

REGULATING, TAXING BIG TECH LONG OVERDUE

A significant plank in Justin Trudeau's election platform was his commitment to apply a tax to non-Canadian digital giants, such as Google, Facebook and Amazon. As well, the Liberals promised new regulations to better protect personal data and the creation of a "data commissioner" role to oversee the process.

This sort of reform is overdue. During its first term, the Trudeau government had an almost laissez faire attitude toward the idea of regulating big data, probably due to its reluctance to face off with these major global corporations.

But things have changed. Successive scandals, data breaches and consumer exploitation have shaken the faith of many Canadians. They don't trust Google and Facebook the way they used to, so are more likely to be supportive of regulatory reform. Whatever the rationale, it's good news provided the new government keeps its commitment to finally move on this subject.

New taxes are not to be taken lightly. But in some arenas, they are entirely appropriate, and this is one of those cases. The plan would see multinational tech giants taxed on three per cent of the revenue they generate in Canada, from the sales of online advertising or other profits related to Canadian user data. And why not?

Canadian companies already pay taxes, so why shouldn't multinationals? They're cashing in on Canadian consumer data, which they would otherwise not have. So it makes perfect sense that they pay corporate taxes in countries where they generate revenue.

There is good reason to think this can move swiftly and constructively through Parliament. The Liberals no longer command a majority so will need help, but there should be no shortage with all the other progressive parties - Bloc, Greens and NDP - having expressed similar views and even the Conservatives appearing supportive toward a level playing field.

That doesn't mean it will be easy. These overdue measures will ruffle international feathers, particularly American ones. The U.S., especially with a bombastic hothead at the helm, will probably object since most of the companies in question are U.S.-based. No doubt the Trump administration will see taxes and regulations as tariffs on American business, and no doubt sabres will rattle.

But consider this - what if the situation was reversed? What if Canadian companies were doing business in the U.S., scraping American data and profit and paying little or nothing in return? How long would Washington put up with that?

Canada is on solid ground here, and the Trudeau government could do worse than put this at the top of its legislative agenda.

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HONOURING OUR VETERANS

IT'S TIME TO
RECOGNIZE THOSE
WHO SERVED,
FOUGHT AND DIED
FOR OUR FREEDOM,
WRITES CARR



GARY
CARR
Column

On Nov. 11, Canadians will gather to honour the sacrifices of our veterans. Throughout our history, these brave individuals have defended our freedom, protected civilians around the world and ensured security for Canadians at home.

In 2019, we marked two significant anniversaries: The 75-year anniversary of D-Day and 80 years since the start of the Second World War.

We observed the anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy on

June 6, honouring the day that Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. Against difficult odds, Canadians and allies advanced, but sacrificed greatly.

Canada's efforts in the Second World War involved the entire country, from those serving in the military overseas to the families they left behind. Both of these anniversaries honour the individuals who protected our rights, freedoms and values.

On Remembrance Day, we remember these soldiers and all those who gave their lives in the world wars, Korean War and War in Afghanistan, as well as in ongoing peacekeeping missions and exercises.

Today, current members of the Canadian Armed Forces continue to bring aid and support to areas in conflict, while protecting civilians from the dangers of war.

We will never forget the price our veterans paid so we could build the strong,

"We will never forget the price our veterans paid so we could build the strong, inclusive and peaceful society they believed in."

inclusive and peaceful society they believed in.

I encourage you to wear your poppy with pride and observe a moment of silence on Nov. 11 to honour those who helped make Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Gary Carr is regional chair of Halton Region. His column appears the first week of each month. To contact him, email gary.carr@halton.ca.

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