

## Persuasive Communication by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Handling a Refugee in Canada

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### ABSTRACT

*Speech is an example of public communication context. How people build arguments in the speech can affect the persuasion process. Justin Trudeau brings refugee issues in his speech as something important for audiences to take concern with. He emphasizes on how world's leaders in 71st General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly are able to accept refugees the way Canada has done. He wants to show the world that accepting refugees will not bring any harm to the countries. He is the youngest prime minister ever in Canada and presumed like a leader has lack of experience among the other world leaders. How Justin Trudeau builds his argument on handling a refugee. This study adopts qualitative research with textual analysis as the method, which will use articles, websites and books as literature. The results showed that Justin Trudeau's physical attractiveness and authority in making decisions, credibility in proving promises, and his attractiveness in attracting the world's attention were the most visible components as a leader and speaker. He builds his arguments by showing evidence, case histories, and making people be guilty for doing wrong things with guilt appeal. His message content is full of the proof he has done for Canada in welcoming refugees. He shows vivid case histories and narratives on how Canada is safe by accepting refugees while many countries refuse for the sake of safety.*

### ABSTRAK

Pidato merupakan salah satu konteks komunikasi publik. Cara orang membangun argumen dalam pidato dapat mempengaruhi proses persuasi. Justin Trudeau membawa isu pengungsi dalam pidatonya sebagai sesuatu yang penting untuk diperhatikan oleh audiens. Dia menekankan bagaimana para pemimpin dunia dalam Debat Umum ke-71 Konferensi Umum Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa dapat menerima para pengungsi seperti yang telah dilakukan Kanada. Dia ingin menunjukkan kepada dunia bahwa menerima pengungsi tidak akan merugikan negara. Justin adalah perdana menteri termuda yang pernah ada di Kanada dan dianggap seperti seorang pemimpin yang memiliki pengalaman kurang di antara pemimpin dunia lainnya. Penelitian ini mengadopsi penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis teks sebagai metode, yang akan menggunakan artikel, website, dan buku sebagai literatur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, daya tarik fisik dan kewibawaan Justin Trudeau dalam memutuskan, kredibilitas dalam membuktikan janji, dan daya tariknya dalam menarik perhatian dunia adalah komponen yang paling terlihat sebagai pemimpin dan pembicara. Dia membangun argumennya dengan menunjukkan data sebagai bukti, kasus sejarah, dan membuat pihak lain tampak bersalah. Isi pesannya penuh dengan bukti bahwa dia telah melakukan hal yang tepat di Kanada dalam menyambut para pengungsi. Dia menunjukkan kasus sejarah dan narasi yang jelas tentang bagaimana Kanada aman dengan menerima para pengungsi sementara banyak negara menolaknya demi keselamatan mereka.

## Introduction

As the democratic heart of the United Nations, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has become the forum for decision-making where all 193-member states each have a single vote. Every country as a member of the United Nations is also invited to send a representative to represent their countries' identity and stances. It has become the main global forum for global leaders to resolve political issues and cooperation around the world, threatening to discuss and resolve the vast array of economic, environmental and social issues that fall under the United Nations' mandate. It has become the main global forum for global leaders to resolve political issues and cooperation around the world, threatening to discuss and resolve the vast array of economic, environmental and social issues that fall under the United Nations' mandate.

The case was on the United Nations General Assembly's 71<sup>st</sup> session, which commenced on September 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> 2016 in the United Nations Headquarters in New York, United States of America. The theme of the general debate in the 71st session is "Sustainable Development Goals: a universal impetus for transforming our world," bringing together 194 heads of state and government. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate change, terrorism, the refugee crisis and UN reform have become several important topic dominated the 2016 general debate (Grant, 2014).

As the new Prime Minister of Canada who led his party to victory on October 19<sup>th</sup> 2015, Justin Trudeau made his first address to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in the morning session (Austen, 2017). In the 71<sup>st</sup> general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, he delivered his speech with a combination of English and French. He is focusing on SDGs, climate change, terrorism, and refugee crisis as four most discussed topic in the general debate. Refugee crisis has become the forth most discussed topic in the general debate and Justin Trudeau also took more concern on refugees in his speech. His government has resettled more than 25,000 Syrian refugees between November 4<sup>th</sup> 2015 and February 29<sup>th</sup> 2016, while many countries are reluctant to open their arms for refugees coming to their countries. The government also commits to continue resettling Syrian refugees to Canada in 2017. The latest update showed that 44,620 Syrian refugees are welcomed in Canada (Canada, 2020).

Canada has hardly been a leader in openness amongst countries. The number of refugees among developing nations, judged per capita, ranked a laggardly 20th. Nearly half of those refugees were privately supported by individuals, not by the government itself (Lukacs, 2017). His concern on the refugee crisis has captured the world about how refugees should be treated. He welcomed those fleeing war and persecution on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> 2017. Day after The United States in pointed tweets Trudeau said that refugees are welcome in Canada, President Donald Trump put a four-month moratorium on allowing refugees into the United States and temporarily banned travelers from seven countries (Ljunggren & Paperny, 2017).



Figure 1. Justin Trudeau's Tweet  
Source: Global News Canada (2017)

The second tweet about the refugee crisis was also in line with Trump's anger at immigration policy and included a picture of Tordo welcoming Syrian refugees at a Canadian airport in 2015. Soon after Trudeau released his tweets, the hashtag #WelcomeToCanada started trending on Twitter (Ljunggren & Paperny, 2017). His concern on refugee crisis to be able to join the middle class of Canada can be seen by the two members of Trudeau's cabinet. They came to Canada as refugees and were born in the predominately Muslim countries. They include Ahmed Hussen, the immigration minister, who was born in Somalia (Austen, 2017). Justin Trudeau treats his government with openness towards refugee can bring good reputation to how he builds his government. How successful a country can also be seen from how the leader builds and leads the government into success.

In this speech, he tries to educate and persuade the audience on how refugees should be treated the way Canada has done. He uses his communication and persuasion skills in a high level to make people believe and adopt the action he has been doing for Syrian refugees. The use of communication, in a way of persuasion, has been used by many world's leaders. Speech, as the medium, has been used very much because it has the power to control the audience, especially when the speakers are powerful enough to change attitudes through words. When the speaker has the authority to change, is credible enough to make people believe, and has attractiveness to attract the audience to believe.

Based on literature these are some leaders able to show this important skills with the difference approach. Nobrega (2014) has found Ronald Reagan strongly contributed to all the principles of persuasion such as reciprocity, authority, commitment and consistency, liking, scarcity, and social proof. He did this through his voice, perfect speeches sharing similarities with the church, his own loyalty, strong example presentations, and a good balance of humor and seriousness. President US, Barack Obama employs the elements of Ethos and Pathos in his speech quite too often. He seems to motivate and persuade the people's emotional side, not the intellectual side, as it is not difficult to convince people emotionally (Baseer & Alvi, 2012). In the context of leadership communication in crisis situation, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on the Christchurch mosque shootings in 2019 has showed expressions of her devastation at the nature of the crisis. Her anger that happened, it provides the community with a guarantee that action will be taken to prevent similar events and have repeatedly expressed the determination to overcome the crisis (Maclean & Ewart, 2020). In the context of persuasive communication from the sender side, each leader has its own 'unique' approach that has not been imitated by others while the message or content must be relevant and easy to understand for its audience. These two elements from communication perspectives has been foundation for the effective leaders especially on political leadership.

Perloff (2017) believes that when persuaders are about to speak of persuasion, the good ones will deliver it with charisma. In persuasion, charisma is an interesting element, but an enigmatic one, to be sure. Charismatic personality is one factor that can influence persuasion. Besides that, Kelman (1958) states that persuaders as communicators have three fundamental characteristics, which are authority, credibility and social attractiveness. *First*, Authority. Authority is individuals tending to have behavior where they listen carefully and adopt obediently what authorities tell them to do. They are willing to adopt a particular behavior even though individuals could not agree with its content, but rather because they expect "to earn specific incentives by conforming and to escape specific punishments or disapproval.

*Second*, credibility. Credible persuaders make them easily adopt their messages. The quality of the persuaders does count in persuasion. Persuaders are considered credible if they are perceived having expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill. *Third*, Social attractiveness. Social attractiveness has three characteristics adopted by persuaders (Perloff, 2017) in the following points, they are (1) Likability, defined as like someone who is just so nice and appealing you cannot reject what he says, (2) Similarly, is a communicator who shares your values or perspective or dresses like you more apt to change attitudes than one who does not, (3) Physical Attractiveness, which is people laugh at your jokes and interact with you in such a way that it is easy to be socially skilled if you are pretty or handsome (Boyle et al., 2009).

Perloff (2017) states that the message—what you say and how you say it—influences people. Persuaders' message needs to be in such a way that the audience thinks “What’s In It For Me?”. Message has three elements which are message structure, message content, and language. Message content will be the focus for this research, which is the content of the communicator—its appeals and arguments. There are four types of message content, namely (a) Evidence, to substantiate persuaders' claims; (b) Case Histories, to present vivid case histories to evoke stronger mental images; (c) Fear Appeal, a persuasive communication is an approach to make scary individual due to changing their attitudes by showing up negative consequences that will happen if they do not following the message statement; and (d) Guilt, a persuasive communication to make people be empathic, reminds the audience that in action is contradictory with their moral norms and convinces them that feelings of remorse can be minimized (Perloff, 2017).

## Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with constructivist paradigm. The method for this research is textual data analysis by Bailey et al., (2018). They suggests to work through an analysis plan that could focus on the task and perform the result by providing a guide to review the progress. The unit analysis of this study is the text of speech by Justin Trudeau, which was delivered on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the United Nations General Assembly. The speech took 12.14 minutes long. There were 1396 words, 56 paragraphs, and 90 sentences and some who match the criteria on the theory will be analyzed. The primary data supporting the research are the text of speech and Source and Message Factors by Richard Perloff.

The secondary uses communication journals, articles, and official websites from the Internet. There are several core tasks by Bailey et al. (2018), which have been discussed by them in the cycle of analysis due to describe, compare, categorize, and make a concept for theory development. These tasks are closely interlinked through a circular manner, with the flow often repeated and conducted altogether.

## Result and Discussion

As the prime minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau has shown his authority and credibility in real works. Over the world, media often talk about him in both ways; how he works and how attractive he is. The authority that he adopts as a prime minister is shown by how he makes agreement about world's issues, especially the refugee crisis. He has the authority to open Canada's doors for Syrian refugees fleeing war and persecution. On December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Prime Minister welcomed Syrian refugees to Canada on Thursday night at Pearson International Airport. The Government of Canada itself has planned to resettle 25,000 Syrians refugees (News et al., 2016).



Figure 2. Prime Minister of Canada on the arrival of Syrian refugees at Pearson International Airport  
Source: News et al. (2016)

These real works are taken from the official website of the Prime Minister of Canada. It consists of the official statements from Justin Trudeau in addressing Canada's activities to the world. This can also be considered as government public relations done by Justin Trudeau as the prime minister in the form of public reporting. He has the authority to inform audiences that might lead to the credibility of the

message since the message is delivered by the one who has done the message itself. Perloff (2017) states that credible communicators are perceived as having expertise, trustworthiness, goodwill, dynamism, extroversion, sociability, and composure (Berlo et al., 1969; McCroskey & Young, 1981). By far the most important characteristics—the ones that have emerged in study after study or generated the greatest theoretical interest—are expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill. Based on the studies as a whole, one can conclude that one who is seen as an expert is a credible communicator, viewed as trustworthy, and demonstrates goodwill towards members of the audience.

The Justin Trudeau's credibility is shown by how he attended and agreed upon those agreements. Justin Trudeau, himself, as the prime minister of Canada, welcomed refugees arriving at Pearson International Airport on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015. The credibility that he gains from the audiences is proved by Justin Trudeau as the speaker, talking directly to the audiences why, how, and what he has been doing for his country. It is also proved by how he, the one who is dealing with the problem, can manage to not only depend on the representatives, like ministers, but also he, as the leader, puts himself in the situations. He has the credibility to show and prove how a leader of a country should become.

Perloff (2017) stated that reputation is an important factor in persuasion. But it is not the only function of a communicator that affects attitudes. Socially attractive communicators may also cause a change of mood towards those who are likeable, similar to message recipients, and physically attractive. As covered by People online magazine, that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made international headlines for his good looks and progressive policies. He also got along very well with former President Barack Obama. People give five things we need to know about Trudeau that explains how he captivated the former president—and the world (Pearl, 2017). The first is that he's a feminist (in his words and his actions). He turned heads when, following his victory, he named a 50 percent female cabinet. When he was asked why he thought that gender equality was relevant in his cabinet, he simply said, "Because it's 2015" (Pearl, 2017).

The second is that he is part of a political dynasty. From 1968 to 1979 and then again from 1980 to 1984, his father, Pierre Trudeau, was Canada's prime minister. Trudeau is a member of the country's Liberal Party, like his father (Pearl, 2017). Audiences who share the same political interest will tend to listen more to Justin Trudeau and believe in what he plans for Canada.



Figure 3. Pierre Trudeau and Justin Trudeau

Source: CBC Canada (2017)

The third is that he is a yogi. In a 2013 snap, he displayed some serious strength, balancing himself in the "peacock pose," with his legs entirely off the ground and his whole body weight balanced exclusively on his arms. The jokes come from People stating that: "Hey, if he can carry his body weight on his arms, then he can surely carry Canada's burdens on his shoulders" (Pearl, 2017).

The fourth one is that he understands quantum computing. When he visited the Perimeter Institute – Canada’s premier theoretical physics establishment, he was there to announce significant continued funding for their work. When a reporter prefaced a question to Trudeau to explain quantum computing, the response was more than he bargained for. The reporter got his explanation and quite a good one. The explanation he gave was clear, brief, and understandable to a non-specialist (Butterworth, 2016).

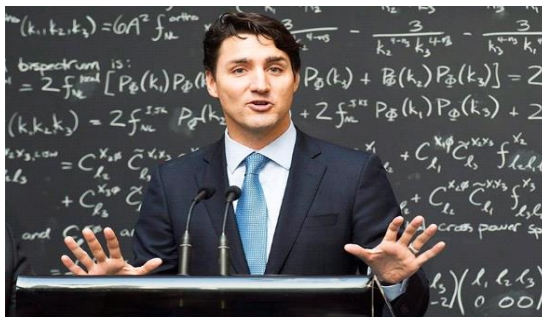


Figure 4. Justin Trudeau explains quantum computing  
Source: Denette (2016)

The fifth or the last one is that he is inked. On his left upper arm, he sports a large tattoo. Actually, the ink is two tattoos, positioned to form one together. The first is of the earth that Trudeau had at the age of 23. Seventeen years later, he was given a raven, illustrated by a Haida artist, Robert Davidson. Trudeau's tattoo is a source of pride for British Columbia's indigenous people, the Haida people. The president, Peter Lantin, said to the National Post that the fact that the prime minister has Haida art on him, of course we're proud of that (Pearl, 2017). The data from People magazine shows that Justin Trudeau is appealing for being similar to the message recipients. He is a feminist and not many leaders are. When he declared himself as a feminist, he has grabbed international attention. Film star as well as UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson and UN Women as the international organization concerning women commented on Justin Trudeau's "Because it's 2015" on Twitter (Frisk, 2015). He gave Canada a first cabinet with an equal number of men and women. As quoted by The Guardian, that the ministers – 15 women and 15 men – are mostly aged under 50, in a team marking both a generational change and a commitment to reflecting Canada's diversity (Murphy, 2015).



Figure 5. Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau has Named a Gender Equal Cabinet from  
Source: Frisk (2015)

As his father was also a late Canada prime minister, he has the same political interest with his father, which is Liberal party. People who share the same political interest will tend to be more accepting since they will be sharing the same values. His understanding about quantum computing also makes him become popular as he could give the explanation briefly and clearly to a non-specialist. Those who like and learn quantum computing will find this attractive as they have the same interest, which is quantum computing, and the prime minister not only announces significant continued funding for their work, but also understands a few from quantum computing. It will make them feel their work be appreciated by the leader of their country, Justin Trudeau.

The physical attractiveness that might be appealing is that when audiences know that he is a yogi and inked. This could become a rare thing for a prime minister to do and have. Some leaders around the world tend to live in their professionalism by acting professionally in front of the media. It works different ways on Justin Trudeau. He re-tweeted the photo of himself doing a yoga pose Mayurasana or also called “peacock pose” in April 2013 after it was published by Ottawa-based photographer Gregory Kolz with the caption, ‘JT is level-headed & able to bring Canada to new heights. That’s why he’s my choice for #Liberal Leader (News et al., 2016).



Figure 6. Justin Trudeau Doing Yoga Pose from  
Source: News et al. (2016)

As quoted by O’Neil from CBC News (2016) that “Canada’s “dreamy” Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is making the world swoon once again this week, simply by appearing in a photo from the past eventhough most people, there’s nothing simple about his achievement.” Justin Trudeau tends to be open and transparent about who he really is, as the prime minister of Canada, a father of three children, and as an individual. Not only about his yoga pose, but he also makes his tattoo on his left hand go public. In 2012, he tweeted about his tattoo, which is actually a combination of two tattoos.



Figure 7. Justin Trudeau Tweeted about His Tattoo  
Source: Benitz (2017).

Quoted from Ledbetter (2017) that “the Haida are native people that reside in the Haida Gwaii territory, British Columbia and parts of Alaska. Robert Davidson (referenced in the tweet) is a renowned Haida artist.” Peter Lantin, president of the Council of the Haida Nation told The National Post that he is proud of the Prime Minister wearing Haida art. His tattoos are featured in *Celebrity* by People magazine and *Hollywood Life*. Benitz (2017) stated that, “Meanwhile, memes with Justin’s pictures continue to make rounds. Several puns about his attractive appearance and enchanting character, and how he enraptures everyone he meets. Can you blame them? He was chosen as Canada’s PM in 2015 and proceeds as a beloved public figure. Justin had many careers, including education and boxing, before becoming a politician!”



Figure 8. Justin Trudeau's Tattoo  
Source: Benitz (2017)

The latest update on Justin Trudeau is when Rolling Stone puts Justin Trudeau on the cover of the August 2017 edition by Rodrick (2017) emphasizes, "And yet, we are half a world away. Join me as we visit a nation led by a man who wore a Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy T-shirt on national television, rode a unicycle and welcomed 40,000 Syrian refugees with open arms."



Figure 9. Justin Trudeau in Rolling Stone Cover  
Source: Rolling Stone (2017)

McCroskey & Teven (1999) highlights that factual statements originating from a source other than the speaker, objects not created by the speaker, and opinions of persons other than the speaker that are proposed in support of the speaker's claims. Reinard (1988) goes further, observing that, there actually may be more consistency in evidence research that can be found in almost any other area of persuasion. Evidence appears to produce general persuasive effects that appear surprisingly stable as it is described in the following paragraphs:

[8] I talked with people my age who were trying to be hopeful about their future, but found it tough to make ends meet, even when they were working full time.

[9] I heard from a frustrated young Canadian that he can't work because he doesn't have work experience, and he can't work because he doesn't have work.

[10] I heard from women and girls who still face inequality in the workplace and violence just because they are women, even in a progressive country like Canada.

[11] I met parents working hard to give their children every chance to succeed, but were afraid that their efforts won't be enough.

[12] And I had the opportunity to share meals with retired seniors who worked hard their whole lives and are now forced to rely on food banks.

[13] I've had too many distressing conversations with Canadians over the past few years. But they made something very clear to me.

These are considered as case histories, which is the other side of evidence. Social psychologists argue that people are frequently more influenced by concrete, emotionally interesting information than by dry, statistical data that are dear to the hearts of scientists and policy planners (Nisbet, Borgida, & Reed, 1976). Vivid case histories or narratives are emotionally engaging tales (not strictly factual) of the experiences of a person with a life problem. They are gripping anecdotes about how an individual or few people have dealt with a problem (Perloff, 2017). Paragraph 8 to 13 has represented the case histories done by Justin Trudeau. He has talked to people directly to get the sense of the problem and to listen directly to the problem in order to cope up easily with the issue.

To that end, Canadians have opened their arms and their hearts to families fleeing Syria's ongoing crisis in recent months. And those 31,000 refugees were greeted from the moment they arrived, not as burdens, but as neighbors and friends. New Canadians, like.

These sentences are considered as evidence or factual statements mentioned, done, and agreed by Justin Trudeau. He promised to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees and the result is far beyond that. Evidence consists of factual statements, quantitative information, eyewitness testimony, testimony, or opinion from credible sources (Perloff, 2017). Persuaders must do more than simply mention evidence: audience members must recognize that fact has been proposed in support of a proposition and perceive the evidence to be legitimate (Parrott, Silk, Dorgan, Condit, & Harris, 2005; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002).

Justin Trudeau has mentioned evidence from what he has done statistically. He mentioned his promise to open doors for more than 25,000 Syrian refugees has been proved by welcoming 31,000 Syrian refugees fleeing war and conflict. He has also mentioned factual assertions as part of the evidence that Canada has reengaged in global affairs, reaffirmed support for NATO and committed to expanding Canada's role in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Justin Trudeau could build his argument on the refugee crisis through the case histories and evidence presented by Justin Trudeau in his speech. After giving case histories done by himself when he is down to the roads and when he uses his authority to make agreements and investment, the audience will believe how he deals with the refugee crisis. It can also be seen by how he managed to talk about successful events that he has attended to agree upon and make investment in. When he talks about the refugee crisis, audiences will find his credible based on both his messages and how he could succeed. When the arguments are built, audiences might believe and adopt what Justin Trudeau has adopted for Canada.

Evidence and case histories, which have been presented by Justin Trudeau, relates to Aristotle's rhetoric, logos, the means of persuasion through logic, data, and statistics (Gallo, 2016). Justin Trudeau has used more than logical statements. He also has used various data such as factual statements, statistical data, quantitative information and testimonials advanced by himself. He walked down to the roads to talk to everyone by himself.

## Conclusion

Justin Trudeau has become a young inspiring leader to the world by what he has done to make Canada a strong and diverse country. His first year as a prime minister leaves a mark in the heart of Syrian refugees. When many leaders are apathetic and ignorant of refugees, he is willing to open Canada's arms and hearts to accept 25,000 refugees. It is proved as now Canada has accepted 44,620 Syrian refugees (Government of Canada, 2020). His speech is mostly to persuade audiences to do what Canada has been doing, which is right, not perfect. Justin Trudeau emphasizes that Canada gets a very important thing right, not perfect. To accept refugees, getting rid of fear, choosing diversity over division is what he is trying to make his citizens' think right about them. Besides his citizens, he also wants other countries to adopt and understand the importance of a strong and diverse country by accepting refugees. In his speech, he conveys that the result of accepting refugees is not the way other countries think will happen. He tries to prove that refugees should be treated the same as their citizens as they are also hoping the same hope and dreaming the same dream. Justin Trudeau builds his image as the prime minister who has authority, credibility, and social attractiveness at the same time. He builds his arguments on the refugee crisis by showing that he has proved his promises to welcome more than 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada.

The official website of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (pm.gc.ca) also becomes one of credibility components. The website consists of his statements about what he has agreed upon, what he is doing for Canada, and his current activities/itinerary. The transparency of his website that he builds is what makes him a credible persuader. His physical attractiveness has brought up his image when he is delivering his speech. As a young leader in the world with a good-looking and attractive face, he has captured entertainment news's attention to cover him, not only talking about politics, but his charming personality. His message content is full of proof that what he has done before he tries to make people do what he is saying. He cites evidence and case histories about what he has done and been doing. Communication and persuasion skills are highly needed because the refugee crisis has become a problem that many world's leaders have been denying to accept. Justin Trudeau tries to convince them to make sure that Canada has no problem in accepting Syrian refugees and that means there should not be any problems for other countries too. In the end, to drive the world adapting to what Justin Trudeau has done must be by verbal communication that many worlds' leaders are able to listen to no matter how far they are from Canada.

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