

June 16, 2016

The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan
Minister of National Defence
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0K2

Minister,

You invited me to share my thoughts on Canada's defence policy and I thank you for this. Rather than addressing all the dimensions, allow me to focus on four areas in which I have developed some expertise, demonstrated by the obtaining of research grants and the publication of scientific works.

First of all, the question of burden-sharing in peace operations. Over the past 20 years, Canada has not distinguished itself through its contribution to UN operations. If a strong commitment for a few years in Afghanistan could suggest the opposite, the same assessment applies to NATO, while agreements with the European Union regarding civil-military crises management remain largely untapped. While crises multiply, particularly in the French-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa, raising high expectations in relation to the Canadian effort within the international community, the question of our military contribution to peacekeeping deserves to be asked again.

Next, the question of European security. I worked for 15 years on this region, which we thought peaceful until Russia reaffirmed its ambitions, Turkey slid into a quasi-state of civil war, and jihadist terrorism was implanted in several European countries. In the coming years, Canada will have to decide if it will continue its support in principle for membership of the countries of the former Soviet Union, if it will accompany this with concrete measures of support to Eastern European NATO member countries, or if it will reconsider the essentially "normative" and disengaged strategy it has adopted since the departure of troops from Bosnia.

Third, the military equipment procurement policy. With colleagues such as Srdjan Vucetic, Stefanie von Hlatky, and Catherine Hoeffler, we have conducted research on the purchase of fighter aircraft in Europe and in Canada. Comparing procurement procedures of the F-35, the Eurofighter, the Gripen, and the Rafale, we have learned some interesting lessons for the Canadian case. In particular, we have shown that these procedures, highly politicized, almost inevitably lead to cost overruns and reduced orders. Your government has announced it wants to review the purchase of F-35s, and it is hoped that this will be an opportunity to depoliticize the process, while shielding it from special interests.

Finally, I would mention that I had the pleasure, as a member and director of the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies (CIPSS) of Université de Montreal and McGill University, of being involved in the Department of National Defence *Security and Defence Forum*, from 2005 to 2012. Although this program had limitations, the dialogue between researchers and practitioners for the development of knowledge in security

studies was the envy of many countries. For example, France is now trying to reinvigorate research in strategic studies, referring in particular to the Canadian experience. The Defence Engagement Program, through which I organized several conferences, does not foster as much long-term project sustainability and cooperation between universities. Many of us think that the termination of the program by the Conservative government has greatly undermined the ability of Canadians to produce original, relevant, and independent analyses, and even more so in the renewal of national expertise on questions of security. The relationship between defence and university certainly deserves an overhaul.

Hoping you will find these few thoughts useful, please accept, Minister, my best wishes.

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