POLICY *Brief*

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How is Prime Minister Carney Doing in Reshaping Government?

An Assessment of *A New Blueprint for Government*

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Context

- Kevin Lynch, former Clerk of the Privy Council and former ADM Jim Mitchell set out priorities for reform of the federal Government
- Their book, *A New Blueprint for Government* published by the UofR Press, was shortlisted for the 2025-26 Donner Prize in public policy writing
- Its premise: Canada's economic underperformance is structural, rooted in how the federal government is designed, managed, and held to account
- The book outlines key issues that need to be addressed, including:
  - Lagging productivity
  - Ill-functioning Westminster Governance System
  - Decline in the role of cabinet, centralization of power in the PMO
  - Renewal of the Public Service
- It sets out 24 practical actions to reshape government

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Considerations

- The "Blueprint" was widely regarded as a roadmap for government reform
- It sets out a multi-faceted agenda to make government more responsive
- The goal: to shape a government that can deliver and "get things done"
- For years Canada has been falling behind in a fast-changing world
- It raises specific issues for reform and renewable of the Public Service:
  - The decline of policy-making capacity
  - A 40 per cent increase in the Public Service during the last decade
  - A simultaneous expansion in the use of outside consultants
  - Few improvements in service delivery
  - Centralization of power in the PMO has weakened the Public Service
  - Ministers need to be empowered and accountable
- The issue of reform comes at a challenging time for Canada

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Questions

- Do you agree with the position that reform of Government is important?
- Whether yes or no, what are reasons you take the view that you do?
- Is Mark Carney making progress reforming government. If so, how?
- Is the timing right for a broadly based government reform initiative?
- Realistically, is reform possible when Canada faces today's challenges?
- Isn't centralization of power/decision making inevitable in times of crisis?
- How can the Public Service be renewed, and who needs to lead it?