



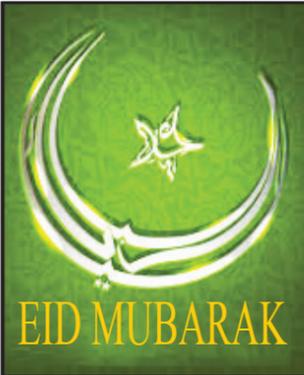
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Omar Khadr CURFEW LIFTED



Al-Mersal-Toronto: Former Guantanamo Bay prisoner Omar Khadr who has been living in Edmonton with his lawyer pending an appeal in the U.S. of his conviction for war crimes, including the murder of an American soldier has now had his bail conditions relaxed.

Khadr, 28, no longer has to wear an electronic monitoring bracelet, and will be allowed to visit his grandparents in Toronto and speak to them in a language other than English, a judge ruled.

Justice June Ross of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench ordered the removal of monitoring software on the laptop computer Khadr uses

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Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie Leads A Challenge To Aid Syrian Refugees

Al-Mersal-Toronto: Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie chaired a public forum-round table discussion regarding the Syrian refugee sponsorship program for Mississauga.

The forum included several members of Mississauga Council, representatives from the Federal and Provincial Government, Regional



Government, the Canadian Red Cross, Lifeline Syria, and several religious and

community organization leaders.

At the meeting the Mayor urged the community leaders to raise 5 million dollars in donations and help bring 32 Syrian families to Mississauga all under the umbrella of Life Line Syria, organization that was recently launched to bring Syrian refugees to Ontario

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Canada's Election: A Three Horse Race Leaders Debate Boosts Trudeau's Position

Al-Mersal-Toronto: Last Thursday night's debate on Canada's economy amounted to nothing but a mudslinging contest and verbal fist fighting, as the three federal leaders launched pointed attacks on each other's plans; ranging on issues, from jobs to energy, deficits and infrastructure.

This debate certainly



displayed a higher energy than the previous one, as Prime Minister Stephen Harper found himself on the defensive during attacks from Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and, NDP leader Tom Mulcair. Both

claimed his economic policies have resulted in hundreds of thousands of job losses and stagnant economic growth. But with the race so close; trust that Trudeau and Mulcair did not waste the opportunity to slam each other as well.

Trudeau accused Harper of having the worst job creation

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The Syrian REFUGEES...!

By: Prof. Harry Ziad Malawi



Recently, a horrific picture of a small Syrian boy's body that had washed up on Turkish shorelines went viral. Even though I have kept myself well informed on the tragic events happening in Syria, this image truly shocked me.

Although this image of the child's lifeless body is very disturbing and horrific, at the same time, it has caught the world's attention and cast a spot light on the reality and seriousness of this ongoing crisis.

Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria over 4 years ago, more than a quarter million Syrians have needlessly lost their lives, half a million have been injured and over 7 million displaced with no other choice but to flee their homes in search of a safe haven.

Initially, thousands fled to neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; but as the war has waged on relentlessly, hundreds of thousands have followed.

Jordan, in particular, has taken on more than a lion's share of the burden, allowing more than two million people to take refuge.

This tiny kingdom, with its limited resources, yet with its compassion and traditional Arabic generosity continues to keep its heart and borders wide open.

Unfortunately due to a combination of the extreme number of displaced people and the lack of sufficient aid from the United Nation, these heroic countries have become overwhelmed.

As a result, not only are the Syrian refugees suffering, but many of the host countries, like Jordan are suffering as well.

A quick jump in population is difficult to maintain for any length of time as it puts tremendous strains on any government's economy, education system and resources such as the electricity, water and food supplies.

The overcrowding of the refugees' camps, combined with the increased magnitude of the war in Syria, has forced many Syrian refugees to look elsewhere.

Many have fled to Europe by desperate and unconventional means, risking their lives yet again to find a safe haven in Europe.

At the beginning, Europe, led by Germany, was somewhat receptive to receiving these people.

But now, even Europe has become overwhelmed and has closed their borders, leaving many refugees stranded in 'no man's land'.

In the meantime, the standard of living in the overcrowded neighbouring countries' camps worsen day by day, the threat of another cold winter season is upon us now and those who are living in these camps are going to find that things can and it will get worse unless we act fast.

Now, even with all of the assistance being offered, it still never seems to be enough.

This problem is not going away anytime soon, the world is experiencing record breaking numbers, in terms of displaced people and even though Europe has become home to many Syrian refugees over the past years, and even more so now, as our brothers and sisters need more help.

Canada has joined the fight by offering some financial assistance and has agreed to accept 5-10 thousand refugees on a sponsorship program... But is it enough?

Is Canada doing all that it can to protect these innocent lives? Is Canada doing all that it can to minimize the disastrous effects this displacement is having on other countries?

These questions merit review, and are questions I find myself asking over and over, Canada is the second largest country in the world; there are vast amounts of space, especially in comparison to its small population, it is also a country known for its compassion and generosity... So where is it now?

This tragic and humanitarian situation is one that is close to my heart as it is for most Arab Canadians. Being a native Jordanian and a proud Canadian Citizen, and having visited the Syrian refugee camps in Jordan several times, I am not only saddened by the events taking place in the Middle East, but I am outraged by the reaction of our Canadian Government.

Hence, I am calling on all my fellow Canadians to take a stand and help make things happen for these desperate refugees.

There is no time to waste; no time for politics, or for debates, now is the time to take action and to save as many lives as possible.

We need to let more refugees into Canada, and we need to do it quickly before another dreadful winter season.

It is time to cut the red tape and make exceptions, for this is an exceptional and urgent situation.

Most Syrian people are proud, hard working, well educated professionals and capable of supporting themselves, Canada can host as many as 50,000 refugees without putting a dent in our living space or economy. In fact, Syrian refugees will enhance and contribute to the Canadian economy.

How many children have to die before we act as a compassionate nation?

Why can't our government increase the refugee quota from 10 to 50 thousand?

Why aren't we airlifting the most vulnerable now, such as the elderly, single women and children? When will enough be enough...

The way I see it anyway...!

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Canada Can be a Potential Services Superpower

Al-Mersal Toronto: - Does Canada have what it takes to be a services superpower?

As many people automatically think about resources or manufacturing when describing Canada's economy. But that image of Canada as a producer and exporter of forest products or energy may soon change.

Canada today is first and foremost a services economy in terms of employment, wealth creation and international business.

Services have steadily grown to more than 70 per cent of gross domestic product, with many highly skilled and well-paying jobs. Future economic success will be determined by our ability to stay at the front of the pack in providing services to the world.

The Canadian economy is now dominated in all regions by services that are provided by the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

Services dwarf manufacturing which represents just less than 10 per cent of GDP and are many times larger than resources, utilities and construction.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of Canadian jobs created over the past three decades, more than 80 per cent have been in services.

Moreover, services have quietly moved to the cutting edge of Canadian international business, growing rapidly in importance over the past decade.

Traditionally, selling services globally was mostly an afterthought for Canadian businesses, representing less than 15 per cent of Canadian exports.

But the Internet, the digitization of information and, in particular, the expansion of global value chains as a dominant business model has fuelled a rapid international expansion in Canadian services.

Ontario is Connecting Students with Their Preferred Career

Al-Mersal-Toronto: - Ontario is expanding the popular Specialist High Skills Major and Dual Credit programs; a pilot project that was announced in the 2015 Budget to help more high school students turn their passions into career opportunities.

The program helps students who face barriers in graduating high school to earn credits that count toward their high school diploma and a postsecondary certificate, college diploma, degree or apprenticeship certification.

Students can choose from 19 different sectors including aerospace, healthcare and transportation to help them prepare for apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace.

A recent Conference Board of Canada report reveals that services already account for 44 per cent of Canada's exports.

This estimate includes direct sales to international customers, but also indirect sales of services that help strengthen Canadian and global value chains.

Finance and insurance services are now Canada's largest and fastest-growing exports. Management services are the third-fastest growing export, and computer and information services including telecommunications are fourth.

Agricultural products, and metals and mineral products, are second and fifth respectively.

Services now account for 43 per cent of all sales by the foreign affiliates of Canadian companies.

There are still some important gaps in Canada's progress toward becoming a services superpower.

Canada cannot afford to rest on its laurels in any aspect of international services trade.

It is a highly competitive world, and firms in other advanced economies are capitalizing on the shift to enhanced global trade and investment in services.

Subtle regulatory barriers to services trade and investment, both internationally and via interprovincial barriers inside Canada, remain in place and will constrain growth for Canadian firms in key services market segments unless addressed.

Driven by the Internet, digitization and global value chains, services are now at the cutting edge of Canadian international business.

Canada has the potential to become a global superpower if we can get all parts of its services economy, including health care and education, fully into the game.

Ontario Will Receive 10,000 Refugees by 2016

Al-Mersal-Toronto: - Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that the province of Ontario will provide \$8.5 million over two and a half years to support Syrian refugees coming to Ontario.

This is in addition to the \$330,000 provided to Lifeline Syria to help recruit and train private refugee sponsors in Ontario, and then match them with Syrian refugees approved for resettlement by the federal government.

Premier Wynne said that the Province of Ontario will work with private refugee sponsors, such as individuals, faith-based groups and community organizations, to help expedite the resettlement of refugees across Ontario and offer them a wide array of support once they arrive.

"The Syrian refugee crisis is the worst in decades, and every day, conflicts in other countries are forcing people to flee their homes.

We can and must do far more to respond to those who need our help.

This funding will help thousands of refugees find a warm welcome in Ontario and give them the support they need to start building new lives here."

Refugees typically face greater settlement and integration challenges than other newcomers.

Many refugees have experienced prolonged periods in refugee camps, trauma,

violence, and limited access to health care and education.

In 2014, Ontario welcomed more than 11,400 refugees from around the world to start new lives in the province.

"Ontarians are ready and willing to do all we can to help support refugees in dire need.

Our government is providing the necessary supports so we can provide immediate and lasting help.

"Added Michael Chan, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.



Columbia Becomes First U.S. University to Divest From Prisons

Columbia University has become the first college in the United States to divest from private prison companies, following a student activist campaign.

The campaign began

G4S, the world's largest private security firm, as well its shares in the Corrections Corporation of America the largest private prison company in the United States.



in early 2014 when a small group of Columbia students discovered tuition money was being invested in the two firms, which run prisons and detention centers and militarized borders.

The group, called Columbia Prison Divest, launched protests and meetings with administrators where they argued it was wrong for the elite school to invest in a "racist, violent system."

"The private prison model is hinged on maximizing incarceration to generate profit they're incentivized by convicting, sentencing, and keeping people in prison for longer and longer times," Danni Oduyemi, a 20-year-old organizer, told CNN.

The decision means the Ivy League school which boasts roughly \$9 billion in endowment will sell its roughly 220,000 shares in

In an emailed statement, a Columbia spokesperson said the university's trustees had decided to divest from private prison companies and would refrain from investing in such companies again.

"This action occurs within the larger, ongoing discussion of the issue of mass incarceration that concerns citizens from across the ideological spectrum," the statement said. "The decision follows ... thoughtful analysis and deliberation by our faculty, students, and alumni."

The spokesperson would not confirm how much Columbia had invested in the two companies.

Although Columbia is the first U.S. University to announce divestment from private prisons, similar campaigns are ongoing at other institutions, including Cornell, Brown, U.C. Berkeley, and UCLA.

What a Wicked World We Live in?

By: Lana Richards.



In light of the growing numbers of refugees flocking into the borders of Europe. The migration crisis of the Middle East today is one of the worst humanitarian disasters the world has not seen since the 1940s. Millions of desperate people are on the move from North Africa to Syria. It is the brutal war in Syria that has displaced millions of people from their homes and sent them flowing into refugee encampments from Amman Jordan to the borders of Budapest to the gates of Germany. Parents are entrusting their lives and the lives of their young children to rickety boats and the mercy of rapacious smugglers along the Mediterranean coast, professionals and business people are giving up their livelihoods and investments, farmers are abandoning their land, the sick and the old are fleeing, carrying a few treasured belongings on a trail of the unknown.

It was the breakdown of order in post-intervention Libya that made the Libyan coast a point of embarkation for desperate refugees from Libya and farther south. It is the first migration crisis of the 21st century, and will unlikely be the last. What we are witnessing today in the Middle East is a widening spiral of war and instability that runs deeper than sectarianism and ethnic hatred.

One hundred years after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and 50 years after the French left Algeria, What economies has the Middle East built to allow its people to carve out a place of honor and respect and live in dignity?

Since Britain defeated the Ottoman Empire and liberated the Arabs from hundreds of years of Turkish rule. The Arab world has tried numerous ideologies and forms of government, From liberal nationalism to a socialist nationalism. The Turks and the Iranians have had more economic and institutional success than the Arabs, but in both Turkey and Iran today, the outlook is bleak. Iran

is ruled by a revolutionary alliance of clerics, and it is committed to a regional policy of confrontation and sectarian war. Like the Soviet Union, Iran is a conglomeration of national and cultural groups held together by radical ideology. Turkey, on the other hand has unresolved ethnic and ideological gaps. And neither country is immune to the violence sweeping the region, and neither country has been able to develop policies that would calm the forever boiling turbulent of the regions

As the flows of refugees continue to grow and the social break down or the victories of radical Islamist forces propel within the Middle East, lurking in the horizon is the Turkish war against the Kurdistan Workers' Party. Or a mass flight of the Egyptian Copts, the last remaining Christian population in a region that has seen other Christian communities exterminated or forced into exile over the last 150 years. What if the sectarian war in Syria intensifies and spread into Lebanon? Or the religious conflict across the Sahel and northern sub-Saharan Africa create political and economic insecurity that would produce flows of desperate asylum seekers.

The mood in Germany is exceptional. Even though few Germans have any personal memories of the third Reich, many still feel the need to prove that they have learned from their country's history. And Germany needs immigrants to fill jobs that locals for whatever reason are unable or unwilling to take.

The breaking point in the Middle East has not yet been reached. But the mix of intervention and failure of Western policy in both Libya and Syria may well be considered a humanitarian sin. Which has helped triggered the flow of migrants that are overwhelming Europe's institutions. But can Europe afford to absorb the flow? They have been generous so far, but foreign values can be a challenge for traditional beliefs.

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Al-Mersal-Toronto: - The Economist ranked Toronto as the #1 best city in the world to live, and also among the worst when it comes to cost of living. At the end of the day no matter how successful you may be, life in Toronto comes with a pretty hefty price tag, sacrificing every square foot of the city's vibe to be part of the culture, lifestyle.

Not that you need to be reminded that the smallest detached home will set you back at least a million dollars, if you're looking to buy.

When it comes to renting, the average monthly cost of renting a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto is \$1,456.33.

So, if you're a single young professional you're looking at \$1606.25 a month just to keep the roof over your head and that doesn't include your internet bill, add another \$54.21.

Transportation: The TTC costs is \$3.00 each way so,

\$30 per week to and from work. A monthly Metro Pass is \$141.50 which you have to purchase at the same time as your rent payment. And taxicabs, it will set you back \$4.25, another option is to use a bicycle or walk to work.

Groceries: If you eat at home you're looking at \$100/week on groceries.

So, at bare minimum, you're looking at \$400/



month Entertainment and Dining Out: The past decade has placed Toronto on the map on the global arts, culture, fashion, and entertainment scene.

There's literally something to do every night.

According to Numbeo.com, the average price of a three course meal for two at a restaurant on average is \$70.00. Drinks: So, assuming you go out five times a month and that's pretty modest and you have an average of three drinks each time, you're spending a minimum of \$150/month.

Health and Fitness: According to Numbeo.com, the average cost of a gym membership is \$55.06

Total:

Housing/Utilities: \$1660.46

Transportation: \$165.00

Groceries: \$400

Dining Out: \$140.00

Drinking: \$150.00

Health and Fitness: \$55.06

Total: \$2,570.52

Keep in mind we haven't included clothes, a haircut, coffee or car payments/insurance. It's no wonder people are not saving for rainy days, you'll need to make a minimum of \$36K a year and have something left in your bank account at the end of the month.

Forget Soul Mates, HAVE I MET YOU BEFORE?

Al-Mersal-Toronto: - Sex can change a lot about a relationship.

For male prairie voles, it can even change their brains.

Many share homes and parenting duties, preferring to snuggle with their partners over any other vole.

So you might think that a little rodent romance would go into choosing these special life partners but at least on the males end, this doesn't seem to be true.

Before male prairie voles put a ring on it, they can't tell one single lady from another, according to a new study in an issue of Animal Behavior.

Because prairie voles fall in what can be anthropomorphized as love, researchers turn to them as tiny models of human love and attachment.

To confirm this odd finding, a team of researchers tested whether mating changes how male

voles perceive females.

They gathered 28 adult males who had never mated before from their breeding colony, and let half of them form relationships with females in the lab.

The other half had to hang out with their single male siblings.

Then the scientists allowed both partnered and single males to repeatedly interact with a single female they'd never met through a clear barrier, through which the rodents could see and smell.

Familiarity, in this experiment, was designed to breed boredom.

Then, they provided them with a brand new female that they've never met to see if they would show an interest.

The single males, though bored with the female they've been getting to sniff, didn't show that spike of interest. But the paired males did.

Suggesting paired males

experience changes in their brain hormones associated with forming bonds, such as oxytocin and vasopressin.

From a human perspective, not being able to recognize one potential partner from another while dating could be a problem.

So why would prairie voles have evolved to be able to recognize individual females only after they've mated?

Because after they've mated, the most monogamous male voles have to recognize whom they've had babies with in order to defend the nest and share parenting duties.

There's also another, sleazier reason prairie voles may need to tell apart females after they've mated: To help them cheat on their partners.

It's possible that if you're better at recognizing other members of your species, you might be more or less likely to cheat on your partner.

Take a SELFIE with Ontario's FALL COLOURS

Al-Mersal-Toronto: - Ontario's provincial parks offer great opportunities for families and friends to view the beautiful fall colours.

This coming fall, take the opportunity to visit a provincial park or go for a stroll in your local neighbourhood park. There are more than 330 provincial parks in Ontario, covering more than eight-million hectares an area

larger than Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island combined.

There are about 85 billion trees in Ontario and almost 40 per cent of those are deciduous. And colours peak at different times across the province, about 66 per cent of Ontario is forested, making Ontario rich in fall colour.

Some of the most brightly coloured fall foliage in the

world occurs in southern Canada.



In 2014, Ontario's provincial parks received

more than 8.5-million visits from people around the world and brought in more than \$70 million in revenue.

For the best viewing spots to see the beautiful fall colours in Ontario check out:

- Ravine Trail in Bronte Creek "

- Lookout Trail viewing platform at Pancake Bay

- Mink Lake Lookout at Frontenac

- The footbridge at Earl Rowe

- The trails in Pinery Big Bend Lookout in Arrowhead.

- The Sea Lion in Sleeping Giant.

If you're planning to stay overnight, campsites can be reserved online, 24 hours a day, or by calling the park reservation line at 1-888-ONT-PARK between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. daily.

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Bonnie Crombie Leads A Challenge To Aid Syrian Refugees

Continued from Page 1

with the help of private sponsors.

With no end in sight to the brutal conflict happening in Syria, and with neighbouring countries already overwhelmed by more than 4 million refugees, Syrians are risking their lives by fleeing to Europe by many dangerous and unconventional means.

Mayor Crombie said; "The Syrian migrant crisis is a human tragedy that deserves our attention and action. Mississauga has always been welcoming to refugees and our doors are always open. It is my hope that we can do our part to assist in this crisis and help those in need." Mayor Crombie added "I have had a number of communities, faith, and business leaders reach out

to me to discuss opportunities to do more to help Syrian refugees from a municipal perspective, this gathering was made possible because of our generous community."

The participants of the forum identified 7 immediate steps to help provide support for refugee families and relief agencies:

1. Individuals and organizations in attendance committed to sponsoring 32 families;

2. Life Line Syria will create a Mississauga Fund with the dual goals of attracting \$5 million in donations from across Mississauga;

3. Mayor and Council will actively encourage other groups, associations, and businesses to come together to donate to the Mississauga Fund;

4. Meeting participants, from the Muslim community, issued an "Eid Challenge" calling on each mosque to raise \$50,000 during Eid celebrations this month;

5. Community mosques will also coordinate Muslim youth groups to volunteer their time and infectious energy to coordinate this support; and

6. City of Mississauga will provide further information on its website to further engage residents on ways they can help;

7. Like Toronto and Oakville, Mississauga will host a community information session to provide detailed information about sponsoring a refugee and how to become further involved in relief efforts.

Ward 5 Councillor Carolyn Parrish said "Today, Mayor Crombie assembled 75 of the

most successful individuals, religious groups and community associations in our city to address the Syrian refugee crisis.

All were intensely committed to a group effort to make Mississauga a top contributor to sponsorships and relief funds for the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who are desperate for our help.

The Mayor inspired instant commitments to a multi-faceted plan to raise \$5 million dollars as Mississauga's contribution to this heart wrenching crisis. I'm proud of her initiative and of the Mississaugans who have stepped up to the plate!"

Mohamad Fakhri, President and CEO of Paramount Fine Foods, added "It is inspiring to see the Mayor, members of council, and community

leaders, come together to pledge help to the worlds most vulnerable". Dr. Hamid Slimi, Imam Resident Scholar and Founder of Sayeda Khadija Centre, added "Mayor Bonnie Crombie's summit on Syria's crisis not only showcased the best of Mississauga, it also united the leadership of various communities under the spirit of humanity and generosity."

Prof. Ziad Malawi, President of Canadian Arab Network and the Jordanian Canadian Society commended Mayor Crombie for her courageous leadership in bringing community leaders together to organize a humanitarian relief for the Syrian refugees and to assist with providing sponsorships. Mr. Malawi also called upon the federal government to take order in council to immediately

airlift 50 thousand of the most vulnerable from the Jordanian refugee camps before another dreadful winter sets in.

Mayor Crombie went on to say that "We have all been moved and saddened by this tragedy. Canada has historically been a lifeline to refugees seeking safety, and shelter, and we must be so again."

She added that last week her office issued a statement with links to organizations where the public can go to donate money or urgently needed supplies such as blankets, to charities including: Red Cross; United Nations Refugee Agency; Lifeline Syria-Toronto.

Mayor Crombie concluded that; "Together, we will explore opportunities to better help those refugees in need of support."

Russia's Expanding Military PRESENCE IN SYRIA

Al-Mersal-Toronto: - It appears Russia aims to establish its first military air base in the region, and there are unofficial reports that the harbor of Tartus might be extended.

Such changes could alter the regional balance of power as well as put a damper on Turkey's very clear desire to establish a safe zone north of Aleppo which Russia opposes.

Syria has completely redone Latakia airport, the ground was leveled and a new runway was built for Russian aircrafts. Sheds have been installed to house the aircrafts and workers are building housing. Sources, confirmed the 3-kilometer runway at Jableh was too short for some Russian planes, so work was quickly carried out to extend it.

Local speculation is that there are already some 3,000 Russian personnel at Latakia.

According to an official with the Gulf Cooperation Council, plans include the deployment of 2,000-3,000 Russians who will serve as instructors, advisers, logistics specialists, technical personnel and MiG-31 pilots. Russia, acknowledges, that it has military experts in Syria assisting the army with weapons use, stating "Russia has never made a secret of its military technical cooperation with Syria."

Some Western sources interpret Russia's increased military presence as just another effort to support the Bashar al-Assad regime, or a move toward joining the international anti-Islamic State coalition.

But there appears to be even more activity taking place.

For the time being, Ankara has devoted its military capacity to operations against the fighters of the Kurdistan Workers Party, not forgetting its plans and ambitions for the buffer



zone.

Ankara is even using the refugee crisis playing out in Europe to promote the idea of a safe zone

As the European Union tries to cope with the wave of refugees, Ankara welcomed a comment by British Prime Minister David Cameron that "British soldiers could be deployed in safe zones to be set up for Syrian refugees." Such a zone cannot work without US concurrence and having dependable partners on the ground.

As much as Russia's military presence concerns Turkey, it is also of concern to Israel, which sometimes enters Syrian airspace and occasionally fires on targets there. According to the Lebanese daily Al-Akhabar, the Russian military presence will make Syrian airspace off-limits to Israeli planes.

Although it might appear the Russian activity at Jableh is designed to boost Syrian army operations, to strengthen the regime's political efforts and fight against ISIS, the long-term goal is a new military strategic balance in the region.

Recent US actions indicate Washington is taking Russia's military moves seriously. On Sept. 8, White House spokesman Josh Earnest highlighted US concerns that Russia's military moves could lead to more lost lives, more refugees and possible confrontation with the anti-IS coalition.

The following day,

Secretary of State John Kerry spoke with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, and reiterated that position.

In response to Russia's military activities, Washington asked Bulgaria and Greece to close their airspace to Russian cargo planes. Greek Foreign Ministry spokesman Constantinos Koutras confirmed Greece honored Washington's request to cancel permits for Russian planes flying to Syria from Sept. 1-24. Bulgaria also agreed to close its airspace to Russian planes. In response, Iran opened its airspace to Russian flights, eliminating the need to go through Bulgaria and Greece.

Moscow's military activity comes at a time when Russia is also pressing for a political solution to the Syrian war. For some time now, Moscow, by trying to reduce the Syrian crisis to combating terrorism, has been probing the possibility of the Assad regime forming a partnership with some part of the opposition.

On Sept. 4, Reuters reported Russian President Vladimir Putin as saying, "We really want to establish some kind of international coalition to fight terrorism and extremism." Putin also spoke of Assad's acceptance of a Russian plan for a peaceful settlement, stating, "The Syrian president agrees with fighting terrorism combined with a political process, all the way down to holding early elections."

TIFF Welcomes Mohammed Assaf

Winner of the second season of Arab Idol, Mohammed Assaf made his Canadian debut recently at TIFF's Festival Street to promote the biopic Ya Tayr El Tayer. Directed by the acclaimed Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu-Assad (Paradise Now, Omar) the biopic is about Assaf

the Gazan wedding singer who became a worldwide sensation after winning Arab Idol in 2013. Since winning the competition Assaf has toured the world, performing in a number of sold-out concerts to audiences in the Middle East, Europe and the Americas.



Canada's Election: A Three Horse Race Leaders Debate Boosts Trudeau's Position

Continued from Page 1

rate since the Second World War and the worst growth rate of any prime minister since the Great Depression.

"Mr. Harper may not see what's going on from 24 Sussex Dr., but I do" said Trudeau.

Mulcair criticized Harper for counting on resource extraction for job creation and blamed his policies for the loss of 400,000 manufacturing jobs since the recession.

"Mr. Harper put all of his eggs into one basket, and then he dropped the basket," Mulcair said.

But Harper dismissed Mulcair and Trudeau's economic plans as consisting of nothing more than reckless spending and tax hikes, while he defended his record.

"I've never said things are great," said Harper.

"Where would you rather have been but in Canada?" he asked. "Looking forward, where would you want to be but Canada?"

Finance Canada released the final figures for the 2014-15 fiscal year showing Ottawa posted a \$1.9-billion surplus. That marks an improvement over the \$5.2-billion deficit Ottawa had recorded during the previous fiscal year.

This news was a welcoming boost for Stephen Harper and his Conservative party as the focus on the economy intensifies during the federal election.

However, Mr. Trudeau dismissed the surplus as a result of billions of dollars in cuts and program expenditures going unspent, known as "lapsed spending."

He argued that this type of spending actually sank Canada into recession.

Finance Minister Joe Oliver gave permission to publish the figures way ahead of its normal release, which is usually in October or late September.

After a string of six consecutive deficits, federal finances are back in the black a year ahead of schedule.

The government posted better-than-expected financial results for the 2014-15 fiscal year that ended in March, with

the \$1.9-billion surplus well ahead of the \$2-billion deficit the government had forecast for the year in last April's budget.

The Conservatives are now using the new report on the government's healthy finances to sell the message that they are the only party that can be trusted to manage Canada's fragile economy.

"Now is not the time for long-term deficits or higher taxes," Harper said. "Only our Conservative government has a plan to protect Canada's economy by ensuring our budget remains balanced."

To some extent, surpluses are like recessions. They are an imaginary line in economic bookkeeping. When you are close to the line, it really doesn't matter in practical terms whether you are a little above or a little below.

But if we take the numbers at face value, there is no question that the government was fanning the flames of the resource economy when it was burning hot and taking away fuel when it was cooling.

The savings that went into the government's surplus were accumulated from spring of last year, just before oil prices began their slide from about \$100 to about \$50 US a barrel.

The period of savings covered in the budget document continued right through to the first quarter of this year, when a commodities crash caused the Canadian economy to shrink by a little less than one per cent.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair said the balanced budget bodes well for his party's spending plan in the coming years.

The surplus sharpened the spotlight on Trudeau's promise to run deficits of up to \$10 billion a year over three years to spur the economy.

The Liberal leader said the surplus was achieved on the backs of Canadians as the government cut or "lapsed" billions of dollars in approved expenditures on important programs.

There are questions, however, as to whether Ottawa might slip back into a small deficit after spending a year in the black.

Omar Khadr CURFEW LIFTED

Continued from Page 1

for school. The software is interfering with the operations of the computer and Alberta Justice has been unable to help resolve the problems.

When Khadr makes the trip to Toronto this fall, he must travel with his lawyer and meet with authorities there, Ross ruled.

She called the conditions faced by Khadr "unusually restrictive"

Ross has also agreed to alter some of Khadr's bail conditions to allow him to attend early morning prayers and a night class. And said she wanted to hear from Khadr's bail supervisor before considering his other requests. The bail supervisor said Khadr has followed all his bail conditions up until now.

He had requested that the electronic monitoring bracelet be removed because it was interfering with his ability to play soccer.

Khadr's mother and one of his sisters made pro-al-Qaeda remarks in the past. But Khadr's lawyers say they do not reside in Canada. He told the judge that his client is now mature enough not to be influenced by their views.

The Crown argued last week that it is in the public interest for Khadr to keep wearing the monitoring bracelet. The Crown also opposed the visit to Ontario, but said if the request was to be granted, there should be restrictions on who Khadr can see.

Before his release in May, Khadr spent 13 years in prison, 10 at Guantanamo Bay.

Since Khadr's release, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that if he were to go back into custody, he would be held as a provincial prisoner not a federal one.



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