

Justin Trudeau sworn in as Canada's new Prime Minister

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Toronto: Justin Trudeau was sworn in Wednesday as Canada's new Liberal prime minister, and his new cabinet ministers vowed to honor campaign pledges to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of the year.

Trudeau, the son of the late iconic Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, also promised a less controlling style of "government by Cabinet" after almost 10 years of Conservative rule under Stephen Harper.

"Government by Cabinet is back," Trudeau said, vowing to have an open and transparent government. Power in Harper's government was centered around his office.

The Cabinet held its first meeting Wednesday and then faced the media — a departure from the Harper era. Harper Cabinet meetings were held in secret and ministers never spoke after them.

Immigration Minister John McCallum said it remains the new government's "firm objective" to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada before the end of the year.

"I think we will find a great desire across the country to help us achieve this objective," McCallum said. "I will be working very hard to achieve that goal."

Harper had declined to resettle more Syrian refugees, despite the haunting image of a drowned 3-year-old boy washed up on a Turkish beach that focused global attention on the migrant crisis stemming from the civil war. The boy had relatives in Canada.

Judy Foote, the new Minister of Public Services and Procurement, also said the Trudeau government will honor its campaign pledge not to buy the next generation F-35 fighter jets from Lockheed Martin's troubled Joint Strike Fighter program.

The F-35 is the U.S. Pentagon's most expensive weapons program, aiming to replace a wide range of existing aircraft for the U.S. and several partner countries.

Canada had previously talked about buying 65 jets from the program, but Trudeau has said he wants a cheaper option.

The 43-year-old Trudeau, a former school teacher and member of Parliament since 2008, became the second youngest prime minister in Canadian history.

His father served as prime minister from 1968 to 1984 with a short interruption and remains one of the few Canadian politicians known in other countries.

"I think of my father and how pleased he must be that Canada so firmly came together around an ambitious vision for the country that we presented," Trudeau said.

"But my thoughts today, sorry Dad, aren't mostly on him, but with my own kids and the kids across Canada. We are going to work very hard to ensure we have a better future."

The new prime minister now has the chance to restore his father's Liberal legacy, providing a generational change in

the party's leadership.

Most of Trudeau's Cabinet members are between the ages of 35 and 50. He said he's appointed a Cabinet that looks like Canada.

Former failed Liberal leader Stephane Dion, who lost an election for the party previously, is the new foreign affairs minister while Toronto businessman Bill Morneau is the new finance minister. Harjit Sajjan, a former Canadian soldier, Afghanistan war veteran and police officer, is the new defense minister.

Chrystia Freeland, a former media executive and author, is the new trade minister.

Women make up half of the Cabinet. Asked why gender balance is important, Trudeau said: "Because it's 2015."

Trudeau talks often about "sunny ways" and ran a campaign with an optimistic theme.

His youthful demeanor and enthusiasm also provides a sharp contrast with the sober and dour Harper, who stepped down as prime minister just ahead of the swearing-in ceremony.

Trudeau's victory should improve Canada's ties with the United States. Harper was angered by President Barack Obama's reluctance to approve the Keystone XL pipeline from Alberta to Texas and it damaged relations. Although Trudeau supports the pipeline, he argues relations should not hinge on the project.

Harper, one of the longest-serving Western leaders, fought hard to reverse the image of a liberal Canada, cutting corporate and sales taxes and removing Canada from a climate change agreement.

Trudeau, by contrast, tapped into an appetite for change with a plan to reject austerity and spend billions on infrastructure, running deficits for three years to do so.

Trudeau has a busy agenda ahead with four global conferences to attend, including the G-20 summit in Turkey and the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris.

Newly named Cabinet minister Dominic LeBlanc, the leader of the government in the House of Commons, said Parliament will return Dec. 3. LeBlanc said Trudeau wants a promised middle class tax cut in place Jan. 1. Taxes on those who make more than \$200,000 will go up as part of the plan.

- AP