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Thank you for inviting me to contribute to this important process – one which should take place far more often than it has. It is an opportunity to assess Canada’s role in the world, its ambitions, and the ability of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to help the government of Canada contribute to the global order and advance and protect Canadian interests. However, these defence reviews, or the less formal defence strategies which are periodically released, are only useful if they occur with some consistency. I would strongly urge the Canadian government to ensure the regular (e.g., annual, biennial, or quadrennial) publication of a ‘white paper’ or defence strategy document which communicates the government’s priorities, strategies, challenges, etc., to the public. Other governments around the world, including many of Canada’s allies and partners, regularly publish similar documents, which articulate their defence policies to both domestic and international audiences. The regular production of such a document is in keeping with the current government’s commitment to transparency, and would go a long way in helping those who study Canada’s foreign and defence policies understand the government’s intentions, rather than having to decipher them through other means. In many cases, the regular publication of these documents by our allies and partners is mandated by law; Canada should follow suit.

The greatest threat to Canada’s security comes from the challenges to the world order from which that security is derived and dependent. For example, in the Asia-Pacific, the regional balance of power and security architecture, to the extent it exists, is wrestling with the challenge of accommodating China’s rising power and its desire to see its interests and status reflected in the region’s *modus vivendi*. The consequences for how this process of accommodation is managed extend far beyond the region itself, and bears directly on the security of Canada and its strategic and economic interests around the world. If China is able to unilaterally re-write the rules and norms in the region through its so-called land reclamation projects in the South China Sea, much as Russia has done with its annexation of Crimea and use of irregular warfare in eastern Ukraine, the fabric of the international order which has existed since the end of World War II begins to tear. On the issues facing Canadian partners and allies in the Asia-Pacific, Canada has had little to say, and that is a mistake.

While it is well known that the CAF lacks the material capability to maintain a sustained presence in the region, particularly as the RCN undergoes a major revitalization, it has not leveraged its capacity to engage the region in other ways. Defense diplomacy, coupled with the consistent engagement from Global Affairs Canada (for example), enables Canada to defend its principles and values, as well as the stability of the regional (and global) order which secures its economic and strategic interests. Canada’s defence partners, including the United States, Australia, and Japan, work to bolster relationships with other states in the region, enhancing mutual capabilities and interoperability, and promoting professionalism and peaceful conflict resolution as tensions over territorial claims increase. While Canada and the CAF have helped countries in the region respond to natural disasters (the Philippines in 2013 and Nepal in 2015), there has been no persistent effort to engage the region or its current challenges, despite its importance to Canada’s economic and strategic interests. And so while successive Canadian governments attempt to obtain membership to regional institutions like the East Asia Summit or the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus, and regularly highlight the region’s growing economic importance, Canada’s potential influence is muted by its lack of consistent engagement. If Canada cannot be there with ships or planes, it should be there with other assets. Given the country’s history of helping states in the region respond to natural disasters, elements from the CAF DART can offer their expertise in emergency response and management, while simultaneously improving interoperability and the efficiency of future deployments. Elements of CANSOFCOM can work with regional allies and partners to improve their maritime security capabilities, counter-terrorist response readiness, and other vital mission sets. The RCN and RCAF can more actively engage with China’s People Liberation Army

(PLA), and other regional militaries, to promote trust and transparency, bolstering efforts to develop stable military relations in the region by the U.S. and other Canadian defence partners. The CAF, in conjunction with other elements of the Canadian government, can host regional talks to diffuse tensions, similar to the role Canada played in the 1990s before financial support for these efforts was cut (yet another sign of our inconsistent engagement with the region). Canada should be consistently present in the region, to the furthest extent possible, working with its partners and allies to uphold the regional and global order and maintain stability in an economically vital part of the world. These efforts should ideally be supported by the deployment of material assets, such as ships to help patrol sea lanes, and Canada should strongly consider investing in a Navy that can not only defend its three coast lines, but engage meaningfully in the regions so central to the country's future, such as the Asia-Pacific.

The challenges facing Canada and its allies are not limited to the waters in the East or South China Seas or the borders of Eastern Europe, but extend into the cyber and space domains, as well. Canada has grappled with the challenges of state-sponsored cyber intrusions against both public and private sector institutions. In conjunction with its Five Eyes allies, Canada should ensure it has the capabilities to defend its cyber and space-based assets and networks from attacks and intrusions. While it should work with its Five Eyes allies to develop systems and technologies to do this, Canada should have the ability to defend itself independently, should the need arise. Maintaining a level of interoperability with our allies, particularly in the increasingly vital sectors of cyber and space-based platforms, is essential to securing Canada's long-term security. While it cannot compete with the investments of its larger allies like the United States or the United Kingdom, Canada must maintain a level of proficiency and interoperability which ensures it continues to play a vital role in the Five Eyes alliance.

Canada is not a major military power, in the same way as the United Kingdom, the United States, or potential rivals like Russia and China. That said, Canada remains an *important* military power. In addition to the CAF's professionalism and expertise, Canada is respected as a principled country, known for its diplomatic tact as much as its ferocity on the battlefield. This is Canada's strength and the one which should be leveraged to advance the country's goals and defend its interests abroad. Investing in a capable military is central to this strategy, and to that end, the government of Canada should commit to a minimum 1.5% of GDP investment in its defence forces, while striving to reach the 2% NATO goal. Expanding the RCN, in terms of physical assets and personnel, should be a priority. In addition to the three coasts it must protect at home, the most pressing security challenges of the near-future are in the maritime domain, as evidenced by the increasing tensions in the East and South China Seas. Canada should not have to rent supply ships from Chile or convert commercial ships to meet the country's operational needs.

Canada has an important role to play in maintaining and defending stability and security abroad. The government of Canada, and the CAF, should be more assertive in responding to the challenges to the stability of the global order upon which Canada's future depends. While some have argued that Canada's security interests in the Asia-Pacific are minimal, and so there is little to gain from 'rocking the boat', Canada cannot separate its economic interests from the security challenges currently facing the region. Canada can, and should, confront China's attempts to re-draw the map in the Asia-Pacific just as it has committed itself to pushing back against a resurgent Russia in Eastern Europe. It is possible, and necessary, for the government of Canada to stand up for Canadian values and interests while still maintaining its reputation as an 'honest broker'. Canada need not be antagonistic or unnecessarily provocative. However, the current silence on the tensions in the South and East China Seas cannot continue. Whether it chooses to act as an independent mediator or to partner with its many defence allies currently engaged in the region, Canada must speak up.