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## GRAND, BLAND OR SOMEWHAT PLANNED? TOWARD A CANADIAN STRATEGY FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION<sup>†</sup>

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### SUMMARY

Canada may be a Pacific nation, but one would hardly know it, given its history of merely sporadic and inconsistent engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. The idea of a proud legacy of special relations with Asian nations is clearly overblown. Canada's relations with the Indo-Pacific region are in need of serious attention and forethought.

There is cause for concern: With the spectacular economic rise, and growing influence, of certain Asian nations, Canada's pattern of Indo-Pacific neglect is proving increasingly unaffordable. Canada may not have squandered any significant legacy from the past, but it might easily squander the potential for crucial relations in the future.

Understandably, that has led some observers to call for a sort of "grand strategy" for Canada to deal with the Indo-Pacific region: an overarching framework that would co-ordinate all the various facets — economic, institutional and security — where Canadian interests do and will touch the Indo-Pacific region. Yet, again, these calls are misplaced: Canada must be more engaged in the region, but there are instances where it should address issues on a seriatim basis (that is, confronting and responding to issues on their own, as they emerge). In some cases, a strategic framework may be prudent, but not in all cases. The appropriate approach is neither a grand strategy, nor a "muddling through" approach, but rather, something in between: partly strategically planned, partly not.

In particular, it would be inadvisable for Canada to fully commit to any standing security strategy to deal with the rise of China's military power. Canada is not a global military power, whereas its closest ally, the United States, is the world's largest military power. The American strategy toward China will influence Canada's approach more than any other factor, however the U.S. strategy is currently largely unclear. For Canada to be proactive in independently developing a security strategy with regard to China could result in waste and even conflict with our allies.

Indeed, in evaluating Canada's security position vis-à-vis the entire Indo-Pacific region, the factors largely seem to favour Canada taking a seriatim approach: Canada's natural and optimal position, given its military status, is to take a reactive, second-mover approach, rather than a first-mover approach.

Somewhat ironically, Canada's history of inattentiveness towards the Indo-Pacific region may actually provide Canada with increased flexibility and advantage in the new era of rising Asian power: Put simply, save for a few examples, there is a distinct lack of baggage between Canada and the Indo-Pacific nations, leaving something close to a clean start for future relations. It is, however, critical that Canada not allow that past irresponsible practice to persist. Notions of some "grand strategy" for the Indo-Pacific region may be misguided. But given the ascendant role of Indo-Pacific nations in the 21st century, it would be even more unwise for Canada to maintain its longstanding pattern of indifference toward the region.

<sup>†</sup> This paper originally had been prepared for the "Emerging Markets & Mounting Tension: Doing Business in the Face of Potential Conflict in the Indo-Pacific" symposium, hosted by The School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta, March 11-12, 2014. I am grateful to participants at the symposium and especially to Nigel Greenwood and Maureen Shields for valuable comments.



### **FAUT-IL OPTER POUR UNE APPROCHE TOTALE, MITIGÉE OU PARTIELLEMENT PLANIFIÉE? VERS UNE STRATÉGIE CANADIENNE POUR LA RÉGION INDO-PACIFIQUE\***

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#### **RÉSUMÉ**

Le Canada est une nation du Pacifique, mais on l'associe rarement à cette région, tellement ses engagements passés avec la région Indo-Pacifique ont été sporadiques et instables. Il serait clairement exagéré de dire que nous sommes fiers des relations privilégiées que nous avons tissées avec les pays asiatiques. Les relations du Canada avec la région Indo-Pacifique ont grandement besoin de notre attention et de notre prévoyance.

Il y a tout lieu de se préoccuper de la situation : vu l'essor économique spectaculaire et l'influence croissante de certains pays d'Asie, l'imprévoyance habituelle du Canada envers l'Indo-Pacifique s'avère de plus en plus coûteuse. Le Canada n'a peut-être pas hypothéqué ses relations passées, mais il court le risque de passer à côté de futures relations prometteuses.

Cette situation a bien entendu conduit certains observateurs à promouvoir une sorte de « stratégie totale » du Canada pour la région Indo-Pacifique : un cadre global coordonnant toutes les facettes (économie, institutions, sécurité) qui concernent ou concerneront les intérêts canadiens dans cette région. Pourtant, encore une fois, ils font fausse route. Il est vrai que le Canada se doit d'accroître sa participation dans la région, mais pour ce faire, il devra parfois s'attaquer à certains dossiers individuellement (en réagissant de façon appropriée à l'apparition d'un nouvel enjeu). Dans certains cas, mais pas tous, il pourrait être prudent de se doter d'un cadre stratégique. L'approche appropriée n'est ni la stratégie totale, ni une stratégie de « débrouille », mais plutôt un compromis entre les deux, soit une stratégie partiellement planifiée.

En particulier, il serait inopportun que le Canada s'engage pleinement dans une stratégie de sécurité permanente en réponse à la puissance militaire croissante de la Chine. Le Canada n'est pas une puissance militaire, contrairement aux États Unis, son plus proche allié et la première puissance mondiale. La stratégie américaine envers la Chine influencera l'approche du Canada plus que tout autre facteur, mais cette stratégie demeure largement nébuleuse. En outre, l'élaboration active d'une stratégie de sécurité canadienne à l'égard de la Chine pourrait générer des tensions, voire des conflits, avec nos alliés.

En effet, l'évaluation de la position canadienne en matière de sécurité visant l'ensemble de la région Indo-Pacifique fait ressortir les avantages d'une approche dossier par dossier. La position naturelle et optimale du Canada, compte tenu de sa situation militaire, serait d'adopter une approche réactive de second joueur, plutôt qu'une approche de premier joueur.

Ironiquement, le manque d'attention du Canada envers la région Indo-Pacifique pourrait lui conférer une souplesse et un avantage dans la nouvelle ère de la montée du pouvoir asiatique. En clair, à quelques exceptions près, le Canada se distingue parce qu'il n'a pas d'antécédents avec les nations du bassin Indo-Pacifique et qu'il peut donc établir de nouvelles relations sur de bonnes bases dans la région. Il est néanmoins essentiel que le Canada ne perpétue pas ses anciennes pratiques irresponsables : les notions de « stratégie totale » pour la région Indo-Pacifique sont certes peu judicieuses, mais le maintien de l'indifférence traditionnelle du Canada envers cette partie du globe serait encore plus malencontreux, étant donné l'importance croissante des nations de cette région au 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

\* Le présent document a été produit à l'origine pour le symposium intitulé « Emerging Markets & Mounting Tension : Doing Business in the Face of Potential Conflict in the Indo-Pacific », organisé par l'École de politiques publiques à l'Université de Calgary à Calgary, en Alberta, les 11 et 12 mars 2014. Je suis reconnaissant aux participants du symposium, et tout particulièrement à Nigel Greenwood et à Maureen Shields, pour leurs commentaires judicieux.

## OVERVIEW

What is the past, present and future of Canada and the Indo-Pacific region? This overarching and multi-faceted question motivates the present study. From the outset, it is clear that the Indo-Pacific region, especially in comparison to other regional subjects such as the United States, is an area lightly traveled in research on Canadian foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this study, the Indo-Pacific region is defined broadly: East Asia, the Asian subcontinent and the island states of the Pacific. This inclusive definition is appropriate for the enterprise at hand; a more restrictive definition might make sense if further study suggests that narrower boundaries reflect reality. As will become apparent, however, consciousness is rising with respect to the idea of an expansive Indo-Pacific at the level of policy and practice, with China first and India second as the leading lights among the many states of this hybrid region.<sup>2</sup>

While there is intrinsic value in seeking a balance of coverage in any subject area, the Indo-Pacific region is gaining salience across the board. A review of Canadian foreign policy in this rapidly changing area therefore seems quite in order. The goal is to reach a conclusion about the degree to which Canadian policy for the Indo-Pacific would be served best through a strategic versus seriatim type of approach. Planning versus contingency is the fundamental question with regard to policy-making, so this is essential to answer for Canada vis-à-vis the Indo-Pacific region.

This paper's arguments will unfold in four additional stages. A brief account of Canada's engagement with the Indo-Pacific up to the end of the previous millennium, to set the context for analysis, appears in the first stage. Discussion in the second phase focuses on the Indo-Pacific turn in world affairs. Stage three introduces the question of whether Canada should develop a grand strategy for the Indo-Pacific region. In the fourth phase, ideas for moving forward with policy are introduced. The fifth and final stage offers a conclusion and a few ideas about future research. The bottom line is that a range of decisions can be expected to confront Ottawa in the future, and their properties — enumerated later in this exposition — should be used to identify a priori whether a strategic versus seriatim approach is more appropriate for the Indo-Pacific region.

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<sup>1</sup> This is true of a wide range of works on Canadian foreign policy, written from various points of view. A representative sample over time includes: Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1989); Patrick James, Nelson Michaud and Marc J. O'Reilly (ed.) *Handbook of Canadian Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006); and J. Marshall Beier and Lana Wylie, *Canadian Foreign Policy in Critical Perspective* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> The forthcoming review of scholarship in the area will, it almost goes without saying, reveal a range of overlapping terms that to some degree are used as approximate substitutes for each other. Asia, Asia-Pacific and other terms are encountered in the literature, with infrequent instances of formal definition.

## BEFORE THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The legacy of our earlier engagement with the region was largely squandered through a decade or more of neglect in the late 1990s and the first decade of this century. In the past, Canada played a vital role in Asia, including participation in the Colombo Plan in the 1950s, establishing a dialogue partnership with ASEAN in the late 1970's, being a founder of APEC's predecessor (the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, or PECC) in 1980 and becoming one of the economies to establish APEC in 1989.

– *Stephens and Campbell (2013)*.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the new millennium, Canadian engagement with the Indo-Pacific region can be described as sporadic and inconsistent. This assertion certainly contrasts with the epigraph, which sees the recent past as a period of decline from a relatively high and successful level of engagement. Yet the conclusion that favours a history of a more modest role for Canada in the Indo-Pacific region will seem justified once the record is reviewed.

Canada in the 19th century “brought in thousands of Chinese labourers to do the hardest and most dangerous work in the construction of the western segment of our transcontinental railway.”<sup>4</sup> However, this and other waves of Asian immigration in the 19th and early 20th centuries had little impact on Canada in relation to the outside world.<sup>5</sup> Little contact with the Indo-Pacific took place otherwise. As former ambassador to China, Fred Bild, points out,<sup>6</sup> trade promotion had priority through the mid-20th century, but so did blocking immigration. If anything, Canadians, until relatively recently, tended to view the Indo-Pacific as far away and possibly even dangerous.

Once again in contrast to the epigraph, McDonough<sup>7</sup> asserts that “Canadian political leaders emerged from the Second World War still heavily disinclined to be involved in the Pacific.” Canada, as a function of its felt obligation to the UN, contributed “on a relatively large scale to the Korean operation.”<sup>8</sup> After that involvement however, Canada's usual preoccupation with the U.S. re-asserted itself, notably in connection with efforts to end the Vietnam War. Canada participated in the International Control Commission (ICC) over the long term during the Vietnam War. While the ICC proved to be ineffective in bringing the war to a close, it spanned decades and involved a large number of Canadian diplomats.

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<sup>3</sup> Hugh Stephens and Don Campbell, “Getting Across the Finish Line: Canada and the Trans-Pacific Partnership,” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 35 (2013): 3.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Bild, “Canada's Staying Power: A Diplomat's View,” in *The China Challenge: Sino-Canadian Relations in the 21st Century*, ed. Huhua Cao and Vivienne Poy (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press 2011), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Yuen Pau Woo, “The Re-Emergence of the Re-Emergence of Asia: And Its Implication for Canada-Asia Relations,” *International Journal* 58 (2003): 633.

<sup>6</sup> Bild, “Canada's Staying,” 16.

<sup>7</sup> David S. McDonough, “Canada, Grand Strategy and the Asia-Pacific: Past Lessons, Future Directions,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 278.

<sup>8</sup> John W. Holmes, “Canada and the Pacific,” *Pacific Affairs* 44 (1971): 10.

Former prime minister Pierre Trudeau attempted to shift Canadian policy away from its overwhelming focus on the U.S., with part of that effort directed toward the Indo-Pacific region. His efforts to engage the Indo-Pacific stalled however by the mid-to-late 1970s; consider, for example, Canada's discord with India over the 1974 nuclear test and fading Commonwealth ties with Australia and New Zealand.<sup>9</sup>

From the standpoint of ongoing institutional engagement with the Indo-Pacific, the story begins in earnest with the mid-1980s. In June 1984, an act of Parliament established the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APFC). The legislation "marked a small but important milestone in Canada's evolution as a Pacific nation" and "looked ahead to the increasingly complex and complicated policymaking environment of the 1980s and 1990s."<sup>10</sup> Thus, with founding of the APFC, more than a century went by after Confederation without a significant institutional manifestation on the Canadian side of the relationship with the Indo-Pacific as a whole.

Canada participated in the humanitarian mission to East Timor, but at least one observer around that time regarded the venture as "far from sufficient to warrant an Asian recognition of Canada as a key regional player."<sup>11</sup> For purposes of comparison, prior involvement with the ICC in the Vietnam era dwarfed Canada's modest contribution to the East Timor operation — it hardly signalled a rebirth of Canada as a player in Indo-Pacific security. Canadian engagement with the Indo-Pacific did take place, as in this instance, but more in response to crises than in a sustained way.

Canadian participation in Asia-Pacific multilateral security forums however, "expanded drastically in the 1990s."<sup>12</sup> This assertion from Bullock shows how the same information can be interpreted quite differently from various points of view. From his standpoint, Canada's presence in the Indo-Pacific region had started to distinguish itself during precisely the same period that Stephens and Campbell<sup>13</sup> (in the epigraph) associated with decline. This type of disagreement is to be expected in an area where the scholarship, albeit of high quality, is limited in quantity — more work is needed to explore nuances and build confidence about what is known regarding such a vast and complex region in connection to any given external actor.

Canadian involvement in the Indo-Pacific region at present focuses on two matters. Both are primarily economic in nature. One is a longstanding effort to achieve a trade agreement with South Korea. Canada's other, more encompassing involvement is with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP is a 12-state trade agreement with ongoing negotiations. The next round of the TPP, which could have a major impact on world trade, will take place in Canada.

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<sup>9</sup> Greg Donaghy, "To Know and Be Known: The Department of External Affairs and the Creation of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 1978-84," *International Journal* 64 (2009): 1041.

<sup>10</sup> Donaghy, "To Know," 1053-1054.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher R. Bullock, "The Paradox of Canada's Regional Engagement: Rethinking Canadian Defence Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region," Thesis (Calgary: Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, University of Calgary, 2003), 100.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 106.

<sup>13</sup> Stephens and Campbell, "Getting Across."

What about Canada and the rising great powers of the Indo-Pacific region in particular, namely China and India? It is beyond the scope of the present investigation to cover even these states in detail, but a few points are essential.

Trudeau tried to re-orient foreign policy away from U.S. in the 1970s;<sup>14</sup> he courted China as part of that approach. For example, Canada in that era facilitated China's entry into multilateral regimes and institutions.<sup>15</sup> Important also is a key demographic change dating back to the 1970s. Chinese from multiple locations began to flock to Canada in significant numbers in the next decade and beyond.<sup>16</sup> Immigrants from Hong Kong led the way for this movement, aided by Canada's large mission there, which included immigration personnel.

Tensions rose with China during the years when Brian Mulroney was Canada's prime minister. "With respect to human rights in general," Frolic observes,<sup>17</sup> "Mulroney made a significant public departure from past Liberal policy by openly dwelling on human rights in his farewell meeting with Premier Zhao Ziyang." This signalled a downward shift in Sino-Canadian relations, in spite of Ottawa's efforts to promote economic exchange. Trade in particular did not meet Canadian goals.<sup>18</sup>

Events in Tiananmen Square in 1989 reinforced the negative trend. Canada curtailed some programs funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), "especially those involving government agencies such as the security services and the police."<sup>19</sup> In addition, Sino-Canadian naval contact ceased temporarily. Tiananmen Square altered generally favourable views that had been held among Canadians about China's evolution toward a less autocratic state with a freer exchange of ideas. The government, public and media moved into a negative consensus about China that persisted for years afterward.

During the period when Jean Chrétien was prime minister, relations with China improved. Canadian ships visited Shanghai in 1998 and Qingdao in May 2000.<sup>20</sup> "Team Canada" trade missions in 1994 and 2001 took centre stage in Sino-Canadian relations and received a favourable reaction from Beijing's leadership, which saw these visits as positive recognition.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Bild, "Canada's Staying," 19.

<sup>15</sup> B. Michael Frolic, "Canada and China: The China Strategy of 1987," in *The China Challenge: Sino-Canadian Relations in the 21st Century*, ed. Huhua Cao and Vivienne Poy (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), 48.

<sup>16</sup> Ming K. Chan, "Friends Across the Pacific: Links Between Canada and Hong Kong in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," in *The China Challenge: Sino-Canadian Relations in the 21st Century*, ed. Huhua Cao and Vivienne Poy (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), 84.

<sup>17</sup> Frolic, "Canada and China," 51.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Bild, "Canada's Staying," 21.

<sup>20</sup> James A. Boutilier, "The Canadian Navy and the New Naval Environment in Asia," *International Journal* 58 (2002/2003): 197.

<sup>21</sup> Woo, "The Re-Emergence," 620.

What, then, can be said of Sino-Canadian relations at the outset of the new millennium? Bild<sup>22</sup> sees little in the way of a pattern. Canadian policy might be summed up as passive and reactive — the lack of a pattern might be the one consistent trait. The time may be right, as per the new assessment offered by Evans<sup>23</sup> of the rise of China in relation to Canada, for Ottawa to develop a comprehensive approach toward the wide range of issues involved.

Canada's relations with India provide an even shorter story to tell: "one cannot, for a moment, underestimate the impact of the nuclear issue as the poisoned apple in that [i.e., Indo-Canadian] relationship for 30 years."<sup>24</sup> Thus Indo-Canadian relations entered the new millennium after a multi-decade period of abeyance, which created the potential for significant change if and when one or both sides decided to act.

Analysts tend to be all over the place in summing up Canada and the Indo-Pacific region at the turn of the millennium. According to Palamar and Jardine,<sup>25</sup> Canada had "demonstrated a lack of interest and commitment to the region in the past" and Bullock<sup>26</sup> pointed to "neglect of the region." Yet Palamar and Jardine<sup>27</sup> also see Canadian foreign policy toward Asia as "laden with past engagements and a complex history that clearly highlights Canada's somewhat precarious foreign policy position." Along the same lines, Evans<sup>28</sup> adds that a "major economic triumph" is not easy to see, but historians will have "little problem finding a vast array of people-to-people contacts and Canadian initiatives in building the sinews of international society within Asia and across the Pacific." If the latter pair of assertions about Canada and the Indo-Pacific turn out to be accurate, the challenge for policy-making is not an absence of prior engagement, but instead carrying "baggage" that creates path dependence and potentially limits future options.

Most convincing, however, are assessments that draw attention to Ottawa as reactive with regard to the Indo-Pacific, with the unpredictable often playing "a determinant role."<sup>29</sup> "Overall," as Bullock<sup>30</sup> observes, "Ottawa's legacy of participation in the security environment of the Asia-Pacific since Confederation has been somewhat mixed." Thus both the epigraph from Stephens and Campbell,<sup>31</sup> and various counterpoints that have followed, contain elements of truth. Canada *did* play a significant role as an external actor in the Indo-Pacific region — during some highly visible events in particular — but Ottawa's participation cannot be described as sustained in the same way as other capitals such as Washington, D.C.

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<sup>22</sup> Bild, "Canada's Staying," 12.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Evans, *Engaging China: Myth, Aspiration, and Strategy in Canadian Policy from Trudeau to Harper* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Campbell, quoted in: Yuen Pau Woo et al., "A Conversation on Canada-Asia Relations," *International Journal* 64 (2009): 963.

<sup>25</sup> Simon Palamar and Eric Jardine, "Does Canada Need a New Asia Policy?" *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 256.

<sup>26</sup> Bullock, "The Paradox," 76.

<sup>27</sup> Palamar and Jardine, "Does Canada," 259.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Evans, "Canada and Asia Pacific's Track-Two Diplomacy," *International Journal* LXIV (2009): 1028.

<sup>29</sup> Bild, "Canada's Staying," 14.

<sup>30</sup> Bullock, "The Paradox," 82.

<sup>31</sup> Stephens and Campbell, "Getting Across."

With regard to actual planning, there is no shortage of such documents from the government of Canada, most notably authored within the Department of External Affairs, from the 1970s onward. The stated policies, however, obtained limited and inconsistent support from a series of both Liberal and Conservative governments. Moreover, the policies received even more limited “buy in” from the public in general and industry in particular. Thus, planning existed but lacked impact because of sporadic and inconsistent action on the part of government, which in turn exerted little to no influence on Canadian society vis-à-vis involvement with the Indo-Pacific region.

Why, to sum up, does Canadian engagement with the Indo-Pacific region look sporadic and inconsistent? One likely explanation is the legacy of Canada within the British Empire and later the Commonwealth. Canada came into being as a creation of the British Empire and, at the levels of both government and society, featured a longstanding focus across the Atlantic. Even the countervailing influence of the U.S. as successor to Great Britain as the global leader resulted in a shift in Canada’s attention to the south rather than the west. Only with the more recent rise of the Indo-Pacific, to be taken up in a moment, is consciousness of the region’s long-term importance to Canada beginning to come to the forefront. For such reasons, a debate over policy planning is quite timely.

## THE INDO-PACIFIC TURN

Consensus exists about change in kind, rather than merely by degree, with respect to the Indo-Pacific region in the new millennium. Oddly enough, its prior lack of co-ordinated and sustained activity could offer Canada an advantage along the pathway to decisive action: concerns about baggage from previous policy decisions would appear to be minimal, with Ottawa possessing quite a bit of room to maneuver in responding to dramatic change in the Indo-Pacific region in the early years of the new millennium.

Ottawa must not “miss the boat” as the institutional profile of the Indo-Pacific region changes rapidly. Acharya<sup>32</sup> calls for Canada to seek entry into the East Asian Summit (EAS), a forum of rising importance. Paltiel<sup>33</sup> observes that, on a worldwide basis, “the economic and political centre of gravity has shifted toward the Asia-Pacific region.”<sup>34</sup> “The idea that Asia will re-emerge as a global powerhouse,” Woo<sup>35</sup> asserts, “is a recurrent theme among economic historians and futurologists.”<sup>36</sup> Increases in global wealth are concentrated in the “chief

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<sup>32</sup> Amitav Acharya, “Canada and Asia Pacific: Time to Make Up for Lost Time” (Vancouver, B.C.: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2011), <http://www.asiapacific.ca/editorials/canada-asia-viewpoints/editorials/canada-and-asia-pacific-time-make-lost-time>.

<sup>33</sup> Jeremy Paltiel, “Canada’s China Re-set: Strategic Realignment or Tactical Repositioning? Re-energizing the Strategic Partnership,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 273.

<sup>34</sup> As a specific illustration, consider that Asia now accounts for nearly 45 per cent of the world’s Internet population, which indicates that “a sociological and political shift will occur that will affect cyberspace writ large” (Ronald Deibert, “Asian Cyberspace on the Rise: Challenges and Opportunities for Canada,” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 20 (2011): 1-5).

<sup>35</sup> Woo, “The Re-Emergence,” 616.

<sup>36</sup> See also: James Manicom, “Canadian Debates About China’s Rise: Whither the ‘China Threat?’” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 287.

economies of Asia — China, India, South Korea, Japan, and the emerging markets in Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and so forth.”<sup>37</sup> While any trend can reverse, this one seems likely to continue as more Indo-Pacific states turn to market-oriented policies and away from the legacy of extreme government planning of the economy.

Canada must deal with the fact that a “symbiotic relationship” now exists between Asia and the world.<sup>38</sup> “With the re-emergence of Asia as a global economic and political powerhouse,” as Woo<sup>39</sup> observes, “what happens in Asia will increasingly intrude on Canadian society, business, and public policy, whether Canadians like it or not.” One particular statistic regarding Asia and Canada can be used to represent many other possible numerical illustrations: “in 1998 the region became the state’s largest market with 53.8 percent of the non-US military exports.” Whether in the form of a grand strategy or some other approach, Indo-Pacific developments will require a higher degree of sustained attention for Canada than ever before.

One superficially discouraging statistic, strangely enough, may foreshadow an opportunity for Canada: “China’s share of US imports has increased to approximately twenty percent of the total, and China has replaced Canada as the number-one trading partner.”<sup>41</sup> China has therefore supplanted Canada in one sense vis-à-vis the U.S., but the sheer size of the greatest Asian dragon might also be viewed as a potential counterweight to Canada’s dependence on the U.S. as well, at least in economic terms.

Security issues arise as a byproduct of dramatic change in economic capacity and the subsequent realized and potential military capability among Indo-Pacific states. China has expanded rapidly and India is heading toward great power status.<sup>42</sup> Consider, for example, the situation on the high seas. “Claims of newness are frequently overblown,” as Boutilier observes,<sup>43</sup> but recent naval developments in the Indo-Pacific region must be described as “remarkable.”<sup>44</sup> As a result of a quantitative and qualitative change in capabilities, Asia-Pacific now stands as the region “with the greatest potential for major armed conflict between great powers.”<sup>45</sup> This represents a dramatic change in world politics and follows on from the rise of China and how the status quo-oriented coalition led by the U.S. will react to an increasingly active set of policies coming out of Beijing.

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<sup>37</sup> Palamar and Jardine, “Does Canada,” 251.

<sup>38</sup> Shaun Narine, “From Conflict to Collaboration: Institution-Building in East Asia,” *Behind the Headlines* 65, 5 (2008): 2.

<sup>39</sup> Woo, “The Re-Emergence,” 636; see also: Evans, “Canada and Asia Pacific’s,” 1028.

<sup>40</sup> Bullock, “The Paradox,” 69.

<sup>41</sup> Huhua Cao, “Introduction: Canada’s Response to China’s Increasing Role in the World,” in *The China Challenge: Sino-Canadian Relations in the 21st Century*, ed. Huhua Cao and Vivienne Poy (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Palamar and Jardine, “Does Canada,” 253.

<sup>43</sup> Boutilier, “The Canadian Navy,” 181.

<sup>44</sup> The past six years “have witnessed some truly historic changes in the Indo-Pacific naval environment: Japan’s first long-range naval deployment since World War II; ships sunk by naval gunfire in northeast Asia; the emergence of a new and more powerful Chinese Navy and the re-emergence of an Indian Navy with blue water ambitions; the acquisition by regional navies of bigger and more powerful surface combatants; and the potential for nuclear weapons to make their appearance in the Indian Ocean” (Boutilier, “The Canadian Navy,” 198).

<sup>45</sup> Bullock, “The Paradox,” 1.

Rapid accumulation of institutions is another key element of change in the Indo-Pacific region. Some institutions date from an earlier era, such as APEC, founded in 1989 “to create a coherent economic bloc among the states of the Asia Pacific Rim.”<sup>46</sup> Created in 1994, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) serves as “a Pacific-wide security organization to smooth regional tensions.”<sup>47</sup> “Viewed in broad sweep,” according to Evans,<sup>48</sup> “the most dramatic change in eastern Asia in the past 25 years may be the associational revolution that has accompanied the region’s spectacular economic growth and integration.” “Today,” as Narine observes,<sup>49</sup> East Asia “is home to an alphabet-soup of inter-state and economic arrangements, and appears to be pursuing ever greater levels of regional organization.” Institutional expansion reflects rapid economic change, which creates the potential for rising levels of interdependence that stimulate efforts at management among those involved. This is true especially with regard to the domain of trade, but efforts also focus on society in a more inclusive way.

Consider, for example, the EAS and the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM+). These are key example of the region’s evolving institutional architecture. While not officially related to each other, the EAS and ADMM+ have the same members. The agenda for each is driven by Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) states. Canada is not a member of either organization and that point comes up in policy circles along the Rideau as well as at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Canada is campaigning actively in the Shangri-La Dialogue for support from ASEAN states to obtain entry into the ADMM+. Note that Canada is in the third year of sending its defence minister, as opposed to officials of lower rank, in order to convey the seriousness of its interest regarding ADMM+.

An essential question to answer, in light of astonishing change in the Indo-Pacific, is “how should Canada respond to these developments in order to remain an active and meaningful player in the region?”<sup>50</sup> At present, observers of Asia view Canada as “falling behind as the centre of global power takes on a distinctly Asian scope.”<sup>51</sup> A passive stance in the face of such rapid and important change will not do. Consider, for example, evolving institutions in the Indo-Pacific. A recent trend exists toward “proliferation of pan-Asian and intra-Asian activities in which North Americans, and to a lesser extent Australians, are not included.”<sup>52</sup> This observation leads naturally into a discussion of strategy: should events be handled individually or in the context of a grand plan from Ottawa?

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<sup>46</sup> Narine, “From Conflict,” 10-11.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Evans, “Canada and Asia Pacific’s,” 1027.

<sup>49</sup> Narine, “From Conflict,” 2.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Daniel Savas, “International Strategy for Asia: Positioning Canada in Asia and the World,” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 19 (2011): 2.

<sup>52</sup> Evans, “Canada and Asia Pacific’s,” 1028.

## STRATEGY?

Grand strategy is a concept with origins in thinking about how to fight a war. The basic idea is to direct all resources of a state toward some kind of ultimate strategic goal.<sup>53</sup> Thus, grand strategy represents one polar point when it comes to formulating and implementing policy. The other polar point can be illustrated by the concept of “muddling through.”<sup>54</sup> The idea here is that, if carried too far, planning can end up creating a procrustean bed that deprives the occupant of the freedom to move quickly and easily when there is a need to do so. Thus, a pragmatic approach toward policy, in which matters are considered one case at a time, is the recommended approach under certain conditions.

Intuition supports the conclusion that neither grand strategy nor muddling through will be best at all times. This section continues with an overview of contrasting positions about how much strategy is observed — and possibly called for — in the context of Canada’s engagement with the Indo-Pacific region.

Some see strategic thinking for Canada, grand or otherwise, as non-existent. Bild,<sup>55</sup> to begin, asserts that “circumstances, the irrationality of some players, unpredictable events and sheer chance have fashioned our so-called policies more often than not.” Bullock<sup>56</sup> sees the “key intractable issue of Canada’s lack of an Asia-Pacific strategy” as being “unresolved.” “The role of government,” Campbell<sup>57</sup> asserts, “has not been coherent or strategic”; Canada lacks “the necessary strategic focus and long-term commitment to ensure success in Asia.”<sup>58</sup> An opposing view, which describes the history of Canadian foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific region as closer to grand strategy than muddling through, is nowhere to be found.

Narine<sup>59</sup> sums up the critique of policy in the apparent absence of strategy:

“...there is no coherent Canadian policy on Asia. This is despite the fact that Canada, more than any other Western state, has the real potential to become an ‘Asian’ state over the next several decades. Most Canadian immigration originates in Asia, and this trend is unlikely to change. Indeed, Canada’s burgeoning Asian population is an enormous untapped resource that could help open economic, political and social doors for Canada in the larger region.”

Note the connection to demographic change as a product of globalization and vastly increased mobility; the evolving composition of Canada’s population itself would seem to argue in favour of more strategic thinking when it comes to the Indo-Pacific.

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<sup>53</sup> B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1967).

<sup>54</sup> Charles E. Lindlom, “The Science of ‘Muddling Through,’” *Public Administration Review* 19 (1959): 79-88.

<sup>55</sup> Bild, “Canada’s Staying,” 29.

<sup>56</sup> Bullock, “The Paradox,” 83.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in: Woo et al., “A Conversation.”

<sup>58</sup> Savas, “International Strategy,” 1.

<sup>59</sup> Narine, “From Conflict,” 22.

Arguments in favour of strategic thinking are building up with time. Over a decade ago, Woo<sup>60</sup> asserted that it would be “wrong” to “defer a major shift in foreign policy emphasis on Asia until all of these issues are well understood.” At the same time, Bullock<sup>61</sup> argued that a “regionally-tailored strategy is crucial if Canada is to contribute to the stability of the Asia-Pacific.” Yet a decade later, the same call for a strategic focus is just as evident. Savas<sup>62</sup> calls for the government of Canada to “take the opportunity to define a clear position and role for Canada in Asia.” Canada, according to Job,<sup>63</sup> needs a “clearly articulated Asia strategy.” Holyroyd<sup>64</sup> draws attention to the need for a strategic response regarding developments in the Arctic in particular: “The Government of Canada should undertake and share broadly a full review of East Asian engagement in the Circumpolar region.” Success under increasing complexity “demands a state that is at once both inward- and outward-looking.”<sup>65</sup> These assessments and recommendations increasingly represent the views of the field as a whole.

Consider work in Australia as a possible model for Canadian policy. The Australian approach is generating interest within Canadian policy circles. Australia’s *Asian Century* white paper, and a series of defence papers, provide examples of strategic thinking by a close Canadian ally. Thus the approach from Canberra may set an example that nudges Ottawa in the direction of greater strategic planning.

What about political feasibility with respect to a more planned approach? The public seems more than ready for it. Recent poll results reveal that 94 per cent of Canadians want to see “an international strategy for Asia.”<sup>66</sup> Given rapid change in the Indo-Pacific and public inclination toward a plan for Canadian engagement with the region, perhaps the time is right for an integrated approach toward policy.

Controversy persists, however, about the value of a grand strategy for Canada. More than four decades ago, Holmes<sup>67</sup> disagreed emphatically with even the *assumption* that “the ‘Pacific Rim’ is a region, a political or geographical entity of any kind toward which Canada could have a uniform policy.” Holmes<sup>68</sup> went on to say that the “so-called Pacific countries have little in common with each other and Canada’s relations with them are largely ad hoc” and thus inferred that a “common ‘Pacific policy’ towards New Zealand and Korea would make no more sense than a common policy linking New Zealand and Poland.” In perhaps the strongest statement of his argument, Holmes<sup>69</sup> also asserted that connections with Asian states, political or economic, “are all *sui generis*.” At least in principle, such arguments could be made just as easily today regarding Canada and a vast, complex region such as the Indo-Pacific. Maybe muddling through is better after all.

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<sup>60</sup> Woo, “The Re-Emergence,” 635.

<sup>61</sup> Bullock, “The Paradox,” 3.

<sup>62</sup> Savas, “International Strategy,” 1.

<sup>63</sup> Brian Job, “Realizing the ‘Other Half of Diplomacy’ in Southeast Asia: Will Canada’s Efforts Last?” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 28 (2012): 7.

<sup>64</sup> Carin Holyroyd, “The Business of Arctic Development: East Asian Economic Interests in the Far North,” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 34 (2012): 1.

<sup>65</sup> Rahim Rezale, “Rising Innovative Capacity in Asia and Opportunities for Canada: Focus on the Biopharmaceutical Sectors in China and India,” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 24 (2012): 8.

<sup>66</sup> Savas, “International Strategy,” 2.

<sup>67</sup> Holmes, “Canada and,” 6.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 16, 8.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 8.

Fast-forward to the present and critics indeed have elaborated upon the arguments from four decades ago against grand strategy: “this is wishful thinking at best, given the contested nature of Canada and Asia visible in Canada-Asia relations and given the limits of the state’s reach evident in other diplomatic practices such as rule-making.”<sup>70</sup> Palamar and Jardine<sup>71</sup> add that “today’s state-to-state relationships are increasingly dominated by people-to-people and business-to-business linkages. It is therefore naïve and simplistic to talk about Canada’s ‘grand strategy,’ since Canadians (let alone the populaces of China, India or Japan) do not follow orders from Ottawa.” Here the critics are claiming implicitly that, if anything, Canadians in the charter era have become less likely to respond well to policies that take a “top-down” form.

Yet even ardent critics of grand strategy, such as Palamar and Jardine,<sup>72</sup> acknowledge that Canada must seriously consider “the implications of Asia’s ascent for Canada’s diplomacy, economy, society and military.” Poon,<sup>73</sup> another critic, adds that a Canadian strategy should link “strategic interests with national economic objectives.”<sup>74</sup> Implicit in these preceding observations is sympathy toward muddling through as a pragmatic alternative to an ultra-planned approach. Palamar and Jardine,<sup>75</sup> for example, argue that “because the world is a complex and unpredictable place, contingent planning is particularly important.” With rapid change in the Indo-Pacific region and modest control (at best) over events, it may make sense for matters to be addressed seriatim rather than within the context of a grand plan that could become obsolete and even self-defeating in very short order. After all, who wants to sleep in a procrustean bed?

Critics of grand strategy can also point to poll results that complicate interpretation of the numbers emphasized by advocates: “only 26% of all Canadians considered Canada as part of the Asia Pacific”<sup>76</sup> and in 2013, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada reported a “downward shift” in the degree of connection with Asia.<sup>77</sup> Thus the degree of public support for the development of an overall Indo-Pacific strategy would appear to be somewhat sensitive to how the question is asked. The relatively low percentage of Canadians who feel kinship with the region argues in favour of muddling through as opposed to any effort to “sell” a grand strategy to the public.

Answers to two overarching questions can be used to sum up the preceding review. One is answered easily: Is there evidence of a grand strategy in Canadian policy toward the Indo-Pacific region? The answer, definitely, is no. An answer to the second question is far from obvious: Would such a grand strategy be desirable or is it better to address issues seriatim? Arguments go back and forth and are summarized below.

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<sup>70</sup> Mary M. Young and Susan J. Henders, “‘Other Diplomacies’ and the Making of Canada-Asia Relations,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 385.

<sup>71</sup> Palamar and Jardine, “Does Canada,” 257.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Poon, “China’s Move Up the Value Chain: Implications for Canada,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 335.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Palamar and Jardine, “Does Canada,” 257.

<sup>76</sup> Savas, “International Strategy,” 4.

<sup>77</sup> Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, “2013 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia,” May 29, 2013, <http://www.asiapacific.ca/surveys/national-opinion-polls/2013-national-opinion-poll-canadian-views-asia>.

Advocates of a more strategic approach, which would not necessarily have to be on the sort of grand scale more suitable to a superpower, cite factors both within and without Canada. Canada's increasingly diverse ethno-linguistic makeup features an already important and rising Indo-Pacific component; this demographic suggests the value of more planning as countries of origin for immigrants are increasingly affected by policy decisions in response to building interdependence. In addition, the sheer scope and rapidity of change itself are put forward as justifications for more planning than they have been in the past. It is best not to be caught unaware as change accumulates toward possible transformation of the region, with attendant challenges for Canada.

Critics of a strategic approach also cite the scale and quickness of change, but emphasize the likelihood that any plan is likely to become obsolete soon after it is developed. Moreover, skeptics see the Indo-Pacific region as too diverse to facilitate a successful plan in aggregate terms. With respect to the changing demography of Canada, critics emphasize the possibility that society will not welcome a "top-down" approach toward dealing with their countries of origin. For such reasons it might make sense instead to address issues as they come up in order to maintain flexibility.

Given the compelling nature of arguments in either direction, intuition supports the idea that neither strategic planning nor a seriatim approach is likely to be everywhere and always best. Thus, interest shifts toward identifying the optimal degree of planning for any given set of conditions.

## **IDEAS FOR MOVING FORWARD**

Uncertainty over where to go along the continuum from grand strategy to muddling through can be resolved through articulation of criteria that match the degree of planning adopted with a given context. Three criteria will be put forward here regarding identification of context and thereby a preference for either an integrated approach or acting on issues as they come up:

- Share of capabilities
- Moving-order advantage
- Range of linkage

Each criterion will be explained in turn. Taken together, these criteria are deemed sufficient to designate, in all likelihood, virtually any situation as leaning one way or the other along the continuum from planning to contingency, with the ideal types being grand strategy and muddling through. Discussion focuses on economics, security and institutions as domains of policy to bring out the range of possibilities connected to the criteria.

Share of capabilities refers to how much power Canada has relative to other actors in a given issue area. Issue areas can be expected to vary by type. All other things being equal, Canada's capabilities relative to others are at the maximum in the economic domain. While its population is not large, Canada is very wealthy and thus possesses excess capacity that can be applied toward exerting influence. Only a few states with more to offer the world in terms of trade and investment clearly rank above Canada. In the area of institutions, Canada lives in a "one state, one vote" world and therefore, at least on paper, is normally in a position of

equality with its peers in international organizations. Obviously Canada, because of its wealth, will tend to exert influence above the norm even in a setting of voting equality, but at the very least Canada can expect parity. Finally, Canada is least capable in the realm of security, although still quite effective by world standards. The low level of assessment is not assigned just because Canadian capabilities are very limited compared to great powers, but also for cultural reasons. The Canadian public is wary of activity in the security domain, as the controversial experience with the war in Afghanistan demonstrated quite effectively.<sup>78</sup> The legacy effect is that Canada possesses significantly more military capability than before Afghanistan, but not enough for great-power status; moreover, Ottawa continues to prefer a cautious approach within the domain of security for reasons of domestic politics alone.

Moving-order advantage will vary from one issue domain to the next. In other words, is it better to lead or follow? Illustrations of extreme points will help here. First-mover advantage would occur in duelling, while second-mover advantage is decisive in the children's game of rock-paper-scissors.

Given the leadership role of the U.S. in the western coalition, security issues would tend toward a second-mover advantage for Canada. For example, until the U.S. strategy toward the rise of China is understood fully, major Canadian decisions about military expenditures and deployments would seem inadvisable. Waste and even intra-coalitional conflict could result from being proactive there.

In other domains, it might be said that if “you snooze, you lose,” with more of a first-mover advantage in place. Consider, in the institutional domain, Canadian exclusion from the increasingly visible and important EAS and ADMM+. Could that have been a function of others perceiving Canada as too reactive and even disinterested? On balance, it might make sense to assume first-mover advantage regarding institutions. Canada's long-established reputation as an effective multilateral actor could come into play here, with states in the Indo-Pacific perhaps granting Canada more credibility than most nations with respect to taking the lead on matters related to institutional reform and even initial questions about design.

Finally, the domain of economics would seem to be highly contingent compared to security (second mover) and institutions (first mover). It is easy to imagine any number of scenarios regarding trade investment, currency and other issues, with the decision to lead or follow depending on precise circumstances.

Range of linkage is the final trait considered here with respect to policy-making. To what degree does the issue in question have the potential, once decided upon, to impact on other choices made? For example, staying out of the war over Bangladesh in 1971 effectively helped Pakistan,<sup>79</sup> but Canada's lack of action there did not impact on other issues. By contrast, the sale of wheat to China in the early 1960s — in defiance of U.S. sanctions — caused friction with Canada's principal ally. Canada's early recognition of the People's Republic of China added to the list of economic items that already had produced a war of words between Ottawa and Washington at the outset of the 1970s. Thus, items with greater spillover potential, to the extent that such effects can be anticipated, are candidates for more strategic, as opposed to individualized, management.

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<sup>78</sup> Patrick James, *Canada and Conflict* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>79</sup> Zaglul Haider, “Unfolding Canada-Bangladesh Relations,” *Asian Survey* 45 (2005): 322-341.

With regard to range of linkage, the “right” amount of planning is likely to be highly circumstantial. It is easy to imagine a continuum of issues within each of the three domains — economics, security and institutions — with regard to spillover. A simple comparison would be a bilateral versus multilateral trade or security agreement. Institutions, depending on their mandate, might emphasize a particular issue that is unlikely to concern more than a limited number of actors, as compared to something of virtually global scope, such as the management of a potential year-round Northwest Passage. Unlike the other two criteria, no rank ordering emerges for range of spillover with regard to the economic, institutional and security domains.

Grand strategy and muddling through, as polar points, represent opposite profiles in terms of the three criteria. Grand strategy is optimal when capabilities are high, first-mover advantage is in place, and issues linkages are at a maximum. When those characteristics are reversed, muddling through is the best approach.

Table 1 contains an inventory of policy ideas gleaned from the literature on Canada and the Indo-Pacific in the new millennium. These ideas are arranged into economic, security and institutional domains. The ideas appear in no order of importance. While others might have been included, these illustrations from the literature are sufficient to show the complex range of possibilities at hand. So, should these issues be handled through a grand strategy or seriatim? It should be obvious now that the answer will vary from one case to the next. How best to handle an issue is expected to depend on its profile in terms of the three criteria introduced above: share of capabilities, moving-order advantage and range of linkage.

**TABLE 1 INVENTORY OF POLICY IDEAS FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION**

DOMAIN	IDEA
<b>Economic</b>	<p data-bbox="456 1150 1380 1178">“In lieu of Team Canada missions to China, we should promote the idea of a ‘Team China’ mission to Canada”<sup>80</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1192 1019 1220">“potential for greater (commodity) exports to China is palpable”<sup>81</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1234 1336 1262">“Put simply, East Asia and Canada need each other and can benefit from collaboration in the Arctic”<sup>82</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1276 1380 1331">“At present, Canada’s approach to Arctic development is passive, relying largely on East Asian businesses to initiate activities”<sup>83</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1346 1360 1400">“Canada should not, however, be aloof about potential FTAs with Asian partners because of the important signaling effect that trade discussions can generate”<sup>84</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1415 1377 1442">“Canada should champion India’s entry into APEC as soon as they moratorium on new members expires”<sup>85</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1457 1118 1484">“encourage Canadian-East Asian scientific and technological collaboration”<sup>86</sup></p> <p data-bbox="456 1499 1377 1575">“Today, there is a high degree of consensus across all federal parties that Canada’s priorities with regard to China are first of all to promote our prosperity through trade and investment between our countries, and secondly to encourage high-quality Chinese immigrants to move to Canada”<sup>87</sup></p>

<sup>80</sup> Woo, “The Re-Emergence,” 621.

<sup>81</sup> Poon, “China’s Move,” 321.

<sup>82</sup> Holyroyd, “The Business,” 6.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>84</sup> Woo, “The Re-Emergence,” 630.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, 627.

<sup>86</sup> Holyroyd, “The Business,” 8.

<sup>87</sup> Charles Burton, “The Past, Present and Future of Canada-China Relations” (paper presented at “Chinese Uncertainties and Canadian Responses: After the Global Financial Crisis” Conference, Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives and Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. November 21-22, 2009), 3.

**TABLE 1 INVENTORY OF POLICY IDEAS FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION (cont'd)**

DOMAIN	IDEA
<b>Security</b>	<p>“Canada has more to gain by adopting a more proactive position given both the importance of current debate surrounding the Arctic and its current objective of re-engagement in Asia”<sup>88</sup></p> <p>“the effort to build region-wide cooperative security structures throughout Asia-Pacific has been too meagre.”<sup>89</sup></p> <p>“The challenge for DND in particular has been how to define a level of engagement in the region in line with our interests and the expectations of regional actors”<sup>90</sup></p> <p>“help Canada to go beyond the foreign policy dead end created by an overemphasis on the social and human rights problems that still pervade Chinese society”<sup>91</sup></p> <p>“Canada should take steps to ensure that the Internet remains free and open in the region in order to advance its strategic interests, and promote the advancement of democracy and the protection of human rights”<sup>92</sup></p>
<b>Institutional</b>	<p>“The Governments of Canada, the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut should create a Northern Aboriginal-East Asian task force”<sup>93</sup></p> <p>Canada should organize an annual regional forum; leverage Canadian diaspora; encourage young Canadian educators and entrepreneurs to go to Asia; support all levels of Canadian education in Asia; increase funding to APFC.<sup>94</sup></p> <p>Canada should support China’s application for observer status in Arctic Council.<sup>95</sup></p>

While it is beyond the scope of the present exposition to explore the issues from Table 1 in full, one example from each domain is sufficient to give a basic sense of the type of identification process being advocated here.

Among the ideas in the economic domain, the sixth one listed pertains to Canadian support for India’s entry into APEC once the moratorium on new members is over. This economic issue presents a mixed profile. As with other economic issues, it plays into Canada’s high level of capability in that domain and tilts toward strategic planning. Moving order is toward the middle — neither obviously toward leading or following. The potential range of spillover, given the scope of APEC and importance of India, would seem to be high. Thus a relatively high degree of planning would be the recommendation here, with two of the criteria pointing toward an integrated strategy and one in the middle.

<sup>88</sup> Zhiming Chen and Dominique Caouette, “China’s South China Sea Policy and Its Implications for Canada: Claims, Strategies and Consequences,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 311.

<sup>89</sup> Bullock, “The Paradox,” 74.

<sup>90</sup> Job, “Realizing,” 5.

<sup>91</sup> Cao, “Introduction,” 4.

<sup>92</sup> Kieran Bergmann, “Extending Censorship Controls in Southeast Asia,” *Canada-Asia Agenda* 31 (2012): 2.

<sup>93</sup> Holyroyd, “The Business.”

<sup>94</sup> Robert J. Hanlon, “Leveraging Talent: Exporting Ideas in the Asian Century,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18 (2012): 370-371.

<sup>95</sup> Chen and Caouette, “China’s South,” 311.

Second among the ideas in the security domain is the possibility of building region-wide cooperative security structures. This idea leans toward muddling through. To begin, it is in the domain of security, where Canada is endowed in a limited way in comparison to great powers and thus should pursue a more reactive approach. Second-mover as opposed to first-mover advantage is the norm for Canada in this context, so that also argues against too much planning and in favour of flexibility. However, given the region-wide scope of the idea, strategic thinking is favoured. Thus, two out of the three criteria point toward a seriatim approach.

Consider the first idea listed under the institutional heading: creation of a “Northern Aboriginal-East Asian intergovernmental task force.” What type of decision does this represent, given the three criteria advocated for profiling agenda items? Creation of such a task force is fully under Ottawa’s authority, so capabilities are at a maximum for this particular institutional setting. This is an institutional initiative, so intuition leans toward first-mover advantage. The likelihood of issue linkage would seem relatively low. In an approximate sense, a decision like this is a hybrid, with two of the three characteristics (capabilities and institutional domain) arguing in favour of planning, but with some allowance for contingency (due to presumed lack of issue linkage).

While the preceding examples do not produce definitive conclusions about what to do in each instance, they combine to illustrate the new kind of thinking involved in profiling issues. *All decisions should be profiled in this manner to assess the degree of planning versus contingency that will make sense from the outset.*

## SUMMING UP

Canada’s engagement with the Indo-Pacific region is a rapidly rising topic on the policy agenda. Substantial economic growth in the region creates the need for response to interdependence-related effects by even those such as Canada who reside outside its boundaries. Effects from the economic domain, moreover, reverberate into security and institutions. What, then, is Canada to do?

Options for response range from seeking a grand strategy to muddling through. As a middle power, neither of those two polar points along the continuum of planning is likely to be chosen by Canada all, or even most of the time. Instead, issues can be handled best by studying their properties and then either looking to co-ordinate with other choices that have been made, or acting more directly on current circumstances.

Offered here is the argument that share of capabilities, moving-order advantage, and range of linkage combine to offer the most relevant sense of what ought to be done. In looking over Canadian foreign policy in the Indo-Canadian region, the phalanx of opinion that describes a history of muddling through suggests that more, rather than less, strategic thinking would have been desirable. In all likelihood, a certain percentage of issues came down the pike with characteristics that would have recommended strategizing rather than muddling through. Yet, as the record reveals, strategic planning seems to have been eschewed altogether, at least in terms of implementation.

Various questions, suitable for pursuit through further research, might be posed about the set of criteria, in and of itself: Are some of the criteria more important than others? Are the criteria to be defined along a continuum — perhaps from full fungibility to absence of linkage? While beyond the scope of the present investigation, answers to the preceding queries would be likely to enhance the value of the three-criterion model in subsequent applications.

Given the dramatic change that the Indo-Pacific region is experiencing, intuition suggests that a variety of issues, in need of different treatment with regard to the amount of planning involved, will confront Ottawa in the months and years to come. Optimal policy is most likely to be achieved through reflection upon what type of decision is at hand and then acting accordingly with regard to the degree of integration and strategizing in response. In sum, Canadian foreign policy for the Indo-Pacific should be neither grand nor bland, but instead, somewhat planned.

### **About the Author**

**Patrick James** is Dornsife Dean's Professor of International Relations and Director of the Center for International Studies at the University of Southern California (PhD, University of Maryland, College Park). James specializes in comparative and international politics. His interests at the international level include the causes, processes and consequences of conflict, crisis and war. With regard to domestic politics, his interests focus on Canada, most notably with respect to the constitutional dilemma. James is the author or editor of 23 books and over 120 articles and book chapters. Among his honors and awards are the Louise Dyer Peace Fellowship from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, the Milton R. Merrill Chair from Political Science at Utah State University, the Lady Davis Professorship of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Thomas Enders Professorship in Canadian Studies at the University of Calgary, the Senior Scholar award from the Canadian Embassy, Washington, DC, the Eaton Lectureship at Queen's University in Belfast, the Quincy Wright Scholar Award from the Midwest International Studies Association (ISA), the Beijing Foreign Studies University Eminent Scholar and the Eccles Professor of the British Library. He is a past president of the Midwest ISA and the Iowa Conference of Political Scientists. James has been Distinguished Scholar in Foreign Policy Analysis for the ISA, 2006-07, and Distinguished Scholar in Ethnicity, Nationalism and Migration for ISA, 2009-10. He served as President, 2007-09, of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, and Vice-President (2008-09) of the ISA. He will be President of the International Council for Canadian Studies in 2011-13. James also served a five-year term as Editor of *International Studies Quarterly*.

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#### ISSN

1919-112x SPP Research Papers (Print)  
1919-1138 SPP Research Papers (Online)

#### DATE OF ISSUE

August 2014

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