



EDITORIAL: military spending stupidity

POLITICAL DESK: Doug Ford stirs up the tempest in the teapot

RICHARD'S DESK: More about Mico...a winner in development

HOME & HEALTH: GLP-1's, today's pharmaceutical fad

BOOKS: Capitalism, Sven Beckert

TECHNOLOGY: AI, AI, AI...it's off to work I go

LAST WORD: Appreciation and gratitude

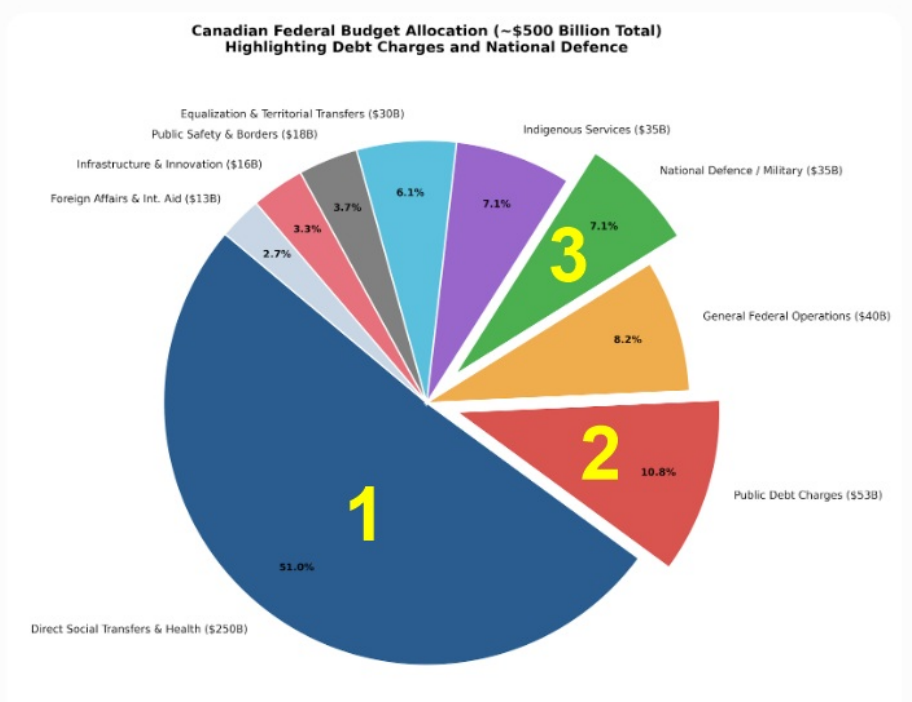
[AI has been used in some areas of this publication.]

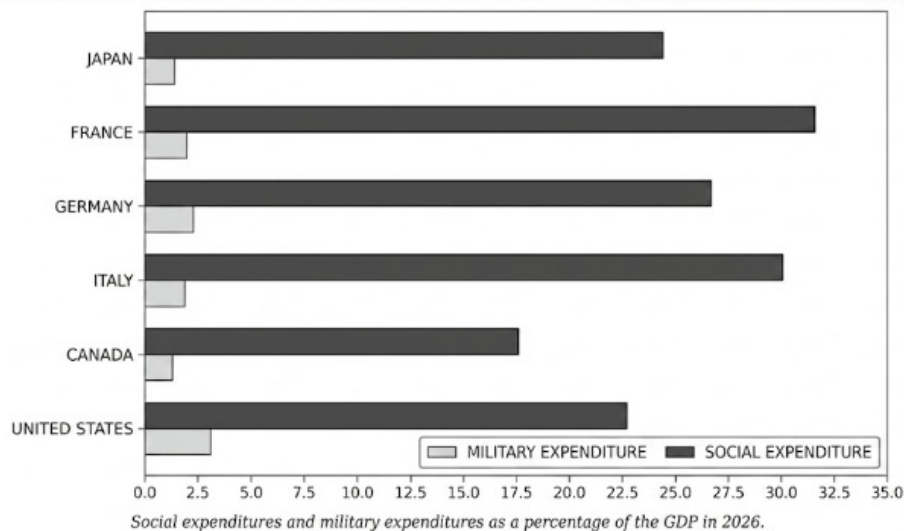
EDITORIAL

Are government leaders spending our money reasonably and with our benefit in mind ?

Canada's military expenditure is \$34-\$35 billion every year while its social expenditure tops at \$250 billion dollars in a total budget of \$500 billions dollars.

Canada's budget allocations in 2026:





Sven Beckert’s “Capitalism,” is the basis of the above chart showing the military vs social expenditures for a number of countries in 2026. With use of AI, the chart was updated to include Canada.

The comparison between military vs social expenditures is flabbergasting. The spending gap between military and social expense is shocking. This is 2026 and every country displayed spends exorbitantly on military expenditures. As if every country expects to go to war or will be in a military conflict for which they must prepare now.

Any sane, thinking person will likely find the imbalance of these expenditures hard to understand. War in 2026...you would think the world has learned yet....Are we all preparing for war? Do most countries see combat inevitable in their futures?

And then consider the expenditure gaps in the chart. Almost everyone of the countries spends outlandishly more in military expenditures than the social. As ridiculous as they may be, it

may be inescapable.

Let's narrow down the discussion a bit and consider Canada. Why do we need to spend so much on military. Who's going to invade us? Why?

If the United States were to invade us, there is no amount of military spending to successfully fend off an AmeriKan invasion. So why spend all that money? Maybe Russia will attack us in the north? About how long would it take for the USA to act if Russia invaded the north of North America?

What do you think would happen if Canada drastically cut its military expenditures. There certainly would be a lot of money left over? Would Canada be vulnerable to a foreign invasion? By whom? The USA would not come to our defense but they would not likely stand still for someone invading North America.

So why spend all that money on the military? Creation of jobs? Canada would suddenly have greater unemployment if military spending were drastically cut? Wouldn't the saving be diverted elsewhere to benefit our economy? The money gained by military expenditure reduction would just be left in some national government vault/bank? The intellectually weakest minister in the federal government would have \$\$\$\$\$\$ dancing in front their eyes and fantasize how that money could be spent: infrastructure, creating new industries, generating new products to sell to the USA? Trade expansion? To other provinces? To other countries?

There must be a better way to manage national spending. The

military spending is distributed like this:

- **Equipment & Capital Projects:** Major procurement programs (e.g., F-35 fighter jets, River-class destroyers, Arctic patrol vessels, modern transport aircraft).
- **Personnel & Operations:** Salaries, training, readiness, and benefits for active Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and civilian support staff.
- **Infrastructure & Modernization:** Base upgrades, NORAD modernization, and Arctic surveillance infrastructure.

This seems to be an absurd way to spend \$35 billion *very year*. But the sages of parliament hill don't see it that way. In your next meeting with one of those elected savants, ask some hard questions.

Political Desk:

News from councillors, elected reps and community associations

Briefly:

- **Note:** We use updated information from politicians as much as possible each month. We publish what we receive.

Ontario's Doug Ford prods Trump with sign rejecting 'Lake America' name...



Another tempest in a teapot thanks to that AH in the WH

Some see Doug Ford as a bully himself and now birds of a feather flap at each other. He pushes, he prods, he bullies his way in many areas and only backs off when enough of the public balks...the personal jet purchase is an example. Now, he takes on the bully in the WH.

Neither of these two bullies will ever be victorious, as both are on a treadmill of outdoing the other, repeatedly, and these boys don't know how to stop their bullying. Each believes his latest will shut the other up...fat chance for either one.

Ignore them but be attentive

The only strategy in dealing with these bullies is to ignore what can be ignored when it comes out of their mouths.

The Gulf of America was to be the new name of the Gulf of Mexico. After a period of time to settle down the spoiled brat in the WH, it remains the Gulf of Mexico. Lake Ontario will flow the same way given a period of time regardless of being named Lake America. Google has already applied it for American users.

Sadly, these men are government leaders

Sadly though, these leaders govern us. To some extent there are regulatory guardrails in place to stop them from going to extremes, but expensive lawyers often find legal workarounds.

T** is wacko; Ford may be ditto**

The whole world recognizes that the AH in the WH is wacko and many countries roll along merrily just ignoring him as much as possible. Remember, mentally he is so far removed from reality, he cannot see the wackiness of anything he does. He is so wacko mentally, that the thought cannot cross his mind that his decisions could be nuts. He cannot think like that ever, though the world sees it so.

Yet, looking at him as the only wacko in politics would be myopic. T**** was elected. Does that tell you something about the mentality of the masses? Now they dream that the midterm elections will begin the turn around. Don't bet on it. The masses are not that easily moved. They are as resistant to directional change as the icebergs that float along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The final word

“This too shall pass.” Eventually, history will turn the page and we will face new idiocy and ridiculousness. Would that this could be changed. Like the inevitability of wars as ridiculous as they may seem, we will never give these idiocies a pass. Humanity is destined to remain as it is, somewhat stupid, somewhat impervious to past lessons. We will suffer all these things repeatedly. But paraphrasing Gloria Gaynor, “We’ll survive.”

RICHARD's Desk:

Briefly:

- **Mico:** Nobody told us...Mico's a bundle of energy that never stops.



Last month we wrote about Mico being the canine personification of the Energizer Bunny. This guy just cannot be de-energized. Take him out for the longest walk, 3-4 kms or more and he comes home roaring from room to room looking for the next playful interaction. This guy just cannot be drained of energy.

Now we are seeing that he is true to the terrier persona, stubborn as a mule.

We learned that this guy is very intelligent. He understands much more than we think he does. Unfortunately, understanding is accompanied by obstinacy. A new command is understood within 3 or 4 repetitions but obeying that is questionable. Chewing things, nibbling hands and fingers...no command seems to change these misbehaviours. Time and maturing may, we hope.

He learned long ago to take note when his name is called. "Mico," even in a low voice gets his attention. He looks at you....but that doesn't mean more than "I heard you. END OF STORY." "Mico, come" often is as effective as weather lamentations at stopping the rain. Thankfully, he cannot resist coming when a squeaky toy is squeezed. The squeak brings him running instantly in anticipation of some play, after all it was a toy that was squeaked. This doesn't mean any of his other obstinate resistances will be set aside. He arrives and looks for game playing. Don't respond with play, and he abandons ship readily.

All this may sound like complaining. It is not. When this guy is in a cooperative mood, he's worth his 16 lbs of weight in gold. He brings a joy and a joie de vivre into whichever room he enters. He greets you at the door with exuberance and excitement as if the 5 minutes out of his sight were a month away. Morning wake ups to go outside are celebrations worthy of Buckingham Palace or the White House. He dashes all around the back yard....eventually remembering why he was brought out.

Surprisingly, combing him is becoming a calmer task each time he is put on the grooming table. He used to jump around like water on a hot griddle but now seems calmer and more placid as you talk and comb him. You can almost do a full body comb with success....almost! Remember this guy is only 5 months old. That's a 1-2 year old child with the attention span of a gnat.

In short, Mico is a young puppy bringing all the energy and excitement expected from a pup that age. He delivers. He's fun, entertaining, a bundle of joy. His affirmed intelligence suggests he will become a great mature dog but remember that intelligence is tempered by that mulish persona. Still, each day he reminds us and makes us appreciate he is a developing treasure in our home.

More about Mico

Visit my website for photos and more about Mico...www.szpin.ca

HOME & HEALTH:

Briefly:

- **HOME:** The pharmaceutical fashion today is to do a dose of one of the GLP-1 class drugs, Ozempic, Wegovy, such as semaglutide and tirzepatide which manage weight control and diabetes.

Many people find the new class of GLP-1s drugs an interesting and irresistible temptation. These drugs help in the management of weight and diabetes. They are prevalent and in common use among the Hollywood crowd and with the celebrity stashed. Watch carefully and you will see notable celebrities transformed from struggling overweights to svelte slims. Oprah Winfrey, Kelly Clarkson, Whoopi Goldberg, Elon Musk and Rebel Wilson to name a few.

The benefits of GLP-1 drugs:

Appetite and Craving Suppression

GLP-1 receptor agonists mimic natural gut hormones to signal fullness directly to the brain, significantly reducing persistent food noise and impulsive snacking.

Sustained Weight Management

By slowing gastric emptying, these medications keep food in the stomach longer, helping users maintain a natural calorie deficit and achieve meaningful, long-term weight reduction.

Glycemic Control

They stimulate insulin release in response to meals while suppressing unnecessary glucagon production, effectively stabilizing blood sugar and lowering A1C levels in individuals with insulin resistance or Type 2 diabetes.

Cardiovascular Protection

Major clinical trials show that specific GLP-1 medications lower the risk of major adverse cardiovascular events, including heart attacks and strokes, in high-risk patients.

Secondary Health Improvements

Significant weight reduction often leads to other benefits, including reduced

systemic inflammation, improved blood pressure, better lipid profiles, and reduced severity of obstructive sleep apnea.

Risk or Side effects of GLP-1 drug use

These drugs are not without risks or adverse side effects:

Common Gastrointestinal Issues

The most frequent side effects are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, acid reflux, and stomach pain, particularly during initial dose escalation.

Lean Muscle Loss

Rapid weight loss often results in significant skeletal muscle depletion alongside fat loss, which can lower resting metabolic rate unless paired with dedicated resistance training and high-protein intake.

Severe Medical Risks

Though less common, these medications carry risks of severe complications, including pancreatitis, gallbladder disease (gallstones), kidney injury from dehydration, and bowel obstructions (gastroparesis or ileus).

Weight Regain Upon Discontinuation

Because these drugs manage appetite biologically rather than curing underlying metabolic tendencies, clinical trials show that most patients regain a large portion of lost weight after stopping the medication.

Aesthetic Changes ("Ozempic Face")

Rapid subcutaneous facial fat loss can lead to hollowed cheeks, sagging skin, and an aged appearance.

High Cost and Supply Shortages

Ongoing prescription costs are substantial without insurance coverage, and frequent supply disruptions can complicate consistent, long-term use.

Thyroid C-Cell Tumor Warning

Animal studies showed an increased risk of thyroid tumors, leading to strict warnings against use in patients with a personal or family history of medullary thyroid carcinoma or Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2).

Books Shelf...

Briefly:

- **Books:** currently reading a book that makes me feel like I am studying for a PhD.

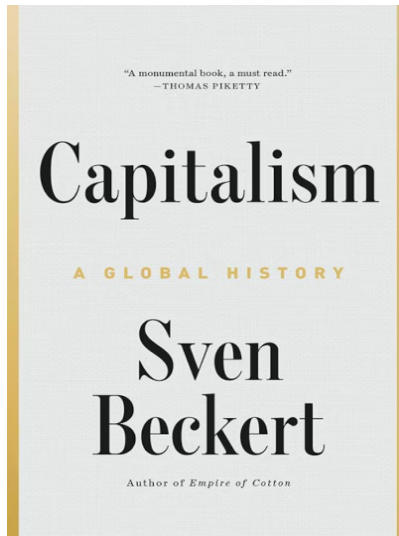


Half an hour nightly before lights out. I used to read longer, (Before Mico) but his bladder likely can't go past 7am, so I am up by 6:45am every day. It's killing me but such are the trials and tribulations of having a pup.

Richard reads

I still swear by digital reading rather than hard copy as I love being able to confer with the Internet, maps, menus, and global meandering which cannot be done with a hardcover book.

Current read:



Currently I am reading a tome, more than a thousand pages, written in a formidable manner making one feel like they are attending a post graduate studies class in economics.

My background of history teaching helps me with the comprehension but this book is a challenge. Beckert writes in a heavy, erudite style that is far above my nightly norm of Baldacci and Grisham. But I plow on and will write my evaluation in a few weeks when I have finished this weighty opus.

I keep a record of everything I read, well over 300 books, read, reviewed and recorded. I need the record as I forget the titles of many of the books I have already read and remember the reading of one after a number of chapters. So it really helps to be able to review the full list of read books.

If you go to my website to www.szpin.ca Select “Richard reads reviews” from the **CATEGORY** drop down box on the right, You will see a portion of the list...



Richard reads a lot.

The list below shows the books I have read and reviewed. It reminds me and helps me remember what I have read.

Notice my favourite author is ***Stuart Woods***. He writes 'adult comic books,' pure escapism, engaging entertainment. Nothing more but fun to read.

OTHER REVIEWS

← Older posts

- [The EDGE, David Baldacci](#)
- [ECHO BURNING, Lee Child](#)
- [EDUCATED, Tara Westover](#)
- [ELEPHANT WHISPERER, Lawrence Anthony](#)

On my website choose the category RICHARD READS to reveal the longer list and click these LINKS to see more

Newer posts →

Be sure to click the circled links to see more titles in the list.

Technology Desk:

Briefly:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** I use AI a lot now: to generate text, to summarize, polish and rewrite text, to generate images, to modify and work on my website, to do research, to help with productivity and to edit and proof read. It is an incredibly useful tool becoming increasingly helpful the more I use it

I use AI a lot and use many different models of the many that are available: Anthropic's Claude, ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, Dall-e, Perplexity and many, many more. Each AI has its areas of strength and as you use them and learn about them you choose the one that is best suited to the task at hand.

Claude is tremendously useful for working directly on my publications. It actually does the work, publishing directly to the website or in my newsletter.

Gemini is the go-to AI for image work, from changing the image to creating original ones. It's like having an artist in your back pocket.

Inevitability of value

AI is an incredibly valuable tool if you work a lot with computers. "Ask and you shall receive" is almost the existential philosophy of AI. Pose it a task in your own language and depending on the AI model you will receive a solution in similar language, easily understood and immediately useful.

Claude

I have subscribed to Anthropic's Claude. The more I use it, the more I learn about it and the more I like it. Asking it to do things for you is the most important aspect of this AI.

Beyond mere Google searches

If you use AI to just enhance your searches, you're missing the boat. You are failing to use its greater potential. AI should be used to take your work to the next level: ask it to help you organize things, create a plan for some project, develop a scheme to follow on a project you are working on.

Working with AI is like working with an assistant by your side, and the better or fuller your questions, the better and more constructive are the responses.

Examples of AI work

Recently I received photos of Councillor Lisa Robinson being dunked in a dunking tank. I hesitated in publishing the photos. Then I thought maybe I could just mask her identity. Thank you AI in putting sunglasses on her. Then in my request to make me look leader-like in directing a project, AI came up with me in a naval uniform....not bad.



Text and images

I do a lot of writing and research and AI helps me in many ways with that from creation of articles to editing and proofing of completed pieces. AI takes away much of the drudgery that working with words entails.

I also do a lot of work with images. Gemini and Dall-e are AI specialists for image work from creating original images to editing ones that I need modified before using.

Real life incorporation

My website requires a lot of hands on involvement with Word Press design and mechanics. These are not my areas of expertise and I hired a computer whiz for that work, a necessary expense. Since AI came along, I no longer use the skilled computer person but have AI do the required work directly on my computer.

Here's an example of the power and value of AI in my work. I publish a *daily news summary* sourced from many, many sources: the BBC, Reuters, US media and press, NY Times, Washington Post, CBC, Canadian printed media, Star, Globe and Sun. The task asked of AI is to produce a summary from ALL those sources of the top stories for Pickering, Canada, International and the 'Lighter Side.' I could do this work myself, hunting through all the sources via the Internet and completing the summary. It would likely take the better part of an entire day to complete the task.

AI does it in just under 8 minutes. Since multiple sources are used, the chances of false news is reduced though one still must take whatever AI produces with a grain of salt...it does not edit itself.

I use AI to enhance and supplement this newsletter. It helps in development of the topics, editing of copy, finding more information and proofing the final product. In short, AI saves hours of time in doing tasks that I used to do myself, freeing me to do other work with the saved time. AI is far more than just a glorified search tool.

SAFETY/GUARD RAILS

AI won't do everything you ask. It has guard rails in place to reject offensive or seriously negative prompts. When asked to insert the following image into my monthly header, it refused, explaining the image violated its programmed regulations on violence....



I have not pursued this further, but I get the sense that something violent, criminal, and such will not be published as AI explains. I think there are likely work-arounds that hackers and moderately experienced computer users will learn but the creators of AI are aware of the possibility of its abuse.

PROMPTS

Ask and AI generates...know this public figure ? I asked AI to make modifications and it let me do a lot as you can see....



CAUTIONS

AI can be a useful tool and a lot of fun. However, imagine what can be done by computer users with malevolent intent. It can become a tool that puts the boots to fact and truth. The above images were generated in minutes. One can see that changing the requests can turn innocent images into less acceptable results.

Just imagine how news images can be, may be, and likely are being edited, modified and manipulated to suit the goals of the media sources.



Every month as the month winds down, I feel increasingly stressed and anxious as my publishing deadlines approach. This work is my passion, my hobby and my interest. I am dedicated to publishing monthly, every month, on the first day of the month. I have been doing this for many years, so much that I am known to many as the town crier of the local news.

As always, though it sounds trite in repetition, I sincerely thank the support and the contributions to help me with my publishing expenses. Those who have gifted me with donations receive my newsletter automatically. Otherwise, full editions of my publishing is available at www.szpin.ca

September marks the end of summer. The CNE reinforces that reminder. Mico's morning backyard rituals now require wearing a jacket as I ache over what is passing us by...to paraphrase the Pointer sisters, "The heat is gone !"

Best,

Richard, Nadia & Mico