

THE DIALOGUE

Latin America Advisor

www.thedialogue.org

Thursday, April 30, 2026

BOARD OF ADVISORS

- Merike Blofield**
Professor of Political Science,
University of Hamburg
- Joyce Chang**
Global Head of Research,
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- Marlene Fernández**
Corporate Vice President for
Government Relations,
Arcos Dorados
- Peter Hakim**
President Emeritus,
Inter-American Dialogue
- Donna Hrinak**
Director,
Covista
- Jon E. Huenemann**
Council Member,
GLG Inc.
- James R. Jones**
Chairman,
Monarch Global Strategies
- Craig A. Kelly**
Senior Director, Int'l Gov't Relations,
Exxon Mobil
- John Maisto**
Director,
U.S. Education Finance Group
- Nicolás Mariscal**
Chairman,
Grupo Marhnos
- Thomas F. McLarty III**
Chairman,
McLarty Associates
- Ernesto Revilla**
Head of Latin American
Economics, Citi
- Gustavo Roosen**
President,
IESA
- Andrés Rozental**
President,
Rozental & Asociados

FEATURED Q&A

What Will a Majority Gov't Mean for Canada's Carney?



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney this month secured a majority government in the country's Parliament. // File Photo: UlyssePixel via Adobe Stock.

Q Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on April 13 secured a majority government after candidates of his Liberal Party won three special parliamentary elections. Carney, who became prime minister in March 2025, said the development reflects voters' "trust in our new government's plan." What will majority control of Parliament mean for Carney's agenda, and what are the most significant initiatives he will now be able to push through Parliament? What challenges face his government in the coming months? What factors best explain Carney's popularity in Canada?

A Julie M. Simmons, associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Guelph: "With majority control of Parliament, Carney can move quickly on his agenda to strengthen Canada's economic autonomy from the United States. He has pledged to expand the industrial base through a 'buy Canadian' policy to support major development projects, reduce barriers to interprovincial trade and diversify international trading partners. Key projects (some already launched) include nuclear energy, critical minerals and mining, high-speed rail and highways, carbon capture and housing development. The most immediate challenge will be the upcoming review of CUSMA (the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement) and managing the impact of U.S. tariffs: 50 percent on steel and aluminum, 25 percent on automobiles and parts, 10 percent on copper and energy products, and 45 percent on softwood lumber. To prepare, Carney has formed a cross-partisan advisory council, including former Conservative members of Parliament, to guide Canada's strategy. He has also promised to

Continued on page 3

TODAY'S NEWS

POLITICAL

U.S. Prosecutors Charge 10 Mexican Officials Including Sinaloa's Governor

U.S. prosecutors charged 10 current and former Mexican officials, including the current governor of Sinaloa state, with conspiring with the Sinaloa drug cartel.

Page 2

ECONOMIC

Brazil's Central Bank Cuts Key Interest Rate by Quarter Point

For the second month in a row, Brazil's central bank cut its benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point.

Page 2

BUSINESS

Santander Posts 60% Rise in Profit for First Quarter

Spain's Banco Santander, led by executive chair Ana Botín, on Wednesday posted a 60 percent rise in profit for the first quarter, partially driven by a strong performance at its unit in Mexico.

Page 2



Botín // File Photo: Santander.

POLITICAL NEWS

U.S. Prosecutors Charge Mexican Governor, 9 Others

U.S. prosecutors have charged the current governor of Mexico's Sinaloa state and nine other current and former Mexican officials with drug and weapons crimes, accusing them of participating in a conspiracy to aid the powerful Sinaloa drug cartel, according to an indictment unsealed Wednesday, The New York Times reported. In the indictment, prosecutors in Manhattan accuse Sinaloa's governor, Rubén Rocha Moya, of accepting bribes and help for his election campaign in exchange for protecting the cartel. In a statement, Rocha denied the charges, calling them "entirely false and without foundation," The New York Times reported. Others indicted include the current mayor of Sinaloa's state capital, Culiacán, as well as the state's deputy attorney general and several former state law enforcement officials. "As the indictment lays bare, the Sinaloa Cartel, and other drug trafficking organizations like it, would not operate as freely or successfully without corrupt politicians and law enforcement officials on their payroll," U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton said in a statement. U.S. prosecutors allege the defendants helped the cartel to traffic fentanyl, heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine from Mexico to the United States.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Brazil's Central Bank Cuts Key Interest Rate by Quarter Point

For the second consecutive month, Brazil's central bank on Wednesday cut its benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point, taking the Selic rate to 14.5 percent, the Wall Street Journal reported. The central bank said its future decisions on rates are unclear, as the

effects of the war in Iran are uncertain. The central bank said it will act cautiously so that "future steps of interest rate calibration can incorporate new information about the depth and duration of the conflicts in the Middle East, as well as their direct and indirect effects over

The central bank's rate cut in March was its first in nearly two years.

time on the price level," The Wall Street Journal reported. Consumer prices in Brazil rose 4.4 percent in the 12-month period through mid-April, the country's national statistics agency, IBGE, announced Tuesday, the newspaper reported. The central bank targets inflation at 3 percent, with a tolerance range of 1.5 percentage points, The Wall Street Journal reported. The central bank's March rate cut of 25 basis points was its first reduction in nearly two years. The central bank's monetary policy committee is scheduled for its next rate decision on June 17. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) in the March 17 issue of the Advisor.]

BUSINESS NEWS

Santander Posts 60% Rise in Profit, Mexico Helps Drive Earnings

Spain's Banco Santander on Wednesday posted first-quarter profit of 5.46 billion euros (\$6.39 billion), a 60 percent increase as compared to the same quarter a year ago, with strong performances in Mexico and Spain offsetting weakness in Argentina and Portugal, Reuters reported. Santander's operations, which span 10 core markets, helped it to weather economic downturns in some areas but also exposed it to currency fluctuations in Latin America, the

NEWS BRIEFS

Summit on Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Concludes in Northern Colombia

Government, private sector and civil society experts from 56 countries wrapped up a summit on the transition away from fossil fuels on Wednesday in the northern Colombian city of Santa Marta, the Associated Press reported. Attendees discussed the financial constraints preventing many developing countries from transitioning away from fossil fuels. No binding commitments emerged from the summit, which was co-hosted by the governments of Colombia and the Netherlands, the AP reported.

Braskem Shareholders Elect Petrobras CEO as Board Chair

Shareholders of Brazilian petrochemical giant Braskem elected a new board of directors on Wednesday, appointing Petrobras CEO Magda Chambriard as its chair, Reuters reported. Novonor, formerly known as Odebrecht, last week sold its controlling stake in Braskem to São Paulo-based fund IG4 Capital. State-run Petrobras, Braskem's second-largest shareholder, still holds 47 percent of voting shares in the firm, which is Latin America's largest producer of petrochemical products, Reuters reported.

Mexico's Becele Reports 67% Fall in Profit as Tequila Sales Slump

Mexico-based Becele, the world's largest producer of tequila, on Wednesday reported a slide of 67 percent in net profit for the first quarter, year-on-year, as sales of its liquors declined, Reuters reported. Net profit for Becele, which produces the José Cuervo line of tequilas, declined to 388.2 million pesos (\$21.7 million). Analysts in a survey by LSEG had expected net profit of 838.5 million pesos, Reuters reported.

wire service reported. In Mexico, Santander saw a profit increase of 6.9 percent in the quarter, while profit rose 6.4 percent in Brazil. The bank's profit rose 12 percent in its home market of Spain amid strong economic growth. Its unit in the United Kingdom also posted profit of 12 percent in the first quarter. A higher level of provisions for bad loans weighed on earnings in Argentina, however. "Looking ahead, we expect this performance to continue, supported by growth in both total and active customers, while further leveraging our global and in-market scale to transform our operating model," Santander's executive chair, Ana Botín, said in a statement. "This will support higher profitability and sustained value creation," she added. After exiting its core retail business in Poland, Santander now serves approximately 176 million clients and wants to increase that number to more than 210 million by 2028, The Wall Street Journal reported.

BP Signs Deal to Develop Gas Projects Off Venezuela's Coast

Representatives from oil supermajor BP on Wednesday signed an agreement with Venezuela's government to develop offshore natural gas projects in Venezuelan waters, Reuters reported. BP now has rights to the entirety of the Cocuina-Manakin gas field, the company announced Wednesday after meeting with acting President Delcy Rodríguez. A BP subsidiary already holds the portion of the gas field that is located in Trinidad and Tobago's territorial waters. The British oil firm also owns a 45 percent stake in the Atlantic LNG terminal located on Trinidad's southwestern coast, which has been forced to reduce its output in recent years due to dwindling domestic natural gas production, Reuters reported. The agreement that BP signed on Wednesday was a memorandum of understanding; the firm did not commit to a timetable for opening commercial gas production at the Cocuina-Manakin field, nor did it say whether gas from the venture would feed the Atlantic LNG facility. Rodríguez's government also agreed that BP could explore

FEATURED Q&A / Continued from page 1

maintain federal funding for universal public health care (which includes abortion access) and the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system. However, these and other social policy commitments could be tested if they come to be perceived as conflicting with, rather than supporting his economic priorities. Carney's appeal lies partly in his background as former governor of both the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England. Many Canadians see him as a pragmatic leader with the experience and judgment to defend national interests, particularly in navigating tensions with the United States. Separatist sentiment remains limited. While some in the provinces of Alberta and Quebec advocate referendums, strong majorities oppose independence, and Indigenous constitutional and legal rights pose additional barriers."

A Yale D. Belanger, chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Lethbridge:

"On April 13, a Liberal sweep of three by-elections transformed Prime Minister Mark Carney's minority government into a majority, freeing him from confidence threats that dogged his first year in office. The result also suggested that Carney's popularity stems from his role in guiding Canada through the global financial crisis, his measured approach to communications, and the clear distinctions from both his predecessor, Justin Trudeau, and the opposition leader, Pierre Poilievre. With the mandatory review of the Canada-United

States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) on the horizon, the timing is perfect: Carney brings the strongest negotiating position any prime minister has carried into continental trade renegotiation since NAFTA's ratification in 1993. Elsewhere, the Liberals will continue efforts to strengthen Canada's economic sovereignty, reduce interprovincial trade barriers and pursue an industrial strategy to reduce dependence on the United States. Enhanced defense spending, with a focus on Arctic sovereignty, is set to increase, and in March, Canada met the NATO 2 percent spending target. It's important to note that achieving a majority government depended on accepting several floor-crossing members of Parliament, which places new demands on caucus management. And growing separatist threats in Alberta, which, alongside Saskatchewan, is insisting on changes to energy policy and equalization, will demand further attention and resources. As the new Liberal majority takes its first steps forward, critics suggesting Carney manufactured a government reliant on floor-crossing and timely by-elections will watch closely to see whether it lives up to its billing under sustained pressure."

States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) on the horizon, the timing is perfect: Carney brings the strongest negotiating position any prime minister has carried into continental trade renegotiation since NAFTA's ratification in 1993. Elsewhere, the Liberals will continue

Enhanced defense spending, with a focus on Arctic sovereignty, is set to increase..."

— Yale D. Belanger

efforts to strengthen Canada's economic sovereignty, reduce interprovincial trade barriers and pursue an industrial strategy to reduce dependence on the United States. Enhanced defense spending, with a focus on Arctic sovereignty, is set to increase, and in March, Canada met the NATO 2 percent spending target. It's important to note that achieving a majority government depended on accepting several floor-crossing members of Parliament, which places new demands on caucus management. And growing separatist threats in Alberta, which, alongside Saskatchewan, is insisting on changes to energy policy and equalization, will demand further attention and resources. As the new Liberal majority takes its first steps forward, critics suggesting Carney manufactured a government reliant on floor-crossing and timely by-elections will watch closely to see whether it lives up to its billing under sustained pressure."

Continued on page 4

that previously had operations in Venezuela have recently renewed their commitments to projects in the country after Rodríguez's government passed a sweeping liberalization of hydrocarbons regulations in late January. On Tuesday, just one day before BP announced its deal for the Cocuina-Manakin field, Italian oil major Eni agreed to revive a heavy-crude venture in the Orinoco Belt following a similar signing ceremony.

FEATURED Q&A / Continued from page 3

A Jeanette Ashe, faculty in the Department of Political Science at Douglas College and visiting senior research fellow at the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London: "Mark Carney's newly secured parliamentary majority gives his government the institutional capacity to move from gender rollbacks to decisive action on gender equity. Majority control reduces reliance on opposition parties and allows the Liberals to advance legislation more efficiently. What this majority will mean in practice, however, depends on Carney's political will, and this is where gender becomes a critical test. To date, Carney's record on gender equity has been uneven. Early decisions, including abandoning a sex-balanced cabinet and dismantling Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), only to reinstate it under pressure with a reduced budget and, along with the absence of gender-based analysis (GBA+) in his universal ministerial mandate letter, signaled a retreat from federal leadership on gender equity. With a majority, these choices now define his government. It can no longer attribute inaction to parliamentary constraints. Carney now has the opportunity, and responsibility, to adopt gender-sensitive reforms. This includes legislating gender quotas for candidates and members of Parliament, amending the Ministries and Ministers of State Act to require gender parity in cabinet, mandating GBA+ across all policy and budget

decisions, and embedding a robust gender results framework in the federal budget. It also means safeguarding WAGE funding and strengthening accountability, including through a gender and diversity-sensitive audit by the auditor general. This is partic-

“To date, Carney's record on gender equity has been uneven.”

— Jeanette Ashe

ularly urgent given Canada's slipping global standing against a backdrop of national and global gender backlash. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Canada ranks 74th worldwide for women's representation in national parliaments, behind many Latin American countries that have adopted quota systems. A majority government provides the conditions to address this gendered democratic deficit. Challenges remain. Economic uncertainty and caucus management will test the government. Carney's popularity likely reflects his technocratic credibility and economic stewardship, but sustaining it, particularly among women voters, will require delivering results. A majority offers power. Whether it delivers progress on gender equity will define his government.”

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.

LATIN AMERICA ADVISOR

is published every business day by the Inter-American Dialogue ISSN 2163-7962

Gene Kuleta
Editor

Jack Quinn
Reporter

Luiza Franco
Reporter



Rebecca Bill Chavez, Ph.D., President & CEO

Lila Abed, Director, Mexico Program

Alfonso Blanco, Director, Energy Transition & Climate Program

Margaret Myers, Senior Advisor, Asia & Latin America Program

Manuel Orozco, Director, Migration, Remittances and Development Program

Bruna Santos, Director, Brazil Program

Peter Hakim, President Emeritus

Latin America Advisor is published every business day, except for major U.S. holidays, by the Inter-American Dialogue at 1155 15th Street NW, Suite 800 Washington, DC 20005 www.thedialogue.org

The opinions expressed by the members of the Board of Advisors and by guest commentators do not necessarily represent those of the Inter-American Dialogue. The analysis is the sole view of each commentator and does not necessarily represent the views of their respective employers or firms. The information in this report has been obtained from reliable sources, but neither its accuracy and completeness, nor the opinions based thereon, are guaranteed. If you have any questions relating to the contents of this publication, contact the editorial offices of the Inter-American Dialogue. Contents of this report may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted without prior written permission from the Inter-American Dialogue.



Upcoming Event

Nicaragua's Democratic Crisis: Consolidation of Authoritarian Rule and the Future of U.S. Policy

May 5, 2026 | 10:00 a.m. ET | Inter-American Dialogue

