

**Defence Policy Review Roundtable  
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**Overview:** Assessments of the contemporary security environment privilege narratives of fragmentation and disorder. The prevailing view of the current and future security environment is one characterized by civil wars and instability driven by conflict drivers such as poverty and inequality, demographic pressures, increased demands for resources, and sectarian and ethno-cultural strife. However, an important counter-narrative exists. Global poverty, hunger, and malnutrition rates have declined. Populations have increased access to water, sanitation, and education. There have been significant reductions in child and maternal mortality rates. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of new war onsets has declined and battle-related deaths have fallen. Despite rising global inequality, the human condition for the larger part of the world's population has improved, not declined.

This counter-narrative is best explained by a crucial variable: the political and institutional capacity of states to govern effectively and inclusively. Where such states exist, security concerns are generally lower: where governance is weak or exclusive, security concerns are generally higher. Well-governed spaces are able to manage conflict drivers more effectively than poorly or weakly governed spaces. Much is made of the extreme case of ISIS, but even in this case the "success" of ISIS was not due to its strength, but because everything around it was weak.

As a result, one of Canada's strategic interests should be the promotion of inclusive, effective state governance and institutional capacity building. The CAF has two roles in support of this objective. First, the CAF should maintain effective expeditionary capabilities to contribute to the peace support operations that establish the safe and secure environments necessary for the restoration of effective governance. Second, the CAF should expand its global advisory capacities as part of a broader security strategy of promoting effective and inclusive governance. CAF contributions would include civilian control of the military, civil-military relations, and human rights and war law, along with the more traditional military advisory roles.

Nothing in this overview denies the importance of the defence of Canada, the defence of North America, or inter-state security threats. However, the security environment will continue to feature civil wars and disorder, and Canada will find itself engaged in such contingencies through interests or values, or both. Canada should be prepared to support the immediate needs of conflict management and the larger needs of conflict prevention through the restoration and development of effective governance.

## **THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

### **Are there any threats to Canadian security that are not being addressed adequately?**

Short-term needs requiring supplementary action are cyberwarfare (requiring defence against cyber attack on the CAF and DND) and malicious disinformation in the realm of social media (requiring an information warfare and social media strategy for the CAF).

## **DEFENDING CANADA AND NORTH AMERICA**

### **What roles should the Canadian forces play domestically, including in support of civilian authorities?**

The aid of the civil power provisions of the National Defence Act continue to provide effective guidance for the CAF. One area requiring review is the use of the CAF in response to civil disturbances involving Canada's indigenous peoples. To the extent consistent with public safety, the CAF should not be used as a response mechanism in such cases. Militarization should not be the response to marginalization.

### **How should Canada-US Cooperation on the defence of North America evolve in the coming years?**

Cooperation between Canada and the US should continue to deepen and widen. While some of this cooperation will be driven by the security needs of Washington (perimeter defence and security harmonization) and the interests of Canada in cooperation (an open border) emerging concerns will require Canadian engagement. Principally, these areas will include the Arctic (and an increased CAF arctic presence including search and rescue capacities); common approaches to illegal migration over sea; and cooperation on ballistic missile defence.

## **GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY**

### **What form should the CAF contribution to peace support operations take? Is there a role for the CAF in helping to prevent conflict before it occurs?**

Building on the arguments made in the overview, Canada's contributions to PSO contingencies should be focused on the ability to deploy one or a mix of the following four core capacities: a naval task force; a squadron of fighter-ground attack aircraft; the ability to deploy and sustain indefinitely a battle group-sized ground force and the concurrent ability to deploy a second formed unit for a 6 month deployment; and special operations forces suited to various roles.

## **DEFENCE CAPABILITIES**

### **Should the size, structure and composition for the Canadian Armed Forces change from what they are today?**

The current force structure is adequate in concept (if not in practice). More consideration needs to be placed on the force structure implications of cyberwarfare and information operations capacities, as well as drone and robotic systems.

### **How can DND and the CAF improve the way they support the health and wellness of military members? In what areas should more be done?**

A greater emphasis should be placed on public-private partnerships to develop and enhance community initiatives designed to help soldiers and their families experiencing service-related trauma or other challenges.

### **Should Canada strive to maintain military capability across the full spectrum of operations? Are there special niche areas in which Canada should specialize?**

Canada should continue to maintain multi-purpose combat-capable forces able to serve Canadian foreign policy needs from traditional peacekeeping through to high-intensity conflict.

### **What kind of investments should Canada make in space, cyber, and unmanned systems? To what extent should Canada strive to keep pace and be interoperable with key allies in these domains?**

The fourth and fifth environments of warfare will only increase in relevance. While Canadian analogs to the US Space and Cyber Commands are not required, dedicated organizations and funding envelopes should be developed within the CAF responsible for these developments and maintaining interoperability with the US and allies.

### **What additional measures should DND undertake, along with partner departments, to improve defence procurement?**

Defence procurement requires more consistency across the political, organizational, and planning levels. The development of a bi-partisan consensus at the political level would be an asset. A parliamentary committee dedicated to military procurement would enhance parliamentary involvement. An arms length procurement advisory board composed of external experts could provide an external source of military procurement advice.

## **DEFENCE BUDGET**

### **What resources will the CAF require to meet Canada's defence needs?**

After the review, the government should commit to a fixed increase in the defence budget consistent with spending requirements over a sequence of five-year periods. The goal at the end of the first five-year period should be defence expenditures of 1.5% of GDP.