

Eliminate interprovincial barriers: new think tank

The failure to create an internal free market makes Canada poorer, says report

By **OMID GHOREISHI**
Epoch Times Staff

EDMONTON—The federal government must use its power to ensure there are no restrictions or impediments to the free movement of people, goods, services, and investment in Canada, says a report by a new think tank.

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute for Public Policy calls for the legislation of an economic charter of rights for Canadians and the creation of an “economic freedom commission” to investigate breaches of the charter. “Establishing that Canadians have

a right to move, work, and do business anywhere in Canada would be the much-delayed fulfilment of our founders’ dream of a great nation and of the deal they struck in 1867,” reads the 36-page report.

Provincial and federal measures and policies restricting interprovincial trade cause considerable economic harm and make Canada “less of a nation,” the report’s authors write.

“We believe that releasing this study on the eve of the G8 and G20 Summits in Canada underscores the paradox that, as Canada advocates freer global trade to offset the impact

of the recession, and as we seek to make NAFTA even more effective in lowering continental trade barriers, we do not always practise what we preach at home,” Robert Knox, one of the authors, said in a statement.

Knox served as executive director of the Internal Trade Secretariat in the early 1990s. The Ottawa-based think tank describes itself on its website as a non-partisan organization conducting research on economic and public policy issues.

The report cites a few examples of the barriers currently in existence between provinces, saying that in many cases they are “visibly foolish.”

For example, different provinces mandate different standard sizes for milk or cream containers used for coffee. While the intent is to favour local producers, it comes at the expense of

dairy farmers and processors elsewhere, as well as local consumers who would have fewer choices.

“Indeed, does anyone suppose that inhabitants of, say, Manitoba habitually add a tiny bit more or less cream to their morning brew? Has anyone ever said, ‘Whoa, that’s a Quebec dose you just put in?’” says the report.

Another example cited by the report is that it is illegal for someone to order wine directly from another province, or cross a provincial border with wine bought in another province. In yet another, Ontario and British Columbia have different standards for bus brakes that affect both passenger and freight vehicles.

“Can anyone suggest that buses in one or the other of these provinces do not stop when the brake pedal is depressed? Then why can’t the two

provinces, while maintaining their own standards if they must, also declare that any bus-braking system acceptable in the other may be used in their own?” asks the report.

There are also interprovincial mobility barriers for Canadians working in regulated and trade professions.

There have been various attempts to put an estimate on the cost of Canada’s interprovincial trade barriers, with some estimates ranging from around 0.2 percent of the GDP to 1.5 percent. With today’s \$1.6 trillion economy, if the cost is estimated at half a percent of the GDP, it amounts to \$8 billion a year, according to the report.

“It is high time for the federal government to introduce a sweeping statute to ensure that no government rules or policies unnecessarily

restrict the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital, and give individual citizens clear legal remedies against such restrictions,” the report says.

“Our proposal is good for all Canadians and good for their governments,” said Brian Lee Crowley, one of the author’s of the report and the institute’s managing director.

“It means greater prosperity, a stronger sense of nationhood, and a clearing of the cluttered agenda of provincial and territorial governments. It is an idea whose time has come.”

During the 2008 election, the report notes, the Conservative Party said that if trade, mobility, and investment obstacles were still in place by 2010, it would use federal authority to intervene.

Coffee-based fuel set to burgeon in Ontario

COFFEE CONTINUED FROM P1

“There’s been a lot of public outcry that the trains have large soot emissions, which is a by-product of the locomotive engine,” Dwyer says. “So Metrolinx is looking at a very big bill at the moment for buying electric trains, they have to change their entire infrastructure to do it, and we contend that that’s not even necessary.”

EIC sells the fuel—which actually smells like java—for 85 cents a litre, while diesel currently costs around 89 cents a litre.

“We always stay price-competitive with diesel,” Dwyer says. “We have to demonstrate that bio-diesel is a cost-effective fuel.”

EIC also manufactures biodiesel from flax oil, and in the process produces human-grade flax flour and flax pellets. The pellets are sold internationally as tilapia (a species of fish) and shrimp feed, and domestically as cattle feed. The flour is gluten-free and high in protein, says Dwyer.

“People with gluten allergies who are celiac absolutely love it. It’s got a great nutty flavour.”

While there is evidence that plant-derived fuel production has put pressure on food supplies in developing countries, Dwyer maintains that converting flax seeds to biodiesel provides a solution to the “food for fuel” dilemma because it produces both food and biofuel. In addition, flax oil is limited as a food because it goes rancid when heated and therefore cannot be used in cooking.

“We’re not using food for fuel. We make both food and fuel from one crop. We’re providing food and fuel from flax seed and that one seed is giving Canadian farmers a great return for their crop,” he says, noting that Canada is the world’s largest producer of flax.

Coffee-based fuel, which Dwyer says is produced without the use of harmful chemicals, also doesn’t drive up food costs the way using soy and corn does, and has the added advantage that leftover solids can be converted to ethanol, used as a compost, or burned as biomass instead of coal.

Misra estimated that with approximately 16 billion pounds of coffee grown worldwide each year, spent coffee grounds can potentially add 340 million litres of biodiesel to the world’s fuel supply.

Canada has a mandate to institute an average 2 percent renewable fuel con-

tent in the nation’s gasoline by January 1, 2011, which means that of the 28 billion litres of diesel Canada burned last year, 560 million litres of that will have to be biodiesel next year.

But in 2009, Canada produced only 100 million litres of biodiesel, meaning it will have to import 83 percent of the biodiesel required to meet the January 1, 2011 mandate, according to Dwyer.

“It’s a ridiculous prospect,” he says. “Canada is an international exporter of crude oil, and is set to emerge as an international importer of renewable fuel. That is not the future Canadians deserve, and one we simply can’t sustain. All of the fuel can be made here giving Canadians great jobs and reducing greenhouse gas and CO₂ emissions in our country.”

With the biodiesel market facing huge growth, Canada has the opportunity to “become the leader very quickly if everybody starts to pay attention to this very important topic,” he says.

EIC is also interested in research being done on how to make fuel from algae, which produces more fuel by far than any other biodiesel source. The company aims to be the first in Canada to build an algae processing plant.

“Algae can be an absolute huge staple for the biodiesel industry,” Dwyer says. “It’s essentially the future, but the technology doesn’t currently exist to sustainably grow algae for use as a biodiesel feedstock.”

In all, EIC plans to build eight biodiesel and flax refining facilities in Oakville, Hamilton, and Samia, Ontario, each producing 3 million litres of biodiesel per year from used coffee grounds and flaxseed. Each facility will create eight full-time jobs, with other spin-off jobs in manufacturing, waste management, and agriculture.

“We have a food product, we have a fuel product, and we have an animal-feed product,” Dwyer says. “So we’ll be able to pay farmers the same price per tonnage that they get selling the product internationally—in fact, most likely more.”

He says EIC wants to take “Canadian products derived from waste and derived from Canadian agriculture to the world.”

“Our model is very easily exportable. While our immediate goal is to help Canada reach its level on an international scale, our applicability is pretty much endless.”

International report slams genocidal Iran

GENOCIDE CONTINUED FROM P1

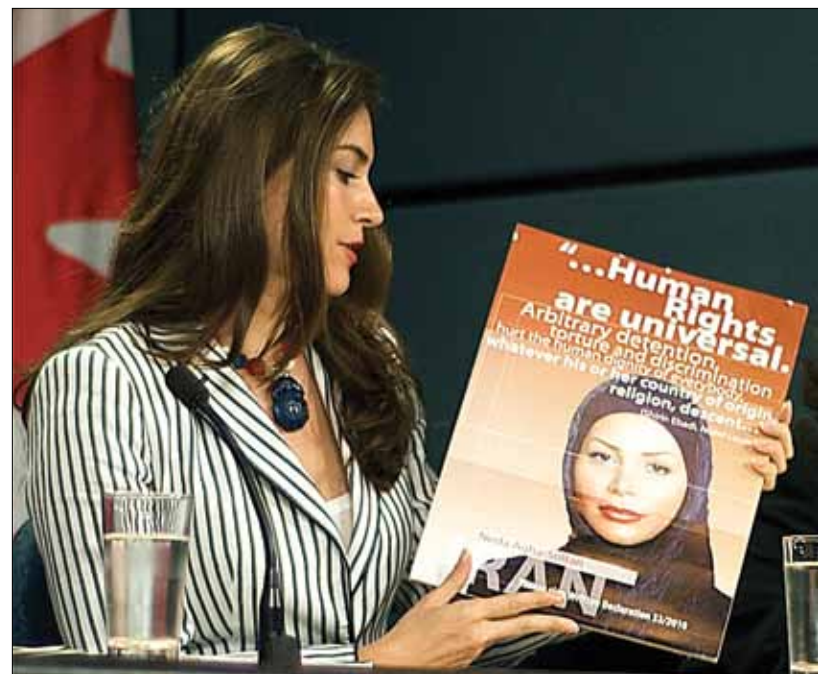
Afshin-Jam, who had to flee Iran as a child when her father was almost murdered by the Revolutionary Guard, said she receives hundreds of e-mails per week from Iranians describing the painful repression they are suffering on a daily basis.

“The situation has deteriorated in Iran with more sham trials, more forced confessions, more torture, including systematic rape in prisons.”

She said that even recently, one year after the protests following the last election that saw Ahmadinejad win a questionable victory, there have been another 1,000 arrests of students involved in the protests.

“My main message here today is that 70 million people in Iran are living in a police state.”

Also present at the press conference was Caspian Makan, former fiancé of Neda Agha-Soltan, the iconic Iranian protester whose death by the bullet of an Iranian militiaman was captured on video and broadcast around the world. Her name, Neda, translates as



Nazanin Afshin-Jam, president and co-founder of Stop Child Executions, holds a photo of Neda Agha-Soltan, the iconic Iranian protester whose death by the bullet of an Iranian militiaman was captured on video and broadcast around the world. MATTHEW LITTLE / THE EPOCH TIMES

“voice” or “divine message.” Her death became a rallying point and symbol for Iranian protesters.

Makan said the only way to stop the Iranian regime is a complete oil embargo to cripple Iran

financially.

The report lays out an 18-point strategy for how to deal with Iran including using international and domestic law to stop and combat Iran’s state-sanctioned incitement to genocide and to redress the human rights violations in Iran.

It also calls for sanctions against companies that enable Iran’s domestic repression, including those that sell the country surveillance equipment and technologies used to monitor or control Internet traffic.

Besides calling for real enforcement of often-ignored sanctions against Iran, the report suggests targeting the country’s gasoline imports which Cotler described as an “Achilles heel” for the country. Despite being a major oil producer, Iran imports approximately 30 to 40 percent of its domestic gasoline production.

The report was issued by the Responsibility to Intervene Coalition, a consortium of international law scholars, human rights advocates, former government leaders, parliamentarians, and Iranian activists for democratic reform.

Tape reveals embassy footing bill for Hu Jintao’s welcome rally

TAPE CONTINUED FROM P1

“We will take the east part of Parliament Hill,” Liu said. “Falun Gong will take the west of the square. We should have 3,000 people. In terms of quantity, we should be able to surpass them.”

Liu said when Hu visited in 2005 and was met with protesters, officials in China were furious. He complained that during that visit, Canadian authorities did not cooperate with Chinese demands regarding the protesters, but this time he says there were some limited guarantees.

“Some parts cannot be guaranteed because this country is particular about so-called freedom. It does not care. It says, ‘we are a free country.’ So we are still negotiating. Falun Gong has already occupied three locations.”

According to several sources, including Chinese students them-

“This is a battle that relates to defending the reputation of our motherland. The embassy and authorities inside China have a very high requirement.”

— Liu Shaohua

selves as well as online notices on bulletin boards, all Chinese students will be provided with transportation, meals, and free T-shirts. Some have said there have been promises of \$50-per-day compensation as well.

Liu criticized those who talked about cash rewards.

“Some people said something on the Internet like, ‘go to the Chinese embassy to get money’ . . . That’s not good at all. Some people are inexperienced and

didn’t realize this.”

PERMISSION REQUIRED TO LEAVE But while many students can choose whether or not to attend, the students Liu addressed were on state-funded scholarships and Liu said “there is no excuse” should they fail to join.

“If you want to take leave [from the welcome rally] for four hours or less, you can ask teacher Yuan. But for longer time, such as for one day, you must ask for leave from me.”

The goal of the rally appears to be ensuring protesters stay out of view for the visiting Chinese leader, and that state-run media are able to portray a warm welcome for Hu in coverage back home.

The large Pro-Beijing presence also sends a message to Canadian leaders interested in courting the ethnic vote that Chinese leaders are admired in Canada’s Chinese community.

Liu explained how students should answer if asked what they are doing.

“Just say, ‘We are here to welcome President Hu. Long live the Canada-China friendship.’”

Liu’s speech appears to affirm comments by Chinese student leaders contacted this week. The Epoch Times reached Chinese student association contacts at the Université du Québec in Hull and Carleton University in Ottawa, each of whom confirmed the activities were being paid for and organized by the Chinese

Embassy.

“The embassy is responsible for the overall plan,” offered Guo Daxu, the rep listed for students at Université du Québec, when he was contacted by someone posing as a Chinese student. “Not only for the Ottawa area, but also Montreal and Toronto area’s students will all come. For those [from Toronto] all of their meals and hotels will be paid for.”

E-MAIL MATCHES LIU’S SPEECH The same day that Liu was speaking with students at the Ottawa embassy, his counterpart at the Chinese Consulate in Toronto shared a similar message with students via e-mail. The e-mail was also obtained by The Epoch Times.

The message came from an address that appears on the Toronto Chinese Consulate’s website as the contact for the education department. The e-mail signature is that of Zhang Baojun, the Chinese consul for education.

Zhang told students on Chinese scholarships that they must participate and that everyone should “comply with the plan and act in unity” at the events, and that participants should not bring their children.

He said if any students on Chinese scholarships have “exceptional difficulties that prevent them from participating, they should ask for leave and provide an explanation.”

The prospect of an expenses-paid trip to Ottawa has proved attractive to some. A Chinese immigrant in Montreal surnamed Wang told The Epoch Times that his son had been invited to join and decided to bring his family.

“Our son has enrolled,” he explained. “All meals and hotel are taken care of, and they also provide transportation back and forth—two days all expenses paid.”

He said he asked who was organizing the trip.

“They said, ‘You don’t need to ask, just enroll and go.’”

Additional reporting by Matthew Little and Anna Yang

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