

# THE WORLD-Spectator



**Kevin  
Weedmark  
Editor  
and Publisher**

Issued every Monday by McKay Publications Ltd., a subsidiary of Weedmark Communications Ltd., from the office, 714 Main Street, Moosomin, Sask.

We welcome your comments. Write to Box 250, Moosomin, Sask. S0G 3N0, call (306) 435-2445, fax (306) 435-3969, or email [world\\_spectator@sasktel.net](mailto:world_spectator@sasktel.net)

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## In our opinion:

# Why Canada's oil and gas sector gets so little respect

Want to know why Canadian oil and gas gets so little respect from anti-oil and gas activists?

It's not because Canada's main energy sector is somehow a miscreant on measures of carbon emissions or anything else. Instead, it is often due to three approaches: focusing only on absolute emissions and ignoring the effect of economic growth and per capita measurements; skipping over the reality of a cold northern country; and making the perfect (utopian end) the enemy of the good.

This might be why, despite considerable debate in the media and policy circles about the absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions arising from the activities of Canada's oil and gas sector, little attention has been paid to the reductions in GHG emissions intensity that have occurred within the sector over the past two decades.

Some background and a necessary definition: emissions "intensity" is the emissions rate of a given pollutant relative to the intensity of a specific activity or industrial production process.

Examples include grams of carbon dioxide released per megajoule of energy produced, or the ratio of greenhouse gas emissions produced to gross domestic product (GDP).

In laymen's terms, if an industry or an economy is growing, as are its emissions, is not immediate evidence of a negative trend.

It would be akin to looking at automobile manufacturing and asserting (if this were happening) that a 20 per cent rise in the use of steel in the last decade must mean that sector is less efficient in its use of steel.

But what if that same sector was manufacturing twice as many cars, trucks and SUVs as a decade ago? Then the rise in steel use would, in fact, be evidence of a sector doing more (100 per cent more production) with less (only 20 per cent more steel).

This trend on carbon emissions intensity is occurring within Canada generally and in the oil and gas sector specifically. (And again, we are measuring carbon emissions intensity, not absolute emissions.)

For example, pair Canada's economic growth from 2000 to 2019 with carbon emissions and here's the record: carbon emissions intensity is down dramatically.

Between 2000 and 2019, measured in what's known in technical terms as "megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent," the greenhouse gas emissions intensity in Canada fell by 30 per cent for every billion dollars in wealth created.

Or consider Canada up against other countries on a similar measurement, carbon emission intensity per millions of U.S. dollars of GDP. Between 2000 and 2018, Canada's GHG emissions intensity fell from 996 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per million dollars of GDP to 445 tonnes, a decline of over 55 per cent.

As of 2018, Canada's GHG emissions intensity on that measurement was lower than many other energy-producing and energy-consuming countries, such as Qatar (522 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per million dollars of GDP), the United Arab Emirates (623 tonnes), Saudi Arabia (811 tonnes), China (843 tonnes), Oman (1,038 tonnes), and Russia, at nearly three times Canada's "445 tonnes" intensity, at 1,193 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per million dollars of GDP.

Here is another comparison that belies the notion Canada is a laggard in carbon emissions reductions: per capita emissions.

Between 2000 and 2018, Canada's GHG emissions intensity on that measurement—per capita—fell by 14 per cent.

Selected other countries showed deeper reductions (with some others, increases). Carbon emissions expressed as tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per capita fell by 22 per cent in the United States, 24 per cent in the United Arab Emirates, 12 per cent in Qatar, and 28 per cent in Australia.

Meanwhile, over the same period, emissions per capita increased by 10 per cent in Russia, 34 per cent in Saudi Arabia, and nearly 43 per cent in Oman.

Here are some relevant statistics specific to the oil sands, always a topic of commentary: between 2011 and 2019, oil sands emissions intensity fell by nearly 22 per cent.

Looking ahead, IHS Markit speculates that improved near-term technologies and efficiencies could result in a 17 to 27 per cent reduction in the GHG intensity of steam-assisted gravity drainage operations (which accounted for 45 per cent of oil sands supply in 2017) and a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in the GHG intensity of mined oil sands by 2030.

This is similar to a base-emissions forecast from BMO Capital Markets, implying that average oil sands emissions intensity could improve by at least another 17 per cent by 2030.

According to IHS Markit, such improvements on a full life-cycle basis (inclusive of emissions from production to combustion) mean these upstream intensities would place average steam-assisted gravity drainage operations within two to four per cent and mined oil sands within five to seven per cent of the average for crude oil refined in the United States by 2030.

Back to the automobile manufacturing example: Whether Canada and measured by billions of dollars in new GDP, or per capita, or the oil sands, carbon emissions intensities are down.

The entire country and the oil and gas sector is already doing much more with much less CO<sub>2</sub>. Recall that the next time someone compares a growing Canada to an economically stagnant country or one with a declining population.

*This editorial was written by Mark Milke and Lennie Kaplan with the Canadian Energy Centre, an Alberta government corporation funded in part by carbon taxes. They are authors of the report Canada's GHG Emissions Intensity Record since 2000: An Updated 2021 Analysis.*



# Hoping for one family's safe transit to Canada

I hope that everyone in Canada remembers every single day how fortunate they are to live here. There are people around the world who would love to live in this beautiful, safe, friendly country and leave behind some very dangerous parts of the world.

Currently a number of Afghan interpreters who worked with Canadian agencies and the Canadian military are on their way to Canada and they cannot get here fast enough.

I spent some time in Afghanistan in 2004, working with the Canadian International Development Agency, writing articles about Canadian Development projects that went hand-in-hand with the military effort. The articles and photos were distributed to media across Canada, and were on display on Parliament Hill for International Development Day.

It was a dangerous time in Afghanistan. The international military presence was relatively new, parts of the country that I travelled to, such as Mazar-e-Sharif, had no foreign military presence and were ruled by local warlords, the infrastructure was so devastated you could not use a credit card, there was not an ATM or bank in the country to withdraw cash, so every foreigner arrived with tens of thousands of US dollars, enough for their time in the country and enough to get out in a hurry if need be. So the Kabul airport, still bomb damaged when I flew in, was full of foreigners carrying heaps of cash, and the Taliban had a standing offer of \$10,000 US for any foreigner delivered to them.

But when you got to know the people, when you were in their home they would defend you with their life.

I had an interpreter who worked with me for the time I was in Afghanistan, and for the last week I have been busy doing what I can to try to get him and his family safely to Canada. I have stayed in touch with him, he got his engineering degree and is helping to build his country, but is now being threatened as the Taliban move to retake the country.

I am so impressed at the Canadian effort to bring these interpreters here, to safety.

The day my interpreter (I won't use his name as he is still in Afghanistan as I write this, and may be in danger) let me know he was being threatened, I reached out to a few people and got a very rapid response.

I sent a message to the Prime Minister's Office in the evening, and by 6 am the next morning I got a reply letting me know that the information had been passed on to Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino and to the Canadian Embassy in Kabul.

Our MP, Dr. Robert Kitchen, called me and did what he could. Dr. Kitchen has a strong in-



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Me in a minefield in Afghanistan in 2004. There was a doctor and an ambulance standing by while I was in there. Afghanistan was dangerous for foreigners then, and is becoming dangerous now for Afghans who worked with foreign governments.

terest in Afghanistan, having spent some of his formative years in the country. His father was Canada's military attaché in Islamabad, and when Dr. Kitchen was young he travelled in Afghanistan extensively. He has been to a Buzkashi game, which would give him instant cred with any Afghan.

Yorkton-Melville MP Cathay Wagantall did what she could to help, and put me in contact with a group of veterans who are working behind the scenes to get Afghan interpreters to Canada and provide some security for those in Afghanistan.

The Canadian Embassy in Kabul and the Canadian military contacted me to get my assurance that this individual was indeed my interpreter, and whatever background I could provide.

I was able to provide that assurance, and fortunately I had photos I could supply and News Media Canada had records of the project and CIDA's involvement, so hopefully my interpreter and his family will be safely in this country before long.

All we can do is hope at this point. Getting to Canada is a matter of life and death for this family.

So as you enjoy this beautiful summer in this beautiful and amazing part of the world, remember how lucky you are to live where you do.



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## In our opinion:

# You're on the hook for \$57,000 in government debt

We have to start demanding that politicians start making some tough choices

Fifty-seven thousand dollars.

That's the average amount each Canadian will owe in provincial and federal government debt by the end of the year.

It's not just the rich or big corporations that will be moping up this budget mess if politicians don't take some air out of their bloated budgets.

Politicians are already starting to try that strategy.

But if you add up the luxury tax and tax on foreign homeowners in the recent federal budget, and throw in the wealth and excess profits tax the New Democrats are pushing for, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's 2021 deficit spending would still burn through that cash in about a month.

Ordinary Canadians would be stuck with the bills for the other 11 months.

That's how staggering the borrowing has become.

"We're adding on more debt in six years than we did in previous 152 years combined," David Rosenberg, a Bay Street veteran, told BNN following the 2021 federal budget.

Canada's gross debt makes up 118 per cent of our GDP, which is the fifth highest among 29 industrialized countries examined by the International Monetary Fund.

Even if we sold everything we produced in an entire year, we still couldn't pay off that government debt.

The provinces aren't a bunch of beauty pageant contestants either. Ontario is the most indebted subnational government in the world. Not too long ago Newfoundland and Labrador was worried about its ability "to pay its public service." And Alberta and Saskatchewan recently received credit downgrades.

It's not just the total debt that taxpayers need to be concerned with.

This year, interest charges on federal and provincial debts will cost each Canadian more than \$1,000.

That money can't go to health care or to put groceries on the table because it's going to the bond fund managers to service the government debt.

What happens if interest rates rise?

Last year, government interest charges cost Canadians about \$50 billion. The Fraser Institute estimates that deficits in Canada would increase by another \$17 billion if interest costs return to their 2019 levels. And they aren't the only economists sounding the alarm.

"Are we really going to make this assumption that interest rates are going to stay static for the next 10 or 20 years?" said Rosenberg. "I just find so many people have short memories against what happened in the 1970s into the 1980s, and then all the tough choices and the hardship to get our fiscal situation back into some mode of stability."

Those tough choices included the closing down of 52 hospitals on the prairies after "we left a fiscal situation in Saskatchewan until it was a crisis," according to former finance minister Janice Mackinnon.

That's a crucial lesson. Eventually, politicians will be forced to make tough decisions, and it's better to tackle the debt challenges now before tougher choices are forced on us.

Here's another crucial lesson: the seeds to our debt problem were planted long before COVID-19.

It's important to keep the massively expensive COVID-19 spending temporary so these programs don't become permanent red ink.

But even before COVID-19, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau increased Canada's per person (and inflation adjusted) spending to heights never before seen.

Instead of fulfilling his promise to balance the budget in 2019, Trudeau spent more than his predecessors did in any one year during the Second World War, Korean War, or during recessions in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

Rather than taking his foot off the gas pedal, Trudeau is using COVID-19 to increase permanent federal government spending by \$100 billion by 2026.

So how can Canadians shrink that \$57,000 government debt bill?

Governments need to do what families and businesses have done: find ways to save money. Overspending has become habitual, but that doesn't mean it's inevitable. Taxpayers need to send a clear message that it's time for fiscal sanity.

*This editorial was written by Franco Terrazzano, the Federal Director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.*

UNLIKELY TO  
HAVE BEEN SAID  
WHILE FLEEING  
AFGHANISTAN...



*Le Monde*  
cartoonink.com

# Chaotic scenes of people trying to escape Kabul never needed to happen

Like you, I saw the scenes of chaos over the last week as people tried desperately to escape Kabul.

Like you, I am shocked that Canada and the United States would leave local embassy staff, security staff, and interpreters who worked with Western powers to try to improve Afghanistan's future.

Like you, I am angry that it came to this.

Maybe moreso, because I have a personal connection to Afghanistan as I spent some time there shortly after the Western Forces uprooted the Taliban.

And having been communicating with people in Afghanistan and with federal officials since July, trying to get my Afghan interpreter and his family to safety, I know for a fact that it didn't have to be like this.

I know for a fact that the Canadian government had an opportunity to get the interpreters and others who helped try to build a better future for Afghanistan safely out of the country.

But it appears bureaucracy got in the way, and some of these individuals who risked their lives to try to build a better future for their country may never get out of the country alive.

I believe the Prime Minister's Office understands the urgency of the situation—when I first contacted them on the evening of July 27 they responded with an email, with a copy to Marco Mendicino's office at 7:23 the next morning, July 28.

I believe the SJS (the Canadian Military's Strategic Joint Staff) understands the urgency of the situation—they inform me that, after receiving all the documentation from me and my interpreter, including photos of him on the CIDA project I worked on in Afghanistan, they verbally confirmed a couple of things with me on Friday, August 6 and say they passed the information to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) within two minutes of speaking with me.

But for the last two weeks, since the file has been in the hands of IRCC, there have been requests for paperwork, but there has been no action that I or others I know who worked in Afghanistan can see on an actual evacuation.

My interpreter received a call from a Canadian embassy in the middle east last weekend, just as Kabul was about to fall to the Taliban. Communications were cutting in and out, so he asked me to help communicate between him and the embassy. He was hoping it was a call about a flight. Unfortunately it was yet another call asking if he and his family had passports. Then he was asked to scan copies of his family's passports and send them to the Canadian government.

At one point that Sunday I got a call, just as Kabul was about to fall. I was told what gate at the military side of the airport to go to, specific instructions what to say when he got there, and what area to avoid. Someone headed out from the airport to escort him to a safe flight, but massive crowds showed up at the airport, there was shooting, and my interpreter and his family couldn't make it through the crowd and had to head home.

IRCC continues with its paperwork. Thursday, while Kabul descended into chaos, my interpreter got an email from



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IRCC telling him he was on track for permanent resident status in Canada, but he should get a passport if he doesn't have one (there is no government in Afghanistan right now, there is no passport office, and he has sent scans of his and his family's passports to the Canadian government).

Oh, and IRCC added "All individuals seeking to depart Afghanistan as part of the temporary special program to resettle Afghans to Canada may be required to obtain a negative Covid-19 test prior to their flight." Probably not too easy to do in Kabul right now when you are being hunted by the Taliban and trying to preserve your life.

The good news is my interpreter is apparently on track for permanent resident status, the bad news is there are blood-thirsty Taliban between him and the airport and the government that needs to get him out of there is concerned with paperwork and Covid tests. It's a good thing IRCC isn't in charge of rescuing migrants from sinking boats in the Mediterranean. "Before we let you on board the rescue ship, do you have a negative Covid test from the last 24 hours?"

It didn't have to be this way. These brave individuals who tried to build a better future for their country need and deserve our help.

I have a lot of questions. Why, in the two weeks after hundreds of interpreters passed vetting through SJS, has IRCC been asking for the same information from those individuals that was already provided to SJS in the initial vetting?

Is it normal in an urgent situation to require passports and immigration forms before rescuing individuals in danger?

Given Canada's military capacity to get these individuals out of Afghanistan over the last two weeks, given the possibility of charter flights and military flights to at least get them to a safe third country in the region for further processing, why are hundreds of Afghan interpreters who risked their lives for Canada still left in the country now under the control of the Taliban?

Given that the SJS vetted the applicants and it would be a military operation to get them out, whose decision was it to involve IRCC between the vetting and the evacuation, rather than completing the military operation first, and involving IRCC once the individuals were safely out of the country?

My interpreter is luckier than most. There are a lot of people working on his and his family's behalf, and he is on the government's radar. Others have heard nothing since applying to come to this country.

But if he and the others who risked their lives for a better future for Afghanistan, who worked hand-in-hand with Canadian agencies trying to build that future, cannot be brought safely to this country, it will be a black mark on this country. We have to do everything possible to help them.



# Freedom getting closer for Afghan family with a Moosomin connection

An Afghan interpreter who worked with World-Spectator editor Kevin Weedmark on a CIDA project in Afghanistan and his family are one step closer to freedom.

We will not publish the name of the interpreter or his family as most of the family remain in Afghanistan and all are in danger.

The Taliban has been seeking out those who co-operated with international efforts in Afghanistan, and some have been taken by the Taliban and have disappeared.

The World-Spectator's interpreter managed to make it from Kabul to Islamabad, Pakistan to make contact with the Canadian High Commission while his family remains in Afghanistan. While he risked his life to get to Pakistan, he was able to meet with officials at the Canadian High Commission in Islamabad and his family, including infant twins, are in the process of getting the documents they need to travel out of Afghanistan.

They're not out of the woods yet, they still have to make it to Canada safely, and every day they remain in the region they are in danger.

A letter from the government last week offering help also came with many warnings.

"Thank you for contacting the Government of Canada to request facilitation for your family to enter Pakistan," the government wrote. "While we strongly advise against all movement toward the Pakistan-Afghanistan border because of the safety risks to you and your family, if you choose to take this journey, the High Commission of Canada in

Islamabad must help you get the necessary letter from Pakistan's Ministry of the Interior.

"In order to obtain the relevant letter from Pakistan's Ministry of the Interior, we must provide the information above to the Government of Pakistan and a transportation service. The Government of Canada has no control over the use or distribution of your information by the Government of Pakistan. There may be personal risks to you and your family in disclosing the information above. The Government of Canada cannot, however, predict the consequences or personal risks you may face as a result.

"Please be aware that if you proceed with accessing border crossing services, you accept and assume all the risks associated including the risk of material loss or personal injury. You waive on your own behalf, all rights to take legal action against and release Her Majesty The Queen in right of Canada in respect of personal injury/loss/death that you may suffer arising out of the use of the services provided.

"Please be ready to travel with 12 hours' notice. As the security situation remains volatile, we strongly encourage you to take precautions with any data stored on your electronic devices, particularly in relation to your communication with the Government of Canada, and to store only information (documents, contact information etc.) that is required to facilitate your travel to Canada."

The process for this family has been ongoing since July. The World-Spectator interpreter and



The seven-month-old twins of the interpreter who is one step closer to making it to Canada with his family.

his family were cleared for travel by the Canadian Strategic Joint Command in early August, but the deteriorating situation on the ground as Afghanistan fell to the Taliban meant almost no Canadian military, embassy, NGO or media interpreters were able to make it onto flights out of Kabul. Many interpreters are still on

the ground in Kabul waiting for any word from the Canadian government.

"My interpreter is one of the lucky ones as he managed to escape Afghanistan and make contact with the Canadian High Commission in Islamabad. While it's dangerous to get the rest of his family out, they want to do anything they can to make it to a country where they can be free and safe," says Weedmark.

"A lot of people have helped all through this process, from looking up the files from the original CIDA project I worked on in Afghanistan to officials recently working to keep this family's file moving forward. Every time there seems to be a delay or a snag, I reach out to Canadian officials, political leaders, people on the ground in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and this family's case seems to move forward.

"And along with the help there have been many, many genuine expressions of concern and support. It has been a long road and there have been a lot of high points and some setbacks along the way, but sincere thanks to everyone who has done anything along the way to help!"

After the latest communication from the Canadian government, offering help but warning that the family is risking their lives by trying to leave Afghanistan, the World-Spectator's interpreter commented, "It is not easy to leave Afghanistan for any other country, while the Taliban have the control here, but there is no way remaining, there is no other option except risking the dangers for a better future for my kids and family."

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## In our opinion:

# New drug price reform is not what the doctor ordered

A highly contested drug price reform is set to come into effect in Canada in January 2022 and critics are demanding a major overhaul

A highly-contested drug-price reform is set to come into effect in Canada in January 2022.

Critics of the major overhaul, including patient groups, doctors, and academics, are hopeful that the new federal cabinet will take their concerns to heart and rather than stifle pharmaceutical innovation, will encourage it in a way that's beneficial to patients.

The reform in question concerns the Patent Medicines Price Review Board (PMPRB), the federal agency whose purpose is to prevent excessive pricing and the abuse of drug patents.

One of the ways in which the Board fulfills this purpose is by establishing a price ceiling according to specific guidelines. It is these guidelines that are changing under the new regime.

Most of the concern stems from the introduction of "experimental" economic factors such as pharmaco-economic value, size of the market, and GDP per capita into the evaluation of the price of a patented drug.

The Board's current assessment already adds as much as three years of additional delay between the time Health Canada approves a drug and the moment it is refunded by provincial insurance plans.

These additional factors will undoubtedly add complexity to an already slow process, and make Canada an international outlier in its approval process.

This in turn can discourage investment, the launch of clinical trials, and new drug releases.

As such, these reforms are likely to compromise the availability of new drugs, to the great detriment of patients. Indeed, multiplying the number of regulatory steps makes the approval process more burdensome and could push companies to introduce their drugs in countries with a more responsive framework first. Meanwhile, ailing patients in Canada are deprived of potentially life-saving medicine.

If this added complexity wasn't enough to ruffle critics' feathers, the PMPRB does not even always respect its mandate when determining whether a newly patented drug is excessively priced.

The court case involving the Federal Court of Appeal (FCA) and SOLIRIS, a breakthrough drug that treats patients with an ultra-rare blood disease, is just one example of such divergence.

When the PMPRB concluded that SOLIRIS's sale price was excessive, the case was brought to the FCA, where it heavily criticized the Board for its lack of transparency and for departing from its guidelines. The FCA found that the PMPRB had "misunderstood its mandate, which is directed at controlling patent abuse, not reasonable pricing, price-regulation or consumer protection at large."

Indeed, SOLIRIS's highest acceptable price upon market introduction should have been the median price of the seven comparator countries listed in the Patented Medicines Regulations. Instead, the Board decided to institute, for the first time, a benchmark of the lowest international price.

This arbitrary divergence causes additional headaches for drug manufacturers who must already jump through multiple, time-consuming hoops before being able to sell their drug on the Canadian market. Such regulatory unpredictability, coupled with the additional economic factors to be taken into account in our country, could discourage drug companies from applying for approval here at all. To the extent that this happens, some suffering patients will never get the best treatment for what ails them.

Drug manufacturers have already proposed alternative solutions that would strike a balance between affordability objectives, incentivizing the development of patented medicines, and timely access to innovative treatments for all Canadians. Specifically, they've recommended simply omitting the new economic factors from the new regime, as excessive pricing can be prevented through other regulatory tools.

With the implementation of the PMPRB's new regime fast approaching, time is running out for the Liberal government's newly appointed cabinet to reconsider, given the dire consequences of this reform.

The well-being of patients who rely on the innovation and development of the Canadian pharmaceutical industry should move them to act quickly.

*This editorial was written by Krystle Wittevrongel, a public policy analyst and Maria Lily Shaw, an economist at the Montreal Economic Institute.*

## SCENE FROM A CHRISTMAS PARTY



# Family safely out of Afghanistan after a long struggle

To me, July feels like a lifetime ago.

It was in July that the interpreter who worked with me in Afghanistan, Qasem Sidiqi, contacted me to tell me that, with the Taliban rapidly retaking the country, his life was in danger.

I spent some time in Afghanistan back when there were Canadian troops at Camp Julien in Kabul and Canadian aid agencies starting the work of rebuilding an entire society after the last time the Taliban were in control.

It was an amazing time to be in the country, when there was almost no infrastructure. I landed in Kabul with \$20,000 of U.S. cash (there was not an operating ATM or a way to use a credit card in Afghanistan at the time), a few hypodermic needles and rabies antidote because of some of the places I would be going.

Afghanistan was a dangerous place even with foreign troops in Kabul. A French journalist was killed while I was there, beheaded by an assailant on a passing motorbike. A large number of election workers were killed on the outskirts of Kabul. I was on the phone with Kara at one point when there were some loud bangs and the building I was in started swaying, and it wasn't immediately apparent if it was a bomb blast or a small earthquake. A woman working with Care International, Clementina Cantoni, who I worked with on one story, was kidnapped by the Taliban and later released.

The Canadian Program Support Unit in Kabul had found a driver/interpreter for me. Qasem was there every day as I made my way around Kabul and the surrounding country.

I put my life in his hands. On a few occasions, when we were in a public place, a crowd would start to gather (Afghans were not used to seeing foreigners as most stayed within their compounds or military vehicles), he would take a look at a couple of people at the fringe of the crowd, and let me know it was time to get back in the vehicle.

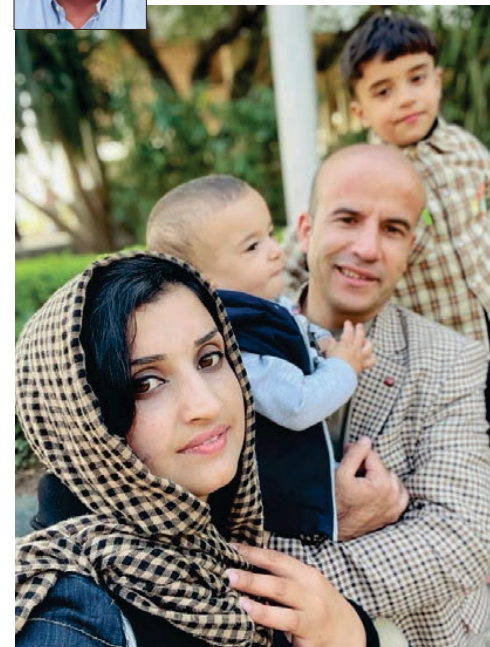
On one occasion I was taking photos near the destroyed Darul Aman Palace and he told me to very carefully retrace my steps as there were landmines all around. On another occasion, when I was taking photos near a military installation, we were surrounded by dozens of machine guns and were blindfolded and had our hands tied behind our backs, but once they discovered I was a journalist, we were fine.

When I was contacted in July, I knew I had to do everything I could to help. Qasem had remained in Afghanistan and built a good life as an engineer, but knew he needed to leave once the Taliban was closing in. The Canadian government set up a special program for immigration of Afghan interpreters and their families. He applied, and I was contacted immediately by the Strategic Joint Staff of the Canadian military to vouch for him and provide any documentation I had. All sorts of people helped with getting that documentation together. Tina Ongkeko at News Media Canada dug up documentation on the original contract with the Canadian International Development Agency that sent me to Kabul. I was able to supply documentation, and a photo I had taken of Qasem from my time in Afghanistan.

He and his family were vetted and approved, but



Kevin Weedmark



Qasem and his family on Friday, safely in Islamabad and hopefully headed for Canada soon.

the Canadian flights didn't get into Kabul when originally planned, Kabul fell to the Taliban, and the task of getting to the airport became very complicated.

Lots of people tried their best. One very senior government official was on the phone with me at 2 am our time, 4 am Ottawa time, as a planned evacuation went sideways. Interpreters were to meet at a specific site, a vehicle was to come from the airport and get them safely to the airport, but when people saw a few people gathering, more started gathering thinking it might be a way to get out, and I was in the position of trying to give advice from thousands of miles away as Qasem told me there was now gunfire at the meeting site and needed to know if he should stay or go.

There were many more struggles between that time and now. Travel out of the country is dangerous, but Qasem made it out to Pakistan overland, a very dangerous route, and his family have been flown out, and now they are all safely out of the country, in Islamabad, Pakistan.

As the family has permission to come to Canada and is on track for permanent resident status, it should be a fairly straightforward matter now to get the paperwork from the Canadian High Commission in Islamabad and get to this country to start a new life in a free and safe country. For everyone who has helped in any way along the way, thank-you.



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Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011909

## In our opinion:

# Think the oil industry is dying? Think again.

Lack of investment in the industry could lead to an energy crisis

Led by Saudi Arabia, oil-producing nations are gaining confidence and delivering a message: the oil era is far from over.

Recently, Saudi Petroleum Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman warned that global oil production could drop by a massive 30 million barrels per day (bpd) by 2030. That's around 30 per cent of the daily global oil supply and about the same share of current global oil demand.

Without any significant drop in global demand, this drop in production could be disastrous.

"We're heading toward a phase that could be dangerous if there's not enough spending on energy," the prince said last week. Lack of sufficient investment in the industry could lead to an "energy crisis," Bloomberg quoted him as saying.

"We have very serious concerns that the world could run short of energy if we are not careful in managing the transition," Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said. He joined the growing chorus reiterating recent warnings from other Saudi officials and industry executives, including Saudi Aramco chief executive Amin Nasser.

Pundits and industry players are echoing these sentiments.

The sector isn't investing enough to meet the growing global energy demand, including for crude oil. That could lead to a series of energy crunches, Daniel Yergin of IHS Markit told CNBC last month.

The industry is "massively underinvesting" in supply to meet growing demand, said Greg Hill, president of U.S. oil producer Hess Corp.

And Saudi Arabia alone can't supply the rise in oil production needed to avoid a crunch, respected analyst Julian Lee wrote in a recent opinion piece on Bloomberg.

Upstream oil and gas investment must rise to pre-pandemic levels of around US\$525 billion per year through the end of the decade so the industry can ensure a demand-supply balance, Saudi Arabia-based International Energy Forum (IEF) reported recently.

Upstream investment has been depressed for a second year in a row and is estimated at around US\$341 billion. Global annual upstream spending needs to go up by as much as 54 per cent to US\$542 billion if the oil market is to avert the next supply shortage shock, Moody's said in October.

Current trends aren't encouraging.

Global oil and gas discoveries in 2021 are expected to hit their lowest full-year level in 75 years, Rystad Energy reported early in December.

As of the end of November, total global discovered volumes this year are calculated at 4.7 billion barrels of oil equivalent (boe) and, with no major finds announced so far this month, the industry is on course for its worst discoveries toll since 1946. This would represent a considerable drop from the 12.5 billion boe unearthed in 2020.

Due to the lack of new exploration leases, almost all of Russia's crude oil will soon be difficult to recover, emphasized Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak. The difficulties extracting the oil will also mean higher production costs.

Oil output in Canada, the world's fourth-largest producer, is expected to climb over the next decade and peak at 5.8 million barrels per day in 2032, seven years sooner than previously forecast, the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) said a couple of weeks back.

While set to increase production in 2022, U.S. shale oil is likely done with the massive two-million-bpd annual output surge we saw just before the pandemic hit, Tsvetana Paraskova said in a piece in Oilprice.com.

So the overall picture isn't positive. The emphasis on broadly increasing investment is growing, and this need comes despite the Saudi plan to raise oil production capacity to 13 million bpd by 2027 from 12 million bpd now.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (ADNOC) also plans to raise the United Arab Emirates production capacity by one million bpd by the end of this decade, to five million bpd from four million now.

Iran and Iraq also plan to increase their output.

Still, this may not be enough, considering that some major international oil companies are pivoting to more investments in low-carbon energy. Some—such as BP and Shell—have even said their oil production has already peaked, Paraskova emphasized.

And to be fair, the world's spare capacity is almost exclusively concentrated in the Middle East, a region prone to geopolitical tensions and conflicts.

Investment bank Goldman Sachs says oil could hit US\$100 a barrel as demand rises to new highs over the next couple of years.

So the industry has entered an interesting phase as opposing forces continue to push and pull global energy dynamics.

*This editorial was written by Rashid Husain Syed, an energy and political analyst.*



1ST WAVE



2ND WAVE



3RD WAVE



4TH WAVE



5TH WAVE

*LaMontagneArt.com*

# The end of a very, very, very, very, very long journey and a new beginning

After a very long ordeal, the interpreter who worked with me in Afghanistan and his family should be in Canada this week.

Last week, Qasem was informed his family's flight to Canada would be leaving Tuesday this week.

I put my life in Qasem's hands when I reported from Afghanistan. He stayed in the country, went to university, had a career in engineering, and worked hard to build his country.

In July, when Taliban forces were closing in on Kabul, his life was threatened and he asked for help to come to this country.

The Canadian government set up a special program for immigration of Afghan interpreters and their families.

He applied, and I was contacted immediately by the Strategic Joint Staff of the Canadian military to vouch for him and provide any documentation I had.

I went back through my old files, found documentation from my time in Afghanistan, and helped put together an application.

All sorts of people helped with getting that documentation together.

Tina Ongkeko at News Media Canada dug up documentation on the original contract with the Canadian International Development Agency that sent me to Kabul. I was able to supply documentation, articles, and a photo I had taken of my interpreter from my time in Afghanistan.

Qasem and his family were accepted to come to this country, and initially the military planned to fly in and get people out immediately.

The plans were in place—there were even discussions about me returning to Afghanistan on one of the military flights to cover the evacuation effort.

Then the bureaucracy slowed down the whole evacuation effort. Canada's foreign affairs department got involved and re-vetted people who had already been vetted, and by the time flights made it to Kabul the Taliban was in charge of the country and passage to the airport was somewhere between extreme-



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ly difficult and impossible.

There were attempts to get the interpreters and their families out at different points, but with the fast changing situation on the ground, various attempts had to be abandoned.

Qasem and his family tried to reach the airport, met at pre-set locations where Canadian officials were to pick them up, but because of the danger the plans never quite came together and very few Canadian interpreters made it out before foreign troops had to leave the Hamid Karzai Airport.

What followed was a deadly and dangerous time for many interpreters who had worked with foreign governments.

Some have disappeared, some have lost their lives.

Qasem made the dangerous overland trip to Islamabad, Pakistan, and his wife and four children were able to fly to meet him, again after a very difficult time and an abandoned attempt at a flight.

This week they should be on Canadian soil. A lot of details are still not finalized, including exactly where they will be initially settled on Canadian soil. But that doesn't matter. They will be in the safest, most free country they have ever lived in.

I know we have problems in this country. I know that some of our leaders act sometimes like they have the intelligence of a dazed squirrel, but I love this country. Seeing how excited this family is to come to Canada, seeing how many Afghans were willing to risk their lives for a chance for what most of us were born with—Canadian citizenship—reminds me once again just how amazing this country is. I, for one, will never take that for granted.



# THE WORLD-Spectator



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## In our opinion:

# Time to cure what ails Canada's health-care systems

**Health reform  
has been talked about long enough  
and now is the time for action**

The need to reform Canada's health-care systems has long been a hot topic of debate.

After all, Canada is an easy target: It has one of the highest price tags among countries with universal health systems in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, but its performance has lagged for years.

The effect of the poor performance of Canada's health-care systems on the lives of patients is bad enough, but now the lack of capacity is interfering with the daily lives of all Canadians.

Indeed, the (re-)re-introduction of strict public health measures in several provinces in response to the Omicron wave has been repeatedly justified by our health systems' lack of capacity.

So how do we fix them? On one side of the debate, there are those who believe throwing more money at the problem would be a miraculous cure.

Unfortunately, several provincial premiers seem to be of this opinion, with their plea to substantially increase the Canadian health transfer.

And yet, health-care spending in Canada has increased at an average yearly pace of over seven per cent since 1975, without delivering better results for patients.

In fact, 55 per cent of Canadians believe the additional amounts of money injected over the past decade have either had no effect at all or actually worsened their health-care system.

At this point, spending even more taxpayer dollars would simply be placing our health systems on an artificial respirator.

On the flip side, there are those who want to give the country's health systems room to breathe by expanding the role of entrepreneurs in the delivery of care.

Such a structural reform could involve encouraging provinces to form more partnerships between public and private institutions, or even letting entrepreneurs run publicly funded hospitals.

Now, adopting a greater mix of public and private care would not equate to an Americanization of our health care.

Allowing and even encouraging entrepreneurs to pick up the slack is no danger to the universality of Canada's health-care systems.

Rather, as many European countries know well, such a change would increase the accessibility of services families already pay for through their taxes and offer greater choice within the public system.

As an added bonus, expanding the role of entrepreneurs would enable health authorities to make better use of the billions of dollars spent on health care every year.

Involving entrepreneurs in the delivery of health services is the next step toward more efficient systems that Canadians can truly be proud of – ones that encourage innovation and prioritize public-private partnerships rather than always resorting to the mechanisms of a single-payer system.

Taking this step will require political courage and co-operation from all levels of governance, including unions, professional orders, and colleges.

In fact, the management of a health-care system should not revolve around politics at all.

It's a matter of doing everything possible to guarantee the high quality of care that Canadians are right to expect, given that 33 per cent of federal and provincial government budgets are directly funnelled into their health systems.

Health reform has been talked about enough; it's time to take action and catch up to the other universal health systems in the world that have already embraced the role of entrepreneurs in the delivery of care.

Otherwise, the next generation is doomed to experience the same heartaches we're suffering through today.

As we head into the umpteenth wave of COVID-19, the pandemic must be the spur that finally gets us to have the conversation we need to have on fundamentally reforming Canada's health-care systems. Anything less would be irresponsible.

*Maria Lily Shaw is an economist at the Montreal Economic Institute.*



The Sediqi family en route from Islamabad to Vancouver. The family arrived in Canada Thursday after a long journey to escape Afghanistan. Qasem Sediqi, who was an interpreter for World-Spectator editor Kevin Weedmark in Afghanistan, reached out for help to leave the country in July, when the Taliban were closing in on Kabul. The family fled the country with their four children, including twins who celebrated their first birthday in Canada on Saturday.



# Arrival in Canada the end of a long journey, the start of a new life

I put my life in the hands of Qasem Sidiqi when I reported from Afghanistan on a Canadian International Development Agency project, and you can't image my sigh of relief when he and his family touched down in Vancouver Thursday, reaching Canadian soil after a long and harrowing escape from Afghanistan.

The family has been accepted to come to Canada under the Special Measures for Afghan Interpreters and their families but, as for many, it was a struggle to get out of the country.

It was last July when Qasem contacted me to tell me that, with the Taliban rapidly retaking the country, his life was in danger.

I had spent some time in Afghanistan back when there were Canadian troops at Camp Julien in Kabul and Canadian aid agencies were starting the work of rebuilding an entire society after the last time the Taliban were in control.

The Canadian Program Support Unit in Kabul had found Qasem to act as a driver/interpreter for me. He was there every day as I made my way around Kabul and the surrounding countryside.

I put my life in Qasem's hands. Afghanistan was a dangerous place when the combined militaries of several western countries were enforcing the peace. Imagine what it is like now, as the Taliban have retaken control, reprisal killings are commonplace, people have been forced from their homes and summarily executed by Taliban militants, and the economy and systems like health care have collapsed.

When I was contacted in July by Qasem, saying his life was in danger, I knew I had to do everything I could to help.

The Canadian government set up a special program for immigration of Afghan interpreters and their families. He applied, and I was contacted immediately by the Strategic Joint Staff of the Canadian military to vouch for him and provide any documentation I had. All sorts of people helped with getting that documentation together. Tina Ongkeko at News Media Canada dug up documentation on the original contract with the Canadian International Development Agency that sent me to Kabul. I was able to supply documentation, articles, and a photo I had taken of Qasem from my time in Afghanistan.

The military unit in charge of vetting moved quickly. After reviewing the documentation, then speaking with me, they approved his application within minutes, but the Canadian flights didn't get into Kabul when originally planned, Kabul fell to the Taliban, and the task of getting to the airport became very complicated.

Lots of people tried their best. One very senior government official was on the phone with me at 2



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am our time, 4 am Ottawa time, as a planned evacuation went sideways. Interpreters were to meet at a specific site, a vehicle was to come from the airport and get them safely to the airport, but when people saw a few people gathering, more started gathering thinking it might be a way to get out, and I was in the position of trying to give advice from thousands of miles away as I was told there was now gunfire at the meeting site and Qasem needed to know if he should stay or go.

There were many more struggles between that time and now.

Travel out of the country is dangerous, but Qasem made it out to Pakistan overland, a very dangerous route, in the fall, and his family were able to fly to meet him there in December.

There have been many struggles and hardships for them as they tried to get out of the country safely.

I tried to do what I could at this end. I'm sure I have the contact information for every Canadian government official in Islamabad, the middle east, and a few in Ottawa.

Every time there was a snag or delay in the family's progress getting the documentation they needed, another email went out and things seemed to move along.

A lot of people have been asking about their progress and asking how they can help, and many at various levels in government have done what they can to move things along.

If you have never been to somewhere like Afghanistan you might not realize how lucky you are to live in Canada, where you can walk down the street, go to the park, drive to the city, attend an event, without wondering if the person walking toward you has something strapped to his chest or a blade hidden.

You live in one of the safest, most free, most prosperous countries in the world.

Many, many people around the world are willing to risk their lives to enjoy what we all enjoy as Canadian citizens.

I am so proud Qasem and his family, after a months-long struggle for freedom, are now safely in Canada, ready to start a new life, full of new possibilities.

For everyone who has helped in any way along the way, thank-you.