

**20<sup>TH</sup> ASIA SECURITY SUMMIT**  
**THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE**

**SECOND PLENARY SESSION**

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**ANITA ANAND**

**MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE, CANADA**

**Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence, Canada**

Thank you so much, John, and good morning, everybody. *Bonjour tout le monde*. Secretary Wallace, Senior Undersecretary Galvez, it is an absolute pleasure to be back here in Singapore for my second Shangri-La Dialogue, as Minister of National Defence of Canada. And let me start by thanking you, John, as well as James Crabtree and the IISS team for putting on such a stellar event. You're really rocking it. So, thank you so much.

Now, today, we are here to discuss 'Building a Stable and Balanced Asia-Pacific'. And I'd like to tell you what Canada brings to the table in advancing that goal.

Canada is a Pacific country. Our Pacific coast is 25,000 kilometres long. Six of our top 13 trading partners are found in this region.

*Et, un Canadien sur cinq tire des origines familiales dans la région, comme moi-même. Aujourd'hui, l'Indo-Pacifique est la région économique qui connaît la croissance la plus rapide au monde.*

As a Pacific country, Canada has a keen interest in building a region that is stable; that is balanced. What does this mean? It means an Indo-Pacific where international rules and norms prevail, and all actors engage responsibly; an Indo-Pacific where disputes are resolved peacefully; and ultimately, an Indo-Pacific that is free, that is open and that is inclusive. These objectives are at the very heart of Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy, which we announced last November.

*Notre stratégie est une feuille de route complète et à long terme visant à renforcer tous les domaines de nos relations dans cette région, qu'il s'agisse du commerce, du développement ou de la défense.*

Our strategy seeks to open up new opportunities with North Pacific partners like South Korea and Japan. It recognises and supports Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) centrality. And it is forthright about our relationship with China. China is an increasingly disruptive global power that increasingly disregards international rules and norms.

*Notre approche est claire et responsable:*

*Nous défendrons toujours nos intérêts nationaux – et l'ordre international fondé sur des règles.*

We have to maintain open channels of communication to avoid misunderstanding – and have difficult conversations where necessary – because these are the moments where dialogue is needed most.

Canada always seeks coexistence and collaboration. We will challenge China when we ought to. We will cooperate with China to find solutions on global issues.

Our Indo-Pacific strategy is not just a policy document, because building a stable and secure region requires tangible contributions. Backed by an investment of over 720 million dollars to promote peace, resilience and security in the region, we are stepping up with concrete new commitments.

First, under the Indo-Pacific strategy, Canada is boosting its annual naval deployments in the Indo-Pacific from two warships to three. We will now annually deploy an additional warship from our Atlantic coast, growing Canada's regional presence, particularly in the Indian Ocean.

Our bigger footprint this year begins, and the Atlantic-based frigate HMCS *Montreal* and the replenishment unit MV *Asterix* are in the region right now and actually visited Singapore just a few

days ago. Two more frigates will deploy from our Pacific coast in the summer and our ships will continue to operate throughout the Indo-Pacific.

As part of these deployments, our ships sail in the South and East China seas, and through the Taiwan Strait, in full accordance with international law. This is a clear signal of Canada's commitment to working with allied and partner navies towards regional peace, stability and prosperity. And we will always act in accordance with international law, including high-seas navigation rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Our Indo-Pacific strategy also boosts Canada's participation in multilateral exercises in the region, so that our armed forces can have a more frequent and fulsome presence here.

The strategy also means that we will work together and train, and learn from, our partners in the region such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam. And that includes initiatives to advance women, peace and security initiatives by supporting the meaningful participation of women in uniform.

This is an area where Canada has much to share and, importantly, much to learn from our partners in the region. And in this regard, I am thrilled to be joined in Singapore by Canada's Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security, Ms Jacqui O'Neill, who just visited Vietnam and Indonesia on her way to Singapore.

*Enfin, notre stratégie lance de nouvelles initiatives pour aider nos partenaires militaires à renforcer leur cybersécurité et leurs cybercapacités afin qu'ils puissent détecter les cybermenaces et y répondre plus rapidement et plus efficacement.*

Since 2018, Canada's main Indo-Pacific military mission has been known as *Operation Projection*. To reflect our enhanced and growing presence, I am pleased to announce that starting this year, this operation will be replaced by *Operation Horizon*. *Operation Horizon* will implement the defence elements of our Indo-Pacific strategy: deploying more naval assets, participating in more multilateral exercises and strengthening our military-to-military cooperation. We know that our allies and partners want to see more of Canada, and I hear it wherever I go. And through *Operation Horizon*, you will see more of us.

A stable and balanced Indo-Pacific also requires a safe and stable Korean Peninsula. Five hundred and sixteen Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice during the Korean War – the third-deadliest conflict in Canada's history. And as Prime Minister Trudeau underlined during his recent visit to Korea, Canada has never left the Korean Peninsula. Our Canadian Armed Forces have continuously served in Korea through the United Nations Command, to promote peace on the peninsula.

And today, I am so pleased to announce that the next deputy commander of the United Nations Command in the Republic of Korea will be a Canadian general or flag officer. This will be the second time that a Canadian has held this vitally important post, demonstrating our leadership in the Korean Peninsula. In fact, the first non-American to ever assume that role was a Canadian as well. He is with me here today and he is now our Chief of the Defence Staff, General Wayne Eyre. Thank you, General Eyre, for your leadership.

To further support stability on the peninsula, Canada recently announced the extension of *Operation Neon*, through which we regularly contribute ships, aircraft and personnel to the multinational effort monitoring UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions against North Korea.

One of those aircraft, a Royal Canadian Air Force CP-140 *Aurora*, recently completed a six-week deployment conducting surveillance to identify suspected violations of UNSC sanctions. And when we deploy our aircraft to monitor UNSC sanctions against North Korea, we expect all actors in the region to engage responsibly, behave safely and conduct themselves professionally. Responsible engagement and safe behaviour are a cornerstone of a stable and balanced Indo-Pacific. And Canada believes strongly in being transparent, open and adhering to the international rules and norms that underpin our collective security.

Finally, a stable and balanced Indo-Pacific depends on partnerships.

*L'année dernière, par exemple, le ministre de la défense, le Dr Ng En Hen, et moi-même avons signé un accord de coopération en matière de défense entre Singapour et le Canada.*

And today, I am thrilled to confirm that recently, the Republic of Korea and Canada signed a ten-year memorandum of understanding on defence research and development.

This is just an example, my friends, of how we will continue to forge resilient relationships with our closest partners in the Indo-Pacific, and we will build new partnerships with important regional leaders – India, for example.

Canada believes in ASEAN centrality as the foundation for cooperation and stability in the region, which is why we are working to deepen our security cooperation with its members. We appreciate ASEAN's support for Canadian observer status in the two ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Groups (EWGs).

We were delighted when ASEAN leaders recently adopted a regional plan of action on women, peace and security. And I am pleased to say that Canada is on track to finalise its strategic-partner status with ASEAN by September, which will enable us to work even more closely with our partners in this vitally important region.

Of course, we will always remain tightly coordinated with our closest allies, including our Five Eyes partners. And we are always looking for ways to advance and strengthen our relationships.

My friends, every issue that matters to global security in the coming decades – democracy, climate change, human rights, artificial intelligence and more – will all run through this region. As a Pacific nation itself, Canada has much to offer the region, and the region has many opportunities in turn for Canada.

Through our Indo-Pacific strategy, you will continue to see more and more of Canada. And through *Operation Horizon*, which I have announced today, you will see a larger Canadian defence presence right here in the Indo-Pacific.

*Alors que l'Indo-Pacifique devient de plus en plus central pour la sécurité mondiale, le Canada doit être, et sera, un partenaire fiable et engagé dans la région.*

Canada is here as your partner and we are ready to work with you to build a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific for all our peoples.

Thank you very much. *Merci beaucoup.*