A CHEWING, SLURPING, SNIFFING, PEN-CLICKING STUDY. *A3*

NATIONAL POST

VOL. 28 NO. 285 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026 RIGHT TO THE POINT

BENCHMARK CANADA

‘The armed forces of Canada have basically been left to rot’



YUNGCHEOL PARK / POSTMEDIA NEWS

Soldiers wait to be taken by barge to either CCGS Henry Larsen, left, one of the coast guard’s medium icebreakers, or HMCS Robert Hampton Gray, the navy’s sixth Arctic and offshore patrol vessel, as part of an annual Arctic operation at Resolute Bay, Nunavut, in early September.

Special series gauges how Canada compares

DAVID GEORGE-COSH

How’s Canada doing?

Countries don’t typically get report cards, and it can be simplistic to rely on rankings that try to tell you which is the happiest or safest country in the world. But it’s not just a matter of opinion; there are hard facts to be collated, assessed and compared.

Enter Benchmark Canada, a new project from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute that brings together more than 40 different metrics that measure this nation’s performance across the economy, health care, immigration and others while comparing Canada with countries that face similar issues.

See PROJECT on A6

Measuring Canada against its peers and the evidence. Kevin Vuong, A8

AT A TIME WHEN PUBLIC SUPPORT OF DEFENCE SPENDING IS AT A HIGH, OUR MILITARY REMAINS UNDERFUNDED, UNDERMANNED AND UNDERPREPARED

DAVID GEORGE-COSH

The radars watching over Canada’s Arctic region were designed when the Soviet Union was a country. The Royal Canadian Navy’s frigates and the Royal Canadian Air Force’s fighter jets are nearing the end of their useful lives. As Canada looks to reinvigorate its defence sector with billions of dollars in new spending, years of neglect may have left Canadian Forces short of the equipment they need to fight alongside their allies.

Canada is expected to put 25 per cent of its 2026 defence budget toward major equipment, according to NATO data compiled by Benchmark Canada, a Macdonald-Laurier Institute project that ranks the country against its allies. That would exceed NATO’s 20 per cent guideline for a second consecutive year, but leave Canada ranked 28 among the 31 allies measured.

> The people are trained and motivated and committed.
>
> LT.-GEN. CHRISTOPHER COATES (RET.)

“It’s somewhat troubling but not surprising,” said retired vice-admiral Mark Norman, a former commander of the Royal Canadian Navy and vice-chief of the defence staff.

Canada’s spending pales in comparison to figures for its European allies such as Poland at 55.9 per cent, Lithuania at 46 per cent and Hungary at 45 per cent. Only Italy, at 24.5 per cent, Croatia and Norway rank below Canada.

Meanwhile, a recent report by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce puts the average equipment share for the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Italy at 31.2 per cent, 6.2 percentage points above Canada’s estimate. France has about 202,000 military personnel, Germany 182,000 and Britain 126,000, compared with Canada’s 71,000.

See MILITARY on A6

Carney was fooled by Abbas

PM’s principled stand appears to be only on one leg



JOHN IVISON

Comment

Thanksgiving comes at a consequential moment, Mark Carney said in his annual statement. “Meeting the challenges takes a strong country,” he said.

Yet, developments over the weekend provided few grounds for pride in Canada’s principled leadership.

First came the news that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is postponing legislative and presidential elections from next month until next September.

Readers will remember that Canada blindly followed France and Britain in recognizing Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in 2025, after Abbas had promised governance reforms, elections in 2026 (with no role for Hamas) and demilitarization.

See IVISON on A4

In a consequential week, Ottawa goes west

SHARON KIRKEY

Prime Minister Mark Carney and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre are set to travel this week to address some of the weightiest and most consequential issues facing the country.

Carney, who appealed directly in his Thanksgiving message Monday to Albertans, will visit the western province this week ahead of the Oct. 19 referendum question on separation.

Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre, meanwhile, is also expected in Alberta this week, after first visiting Detroit on Tuesday to meet with business leaders and media outlets to push for the removal of cross-border tariffs and champion the Conservatives’ proposed tariff-free auto pact.



Pierre Poilievre

“Canada is facing real threats to our economy, to our security, to our way of life. We have to be strong, and we are stronger together,” Carney said in a short video message released on YouTube on Monday.

“A week from today Albertans will have the opportunity to make an important decision about their future, whether to remain part of Canada or begin a long and uncertain process through which Alberta could separate from Canada,” the prime minister said as he sat in a classroom at his old Edmonton high school, St. Francis Xavier High School.

See MESSAGE on A7

FP

A trade war, two beer importers, two very different outcomes. *FP1*

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