



**CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE**  
**INSTITUT CANADIEN DES AFFAIRES MONDIALES**

# **Unpacking Canada's New Defence Policy**

## **The Path to Strong, Secure, Engaged**

Conference Report  
October 4, 2017

# CONFERENCE REPORT

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## **UNPACKING CANADA'S NEW DEFENCE POLICY: THE PATH TO STRONG, SECURE, ENGAGED**

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## WELCOME REMARKS

*Colin Robertson, CGAI*

Colin Robertson welcomed the guests and provided introductory comments about the topics of discussion. He also urged young women interested in national defence and security to apply for the joint Women in Defence & Security (WiDs) and CGAI Fellowship located on the CGAI website.

### PANEL 1: THE EVOLUTION IN NORTH AMERICAN DEFENCE POLICY

*Moderated by Lindsay Rodman, Council on Foreign Relations & CGAI Fellow*

*Introductory comments by Maj.-Gen. W.F. Seymour, Chief of Staff, Canadian Joint Operations Command*

Maj.-Gen. Seymour set the scene for the new NATO defence policy by charting how threats have changed from the Second World War to the Cold War to 9/11. Now, the major threats facing North America are terrorist attacks and ballistic attacks from North Korea. The new defence policy is a strategic doctrine with the slogan “Strong, Secure and Engaged” (SSE). Today’s ever-changing security threats require Canada to have a new defence policy that enshrines the idea of being strong at home and engaged in the rest of the world. Being strong at home impacts our relationship with North America and enhances our presence in the North. It requires investing in key capabilities and platforms, such as ships. This will improve Canada’s presence in the Arctic and secure our presence in North America. It also requires investing in a new fighter fleet. Doing so will enhance our sovereignty and security in the North. Moreover, being engaged in the world means that Canada deploys in co-operation with other states. Canada must respond to Canadian directives in conjunction with other states like the U.K., U.S., France, etc. By engaging in the world, Canada increases its continental security as co-operation with other states increases peace and security abroad.

*Remarks from Rob Huebert, University of Calgary*

The new Canadian defence policy is not an evolution of defence policies but a return to Mulrone-era policies that focus on traditional security. This relates to the Arctic, which has become an area of interest due to climate change. Previously, there was co-operation among the eight Arctic states, unlike any other area. However, Canada’s relations with Russia have been challenged by the return-to-power politics and ballistic missiles. NORAD, in this new reality, is undergoing substantial redevelopment in areas such as surveillance, operations and equipment. NORAD’s Arctic-capable force will modernize Canada’s air force capability in the Arctic. This modernization will require a readjustment in priorities and a shift in our overall defence policy.



*Remarks from Dr. Joel Sokolsky, Royal Military College of Canada*

There is an argument that the modernization of NORAD will change the nature of how Canadian defence policy is viewed. It seems that the world needs more Canada in it, but Canada can only give as much as it can afford. International security, though, seems to be one area where if there is a problem Canada is expected to be present and engaged (i.e., in Africa), but the reality is Canada must choose whether to be active or not. Canadians like to see their country active in the world, and the new defence policy emphasizes this desire. Within our new defence policy Canada retains a measure of discretion. However, in the event that North America requires more resources, that discretion might become less measured. Canada can protect North America, but it may come at the cost of giving up other actions elsewhere in the world due to a lack of resources.

*Remarks from Dr. Andrea Charron, University of Manitoba*

The modernization of NORAD is a priority, but the allocation of money is absent from the new defence policy. Improving technology is expensive. There are some technological improvements that would enhance our Arctic security; for example, improving the Canadian Air Defence ID Zone. This could be extended to cover more of the Arctic. Other technologies that could be improved are the Canadian command and control systems. NORAD needs an Air Component Commander who is responsible for any air task orders. Improving Canadian technology is necessary to address gaps in the NORAD warning system and the NATO system. Last, Canada is not immune to national disasters, as we are being called to help in the U.S. It is imperative that this also be considered as part of NORAD's modernization.

*Remarks from Richard Fadden, former deputy minister of National Defence and former director of CSIS*

The change in the Canadian defence policy is seen in its tone, enthusiasm and emphasis. The change is an effect of the international environment which pushes governments in different directions. However, even though the policy incorporates new concepts, it seems it lacks actual points of action. This is because governments tend to avoid stipulating their points of action in their policies so as not to be locked into a specific position. That said, the defence policy is mainly a procurement and fiscal paper that provides the means for the acquisition of "toys for the boys". Government can do a lot to assist in the policy's implementation. There are issues with the Arctic, and the main issue is with missile defence. There is a lack of guidance within the new defence policy concerning what is to happen after a crisis, which is the worst time to discuss crisis control. One solution to the threat of missiles is the use of radar systems to monitor their approach.



## Question & Answer

Q: If you could have written the part on missile defence, what would you have added?

*Joel Sokolsky*

We feel the more powerful these weapons become, the more we have to do something.

*Andrea Charron*

Maybe we should look at other ways we can help with missile defence, in the sense that there are other means of technology that can assist in Canada's defence.

*Rob Huebert*

It was not until 9/11 that we determined terrorism was a problem. Canada has a hard time understanding why anyone would want to harm it, so when it comes to defending our territory we do not feel threatened.

*Richard Fadden*

The sheer potential for our cities to be hit by missiles should indicate that we need to do more than have policy.

Q: Where is Canada on threats? Where should it be?

*Richard Fadden*

The Russian expansionism is a threat to NATO. They have altered their deterrence and nuclear power and are expanding into the Arctic as they said they would. Now we have to respond. The difference is in what we assumed was the Canadian/Russian relationship. The defence policy has the right idea in what it says we should do, but we have to be aware that the Russians are going to do what they need to do to retain power. They can use various instruments of force to assert power that will impact us, but will not be directed at us.

*Joel Sokolsky*

The Russians will test the alliance of NATO. For Canada, the challenge becomes how far does Article 5 go? If the conflict escalates, it is not clear if the West stands together.

*Andrea Charron*

NORAD has a unique ability to work with U.S. commands. NORAD encompasses three mandates, but perhaps it should also include cyber- and land security as well.

*Rob Huebert*

Russia is not about to invade from the Arctic, maybe from other environmental aspects, but not from the Arctic, and they are not about to declare war. They will probe in Europe. This is because



the Russians' goal is to remain in power and they cannot achieve this if they start an international conflict.

#### Question & Answer

Q: Did the new defence policy get it right or are there areas lacking?

A: It appears that the defence policy is lacking in the realm of cyber-security, especially considering this is an emerging area of concern for national security.

Q: Since our sovereignty is not recognized in the Arctic, are we only to be worried about kinetic invasion?

A: The issue is with Russia emerging as an Arctic hegemon. They will use many means to poke and prod which will not always be kinetic in nature, and therefore are not solely the responsibility of the military. More specifically, the military should not be in charge of cyber-issues. What we need is a broad defence policy that is focused on what is to be done with the Arctic, space, etc., as these are areas of sensitivity. Furthermore, we often do things for the sake of national image which results in sending our troops into dangerous situations. This is something that should be avoided.

## CONVERSATION ABOUT CAPABILITIES

*Participants: Rear Admiral Darren Hawco, Chief of Force Development, Department of National Defence, and Lt.-Gen. (retired) D. Michael Day, CGAI*

Rear Admiral Darren Hawco and Lt.-Gen. D. Michael Day discussed the use of strategic foresight as it pertains to the Canadian Armed Forces. The purpose of looking at future trends is to be able to illuminate mysteries internal to the Forces. There are three objectives: 1) looking to procure real military ability; 2) desire for greater good and economic ability; and 3) desire for positive political effect. The defence policy review described what needs doing and how to do it. This is called defence-based planning. It requires individuals to look 15 years ahead – typically, three election cycles – at what types of threats there will be at that time. The individuals tasked with determining these new threats must imagine certain scenarios and factor in where, when, why and how. The end result is the ability to determine what type of action can be taken as this exercise identifies the gaps that need to be filled in investment and development, in order to prepare for future threats.

Some kind of defence policy review was likely, and so the review's early stages began with a developed body of work that identified the strengths and weaknesses, and the known areas that need investment. The goal of this defence-based planning was to have a multi-purpose force with modern technology. The next step was to play out what-if scenarios. This was done to understand how things change and determine what will be needed as well as what it will mean for the public. Then, the review presented those insights to the concerned parties. They were able to see what would happen if the Forces did not modernize. It is difficult to argue with the insights when you can visualize the reality.



The result was the conclusion that it is imperative that Canada be modernized, but it must be understood that Canada cannot be futurized. Canada's modernization is achieved by looking at where investments are being placed. Space is one of those areas. The problem is that Canada is not investing enough in leading-edge capabilities.

#### Question & Answer

Q: When we talk about capabilities we have to talk about threats. Among our top threats are environmental ones, not terrorism. Why is it that when you look at international policy on distribution of resources, the majority of spending is allocated to security? There really are no military actions to be taken against environmental threats, so why invest in security and not development?

A: Military capabilities are not merely kinetic, which is embedded in “Strong, Secure and Engaged”.

Q: Does the new defence policy on capabilities and demand reflect the old provisions of 553 – which is the tribal division of who (Army, Navy, Air Force) gets what and when?

A: The visualization of each option was presented to leaders so that they can see the collective good across the clusters. If you look at the investment requirements for the three services they are all different, therefore the distribution among them will be different. Some have smaller technological requirements while others have larger.

Q: How do you track and understand future developments?

A: That is achieved through significant work with our allies to see what it means in the field. We want to make sure we have abilities that work across states. However, we encounter a practical challenge when incorporating the new technology quickly.

Q: How did you look at the organizational structure?

A: The current structures work well. A refinement to our current organizational structure was not considered necessary to “Strong, Secure and Engaged”. Additionally, you cannot move all capabilities at the same time. You must decide which ones get priority and whether the industry can handle it. An assessment of the roadblocks is necessary to prioritize and continuously adjust to changes.



## LUNCH KEYNOTE

*Jody Thomas, Senior Associate Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence*

Canada's new defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged" (SSE) has altered the way in which defence and its policy are provided and paid for by the Canadian government. While maintaining the classical triduum of Canadian defence priorities – those being: first, Canada; second, North America and third, the world – it has been resolved to pursue each goal with a new scope, funding and execution, which were not present in earlier formulations of Canadian defence policy.

The defence policy was formulated in response to robust and far-reaching consultation with the Canadian public. Public consultation was undertaken not only by Minister of Defence Harjit Sajjan and his staff, but also by individual members of Parliament within their constituencies. Furthermore, the SSE's release, just days after Canada's new foreign policy, signalled that the government was going to use the SSE to pursue the policy objectives laid out within the new foreign policy. To achieve these goals, the SSE invests in the procurement of big-ticket items – such as 88 fighter jets, and 15 surface combatants – as well as reinvesting in core and future capabilities. The SSE is about caring for its personnel; its implementation will result in the growth of both the regular and reserve forces. In addition, its commitment to future capabilities is evident in its promise for investment in cyber-security, and in its commitment to the creation of the new Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security (IDEaS) program. The IDEaS program will establish a forum where industry and academic professionals can work together toward innovating the Canadian defence sector.

The SSE's ambitions are matched to a new funding and accounting project, which makes it monetarily feasible to undertake a defence policy of this scope. Ultimately, SSE is looking to increase the defence budget to \$62.3 billion, of which three-quarters shall be used for capital purchases and one-quarter for operations. It has also been decided that the SSE would use an accrual basis to calculate the costs of all capital investments so as to account for the total costs of capital investments from purchase to cessation. Furthermore, the SSE's stated goal is to achieve a defence budget of 1.4 per cent of the national GDP by 2025 – current expenditure of GDP on defence is roughly one per cent. The use of the accrual funding model and outside financial firms assures that all funding estimates are accurate, and that the SSE is indeed affordable.

To ensure that the SSE can be properly executed over its lifetime, the Canadian government has committed to a re-evaluation of the SSE investment plan that occurs once every three years. The plan will re-evaluate defence procurement and spending to assure that it is in line with the SSE. Accompanying the defence investment plan is accrual financing, which will enable the process of defence spending and investment to become more transparent to the public, thus making it easier to execute. There is no question that the SSE is ambitious in scope and in funding; however, the government is optimistic that it will be undertaken and executed properly while following its mandate.



## PANEL 2: CANADA'S FUTURE DEFENCE FUNDING

*Moderated by David Perry*

*Introductory comments by Brigadier General Werner Liedtke*

Canadian investment in defence procurement has been challenging, historically. The new defence policy “Strong, Secure, Engaged” (SSE) moves defence financing and purchase from a cash to an accrual basis. The transfer to an accrual basis ensures that capital projects do not lose funding. Projects that were once based on cash capital such as the Integrated Soldier System project have been moved to an accrual envelope to account properly for all associated costs. The new costing methodologies underwent third-party review by firms such as Deloitte, assuring the government and the Canadian public that SSE is properly accounted for.

*Remarks from Dr. Craig Stone, Canadian Forces College*

When one looks back at the formulations of Canadian defence policy, it is evident that everything always costs more than originally accounted for. The main problem is that cost estimates are riddled with assumptions, and this is coupled with the reality that defence inflation is higher than regular inflation. Furthermore, operation and maintenance costs have been gradually increasing, and the new defence policy does not account for this trend. Finally, the business cycles of Canada run roughly on a 10-year cycle, and Canada is reaching the end of this cycle; when revenues become restricted the government will target defence budgets, as they have done in the past, and move them into other departments.

*Remarks from Ross Fetterly, Canadian Global Affairs Institute*

The government worked closely with the defence community to formulate SSE. This allowed the defence policy to reap four benefits: 1) government decisions on the necessary capabilities were clear and specific; 2) a procurement roadmap clearly lays out Canadian procurement priorities and a sequence to move it along; 3) the clear and distinct sequencing of the procurement allows the public to hold the government to account; and 4) capital equipment projects in SSE will be pulled through the bureaucracy with a consensus from government, rather than pushed through solely by the Department of National Defence (DND). The real question about defence spending and financing arises out of the government's decisions on aligning programs and meeting key procurement deadlines. It is great to have a properly accounted policy, but if the money is never spent and deadlines are never met then the Canadian Forces suffer.

*Remarks by Kevin Page, President and CEO of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy*

The Canadian economy is strong and doing well. Year-to-year growth is around four per cent, labour is strong and wage growth is healthy. The fiscal forecast looks healthy and the Canadian government should feel comfortable with the revenues coming in. This healthy forecast makes it fiscally permissible for the government to run upwards of \$10 billion deficits, which will allow the



government to comfortably reach roughly 1.5 per cent of GDP spending on defence. Canadian debt is sustainable and there is no reason why the Canadian government should not be able to keep running the deficits and attain the 1.5 per cent spending mark on defence, if it so wishes.

#### Question & Answer

**Q:** The Canadian government has enjoyed, traditionally, a two-for-one combination: that of announcing spending on defence, and then never spending on defence. Is the SSE transparent, and will it result in actual spending?

**A:** SSE was validated by key departments and an independent review panel. Furthermore, as (future) assistant deputy minister Jody Thomas said, there will be a defence investment plan review every three years, which allows the public to ask questions and track the movement of money from government to procurement.

**A:** On the other hand, one thing that is worrisome about tracking finances and holding the government to account is that for the 2016/2017 parliamentary budget there was no line for DND. The public therefore does not know exactly how much the government is spending yearly on defence.

**Q:** SSE relies on funding projections 10 years out from now. Over those 10 years, Canada will hit a recession and traditionally, the defence budget is slashed first. This is due to its high discretionary spending. Is it prudent for the government to propose funding a policy with investment increases over a 10-year period?

**A:** While the fiscal forecast is healthy for the federal government, the provinces are going broke. This will lead inevitably to a renegotiation between the federal and provincial governments, providing a major fiscal challenge which is unaccounted for in SSE.

**Q:** Is there a way to lock in government bipartisan support for SSE to ensure that there is consistency?

**A:** There is no real solution to the issue of bipartisan support for the defence policy. Naturally, governments run on a five-year election cycle and cater their priorities as such. Defence procurement being upwards of that mark quite significantly – 10 to 20 years – means that it is still a problem within Canadian defence policy which is not exactly solvable. There is hope that accrual financing and new accountability structures will make it easier for bipartisan support of the new defence policy



## **PANEL 3: CREATING AN INNOVATIVE DEFENCE SECTOR: NEW IDEaS AND APPROACHES**

*Moderated by Maj.-Gen. (retired) Doug Dempster, Telfer School of Management*

*Introductory comments by Dr. Marc Fortin, Assistant Deputy Minister (Science & Technology), Department of National Defence*

Today's environment requires more research and development as a result of threats becoming more complex. In the 1970s roughly 30 per cent of research was done outside of federal labs, compared to now where only eight per cent is. No organization has a monopoly on ideas. Furthermore, Canada has not been the best at innovation and it is important to talk about potential reform of innovation practices. Currently, Canada invests about \$1 billion and this is decreasing. Canada needs investment because innovation will enable the Forces to have the strategic advantage that they need to secure Canada effectively against potential threats. Additionally, it is important that Canada create a more diverse innovation system by funding different relations and stakeholders. Finally, Canada needs to generate new concepts to challenges facing defence and security, which can be done through recruitment (i.e., ideation competitions), support (i.e., supporting projects and creating innovation networks) and acceleration (i.e., technological maturation) of new ideas.

*Remarks from Dr. Craig Stone, Canadian Forces College*

The evolution of Canada's approach to innovation does not incorporate defence industrial policy. There is an evolution of the Canadian bureaucracy trying to improve connectivity between research and development which forces industry to figure out how to invest. Three issues need management. The first is how to create research clusters. These are necessary to bring academia and industry together as each sector has different points of view and they do not like each other. The second issue is in regard to innovation as a skills policy. Currently, innovation and strategic defence policy are mutually exclusive to one another when they need to be working in conjunction with one another. The third issue focuses on the need to leverage defence and procurement.. The work of industry needs to mesh with the government plan. Part of encouraging innovation can be accomplished through the promotion of small businesses and their interests. Small businesses are inherently more innovative. This will reduce costs and help to achieve different outcomes. Moreover, once the specific clusters have been determined (i.e., the areas in which innovation is desired), universities can delve into research in those areas which can be supported and encouraged by providing them with funding. In essence, increasing innovation requires the government to be a better customer.

*Remarks from Christyn Cianfarani, President and CEO, Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries*

The new defence policy is the first time that there is a link among national security, sovereignty and defence. It is the agility of procurement that leads to more innovation. IDEaS alone is not sufficient enough to drive innovation. When you have clusters and forced development, defence becomes the motivation. However, the motivation for large businesses is market demand. It is necessary to have a connection between the government's defence plan and the rest of the



government, which needs to be constructed around defence. The challenge to this is systemic as research and development and the tools they use are scattered. They have to be put together to improve the discrepancy between research and development. In order to accomplish this, mandate letters or objectives of the strategic committee must come from the highest level of government. The hypothesis is that in the next five to 10 years industry will be shaped accordingly, as it will either grow or shrink in nature.

#### Question & Answer

Q: What kind of risks is Canada willing to take and how do we mitigate failure?

A: Risk is necessary, and research and development are risky as they may not produce the desired outcome. An 80 per cent failure rate is normal. If risk is not taken, there is no reward. One must be prepared to justify why they invested in the project, and assume the risk while also mitigating issues appropriately. By only pursuing low-risk projects, Canada will not keep up with the fast pace of innovation.

Q: What is the effect on Canadian expenditures and research and development on the Bombardier plane being sold to the U.S.?

A: It is politics on both Canada's and the U.S.'s sides. It is an issue that has to be played out.

Q: Is innovation best suited for inside the government or within industry that focuses on the outcomes?

A: Researchers are into creating new ideas but require some other entity to fund and push the project forward. Innovation requires government support. It is also desirable for the government to partner with a conglomerate that knows who to go to in order to solve problems. This is not necessarily a conglomerate that does it all itself. Ideas are not solely produced by the innovation system. Ideas also require the procurement system because an individual is not going to want to invest if they do not know what the outcome will actually look like.

Q: Should we link our programs with those of other states?

A: There is a motive to share technology with our allies because one day Canada and the other states will not be able to do it all themselves. There is not enough scope in one country. Thus, the nature of the problem will force states to come together.

Q: Due to the parameters of intellectual property, how do we get large companies to invest?

A: There are certain topics, when it comes to intellectual property, for which the dissemination of the information revealed through research serves greater purpose when it is made public. An example is research on PTSD.



## AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

*Remarks from the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence*

The Canadian defence policy “Strong, Secure, Engaged” (SSE), began with a goal to make a defence policy which was relevant and credible. The Canadian government reached out to the public in consultation and assured the public that the costing of the policy was done appropriately. Proper consultation with the public resulted in the government’s ability to sell the new defence policy.

Since the approval of SSE in the spring of 2017, the project has begun to implement the promises made within the policy. The government used the summer to allow the chain of command to digest the new policy, and has since decided that the minister, deputy minister and chief of the defence staff will meet every six months to discuss the target priorities for the implementation of SSE. The implementation of these projects will use methods gleaned from the Five Eyes, which should allow the Canadian government to shorten the implementation time-frame. The government’s use of accrual financing will assure the defence community that financing will be available to all capital projects throughout their lifetimes.

Although no implementation plans with hard deadlines have been approved as of yet, the minister of National Defence and the government have decided that the chief of the defence staff will have control of creating and ultimately executing plans.

### Question & Answer

Q: In light of the changing strategic environment, away from asymmetric to symmetric threats, does Canada’s new defence policy have the capabilities necessary to fight in these traditional peer-to-peer environments?

A: The government argues that the SSE does not shift away from high-intensity conflict, but provides the military with the flexibility of force structures to be prepared for all types of conflict. The SSE is investing in air defence and anti-armour capabilities. The goal of the SSE is to make the Canadian Forces flexible and fully combat-capable. This flexibility relies on the trust that General Vance and his staff have done, and will do, great work.

Q: Is there anything you can do to make the defence policy multi-partisan?

A: The use of transparent costing measures will allow both the public and other political parties to understand the financial state of military expenditures from year to year. This will allow the present and future governments to demonstrate their costs and the reasoning behind said costs.

Q: In what way will the policy support the mental health of the Canadian Forces?

A: The defence policy is focused on people. A lot of time was spent in formulating the new defence policy to help personnel and their families. The minister of National Defence will be announcing



a project with the minister of Veterans Affairs soon on mental health, and the SSE will be investing heavily in research and development of techniques to combat mental health problems. \$4.5 million has been allocated through the defence engagement plan into research for master's and PhD programs.

**Q:** One of the key planks of the Canadian government in the last election was a promise to undertake peace operations. There has not been any announcement yet. What is our commitment to peace operations?

**A:** We must make responsible decisions and send troops where they can have an impact and make a difference. Leadership of the United Nations has changed, so now we are in a better situation for a whole of government and integrative approach for peace operations, which the Canadian government wants to provide. Although Canada has not yet joined peace operations, the government is still fully committed to getting Canadians into peace operations.

**Q:** What is the government policy toward the reserves and rerolling of the reserves for capabilities?

**A:** The Canadian government believes in the regimental structure for the reserves, and is not looking at changing it at this time. The government is looking at making the reserves more relevant, giving them tangible tasks to contribute to the mission of the armed forces. Ultimately, the goal is to make them more effective, but with no rerolling.

**Q:** Is the government reconsidering the creation of a facility for the training of United Nations peacekeeping groups?

**A:** It is clear that this is not the peacekeeping of the past. The government is looking at new and innovative initiatives for making an impact, and building up the effectiveness of our troops and others in peacekeeping operations.

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