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The Need for an Updated National Security Policy

Lieutenant-Commander Kevin R. Maarse

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Exercise Solo Flight

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The Need for an Updated National Security Policy

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Putting the Cart Before the Horse: The Need for an Updated National Security Policy

On April 7th, 2022, five years since Canada's existing defence policy, *Strong, Secure and Engaged*, was released, the Deputy Prime Minister announced that the government would be undertaking a major defence policy review "to equip Canada for a world that has become more dangerous."¹ Meanwhile, Canada's National Security Policy, *Securing an Open Society*, was released more than 18 years ago, in 2004. While the effort to keep Canada's defence policy up to date is commendable, the threat and technology landscape has changed dramatically in 18 years, and Canada is now out of step with its' international partners with its' approach to national security, a process that is intended to provide overarching guidance to defence policy. To achieve strategic coherence and effectively promote strategic interests, Canada's defence policy must be guided by a robust national security policy. In a complex threat environment, "a decentralized national security system struggles to produce governance cohesion."² Why is it, for example, that Canada buys large quantities of oil from Saudi Arabia every year, yet we cannot sell them armoured vehicles? An updated defence policy cannot resolve these sorts of contradictions. An updated national security policy could. To demonstrate the need for such a policy, this paper will examine the theoretical foundations of these policies, the policies themselves, and then compare them with those of our international partners, specifically the US. It will then assess the gaps and conflicts that should be addressed.

¹ Canada, Department of Finance. "Budget 2022: Address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance." Canada.ca. Government of Canada, April 8, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2022/04/budget-2022-address-by-the-deputy-prime-minister-and-minister-of-finance.html>.

² Wark, Wesley. "A Case for Better Governance of Canadian National Security." Centre for International Governance Innovation, March 29, 2021. <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/case-better-governance-canadian-national-security/>.

What is National Security?

To begin with, clarification must first be provided regarding terminology. There is unfortunately no official Government of Canada definition of national security. Security and defence are terms that are, in fact, often used interchangeably. Canada's National Security Policy, *Securing an Open Society* provides a basic definition. It states that "national security deals with threats that have the potential to undermine the security of the state or society."³ These threats "generally require a national response, as they are beyond the capacity of individuals, communities, or provinces to address alone."⁴ Public Safety Canada goes on to describe national security activities as "continuously adapting to keep pace with new and emerging threats from terrorism and violent extremism to disinformation campaigns during election season, to cyber hacks."⁵

Early conceptions of national security focused on military threats.⁶ However, the term is now understood to also include non-military dimensions such as physical, infrastructure, computer, political, economic, ecological, energy and natural resource security. Because these dimensions are frequently in tension with one another, a national security policy or strategy is required to effectively manage them. In other words, "national security is a multi-faceted endeavor that requires cooperation across a diverse range of initiatives and programs."⁷ By extension then, national security policy is the "framework describing how a country provides

³ Government of Canada, Privy Council Office of Canada, *Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy*, (Ottawa, Government of Canada, April 2004) 14

⁴ Ibid

⁵ "National Security Transparency Advisory Group ... - Public Safety Canada." Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-nstag-irwwh/2020-nstag-irwwh-en.pdf>.

⁶ Sayle, Timothy Andrews. "Canadian National Security in Historical Perspective." Centre for International Governance Innovation, April 25, 2022. <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/canadian-national-security-in-historical-perspective/>.

⁷ Canada, Public Safety. "National Security." Public Safety Canada, May 12, 2021. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/index-en.aspx?wbdisable=true>.

security for the state and its citizens.”⁸ It is the overarching plan and how this can be plan can be “integrated, coordinated and otherwise shared with other agencies and departments.”⁹ The government relies on many departments and organizations to identify and address these threats.¹⁰ Naturally, the Canadian Armed Forces constitute an essential national security capability, which is reinforced in *Securing an Open Society*.¹¹

For much of Canada’s history, national security has not been an issue that many Canadians thought about.¹² However, the world can change rapidly, as has been demonstrated with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These events are forcing countries to take their national security more seriously, and, as a result, their security policy (or strategy). For Canada, this process last took place in 2004, led by Prime Minister Paul Martin. Several national security initiatives were initiated through this process. Notable among these were the creation of Public Safety Canada, which “brought together key departments and agencies under one ministerial roof,”¹³ the publication of *Securing an Open Society – Canada’s National Security Policy* and the creation of the National Security Advisor (NSA).

The National Security (and Intelligence) Advisor

The NSA position was created in 2005 to “improve coordination and integration of security efforts amongst government departments.”¹⁴ The position eventually had intelligence added to the portfolio. The NSA was established to be responsible for “intelligence and threat

⁸ “National Security Policy.” Security Sector integrity, November 27, 2017.

<https://securitysectorintegrity.com/defence-management/policy/>.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 28

¹¹ Ibid 49

¹² Navid Hassibi. Originally published on Policy Options March 15, 2021. “Canada Needs a Better National Security Policy.” Policy Options, January 19, 2022. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/canada-needs-a-better-national-security-policy/>.

¹³ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 16

¹⁴ Ibid 9

assessment integration and interagency cooperation, and for assisting...in the development and overall implementation of an integrated policy for national security and emergencies.” Located within the Privy Council Office (PCO) and reporting to the Clerk of the Privy Council, the NSA “briefs the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister on national security from an integrated government-wide perspective.”¹⁵ They have four main responsibilities:

- “providing information, advice and recommendations on security and intelligence policy matters to the prime minister;
- coordinating members of the security and intelligence community;
- along with the deputy minister for the Department of National Defence, is accountable to the minister of National Defence for the Communications Security Establishment; and
- overseeing the intelligence assessment function, specifically the production and co-ordination of intelligence assessments for the prime minister, other Cabinet members and senior government officials.”¹⁶

Challenges with the coordinating role of the NSA have been highlighted.¹⁷ Namely because the NSA lacks formal authority, they are “unable to provide direction to departments and agencies.”¹⁸ Unlike in the US, “there is no legislation governing the role of the NSA”¹⁹ (or PCO for that matter). Therefore “national security policy and decision-making authorities are statutorily held by the ministers and deputy ministers.”²⁰ In the US, by contrast, the role of the national security advisor is outlined in *National Security Act of 1947*. Accordingly, they are mandated to “coordinate defence, foreign affairs, intelligence, and international economic policy for the incumbent US administration.”²¹

¹⁵ “Canadian Intelligence Resource Centre Archives.” CIRC Archives - National Security Advisor. Accessed May 5, 2022. <http://circ.jmellon.com/agencies/nsa/>.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ “National Security Transparency Advisory Group ... - Public Safety Canada.” Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-nstag-irwwh/2020-nstag-irwwh-en.pdf>.

¹⁸ <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/canada-needs-a-better-national-security-policy/>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Navid Hassibi. Originally published on Policy Options March 15, 2021. “Canada Needs a Better National Security Policy.” Policy Options, January 19, 2022. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/canada-needs-a-better-national-security-policy/>.

With the position of the NSA now well established, and a fresh turnover of the position amidst a huge change in the global security situation, perhaps the time is right for a more prominent, authoritative role for the NSA. As a first step, the NSA could be appointed by the Clerk of the Privy Council Office to chair the Deputy Minister's National Security Committee (DMNSC). This committee "considers current and emerging issues affecting Canada's national security, including implications for Canada's economy."²² It is currently co-chaired by DMs DND and PSC.²³ The NSA would also be better positioned to lead updates to Canada's national security policy, *Securing an Open Society*, rather than Public Safety Canada.²⁴ To highlight this natural pairing, a closer look at the policy is warranted.

Canada's National Security Policy

Securing an Open Society is Canada's "first-ever comprehensive statement of national security policy"²⁵ It is intended to be "an integrated approach to national security."²⁶ The policy "articulates core national security interests and values and proposes a framework for addressing threats to Canadians."²⁷ Accordingly, "the Government will make Canada's national security one of the top priorities in its International Policy Review."²⁸ *Securing an Open Society* places "the highest priority on countering international terrorism, preventing the proliferation of weapons of

²² Privy Council Office. "Government of Canada." Canada.ca. / Gouvernement du Canada, April 21, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/programs/appointments/senior-public-service/deputy-minister-committees.html>.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Navid Hassibi. Originally published on Policy Options March 15, 2021. "Canada Needs a Better National Security Policy." Policy Options, January 19, 2022. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/canada-needs-a-better-national-security-policy/>.

²⁵ *Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy*, 4

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ "Caught in the Middle at the U.S.-Canadian Border - Core." Accessed May 5, 2022. https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/32847/13Mar_Killingbeck_Kyle.pdf?sequence=1

²⁸ *Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy*, x

mass destruction, and assisting failed and failing states”²⁹ and heavily emphasizes the importance of integration and intelligence.

While terrorism remains a concern today, the global security landscape is now vastly different, characterized by great power competition, highlighted by the war in Ukraine, and the rise of China as a global power. Similarly, the significance of technology has increased dramatically. The current information dominated threat environment demands quick coordinated decision making, for example social media’s influence on national political agendas. Other notable omissions include the role of the commercial and private sectors, economic prosperity, energy, supply chains, or the environment. “Foreign policy, domestic innovation, national prosperity, intellectual property (IP), data governance, cybersecurity and trade are now all inextricably linked. Adversarial states now seek advantage across these areas, treating them as strategically connected.”³⁰

Lastly, the policy clearly highlights the Canadian values of democracy, human rights, and respect for the rule of law. It states that “a primary reason that we engage in security and intelligence activities is to protect Canadians and the society we have built together, based on democratic principles, the rule of law and respect for human rights.”³¹ However, it falls short in clearly articulating national interests. Instead, the policy highlights national ‘security’ interests, a subset of national interests. Policy writers have been keen to promote the importance of national interests but have not defined them. So, what are Canada’s national interests?

²⁹ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 48

³⁰ Shull, Aaron. “It’s Been 20 Years since 9/11: Canada Needs a New National Security Policy.” Centre for International Governance Innovation, September 10, 2021. <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/its-been-20-years-since-911-canada-needs-a-new-national-security-policy/>.

³¹ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 29

Canada's National Interests

According to the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) homepage, GAC “defines, shapes and advances Canada’s interests and values in a complex global environment.”³² Listed as examples are “poverty reduction, the empowerment of women and girls, the promotion of a rules-based international order, international peace and security, human rights, inclusive and accountable governance”³³ among others. It does not appear that this list is published or available formally, or what mechanism was used to arrive at these interests or whether they are prioritized. Absent such information, more emphasis has been placed on Canada’s Defence Policy, which will be discussed below.

Therefore, much like Canada’s national security priorities, ‘Canadian interests’ remain ill-defined. This has long been a challenge and criticism of Canadian policy. Perhaps this is because “discussions of the national interest can be vacuous.”³⁴ In 2004, critics proclaimed that “the inability to consider something as fundamental as our strategic interests is a reflection of a lack of strategic culture or at the very least an immaturity in strategic culture.”³⁵ And that “a clear understanding of strategic interests and a more coherent national security strategy are essential preconditions for success and relevance in the 21st century security environment.”³⁶

Nevertheless, Canadian policy does acknowledge the importance of supporting Canadian interests. The phrase is mentioned eleven times in SSE, for example. “Canada cannot meet its defence needs at home and abroad without the dedicated, motivated and highly skilled people

³² <https://www.international.gc.ca/global-affairs-affaires-mondiales/home-accueil.aspx?lang=eng>

³³ Ibid

³⁴ <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/its-been-20-years-since-911-canada-needs-a-new-national-security-policy/>

³⁵ <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/paul-martin/finding-a-way-national-security-and-defence-policy-for-a-new-liberal-leadership/>

³⁶

who work tirelessly to defend Canada and promote Canadian values and interests abroad.”³⁷ Canada’s national security interests appear to be the only formally published reference to Canadian interests. These are found in *Securing an Open Society*. According to this policy, Canada’s core national security interests are “protecting Canada and Canadians at home and abroad, ensuring Canada is not a base for threats to our allies, and contributing to international security.”³⁸ The number one national security interest is “to protect Canada and the safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad.”³⁹ A priority that is also emphasized by Public Safety Canada.⁴⁰ This requires the Government to “protect the physical security of Canadians, our values, and our key institutions. The Government has a responsibility to be able to defend against threats to Canadian sovereignty, ranging from illegal entry to incursions into our territorial waters.”⁴¹

In summary, while *Securing an Open Society* is an important step in formalizing a national security approach in Canada, the framework envisioned was not fully institutionalized or legislated. This likely goes a long way to explaining why it has not been updated since its’ publication. The apparent focus in Canada on defence policy over national security policy may be an acknowledgement that producing a national security policy update would be too difficult. This process requires a national vision, significant consultation, and input from all of the components of national power. Something made more difficult with a minority government and

³⁷ National Defence. “Government of Canada.” Canada.ca. Strong, Secure, and Engaged, May 31, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/canada-defence-policy.html>.

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³⁸ “National Security Transparency Advisory Group ... - Public Safety Canada.” Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2020-nstag-irwwh/2020-nstag-irwwh-en.pdf>. vii

³⁹ Canada, Public Safety. “National Security.” Public Safety Canada, May 12, 2021. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/index-en.aspx?wbdisable=true>.

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 5

a Prime Minister who famously stated that “there is no core identity in Canada.”⁴² As FitzGerald and Segal note, “discussions of this nature are typically bilateral among those who feel security measures are a threat to individual freedoms, and those who feel governments in Canada are too passive. The political minefield is clearly evident.”⁴³ Thus, it does not appear as though there is much political capital to be earned. Likely adding to this pressure is the impending publication of the long-awaited US National security strategy from the Biden Administration.

Whatever the reasons, Canada’s national security policy should be updated at regular intervals, and available at multiple classification levels. An unclassified version has the benefit of increased transparency and awareness for the Canadian public and international audiences. This is especially important in Canada where foreign policy and defence are usually not important election campaign issues. Additionally, others have recommended that “a cabinet committee on national security...be established. This committee would be chaired by the prime minister with a deputy chair on a rotating basis selected from the ministers of Public Safety, the Department of National Defence (DND) and Global Affairs Canada.”⁴⁴

Consistency with International Partners

As a country who relies heavily upon its’ international partnerships, whether in intelligence sharing or collective security, Canada must ensure they remain consistent with their key allies with their approach to national security. National Security, and specifically a formalized National Security Council, lie at the heart of decision making in the US, with similar

⁴² <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/magazine/trudeaus-canada-again.html>

⁴³ A. Fitz-Gerald and H. Segal, “Reimagining National Security in Canada: The Challenge of Dynamic Change,” Center for International Governance Innovation, April 13, 2021, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/reimagining-national-security-canada-challenge-dynamic-change/>.

⁴⁴ “Canadian Intelligence Resource Centre Archives.” CIRC Archives - National Security Advisor. Accessed May 5, 2022. <http://circ.jmellon.com/agencies/nsa/>.

structures in place in Australia and the UK.⁴⁵ Examining the US, in particular, highlights the stark contrast in national security institutionalization. Doctrinally, National Security in the US is “a collective term encompassing the policies of both national defense and foreign relations.”⁴⁶

“It is intended to serve five primary purposes:

- Communicate the Executive's strategic vision to Congress, and thus legitimize its requests for resources;
- Communicate the Executive's strategic vision to foreign constituencies;
- Communicate with select domestic audiences;
- Create internal consensus on foreign and defense policy within the executive branch; and
- Contribute to the overall agenda of the President, both in terms of substance and messaging”⁴⁷

National Security in the US is legislated through the *National Security Act 1947* and the *Goldwater–Nichols Act*. These pieces of legislation established much of the US national security structure as well as spell out the requirements of the US National Security Strategy (NSS).

Canada also has a National Security Act, that went into force on 21 Jun 2019, however this is a very different document to that in the US. The Canadian *National Security Act (2017)* was enacted by Parliament “to reform the oversight of the National Security Agencies of Canada.”⁴⁸ This was perhaps a missed opportunity to better institutionalize National Security in Canada.

In the US, the Act established the National Security Council to “advise the President on the integration of domestic, military and foreign policies relating to national security.”⁴⁹ It did not, however, define national security, which was “conceivably advantageous, as its ambiguity

⁴⁵ Wark, Wesley. “A Case for Better Governance of Canadian National Security.” Centre for International Governance Innovation, March 29, 2021. <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/case-better-governance-canadian-national-security/>.

⁴⁶ “National Security Law Resources: Home.” GW Law Library: Library Guides. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://law.gwu.libguides.com/natsec#:~:text=%22national%20security%20%E2%80%94%20A%20collective%20term,or%20group%20of%20nations%3B%20b>.

⁴⁷ “National Security Strategy - the White House | Whitehouse.gov.” Accessed May 5, 2022. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

⁴⁸ Canada, Legislative Services Branch. “Consolidated Federal Laws of Canada, National Security Act, 2017.” National Security Act, 2017, April 28, 2022. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-16.56/>.

⁴⁹ Paleri, Prabhakaran (2008). *National Security: Imperatives And Challenges*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill. p. 521. ISBN 978-0-07-065686-4. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

made it a powerful phrase to invoke against diverse threats to interests of the state, such as domestic concerns.”⁵⁰

The keystone national security document in the US is the National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS “lists the [US] national security concerns and how the administration plans to deal with them.”⁵¹ It is used to “forge consensus among competing views on direction, priorities and pace, and getting “on board” important players”⁵² And it is “recognized as an invaluable, if not totally daunting, opportunity for a new administration.”⁵³

The NSS is mandated by US legislation⁵⁴ and has generally been transmitted annually since 1987. The NSS is “to be sent from the President to Congress to communicate the executive branch’s national security vision to the legislative branch.”⁵⁵ The strategy provides “discussion on proposed uses of all facets of [US] power needed to achieve the nation’s security goals.”⁵⁶ And it is “obligated to include a discussion of the [US’] international interests, commitments, objectives, and policies, along with defence capabilities necessary to deter threats and implement US security plans.”⁵⁷

In March 2021, President Biden published an Interim National Security Strategy (NSS).⁵⁸

⁵⁰ Romm, Joseph J. (1993). *Defining national security: the nonmilitary aspects*. Pew Project on America's Task in a Changed World (Pew Project Series). Council on Foreign Relations. p. 122. ISBN 978-0-87609-135-7. Retrieved 1 May 2022

⁵¹ “The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision Second Edition.” Accessed May 5, 2022. <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Snider.pdf>.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Department of Defense. Section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-433) <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-100/pdf/STATUTE-100-Pg992.pdf>

⁵⁵ <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/#:~:text=The%20NSS%20has%20been%20transmitted,vision%20to%20the%20legislative%20branch.>

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ “Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.” The White House. The United States Government, March 3, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/>.

The strategy recommitted the US to NATO and outlined the country's global priorities, concluding that the US “must demonstrate that democracies can still deliver for our people. It will not happen by accident – we have to defend our democracy, strengthen it and renew it.”⁵⁹ Despite being in interim strategy, the President directed “departments and agencies to align their actions with [the] guidance.”⁶⁰

Canada’s Defence Policy

As stated in *Securing an Open Society* “National security is a key driver of Canadian defence policy...[and] National defence is the core element of the national security system.”⁶¹ From a theoretical standpoint, “Defence policy is a series of guidelines, principles and frameworks that link theory (National Security Policy) to action.” Defence policy aims to “achieve national defence objectives, guided by the codes and principles embedded in national security policy.”⁶²

In this vein, *Securing an Open Society* provides some guidance to Defence Policy. It states that “the primary obligation of the Canadian Forces is to defend Canada and Canadians, particularly from external military threats. They also play a key role in protecting Canadians from internal threats to their security, both accidental and intentional”⁶³ “Our forces must be able to defend Canada, help secure North America, and address threats to our national security as far away from our borders as possible.”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 47

⁶² “National Security Policy.” Security Sector integrity, November 27, 2017. <https://securitysectorintegrity.com/defence-management/policy/>.

⁶³ *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, 47

⁶⁴ Ibid. 49

Canada's Defence Policy *Strong, Secure, and Engaged* (SSE) was published nearly five years ago, on 7 June 2017. The goal of SSE was to "detail a new vision for the Defence team"⁶⁵ over a 20-year horizon.⁶⁶ This vision "provide[d] \$108 billion for the development and acquisition of capital equipment over...20 years."⁶⁷ So where does Canada's Defence Policy sit (as a byproduct of Canada's National Security policy)? Absent an updated National security policy, more emphasis has been placed on Canada's Defence Policy, in comparison to the US, for example. This is highlighted by the notable inclusion of a forward by the Foreign Affairs minister, something that was not part of the previous policy. The Minister included elements of guidance that would more typically be found in a national security or foreign policy statement. She states "Our objective is to restore constructive Canadian leadership in the world and to promote Canada's interests and values; serve our security and economic interests; and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world."⁶⁸ She goes on to state that "in order to do so, we must build a closer link between our foreign, defence, humanitarian, development, and trade policies. Combined with our upcoming International Assistance Policy and progressive, feminist foreign policy, this defence policy will help accomplish our shared objectives."⁶⁹ And that "we must focus to ensure that our foreign, defence, development, and trade policies reinforce one another and deliver results"⁷⁰ These statements fall outside of what would typically be considered defence policy.

⁶⁵ National Defence. "Government of Canada." Canada.ca. *Strong, Secure, and Engaged*, May 31, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/canada-defence-policy.html>.

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⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid. 101

⁶⁸ National Defence. "Government of Canada." Canada.ca. *Strong, Secure, and Engaged*. 7

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid

Conclusion

After 18 years it is time for a change. The world has reoriented, but Canada has not. “It still remains a mystery who, exactly, is in charge of national security in Canada. The reality is that there are many centres of authority for national security in Ottawa.”⁷¹ As the national security landscape is changing, it gives heightened importance to explaining to Canadians the importance of a robust approach to national security⁷² which must be guided by a thorough assessment of Canada’s core national interests.

Only by taking a first principles approach to national security can we effectively mobilize the elements of Canada’s national power, including diplomatic, information, military, and economic, “bring policy coherence to the various departments and agencies with an interest in security matters”, and deliver on promoting of our strategic interests. In so doing Canada can align itself with its’ international partner as well as the current and future technology and threat landscape. This will require a deeper institutionalization of the national security framework through legislation, but above all the political will of government and the popular will of the Canadian public.

⁷¹ Navid Hassibi. Originally published on Policy Options March 15, 2021. “Canada Needs a Better National Security Policy.” Policy Options, January 19, 2022. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/canada-needs-a-better-national-security-policy/>.

⁷² Ibid.

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