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Canada braces for new phase of trade war

Further escalation expected as Ottawa readies retaliatory levies, Trump threatens Bombardier and sovereignty in social-media blitz

MARIEKE WALSH OTTAWA
SOPHIA BERTUZZI TORONTO

The Prime Minister's Office said Monday that there had been no eleventh-hour talks to prevent Canada from imposing counter-tariffs on the United States, putting the trade war between the two countries on course for escalation.

Instead of negotiations over the weekend, U.S. President Donald Trump made a steady stream of derisive and insulting social-media posts about Canada and floated a ban on Canadian luxury-jet maker Bombardier.

The attack on the prominent Canadian company was made only on social media, with no formal policy announcement from the White House.

Ottawa's promised levies on American businesses were set to come into effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday. They cover $28-billion worth of U.S. imports to Canada, and include nearly 900 items – everything from clothing and home appliances to metals and electronics.

The Canadian tariffs are in response to 50-per-cent tariffs that Mr. Trump levelled against Canada on Aug. 22. Ottawa's levies are set mostly at 25 or 50 per cent, with a small number of goods subject to a lower 15-per-cent duty.

Canada walked away from negotiations late on Aug. 21, with Prime Minister Mark Carney saying American negotiators had made unreasonable last-minute demands. No formal talks have taken place since.

Mr. Trump's administration has promised to retaliate, meaning that Ottawa's response on Tuesday could widen the trade war, with ever-expanding economic pain for businesses and consumers on both sides of the border. And Mr. Trump has already said that he would double auto tariffs to 50 per cent from 25 per cent as of Jan. 1, 2027, and have them also apply to auto parts, which have so far been exempted.

But the White House is threatening a Canadian public that polls show is primed for the fight after a year and a half of near-constant provocation from Mr. Trump. His administration has waged economic war not just on Canada but on many traditional U.S. allies.

Mr. Carney campaigned both on a promise that he could manage Mr. Trump and win at the negotiating table and on diversifying Canada's economy. Voters rewarded him with government, and many took their own stands by boycotting the U.S. and its products.

Ahead of the latest round of U.S. tariffs, Canadian officials were in near-daily talks with their counterparts to strike a deal and avert the fresh economic pain. But rather than another bid for diplomacy in the final hours before the new Canadian levies were to be imposed, the President took the opposite approach.

TRADE, A15

FOLIO



Amanda Doherty Kirby, Katrina Lewis and Tate Ellis-Walters operate a coyote puppet designed by artist Laura Stinson of Sackville, N.B., during the River Clyde Pageant in New Glasgow, PEI. VANESSA TIGNANELLI/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

PEI's annual River Clyde Pageant brings a community together to tell stories of nature through the traditions of theatre A8

Beijing reveals defence talks with Ottawa have resumed after years-long freeze

STEVEN CHASE
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER
OTTAWA

Canada has restarted military talks with China after a break of more than eight years that began with Beijing's jailing of two Canadians in late 2018.

The two countries held a "defence co-ordination dialogue" on Sept. 4, according to a statement issued the day after the meeting by China's Ministry of National Defense.

Beijing was the only side to publicly announce this new milestone in thawing relations between Canada and China under Prime Minister Mark Carney. Mr. Carney's government, which has faced blowback from U.S. President Donald Trump over its new "strategic partnership" with China, issued no statement to mark the event.

In response to questions from The Globe and Mail, a spokesperson for the Department of National Defence confirmed Monday that the meeting took place in Ottawa last week.

"As part of ongoing working-level dialogue, Canadian and Chinese defence officials met on September 4, in support of ongoing military-to-military communications at the functional level," department spokesperson Nick Drescher Brown said in a statement.

"This meeting is consistent with Canada's broader defence engagement with partners across the Indo-Pacific region and is anchored in our commitment to protecting the safety of Canadians and the strategic interests of Canada. As a matter of long-standing practice, the Government of Canada does not publicize working-level meetings by officials."

Between 2013 and 2018, Canada conducted four "defence co-ordination dialogues" with China, with the last one in April, 2018.

A Canadian official said on background that fewer than 10 staff members from the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defence and the department of Global Affairs attended last week's meeting with Chinese counterparts. The military ranks in attendance ranged between major general and the rank of colonel in the army and air force, which corresponds to captain in the navy, the same official said.

The Globe is not naming the official because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

In a statement posted on China's Ministry of Defense website, Beijing said the Canadian and Chinese sides "had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on international and regional issues of mutual interest, expressed willingness to strengthen practical exchanges and co-operation between the two militaries, and enhanced mutual understanding and trust."

CHINA, A6

For U.S. builders, tariffs raise another hurdle in an industry under strain

IRENE GALEA WASHINGTON

Two kilometres west of the U.S. Capitol Building, on a site surrounded by a tangle of highways, all that remains of a 50,000-seat football stadium are a few old signs and a dusty field full of gravel.

A couple of excavators are clustered at the edge, now stationary after a year and a half spent removing the countless tons of concrete, steel and asphalt that formed the condemned carcass of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, first opened in 1961 as District of Columbia Stadium.

The site is now awaiting its phoenix moment: a new, US$3.7-billion stadium due for completion in 2030, with the surrounding parking lots later to be transformed into 5,500 housing units, commercial spaces and a new road system.

But to give the NFL's Washington Commanders a new home, the stadium's developers will need to navigate a difficult construction environment that has slowed building across the United States, one marked by rising material costs linked to tariffs, as well as fluctuating oil prices and a tight labour market.

"Tariffs are just another ingredient in a potent cocktail that has led to a significant downturn in construction activity over the last year," said Richard Branch, chief economist for the American Institute of Architects.

In July, U.S. spending on construction approached three-year lows, data from the U.S. Census Bureau show. Meanwhile, input prices across a range of common building materials were up more than 7 per cent year over year, according to an index from trade group Associated Builders and Contractors.

On Aug. 22, U.S. President Donald Trump enacted a range of new tariffs on Canadian goods, including a slew of construction goods, from plywood and concrete to door frames and seating. These 50-per-cent levies build on existing ones on lumber and steel, with more threatened to come into effect on Jan. 1.

The impact of U.S.-imposed tariffs on Canada will vary across the American construction industry, based on the product.

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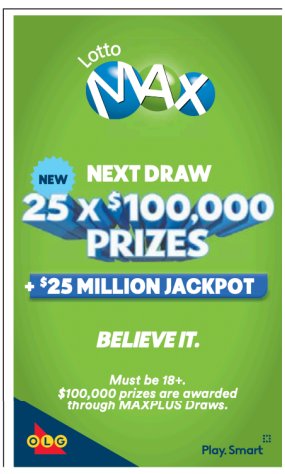
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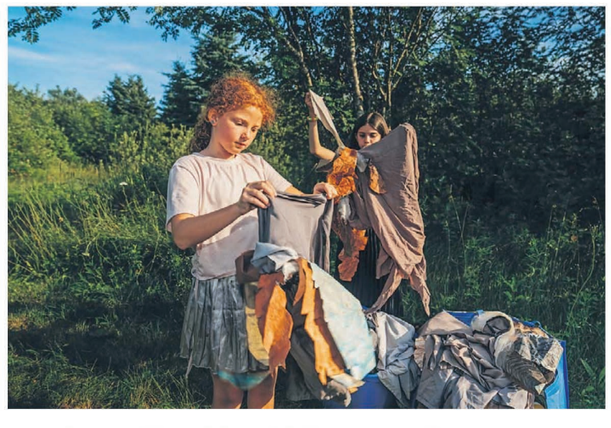




Stilt walkers Anna Keenan, Erin Gillespie, Ben Kirby, Alex Morkunas and Ry Gorman enjoy down time together.



The full cast gathers for the River Clyde Pageant's final number.



Amadea Tremere and Zaynab Eiriksson, both 10, prepare to don their pageant costumes.



Left to right, key players Jane Wells, Megan Stewart, Isabelle Lee and Sébastien Labelle.



Stilt walking has been a part of the festivities since its inception.



Françoise Labelle, 14, performs as a heron. Her parents were collaborating artists during the pageant's inaugural season 10 years ago.

ON STAGE AND STREAM

PEI'S River Clyde Pageant blends the theatrical and the natural

PHOTOGRAPHY AND STORY BY VANESSA TIGNANELLI
NEW GLASGOW, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Beneath strings of bunting and fairy lights in the fields of New Glasgow, PEI, flutes and banjos mingle with birdsong as audiences drift through a grove of apple trees. For 90 minutes, the River Clyde Pageant dissolves the boundary between theatre and the natural world.

The event is held over two weekends on a tidal estuary known as the River Clyde, and draws from medieval pageantry, when communities gathered to tell stories of their origins and beliefs through music, costume and spectacle. But this production, which marked its 10th edition this summer, uniquely draws on the surrounding community and location itself.

The idea was born a decade ago when Ker Wells, a theatre professor at Simon Fraser University, visited family in New Glasgow and saw how decades of agricultural runoff and ecological decline had transformed the river into a shallow, silted stream. He proposed an idea to fellow islander and performing artist Megan Stewart: What if they created a community play about the health of the river?

That idea became River Clyde Arts, and in 2016 the organization staged its first pageant: A procession where nearly 300 people followed giant trout puppets and luminous jellyfish along the riverbanks before sharing a meal at sunset. Since Mr. Wells's death in 2019, Ms. Stewart has continued the work alongside his sisters Jane and Emily Wells.

This summer marks its first with a permanent home. After years of borrowing sites throughout the area of New Glasgow, River Clyde Arts has settled onto a seven-acre homestead, which the organization will steward. "It felt like the land was waiting for us," says Ms. Stewart.

Each year, Ms. Stewart and co-director Jane Wells develop the overall story structure, and invite community members, regardless of experience, to participate in the performance. Over six weeks, locals aged seven to 76 learn puppetry, dance, stilt-walking, music and acting alongside production team members each summer. Every song, puppet, lantern and costume is handmade with the help of community workshops.

"Everybody learns to collaborate with kids, adults and elders, from Mi'kmaq communities to newcomer communities," says puppet ensemble co-lead Sébastien Labelle. "It brings a depth of life experience that feels really tangible."

That philosophy comes alive during the performance. This year's story is about migrations of birds, insects, wandering herds and people arriving on unfamiliar land, asking what it means to be a visitor.

A 58-year-old first-time stilt walker becomes an eagle, circling so convincingly that hundreds of people fall silent. Teenagers glide across the hills as towering herons. Mi'kmaq collaborators lead with the traditional drum, while children transform into geese, fungi fairies and glowing fireflies.

Ten-year-old Felix Deveaux says he told his mother he wanted to perform after watching the pageant for the first time last summer. Participating has taught him a new way of paying attention. "I really like how instead of talking with words, we bond and talk with positions," he says. "Movement is the talking."

The event ends with a communal dinner, co-ordinated by chef Emily Wells. Stilt walkers remove their towering legs; puppeteers cradle swallows beneath their arms. Families who travelled from across PEI, the Maritimes and, increasingly, across Canada for the event, linger together for the true final scene.

"The word 'community' can get thrown around a lot, and sometimes it empties of meaning," says Ms. Stewart. "But when you see a project like this and the vast swaths of different people working together, it's astounding. It's a real manifestation of what it means to co-exist."

UNDER EXPOSED

Underexposed is a photojournalism series dedicated to shedding light on the unseen lives of Canadians in every province and territory.



About the Photographer Vanessa Tignanelli is an Italian-Canadian documentary photographer and filmmaker currently based in Prince Edward Island. Vanessa collaborates with cultural institutions and media to tell stories that explore creative survival and resilience, with a focus on gender, aging and environmental justice.