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CANADA

THE NEXT PHASE OF CANADA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

**Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and
International Development**

Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Chair

**OCTOBER 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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has the honour to present its

TWELFTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, February 12, 2026, the committee has studied the Review of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada publish an updated Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2027 that prioritizes Canada's strategic autonomy and economic resilience, reflects Canada's overarching foreign policy priorities and national security interests, and commits Canada to long-term regional engagement. 27

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada use its updated Indo-Pacific Strategy to help expand and diversify Canada's trade in non-strategic sectors, including by investing in Canada's economic intelligence and regional trade promotion and diplomatic capacities. 27

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada reduce Canada's vulnerabilities in strategic segments and stages of global supply chains, including by strengthening domestic capacity in these sectors, by working with trusted regional partners on supply chain resilience and early warning mechanisms, and by remaining vigilant for signs of forced labour within these supply chains. 27

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada elevate the emphasis on energy, digital trade and services, emerging technologies, talent mobility, and research and educational partnerships in its updated Indo-Pacific Strategy. 27

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada explore the possibility with Japan and the Republic of Korea of developing a joint economic security strategy. 27

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada strengthen its role in upholding the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, including in the Taiwan Strait, notably by increasing naval deployments and participation in regional military exercises, enhancing intelligence-sharing and defence cooperation with trusted allies, and investing in specific capabilities such as dark vessel detection and cyber resilience. 28

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada continue to work with its allies and partners to uphold international law and maintain a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. 28

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada operationalize the Trade Cooperation Framework Arrangement (TCFA) with Taiwan. 28

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada deepen its engagement with Indo-Pacific regional institutions and strengthen its bilateral relationships with key partners, guided by Canada’s diplomatic, economic and national security interests. 28

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada advance its bid to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders’ Meeting in 2029. 28

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada regularly review, report on, and periodically update its Indo-Pacific Strategy to ensure it remains focused on outcomes and responsive to a rapidly evolving global context. 28



THE NEXT PHASE OF CANADA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

In November 2022, the Government of Canada released a strategy dedicated to the Indo-Pacific, a region that was described as “the epicentre of a generational global shift.”¹ Key statistics underscore why every issue that matters, from national security to economic prosperity, “will be shaped by the relationships that Canada, along with its partners, have with countries throughout the Indo-Pacific.”² These 40 economies³ are expected to comprise 50% of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP) by 2040 and 65% of the global population.⁴ The region is characterized by its economic dynamism, but it is also the site and source of strategic competition, which plays out in contested spaces and through critical supply chains.

In October 2025, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Anita Anand, told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (this Committee) that she had asked Global Affairs Canada to review and update the Indo-Pacific Strategy to ensure that Canada’s policy “is responsive to Canada’s needs now.”⁵ The department was instructed to come forward with an update as soon as possible. That said, and as will be detailed below, the government’s evolving approach is already being demonstrated by its regional activity and through its emphasis

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- 1 Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, [*Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly Previews the Government of Canada’s Upcoming Indo-Pacific Strategy in Advance of Diplomatic Trip to Asia*](#), 10 November 2022.
 - 2 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada launches Indo-Pacific Strategy to support long-term growth, prosperity, and security for Canadians*](#), News release, 27 November 2022.
 - 3 [*Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy*](#) lists the following 40 regional economies: “Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, the Pacific Island Countries (14), Pakistan, People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Philippines, Republic of Korea (ROK), Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam.”
 - 4 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy*](#). To put these statistics in context, it should be noted that the department’s list of 40 regional economies does not include the United States or Russia.
 - 5 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE), [*Evidence*](#), 30 October 2025, 1610 (The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs). For additional context, see Dylan Robertson, [*“Anand says she’s asked for updated Indo-Pacific strategy as PM heads to Asia,” The Canadian Press*](#), 24 October 2025.



on particular sectors and relationships.⁶ Given the significance of the Indo-Pacific to Canada's foreign policy and economic interests, the Committee decided in February 2026 to undertake its own review and consider how the Strategy could better address the challenges Canada is facing in a changing geopolitical context.⁷

THE COMMITTEE'S STUDY

The Committee has sought to understand how the Government of Canada aims to pursue Canada's interests in the Indo-Pacific region, anchored by an updated Strategy. In high-level terms, the government is seeking to accelerate the diversification of Canada's trade, to reinforce Canada's economic resilience and strategic autonomy, and to engage with regional partners through "variable geometry," an approach that Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has described as pursuing "different coalitions for different issues, based on common values and interests."⁸ As it updates the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the government intends to draw on "Canada's strengths in energy, critical minerals, technology, defence production, [artificial intelligence] and other sectors."⁹

To help inform its recommendations for this next phase, the Committee also gathered the perspectives of experts and stakeholders, through testimony and written briefs, which are reflected throughout this report and listed in its appendices. While some witnesses focused on specific countries, sub-regions and sectors, the study generally suggested that Canada should build on the progress it has made in the region since 2022, through an approach that is well-framed, effectively targeted, tailor-made for Canada, and built for the long-term – the themes of this report's main chapters. The Committee's study also highlighted the importance of investment in the foundations of success. These include regional knowledge and sectoral expertise. They also include governmental machinery that is tasked with converting announcements into outcomes and supporting those who provide Canada's tangible connections to the region through business, academic, cultural, and people-to-people ties.

6 The Deputy Minister of Global Affairs Canada remarked that "strategies are not straitjackets," that the world is now "very different than it was in 2022," and that the department was not waiting for the review and update to be complete to take initiatives that were no longer in keeping with what was written in 2022. See FAAE, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2025, 1610 (David Morrison, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

7 FAAE, [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 12 February 2026.

8 Prime Minister of Canada, ["Principled and pragmatic: Canada's path" Prime Minister Carney addresses the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting](#), Speech, Davos, Switzerland, 20 January 2026.

9 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1530 (Weldon Epp, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indo-Pacific, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

BACKGROUND

The 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy

Launched in November 2022, *Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy* aimed to uphold and advance Canada's national interests, while defending its values. Backed by almost \$2.3 billion in funding over five years, the strategy put forward objectives that were based on five pillars:

- "Promote peace, resilience and security";
- "Expand trade, investment and supply chain resilience";
- "Invest in and connect people";
- "Build a sustainable and green future"; and
- "Canada as an active and engaged partner to the Indo-Pacific."¹⁰

While the Strategy focused on partnerships, connections and opportunities, certain passages attracted particular attention and were referenced often during the Committee's study. Perhaps most notably, the Strategy indicated that "Canada's evolving approach to China" would be "a critical part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy," and then declared that "China is an increasingly disruptive global power."¹¹ The Strategy further observed that "China is looking to shape the international order into a more permissive environment for interests and values that increasingly depart from ours."¹² At the same time, regarding the other major power in the region, the Strategy characterized India as a "critical partner,"¹³ although bilateral relations subsequently became strained, before they were reset.¹⁴ The Strategy also emphasized Canada's strong relationships with Japan, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

10 Global Affairs Canada, [Canada and the Indo-Pacific](#), Backgrounder.

11 Global Affairs Canada, [Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy](#).

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Prime Minister of Canada, [Joint statement by Prime Minister Carney and Prime Minister Modi](#), Statement, 2 March 2026.



The Strategy reflected the economic, demographic, and geopolitical weight of the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, it represented a response to long-standing criticisms from observers who had argued that Canada's interest in the region tended to wax and wane in the face of other foreign policy priorities and was not anchored by consistent political engagement, deep regional expertise, meaningful presence, and sufficient resources. The Strategy indicated that its overall objective was for Canada "to be an active, engaged and reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific."¹⁵

Since establishing that goal, there have been a series of Team Canada trade missions to Indo-Pacific markets,¹⁶ the most recent of which involved some 175 business organizations travelling to Japan.¹⁷ This period has also been marked by deeper economic engagement with ASEAN, whose 11 member states¹⁸ comprise a more than \$5 trillion economy.¹⁹ A comprehensive economic partnership agreement was concluded bilaterally with Indonesia,²⁰ the world's 4th-most populous country, while trade negotiations are being advanced with the Philippines²¹ and Thailand,²² and with ASEAN as a bloc.²³ In addition to Canada's focus on Southeast Asia, bilateral trade negotiations are also advancing with India,²⁴ which is expected to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2027–2028.²⁵

15 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy*](#).

16 Trade Commissioner Service, [*Team Canada Trade Missions*](#).

17 Global Affairs Canada, [*Minister Sidhu drives new commercial partnerships and promotes trade diversification during significant Team Canada Trade Mission to Japan*](#), News release, 26 June 2026.

18 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos), Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. Canada and four ASEAN member states – Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore and Viet Nam – are parties to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which entered into force in 2018.

19 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Prime Minister Carney advances new trade, economic, and security partnerships with ASEAN nations*](#), News release, 27 October 2025.

20 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Prime Minister Carney announces new trade agreement with Indonesia – Canada's first-ever bilateral trade agreement with an ASEAN country*](#), News release, 24 September 2025.

21 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada-Philippines Free Trade Agreement*](#).

22 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada-Thailand Free Trade Agreement*](#).

23 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement*](#).

24 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada welcomes India's Minister of Commerce and Industry for bilateral trade mission*](#), News release, 29 May 2026.

25 Trade Commissioner Service, [*Team Canada Trade Mission to India*](#).

Across the Indo-Pacific, Canada's presence has been solidified through the naming of a special envoy for the region,²⁶ and the establishment of a new diplomatic mission in Fiji.²⁷ There are also new regional offices of Export Development Canada, FinDev Canada, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Furthermore, high-level engagement has been demonstrated by the sustained pace of ministerial and prime ministerial visits.²⁸

In the realm of security and defence, three naval frigates are now being sent to the Indo-Pacific region annually. These deployments contribute to efforts to monitor United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea. They also enable more port visits, tailored defence training, and participation in multinational exercises and other activities.²⁹ In summer 2026, Canada deployed more than 800 personnel to the 30th iteration of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), the world's largest international maritime exercise.³⁰ At the institutional level, Canada has reached new defence and security agreements with Japan,³¹ South Korea,³² and the Philippines,³³ all of which allow for deeper cooperation. Military engagement with regional allies and partners is also being facilitated by a new position, the Senior Military Representative to the Indo-Pacific, who reports to the Chief of the Defence Staff.³⁴

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- 26 Global Affairs Canada, [*Minister Joly names Canada's Special Envoy for the Indo-Pacific*](#), News release, 19 April 2023.
- 27 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada strengthens international cooperation and trade opportunities during Secretary of State Sarai's visit to Vietnam, Indonesia and Fiji*](#), News release, 19 January 2026. Canada also established a bilateral development cooperation program with Pacific Island countries.
- 28 FAAE, [*Evidence*](#), 16 April 2026, 1530 (Weldon Epp).
- 29 FAAE, [*Evidence*](#), 5 February 2026, 1530 (Major-General Travis Morehen, Director General, International Security Policy, Department of National Defence).
- 30 National Defence, [*RIMPAC Public Affairs Team, One team, many nations: Canada's significant contribution to RIMPAC 2026*](#), 19 August 2026.
- 31 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Canada-Japan Comprehensive Strategic Roadmap*](#), Backgrounder, 6 March 2026; and National Defence, [*Minister McGuinty signs an Equipment and Technology Transfer Agreement with Japan*](#), News release, 27 January 2026.
- 32 Global Affairs Canada, [*Canada-Republic of Korea Security and Defence Cooperation Partnership \(SDCP\)*](#); and Global Affairs Canada, [*Joint statement: Canada-Republic of Korea Foreign and Defence \(2+2\) Ministerial Meeting*](#), Statement, 25 February 2026.
- 33 National Defence, [*Canada and the Philippines strengthen defence partnership with new arrangement*](#), News release, 11 June 2026.
- 34 National Defence, [*Senior Military Representative – Indo-Pacific*](#).



The Government's Review

The Government of Canada committed five years of funding to the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy, which continues to be implemented by 17 departments and agencies.³⁵ Nevertheless, the geopolitical situation has evolved since the Strategy was released. Crises and conflicts in other parts of the world have revealed new alignments, vulnerabilities, and technological advancements. More than four years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, “greater convergence” is visible between Russia, China and North Korea.³⁶ Meanwhile, the constriction of energy supplies and other vital commodities through the Strait of Hormuz, amid hostilities between Iran and the United States, has revealed “the danger of conflict in such an important waterway.”³⁷

More broadly, systemic shifts in state behaviour are affecting Canada's strategic position. Ari Van Assche, Full Professor in the Department of International Business at HEC Montréal, told the Committee that, today, “the resilience of Canada's economy more than ever depends on its ability to reduce overreliance on major economic powers, especially China and the United States, through deliberate and strategic trade diversification.”³⁸ This reality has come into sharper focus during the second term of U.S. President Donald Trump in light of the “fundamental change to the way the U.S. exercises its power and its relationships with allies.”³⁹ When making this point, Vina Nadjibulla, Vice-President of Research and Strategy at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, noted that Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy was developed “at the time of the Biden administration, when the alliance structure was at its strongest in many years.” As she said: “We're no longer there.”⁴⁰

As was noted at the beginning of this report, when appearing before the Committee in October 2025 to discuss her mandate, Minister Anand indicated that she had instructed Global Affairs Canada to update the Indo-Pacific Strategy as soon as possible.⁴¹ The

35 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1600 (Weldon Epp).

36 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1605 (Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an Individual).

37 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1605 (Scott Simon, Full Professor, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, As an Individual).

38 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1550 (Ari Van Assche, Full Professor, Department of International Business, HEC Montréal, As an Individual).

39 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1605 (Vina Nadjibulla, Vice-President, Research and Strategy, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada).

40 Ibid.

41 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2025, 1610 (The Honourable Anita Anand).

intent is to ensure that regional engagement and issues being raised bilaterally are closely aligned with current policy priorities, which include the objectives of doubling Canada's exports to non-U.S. destinations by 2035 and ensuring Canada's ability to be an energy superpower.⁴²

When officials from Global Affairs Canada subsequently testified as part of this study in April 2026, they noted that the Strategy was designed as an "adaptive framework" and that its update is already being reflected through policy decisions and advice.⁴³ The officials also conveyed that the minister would be determining the format of the update, which could be done through a document, a speech, or another mechanism.⁴⁴ Regardless of the format, there will be aspects of continuity in Canada's approach, including the emphasis on regional stability and trade diversification, but also adjustments that take into account new political realities and emerging challenges, including with respect to economic resilience. The department therefore sees this as an evolution of the Strategy, with respect to the "balance of priorities and operational commitments,"⁴⁵ rather than a "major before-and-after moment."⁴⁶

Policy Shifts in Action

Work on the Strategy is underway, but departmental officials indicated that the update is likely to be reflected "as much in the action set as it is in new documents."⁴⁷ Already, shifts have been seen in important bilateral relationships, as well as in the depth of the Government of Canada's engagement with long-standing regional partners.

In January 2026, Prime Minister Carney visited Beijing, the first such prime ministerial visit to China since 2017.⁴⁸ After meeting with President Xi Jinping, the leaders outlined the pillars of a "new strategic partnership," which is focused on specific areas that were detailed in the resulting communiqué, including macroeconomic engagement, economic and trade cooperation, energy, finance, public security and safety, people-to-people ties

42 Ibid.

43 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1530 (Weldon Epp).

44 Ibid., [1540](#).

45 Ibid., [1625](#).

46 Ibid., [1600](#).

47 Ibid., [1540](#).

48 Prime Minister of Canada, [Prime Minister Carney forges new strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China focused on energy, agri-food, and trade](#), 16 January 2026.



and cultural exchanges, and multilateralism.⁴⁹ The visit was also used to make progress on “resolving trade irritants and market access challenges, including for Canadian agriculture and agri-food products such as canola and seafood, and Chinese electric vehicles.”⁵⁰ Officials told the Committee that the recalibration of the relationship reflects the government’s commitment “to engaging with Beijing where it advances our interests, while remaining clear-eyed about areas of disagreement and concern and putting appropriate guardrails in place to protect our economic and national security.”⁵¹

Canada’s renewed relationship with India reflects broader parameters of engagement. In New Delhi in March 2026, Prime Minister Carney and Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to “new strategic partnerships in energy, talent and innovation, and artificial intelligence (AI).”⁵² In addition to their shared ambition to finalize a new Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement by the end of 2026, the leaders also launched a new Defence Dialogue. It will focus on “maritime security cooperation and stability in the Indo-Pacific, as well as training, education, and joint exercises.”⁵³ They also agreed to negotiate a General Security of Information Agreement “to facilitate greater defence cooperation.”⁵⁴ Finally, the leaders “affirmed the importance of their countries’ shared commitment to democratic values, self-reliance, and respect for sovereignty and the rule of law — including in combatting transnational repression and organised crime.”⁵⁵ According to Global Affairs Canada, this two-track approach to bilateral relations with India, which is based on “complementary pillars” of security and diplomacy, “has allowed us to rebuild trust, restore regular channels of communication, and refocus co-operation as pluralistic democracies on shared responsibilities and interests.”⁵⁶

49 Prime Minister of Canada, *Joint statement of the Canada–China Leaders’ Meeting*, 16 January 2026.

50 Prime Minister of Canada, *Prime Minister Carney meets with President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping*, Readout, 16 January 2026.

51 FAAE, *Evidence*, 16 April 2026, 1535 (Weldon Epp).

52 Prime Minister of Canada, *Prime Minister Carney meets with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi*, Readout, 2 March 2026.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 FAAE, *Evidence*, 16 April 2026, 1535 (Weldon Epp).

In addition to deepening cooperation with Australia,⁵⁷ Japan,⁵⁸ and South Korea,⁵⁹ all long-standing partners for Canada in the region, the government has been focused on regional institutions. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy affirmed "ASEAN centrality" in the regional architecture, which recognizes ASEAN's leading role in regional cooperation. Canada also notes that its Strategy shares fundamental principles with ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.⁶⁰ Canada has been an ASEAN dialogue partner since 1977 and is a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. Relations with ASEAN were elevated in 2023 through the establishment of a strategic partnership, and both sides are now aiming to complete free trade negotiations by the end of 2026.⁶¹ Following her participation in the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference Plus Canada and ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting in Manila, Minister Anand announced the adoption of a Plan of Action to implement the strategic partnership, which will be implemented from 2026 to 2030.⁶² In 2027, Canada and ASEAN will commemorate 50 years of relations.⁶³

With respect to economic integration initiatives that span the Pacific, Canada also remains actively involved in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which brings together 21 economies that account for more than 84% of Canada's trade. On 1 November 2025, Prime Minister Carney announced that Canada has offered to host the APEC leaders' meeting in 2029.⁶⁴ At the same time, the Committee's study reinforced the many ways of solidifying ties, not limited to economic fora and commercial activity. The Committee heard that Cambodia's hosting of the 20th Summit of La Francophonie in November 2026 will provide an important opportunity to strengthen people-to-people ties in the Indo-Pacific region, alongside the promotion of

57 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Prime Minister Carney elevates partnership with Australia in critical minerals, defence, and artificial intelligence*](#), News release, 5 March 2026.

58 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Prime Minister Carney forges new Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Japan across defence, energy, trade, and technology*](#), News release, 6 March 2026; and Prime Minister of Canada, [*Joint statement on Canada-Japan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership*](#), 6 March 2026.

59 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Joint statement by Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada and President Lee Jae Myung of the Republic of Korea*](#), 30 October 2025; and Prime Minister of Canada, [*Prime Minister Carney meets with President of the Republic of Korea Lee Jae Myung*](#), Readout, 16 June 2026.

60 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Joint Leaders' Statement on ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership*](#), Statement, archived, 6 September 2023.

61 FAAE, [*Evidence*](#), 16 April 2026, 1535 (Weldon Epp).

62 Global Affairs Canada, [*Minister Anand advances Canada's relations with ASEAN members*](#), News release, 23 July 2026.

63 Global Affairs Canada, [*Minister Anand to travel to Pakistan and the Philippines to strengthen Indo-Pacific partnerships*](#), News release, 19 July 2026.

64 Prime Minister of Canada, [*Prime Minister Carney advances new trade, economic, and defence partnerships with Indo-Pacific nations*](#), News release, 1 November 2025.



the French language.⁶⁵ This will be only the second time the summit has been held in Asia, after Vietnam hosted in 1997.⁶⁶

As demonstrated above, significant government activity has been directed towards the Indo-Pacific region in recent months and years, in the form of visits, announcements, and new initiatives. Even so, Vina Nadjibulla encouraged a shift in thinking. Her view is that the Strategy's next phase should be focused on the gains – prosperity, security and influence – that its measures are meant to achieve.⁶⁷ The end goal, she said, is ensuring “that Canada matters—as a relevant, effective and consequential partner in the region that will shape Canada’s prosperity, security and sovereignty for decades to come.”⁶⁸

UPDATING CANADA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

Framing the Strategy

Strategy documents commit governments to actions, which become – in effect – a set of instructions for public servants and a guide for external observers. These commitments and their prioritization flow from an assessment of the policy landscape. The introduction of this report noted the degree to which the landscape has changed since 2022 from Canada’s perspective, which testimony suggested should be reflected in the framing of the Indo-Pacific Strategy’s update. Testimony also highlighted the national interests that are at stake for Canada in the region, including the regulation of new technologies, the management of sea lines of communication, and the geographic access that has underpinned stability and enabled prosperity.⁶⁹

Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, believes that the “task now is not to rewrite the [Indo-Pacific Strategy] but to refresh it, building on its strengths while adapting it to a more complex and interconnected strategic

65 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1645 (Weldon Epp).

66 20^e Sommet de la Francophonie, Phnom Penh 2026, [The Francophonie Summit](#).

67 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1550 (Vina Nadjibulla).

68 Ibid., 1555.

69 For elaboration on Canada’s regional interests, including with respect to traditional and non-traditional security threats and the implications of regional hegemony, see FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1645 (Stephen R. Nagy, China Policy Project Lead and Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Professor, International Christian University, As an Individual). For the geographic significance of the Central Pacific, see FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1650 (Cleo Paskal, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, As an Individual).

environment.”⁷⁰ For him, the next stage should therefore be “about refinement and action—ensuring that the strategy reflects the interconnected nature of today’s threats, the inseparability of economic and security policies, and the need for a consistent approach.”⁷¹

More specifically, Mr. Berkshire Miller observed that threats can no longer be conceived of in distinct geographic terms. He described “a single, evolving strategic system.”⁷² One example is Russia’s war against Ukraine. The war has primarily affected the European theatre, but it is “sustained by Chinese economic support and North Korean materiel while Moscow continues to project power in the Pacific and the Arctic.”⁷³ From Mr. Berkshire Miller’s perspective, there is also an “outdated distinction between economic and security policy.”⁷⁴ He emphasized that,

Economic relations are now a primary vector of strategic competition. Supply chains can be leveraged for coercion. Investment flows can create dependencies with security implications. Critical technologies, whether in telecommunications, artificial intelligence or critical minerals, sit at the intersection of economic opportunity and national security risk. The idea that Canada can engage economically without accounting for these dynamics is not simply outdated. It is strategically unsound.⁷⁵

Recognizing these two realities will require Canada to draw linkages between key regions and ensure “that diversification strategies enhance resilience rather than simply shifting exposure.”⁷⁶

Vina Nadjibulla of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada similarly argued for an evolution rather than a reinvention of Canada’s approach to the Indo-Pacific region. The Strategy, she wrote, has delivered “real progress” and starting over “would risk losing momentum and signalling inconsistency to partners.”⁷⁷ She also reinforced the point that, instead of standing alone, Canada’s strategies for different regions and sectors need to fit together and be embedded coherently within its larger foreign, national security and domestic economic policies. Furthermore, and echoing the comments

70 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1545 (Jonathan Berkshire Miller).

71 Ibid., 1550.

72 Ibid., 1545.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, [written brief](#), 3 June 2026.



made above, she identified “economic resilience” as the organizing logic.⁷⁸ This “sharper second phase” of the Indo-Pacific Strategy should be launched “as soon as possible, and no later than early 2027,” according to Ms. Nadjibulla, with “fewer priorities, additional dedicated resources, and measurable outcomes.”⁷⁹ The first component is addressed next.

Targeting the Strategy

Going forward, Professor Ari Van Assche believes that the Indo-Pacific Strategy must “be deployed more deliberately and more assertively as an instrument of economic statecraft.”⁸⁰ In his view, doing so necessitates three fundamental shifts. First, Canada needs to move “from export expansion to value chain positioning.”⁸¹ The objective, he told the Committee, “is not simply to export more, but to reduce Canada’s critical dependencies on both the import and the export side.”⁸² Second, Professor Van Assche said, Canada needs “sector-selective focus.” Economic security would be the determining factor. As he said, “Industries such as defence, pharmaceuticals and semiconductors are far more exposed to disruption and coercion than non-strategic sectors like Christmas lights, and they therefore require more coordinated state intervention.”⁸³ The third shift “is from diffuse regional engagement to targeted strategic partnerships.” In this regard, Professor Van Assche noted, “Not all partners offer the same level of reliability or strategic complementarity.”⁸⁴

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1550 (Ari Van Assche).

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

As Canada moves to expand its trade in non-strategic sectors, while protecting against choke points in strategic sectors,⁸⁵ Professor Van Assche's testimony suggested that Canada needs to act in a more anticipatory manner, informed by robust economic intelligence.⁸⁶ The global trading system does not have infinite choke points, he said, but they do need to be identified, which enables de-risking before they become points of vulnerability.⁸⁷

When appropriate, Canada can work with trusted Indo-Pacific allies. Professor Van Assche referenced South Korea's supply chain early warning system, and suggested that Canada could explore a joint economic security strategy with South Korea and Japan as part of its trade diversification strategy.⁸⁸ Research he published with two colleagues found that Canada's current policies for supply chain resilience "emphasize product-specific chokepoints (e.g. transport, health products, minerals) but lack an integration system across sectors, foresight in anticipating emerging risks, and strong international partnerships."⁸⁹ In addition to mitigating its own vulnerabilities, Canada can also "promote domestic strong points" in sectors that are strategically significant for its partners,⁹⁰ whether that is the sourcing of critical minerals or service sectors like artificial intelligence.⁹¹

Vina Nadjibulla also called for a more targeted approach in the next phase of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, which would aim to secure "deeper and more resilient Canadian positions in critical supply chains such as around energy, critical minerals, clean

85 Professor Van Assche defines non-strategic sectors as those "which continue to operate largely under market logic." By contrast, strategic sectors are those in which "reliance on foreign suppliers is considered too consequential to be left to markets alone" and in which "interdependence itself creates vulnerability." He identifies dual-use technologies, semiconductors, electric-vehicle batteries, critical minerals, pharmaceuticals and cloud computing as examples of strategic sectors. See Ari Van Assche, *Adapting Canada's Trade Diversification Strategy in an Era of Strategic Interdependence*, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 5 February 2026. When calling for a differentiated approach between strategic and non-strategic sectors, Professor Van Assche noted that companies require support to identify opportunities and reduce the costs of integrating into Asian business networks. In non-strategic sectors, the task is using tools like trade representatives in support of market mechanisms, whereas strategic sectors require reflection with respect to industrial policies. See FAAE, *Evidence*, 21 April 2026, [1555](#), [1605](#) and [1625](#) (Ari Van Assche).

86 FAAE, *Evidence*, 21 April 2026, 1550 (Ari Van Assche).

87 Ibid., [1615](#).

88 Ibid., [1635](#).

89 Ari Van Assche, Seungjoo Lee and Seyyed Milad Shirvani, *Strengthening Supply Chain Resilience: Developing Canada–Republic of Korea Early Warning System Co-operation*, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 5 December 2025.

90 FAAE, *Evidence*, 21 April 2026, 1550 (Ari Van Assche).

91 Ibid., [1600](#) and [1635](#).



technology, AI and quantum.”⁹² In terms of sectoral priorities, she believes that the Strategy “needs much stronger language around the energy, technology and services agendas.”⁹³ Conventional and clean energy and critical minerals, she said, “should all be treated not only as commercial opportunities but as strategic assets.”⁹⁴ Furthermore, according to Ms. Nadjibulla, there is a need to move beyond the long-standing focus on the export of goods, elevating “digital trade and services, as well as university partnerships and research and technology partnerships.”⁹⁵

As a country that must see itself as a stakeholder in regional stability, Ms. Nadjibulla recognized that Canada will not be among the region’s major military actors, but that it can – and does – make important contributions in niche areas. She highlighted maritime domain awareness, and told the Committee that Canada’s dark vessel detection program has been “much celebrated.”⁹⁶ Other areas where Canada can demonstrate that it is a “useful, trusted, and capable security partner” are cyber resilience, sanctions enforcement, training, and regular participation in regional exercises.⁹⁷ Furthermore, Ms. Nadjibulla observed that “Canada can also be an important actor in defence diplomacy, in standing firm on principles that matter to us in terms of freedom of navigation and in terms of calling out actions that are violating our partners and allies in the region.”⁹⁸ In July 2026, Canada joined with a group of governments to mark the 10th anniversary of the Philippines-China South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award. The joint statement also reaffirmed an “unwavering commitment to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, stable, and rules-based, anchored in international law.”⁹⁹

Stéphanie Martel, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies at Queen’s University, referenced similar initiatives to the list above, but expanded it to include efforts in combatting illegal and unregulated fishing, disaster relief, non-proliferation, countering violent extremism, capacity-building in peacekeeping, and conflict mediation. While perhaps garnering less attention than more traditional military activity, these are areas where Canada can contribute in concrete and cost-effective ways, solidify its

92 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1550 (Vina Nadjibulla).

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., [1555](#).

97 Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, [written brief](#), 3 June 2026.

98 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1555 (Vina Nadjibulla).

99 Global Affairs Canada, [Joint Statement on the 10th anniversary of the Philippines-China South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award](#), Statement, 11 July 2026.

brand, and better align its Indo-Pacific Strategy “with the comprehensive approach of our regional partners on national and regional security, cutting across those unhelpful divides among security, the economy and,” Professor Martel added, “social development.”¹⁰⁰ In this same regard, she feels strongly that Canada’s support for regional efforts to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda “should not be downgraded but instead carry over this next phase.”¹⁰¹

As Canada prioritizes relationships, and amid the calls for a more targeted approach to security, strategic assets and economic resilience, the Committee’s study also reflected on Canada’s conception of like-mindedness. Kai Ostwald, Associate Professor in the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia, encouraged the Committee to think about regional partnerships according to Canada’s overarching interests, including the preservation of sovereignty, agency, and predictable, rules-based trade. Some of the smaller and middle-sized countries in the region whose interests align with Canada’s “fall within the circle of traditional allies and liberal democracies that Canada has historically viewed as ‘like-minded’,” while “others do not.”¹⁰² More specifically, Professor Ostwald noted that there are countries in Southeast Asia that “do not subscribe to all elements of Canada’s more liberal convictions,” but which “do share many of Canada’s interests and values in ways that make them compatible and strategically valuable partners.”¹⁰³

Professor Ostwald believes that Canada should avoid taking a tactical orientation in its Indo-Pacific Strategy, which means “focusing on long term foundational objectives, while limiting rigid positions on specific issues that are likely to evolve in the near-term amid the unusually fluid geopolitical environment.”¹⁰⁴ While suggesting there is a need to temper language that does not resonate in a region that is generally characterized by its nuanced statecraft, he acknowledged that China’s significant power and capacity to coerce smaller states “demands a cautious, eyes-wide-open stance.”¹⁰⁵

Providing concrete examples, Cleo Paskal, a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, detailed her concerns about China’s use of

100 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 4 June 2026, 1535 (Stéphanie Martel, Associate Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen's University, As an Individual).

101 Ibid.

102 Kai Ostwald, [written brief](#), 13 May 2026.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid.



corruption and economic leverage to gain influence across the Central Pacific.¹⁰⁶ She argued that Canada could play a role through relatively modest investments, designed to block coercion and build resilience.¹⁰⁷ When asked for his thoughts about what Canada can do, Stephen R. Nagy, who is a Senior Fellow and China Policy Project Lead at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and a Professor at International Christian University in Tokyo, suggested that legal training is one type of assistance that can make a “soft” but “meaningful” contribution to the region.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, he observed that Canada has limited resources and that, when thinking about the size of the Indo-Pacific, “there are priority partners that we need to develop, such as Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam.” Canada, he said, must pick and choose where to invest in order to “build momentum” in its Indo-Pacific policy.¹⁰⁹

Tailoring the Strategy

Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy recognized that many close allies were increasing, or considering increasing, their presence in the region, guided by their own interests and supported by significant investments in diplomacy, defence, trade promotion and development assistance.¹¹⁰ Though the Strategy sought to “seize opportunities in the national interest of Canadians, while defending the values they hold dear,”¹¹¹ the Committee heard that the update presents an opportunity to ensure that Canada’s approach is tailored to Canada’s interests through framing that allows for adaptation to changing conditions and more pinpointed responses to specific behaviour of concern.

Like Professor Ostwald, Professor Martel argued that there was “some room for adjustment in the more zero-sum dimensions of the Indo-Pacific Strategy,” particularly in responding to aspects of China’s regional power.¹¹² In her view, a “value-informed, pragmatic approach to like-mindedness requires more than just categorizing each country as like or unlike overall[.]” Instead, she believes that Canada needs to look “at what specific aspects of a country’s behaviour within each particular issue area align or clash with our interests and values, and to what extent,” and then determine “where it

106 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1655 (Cleo Paskal).

107 [Ibid.](#), 1705. In her opening statement, Ms. Paskal provided the example of the U.S. agreeing to send investigators to Palau to help with corruption cases (blocking), while funding a new hospital (building).

108 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1700 (Stephen R. Nagy).

109 [Ibid.](#)

110 Global Affairs Canada, [Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy](#).

111 [Ibid.](#)

112 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 4 June 2026, 1535 (Stéphanie Martel).

makes sense for Canada to draw the line by coordinating with others.”¹¹³ Similar considerations were raised by Dominique Caouette, Full professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at the Université de Montréal, who told the Committee that Canada should avoid language that puts it in a “rhetorical trap” and does not “gain anything” by creating “polarizing narratives.”¹¹⁴

Vina Nadjibulla was less concerned with the Strategy’s assessment of China’s regional role, which she believes “holds true today.”¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, and despite her agreement with the validity of the description, her perspective is that “Canada’s approach to managing relations with China must evolve to reflect the broader shifts in the global order and our priority on independence and room for manoeuvre.”¹¹⁶ That said, Ms. Nadjibulla emphasized that the “government’s recalibration towards selective engagement with China is necessary, but selective engagement cannot become quiet accommodation.”¹¹⁷ She called for specific guardrails that “deal with issues of foreign interference, transnational repression, forced labour, cyber-threats, investment screening, research security, sensitive technologies, critical infrastructure, data governance and supply chain integrity.”¹¹⁸ Specifically on Taiwan, she noted that “Canada’s one China policy provides ample room for practical engagement with Taiwan, and that space should be used with confidence.”¹¹⁹

One specific example of this room for engagement, which was raised during the Committee’s hearings, was the status of the Trade Cooperation Framework Arrangement (TCFA) with Taiwan. In a written brief, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada urged the Canadian government to finalize and sign the TCFA, the negotiation of which was completed in 2025, but which has since been undergoing a “legal review.” Building on the foreign investment promotion and protection arrangement (FIPA), which Canada and Taiwan signed in December 2023 – triggering what the Office called a “surge in

113 Ibid.

114 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 4 June 2026, 1625 (Dominique Caouette, Full professor of Political Science and Asian Studies, Université de Montréal, As an Individual).

115 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1550 (Vina Nadjibulla).

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid. Since 1970, Canada’s “One China policy” has recognized the People’s Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of China, while taking note of – neither challenging nor endorsing – the Chinese government’s position on Taiwan. Consistent with Canada’s policy, the Indo-Pacific Strategy [indicated](#) that Canada would continue its “multifaceted engagement with Taiwan, which includes collaborating on trade, technology, health, democratic governance and countering disinformation.” Furthermore, the Strategy indicated that “Canada will oppose unilateral actions that threaten the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.”



private investment” – its written brief described the TCFA as a “‘building block’ framework designed to provide an institutional platform for trade, investment, regulatory cooperation, and supply chain integration.”¹²⁰ While the TCFA is not a traditional free trade agreement, the Office suggested that it would create “even stronger momentum” for businesses and help expand modest bilateral trade, the full extent of which may not be captured in bilateral trade statistics.¹²¹

Global Affairs Canada officials described the TCFA as “effectively a modalities document” that “sets out process, architecture, contact points and those kinds of elements” and largely resembles a similar arrangement signed by the United Kingdom and Taiwan in November 2023.¹²² With negotiations complete, the officials informed the Committee that the TCFA was with the government, which “is considering the timing and the nature of moving forward on it.”¹²³ They also noted that recent agreements between Taiwan and other trading partners – including the February 2026 United States-Taiwan *Agreement on Reciprocal Trade*¹²⁴ – would need to be taken into account as Canada determines how to “operationalize” the arrangement.¹²⁵

In addition to discussion of the TCFA, witnesses situated Taiwan’s importance in the broader regional and global context. After noting that a Taiwan “contingency” – namely a conflict in the Taiwan Strait – could cause an estimated US\$10 trillion to US\$15 trillion in global economic damage, disrupt semiconductor supply chains, and allow China to restrict access to the Indo-Pacific region, Professor Stephen Nagy underlined that Taiwan “matters to every single country on the planet.”¹²⁶ He urged the Canadian government to continue discussing Taiwan in terms that reflect Canadian policy. He also called for

120 Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada, [written brief](#), 30 June 2026.

121 Ibid.

122 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1555 (Darren Smith, Executive Director, Indo-Pacific Trade Policy Division, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development); United Kingdom Department for Business and Trade, [Enhanced Trade Partnership arrangement between Taiwan and the United Kingdom](#), 30 June 2025; and United Kingdom, Department for Business and Trade, [UK and Taiwan Enhanced Trade Partnership arrangement pillars](#), 30 June 2025.

123 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1540 (Weldon Epp).

124 Office of the United States Trade Representative, [Fact Sheet on U.S.-Taiwan Agreement on Reciprocal Trade](#), February 2026.

125 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 16 April 2026, 1610 (Darren Smith).

126 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1730 (Stephen R. Nagy).

greater investment in diplomatic resources that build alliances and partnerships with countries that view Taiwan in similar terms.¹²⁷

Scott Simon, Full Professor, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, called for specific actions after noting China's recent pressure tactics against Japan, which followed comments Japan's Prime Minister made when asked about a conflict scenario that could involve her country's self-defence obligations.¹²⁸ Professor Simon referenced China's imposition of export controls on rare earth minerals, its sanctioning of a Japanese parliamentarian following his visit to Taiwan, and its criticism of Japan at the United Nations Security Council after a Japanese destroyer transited the Taiwan Strait. Professor Simon argued that Canada should "publicly support Japan," while also strengthening defence and security collaboration with Japan.¹²⁹ In addition to the completion of the TCFA, he also called on Canada to continue its transits through the Taiwan Strait – which, he noted, is an international waterway – and maintain interparliamentary diplomacy. These people-to-people ties, Professor Simon said, were initiated in the 1970s.¹³⁰

In the conduct of an independent foreign policy, guardrails can also be erected around key values and standards. One example that was raised during the Committee's study is forced labour in global supply chains. Canada has prohibited the importation of goods produced wholly or in part by forced labour since 2020, when amendments to the *Customs Tariff* implementing Canada's obligations under the *Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement* (CUSMA) came into force.¹³¹ Building on that framework, the Indo-Pacific Strategy identified forced labour as one of the non-market trade practices associated with China. The Strategy also committed the Government of Canada to providing greater technical assistance to Indo-Pacific trading partners to improve the enforcement of labour provisions, including those concerning forced labour, in current and future free trade agreements with Canada.¹³²

Departmental officials told the Committee that Canada has developed a range of tools in recent years to identify products made with forced labour and has strengthened enforcement capacity at the Canada Border Services Agency and Royal Canadian

127 Ibid.

128 For background, see Koh Ewe, "[What to know about China and Japan's escalating spat over Taiwan](#)," *BBC*, 19 November 2025.

129 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 26 May 2026, 1540 (Scott Simon).

130 Ibid.

131 Public Safety Canada, [Import Prohibition on Goods Produced by Forced Labour](#), 8 February 2021.

132 Global Affairs Canada, [Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy](#).



Mounted Police. The government also introduced a requirement that Canadian companies with investments in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region – where forced labour involving Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities has been documented – adhere to a Xinjiang Integrity Declaration.¹³³

Professor Ari Van Assche acknowledged the need to be “mindful of the fact that products imported from China, but also elsewhere, may result from supply chains that involve forced labour.”¹³⁴ He nevertheless emphasized that “not all products imported from China involve the use of forced labour” and that Canada should adopt a pragmatic approach to the issue.¹³⁵ In that respect, he described Canada's *Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act* (2023), which requires covered entities to report on their due diligence processes, as a “first step.”¹³⁶ Near the conclusion of the Committee's study, Minister Anand tabled *An Act respecting the prohibition of the importation of goods produced by forced labour* to “reinforce Canada's existing framework to prevent goods made with forced labour from entering the Canadian market.”¹³⁷ This announcement was followed, on 21 July 2026, by the launch of a public consultation on possible due diligence measures and methods for identifying goods suspected of being produced with forced labour.¹³⁸ The consultation closed on 21 August 2026.

Institutionalizing the Strategy

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy conveyed that it was built on “decades of government, private sector, security and civil society cooperation” within the region, whose rising influence was seen as a “once-in-a-generation global shift” that would require “a generational Canadian response.”¹³⁹ Even so, to be given practical effect, such documents must be linked to budgetary cycles, governmental planning processes, and associated programs. The Indo-Pacific Strategy was designed as a “whole-of-government

133 FAAE, *Evidence*, 16 April 2026, 1555 (Weldon Epp); and Global Affairs Canada, *Canada announces new measures to address human rights abuses in Xinjiang, China*, News release, 12 January 2021.

134 FAAE, *Evidence*, 21 April 2026, 1605 (Ari Van Assche).

135 *Ibid.*, 1610.

136 *Ibid.*

137 Global Affairs Canada, *Canada tables legislation to strengthen prohibition on goods produced with forced labour*, News release, 12 June 2026.

138 Global Affairs Canada, *Canada launches public consultations on measures to strengthen Canada's fight against forced labour in global supply chains*, News release, 21 July 2026.

139 Global Affairs Canada, *Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy*.

effort supported by additional investments of nearly \$2.3 billion over 5 years, supporting 24 initiatives across 17 federal government departments and agencies.”¹⁴⁰ Given that the Strategy was launched in November 2022, its notional lifespan continues until November 2027.

As was discussed in the preceding sections of this report, testimony favoured the launch of a new phase of the Strategy, which witnesses suggested should be refined to reflect current geopolitical realities and Canadian interests, including with respect to strategic autonomy and economic resilience. Testimony also addressed the need for the Strategy’s objectives to be entrenched within government, for the long-term, and supported by governmental capacity and non-governmental networks.

Professor Kai Ostwald summarized the Strategy’s positive outcomes to date, while noting that the baseline it established had been preceded by decades of underinvestment in the region, which left Canada with deficits that it still needs to overcome. Professor Ostwald did not yet see “sufficient familiarity, knowledge, expertise or language capacity in key sectors in Canada, whether they’re in the private sector or large parts of the public sector, to effectively leverage Canadian opportunities.”¹⁴¹ To support this point, he told the Committee that, even the University of British Columbia, which “is arguably the most Asia-facing university in Canada,” has not offered a Southeast Asian language as a foreign language in more than a decade.¹⁴² Diasporic connections are important, he said, but they “do not replace systematic training across the board.”¹⁴³ Regarding the other two deficits, Professor Ostwald is of the view that Canadian networks are “thinner on the ground across Asia than those of many counterparts.” Furthermore, Canada must still overcome its “reputational deficit,” which has caused Canada to be perceived to some extent as “a fair-weather friend” who appears and recedes as political dynamics in Canada shift.¹⁴⁴

The Indo-Pacific Strategy rests on five pillars, but the security and economic pillars are clearly the priorities today. However warranted this emphasis may be, Professor Ostwald reminded the Committee that those pillars depend on “adequate human capacity, Asia competence, and network density.”¹⁴⁵ He described these as the “load-bearing

140 Global Affairs Canada, [Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy 2023–2024 Implementation Update](#).

141 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 21 April 2026, 1545 (Kai Ostwald, Associate Professor, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, As an Individual).

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid., [1630](#).

144 Ibid., [1545](#).

145 Kai Ostwald, [written brief](#), 13 May 2026.



infrastructure of Canada's Asia relationships," and remarked that they "are built primarily through the people-to-people and active engagement pillars."¹⁴⁶ The challenge then is devising an approach that maximizes immediate gains, without neglecting investments in this foundation of long-term success.

Professor Stéphanie Martel suggested that Canada can "better leverage the higher education sector."¹⁴⁷ One idea she mentioned would be to build on the successes of the Canada-ASEAN scholarships program.¹⁴⁸ Professor Dominique Caouette discussed structured forms of support for Canadian researchers and think tanks whose work focuses on the Indo-Pacific, including having "researchers in residence at Canada's consulates and embassies."¹⁴⁹ When it comes to funding that can help students conduct research in the region, he emphasized the importance of reciprocal exchanges, which would also enable student researchers from the region to come to Canada to specialize.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, he suggested that Global Affairs Canada's in-house expertise and regional connections could be enhanced through the establishment of an Indo-Pacific research centre, similar to what the department has done with its China research centre.¹⁵¹

Julia G. Bentley, a former diplomat, Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and Senior Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, also focused on education, academic collaboration, and Asia competencies in her recommendations for what she calls an Indo-Pacific Strategy "2.0." She suggested that Canada could capitalize on the Association of Asian Research Centres of Canada, which was established in early 2026, and "use it as a platform for engaging Canadian academic[s] with expertise on Asia."¹⁵² Such a "one-stop shop," she wrote, could also provide an early sounding board for government initiatives. Additionally, Ms. Bentley recommended the launch of a visiting professorship program. It "could be modelled on the 1990s Canada-ASEAN Centre's visiting chair in Southeast Asian Studies,

146 Ibid.

147 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 4 June 2026, 1550 (Stéphanie Martel).

148 Ibid. For additional context, see Global Affairs Canada, [Scholarships and Educational Exchanges for Development – Phase 2 \(SEED-2\)](#).

149 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 4 June 2026, 1555 (Dominique Caouette).

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid. For additional context regarding these points, see Université de Montréal, [L'UdeM reçoit 500 000 \\$ pour renforcer sa recherche en Indo-Pacifique](#), 9 April 2026 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]; and, Government of Canada, [Indo-Pacific Engagement Initiative](#).

152 Julia G. Bentley, [written brief](#), 14 July 2026.

which rotated Asian scholars among Canadian universities with centres of Asian expertise.”¹⁵³

Another idea is investment in a speaker series of Asian experts who would be invited to Canada to address policy-relevant themes that align with the updated Strategy. If coordinated with appropriate institutions and expanded to sufficient scale, such inbound programming would complement the original Strategy’s funding of the outbound Indo-Pacific Scholarships and Fellowships. Finally, Ms. Bentley would like to see support for the consistent participation of Canadian academics and experts in informal regional dialogues, such as the Shangri-La Dialogue and the ASEAN Regional Forum Expert and Eminent Persons Group. This exposure, she noted, can help to “build understanding of regional priorities and sensitivities, informing how Canada can contribute to regional peace and stability.”¹⁵⁴

The value of reciprocal exchanges, talent attraction, and scholarships was similarly underscored by the Canadian Bureau for International Education, along with skills-based training and capacity-building projects. The organization wants these activities to be given strategic recognition, direction and investments in an updated Indo-Pacific Strategy. Despite enabling and reinforcing the existing Strategy’s core objectives, international education is currently “only listed as a priority sector for the ASEAN region, and is provided with limited funding or support to advance the Strategy.”¹⁵⁵ Yet, many of these activities and collaborations – whether connected to colleges and universities or language schools and school boards – “are the most sustained point of contact that partner countries have with Canada and serve as the basis of Canada’s people-to-people ties in the region.”¹⁵⁶

As Canada works to deepen its base of Indo-Pacific knowledge, networks and competencies, and realize its interests in the region, Professor Ostwald emphasized that meaningful progress “will be measured in decades, not in individual budget or electoral cycles.”¹⁵⁷ With that reality in mind, he stressed the need for “sustained, long-term investment that strengthens the foundation of transpacific relationships, even when near-term returns are modest and political pressure for visible results is high.”¹⁵⁸ A long

153 Ibid.

154 Ibid.

155 Canadian Bureau for International Education, [written brief](#), 15 June 2026.

156 Ibid.

157 Kai Ostwald, [written brief](#), 13 May 2026.

158 Ibid.



time horizon may also help to give the updated Strategy a big picture outlook, and one that is not overly influenced by present-day tactical debates or political dynamics. As another witness noted, the political power structures of key regional states can change, and national power can oscillate.¹⁵⁹

Regarding Canada's own machinery of government, Jonathan Berkshire Miller referenced the need to reinforce the Strategy's "continuity across political cycles through formal mechanisms."¹⁶⁰ The way in which implementation is measured is equally important. "Meetings, missions and announcements matter only if they produce results," Vina Nadjibulla remarked.¹⁶¹ To shift the emphasis from the reporting of activities to the achievement of outcomes, she suggested that the Government of Canada should publish an annual "scorecard" on the Indo-Pacific Strategy that would track "market access secured, investments attracted, supply chains strengthened, security capabilities delivered, partnerships institutionalized and regulatory barriers removed."¹⁶²

CONCLUSION

The Committee's study emphasized the progress that has been achieved through the Indo-Pacific Strategy, but also confirmed the need for its renewal and refinement. Targeted improvements can help Canada to adapt to geopolitical pressures and to capitalize on new opportunities for regional partnerships. The Strategy's publication in 2022 represented a milestone in Canada's commitment to the region and gave shape and momentum to Canadian initiatives. Even so, the significance of a region that has been described in generational terms cannot be addressed through a five-year effort, just as the layers of its national and sub-regional complexities cannot be adequately captured by an assessment that was made at a specific moment in time.

The Committee believes that the extent of the shifts in the geopolitical environment and in Canada's policy priorities that became evident during its study merit the publication of an updated document. In addition to the need for policy coherence and whole-of-government coordination, recurrent themes of the Committee's recent work, this study on the Indo-Pacific emphasized the importance of perceptions, reputation, and

159 FAAE, *Evidence*, 21 April 2026, [1645](#) and [1715](#) (Stephen R. Nagy).

160 FAAE, *Evidence*, 26 May 2026, 1545 (Jonathan Berkshire Miller).

161 FAAE, *Evidence*, 26 May 2026, 1550 (Vina Nadjibulla).

162 Ibid.

signals,¹⁶³ all of which can be solidified within the region and communicated across Canada – to businesses, other levels of government, educational institutions, and civil society – through a tangible document. Its publication would provide continuity, while positioning Canada for a new and ambitious phase of regional engagement.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada publish an updated Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2027 that prioritizes Canada's strategic autonomy and economic resilience, reflects Canada's overarching foreign policy priorities and national security interests, and commits Canada to long-term regional engagement.

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada use its updated Indo-Pacific Strategy to help expand and diversify Canada's trade in non-strategic sectors, including by investing in Canada's economic intelligence and regional trade promotion and diplomatic capacities.

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada reduce Canada's vulnerabilities in strategic segments and stages of global supply chains, including by strengthening domestic capacity in these sectors, by working with trusted regional partners on supply chain resilience and early warning mechanisms, and by remaining vigilant for signs of forced labour within these supply chains.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada elevate the emphasis on energy, digital trade and services, emerging technologies, talent mobility, and research and educational partnerships in its updated Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada explore the possibility with Japan and the Republic of Korea of developing a joint economic security strategy.

163 As a sign of the work that still lies ahead for Canada in the Indo-Pacific region, Professor Kai Ostwald's brief [referenced](#) survey reports that are published annually by the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. They ask government, business and civil society elites across Southeast Asia to rank ASEAN's dialogue partners in order of their strategic relevance to ASEAN. In the [2026 edition](#), Canada ranks 10th of 11 partners.



Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada strengthen its role in upholding the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, including in the Taiwan Strait, notably by increasing naval deployments and participation in regional military exercises, enhancing intelligence-sharing and defence cooperation with trusted allies, and investing in specific capabilities such as dark vessel detection and cyber resilience.

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada continue to work with its allies and partners to uphold international law and maintain a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada operationalize the Trade Cooperation Framework Arrangement (TCFA) with Taiwan.

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada deepen its engagement with Indo-Pacific regional institutions and strengthen its bilateral relationships with key partners, guided by Canada's diplomatic, economic and national security interests.

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada advance its bid to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting in 2029.

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada regularly review, report on, and periodically update its Indo-Pacific Strategy to ensure it remains focused on outcomes and responsive to a rapidly evolving global context.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canadian Forces Col Jerome Patry, J35 Expeditionary, Future Operations, Canadian Joint Operations Command	2026/04/16	30
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Weldon Epp, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indo-Pacific Aly-Khan Rajani, Director, Indo-Pacific Regional Coordination, Policy and Planning Division Valérie Samaan, Director General, Indo-Pacific Strategy Planning, Policy and Operations Darren Smith, Executive Director, Indo-Pacific Trade Policy Division	2026/04/16	30
Department of National Defence Inderjit Nijjar, Deputy Director General, International Security Policy	2026/04/16	30
As an individual Dr. Stephen R. Nagy, China Policy Project Lead and Senior Fellow, , Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Professor, International Christian University Kai Ostwald, Associate Professor, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia Cleo Paskal, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies Dr. Ari Van Assche, Full Professor, Department of International Business, HEC Montréal	2026/04/21	31

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
As an individual	2026/05/26	35
Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute		
Dr. Scott Simon, Full Professor, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University Of Ottawa		
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada	2026/05/26	35
Vina Nadjibulla, Vice-President, Research and Strategy		
As an individual	2026/06/04	38
Dominique Caouette, Full professor of Political Science and Asian Studies Université de Montréal		
Dr. Stéphanie Martel, Associate Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen's University		

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Bentley, Julia G.

Berkshire Miller, Jonathan

Canadian Bureau for International Education

Canadian Red Cross

International Development Research Centre

Ostwald, Kai

Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 30, 31, 35, 38, 41 and 42](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Ahmed Hussen, C.P., M.P.
Chair

Review of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy Dissenting Opinion
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development
Submitted by Eric Duncan, Member of Parliament on behalf of Conservative Members

The majority report fails to confront the fundamental shortcomings of the Liberal government's Indo-Pacific Strategy. While the 2022 document marked a long-overdue recognition of the region's importance, four years of testimony before this Committee and its predecessor reveal a pattern of rhetorical ambition paired with inadequate resources, delayed implementation, and a reluctance to confront the People's Republic of China's coercive behaviour with the seriousness it demands.

Officials from Global Affairs Canada told the Committee on 16 April 2026 that the strategy is "delivering real results" and that an update is underway. Yet when pressed on the Canada-Taiwan Trade Cooperation Framework Arrangement—fully agreed and awaiting Canada's signature since March 2025—they could only say it remains under consideration at senior levels of government. This hesitation, despite the original strategy's repeated references to strengthening economic ties with Taiwan, signals a continued prioritization of Beijing's sensitivities over Canadian economic and strategic interests.

Expert witnesses underscored the gap between presence and impact. Vina Nadjibulla of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada testified on 26 May 2026 that "presence is a means, not an end" and called for a Phase Two strategy focused on fewer priorities, additional dedicated resources, and measurable outcomes measured by an annual scorecard of market access, supply-chain resilience, and security capabilities delivered. Jonathan Berkshire Miller of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and Cleo Paskal of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies similarly stressed the need for clearer prioritization of strategic geography and robust deterrence rather than quiet accommodation.

The security pillar remains particularly weak. While Canada has increased naval transits and exercises under Operation Horizon, witnesses repeatedly noted that Canadian hard-power contributions lag far behind those of key partners. Without a credible defence industrial base and sustained naval and air presence, Canada risks being viewed as a free-rider rather than a reliable ally in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, especially with regard to Taiwan. We continue to strongly oppose military co-operation with China and view their actions as an ongoing security concern.

Conservatives support deeper engagement with Japan, South Korea, Australia, ASEAN, India, and Taiwan. We reject, however, an approach that treats China primarily as a commercial opportunity while soft-peddalling its military expansion, economic coercion, and human-rights

abuses. The government must sign the Taiwan Trade Cooperation Framework Arrangement without further delay, accelerate defence investments tied to the region, publish transparent implementation metrics, and ensure that engagement with Beijing is strictly conditional on reciprocity and respect for international law. In contrast, the Liberal majority's recommendation is that Canada "operationalize" the agreement. It should be obvious that Canada cannot operationalize an agreement it refuses to sign. Rather, it is clear to Conservative members of the committee that this recommendation is meant to appear as support for Taiwan while the government continues to acquiesce to Chinese intimidation.

Canada cannot afford another cycle of announcements without results. The Indo-Pacific will shape our prosperity and security for decades. This Committee's report should have demanded accountability; instead it risks papering over the government's shortcomings.

We therefore dissent.