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# Larry Maher: Weak leadership and lax immigration policy is tearing the fabric of Canadian society

*The result is not diversity within a cohesive nation, but fragmentation within a weakening one*

By [Larry Maher](#), [Special to National Post](#)

Published Jan 28, 2026 Last updated Jan 28, 2026 4 minute read [Join the conversation](#)

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Police lock down Parliament Hill in Ottawa following a shooting in 2014. PHOTO BY MATTHEW USHERWOOD/QMI AGENCY

Canada is undergoing a quiet but profound erosion of national cohesion, authority and cultural confidence. At every level of government, political leadership has increasingly substituted ideological appeasement for the basic responsibilities of maintaining social order, enforcing the law and protecting the integrity of Canadian citizenship.

For much of the 20th century, Canada's immigration model was focused on bringing in the skilled workers and families who wanted to come to build a better life.

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To be clear: this is not an argument against immigration, it is an argument against the abandonment of assimilation as a governing principle and the current system, which places a greater emphasis on refugees and asylum seekers than skilled workers. The result is not diversity within a cohesive nation, but fragmentation within a weakening one, while Canadian taxpayers shoulder rising costs for housing, health care, education and social programs that were never designed for limitless demand.



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The recent passage of Bill C-3 illustrates the deeper problem. This legislation now means that if a Canadian citizen moves abroad, starts a family and has generations of children born outside of Canada, they could all be automatically granted Canadian citizenship.

Citizenship, once rooted in lived connection and civic participation, is being transformed into a perpetual, hereditary entitlement. Over time, this risks hollowing out the meaning of citizenship itself, while expanding long-term fiscal and legal obligations to individuals with no meaningful connection to the country.

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Rather than encouraging newcomers to adopt Canadian values, institutions increasingly validate imported political and religious demands, even when they conflict with liberal democratic norms. Public spaces, universities and cultural institutions now host protests and campaigns rooted in foreign ideological struggles, while dissenters

are labelled as intolerant, colonialist or oppressive.

Weakening political leadership has led to selective enforcement and politicians who continually attempt to appease loud, activist minorities. Police, courts and other public officials operate under ideological pressure, hesitant to apply the law evenly for fear of political backlash. The result is declining public confidence, as all levels of government pass the buck and wash their hands of responsibility, along with rising disorder — not because laws are inadequate, but because will is absent.

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The consequences extend beyond domestic cohesion. Canada is increasingly exposed to foreign ideological influence and state-sponsored soft power campaigns from authoritarian regimes and extremist

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networks, including Russia, China, Iran, Qatar, Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood — two of which our prime minister recently visited, lauding them as our country’s new partners. Authoritarian regimes and transnational extremist movements do not need tanks to destabilize open societies, they exploit cultural guilt, identity politics and institutional timidity. You only need to look at our universities to see this playing out.

These malicious actors invest in education, media, activism and political networks, slowly reshaping the moral and institutional foundations of western democracies. Marxist, socialist and radical Islamist movements, while differing in language, share a common objective: to destabilize and destroy western liberal democracies from within. These ideologies exploit liberal societies, identity politics and moral relativism to create division, chaos and institutional paralysis.

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Mark Norman, former vice-admiral of the Royal Canadian Navy and vice-chief of the defence staff, recently expressed to me how liberal societies, detached from their moral and cultural foundations, become uniquely vulnerable to manipulation. “One could argue that we’ve lost that unifying sense of right and wrong. The very sense of (the) liberal, permissive, non-judgmentally embracing society that our countries were fundamentally founded on is now being openly exploited for the purpose of reshifting the balance,” he told me. Put simply, when a nation loses confidence in its own values, it loses the capacity to defend them.

Western societies have had ample warning, and no leader can claim ignorance. Elected officials and civic leaders must be held accountable for protecting public safety, alerting citizens to threats and removing known extremists and designated terrorist entities from Canadian soil. As Israel’s Canadian-born deputy foreign minister, Sharren Haskel, said to me, “It is not about foreign policy or security, it is about appeasing foreign politics.”

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individuals. From 9/11 to the 2014 attack on Parliament Hill, the Boston Marathon bombing, car rammings across Europe and the recent attack at Bondi Beach in Australia, the lesson is clear: failure to confront extremism decisively comes at a deadly cost. This is domestic terrorism and must be treated as such.

Symbolic politics has never been sufficient, it is a sign of weak leadership. Condemnations without enforcement, statements without consequences and gestures without policy are not leadership. Canadians do not need additional legislation layered over existing statutes. We need the consistent application of the laws already in force.

Canada is lost and no longer immune. A nation cannot remain open if it forgets how to be a nation. The choice is not between tolerance and cohesion. It is between a confident pluralism anchored in shared civic norms, and a politics of endless

accommodation that dissolves the very framework that makes diversity possible.

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*Larry Maher is CEO of Exigent Foundation.*



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