

INDIA IN CANADA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

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In recent years, the United States, Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the European Union (EU), and South Korea have all released their own versions of an Indo-Pacific strategy or policy. After a long debate, Canada followed several of its close Western partners to release its Indo-Pacific strategy on November 27, 2022, and become one of the newest members of what has come to be known as the 'Indo-Pacific Strategy Club'.¹ Importantly, the strategy outlines how important the Indo-Pacific region—which has become a centre for global economic and geopolitical activity—is for Canada's future economic prosperity, security, and society.²

This article is centred around the following research question: What are the key tenets of Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy, and where does India feature in the document? It offers an analysis of

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1. Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, "Canada Joins the Indo-Pacific Strategy Club", *The Diplomat*, November 29, 2022, at <https://thediplomat.com/2022/11/canada-joins-the-indo-pacific-strategy-club/>. Accessed on December 10, 2022.
2. "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy", Government of Canada, November 30, 2022, at <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng#a1>. Accessed on December 10, 2022.

Canada's interest and outlook toward the Indo-Pacific, based on the release of its recent policy document, as well as how it views its strategic partnership with India in this context. The world has increasingly fractured along the fault lines between democracies and autocracies. This article contends that India and Canada—from the two ends of the Indo-Pacific—have an inherent interest in contributing to the region's security and prosperity, and this can form a pathway for a deeper strategic partnership between the two countries.

CANADA'S INDO-PACIFIC POLICY: KEY TENETS

Canada's foreign policy has operated in sync with that of the United States, which has long been a close ally and partner, to address key issues of foreign policy crisis.³ Some examples of this are Canada's support to the allied forces during the two World Wars, its participation as a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and its membership in the Five Eyes (FVEY) intelligence sharing alliance.⁴ Clearly, both countries share many world views and values, and this is well-reflected in Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy. In identifying the Indo-Pacific as a new "horizon of opportunity" and laying out a strategy for a deeper and more substantive engagement with the region, Canada's strategy closely trails that of Washington's 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP). Both, for example, adopt a holistic 'whole-of-government' approach (or a 'whole-of-society' strategy) towards the region that encompasses all domains such as national security, trade, infrastructure, cybersecurity, sustainable development, innovation, natural resources, and supply chain resilience, among others. Like FOIP, Ottawa's strategy focuses on ensuring open skies, open trading systems and open societies, as well as addressing climate change as key objectives in the region.

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3. "Canada-United States Relations", Government of Canada, modified on October 27, 2022, at [https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/us-eu/relations.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/us-eu/rerelations.aspx?lang=eng). Accessed on December 12, 2022.
 4. "Canada and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", Government of Canada, modified on August 25, 2022, at https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/nato-otan/index.aspx?lang=eng. Accessed on December 13, 2022.

Specifically, Canada's strategy outlines five interconnected strategic objectives aimed at shaping Canada's active engagement with the region:⁵

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

In the national security domain (that is, in relation to the first objective), the implementation of its Indo-Pacific strategy will include enhancing its military presence in the region, increasing investments in intelligence and cybersecurity in view of new threats, building on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the region, and bolstering security partnerships to enhance joint capabilities. This will be supplemented by diversifying regional partnerships in terms of trade, investment and supply chains. A unique focus of the Canadian strategy is expanding education exchanges and visa-processing capacity to enable greater people-to-people engagement; this will include increasing its feminist international assistance and working with regional partners to address local developmental challenges, work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and defending human rights. In connection with this, Canada plans to share its expertise in clean technologies, ocean management, energy transition and climate finance, and support quality infrastructure development efforts in the region. Finally, Canada will seek deeper holistic engagement with regional partners, driven by its interests, objectives and values.⁶ At the same time, in conjunction with the release of its Indo-Pacific policy, the Canadian government also committed to spending CA\$ 2.3 billion over the coming five years (2023-2028), in the fields of military, security, trade and political engagement.

5. "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy", n. 2.

6. For a discussion on implementation of the strategy, see Girish Luthra, "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy Makes its Policy Choices Clear", December 15, 2022, at <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/canadas-indo-pacific-strategy-makes-its-policy-choices-clear/>. Accessed on January 10, 2023.

TACKLING A DISRUPTIVE CHINA

What is perhaps most surprising about Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy—and what makes it well-harmonised with that of the US—is how the strategy treats China. In recent years, Beijing has engaged in 'wolf warrior' tactics vis-à-vis Canada. For example, Beijing's detainment of two Canadian citizens in retaliation to the arrest of Huawei's Chief Financial Officer, Meng Wanzhou, prompted Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to accuse China of "coercive diplomacy".⁷ Since then, too, even as Beijing and Ottawa attempted to resume meaningful diplomacy, there have been several instances of discord between the two countries. In June 2022, during the deployment of Canadian aircraft in Japan as part of a United Nations mission to enforce sanctions against North Korea, Canadian and Chinese aircraft entered into altercations, as Ottawa accused the Chinese Air Force of unprofessional and risky conduct.⁸ Over the last half decade, China went from being a friend to a difficult-to-engage-with adversary. In this context, Canada's Indo-Pacific policy comes as an acknowledgement of the shift in China-Canada relations, and that the China of today is no longer the China of 2015.

Following four years of frigid relations, Ottawa explicitly recognises China's aggressiveness as a source of disruption in the region.⁹ It states, for instance, that the strategy is "informed by its clear-eyed understanding of this global China" and aligns Canada's China approach to that of its partners (especially the US).¹⁰ Interestingly, the document draws a distinction between the actions of the Chinese government (under the leadership of President Xi Jinping) and the Chinese people. At the same time, it does not shy away from calling out Beijing's provocative strategies and tactics. Beijing's coercive diplomacy, offensive military capabilities, willingness to disregard UN rulings and challenge international norms through its behaviours and policies are all recognised as threats to Canadian national

7. Steve Scherer, "China Denies 'Coercive' Diplomacy with Canada, Urges Release of Huawei Executive", Reuters, October 15, 2022, at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-canada-diplomacy-idCAKBN2702IM>. Accessed on January 10, 2023.

8. "Trudeau calls China's Actions Toward Canadian Planes 'Provocative and Irresponsible'", CBC, June 6, 2022, at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/china-canada-harass-warplanes-1.6478645>. Accessed on January 10, 2023.

9. McCuaig-Johnston, n. 1.

10. "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy", n. 2.

interest. In this context, Canada's Indo-Pacific policy is notable in its recognition of Beijing's unpredictability and aggressive posturing in the region, as well as the geopolitical threat it poses to not only several Indo-Pacific states, but also to Ottawa.

Canada's outlook toward China is summarised in the document as follows:¹¹

Our approach to China, which is inseparable from our broader Indo-Pacific Strategy, operates across domestic, bilateral, regional and multilateral spheres: At the domestic level, Canada will continue to strengthen the defence of our Canadian infrastructure, democracy and Canadian citizens against foreign interference.

In essence, with the release of this new document, Canada has tied its China approach to its Indo-Pacific strategy; this involves remaining open to working with Beijing on global issues (like climate change and global health) but shaping its actions and strategies with a realistic and perspicacious assessment of today's—much more belligerent—China. The document explicitly declares Ottawa's support for Taiwan, Tibet, opposing Chinese unilateral actions in the South and East China Seas, and Uighurs and other minorities. For instance, it not only pledges to continue working against any unilateral actions that threaten to upend the status quo to the detriment of security and stability in the region, but also pledges to continue its multifaceted engagement with Taiwan (encompassing trade, technology, health, democratic governance, and countering disinformation).¹² Taken together, these represent indications of Canada's commitment to be a reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific, including against the challenge of China's coercive behaviour and unilaterally assertive actions. Accordingly, Canada's Indo-Pacific outlook highlights the importance of partnerships in the region. To deepen its understanding of China, its strategies and tactics, and influence operations in the region (and beyond), Ottawa aims to bolster its active presence in the region.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

INDIA: A DEMOCRATIC FRIEND AND STRATEGIC PARTNER

In this context, India is highlighted and identified as a crucial partner in Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy document, especially owing to New Delhi's growing strategic, economic and demographic significance. In 2021, India had a GDP of US\$ 3.18 trillion,¹³ and in 2022, this figure rose to US\$ 3.5 trillion.¹⁴ In 2023-2024, despite the geopolitical and geo-economics churning across the world, India's economy is expected to show a consistent growth in the range of 6 to 6.8 per cent.¹⁵ With the country's population being over 1.4 billion, and on course to rise to nearly 1.6 billion to make India the world's most populous country by 2030, India has a large and young working-age population. Other factors like a diversified economy and growing tech adoption mean that India is poised to add roughly US\$ 400 billion year-on-year and become a US\$ 8.5 trillion economy by 2027 and US\$ 11 trillion by 2032.¹⁶ These projections sync well with India's aim to achieve a US\$ 5 trillion economy by the Financial Year 2025 and so to become the world's third-largest economy (overtaking Japan and Germany). Therefore, India's potential as a market and major regional and global economy is immense.

Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy recognises this potential in emphasising the importance of deepening its partnership with India. Not only is India identified as a "critical partner in Canada's pursuit of its [Indo-Pacific] objectives", but also as one whose strategic importance and leadership in the region—and globally—

13. "GDP (Current US\$)—India", data derived from the World Bank national accounts data and OECD National Accounts data files, The World Bank, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=IN>. Accessed on January 11, 2023.

14. PTL, "India to be 2nd Largest Economy by 2050, to add a Trillion Dollar to GDP Every 12-18 months: Adani", *The Economic Times*, November 20, 2022, at <https://energy.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/india-to-be-2nd-largest-economy-by-2050-to-add-a-trillion-dollar-to-gdp-every-12-18-months-adani/95632254>. Accessed on February 2, 2023.

15. "Economic Survey 2022-23 | Survey Presents Comprehensive Analysis of India's Growth Trajectory: PM Modi", *The Hindu*, January 31, 2023, at <https://www.thehindu.com/business/budget/economic-survey-2022-23-budget-session-live-updates-january-31-2023/article66452937.ece>. Accessed on February 2, 2023.

16. "India to be 3rd Largest Economy by 2027: Morgan Stanley", *Fortune India*, November 9, 2022, at <https://www.fortuneindia.com/macro/india-to-be-3rd-largest-economy-by-2027-morgan-stanley/110332>. Accessed on February 3, 2023.

will only increase in the coming times. Additionally, the document also focuses on both nations' shared interests in the security and prosperity of the region, and their shared value system and traditions of democracy and pluralism, and commitment to human rights as factors underpinning a deeper India-Canada strategic partnership in the times to come.

In specific, the strategy identifies the following avenues for practical engagement with India:

Political Ties

India and Canada have a long-standing relationship that began in 1947, with exchanges occurring at various political levels. Despite the Khalistan issue that has been a major irritant in their ties,¹⁷ India-Canada relations have fared well under the leaderships of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Modi's visit to Canada in April 2015 elevated their ties to a strategic partnership, which was reciprocated by Trudeau's state visit to India in 2018. Both leaders also interacted on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in 2019, alongside holding several other virtual discussions.¹⁸

Now, Canada is exploring avenues to strengthen the India-Canada bilateral, with the aim of putting its Indo-Pacific strategy into action. Following the release of its Indo-Pacific strategy in November 2022, Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly visited India in February 2023 to inject bilateral relations with further momentum and ultimately foster a stronger partnership. In view of India's G20 Presidency, both leaders identified areas of convergence where the two countries can collaborate to make immediate impact. The aim of the visit was to reset the India-Canada strategic partnership, move beyond points of differences (like New Delhi's displeasure of the activities of pro-Khalistan separatists in Canada), and mobilise

17. Nayanima Basu, "Modi and Trudeau Talk Security & Trade in First Bilateral Meeting since 2018 Debacle", *The Print*, June 28, 2022, at <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/modi-and-trudeau-talk-security-trade-in-first-bilateral-meeting-since-2018-debacle/1015636/>. Accessed on February 3, 2023.

18. Ministry of External Affairs of India, "India-Canada Bilateral Relations", February 2021, at https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_canada_2021nw.pdf. Accessed on February 3, 2023.

them toward a more robust agenda.¹⁹ In this vein, Joly also met with key stakeholders in the India-Canada partnership, such as business leaders and civil society communities to further productive collaboration. Additionally, Prime Minister Trudeau and as many as eight Canadian cabinet ministers are expected to visit India for various G20 events over 2023.

Moving forward, as India and Canada look to upgrade their ties in view of accelerated cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, they must move toward enhancing their political ties and ensuring that their collaboration is well institutionalised. At present, both countries share Ministerial dialogues on foreign policy, trade and investment, finance, and energy. This is in addition to working level groups on counterterrorism, security, agriculture, education, science and technology.²⁰ In view of the changing nature of the shared challenges both countries face, they can formulate institutionalised channels for regular exchanges and collaboration at various diplomatic levels. India and Canada are both democracies increasingly facing authoritarian powers attempting to intimidate them and disinform their people. Regular exchanges at varied levels and across numerous strategic domains—including supply chains, technology, development, clean infrastructure, energy security, and combatting poverty—can help both states achieve mutual understanding of each other's interests, threat perceptions, their modalities and how to work together to address them.

People-to-People Exchanges

In addition to their political ties, Canada's Indo-Pacific policy also gives due attention to investing in deeper connections between the two populations. India and Canada share close-knit demographic linkages: over 650,000 students from India travelled from India to Canada between 2012 and 2021 for education, with one in five

19. Anirudh Bhattacharyya, "Expectations of Reset in Bilateral Ties as Canadian Foreign Minister Heads to India", *Hindustan Times*, February 5, 2023, at <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/expectations-of-reset-in-bilateral-ties-as-canadian-foreign-minister-heads-to-india-101675578224557.html>. Accessed on February 6, 2023.

20. "Canada-India Relations", Government of Canada, September 2, 2022, at <https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/india-inde/reasons.aspx?lang=eng>. Accessed on February 4, 2023.

recent migrants to Canada coming from India. Such economic and people-to-people connections can form the foundation of a stronger comprehensive and strategic partnership between the two countries. In particular, the document notes the need to accelerate support of academic, educational, cultural and youth, and research exchanges between the two countries. Furthermore, the document also highlights the need to bolster Canada's visa-processing capacity in Indian cities like New Delhi and Chandigarh to support their vibrant demographics. Ultimately, Canada is looking to further facilitate the movement of highly skilled persons under its *Global Skills Strategy* programme, to fully harness the complementarities between the two countries.²¹ In a step toward this direction, India and Canada announced that they will allow the designated carriers of each other's countries (that is, Air Canada and Air India) to operate an unlimited number of flights.²² The announcement, which came ahead of the G20 Summit in Bali in 2022, will encourage greater movement of goods and people (including professionals, students and investors), and allow their business (and overall) relations to flourish.

Economic Relations

Ottawa will seek to grow India-Canada economic ties by encouraging increased trade and investment. Importantly, this economic cooperation will also extend to the supply chain domain as both countries can facilitate industrial exchanges geared at building alternative supply chains of critical value goods. India's manufacturing push under the current Modi government, through national programmes like 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', make it an ideal hub for production. For Canada, especially, increasing trade with India in key areas will help it divest from China, de-risk its

21. Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, "India-Canada Joint Statement: Partnership for Security and Growth", February 23, 2018, at <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2018/02/23/india-canada-joint-statement-partnership-security-and-growth>. Accessed on February 4, 2023.

22. Saurabh Sinha, "Now, 'Unlimited Number' of Flights between India and Canada Allowed: Justin Trudeau", *Times of India*, November 15, 2022, at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/us-canada-news/now-unlimited-number-of-flights-between-india-canada-allowed-justin-trudeau/articleshow/95517379.cms>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

supply chains, and help reduce excessive dependence on a single—unreliable and increasingly hostile—nation.

At present, India-Canada economic relations are arguably underperforming. Despite being two of the world's largest economies and fellow members of the Group of 20 (G20), both countries have been unable to accord adequate focus on the economic dimension of their bilateral. Notably, in 2021, India-Canada trade amounted to merely US\$ 7.6 billion in goods (US\$ 4.6 billion in exports to Canada and US\$ 3 billion in imports) and US\$ 6.8 billion in services (US\$ 2.4 billion in exports to Canada and US\$ 4.4 billion in imports).²³ Hence, there remains great room for growth of their trade volume and breadth, and this is likely to be a key point for focus for both countries moving forward.

Notably, the Indo-Pacific agreement highlights Ottawa's intention to seek greater market access to India, by concluding an Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) as an interim step to their final goal of finalising a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Ottawa is also looking to create an India-Canada desk within its Trade Commissioner Service to implement the EPTA for Canadian businesses wishing to enter the Indian market (both independently and via a joint venture).

Climate Change

A key aspect of the India-Canada economic ties must address the problem of climate change, including cooperation on protecting the environment and developing and spreading the use of clean and green technologies to promote renewable energy. In fact, in June 2022, both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance bilateral cooperation on climate change, environmental protection and conservation along the sidelines of COP26 in Sweden.²⁴ Under this agreement, both sides will share information, experience and

23. "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy", n. 2.

24. Environment and Climate Change Canada, "Canada and India Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Establish Stronger Cooperation on Environmental Protection and Climate Action", Government of Canada, June 2, 2022, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2022/06/canada-and-india-sign-memorandum-of-understanding-to-establish-stronger-cooperation-on-environmental-protection-and-climate-action.html>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

expertise in areas like renewable energy, decarbonising heavy industries, reducing plastic pollution, management of chemicals, and their sustainable consumption. Through these areas, India and Canada hope to not only support each other's climate change goals, but also work together to devise long-term solutions to shared environmental problems, as well as spur their economic growth and job market. Furthermore, Canada has developed several clean technologies that have been proven and tested—including water and waste management systems, clean hydrogen, smart grids and energy storage—which could be of immense interest to India. Ultimately, by collaborating in these domains, both countries can further their agenda of embracing sustainable growth and moving toward a circular economy.²⁵

Canada has the world's third-largest reserves of Uranium and oil, and as it looks to shift its focus from its largest trading partner to partnering with the largest democracy, India can be an ideal partner.²⁶ India is currently the world's third largest energy consumer, with still growing demand; by 2040, the International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that the country will account for a quarter of the total global demand.²⁷ In anticipation of this rise, India is not only boosting its liquefied natural gas (LNG) and solar energy infrastructure but also looking for additional sources of strong, stable energy supply. Notably, Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy emphasises Ottawa's intent to deploy "enhanced Team Canada trade missions" to India, particularly in sectors of renewable energy and clean technology, to

25. Here, circular economy refers to a different way of doing business wherein the primary purpose is to eliminate waste (that is, the underutilisation of assets and resources). See, Dilip Chenoy, et al., *Accelerating India's Circular Economy Shift: A Half-Trillion USD Opportunity; Future-proofing growth in a resource-scarce world* (New Delhi: Accenture, FICCI, 2018), at https://www.ficcices.in/pdf/FICCI-Accenture_Circular%20Economy%20Report_OptVer.pdf; Government of Canada, "Circular Economy", December 23, 2022, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/conservation/sustainability/circular-economy.html>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

26. Vijay Sappani, "The Need for a Canada-India Energy Pact", Observer Research Foundation, August 18, 2021, at <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-need-for-a-canada-india-energy-pact/>. Accessed on February 6, 2023.

27. Nidhi Verma, "India will be Biggest Driver of Global Growth in Energy Demand Over Next Two Decades, IEA Forecasts", *The Globe and Mail*, February 9, 2021, at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/article-india-will-be-biggest-driver-of-global-growth-in-energy-demand-over/>. Accessed on February 6, 2023.

spur greater collaborations between the two countries. India's need for a reliable source and Canada's for a reliable consumer make an energy partnership between the two countries the logical next step.

Security Partnership

In the security and defence sector, cooperation between India and Canada has occurred through both bilateral and international fora. Key hallmarks of their security collaboration include mutual naval visits as well as robust collaboration on counterterrorism issues (such as mechanisms like the Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism). Both countries also hold regular National Security Advisor-level and Foreign Ministerial-level strategic dialogues to discuss their prevailing security situation and outlook. While these dialogues are an excellent example of meaningful cooperation, much needs to be done to if they are to achieve their goal of building a more peaceful and secure world.

For one, US withdrawal from Afghanistan has further created the need for India-Canada cooperation in the region. Previously, both countries expressed their intention to help achieve an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled national peace and reconciliation process".²⁸ Now, under a Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, both countries have an interest in supporting the interests of Afghan women and delivering direct and urgent assistance of the people via humanitarian efforts. Broadly, cooperation can come about in areas like cybersecurity, space security, as well as climate change (such as in the Arctic, a domain in which India is looking to play a larger role).

In the Indo-Pacific, too, Canada has been subject to Chinese aggression, such as with the incident between their Air Forces. For Canada, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Russo-Chinese defence arrangements have prompted a rethink of its assumptions and foreign policy beliefs. On the other hand, for India, the growing tensions with China and the emergence of a new, much more contested, geopolitical landscape have highlighted the importance of bolstering its national defence industry and diversifying its security arrangements. While India's experience is different, in

28. Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, n. 21.

that it faces the Chinese threat at its border, the need to strengthen security cooperation in view of the Chinese military threat in the region is evident.²⁹ Ottawa's new Indo-Pacific policy can bring the requisite ambition to upgrade the India-Canada defence relationship. Although Canada has been largely removed from the Indo-Pacific conversation until now, it has much to offer India and Delhi's goal to build a modern defence industry base. While Canada can be a reliable supplier of high-quality defence equipment and technology, India is a major defence market that Canada can benefit from. Since the release of its Indo-Pacific policy, the Canadian Current Scientific Corporation signed a CA\$5 million contract with the Indian Navy for optical systems.³⁰ Through greater working level security dialogues and military-to-military interaction, both countries can explore more such collaborations.

A defence trade partnership must be supplemented by joint exercises in the Indo-Pacific domain. In 2021, Canada joined the QUAD nations for an anti-submarine warfare exercise (Sea Dragon) in the Pacific Ocean. Before exploring the potential for Canadian participation in QUAD endeavours (including the Malabar drills) as a Plus partner, however, India and Canada must expand their respective national programmes of joint military exercises to conduct joint drills. This can begin with, for example, joint bilateral naval drills held alternately in the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. At the same time, exchanges of military officials under training programmes can be another area enabling greater synergy. Such developments can help both countries develop positive military relations, exchange best practices, and enhance their joint operational capabilities—helping both operationalise their respective Indo-Pacific policies.

29. Shuvaloy Majumdar and Sameer Patil, "Carving out Space for Indo-Canadian Security Cooperation", Observer Research Foundation, July 11, 2022, at <https://www.orfonline.org/research/carving-out-space-for-indo-canadian-security-cooperation/>. Accessed on February 6, 2023.

30. Anirudh Bhattacharya, "Canada: Defence Deal with India Almost Falls through due to Clearance Delays", *Hindustan Times*, January 27, 2023, at <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/canada-defence-deal-with-india-almost-falls-through-due-to-clearance-delays-101674812894124.html>. Accessed on February 6, 2023.

CONCLUSION: INDO-PACIFIC AS A CONDUIT FOR A DEEPER INDIA-CANADA PARTNERSHIP

Importantly, Canada's immediate neighbourhood is that of the North Pacific, and as such it has limited physical connections in the Indian Ocean. Here, India—as an anchor in the region—is of vital importance to Ottawa. While Canada has several close partners in the Pacific (such as Japan and the Republic of Korea), India's location and growth as a global middle power proponent for a rules-based and inclusive order adds to its importance as a regional leader. Pursuing new opportunities with New Delhi to achieve shared objectives in areas of common interest is hence a key feature of Canada's Indo-Pacific policy. Moving forward, however, what will be of critical importance is how far both countries can prioritise each other. Despite their interest and stake in the Indo-Pacific region and increasing convergence of the threat that China poses, both India and Canada have notably different calculus. In addition to their disparities based on geography, Delhi and Ottawa also have different partnerships and alliances, different priorities, and different modalities. The goal for both must now be to close the gap between their intention and actions. Amid the myriad of bilateral, minilateral and multilateral partnerships, the key challenge for Delhi and Ottawa will be to keep up the momentum of their cooperation; India-Canada ties cannot be relegated to a mode of mutual indifference, but must look toward slowly building and elevating collaboration to a comprehensive strategic partnership.