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- **Part One: AIMS latest research paper - Could Do Better 3: Grading Atlantic Canada's 2006/2007 Provincial Finances AIMS.**
- **Part Two: It's budget season, but where are the tax cuts?**
- **Part Three: Turning off the Robin Hood act.**
- **Part Four: 2006 Census reflects AIMS analysis – Atlantic Canadian population is in decline, it's time for action.**
- **Part Five: Atlantica – delivering results.**
- **Part Six: Canada in Afghanistan: Lessons learned.**

Part One: AIMS latest research paper – Could Do Better 3: Grading Atlantic Canada's 2006/2007 Provincial Finances.

Could Do Better 3 is proof of the troubling trend that is keeping Atlantic Canadians either in the poorhouse or on the way to Fort McMurray; governments have not learned the lessons that out of control spending increases and crushing debt should have taught them. Lower taxes, spending restraint and fiscal prudence are the way to prosperity.

Could Do Better 3: Grading Atlantic Canada's 2006/2007 Provincial Finances by David Murrell and Ian Munro, analyzes the state of provincial finances and finds them lacking.

Murrell, a professor of economics at the University of New Brunswick said, "There were some improvements last year in certain areas for the region overall, but tighter fiscal discipline, especially in terms of controlling spending and avoiding budget deficits, is essential if we are to head down the road to prosperity."

Could Do Better 3 is the third annual review of budget performance in Atlantic Canada and grades the public finances – based on the budgets for the 2006/07 fiscal year – of the Atlantic Provinces relative to each other and to the Canadian average.

The region's overall grade is a C, identical to the C it got for the last fiscal year. . Thus the champagne will stay on ice for at least another year. The overall grades for the individual Atlantic provinces remain sub-par, except in New Brunswick which managed to meet the national average of C+.

To read the complete paper, [click here](#).

Part Two: It's budget season, but where are the tax cuts?

During this budget season AIMS expertise has been called on before and after budgets to provide informed comment on fiscal measures taken by Ottawa and the provincial governments. The message has been consistent; governments need to control spending, cut taxes and balance the budget making the country and our region attractive for investment and job growth.

One out of three is not good enough. To date, the budgets have fallen short. Governments appear to understand the balancing act, but not the control or the cutting.

In a series of articles and op/eds AIMS Director of Research Ian Munro and acting President Charles Cirtwill provide in-depth analysis of the measures taken and the impact on taxpayers and the economy.

To read the complete budget coverage, [click here](#).

Part Three: Turning off the Robin Hood act

The dust has yet to settle on the federal budget and may not for a while with provincial governments arguing over equalization and Accords. However, columnists across the country are once more examining that all too Canadian programme called equalization.

Many turned to AIMS for insight from its wealth of papers and Commentaries on the topic, including Neil Reynolds in The Globe and Mail. He used AIMS recent special Commentary series on Equalization to point out that equalization is becoming a little more equal for all.

To read the complete column, [click here](#).

To read more of AIMS special Commentary series on equalization, [click here](#).

Part Four: 2006 Census reflects AIMS analysis – Atlantic Canadian population is in decline, it's time for action.

Optimistic analysis of the 2006 Census data shows Atlantic Canada's population as close to stagnant, realistically there's a slight decline. This echoes what AIMS' forecast several years ago.

The shrinking population is already making the labour shortage more acute and causing severe difficulties in certain sectors of the economy. The declining population figures make it clear this problem is only going to get worse.

AIMS acting President Charles Cirtwill was called upon often for analysis as AIMS studies on Atlantic Canadian demographic challenges were routinely cited in the media. He responded to a number of newspaper and radio interview requests with concrete policy solutions to the growing problems of a shrinking population:

"We need to create an environment that encourages people to stay. Advertising campaigns and billboards in Alberta are not enough. The fact of the matter is we don't have the economic opportunities, our taxes are too high and our services are not up to par. That needs to change."

To read more on this topic, [click here](#).

Part Five: Atlantica – Delivering results.

In this article from the Times and Transcript AIMS Senior Policy Analyst Stephen Kymlicka explains the economic realities moving Atlantica forward and how increased publicity of late serves to highlight the opportunities available to Atlantic Canadians.

Kymlicka shows that the scope of Atlantica success stories ranges from organizations like the Gulf of Maine Council that protect our living environment to Atlantic Canadian companies like Cymbals or Cherryfield Foods that have grown and expanded thanks to open markets.

“The bottom line is that Atlantica is about neighbours finding common solutions to common problems.... It is about neighbours building an economy that can sustain itself.”

To read the complete article, [click here](#).

Part Six: Canada in Afghanistan – Lessons learned

AIMS Security and Defence Intern, Alex Wilner analyses Canada’s role in Afghanistan in this Commentary; *Self-Interest or Self-Importance: Afghanistan’s Lessons for Canada’s Place in the Modern World*. He highlights elements of recent policy debate and media focus on Canada’s role in Afghanistan that have been misconstrued.

Wilner points out that Afghanistan is well on its way to political, economic, and social recovery with the exception of the South of the country where conflict pits international and Afghan forces against a revisionist bloc espousing a return to the decades of fractious and brutal terror. Ensuring that battle is won is of the utmost importance for Afghanistan but also for Canada in that terrorist organizations operating there have repeatedly targeted Canada for attacks.

For Canada the lesson then becomes one of patient resilience in facing a compounding threat. A renewed al Qaeda foothold in Afghanistan strengthens the organization’s ability to attack Canadians domestically and internationally. In response, Canadian citizens should expect their government to dispatch all diplomatic and military means to confront the threat leaching from Afghanistan. To do otherwise invites considerable insecurity.

To read the complete Commentary, [click here](#).

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