



**December 4, 2025**

Ottawa, ON

**LE CANADA PEUT-IL  
ACCROÎTRE SON AUTONOMIE  
EN DÉFENSE ?**

**CAN CANADA ENHANCE ITS  
AUTONOMY IN DEFENCE?**



# **CAN CANADA ENHANCE IT'S AUTONOMY IN DEFENCE?**

PARTNERS:

**CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE  
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**INSTITUT DE LA CONFÉRENCE  
DES ASSOCIATIONS DE LA DÉFENSE**





# PROGRAM

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|---------------|--|
| 8:30          | Opening remarks  |
| 8:40 – 10:15  | Panel 1: Industrial Cooperation and Strategic Diversification.                         |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Health Break   |
| 10:30 – 12:00 | Panel 2: Missile Defence: Reconciling Canadian Autonomy and North American Integration |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch  |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Panel 3: Enhancing Canada's Digital Autonomy?  |
| 14:30 – 14:45 | Health break.  |
| 14:45 – 16:15 | Panel 4: Conceptualizing Deterrence in Canada  |
| 16:15 – 16:30 | Closing remarks  |



# Opening Remarks

08:30

**Jonathan Paquin**, Director of the Network for Strategic Analysis (NSA)  
and Full Professor, Université Laval.

The liberal world order is gradually fading, giving way to a more conflictual international environment in which power politics, and technological competition are reshaping strategic balances. China, the United States, and Russia are now pursuing more assertive, often revisionist, foreign policies, while the race for armaments, artificial intelligence supremacy, and access to critical minerals is intensifying great-power rivalries.

In this uncertain and dangerous context, Canada's sovereignty and security are directly being put to the test. The country is compelled to rethink the foundations of its defence policy to better adapt to these rapid transformations. Amid so much uncertainty, a central question arises: Does Canada have the means to strengthen its defence autonomy?

Four expert panels will address this question from various angles, examining the conditions, constraints, and opportunities for greater Canadian strategic autonomy. The first panel will focus on industrial cooperation and strategic diversification, exploring how Canada can enhance its defence autonomy while maintaining close ties with its allies and diversifying its international partnerships. The second panel will examine the dilemma posed by Canada's integration into the North American missile defence system, questioning how to reconcile participation in continental security with the preservation of national sovereignty. The third panel will address Canada's digital autonomy in the face of cyber threats and dependence on foreign tech giants, identifying the conditions required for the emergence of autonomous digital capabilities. Finally, the last panel will consider what a distinctly Canadian approach to deterrence might look like, exploring how Canada can rethink its strategic posture amid rising global tensions.



# Panel 1 – Industrial Cooperation and Strategic Diversification

08:40 - 10:15

Defense autonomy relies on a coherent industrial, technological, and diplomatic ecosystem. However, Canada remains heavily dependent on its allies, particularly the United States, for the supply, research, and production of military equipment. In a context of increased rivalry among major powers, this dependence presents significant strategic challenges. How can Canada strengthen its strategic autonomy, deepen industrial cooperation with certain allies, and diversify its strategic partnerships? This panel will examine the political, institutional, and economic levers available to Canada to consolidate its defense base and increase its strategic flexibility.

## Chair:

**Gaëlle Rivard Piché**, Director of the CDA Institute.

## Speakers:

- **Yan Cimon**, Full Professor, Université Laval ;
- **Philippe Lagassé**, Associate Professor, Carleton University ;
- **Justin Massie**, Co-director of the NSA, Full Professor, UQAM ;
- **Jacob Tuckey**, Master's degree Student, University of Waterloo.



# Panel 2 – Missile Defence: Reconciling Canadian Autonomy and North American Integration

10:30 - 12:00

Canada's possible integration into the North American missile defense system raises a strategic dilemma: how can we participate fully in continental security without relying entirely on the United States for the protection of our territory? President Trump's "golden dome" project crystallizes the tensions between dependence and autonomy. This panel will discuss Canada's room for maneuver in this sensitive area and the conditions necessary to ensure that increased participation does not result in a loss of decision-making sovereignty.

## **Chair:**

**Steve Saideman**, Full Professor, Carleton University.

## **Speakers:**

- **Lieutenant-general (ret.) Yvan Blondin** ;
- **Andrea Charron**, Professor, University of Manitoba ;
- **Paul Meyer**, Adjunct Professor, Simon Fraser University ;
- **Gaëlle Rivard Piché**, Director of the CDA Institute.



# Panel 3 – Enhancing Canada’s Digital Autonomy?

13:00 - 14:30

In the face of cyber threats, Artificial Intelligence, and dependence on American tech giants, digital autonomy is becoming an essential dimension of our national security. Does Canada have the means to develop sovereign capabilities in cybersecurity, data management, and critical digital infrastructure? This panel will explore the place of digital technology in Canada’s defense strategy and the conditions required for true technological autonomy in an environment dominated by the United States and China.

## **Chair :**

**Sarah E. Sharma**, Co-director of the NSA and Associate Professor,  
University of Ottawa.

## **Speakers:**

- **Jean-Christophe Boucher**, Associate Professor, University of Calgary ;
- **Stéphanie Carvin**, Associate Professor, Carleton University ;
- **Leah West**, Associate Professor, Carleton University.



# Panel 4 – Conceptualizing Deterrence in Canada

14:45 - 16:15

In an international context marked by renewed rivalries between major powers, threats made by Donald Trump, and the modernization of nuclear arsenals, the concept of deterrence has regained significant importance. As a non-nuclear power and NATO ally, Canada must rethink its stance in the face of hybrid, cyber, and conventional threats. What does “deterrence” mean for a country whose strategy is based on the credibility of alliances rather than the possession of strategic weapons? This panel will examine the relevance and possible contours of a “Canadian-style” deterrence, between collective engagement and the assertion of increased strategic autonomy.

## Chair:

**Daniel Jean**, Advisory Board of the NSA, Former National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada.

## Speakers:

- **Thomas Hughes**, Assistant Professor, Mount Allison University ;
- **Emile Lambert-Deslandes**, PhD Candidate, Queen’s University ;
- **Eric Ouellet**, Full Professor, Canadian Forces College ;
- **Nancy Teeple**, Strategic Analyst, Centre for Operational Research and Analysis (CORA).





# Closing Remarks

16:15

**Justin Massie**, Co-director of the Network for Strategic Analysis,  
Full Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal.



# Biographies



## **Lieutenant-general (ret.) Yvan Blondin**

Lieutenant-general Yvan Blondin served as Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force from 2012 to July 2015. He enlisted in the Canadian Forces in 1980. After completing his pilot training in 1982, he was assigned to 32 Squadron in Shearwater, Nova Scotia, where he flew T33 aircraft. In 1986, when Canada acquired CF18 fighter jets, he was assigned to the newly created 433rd Tactical Support Squadron in Bagotville. He logged more than 3,000 flight hours in North America and Europe aboard several types of Canadian Forces aircraft. From 2000 to 2002, he was commander of the 425th Tactical Support Squadron in Bagotville, while also serving as commander of the Canadian CF18 Task Force in Aviano, Italy, from where he supported NATO forces in the former Yugoslavia in 2000 and 2001. From 2002 to 2004, he was part of the Canadian staff at NORAD Headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 2006 and 2007, he was deployed to Afghanistan, where he served as director of the Canadian staff at NATO's ISAF headquarters. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Manitoba and an MBA from the University of Phoenix, Arizona. He is also a graduate of the Canadian Forces Staff and Command College and the United States Air War College.

## **Jean-Christophe Boucher**

Jean-Christophe Boucher is an Associate Professor at the School of Public Policy and at the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary. His current work focuses on applied machine learning to understand how the digital world shapes our society. He is currently holding grants from the Department of National Defence (DND) to study information operations; the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to understand civil-military relations in Canada; and holds grants from Alberta Innovates, the Vaccine Confidence Fund and Merck to study vaccine hesitancy on social media to develop better communications strategies and tools to increase vaccine uptake. He holds a BA in History from the University of Ottawa, a MA in Philosophy from the Université de Montréal and a PhD in Political Science from Université Laval. He specializes in international relations, with an emphasis on foreign policy, international security, and data analytics.



## **Stéphanie Carvin**

Stephanie Carvin is an Associate Professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. Her research interests are in the area of international and national security, and technology. Stephanie holds a PhD from the London School of Economics. Among other university press publications, she is the author of *Stand on Guard: Reassessing Threats to Canada's National Security* (University of Toronto Press) which was nominated for the 2021 Donner Prize. From 2012-2015, she was an intelligence analyst with the Government of Canada focusing on national security issues. She is presently co-authoring a book on far-right extremism in Canada with Amarnath Amarasingam.





# Biographies



## Andrea Charron

Dr. Charron holds a PhD from the Royal Military College of Canada (Department of War Studies). She obtained a Masters in International Relations from Webster University, Leiden, The Netherlands, a Master's of Public Administration from Dalhousie University and a Bachelor of Science (Honours) from Queen's University. Dr. Charron worked for various federal departments including the Canadian Privy Council Office in the Security and Intelligence Secretariat. She is now Professor (IR), Political Studies and Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies. Dr. Charron has been featured in the Economist twice for her Canadian foreign policy and NORAD expertise (2019 and 2021) and on the CBC radio show Ideas (2020). She has 4 peer reviewed books (2011, 2022, 2023, 2023) on NORAD, sanctions and 9/11. She is on the editorial board of the Canadian Foreign Policy Journal, the Journal, the Canadian Naval Review and the Army Journal. She has peer-reviewed articles in International Affairs, International Studies, Strategic Studies Quarterly, International Journal, Canadian Foreign Policy Journal and others.

## Yan Cimon

Yan Cimon, Ph.D., is a full professor of strategy at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Laval University (Quebec, Canada). He was Assistant Vice-President for International Affairs and Francophonie at Laval University and Director of the Interuniversity Research Center on Business Networks, Logistics, and Transportation. He teaches at the Collège des administrateurs de sociétés, which awarded him a Distinction in Teaching Award in 2015. His research and teaching focus on business models, strategy, alliances, and networks in several industries, including—but not limited to—aerospace and defense, automotive, retail, and telecommunications equipment manufacturers. He also takes a keen interest in strategic and governance issues affecting North American companies and international trends that impact them. In this regard, he has given over 100 lectures to specialists and has been quoted over 1,000 times in national and international media. He was the recipient of the Hermès Award for Excellence in Community Relations, presented at the 2018 FSA ULaval Excellence Ceremony.



## Thomas Hughes

Dr. Thomas Hughes is an Assistant Professor at Mount Allison University, and the Deputy Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies at the University of Manitoba. His research focuses on North American and Arctic defence, NATO, and threat perception. Dr. Hughes co-edited the 2018 volume North American Strategic Defense in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and has published research on Arctic defence and trust in international relations, including a chapter in International Competition in the High North (published by the U.S. Army War College) and articles in the Journal of Transatlantic Studies, The Journal of Trust Research, and the Canadian Foreign Policy Journal. Dr. Hughes is also a Network Co-ordinator for the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network and is on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Naval Review magazine. He has contributed to events across the defence and security community in Canada, including presenting at the Kingston Conference of International Security in 2022. He completed his award-winning PhD, The Art of War Games, which explored confidence-building measures and the political effects of military exercises, at Queen's University in 2021.



# Biographies



## Daniel Jean

Daniel Jean served as National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada (2016-18). Previously, he was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (2013-2016) and Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage (2010-2013). Prior to his appointment as Deputy Minister in 2007, Daniel had a stimulating career in international and migration related issues both in Canada and abroad that included two postings in Haiti, two separate assignments in the United States in Buffalo and Washington, and one in Hong Kong. He received a Public Service Award of Excellence and a Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO) award for his efforts in the aftermath of the coup that ousted the first democratically elected government in Haiti in 1991. Daniel graduated with a MBA from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1988. He is a senior fellow at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs of the University of Ottawa, a distinguished fellow with the Canadian School of Public Service, an associate member with the Observatory of multidimensional conflicts at the Raoul Dandurand Chair of UQAM and a member of the Strategic Council of the Network for Strategic Analysis. He is an active volunteer with Centraide Outaouais where he served, until recently, as chair of the board and is a mentor with the Action Canada Fellowship Program of the Public Policy Forum.

## Philippe Lagassé

Philippe Lagassé is associate professor and the Barton Chair at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, at the Carleton University. Between 2012-2014 he served as a member of the Independent Review Panel overseeing the evaluation of options to replace Canada's CF-18 fighter aircraft, and he is currently a member of the Independent Review Panel for Defence Acquisition within the Department of National Defence. His research focuses on defence policy and military procurement, as well as civil-military relations and the role of institutions in international policymaking in the Westminster tradition. He has published in academic journals *Parliamentary Affairs*, *West European Politics*, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, *Review of Constitutional Studies*, *Canadian Public Administration*, *Defense & Security Analysis*, *Canadian Foreign Policy* and *International Journal*. He is the author of many referred book chapters and the co-author of *Reviving Realism in the Canadian Defence Debate* (Martello Paper, 2008).



## Émile Lambert-Deslandes

Émile is a doctoral student and Joseph-Armand Bombardier (CGS-D) Scholar in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University, studying International Relations and Security. He has been granted the Desjardins Scholarship, the G.G. Baron Van der Feltz Award for best master's dissertation in International Relations, and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS; twice). Émile's research is primarily focused on NATO deterrence, nuclear weapons proliferation, and nuclear latency. Additionally, he works on Canadian foreign and defence policy. Émile has authored or co-authored articles, book chapters, and book reviews that have been published in *International Affairs*, *Defence Studies*, the *Journal of Strategic and Military Studies*, and the *Palgrave Handbook on Contemporary Geopolitics*. He regularly analyzes international events on the radio. He is also a Graduate Research Fellow at the Centre for International and Defence Policy, and a Coordinator for the Network for Strategic Analysis. Previously, Émile earned a B.A. in International Development Studies at McGill University in 2020, and a M.A. in Political Studies at Queen's University in 2022.



# Biographies



## Justin Massie

Justin Massie is a professor and Head of the Department of political science at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He is also Co-director of the NSA, and Co-director of Le Rubicon. He was the 2019 Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in Canada-U.S. Relations at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC. His research focuses on the global power transition, multinational military interventions, and foreign and defence policy. His work has been published in several journals, including *International Studies Quarterly*, *European Journal of International Security*, *International Relations*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Contemporary Security Policy*, *Comparative Strategy*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *International Journal* (winner of the best article published in 2017), *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* (winner of the best article published in 2008) and *Études internationales*. He is the author of *Francosphère : l'importance de la France dans la culture stratégique du Canada* (PUQ, 2013), and co-editor of *Paradiplomatie identitaire : Nations minoritaires et politique extérieure* (PUQ, 2019), *America's Allies and the Decline of U.S. Hegemony* (Routledge, 2019), and *Intelligence Cooperation in a Multipolar World: Non-American Perspectives* (UTP, 2024).

## Paul Meyer

Paul Meyer is Fellow in International Security and Adjunct Professor of International Studies at Simon Fraser University. He is a founding Fellow of the Outer Space Institute, a senior advisor to ICT4Peace and a Director of the Canadian Pugwash Group. Prior to assuming his current positions in 2011, Mr. Meyer had a 35-year career with the Canadian Foreign Service, including serving as Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva (2003-2007). He teaches a course on diplomacy at SFU's School for International Studies and writes on issues of Canadian diplomacy, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, outer space security and international cyber security.



## Eric Ouellet

Éric Ouellet holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Political Science from Université Laval, Quebec City, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from York University, Toronto. He joined the Canadian Forces College in 2002, and taught in the fields of Leadership, Command, Defence Management and Organizational and Military Sociology. In 2005, he became Director of Academics. In 2008, Dr. Ouellet re-joined the Canadian Forces College after working as a Strategic Analyst at the Centre for Operational Research and Analysis, part of Defence Research and Development Canada. Dr Ouellet published an international anthology in 2005 entitled *New Directions in Military Sociology*. He has published in journals like *Low-Intensity Conflict* and *Law Enforcement*, *Canadian Army Journal*, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, and *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, as well as a number of government and NATO research reports, and book chapters. He is member of the international Board of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, and is actively involved in research projects with NATO's Research and Technology Organization and Defence Research and Development Canada.



# Biographies



## Jonathan Paquin

Jonathan Paquin is director of the Graduate School of International Studies (ESEI, Université Laval) since November 2023. He is also a Full Professor in the Department of Political Science at Université Laval and the Director of the Réseau d'analyse stratégique. He holds a PhD in Political Science from McGill University. He has also been a Fulbright scholar and a visiting professor at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC, as well as the Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Humanities and Social Sciences at The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina. His research focuses on foreign policy analysis and international security issues. He has published numerous scholarly articles, including in *International Studies Quarterly*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, and *Cooperation and Conflict*. He is the co-editor of *America's Allies and the Decline of US Hegemony* (Routledge, 2019); co-author of *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); co-editor of *Game Changer: The Impact of 9/11 on North American Security* (UBC Press, 2014); and the author of *A Stability-Seeking Power: US Foreign Policy and Secessionist Conflicts* (McGill-Queen's, 2010).

## Gaëlle Rivard Piché

Dr. Rivard Piché holds a Ph.D. in International Affairs from Carleton University (2017) and an M.Sc. in Political Science from the Université de Montréal (2010). She is a Fellow of numerous academic organizations and think tanks including the CDA Institute and the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, and was a Fulbright Fellow with the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School in 2014 and 2015. Prior to joining the CDA and CDA Institute, Dr. Rivard Piché was a long-time strategic analyst at Defence Research and Development Canada working variously with NORAD Headquarters in Colorado Springs, the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, and the Royal Canadian Navy. She also supports the education and professional development of CAF members as a lecturer at the Canadian Forces College, as well as being a training consultant to the RCMP. With experience in Latin American and Caribbean security issues, deterrence theory and practice, and Arctic security, Dr. Rivard Piché is the co-author of two books on defence and security in the Far North and numerous articles and reports.



## Steve Saideman

Stephen Saideman holds the Paterson Chair in International Affairs at Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. He is also the Director of the Canadian Defence and Security Network, which has led to his co-hosting *Battle Rhythm*, the CDSN's podcast. His main area of research is International Security, defined broadly. For much of his career, he focused on the international relations of intervention: why do groups and countries get involved in conflicts elsewhere in the world, how do they engage in such efforts, and to what effect. Recently, he has spent most of his time comparing the civil-military relations of democracies and he has also worked on the domestic politics of ethnic conflict, and Canadian defence and foreign policy issues. He is the author of *Adapting in the Dust* (University of Toronto Press, 2016) and co-author of *NATO in Afghanistan. Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton University Press, 2014). He has published in academic journals such as *International Organization*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *International Studies Quarterly*, and *European Journal of International Security*.



# Biographies



## **Sarah E. Sharma**

Sarah E. Sharma is an Assistant Professor in the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her research examines how power, politics and economics shapes environmental policy and its outcomes at transnational, national and subnational scales. Her work has been published in various academic and media outlets, including the Review of International Political Economy, International Affairs, New Political Economy, Urban Geography, Policy Options and The Conversation, amongst others. Before joining uOttawa, Dr. Sharma held a position at the University of Victoria and a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Toronto; prior to her doctoral studies, she worked as an Economic Affairs Consultant at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University. At present, she is the co-director for Climate Change and Security with the federally-funded research network Réseau d'analyse stratégique (RAS). Formerly, she was the 2022 Chair of the Women & Inclusivity in Sustainable Energy Research (WISER) Network.

## **Nancy Teeple**

Dr. Nancy Teeple is a Defence Scientist conducting strategic analysis with Defence R&D Canada's Centre of Operational Research and Analysis, embedded at the Canadian Army Land Warfare Centre (CALWC) in Kingston, Ontario. She is also a research associate and adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Political Science and Economics at the Royal Military College of Canada, and a fellow at several research networks, such as the Kingston Consortium on International Security, the North American and Arctic Security Defence Network, and the Center for Arctic Security and Resilience at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.



## **Jacob Tuckey**

Jacob Tuckey is a graduate student at the University of Waterloo pursuing an MA in Global Governance and researching defence-industrial strategy. His broader interests include trade weaponization and Euro-Atlantic security. Jacob is currently a Balsillie Graduate Fellow in economic security, where he is examining Canada's response to U.S. tariffs and Chinese industrial overcapacity. He is also serving as a member of the NATO Association of Canada's policy task force on achieving the alliance's financing commitment of 2.8% of GDP for national defence. Previously, Jacob earned a BBA in Strategic Management and International Policy at Wilfrid Laurier University's Lazaridis School, where he served as editor-in-chief of the Laurier Business and Economics Review and as vice-president of a student-led Ukraine aid initiative. He has also completed student work terms spanning the private intelligence, aerospace, and technology sectors.



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# Biographies

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## **Leah West**

Leah West is an Associate Professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and a senior fellow with the Centre for International Governance Innovation. Leah has written extensively on the law as it relates to information and intelligence collection, the privacy implications of using new technology to collect personally identifying information, and intelligence policy. She is frequently consulted by government agencies such as Public Safety Canada, the Communications Security Establishment, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service on national security law and policy matters, and has testified before the House of Commons, the Senate and the European Parliament. She was also a member of the Research Council for the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. She serves on the editorial board of the Journal of National Security Law & Policy and Terrorism and Political Violence.



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