

# **Leader's Debate Must Feature a Defence and Security Segment**

feat. BOB MILLAR

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The Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) and the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI) announced today that they strongly urge the Consortium of Broadcasters to include a segment on Defence and Security in the Leaders Debate on 12 April and 13 April.

In the midst of the current election campaign it is important to consider the fact that the Canadian Forces are deployed on dangerous duties in Afghanistan and in the NATO action to protect civilians in Libya. Moreover, the next government will face critical defence and security questions immediately after it enters office. Fundamental and sometimes expensive decisions will be required concerning the acquisition of the F35 fighter; Canada's Arctic sovereignty; the welfare of the Veterans, Canada's defence and security relations with the United States in North America and with our other alliances elsewhere; the development of a National Shipbuilding and Procurement Strategy to maintain our navy and the Coast Guard; and, plans and budgets to modernize Canadian Forces capabilities. It is incumbent upon the candidates to inform the public of their policies concerning Canada's ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and Libya, their plans for the Canadian Forces of the future whilst maximizing opportunities for Canadian industrial participation. It is important, therefore, that the Broadcast Consortium gives the candidates an opportunity to describe and debate their policies to provide for Canada's national defence.

The Leader's Debate televised in French and English is one of the key opportunities during the election campaign where Canadians can see, hear and contrast their leaders' views on Canada's position in the world, how our Forces will be used and equipped for the future. These considerations are directly related to the Foreign Affairs, Economic and International Development and Security policies that a future government will implement. These have a direct impact on the pocketbook of Canadians, who should know what international and domestic security initiatives a future government would finance.

"As an association dedicated to independent and informed public debate on defence and security issues, we urge the Broadcast Consortium to dedicate one of the six segments in the Leaders Debate to Foreign Policy, Defence and Security matters" said Alain Pellerin, the Executive Director of the Conference of Defence Associations.

"As we have seen, the world is an interconnected place and events that occur thousands of kilometres away can have impacts on Canada, Canadians, and our interests—security, prosperity and stable world order. As a key member of NATO, NORAD and the UN, Canada has a role to play in the world and Canadians should know how Canada's role will be defined" added Bob Millar, President of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute.

We have written to the Broadcast Consortium strongly urging the inclusion of Defence and Security issues that the Leaders will debate on 12 and 14 April.