

COMMENT & OPINION

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VERBATIM

"If companies were forced to stop using encryption, or weaken it, all our electronic devices and online accounts would become significantly more vulnerable to hackers and oppressive governments."

OpenMedia's Rodrigo Samayoa calls for strong, backdoor-free encryption, opposing push by police-state advocates such as security agencies

THE MONITOR

Last week's Let's Talk Day raised \$7,719,371.25 in new mental health funding, as Canadians shared a record 154,387,425 messages of support for the cause. Bell donates five cents for each communication. The effort has raised \$108,415,135 over its ten years.

PUBLICATION MAIL AGREEMENT NUMBER 1004840 | ISSN 12039578

OUR VIEW | EDITORIAL

Pipeline approval should mean end of subsidies, higher fees

That the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project will ultimately get pushed through seems an almost foregone conclusion given both the undue influence of oil-industry lobbyists and the sparking of western alienation, particularly in Alberta.

The controversial project got another boost this week as the Federal Court of Appeal rejected claims from Indigenous communities that they weren't adequately consulted in the process.

The federal Liberals, accused of both dragging its heels on the project and toadying to the oil industry, are in a no-win situation here. Pragmatically, they can point to the minimal impact Canada has on global greenhouse gas emissions, the somewhat disingenuous "jobs" issue and the financial impacts as reason enough to push through a pipeline from

Alberta to the B.C. coast. That the western-most province isn't keen on the project will undoubtedly still play a part. B.C. has more voters, and Alberta is a Conservative haven, so that will figure in the equation – all issues are matters of short-term political gain rather than the long-term public interest.

Even more practical, the federal government has billions tied up in the deal – it bought the existing pipeline for \$4.5 billion in 2018, and estimates put the amount sunk into the venture at up to \$10 billion. Given its runaway spending, Ottawa is unlikely concerned about the money, but the optics would be really bad.

Turning on the Alberta oil taps also provides a national unity benefit, easing the always simmering discontent in the Prairies.

All of that pales in comparison, however, to the profit that

will come from extracting and transporting tar-sands oil. The oil lobby has been incessant, with the employment prospects being a big carrot dangled before politicians. And the government stands to rake in billions of dollars, despite notoriously poor royalties and low taxes on the industry – corporate tax revenue alone has been estimated at \$500 million per year. Though Justin Trudeau has pledged to direct earnings towards green energy projects, the details remain up in the air.

Studies have shown that the project, which will give Alberta oil an outlet to the B.C. coast (capacity will be almost tripled if plans go ahead), is rife with hazards to the environment, but the benefits outweigh the risks, say officials. No matter what, the decision was always going to be thus.

A pipeline to funnel more tar

sands bitumen to refineries may not be in keeping with plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the wake of climate change. And the inevitable spills will be harmful to the natural ecology along the pipeline corridor, which a major event potentially catastrophic. Those opposed to fighting greenhouse gas emissions often cite economic reasons, saying we'd kill the economy by cutting back on energy production and manufacturing. Again, it's the dollars that matter.

The industry claims pipelines are still the safest way of transporting oil. That's true. It would take millions of trucks or railcars to move the oil, each providing numerous opportunities for spillage. But that doesn't mean there's not room for improvement, as problems occur far more frequently than we hear about.

Supporters essentially tell us that the spills are the price of doing business, the business of feeding our oil addiction.

As long as we're so reliant on oil, we'll be taking it out of the ground and moving it around in large volumes. Oil offers us many advantages, which we may or may not choose to enjoy over the many negatives. While we use the stuff, we're all complicit in the pollution, habitat destruction and increased cancer rates and other health problems that come with that arrangement.

If the pipeline is built as a concession to the industry, the federal government's next move must to remove all corporate welfare from the industry, dramatically increase royalties and ensure the notoriously dodgy sector pays its taxes – that would be fairer to Canadians.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Overstepping Erdogan vs. the world

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is not an 'Islamist,' in the extreme sense of the word. He doesn't wear a suicide vest, he doesn't behead people, he doesn't even go around holding one finger up in the air to signify his hatred of those who fail to acknowledge the One True God. But he certainly does like the Islamists a lot.

In the heyday of the 'Islamic State' in northern Syria and Iraq, it was Erdogan who kept the Turkish border open so that thousands of foreign fighters and their families could go to join that terrorist proto-state, which was a descendant of Osama bin Laden's original Al-Qaeda organization.

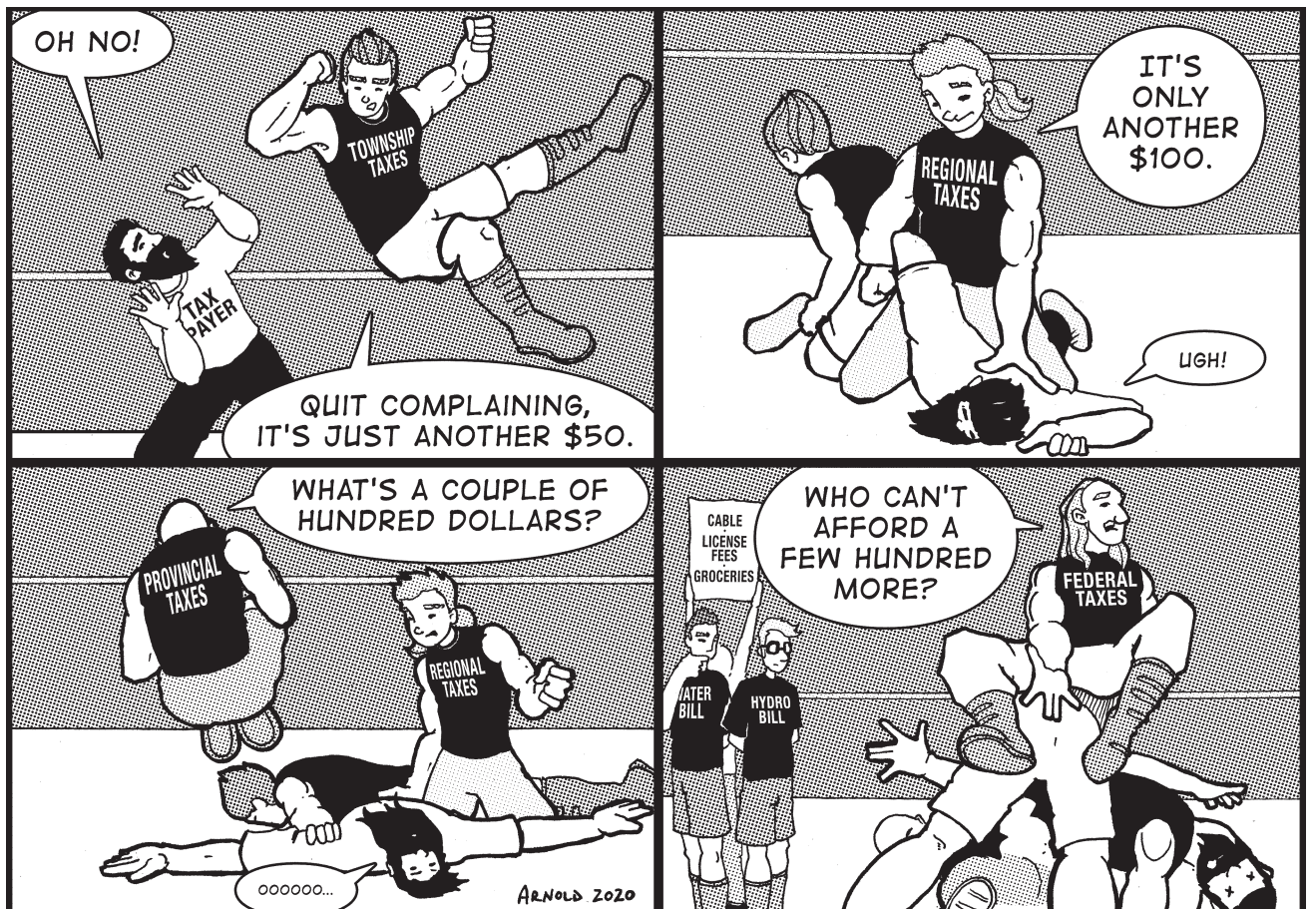


More recently, he has stationed Turkish troops in Syria's Idlib province, the one remaining rebel-held part of the country, where Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, another offshoot of Al-Qaeda, subjugated all the other rebel organizations last year and now rules unchallenged.

Unchallenged, that is, except by Syrian army troops backed by Russian airpower who are gradually winning back control

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THE VIEW FROM HERE | SCOTT ARNOLD



Politicians conveniently disregard cumulative impact, just like they ignore that runaway spending compounds yearly.

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VERBATIM

"Research shows environmentally targeted stimulus measures offer as many or more employment and economic benefits as neutral or harmful measures. Studies of U.S. stimulus policies during the 2008-09 global financial crisis found green policies performed well, especially compared to fossil fuel infrastructure funding."

David Suzuki cites the benefits of a green recovery plan.

THE MONITOR

The International Energy Agency predicts an 8% drop in carbon dioxide emissions this year due to pandemic measures. That decrease would have to be repeated every year this decade to keep global warming on a pathway to 1.5C.

CarbonBrief

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OUR VIEW | EDITORIAL

Masks are another way we can each do our part

That the region has seen a large decrease in COVID-19 cases – and saw comparatively few overall – is largely due to residents taking to heart measures such as staying at home, physical distancing and hygiene protocols. Wearing a mask is just another of the inconveniences we've borne to date.

While we can expect some resistance – it's natural to chafe against bureaucratic diktats – we're unlikely to see the restrictions imposed this week as a serious curtailment of our civil liberties. Nor are masks likely to become politically-charged symbols of a partisan divide. In short, we're not the U.S.

Still, one hopes the decision to make masks mandatory in public as of July 13 was not taken lightly, though there was

little consideration given to the broader implications. The immediate crisis tends to favour a certain amount of myopia: imminent threats to our health will do that.

Masks that cover the mouth and nose have been shown to be an effective way to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. By wearing a mask in spaces such as stores, gyms and restaurants, we help keep others safe.

There are also practical reasons to impose new rules on the public in that the sooner the threat is eliminated – or lowered dramatically until a cure or vaccine is found – the sooner we can return to something resembling normalcy. The reopening of the economy will be greatly aided by the numbers remaining low.

The benefit of that is now on display in the U.S., where large

outbreaks have forced some states, counties and municipalities to roll back the reopening of their economies. Divisive, hyper-partisan politics saw some areas reopen quickly with few precautions, with the ensuing spike in COVID-19 cases almost inevitable.

Masks have been mandated in some parts of the U.S., while others have fought against them. Rather than simply a tool to promote health, masks have become a symbol of libertarian struggles, of race and, most notably, of political ideology. Much has been discussed about the uniquely American culture that promotes individualism, distrust of government and freedom even from responsibility – it's more "me" than "we."

Here, we can look upon that and shake our heads in disbelief.

Canadians are by and large more likely to be socially minded, to support measures that help others. As such, the measures imposed to slow the spread of the virus were adopted, even if we weren't happy to be stuck at home. There were some instances where people disregarded limits on gatherings, for instance, but not the kind of resistance regularly seen to the south.

Moreover, our stronger social safety net meant there have been fewer economic hardships here. Not, of course, that there hasn't been pain, particularly in the case of small businesses whose fate still remains up in the air, but the worst effects of the lockdown were blunted by the kinds of government programs that wouldn't fly in the U.S.

Even as some people return to work, support programs have been extended in recognition that the crisis isn't over yet. The same thinking applies to this week's regional council decision about masks: the threat is much less imminent, but we can't assume that we're on a one-way track to a pre-coronavirus existence.

So, yes, a mandatory mask policy may have made more sense three months ago, we can't assume that today's low numbers will continue to dwindle in some linear way. And there's also the possibility of a second wave when the typical fall flu conditions return, meaning we'll be better served if we've all become accustomed to measures such as wearing masks – there will be no need to explain why they're important.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Hong Kong and the "British" 3 million

"We will grant BNOs five years' limited leave to remain (in the United Kingdom), with the right to work or study," British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab told the UK parliament on July 1. "After five years, they will be able to apply for settled status. After a further twelve months with settled status, they will be able to apply for citizenship."

The stunning thing about this promise is that it applies to all three million people in Hong Kong – almost half the population – who have British National (Overseas) status by virtue of having been born there before the former British colony was handed back to the People's Republic of China in 1997.



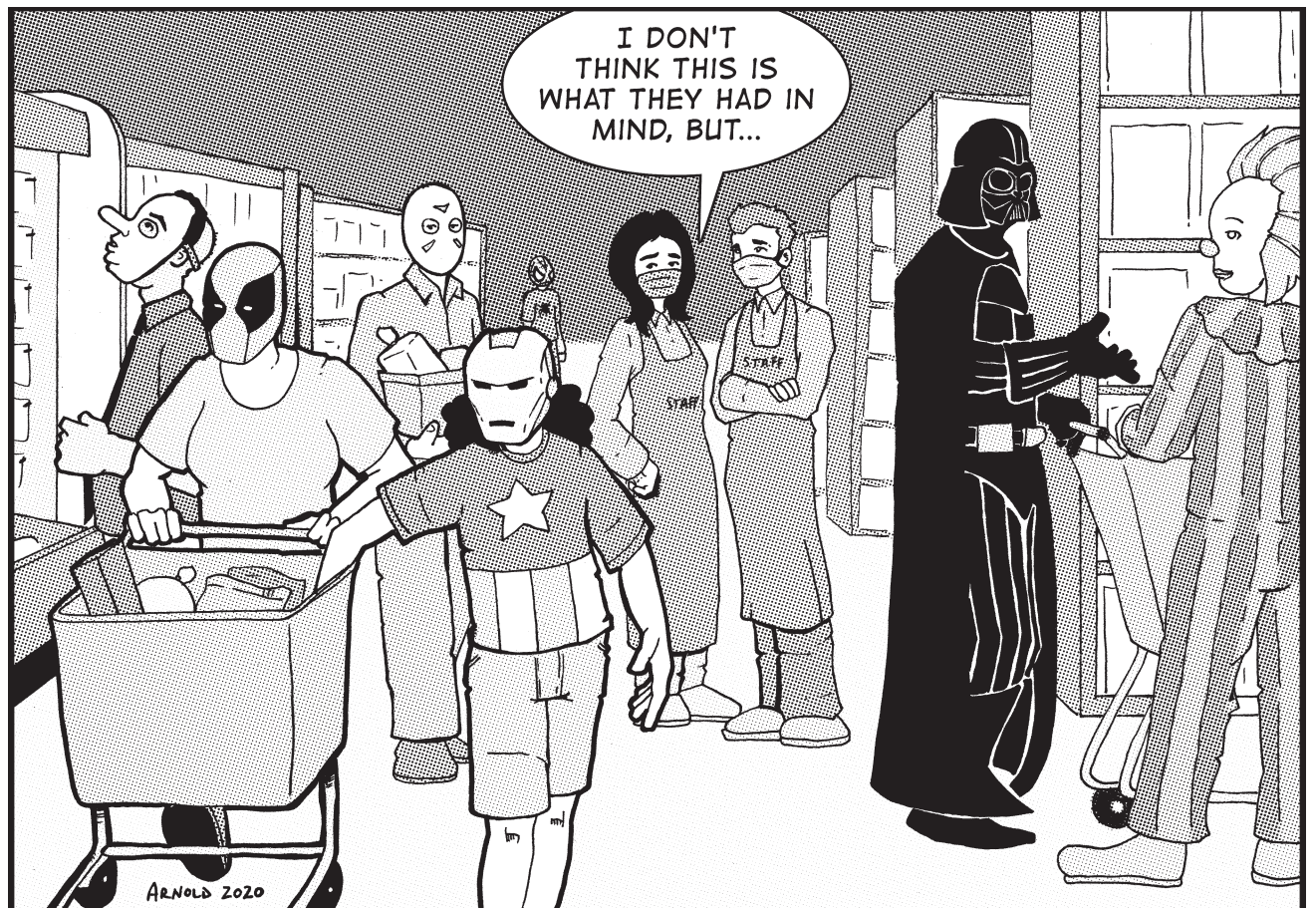
GWYNNE DYER
GLOBAL AFFAIRS

They don't even need to have an actual BNO passport (although 300,000 of them do). All three million of them qualify: "all those with BNO status will be eligible, as will their family dependants who are ordinarily resident in Hong Kong. The Home Office will put in place a simple, streamlined application process. There will be no quota on numbers."

This is an unprecedented commitment, and it's not

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THE VIEW FROM HERE | SCOTT ARNOLD



The government may dictate masks be worn, but that doesn't mean some people can't have fun with it.

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VERBATIM

"We recognize the tremendous risk workers are taking and thank them for their dedication during these unprecedented times. Unifor continues to call on retailers to recognize the importance of their frontline workers and to compensate them fairly during the crisis."

Unifor president Jerry Dias calls on all retailers to increase wage premiums, and enhance health and safety protocols.

THE MONITOR

Some 3.5% of the total workforce is made up of gig economy workers. Most recent data show there were about 1.7 million workers that made up the gig economy. Typical workers that are considered part of the gig economy include Uber drivers, food delivery workers for services like Foodora, and unincorporated self-employed freelancers. The median net gig income was a mere \$4,303.

Bank of Canada

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OUR VIEW | EDITORIAL

Officials taking more liberties in wake of COVID-19 scare

The national plan on slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus involves all of us keeping our distance. It's a strategy that works best when everyone goes along with the prescribed rules and guidelines, though not all of us have bought in.

That's precisely why political leaders have become more strident and why what was once advice is now being enforced by law. It's the reason Canada and many other countries are strangling their economies in hopes of both saving lives and preventing their medical systems from being overwhelmed, a situation that both applies to saving lives and taking economic precautions.

As of this week, the province ordered the shutting of all non-essential businesses.

Officials from the local councils up to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are considering tougher regulations to prevent people from congregating in numbers, as some continue to do despite all the warnings. The response could include draconian measures that would seriously curtail civil liberties, and freedoms once lost are incredibly hard to regain, as we've seen in this surveillance age as governments fail to protect the rights and privacy of their citizens.

We want to avoid such drastic steps – leaving the important conversation about revoking the option of such powers for another day in the post-crisis future – and the best way to do that is for everyone to help with the now ubiquitous flatten-the-curve efforts.

A new poll released Tuesday

shows we're not all on board. About 20 per cent of Canadians indicated they weren't taking the COVID-19 pandemic seriously when surveyed by Leger just last weekend.

The pollster found 16 per cent of respondents said the crisis was partly blown out of proportion and another four per cent believed it was blown way out of proportion.

If that large a percentage of the public is failing to heed the guidelines, that could jeopardize the all-important flattening.

Of course, the poll numbers do reflect concerns that the measures invoked to combat COVID-19 may end up doing more harm than the virus itself: the cure is worse than the disease, some muse.

That may be so, but it's a gamble science says we have to

take. For now, we should all be doing our part, though we can be sure opposition will mount the longer the closures, self-isolating and social distancing go on. We've never seen the likes of this kind of economic downturn, so have no way of knowing for sure what the situation will look like in a week, a month or quarter.

We're already feeling the effects of the fight against COVID-19, as the Leger poll also reveals.

Forty-one per cent of respondents said they were somewhat afraid of personally contracting the virus; another 16 per cent said they were very afraid.

Forty-four per cent said they were somewhat afraid someone in their immediate family will contract the disease; another 26 per cent were very afraid.

Only four per cent said they personally know someone who's been diagnosed with the disease.

Fifty-six per cent said the crisis was already having an impact on their work, 54 per cent said they were stocking up on food and supplies at home and 47 per cent said it's had an impact on their ability to visit loved ones in hospital or long-term care homes.

As well, 48 per cent said the crisis had impacted their retirement savings or other investments, 38 per cent said it's affected their income, 35 per cent their capacity to financially assist other family members, 27 per cent their ability to pay bills and 21 per cent their ability to meet mortgage payments or pay rent.

Sixteen per cent said they'd lost their job.

We know there's a crisis. Now we have to act like it.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Current plague will bring some changes

They teach you in journalism school never to use the phrase "...X has changed the world forever." Or at least they should. Covid-19 is certainly not going to change the world forever, but it is going to change quite a few things, in some cases for a long time. Here's nine of them, in no particular order.

1. The clean air over China's cities in the past month, thanks to an almost total shutdown of the big sources of pollution, has saved 20 times as many Chinese lives as Covid-19 has taken. (Air pollution kills about 1.1 million people in China every year.) People will remember this when the filthy air comes back, and want something



GWYNNE DYER
GLOBAL AFFAIRS

done about it. India too.

2. Online shopping was already slowly killing the retail shops. The lockdown will force tens of millions who rarely or never shop online to do it all the time. (Yes, all the websites are crashed or booked until mid-April now, but there will be lots of time to scale them up to meet the demand.) Once customers get used to shopping online, most of them won't go back, so retail jobs will be

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THE VIEW FROM HERE | SCOTT ARNOLD



The province knows it can only push so far in shutting down facets of the economy.

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