

1. The current government is responsible for the \$52 billion budget deficit, the biggest deficit in the history of Canada, and Mr. Harper has presided over the second biggest cabinet in the history of Canada with 38 ministers at one time, second only to Mulroney's cabinet of 39 ministers. What are your views about the size of the government and about balancing the budget?

Which of the following do you think should be cut/reduced to balance the budget:

- \$16 -29 billion cost of F35 fighter bombers, when there is no imminent or credible defence need;
- \$500 million per year to keep 950 soldiers in Afghanistan (total cost until March 2014 to exceed 1.5 billion), at a cost of about \$535,000 per soldier per year, which no one can see any benefit in, because there has been no benefit realized for the \$22 billion spent so far, along with sacrificing 154 young Canadian soldiers and four civilians, about 1500 injured soldiers, 147 of whom are permanently disabled and about 41,000 war veterans. There has been no benefit to Canada against all these costs, nor has there been any benefit to Afghan people whose suffering has actually increased as a result.
- Increase in defence spending from \$14.7 billion in 2006 to \$21 billion in 2010 which does not include about \$35 billion allocated for capital expenditure and upgrade of hardware since 2005-2006 over five years, plus 2% increase that is planned over the next 20 years, on top of the 44% increase that has already occurred.
- Size of the government, starting with the number of ministers and parliamentary secretaries
- Tax reduction for corporations
- Seniors pensions and old age security (as is being done quietly through making changes such as increasing claw back, changing eligibility criteria and other structural changes)
- Funding for social programs
  
- While sending troops to kill those who have done nothing wrong to Canada (such as in Afghanistan) and doing so at a huge cost to Canadians, the peace keeping role that Canada used to play and that brought Canada respect and honour in the world has been drastically cut. The peace-keeping budget has gone down about 83% from \$94.1 million in 2001 to 15.6 million in 2008-2009. Do you think that Canada should return to its honourable roles of peace-keeping, humanitarian work and reconstruction or should it continue to follow American war-mongering by invading far away countries under false pretences? What is your personal opinion about it and what role do you think you can play to convince your party for the right course of action for Canada?
- Canada is too heavily dependent on its trade with US and is not doing much to enhance its trade with growing economies and markets in other countries of the world. Canada is in a unique position to develop trade with many other countries using Canadians originating from those countries, but Canada is neglecting to use its resources and potential. How would you encourage your government or develop a campaign to convince the government to bring prosperity to Canada by enhancing trade with other countries using the huge potential of its citizens.

- There is a significant back log of family class sponsorship as well as immigration applicants in other categories due to lack of sufficient consular resources in some of the South Asian countries. Also, people feel that the staff in foreign missions and Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices are not sensitive enough to the culture, religious and social needs and sensitivities of various faiths and cultures. Consequently, some cultures are short changed when it comes to the treatment of visa applicants, integration of immigrants and civic engagement of the citizens. In addition, CIC has recently cut down the funding of 32 community organizations in Ontario, who were providing settlement services to new comers. What do you think should be done to ensure that:

- Consular staff is increased to sufficient levels in countries where there is huge backlog;
- The TRV applicants from Muslims countries are not discriminated against or denied visa to travel to Canada to visit their loved ones, to participate in marriage and death ceremonies and to attend other religious or social activities;
- Staff in foreign missions and Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices are adequately trained; and
- Immigration settlement services and the civic engagement programs and initiatives are appropriately funded.

And you will you be able to help in these matters, if elected?

- Every community has their share of bad people, and the Muslim community is no exception, however, they get much more than their fair share of bad publicity. Because of the increased negative portrayal of the Muslims in the media, there is a negative stereotype developing in the minds of policy makers about Muslims, so much that voices are being raised to discriminate against Muslim citizens in Canada as well as applicants for immigration to Canada. This stereotyping and discrimination is obviously unacceptable, what are your views about this issues, how do you think you can contribute to their resolution and how will they be addressed by your party?

- Considering the continuous attacks on the concept of multiculturalism and a general resentment in accepting other cultures, especially the antagonism that Muslims are increasingly encountering in the society, what do you think the government can do to support, strengthen and promote multiculturalism in general, but Muslim cultures in particular?

- Racial and religious profiling is being increasingly used to harass innocent Muslims and to hinder their basic right to travel around without being held in suspicion or put to shame. While security of all citizens is important, it should not be at the cost of innocent people of a certain community. In this day and age of technology and all kind of information being available to security agencies, why is the racial and religious profiling needed except to harass law abiding citizens? How can you help Muslims in this respect?

- Legal experts are of the opinion that the existing laws, regulations and procedure, other than security certificates, are enough to handle, arrest and prosecute the most violent of the criminals. Thus a draconian law called security certificates is not needed. The Harper government extended this law when it expired under the sunset clause. The Supreme Court of Canada has given verdict against it, what is your opinion about this law and what role can you play to represent Muslim views in this respect?

- Canadian pension plan and old age security pensions are already too little to meet the needs of the senior citizens. The Harper government is slowly reducing these benefits further by

clawing back seniors' current year's pension on the basis of their last year's income. How do you think the seniors' lot can be improved?

- In the past few years, Canada has lost all balance and fairness when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict. It has become extremely lopsided in favour of Israel so much so that even Israel's war crimes are condoned. Canada supports its criminal actions when the whole world protests against them and Canada opposes those UN resolutions that the overwhelming majority of the countries of the world support. What do you think needs to be done to bring balance to the foreign policy of Canada, especially when it concerns Israel?

- The government of Stephen Harper abolished funding (\$2.75 million per year) for the court challenges program in 2006. This program used to help people obtain their rights guaranteed under the charter through the courts. Do you think that this program should be restored? How will your party promote such an idea?