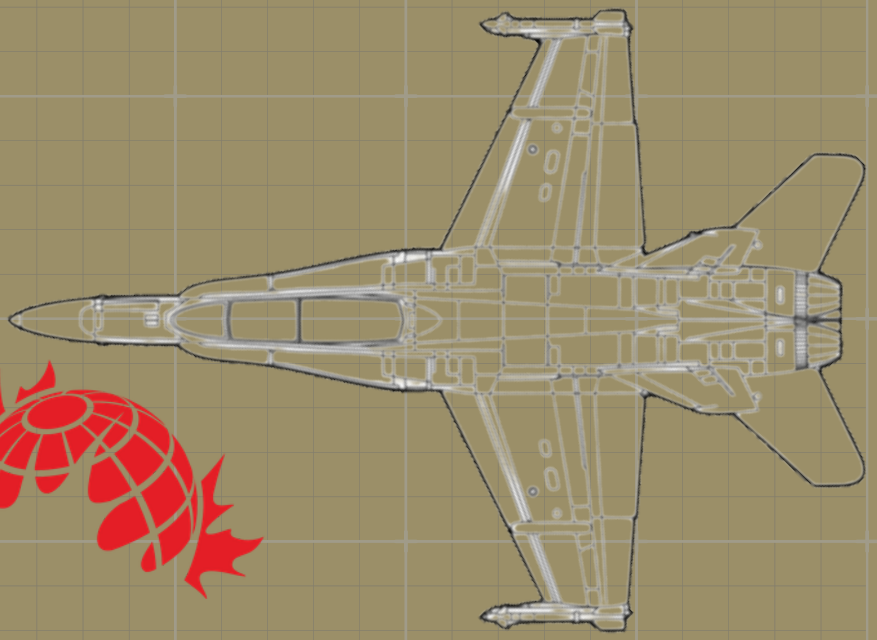
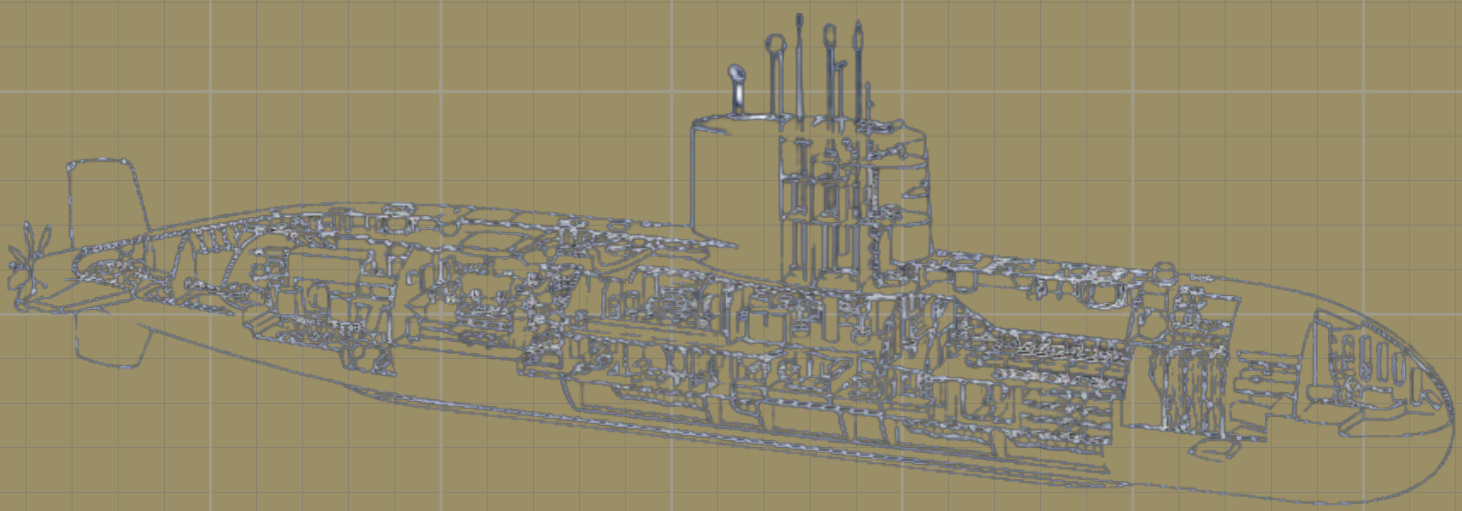


The State of Canadian Defence Procurement in 2026

Ottawa, Ontario



Program

08:00 – 08:40 **Arrival, Registration and Welcome Coffee**

08:40 – 08:50 **Opening Remarks**
- Dr. David Perry — Canadian Global Affairs Institute
- Tom Rose — Thales Canada

08:50 – 09:45 **Panel I: CAF Force Development Needs in 2026**
- MGen Jeff Smyth — Royal Canadian Air Force
- RAdm Jason Armstrong — Royal Canadian Navy
- MGen J.D.S. Masson — Canadian Army
- BGen K.J. Kozak — Canadian Armed Forces
- Moderator: BGen (Ret'd) Chris Ayotte — AWS Canada

09:50 – 10:50 **Panel II: Putting Build, Partner Buy into Practice**
- Dr. Jerry McGinn — Centre for Strategic and International Studies
- Dr. Philippe Lagassé — Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
- Dr. Siobhan Harty — Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University
- Melanie Nadeau — COVE
- Stefano La Terra Bella — Delegation of the European Union to the United States
- Moderator: RAdm (Ret'd) Simon Page — Canadian Global Affairs Institute

10:50 – 11:20 **Coffee Break**
- Sponsored by Thales Canada

11:20 – 11:50 **Panel III: The Evolution of the Defence Investment Agency**
- Wendy Hadwen — Defence Investment Agency
- Vincent Robitaille — Defence Investment Agency
- Moderator: David Perry — Canadian Global Affairs Institute

11:55 – 12:45 **Panel IV: Optimizing Procurement Processes**
- Heather Sheehy — Department of National Defence
- Chad Hartnell — Privy Council Office
- Channen Tan — KPMG Canada
- Moderator: Vice-Admiral (Ret'd) Ron Lloyd — Canadian Global Affairs Institute

Program

12:45 – 14:00

Lunch
- Sponsored by RTX

14:00 – 14:50

Panel V: Industry Perspectives on Canada's Evolving Defence Procurement Ecosystem
- Jim Landon — ATCO Frontec
- Mitch Carkner — Dominion Dynamics
- Kristen Leroux — Lockheed Martin Canada
- Chris Pogue — Calian
- Jana Lee Murray — ADGA Group
- Moderator: Nicole Butler — Canadian Global Affairs Institute

14:50 – 15:10

Coffee Break
- Sponsored by ADGA Group

15:10 – 16:10

Panel VI: Commanders Perspectives on Canadian Defence Procurement
- LGen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet — Royal Canadian Air Force
- LGen D.E. Molstad — Canadian Joint Forces Command
- Moderator: Charlotte Duval-Lantoine — Canadian Global Affairs Institute

16:10 – 16:40

Fireside Chat with the Deputy
- Deputy Minister Christiane Fox — Department of National Defence

16:45 – 16:55

Closing Remarks
- Councillor Karen Principe — City of Edmonton
- David Perry — Canadian Global Affairs Institute

17:00 – 18:00

Reception

HOST AND MODERATOR

DR. DAVID PERRY

President and CEO

Canadian Global Affairs Institute



Dr. David Perry is the President of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, host of the institute's Defence Deconstructed Podcast, and a co-director of the Triple Helix MINDs Collaborate Network. He is the author of multiple publications related to defence budgeting, transformation and procurement and a columnist for the Canadian Naval Review.

He received his PhD in political science from Carleton University where his dissertation examined the link between defence budgeting and defence procurement.

He is an adjunct professor at the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary and a research fellow of the Centre for the Study of Security and Development at Dalhousie University.

He was previously the Senior Security and Defence Analyst of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute and Deputy Director of Dalhousie University's Centre for Foreign Policy Studies. Embassy Magazine and The Hill Times has named him one of the "Top 100 Influencing Canadian Foreign Policy."

TOM ROSE

Vice President, Industry, Offset & Government Relations

Thales Canada



Tom Rose is Vice President, Industry, Offset & Government Relations at Thales Canada, based in the Ottawa. In this role, Tom provides strategic direction over Thales Canada's industrial participation and offset commitments, stakeholder and government relations efforts. Tom is responsible for supporting Thales Canada's defense and technology growth through strategic partnership and program outcomes. Prior to his appointment to Vice President, Tom was Director of Industrial Participation and Offsets.

Prior to joining Thales in 2018, Tom worked at General Dynamics Land Systems Canada. He holds a B.A. in Applied Economics and Political Science from Wilfrid Laurier University and is a Certified International Trade Professional (CITP).

Panel I: CAF Force Development Needs in 2026

This discussion will examine the capability requirements and force development priorities driving defence procurement decisions within the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

MAJOR GENERAL JEFF SMYTH, MSM, CD

Chief Air and Space Force Development

Royal Canadian Air Force



Originally from Chatham, Ontario, MGen Smyth graduated with his pilot wings in 1994 and was posted to 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in Petawawa, Ontario. His operational experience includes deployments to Haiti (1995-96) flying the CH135 Twin Huey, Bosnia-Herzegovina (2000-01) and Afghanistan (2009-10) flying the CH146 Griffon. He has conducted numerous domestic operations providing support to forest fires, floods and ice storms. He was Deputy Commanding Officer of 427 Sqn during the transition to 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron.

He was appointed Commanding Officer of 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in Edmonton, Alberta in January 2008. He deployed to Afghanistan from October 2009 to August 2010 as Commanding Officer of the Canadian Helicopter Force (Afghanistan), flying more than 400 hours and 76 combat missions in the CH146 Griffon.

He commanded the Canadian Forces Warfare Centre in Ottawa from 2014-2017. From 2018-2020 he held the position of Deputy Chief of the NORAD and US NORTHCOM Command Centre in Colorado Springs. In 2020 he was promoted to Brigadier-General and posted to the position of Director General Operations at Canadian Joint Operations Command in Ottawa. In October 2021 he assumed the role of Director General Strategies, Effects and Readiness in the Strategic Joint Staff.

MGen Smyth has held staff positions at 1 Wing HQ in Kingston and NDHQ Ottawa. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada (Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering and Management 1993, Master of Public Administration 2019), The Canadian Forces Land Command and Staff College (1999), the Australian Command and Staff College (2008), and Canadian Forces College National Security Program (2018).

In July 2024 he was promoted to his present rank and was assigned the RCAF Chief Fighter and NORAD Capabilities portfolio. April 1, 2025, MGen Smyth was appointed RCAF Chief Air and Space Force Development, a new position focused on synchronizing projects and programs across the RCAF.

MGen Smyth has over 3500 flying hours, mainly in the CH135 Twin Huey and CH146 Griffon helicopters. He is married with three children and is an avid cyclist.

REAR ADMIRAL JASON ARMSTRONG

Chief of Naval Capability

Royal Canadian Navy



A son of a multi-generational military family, he grew up in various army and air force bases throughout Canada, but calls Sault Ste-Marie, Ontario his hometown. He joined the Canadian Armed Forces as a Maritime Surface Officer in 1989 and graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) Kingston, with a Bachelor of Arts Honours History in 1993.

Rear-Admiral Armstrong, upon completion of Naval Warfare Officer training in 1994, joined the Pacific Fleet.

Since then, he has served onboard HMC Ships on both coasts conducting several international deployments including WESTPLOY, NATO, Op AUGMENTATION, and Op ALTAIR. He has had the honour and privilege of commanding three of Her Majesty's Canadian Ships during his command tour and deployed onboard HMCS Toronto as Commanding Officer for Op REASSURANCE in 2014-2015.

RAdm Armstrong has served in staff positions at Maritime Pacific and Canadian Fleet Atlantic Headquarters. He has served in the National Capital Region in Naval Force Development and as the Chief of Staff for the Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy.

RAdm Armstrong is a graduate of the Canadian Forces College Joint Command and Staff Program and the National Security Program. He holds a Master's degree in Defence Studies (MDS) and a Master's degree in Public Administration both from the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) Kingston.

RAdm Armstrong and his bride have raised two outstanding young adults who both excel in the world of academics and athletics. RAdm Armstrong enjoys hockey and rugby (both sports he plays poorly, but with heart), cycling and coaching.

MAJOR GENERAL J.D.S. MASSON, OMM, MSM, CD

Chief of Army Force Development

Canadian Army



Major-General Stéphane Masson began his military career in 1991 as a reservist with the 6e Régiment d'artillerie de campagne in Quebec City. In 2003, he transferred to the Regular Force.

Over the course of his service, he has been privileged to hold a variety of command and staff appointments. In 2008, as a Major, he commanded Q Battery, 5e Régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada at CFB Valcartier. Promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in 2012, he served as Commandant of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery School at CFB Gagetown.

He later served in several staff and leadership roles, including at Canadian Joint Operations Command Headquarters and as Commander of Canadian Forces Base Kingston.

In 2024, he concluded his tenure as Commander of 5th Canadian Division, known as the Army's "Mighty Maroon Machine." He subsequently served as Chief of Staff Army Strategy at Army Headquarters.

Promoted to his current rank in 2026, he now serves as Chief of Army Force Development and as the Senior Serving Gunner in the Canadian Army.

Major-General Masson has deployed operationally to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, and Egypt, and has supported a number of domestic operations.

He is a graduate of the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, the Joint Command and Staff Program, and the National Security Program. He holds a Bachelor of Science, a Master of Defence Studies, and a Master of Public Administration.

Outside of his military duties, he values time with his wife and their three children.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL K.J. KOZAK, CD

Deputy Chief of Force Development

Canadian Armed Forces



Born in Northwestern Ontario and educated in Winnipeg, Kevin Kozak joined the Canadian Armed Forces as a pilot. Following graduation from the Royal Military College of Canada in 1997, he earned his pilot's wings in 2004 and held operational air mobility roles in both the CC130H Hercules and CC144 Challenger worldwide, conducting air-to-air refuelling, tactical airlift, search and rescue, and VIP transport missions. He qualified as both an Aircraft Commander and Instructor Pilot on the platforms.

Alongside his flying appointments, he held operational staff roles focused on air mobility, including Air Mobility staff appointments. From 2016 to 2018 he commanded 435 Transport and Rescue Squadron. He later transitioned to joint operational appointments and served as Director of the Joint Air Component Coordination Element at Canadian Joint Operations Command and as Director of Air Operations at Canadian Special Operations Forces Command.

He was subsequently appointed Commander J3 Small and Enduring Missions, where he commanded the CAF's footprint of expeditionary support operations. Kozak later served as Special Advisor to the Commander of CJOC before moving into institutional roles in force development. Promoted to Brigadier-General in 2025, he was appointed Director Force Development Integration. In December 2025, he was appointed Chief of Force Development (Interim). A graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada, Brigadier-General Kozak holds master's degrees in Physics and Defence Studies. He is also a graduate of the United States Air Force Air War College.

BRIGADIER GENERAL (RET'D) CHRIS AYOTTE

Principal Business Development Manager
for National Security and Defence
AWS Canada



BGen (ret'd) Chris Ayotte, OMM, CD, was raised in Ottawa and enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1992. He completed his training as a Military Engineer in 1997 and was privileged to serve in many of the Army's engineer regiments.

Throughout his career, he had opportunities for experiences outside of the military engineer community. He was the Commanding Officer of Canada's Disaster Assistance Response Team, business planner for the Canadian Army, Director of Cadets at the Royal Military College of Canada, Director of Strategic Communications for the Global Counter-ISIS Coalition, and the Director General of Army Force Development.

He also initiated and guided the development of the Army's digital transformation strategy.

In addition to multiple domestic deployments in response to natural disasters, Chris has international deployments to the Balkans, Afghanistan, and the Middle East.

He has a bachelor's degree in Chemical and Materials Engineering from the Royal Military College in Kingston, a Master of Arts in Policy and Strategy from the University of New South Wales in Australia, and is a graduate of the National Security Program at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto.

Upon retirement in July 2022, Chris started a consulting business with a focus on national security issues. In addition to being a fellow with CGAI, he hosts the Northern Sentinels Podcast focused on service and citizenship. He is currently the Principal Business Development Manager for National Security and Defence at AWS Canada.

Panel II: Putting Build, Partner Buy into Practice

Global geopolitical shifts and growing concerns around supply chain resilience are reshaping how Canada approaches defence procurement. This panel will explore opportunities to diversify sources of supply, strengthen partnerships with allies, build domestic industrial capacity, and advance Canada's broader defence industrial objectives.

DR. JERRY MCGINN

Director, Center for the Industrial Base and Senior Fellow, Defense and Security Department

Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)



Dr. Jerry McGinn is the director of the Center for the Industrial Base and a senior fellow with the Defense and Security Department. He is one of the nation's leading experts on industrial base, acquisition, government contracting, and security policy issues.

Prior to joining CSIS, Jerry served as executive director of the Greg and Camille Baroni Center for Government Contracting at George Mason University, publishing over 70 influential reports, white papers, and commentaries. Prior to GMU, Jerry served as the senior career official in the Office of Manufacturing and Industrial Base Policy in the Department of Defense (DoD), leading efforts to analyze the capabilities of the defense industrial base.

Dr. McGinn is also a widely acclaimed thought leader and has testified numerous times before the U.S. Congress and the UK House of Commons.

Dr. McGinn served with distinction as an infantry officer and is a graduate of Ranger and Airborne Schools. He earned a PhD, MS, and MA from Georgetown University as well as a BS from the United States Military Academy.
He also directed hundreds of reviews of high-profile mergers and acquisitions as well as transactions before the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. Before his service in DoD, Dr. McGinn spent a decade in senior defense industry roles at Northrop Grumman, Deloitte Consulting LLP, and QinetiQ North America.

Prior to industry, Dr. McGinn served as special assistant to the principal deputy undersecretary for policy in DoD and as a political scientist at RAND.

DR. PHILIPPE LAGASSÉ



Associate Director, PhD Program

Norman Paterson School of International Affairs

Philippe Lagassé is a professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. His research focuses on defence policy, military procurement, and the Westminster system. Between 2012-2022 he served as an independent reviewer of major defence procurements for the Government of Canada, notably as a member of the Independent Review Panel for Defence Acquisition.

In 2025, he was awarded the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service for his “exceptional contribution to Canadian defence policy” by the Chief of the Defence Staff.

DR. SIOBHAN HARTY

Slater Family Visiting Scholar

Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University



Siobhan Harty joined the Max Bell School of Public Policy in July 2026 as the Slater Family Visiting Scholar and Research Director for the Second Century Commission. She is also a Senior Fellow at the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. Her research focus is Canada-United States defence cooperation.

Previously, Siobhan held senior leadership positions in the federal public service in a combination of policy, program and operational roles, including Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Defence and Marine Procurement, Public Services and Procurement Canada and National Coordinator for the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort (ICE Pact) with the United States and Finland.

Prior to that, she was Assistant Secretary, Priorities and Planning and Assistant Secretary, Legislation and House Planning, both at the Privy Council Office, and Assistant Secretary, Government Operations, Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada.

As Director General, Social Policy at Employment and Social Development Canada and Senior Director, Emergency Management Planning at Public Safety Canada, Siobhan represented Canada at meetings at the OECD, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations.

Siobhan has a PhD in Political Science from McGill University, a MPhil in Latin American Studies from Oxford University and a BA (Hons) in Political Science from Concordia University.

MELANIE NADEAU

Chief Executive Officer

COVE



Melanie Nadeau is the Chief Executive Officer of COVE, where she leads the strategic direction and manages overall operations. She brings over 20 years of experience in business development initiatives that drive high-tech innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment.

Melanie has been a noted expert for the International Energy Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Electrotechnical Commission.

She has earned multiple awards, including Canada's Clean16 Award for her outstanding contribution to clean capitalism, has been named one of Atlantic Canada's 25 most powerful women, has been an invited speaker at TEDGlobal, and is a strong supporter of Canada's tech ecosystem as a mentor for the Creative Destruction Lab.

Melanie is an accredited professional engineer, a graduate of the University of Waterloo, holds an ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors, and is a former Board Director with the Business Development Bank of Canada.

STEFANO LA TERRA BELLA

Counselor for Defence Industry and Space

Delegation of European Union to the United States



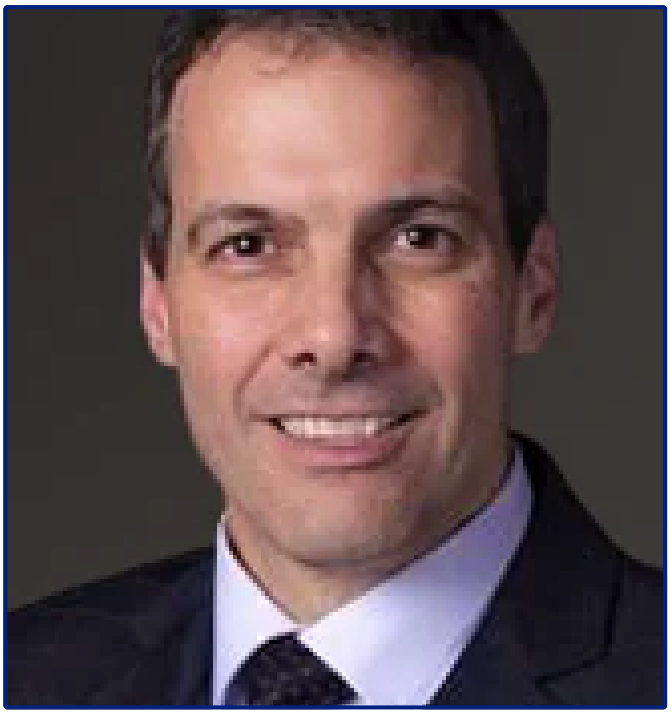
Stefano La Terra Bella is an EU diplomat specializing in defence industry, space and international relations. He is currently posted at the Delegation of European Union to the United States where he serves as Counselor for defence industry and space matters. Previously, he worked with the European Commission on a range of topics including defence industry, space and digitalization initiatives supporting global sustainable development.

Prior to that, Stefano worked also with the European Space Agency. In his current role he focuses on strengthening international partnerships and transatlantic cooperation on space-related issues and defence industrial policy.

Moderator

REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) SIMON PAGE

Fellow
Canadian Global Affairs Institute



Highly experienced in complex projects/programs management and governance, Simon Page recently completed a 41-year career as a Government of Canada senior official and member of the Canadian Armed Forces.

As Assistant Deputy Minister in Public Services and Procurement Canada, his Branch oversaw multiple large project procurements, the management of numerous long-term contracts, the defence procurement strategy, the management and advancement of Canada's National Shipbuilding Strategy, and innovation in defence procurement.

His time in uniform included a three-year segment as Director General Maritime Program Equipment Management where he overviewed all Royal Canadian Navy sustainment activities.

Panel III: The Evolution of the Defence Investment Agency

As the Government of Canada introduces new structures and responsibilities across the defence procurement ecosystem, this panel will examine the evolving roles of key organizations responsible for capability development, procurement, and industrial policy. Speakers will discuss how these changes are intended to improve procurement outcomes, streamline decision-making, and support implementation of Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy.

WENDY HADWEN

Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy

Defence Investment Agency



Ms. Wendy Hadwen was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy) at the Defence Investment Agency in July 2026.

Prior to assuming her current duties, she served as Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy-Industry), where she spearheaded the development and implementation of Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy.

Before joining the Department of National Defence, she was Communications Security Establishment Canada's Deputy Chief responsible for Strategic Policy, Planning and Partnerships. She has also held executive positions at Natural Resources Canada, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Ernst & Young, and the Security and Intelligence Secretariat of the Privy Council Office.

Since joining Foreign Affairs in 1994, working on rapid reaction capacity for international peacekeeping operations, Ms. Hadwen has dedicated the majority of her career to peace and security issues, including implementing the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines, establishing Canada's Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program, and advancing international non-proliferation and nuclear security initiatives.

Ms. Hadwen holds a Master of Arts in War Studies from King's College London and a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and History from the University of Toronto.

VINCENT ROBITAILLE

Assistant Deputy Minister, Procurement

Defence Investment Agency



Since February 2026, Vincent Robitaille serves as Assistant Deputy Minister, Procurement, at the Defence Investment Agency. He provides strategic leadership for defence procurements valued over $100 million, ensuring major capability investments are delivered to the Canadian Armed Forces with greater speed and efficiency.

In advancing Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy, he drives reforms that simplify procurement processes, accelerate acquisition timelines, and strengthen collaboration with Canadian industry—supporting the timely delivery of critical military capabilities while building long-term industrial capacity and economic benefits for Canada.

From 2021 to 2026, he served as Assistant Deputy Minister, Major Projects at Transport Canada, where he led the initiation and procurement of the Alto High-Speed Rail project and, starting in 2025, the delivery of the Lac-Mégantic Bypass project.

From 2018 to 2021, Mr. Robitaille served as Director General, Centre of Excellence on Strategic Investments at Transport Canada, leading a team responsible for the commercial and policy aspects of major transportation investments, alternative financing arrangements, and COVID-19 support measures for the air sector.

Before joining Transport Canada in 2018, he served in senior roles at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Global Affairs Canada, notably leading the P3 procurement of the new Champlain Bridge Corridor in Montréal.

From 2016 to 2019, Vincent volunteered as President of the Canadian Institute for Procurement and Materiel Management. Vincent holds a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation, a Project Management Professional (PMP) designation, a Certified Director (C. Dir) designation, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the University of Ottawa.

Panel IV: Optimizing Procurement Processes

As Canada seeks to accelerate defence spending and deliver capabilities more quickly, increasing attention is being paid to modernizing procurement practices. This panel will bring together leaders from government, industry, and advisory organizations to examine opportunities for greater agility, efficiency, and responsiveness. Discussion topics will include governance reform, project approvals, risk management, industry engagement, and reducing barriers while maintaining accountability and oversight.

CHANNEN TAN



Partner, National Lead,
Lean in Audit Toronto

KPMG Canada

Channen is the architect of KPMG's award-winning audit innovation Lean in Audit™ and leads the deployment of this approach with clients across Canada and globally to ensure they get the most from their assurance provider.

Channen has served many leading organizations to improve customer experience and operational performance by using design-thinking and Lean principles. He takes a practical approach to helping clients deliver sustainable change and one of his favorite mottos he lives by is "done is better than perfect".

HEATHER SHEEHY

Assistant Deputy Minister (Materiel)

Department of National Defence



Heather Sheehy was named Assistant Deputy Minister (Materiel) on September 25, 2025.

Prior to joining DND, Heather Sheehy was the Assistant Secretary of the Government Operations Sector in the Treasury Board Secretariat where she supported Treasury Board Ministers on numerous issues of importance in advancing the government's agenda.

Throughout much of 2020, Heather worked on the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the delivery of benefits to Canadians. Prior to this, she was Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Service Policy Branch at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) since September 2017. She previously spent three years as the Director of Operations, Machinery of Government at the Privy Council Office.

Prior to this, she was Chief of Staff to the Deputy Minister at ESDC. Earlier in her career she worked in various departments including Health Canada and (then) Citizenship and Immigration Canada as well as working for two years with the Canadian Medical Association.

Heather obtained her undergraduate in politics from Queen's University and has a Master's in Public Administration from Dalhousie University.

CHAD HARTNELL

Director of Operations, Impact and Innovation Unit

Privy Council Office



Chad Hartnell is the Director of Operations of the Impact and Innovation Unit within the Government of Canada's Privy Council Office. In this role, he leads work under Impact Canada, a whole of government approach to develop, refine and scale up novel public policy methods, such as behavioural science and outcomes-based funding (e.g., challenge prizes), focused on improving impact, accountability and value for Canadians.

Over his federal government career, Chad has worked in Public Health Agency of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Health Canada and the Privy Council Office.

In these roles, he has worked on a variety of initiatives in the policy, legislative, and programming domains, including in healthy living/chronic disease prevention; Indigenous health, employment; social and economic development; and justice and public safety.

Chad holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Mississippi and Bachelor of Arts (economics and political science) from the Colorado College.

Vice Admiral (Ret'd) Ron Lloyd



Fellow

Canadian Global Affairs Institute

Ron Lloyd retired from the RCN in 2019 having served as the 35th Commander of the RCN and the first Chief Data Officer for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

He also served as the Acting-VCDS for several months.

Since retirement he has worked as a strategic advisor in industry and has written several papers for the Canadian Global Affairs Institute on how Canada can better posture itself during these turbulent times.

Panel V: Industry Perspectives on Canada's Evolving Defence Procurement Ecosystem

Representatives from across Canada's defence and security sector will provide their perspectives on the federal government's evolving defence procurement agenda. Discussion will focus on opportunities and challenges for industry, expectations regarding the Defence Industrial Strategy, and priorities for strengthening Canada's defence industrial base.

Participants will also address how industry can better align its capabilities with national priorities.

JIM LANDON

President

ATCO Frontec



Jim Landon leads ATCO Frontec, the Operational Support Services Division of ATCO which delivers Facilities Operations and Maintenance and Construction Services to government and commercial clients across North America, as well as for NATO in Europe.

A former British Army officer with multiple operational deployments worldwide, he was educated at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and has a Bachelor's degree in Law and a Masters in International Liaison and Communication.

Frontec has many Indigenous business partners including Nasittuq which operates and maintains the North Warning System and Inuvialuit Frontec Services who are building a Polar Over-the-Horizon Radar for DRDC.

MITCH CARKNER

Chief Operating Officer and Board Director

Dominion Dynamics



Mitch Carkner is a Canadian business leader and former Army officer now serving as chief operating officer and board director at Dominion Dynamics. He has held both roles since March 2025. Before that, Mitch served as CEO of Decisive Group, where he grew the firm across North America until its $74.7 million acquisition by Calian.

He began his career as an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, serving from 2007 to 2015. He spent eight years at IBM, where he also worked in the Middle East and led business development for the Canadian public sector. Mitch serves as board director of the Alliance of Canadian Defence Companies (ACDC).

He is a graduate of Queen's University and holds an MBA from Carleton University.

KRISTEN LEROUX

Vice President and Regional Executive

Lockheed Martin Canada



Kristen Leroux was appointed Vice President and Regional Executive for Canada and Latin America at Lockheed Martin in July 2025. With a strong background in business transformation, she builds trusted high performing teams rooted in a collaborative client-centric approach, for sustainable business growth.

In her role, Kristen leads Lockheed Martin's strategy and customer engagement across Canada and Latin America to meet the evolving needs of clients and is continuing to evolve and build on the company's strong legacy in both regions. She is focused on strengthening collaboration with government, industry, and community partners to deliver advanced and sustainable defence capabilities aligned with regional priorities.

Kristen is passionate about connecting customer expectations with business capabilities, navigating complex environments, and positioning organizations for long-term success.

From 2020 to 2025, she led DXC Technology Canada, driving business growth and delivering complex solutions aligned with evolving market needs.

Prior to that, from 2002 to 2020, Kristen built a 18-year career at IBM Canada, where she held multiple senior leadership roles, including oversight of the defence and public safety portfolio.

Kristen holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Western Ontario and is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Executive Program.

JANA LEE MURRAY

Chief Growth Officer

ADGA Group



Jana Lee Murray is Chief Growth Officer at ADGA Group. She leads corporate growth strategy and client relationships, overseeing Business Development, Marketing and Communications, Innovation, and Proposal Development. With more than twenty years of experience delivering complex technical solutions across defence, security, aerospace, public safety, marine, nuclear, healthcare, and commercial sectors, she specializes in advancing programs, shaping markets, and strengthening client partnerships. Her mandate is to drive sustainable growth, ensure alignment with client needs, and position ADGA for long-term success.

Jana Lee joined ADGA's Executive Leadership Team in May 2023. An award-winning business professional, she has held leadership roles in global business development, human systems integration, and account management. Prior to joining ADGA, she served as Program Director of Babcock Leonardo Canadian Aircrew Training, following earlier roles as VISSC II Capture Manager and Senior Manager, Business Support.

She spent 14 years at CAE Inc., where she began in Human Factors before advancing to account management roles in defence, public safety, and the NATO Flying Training in Canada program.

Jana Lee is recognized for her leadership in Canada's defence and security industry. She was named one of Esprit de Corps' Top Women in Defence (2016) and a Vanguard Game Changer (2018–2019). She also served as President of Women in Defence and Security (WiDS) from 2015–2020, and as a member of the Centennial College Emergency Management and Public Safety Institute (EMPSI) Steering Committee from 2010–2016.

She holds a Master of Human Kinetics from the University of Windsor and a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology from Wilfrid Laurier University, both with distinction.

CHRIS POGUE

President, Defence and Space

Calian



Chris is an accomplished leader with over 20 years of senior executive experience in defence and space innovation. He most recently served as President and CEO of Thales Canada, where he expanded naval support services, re-established land-forces capabilities, and guided key AI and digital transformation initiatives.

Prior to Thales, he led MDA Government's Defence Space portfolio and held leadership roles at General Dynamics Mission Systems Canada and CAE Professional Services.

Throughout his career, Pogue has championed the development of innovation ecosystems by connecting Canadian small- and medium-sized businesses to national defence and space priorities.

A retired Royal Canadian Air Force officer with more than 3,500 flight hours on the C-130 Hercules.

NICOLE BUTLER

Western Canada Defence Lead

Canadian Global Affairs Institute



Nicole Butler is a leading Canadian specialist in international security, Canadian defence, and Arctic security. As the Western Canada Defence Lead at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI), she advances defence-sector business development and strengthens the growth and competitiveness of Western Canada's defence industry in support of Canada's national security objectives.

Her international experience spans four countries and encompasses a diverse range of complex security challenges, including transnational organized crime, humanitarian crisis response, international diplomacy, Arctic security, and Canadian defence.

Nicole has worked with the United Nations in Geneva and contributed to leading policy and research institutions, including the Wilson Center's Polar Institute and Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy in Washington, DC.

She is a resident Arctic security Research Fellow with the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN), and holds a Master of Arts in Security Studies from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service and a Bachelor of Arts Honours in International Relations from Western University.

Panel VI: Commanders Perspectives on Canadian Defence Procurement

Senior Canadian Armed Forces leaders will discuss the strategic priorities shaping capability investments across the services. The conversation will focus on operational requirements, emerging threats, interoperability with allies, and the technology and equipment needed to fulfill Canada's defence commitments at home and abroad.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JAMIE SPEISER-BLANCHET

Commander

Royal Canadian Air Force



Lieutenant-General Jamie Speiser-Blanchet enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1990, graduating from the Royal Military College (RMC) in 1994 with a degree in Computer Engineering.

She has commanded 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron, the Canadian Forces Intelligence Group, and the Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers Group. Strategic level appointments include Military Assistant to the Minister of National Defence, Special Advisor to the Chief of Defence Staff, and Deputy Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Lieutenant-General Speiser-Blanchet has led through complex operations both domestically and abroad.

In Canada, she has deployed on numerous domestic operations in response to regional emergencies and in support to other government agencies.
Deployed, she flew for both United Nations and NATO missions in Haiti and Bosnia. In Kuwait, as Deputy Commander of an Operation, she led a force tasked with building the military capabilities of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.

She holds a Master of Defence Studies from RMC and a Master of Politics and Policy from Deakin University.

She is married to Janin Blanchet, a retired tactical aviation pilot, and they have three amazing children, Emma, Zachary and Samuel.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL D.E. MOLSTAD, CD

Commander

Canadian Joint Forces Command



Lieutenant-General Darcy Molstad was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta. He joined the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in 1996 after completing a Bachelor of Science at the University of Alberta. As a CF-18 pilot he flew operational tours in Bagotville, Cold Lake, and South Carolina on exchange with the United States (U.S.) Marine Corps.

He commanded 425 Tactical Fighter Squadron in Bagotville, Deployed Air Task Forces in Iceland, Romania, and in Hawaii, and 3 Wing / Canadian Forces Base Bagotville. As a General Officer, he deployed as Director of the U.S. Combined Air and Space Operations Center in Al Udeid, Qatar, and served a two-year tour as Deputy Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command, second in command of all deployed CAF personnel.

His executive staff experience includes serving as an Attaché in the United Kingdom and Iceland, as the Special Advisor to the Minister of National Defence, as Director General of Strategies, Effects, and Readiness at the Strategic Joint Staff, and most recently as the Chief of Force Development designing the Joint Force of the future.

Lieutenant-General Molstad holds master's degrees from the Royal Military College of Canada and the U.S. Air Force Air University and is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate Senior International Defense Management Course and the Institute of Corporate Directors Rotman School of Management Directors Education Program. He is a Fighter Weapons Instructor with over 2,200 hours logged on the CF-18.

He was promoted to his current rank and named the inaugural Commander of the Canadian Joint Forces Command in December 2025.

Before joining the CAF, he competed in the pole vault winning two junior national titles and rising to multiple national university podiums. He stays connected to sports as the CAF Triathlon Patron and as an Honourary Coach of the Montréal Alouettes Football Club. He is married to an exceptional health professional and is the father to two extraordinary adult children.

CHARLOTTE DUVAL-LANTOINE

Vice-President, Ottawa Operations

Canadian Global Affairs Institute



Charlotte is the Vice President, Ottawa Operations and a Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, and Co-Director and Gender Advisor of our MINDS Collaborative Network Triple Helix. An extensively published researcher (including her 2022 book The Ones We Let Down), Charlotte studies military culture, leadership, and personnel issues.

In parallel to her work at CGAI and Triple Helix, she is a PhD student at Deakin University where she is examining the influence of the Canadian army's culture on the killings during Canada's Operation Deliverance.

Charlotte has received multiple awards for her work: she was recognized as a 2022 Women in Defence and Security Emerging Leader and one of the twenty in their 20s in 2025, her book was amongst The Hill Times' Best Books of 2022, and she received the CDA Institute Capt Nichola Goddard Award for 2024.

She has given talks and lecture to Royal Military College and West Point cadets, the National Security Program at the Canadian Forces College, and the Australian War College.

FIRESIDE CHAT WITH THE DEPUTY

CHRISTIANE FOX

Deputy Minister

Department of National Defence



Christiane Fox was appointed Deputy Minister of National Defence, effective January 29, 2026.

Prior to joining the Department of National Defence (DND), Christiane Fox served as Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and Associate Secretary to the Cabinet, as well as Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Previous to that, Christiane held several deputy minister roles across the public service. She was the Deputy Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada from July 2022 to January 2024, the Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada from September 2020 to July 2022, the Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs from November 2019 to September 2020, and the Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth from June 2017 to November 2019. She is also the Deputy Minister Champion of the Federal Youth Network.

Christiane has also held several positions at the Privy Council Office, including Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Communications and Consultations; Director of Operations, Policy, in the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Relations Secretariat; and Director General of Communications.

She started her career as a communications advisor at Industry Canada (now Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada), where she worked in communications and in science policy. She also spent a year with the Competition Policy Review Secretariat as Director of Communications and Consultations.

Christiane has a B.A. in Mass Communications and Psychology from Carleton University and is a graduate of the University of Ottawa's Master's Certificate Program in Public Administration.

KAREN PRINCIPE

City Councillor

North Edmonton's Ward Tastawiyiniwak



Karen lived in Winnipeg and Toronto before settling in Edmonton in 1998. She has been a resident of Ward tastawiyiniwak (TASS-TAW-WIN-EE-WOK) with her husband for 27 years, and both are active members of the community.

Karen attended the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg and Durham College, then began her career as a Registered Dental Hygienist in 1998. In addition to her dental career, Karen was also a former small business owner.

Karen is proud to support north Edmonton's Ward tastawiyiniwak as a member of City Council for her second term. She is especially proud to support the men and women serving at CFB Edmonton, which borders her community.

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This project is supported by the Department of National Defence's Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS) program.

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