India–Canada Cooperation in Professional Military Education and Joint Military Exercises

Building the Human Infrastructure of a Strategic Partnership



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Following the landmark India–Canada Defence Dialogue announced by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Mark Carney on 2 March 2026, this report examines how the two countries can strengthen their defense partnership through Professional Military Education (PME) and joint exercises.

Despite complementary strengths — India's extensive experience in high-altitude operations, jungle warfare, and peacekeeping, paired with Canada's Arctic and cold-weather expertise — bilateral military ties remain underdeveloped. There is currently no named bilateral exercise series or standing officer exchange program. The report proposes a practical six-pillar PME framework and a four-tier exercise architecture that can begin immediately at the unclassified level. These initiatives aim to build officer-to-officer relationships, shared professional understanding, and long-term interoperability without waiting for a General Security of Information Agreement. This timely report offers actionable recommendations to convert the 2026 political reset into durable defense cooperation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 2 March 2026, Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Mark Carney announced the establishment of a formal India–Canada Defense Dialogue at the Joint Secretary / Assistant Deputy Minister level. The joint communiqué explicitly stated that the dialogue "will support maritime security cooperation and stability in the Indo-Pacific, as well as training, education, and joint exercises. The leaders agreed to negotiate a General Security of Information Agreement to facilitate greater defense cooperation."[1] This announcement constitutes the most significant recalibration of bilateral defense relations in at least two decades. It also creates an immediate policy problem: the institutional architecture required to give the Defense Dialogue operational content does not yet exist.

This report analyses the most underdeveloped dimension of that announcement, cooperation in Professional Military Education (PME) and joint military exercises. These are the human infrastructure of any defense relationship. Hardware agreements and institutional dialogues, however well-crafted, remain transactional unless they are accompanied by officer-to-officer relationships, a shared professional vocabulary, and the institutional familiarity that only training together can produce.

India and Canada share complementary strategic advantages that are unusually well-suited to bilateral PME and cooperation. India brings the world's richest high-altitude and jungle warfare experience, a UN peacekeeping footprint of over 290,000 personnel across more than fifty missions since 1950,[2] a tri-service staff college at Wellington that hosts officers from twenty-six partner nations annually,[3] and an operational tempo that no Western military can replicate. Canada brings world-class Arctic and cold-weather warfare expertise, the only NATO country offering a dedicated Arctic aircrew survival course, a graduate-level defense education architecture at the Canadian Forces College (CFC) and Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC), and an institutional body of peacekeeping doctrine whose influence on UN practice exceeds its current troop contribution by an order of magnitude.[4]

The central finding of this report is that, despite clear complementary capabilities, the bilateral defense relationship remains underdeveloped in its human dimension. As of early 2026, there is no named bilateral military exercise series between the two countries, no standing reciprocal officer exchange program, and no formal PME articulation agreement. Cooperation has largely been limited to multilateral forums and occasional incidental interactions. The March 2026 Defense Dialogue, therefore, provides a timely mandate to build the officer-to-officer relationships, shared professional vocabulary, and institutional familiarity that are essential for any substantive and durable defense partnership.[5] This report suggests a six-pillar PME framework and a four-tier exercise architecture as practical options that could be pursued under existing authorities, starting at the unclassified level.

FROM RUPTURE TO RESET: THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The 2023–25 diplomatic rupture unfolded in two major phases. In October 2023, following escalating tensions after Prime Minister Trudeau's allegations regarding the Nijjar killing,[6] India demanded that Canada reduce its diplomatic presence and threatened to revoke diplomatic immunity for many Canadian personnel. Canada responded by withdrawing approximately 41 diplomats and their families from India, temporarily closing three consulates and leaving only about 21 diplomats in the country. The crisis reached a new peak in October 2024, when Canada expelled six Indian diplomats, including the High Commissioner, citing them as persons of interest in the investigation into the Nijjar assassination and related violent activities. India immediately retaliated by expelling six Canadian diplomats from New Delhi, including the Acting High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner, giving them until 19 October 2024 to leave.[7] Defense contacts, already limited, were effectively suspended during this period.

Mark Carney's election as Prime Minister in early 2025 was driven substantially by a domestic political realignment around Canadian economic sovereignty in the face of United States trade pressure. His government's strategic calculation was explicit: Canada required alternative partnerships in trade, critical minerals, defense, and energy, and India was the most consequential non-American partner in the Indo-Pacific.

The political conditions for recovery were created not by resolution of the underlying dispute, the Khalistan-related tensions that structure India's security concern about Canadian politics remain unresolved, but by a convergence of external pressures on Canada and a change of government in Ottawa. Mark Carney's election as Prime Minister in early 2025 was driven substantially by a domestic political realignment around Canadian economic sovereignty in the face of United States trade pressure. His government's strategic calculation was explicit: Canada required alternative partnerships in trade, critical minerals, defense, and energy, and India was the most consequential non-American partner in the Indo-Pacific.

PMs Modi and Carney met bilaterally on the sidelines of the G7 summit at Kananaskis in June 2025.[8] As a result, a formal bilateral roadmap was launched by External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and Foreign Affairs Minister Anand in October 2025.[9] Parallelly, High Commissioners were reinstated by both sides and by the time PM Carney arrived in New Delhi on 2 March 2026 for a two-day state visit, the framework for a substantially upgraded relationship was already assembled. During his visit, eight agreements were signed; CEPA negotiations were formally launched with a

target of conclusion by the end of 2026; a CAD 2.6 billion long-term uranium supply agreement between Cameco and India's Department of Atomic Energy was announced; and a Defense Dialogue was established.[10]

The Significance of the Defense Dialogue Mandate

Two features of the 2026 Defense Dialogue announcement are particularly significant for this report. First, the Canadian readout explicitly named 'training, education, and joint exercises' as domains for cooperation, language that goes beyond the generic 'maritime security' or 'defense industries' framing that characterizes most such announcements.[11] Second, and critically, the two governments agreed to begin negotiating a General Security of Information Agreement (SOIA). Although this isn't a final agreement, it is the strongest indication that both sides intend to move the relationship to the classified cooperation tier, which includes hardware co-development and intelligence sharing. It also indicates that both sides are considering a planning horizon: exercises and PME exchanges initiated today under unclassified protocols can be designed to be upgraded once the SOIA is signed.

PME exchanges and military exercises occupy a distinctive position within this architecture. Neither officer exchanges at staff colleges nor bilateral tactical exercises require a concluded SOIA to initiate. They can begin immediately under existing bilateral authority and build institutional relationships that will deepen as the broader relationship matures. They are also the category of cooperation that is hardest to reverse: an officer who attends a partner nation's staff college carries those professional relationships throughout a thirty-year career, regardless of any political turbulence that emerges in the interim.



Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, meets Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House in New Delhi in March 2026. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press via AP)

COMPLEMENTARY CAPABILITIES: WHAT EACH PARTNER BRINGS

India's Capabilities

Operational Experience at Scale

India's armed forces number approximately 1.4 million active personnel, the world's second-largest army by headcount, and sustain simultaneous operational commitments across the Himalayan northern theatre, the maritime Indo-Pacific, and active counter-insurgency environments in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast.[12] The Canadian Armed Forces, with approximately 67,000 regular force personnel and a defense budget that, even after the announced CAD 81.8 billion five-year spending surge, will reach only roughly two percent of GDP, cannot replicate the density or variety of India's operational experience.[13] What India provides, uniquely among major partners, Canada might cultivate is a live laboratory for complex, multi-domain operations at a continental scale.

High-Altitude and Extreme-Terrain Warfare

India operates on the world's highest permanent battlefield. The Siachen Glacier deployment, sustained continuously since 1984 at altitudes exceeding 5,400 meters, is unmatched globally in duration, scale, and environmental severity.[14] The institutional knowledge embedded in the Indian Army over four decades of high-altitude operations, covering acclimatization protocols, logistics in oxygen-depleted environments, equipment maintenance at temperatures below minus forty degrees Celsius, avalanche rescue doctrine, and mountain artillery procedures, is not available from any other partner except in fragments. The High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) at Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, is the world's most operationally tested institution for this knowledge.



Indian Army Soldiers Training for the dominating heights of the Siachen glacier. The Indian armed forces have maintained a presence at the glacier for 40 years. (Kritajna Naik/The Week)

The relevance to Canada could be significant. The Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Center (CAAWC) at 8 Wing Trenton and the Canadian Forces School of Survival and Aeromedical Training (CFSSAT) at Resolute Bay provide world-class Arctic and cold-weather training. Still, their mandate is environmentally distinct from the Himalayan challenge.[15] Arctic operations require expertise in sea-ice navigation, cold-weather C4ISR, and the logistics of vast, flat, sub-zero terrain. On the other hand, Himalayan operations require distinct competencies: sustained high-altitude patrols, vertical logistical chains, management of altitude sickness in combat conditions, and mountain engineering. Neither replaces the other; each enriches the other.

This creates the precondition for a genuine mutual exchange in which India teaches Canada Himalayan mountain warfare techniques while Canada teaches India Arctic environmental operations and cold-weather survival. The Yudh Abhyas model, in which twenty-one editions of the India-US exercise have generated cross-training in mountain skills (India teaching) and Arctic C4ISR and cold logistics (US teaching), is the explicit precedent.[16]

UN Peacekeeping

India is the largest overall contributor to UN peacekeeping by cumulative historical measure, with over 290,000 personnel having served across more than fifty missions since 1950.[17] As of June 2025, India ranked fourth among troop-contributing countries, with 5,387 uniformed personnel deployed.[18] The Center for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi trains approximately 12,000 personnel annually from partner nations, providing pre-deployment preparation for complex missions across Africa and the Middle East.[19] This operational depth, mission-specific rules of engagement, protection of civilians doctrine tested in actual mandates, civil-military coordination in ethnically fractured environments, represents a curriculum asset that no Western military institution can replicate from training alone.

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Counter-Insurgency Doctrine in Sustained Domestic Contexts

India has sustained counter-insurgency operations continuously for decades across geographically and ethnically distinct theatres: Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur, and the Maoist-affected districts of central India. This institutional experience of operating under domestic

legal constraints, managing the civil-military interface in ethnically sensitive environments, and sustaining information operations over generational timescales is doctrinally distinct from the expeditionary COIN experience of Western militaries. Canadian officers who have studied operations in Afghanistan or the Sahel will find in India a fundamentally different analytical frame, one that is arguably more durable and transferable to the complex internal security environments the international community is likely to face in the coming decade.



Major Radhika Sen greets local women during a patrol, building trust. Major Sen was named the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year for her work empowering local communities to speak out about their humanitarian and security concerns. (Photo MONUSCO)

PME Architecture: The Defense Services Staff College and Beyond

The Defense Services Staff College (DSSC) at Wellington, Tamil Nadu, is a tri-service institution of considerable international standing. The annual forty-five-week Staff Course, the 80th edition, conducted in 2024–25, enrolled 38 international officers from 26 countries alongside approximately 440 Indian officers, and is one of the most operationally rich PME environments in Asia.[20] Canada has never placed an officer at DSSC Wellington under a formal bilateral PME agreement. In comparison, the United Kingdom's 2004 Defense Cooperation MoU with India provides for standing officer exchanges to the DSSC, and Australia similarly places officers there annually.[21]

India's senior-level PME institutions include the National Defense College (NDC) in New Delhi, which operates at the colonel-to-brigadier level with a strategic studies program broadly equivalent to Canada's National Security Program, and the College of Defense Management (CDM) in Secunderabad, which focuses on defense economics, acquisition management, and logistics science. The CDM has no precise Canadian counterpart and represents a potential avenue

for knowledge exchange on the organizational challenges of large-scale defense modernization, a challenge India and Canada share, if at very different scales.

Canada's Capabilities

Arctic and Cold-Weather Warfare Expertise

Canada's environmental warfare credentials are concentrated in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, and they are well proven. CAAWC at 8 Wing Trenton operates over twenty courses, including the five-week Arctic Operations Course.[22] CFSSAT at Resolute Bay, Nunavut, offers the Arctic Aircrew Survival Course, a program that operates in one of the world's harshest accessible environments and is widely recognized as the most rigorous cold-weather aircrew survival training available within the NATO alliance.[23] Canada conducts annual Arctic sovereignty exercises, including NOREX and NUNALIVUT above the tree line in Nunavut, as well as sub-Arctic training exercises in northern Quebec.[24] The biennial Exercise ARCTIC EDGE, conducted with US forces, addresses joint Arctic domain awareness and cold-weather interoperability at the operational level.

India's engagement with Arctic affairs has expanded substantially over the past decade. India has been an observer state in the Arctic Council since 2013. It operates the Himadri research station at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard. It has published two iterations of its Arctic Policy, with the most recent (2022) identifying Arctic governance, shipping routes, and energy resources as strategic interests.[25] Yet, India's military has no institutionalized Arctic operational capability. Canada could be seen as a useful partner that can help India close this gap, given both its geographic position and its depth of Arctic operational experience.



Sergeant Langille calls “FIRE” to Gunner Nicholson and Gunner Hughes of D Battery, 2nd Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, on Erikfjellet (Erik Mountain) as the 81mm mortar fires a round into the air during a live shoot in preparation for Exercise Cold Response on March 11, 2012. (Cpl Stuart MacNeil © 2012 DND-MDN Canada)

Graduate-Level Defense Education: CFC, RMCC, and the Dallaire Center

The Canadian Forces College (CFC) in Toronto is Canada's principal graduate-level defense education institution. Its flagship Joint Command and Staff Program (JCSP) is a ten-month residential course for officers at the major / lieutenant-colonel level, carrying an optional Master of Defense Studies degree from RMCC. The National Security Program (NSP) operates at the colonel-level, with a whole-of-government intake that includes senior public servants, and offers a Master of Public Administration through the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC).[26] The CFC already has infrastructure for international students from partner nations. The NSP, in particular at the senior-officer level, with genuine academic credentialing and a whole-of-government orientation, aligns closely with the trajectory of India's senior PME architecture, which increasingly emphasizes postgraduate qualifications.

Additionally, the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC) in Kingston is a degree-granting university with graduate programs in War Studies, Defense Management, and Engineering.[27] Its War Studies program has existing bilateral linkages with American, British, and Australian counterpart institutions. Adding research partnerships with India's NDC and DSSC would be administratively straightforward and intellectually productive.

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Further, the Dallaire Center of Excellence for Peace and Security, within the Canadian Defense Academy, represents perhaps Canada's most distinctive potential contribution to bilateral PME cooperation. Its research program on peacekeeping doctrine, protection of civilians, and prevention of atrocity crimes is internationally recognized. The Vancouver Principles on peacekeeping and the prevention of child soldier recruitment, championed by the Center, are embedded in multiple UN peacekeeping mission frameworks.[28] Canada's doctrinal influence on UN peacekeeping practice continues to far exceed its troop contribution, which, under successive governments, has declined to near-zero in terms of military units.[29]

The Cyber PME Dimension

Both militaries are investing heavily in cyber and information warfare as distinct operational domains. India's ongoing force theaterisation process has elevated cyber to domain-level priority. RMCC's Cyber Security Foundations Program, which is now moving toward full curricular integration, is developing a structured PME framework for cyber operations

with no direct equivalent in Indian institutional education.[30] The potential for joint curriculum development in this domain is constrained only by classification, a constraint that the unclassified 'cognitive warfare' and information environment framing can accommodate without an SOIA.

THE EXERCISE GAP: CURRENT STATE AND PROPOSED ARCHITECTURE

India currently maintains bilateral military exercises with the United States (Yudh Abhyas, now in its twenty-first edition), France (Exercise Shakti, Exercise Varuna, Exercise Garuda), the United Kingdom (Exercise Konkan, Exercise Indradhanush), Japan (Exercise Dharma Guardian, JIMEX), and Australia (Exercise Austra Hind, AUSINDEX), among approximately thirty bilateral exercise relationships in total.[31] Canada has no named bilateral military exercise with India in any service domain - army, navy, or air force, apart from the multilateral exercises in which the two forces participate. This reflects the extent to which the bilateral defense relationship has atrophied.

Further, the existing points of contact are thin. Both navies participate in the Indian Navy's MILAN multilateral exercise, which assembles over fifty countries, and Indian and Canadian special operations personnel have had incidental interaction at multinational exercises including Talisman Sabre 2025.[32] These multilateral interactions are useful but categorically different from the sustained, planned bilateral exercise programme that signals genuine partnership, generates interoperability, and builds the institutional muscle memory that allows two forces to operate together under pressure. Even a PASSEX, a passing exercise at sea, the most rudimentary form of bilateral naval interaction, has never been conducted under a named bilateral India–Canada rubric.

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Imagining a Four-Tier Exercise Architecture

The mandate in the 2 March 2026 joint statement, that Canada and India will 'identify opportunities for bilateral and multilateral naval activities to deepen interoperability and promote knowledge exchange',[33] provides the authorizing language for a structured exercise program. The following architecture builds progressively from low-risk, low-classification interactions toward operationally substantive exchanges.

Four-Tier Exercise Architecture

Proposed India–Canada joint military exercise framework, initiable under existing bilateral authorities at the unclassified level and designed to scale upon conclusion of a General Security of Information Agreement (SOIA).

TIER & EXERCISE NAME	FORMAT & CADENCE	DOMAIN FOCUS	STRATEGIC RATIONALE
1 NAVAL **Exercise SAHYOG-MAPLE**	ANNUAL Annual bilateral PASSEX progressing to 3-day CASEX; alternating Indian Ocean and Pacific coast hosting.	• Anti-submarine warfare • Surface warfare • Search and rescue • Maritime domain awareness	**Lowest classification entry point.** Aligns directly with the joint statement maritime mandate. Exploits Canada's Indo-Pacific patrol expansion under the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy.
2 ARMY **Exercise MAPLE-SHAKTI**	BIENNIAL Alternating host; company-level, 14 days. Year 1 India — mountain terrain. Year 2 Canada — Arctic terrain.	• Mountain warfare • Counter-insurgency • Arctic survival • Cold-weather operations	Mirrors the **India–France Shakti model.** Generates genuine reciprocal tactical cross-training. India teaches Himalayan techniques; Canada teaches Arctic C4ISR and cold logistics. NO SOIA REQUIRED
3 AIR **MAPLE FLAG Invitation**	BIENNIAL Observer initially, progressing to participant; 4 Wing Cold Lake, Alberta; biennial engagement cycle.	• Tactical air combat • Air defence • Multi-domain air operations	India hosts **Tarang Shakti** (11 nations). Maple Flag is NATO's premier air exercise. **Inaugural IAF participation** would be high-visibility and symbolically significant.
4 PKO / TTX **Exercise SHANTI-CANADA**	ANNUAL Annual table-top exercise; hosted alternately at CUNPK New Delhi and Dallaire Centre Halifax; peacekeeping mission planning focus.	• UN mission planning • Protection of civilians • Civil-military coordination	**No live forces; lowest cost pathway.** Leverages India's operational PKO depth (290,000+ personnel; 50+ missions since 1950) and Canada's Dallaire Centre doctrinal frameworks.

Table 1: Proposed India–Canada Military Exercise Architecture

The Naval Component

The maritime domain is the most politically mature arena for bilateral exercise cooperation. India's Indian Ocean reach and Canada's Indo-Pacific patrol commitments under the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy are structurally complementary. A PASSEX requires no bilateral security agreement and can be scheduled within the Defense Dialogue's first year. The logical progression would be to have a PASSEX in Year 1; combined anti-submarine and surface warfare drills (CASEX) in Years 2–3; and a full combined convoy escort and search-and-rescue exercise by Year 4–5. In response, India's participation in Canada's annual Exercise NANOOK, a sovereignty and maritime domain exercise in the Canadian Arctic, would later send a strong signal that India takes Arctic governance seriously as part of its strategic partnership with Canada.

The Army Component

For the armies, the Yudh Abhyas template could be an appropriate model. After twenty-one editions with the US, that exercise is institutionalized, generates genuine tactical learning, and serves as a basis for operational planning for both armies.[34] An India–Canada army exercise, following the same alternating-host model, could simultaneously achieve three objectives. One, it would expose Canadian soldiers to high-altitude and jungle warfare methods. Two, it would expose Indian soldiers to Arctic cold-weather survival, logistics, and environmental operational planning. Finally, it would generate the NCO- and officer-level personal relationships that constitute the bedrock of military interoperability. Additionally, the exchange of subject-matter experts, such as a Canadian winter warfare instructor to India's HAWS at Gulmarg, and an Indian high-altitude medical officer to CAAWC at Trenton, should precede the formal exercise and can be announced as an early, visible deliverable of the Defense Dialogue.

A SIX-PILLAR FRAMEWORK FOR PME COOPERATION

Generally, Professional Military Education cooperation operates at three functional levels: officer exchange (placing officers in partner institutions for full-program residency), faculty exchange (deploying instructors for defined curriculum contributions), and institutional partnership (joint research, curriculum co-development, and academic credentialling). In the India-Canada case, all three are achievable without a concluded SOIA. The six pillars, suggested below, constitute an integrated framework, though each can be initiated independently.

Pillar 1: Reciprocal Officer Exchanges - DSSC Wellington and CFC Toronto

The most potent, immediate PME action is a standing reciprocal officer exchange between DSSC Wellington and CFC Toronto. The DSSC already has the administrative infrastructure to manage Friendly Foreign Country officers, with a dedicated international student program that handles 38 officers from 26 nations in each annual cohort.[35] The CFC similarly has an established international student program within both JCSP and NSP. Both sides could start with one Canadian officer at the major / lieutenant-colonel level, who is posted annually to DSSC Wellington for the forty-five-

week tri-service Staff Course; one Indian officer of equivalent rank attends JCSP at CFC Toronto, eligible for a Master of Defense Studies degree from RMCC upon completion. At the senior level, a reciprocal placement of one colonel-equivalent from each side, an Indian officer at CFC's National Security Program, and a Canadian officer at NDC New Delhi, would constitute a strategically significant exchange of institutional perspectives.

To start, both sides will need to establish an administrative mechanism through an MoU between the Canadian Defense Academy (CDA) and India's Integrated Defense Staff Headquarters, specifying exchange quotas, salary and administrative authority arrangements, and academic credentialling. The UK–India Defense Cooperation MoU (2004) includes officer exchanges to DSSC as a standing provision; Canada could replicate this framework with minimal bureaucratic overhead.[36]

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Pillar 2: High-Altitude and Arctic Subject-Matter Expert Exchange

India and Canada both operate formal specialist schools whose expertise is directly needed by the other's officer corps. A bilateral standing Subject-Matter Expert (SME) exchange protocol could enable Indian Army instructors from HAWS Gulmarg to deliver a structured two-week capsule course at CAAWC Trenton covering mountain warfare fundamentals, extreme-cold logistics, and high-altitude medicine. On the Indian side, this content is fully developed, as Indian instructors delivered this curriculum directly to US Paratroopers during Yudh Abhyas in 2021, with after-action reports noting substantial knowledge transfer.[37] Reciprocally, Canadian instructors from CAAWC and CFSSAT could deliver a two-week Arctic operations module at an Indian formation headquarters, covering sub-zero survival, sea-ice navigation, cold-weather C4ISR, and Arctic logistics. CFSSAT's Arctic Aircrew Survival Course at Resolute Bay could additionally be offered to Indian Air Force officers as part of a broader aviation exchange.

This pillar would operate entirely at the individual-exchange level, requiring no bilateral exercise, and could be funded from existing defense cooperation budgets. It would be a low-input, high-output pillar as it would result in trained personnel on both sides who carry the other's expertise back into their institutional systems.

Pillar 3: UN Peacekeeping Curriculum Partnership

India's CUNPK and Canada's Dallaire Center represent two credible peacekeeping institutions, and their strengths are genuinely complementary as India provides operational depth and training scale, while Canada provides doctrinal, legal, and normative frameworks. A partnership between these two institutions could yield three specific outcomes. First, they could co-author a shared training module on 'Protection of Civilians in Complex Peacekeeping Environments', integrating Indian field experience with Dallaire Center normative frameworks and immediately deployable to both institutions' pre-deployment syllabi. Second, faculty secondment on a four-to-six-month rotation, for instance, a Canadian peacekeeping doctrine specialist at CUNPK New Delhi, and an Indian field-experienced PKO officer at Dallaire Center. Third, an annual bilateral peacekeeping symposium, hosted alternately at CUNPK and CFC / Dallaire Center, with practitioners, academics, and officials from both establishments. The joint policy output of this symposium could be submitted to the UN Department of Peace Operations and would constitute a tangible diplomatic asset for both governments.

Pillar 4: Cyber and Information Warfare PME Cooperation

India's force theaterisation has elevated cyber and information warfare to domain-level operational priority. On the Canadian side, RMCC's Cyber Security Foundations Program is developing a structured PME curriculum in this domain that has no direct equivalent in India's institutional education architecture.[38] This creates an opening for a joint curriculum development working group between RMCC's cyber faculty and India's Army Cyber Group / College of Defense Management, producing a shared open-source taxonomy of information environment threats for the Indo-Pacific context, a residential module on cognitive warfare and military decision-making trialled alternately at both institutions, and bilateral access to unclassified cyber wargaming infrastructure. To start with, all work in this pillar could operate at the unclassified level using open-source or purpose-sanitized scenarios. Therefore, here too, starting cooperation would not have to wait for the finalization of the SOIA, though the architecture is explicitly designed to upgrade once an SOIA is concluded.

Pillar 5: Academic Credentialling and Research Partnership

CFC already awards graduate degrees, a Master of Defense Studies through RMCC and a Master of Public Administration through the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC), to officers completing JCSP and NSP, respectively.[39] Extending these credentials to Indian officers placed under the Pillar 1 exchange would only require an academic recognition agreement between RMCC and an Indian university. Since the DSSC Wellington already offers MSc accreditation through Madras University to its officers, a comparable recognition arrangement between RMCC and a designated Indian institution would open graduate qualification pathways for officers on exchange.[40]

At the research level, an RMCC–NDC–IDSA joint research program on Indo-Pacific security and governance would complement the trade, energy, and critical minerals dimensions of the broader bilateral relationship. The Canadian government has, as a separate parallel track, already announced the UBC South Asia Hub and McGill–Jubilant Bhartia Center of Excellence in AI Education as outcomes of the March 2026 visit.[41] Adding a defense studies research dimension to this academic infrastructure would be a natural extension.

Pillar 6: Cross-Cultural Preparation and Strategic Literacy

Neither military has invested adequately in preparing its officers for extended postings in the other's institutional environment. While language isn't a barrier in this bilateral relationship, the current gap is in institutional and strategic understanding of each other. A Canadian officer arriving at DSSC Wellington without a working understanding of India's civil-military relations, the structure of the defense acquisition system, the internal logic of the theaterisation debate, or the historical context of India's non-alignment instinct will function at a significant disadvantage relative to British or Australian officers who have invested in this preparation.

To guard against this, the CDA could develop a structured pre-departure module for Canadian officers posted to Indian PME institutions, covering India's strategic culture, defense governance, and the domestic political context of its international partnerships. Conversely, Indian officers bound for CFC could receive preparation covering Canada's federal parliamentary civil-military structure, the whole-of-government operating model that suffuses CFC's curriculum, and the bilingual institutional culture of the CAF. India's approximately 1.8 million-strong diaspora in Canada constitutes a unique social asset that well-prepared exchange officers can draw upon.[42]

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

The political fragility of the 2026 reset is the biggest structural risk to the program proposed in this report. The 2023–25 rupture demonstrated that this relationship can deteriorate with extraordinary speed, and the conditions that produced the recovery are specific and contingent, yet to be durable. The Khalistan-related structural irritant, Indian sensitivity to what New Delhi characterizes as Canadian political accommodation of Sikh separatist activism on Canadian soil, compounded by the unresolved questions surrounding the Nijjar case, has not been dissolved by the March 2026 agreements; it has been set aside in circumstances of unusual diplomatic convergence that may not persist.[43] A single serious incident could suspend the Defense Dialogue before the first exercise is conducted. The most durable mitigation, therefore, would be institutional: formalizing the program at the working level, between the DSSC Commandant and the CFC Commandant and between the CUNPK Director and the Dallaire Center Director, rather than leaving each step contingent on ministerial endorsement. The UK–India

The Khalistan-related structural irritant, compounded by unresolved questions surrounding the Nijjar case, has been set aside amid an unusual diplomatic convergence that may not persist. A single serious incident could suspend the Defense Dialogue before the first exercise is conducted. The most durable mitigation, therefore, would be institutional: formalizing the program at the working level

defense relationship survived substantial bilateral turbulence in the early 2000s because institutional depth at the sub-ministerial level kept the program alive when the political temperature fell.

A second and more tractable constraint is the classification architecture. The agreed negotiation of a General Security of Information Agreement, confirmed on 2 March 2026, is a significant development, but it is a negotiation rather than a concluded agreement, and its timeline is uncertain.[44] Until it is signed, classified C2 architecture, system-specific technical specifications, and ITAR-controlled equipment cannot feature in joint exercise scenarios. This report has designed the entire initial program at the unclassified level for precisely this reason, with an explicit upgrade pathway contingent on SOIA conclusion. Both sides should consider SOIA negotiations as a standing agenda item with defined working-level milestones, drawing on the political momentum of the parallel CEPA process to maintain pressure toward conclusion.

On the Indian side, the most significant practical constraint is the nomination cycle. The DSSC Wellington runs a single 45-week annual cohort, with a 12- to 18-month planning horizon for Friendly Foreign Country nominations.[45] Inserting a Canadian officer into the 2027 cohort requires a nomination decision in the second half of 2026, ideally secured at the first Defense Dialogue meeting before the PME MoU is formally signed. Sequencing that treats the MoU signature as a precondition for nomination will delay the first exchange by a full year, compounding the perception of institutional inertia, which is the characteristic pathology of post-rupture defense relationships.

A second and more tractable constraint is the classification architecture. The agreed negotiation of a General Security of Information Agreement, confirmed on 2 March 2026, is a significant development, but it is a negotiation rather than a concluded agreement, and its timeline is uncertain. Until it is signed, classified C2 architecture, system-specific technical specifications, and ITAR-controlled equipment cannot feature in joint exercise scenarios.

The Canadian side faces a constraint of a different character. The CAF is managing a documented shortfall of approximately 16,500 personnel against its regular force establishment alongside the administrative burden of a CAD 81.8 billion, five-year spending program.[46] Sending officers abroad for ten-month PME programs competes with domestic operational requirements in a force under genuine institutional strain. The institutional case must be made early and explicitly: a DSSC Wellington assignment should carry career recognition equivalent to a fellowship at a British or Australian staff college, and the CDA mandate, which explicitly includes defense diplomacy through international PME engagement, provides the policy

authority to make that argument. Securing the endorsement of the CDA Commander and the DG Military Personnel before the Dialogue's first meeting will be essential to prevent the program from being quietly deprioritized at the force-generation level. The prescription for the residual working-level trust deficit created by two years of rupture is sequencing: beginning with the SME exchange and naval PASSEX, both modest in resource demand and low in classification requirement, generates early success that builds the confidence the larger program requires to proceed.

The six-pillar PME framework and four-tier exercise architecture proposed in this report represent a possible structured pathway for providing operational content to the Defense Dialogue announced on 2 March 2026. These ideas draw on proven models from India's partnerships with other countries and are designed to begin at the unclassified level, without waiting for a concluded General Security of Information Agreement. Nevertheless, successful implementation will depend on overcoming several practical hurdles, including the long nomination cycles at institutions such as the Defense Services Staff College, competing demands on Canadian Armed Forces personnel, and the residual trust deficit left by the 2023–25 rupture. Starting with modest, low-risk activities, such as a naval PASSEX, limited subject-matter expert exchanges, or observer invitations to existing exercises, can help build the confidence required for more ambitious cooperation. Ultimately, progress will depend on sustained working-level commitment during the early meetings of the Defense Dialogue, not just high-level announcements.

CONCLUSION

The Defense Dialogue announced on 2 March 2026 provides the mandate for what this report has proposed, but mandates without institutional follow-through are a recurring feature of the India-Canada relationship. The two countries declared a strategic partnership in 2015 without building the defense architecture to sustain it, and the rupture of 2023-24 erased even the modest gains that had been made. The question before both defense establishments is therefore not whether the political will exists at the summit level, it clearly does, but whether the working-level institutions on both sides will act with sufficient urgency and discipline to convert that political moment into a durable program before it passes.

The case for investing in PME and exercises as the first priority in the Defense Dialogue rests on the logic that runs throughout this entire report. Hardware cooperation, intelligence sharing, and defense-industrial co-development all require a classified information architecture that India and Canada are only now beginning to negotiate. PME exchanges and bilateral exercises require no such architecture. A Canadian officer can attend DSSC Wellington under existing bilateral authority. An Indian officer can complete the JCSP at CFC Toronto within the current international student program. A HAWS instructor can deliver a mountain warfare capsule at CAAWC Trenton because Indian instructors have delivered precisely that content to US Paratroopers for over two decades. None of these actions awaits the conclusion of an SOIA, new budget allocations, or fresh legislative authority. They await only the nomination decisions and institutional commitments that the first Defense Dialogue meeting in Q2 2026 is positioned to produce.

While the benefits of deeper cooperation are mutual, they are not perfectly symmetrical. Canada stands to gain significantly from India's extensive operational experience in high-altitude warfare, large-scale peacekeeping, and

sustained counter-insurgency environments. India, in turn, can benefit from Canada's specialized Arctic and cold-weather expertise, its graduate-level defense education architecture, and doctrinal contributions to UN peacekeeping. Both sides gain from expanded professional military education exchanges and joint training that build working-level familiarity beyond what ministerial-level meetings can achieve. Cooperation grounded in these complementary strengths is more likely to endure than partnerships based solely on declarations of shared values.

The sequenced approach outlined in this report aims to build institutional confidence through early, low-risk activities. Whether these specific ideas are adopted in full or in part, the central task remains converting the March 2026 political mandate into consistent, working-level engagement before the current window of opportunity narrows.

Hardware cooperation, intelligence sharing, and defense-industrial co-development all require a classified information architecture that India and Canada are only now beginning to negotiate. PME exchanges and bilateral exercises require no such architecture. They await only the nomination decisions and institutional commitments that the first Defense Dialogue meeting in Q2 2026 is positioned to produce.

ENDNOTES

1. "Prime Minister Carney Meets with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi." Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/readouts/2026/03/02/prime-minister-carney-meets-prime-minister-india-narendra-modi. The Canadian readout explicitly states the Defence Dialogue will support "training, education, and joint exercises" and that the leaders "agreed to negotiate a General Security of Information Agreement to facilitate greater defence cooperation." See also: "Joint Statement by Prime Minister Carney and Prime Minister Modi." Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2026/03/02/joint-statement-prime-minister-carney-and-prime-minister-modi. PM Modi's press remarks were reported by ANI, The Tribune (New Delhi), and IANS, 2 Mar. 2026.
2. "India's Legacy in UN Peacekeeping: Leadership, Commitment, and Sacrifice." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 29 May 2025, pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2109587. India has contributed over 290,000 peacekeepers to more than 50 UN missions since its first deployment in Korea in 1950. See also: "Indian Army United Nations Peacekeeping Missions." Indian Army, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, indianarmy.nic.in.
3. "80th Staff Course Commences at Defence Services Staff College in Wellington." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 3 June 2024, pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2022583. The 80th Staff Course (2024–25) enrolled 38 international officers from 26 countries alongside approximately 440 Indian service officers over 45 weeks. See also: "Welcome to Defence Services Staff College." Defence Services Staff College, dssc.gov.in.
4. "Canadian Forces School of Survival and Aeromedical Training (CFSSAT)." Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/army/services/school-survival-aeromedical-training.html. The Arctic Aircrew Survival Course at Resolute Bay, Nunavut, is conducted in an operationally authenticated extreme Arctic environment. Canada remains the only NATO country operating a dedicated Arctic aircrew survival course of this type.
5. Inference based on the absence of any named bilateral India–Canada military exercise in open-source databases (Indian Army bilateral exercise list: Indian Army, indianarmy.nic.in; Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence.html) and the absence of any India–Canada bilateral PME articulation agreement in published Canadian Defence Academy or Indian Integrated Defence Staff documentation as of March 2026.
6. Trudeau, Justin. Statement to the House of Commons, 18 Sept. 2023. Parliament of Canada, www.ourcommons.ca. Trudeau alleged "credible intelligence" linking Indian government agents to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, on 18 June 2023. India rejected the allegations as "preposterous." Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, statement, 19 Sept. 2023, mea.gov.in. See also: "2023–25 Canada–India Diplomatic Row." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, Mar. 2026, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada%E2%80%93India_diplomatic_row.
7. "Canada Expels Indian Diplomats." Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 14 Oct. 2024, www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2024/10/canada-expels-indian-diplomats.html. India's Ministry of External Affairs announced the reciprocal expulsion of six Canadian diplomats, including the acting High Commissioner, on the same date; see mea.gov.in. See also: "Timeline of Tensions: How India-Canada Relations Soured." Al Jazeera, 15 Oct. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/15/timeline-of-tensions-india-canada-relations-under-trudeau.

ENDNOTES

8. “Prime Minister Meets Prime Minister Mark Carney on the Sidelines of the G7 Summit.” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 17 June 2025, www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39689/Prime_Minister_meets_Prime_Minister_Mark_Carney_on_the_sidelines_of_the_G7_Summit. First meeting between the two Prime Ministers. India and Canada subsequently exchanged new high commissioners; India appointed Dinesh K. Patnaik as its new High Commissioner to Canada (August 2025). See also: “Prime Minister Carney Concludes 2025 G7 Leaders’ Summit.” Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 17 June 2025, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2025/06/17/prime-minister-carney-concludes-2025-g7-summit.
9. "Canada-India Joint Statement: Renewing Momentum towards a Stronger Partnership." Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 13 Oct. 2025, www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2025/10/canada-india-joint-statement-renewing-momentum-towards-a-stronger-partnership.html.
10. “Factsheet on Deliverables Announced during the Visit of Prime Minister Mark Carney to India.” Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2026/03/02/factsheet-deliverables-announced-during-visit-prime-minister-mark. Deliverables include: CEPA Terms of Reference; Cameco–DAE uranium supply agreement (approx. CAD 2.6 billion / USD 1.9 billion); Strategic Energy Partnership; Defence Dialogue Letter of Intent; MoUs on Critical Minerals, Renewable Energy, and Cultural Cooperation. See also: “Cameco Signs Long-Term Uranium Supply Agreement with India.” Cameco Corporation, 2 Mar. 2026, www.cameco.com/media/news/cameco-signs-long-term-uranium-supply-agreement-with-india.
11. "Prime Minister Carney Meets with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi." Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/readouts/2026/03/02/prime-minister-carney-meets-prime-minister-india-narendra-modi. The Canadian statement on the Defence Dialogue explicitly references "training, education, and joint exercises" and "bilateral and multilateral naval activities to deepen interoperability and promote knowledge exchange."
12. The Military Balance 2025. International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2025, www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance/2025. India’s Army, with an active-duty headcount of approximately 1.4 million, is the world’s second-largest by active strength. See also: “2026 India Military Strength.” Global Firepower, 2026, www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=india.
13. Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy. Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, 2017, www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2017/06/strong_secure_engagedcanadasdefencepolicy.html. "Prime Minister Carney Launches Canada's First Defence Industrial Strategy to Strengthen Security, Create Prosperity, and Reinforce Strategic Autonomy." Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 17 Feb. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/02/17/prime-minister-carney-launches-canadas-first-defence-industrial. CAF regular force personnel: approximately 67,000 as of December 2024 (DND Annual Report 2023–24). The CAD 81.8 billion, five-year defence investment was announced in Budget 2025 alongside the Defence Industrial Strategy.
14. "Operation Meghdoot." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 2025, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Meghdoot. The Siachen Glacier deployment (Operation Meghdoot) has been sustained since 13 April 1984 at altitudes ranging from approximately 3,000 to over 6,700 metres above sea level, making it the highest sustained military deployment in the world. See also: "High Altitude Warfare School." Indian Army, indianarmy.nic.in. Singh, V. K. Leadership in the Indian Army. Sage, 2005.

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15. “Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre (CAAWC).” Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/army/services/army-advanced-warfare-centre.html. CAAWC, based at 8 Wing Trenton, is a functional centre of excellence for the Canadian Army’s environmental domains, offering the five-week Arctic Operations Course, Cold Weather Survival, Airborne, Pathfinder, and Aerial Delivery courses. “Canadian Forces School of Survival and Aeromedical Training (CFSSAT).” Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/army/services/school-survival-aeromedical-training.html. Resolute Bay, Nunavut: population approximately 200; average January temperature –38°C.
16. “Conclusion of 21st Edition of Exercise Yudh Abhyas.” Embassy of India, Washington, D.C., 14 Sept. 2025, indianembassyusa.gov.in/News?id=250079. See also: “Indian Army Contingent Departs for India–USA Joint Military Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2025.” Press Information Bureau, Government of India, pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2162738. Exercise held at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, 1–14 September 2025, with approximately 450 Indian Army personnel alongside the 11th Airborne Division. The exercise has alternated between India and the United States since 2004.
17. "India's Legacy in UN Peacekeeping: Leadership, Commitment, and Sacrifice." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 29 May 2025, pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2109587. Cumulative total of 290,000+ personnel across 50+ missions, since the 60th Field Ambulance was deployed to Korea in November 1950.
18. "Troop and Police Contributors." United Nations Peacekeeping, June 2025, peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors. As of June 2025, India ranked fourth among troop-contributing countries with 5,387 total uniformed personnel. See also: "Uniformed Personnel Contributing Countries by Ranking." United Nations Peacekeeping, Jan. 2025, peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/02_country_ranking_82_january_2025.pdf.
19. "Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK)." Peace Operations Training Institute, www.peaceopstraining.org/programs/ntcelp/south-asia/cunpk/. See also: "India's Legacy in UN Peacekeeping: Leadership, Commitment, and Sacrifice." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 29 May 2025, pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2109587. CUNPK trains approximately 12,000 personnel annually from partner nations in pre-deployment preparation courses covering rules of engagement, protection of civilians, civil-military coordination, gender in peacekeeping, and UN logistics procedures.
20. "80th Staff Course Commences at Defence Services Staff College in Wellington." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 3 June 2024, pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2022583. The 80th Staff Course enrolled 38 international officers from 26 countries. Total course strength approximately 480 officers over 45 weeks.
21. UK–India Defence and Security Cooperation MoU, 2004 (as subsequently updated). For current bilateral defence education exchange details, see: “Defence Cooperation.” British High Commission, New Delhi, www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-new-delhi. Australia–India bilateral PME exchanges: Department of Defence, Australia, www.defence.gov.au. No comparable Canada–India formal bilateral PME arrangement exists as of March 2026; confirmed through open-source review of Indian Ministry of Defence bilateral cooperation frameworks and: Canadian Defence Academy, www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/education-training/professional-development/canadian-defence-academy.html.

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22. "Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre (CAAWC)." Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/army/services/army-advanced-warfare-centre.html. The Arctic Operations Course is a 5-week residential programme. CAAWC also delivers courses in Cold Weather Survival, Helicopter Insertion and Extraction, Pathfinder, and Canadian Parachutist qualifications.
23. "Canadian Forces School of Survival and Aeromedical Training (CFSSAT)." Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/army/services/school-survival-aeromedical-training.html. The Arctic Aircrew Survival Course at Resolute Bay, Nunavut (74.7°N), is conducted in extreme polar conditions. Resolute Bay is one of the northernmost permanently inhabited communities in the world.
24. "Exercise NUNALIVUT 2025." Canadian Army, Government of Canada, Mar. 2025, www.canada.ca/en/army.html. Annual Canadian Arctic sovereignty exercises (NOREX, NUNALIVUT) conducted above the tree line. Sub-Arctic training exercise at Chisasibi, Quebec: "CAF Conducts Arctic Training Exercise in Northern Quebec." Global News, 6 Mar. 2025, globalnews.ca. See also: "Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre (CAAWC)." Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/army/services/army-advanced-warfare-centre.html.
25. India and the Arctic: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development. Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, 2022, www.moes.gov.in. See also: "Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh Releases India's Arctic Policy." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 17 Mar. 2022, pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1806993. India has been an Arctic Council observer since 2013. The Himadri research station at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard (Norway), has operated continuously since 2008. The 2022 Arctic Policy explicitly identifies Arctic shipping routes, energy resources, and governance as Indian strategic interests.
26. "Programmes at the Canadian Forces College." Canadian Forces College, Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/248-eng.html. JCSP 52: August 2025–June 2026; NSP 18: August 2025–June 2026. The Master of Defence Studies (MDS) is awarded through the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC) upon completion of the optional MDS component of JCSP. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) is awarded through RMCC upon completion of NSP requirements.
27. "Graduate Studies." Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, www.rmc-cmr.ca/en/graduate-studies. Graduate programmes include: Master of Arts in War Studies; Master of Arts in Defence Management and Policy; Master of Applied Science (Engineering). RMCC is a bilingual, degree-granting federal institution.
28. "Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security." Department of National Defence, Canadian Defence Academy, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/education-training/professional-development/canadian-defence-academy/dallaire-centre-of-excellence-ps.html. "The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers." Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng. The Vancouver Principles (2017) were initially endorsed by 55 founding states and have since grown to 86 UN member state endorsers (current official count per vancouverprinciples.com/endorsers).

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29. Dorn, A. Walter. “Tracking the Promises: Canada’s Current Contributions to UN Peacekeeping.” walterdorn.net, updated Oct. 2025, www.walterdorn.net/256. See also: Canadians for UN Peacekeeping, peacekeepingcanada.com. Canada contributed to all UN peacekeeping operations during the Cold War (approximately 1948–1989), averaging approximately 1,000 personnel per month. Current contribution: primarily staff officers; no formed military units. Dorn notes Canada’s doctrinal influence continues to substantially exceed its troop contribution.
30. “Cyber Security Foundations Programme (CSFP).” Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, www.rmc-cmr.ca. Pilot programme: September 2024–Spring 2025. See also: “Annual Report 2024.” Ministry of Defence, Government of India, mod.gov.in. Cyber operations elevated to domain-level priority under the theatrisation framework; Army Cyber Group established as a separate command element.
31. “Annual Report 2024.” Ministry of Defence, Government of India, mod.gov.in. Indian Army bilateral exercise relationships as of 2025: India–US: Yudh Abhyas (21 editions); India–France: Shakti, Varuna, Garuda; India–UK: Konkan (naval), Indradhanush (air); India–Japan: Dharma Guardian, JIMEX; India–Australia: Austra Hind, AUSINDEX; India–Russia: Indra; India–Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives (various). Approximately 30 bilateral exercise relationships in total.
32. "MILAN Multilateral Naval Exercise." Indian Navy, indiannavy.nic.in. Over 50 countries attend in observer or participant capacity; Canada participates. See also: "Canada-India Relations Stabilize with PM Carney's Visit." The Diplomat, Mar. 2026, thediplomat.com/2026/03/canada-india-relations-stabilize-with-pm-carneys-visit. Talisman Saber 2025: India and Canada both participated; incidental special operations interaction at the margins of the exercise.
33. "Prime Minister Carney Meets with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi." Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/readouts/2026/03/02/prime-minister-carney-meets-prime-minister-india-narendra-modi.
34. "Conclusion of 21st Edition of Exercise Yudh Abhyas." Embassy of India, Washington, D.C., 14 Sept. 2025, indianembassyusa.gov.in/News?id=250079. The exercise is described by US Army Pacific as generating genuine tactical learning and has created personal networks at the formation-commander level between Indian and US Army officers over 21 editions.
35. "80th Staff Course Commences at Defence Services Staff College in Wellington." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 3 June 2024, pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2022583. The international student programme for Friendly Foreign Country officers includes dedicated administrative support, orientation training, and full integration into the 45-week tri-service Staff Course curriculum.
36. UK–India Defence and Security Cooperation MoU, 2004 (as subsequently updated). See also: “Defence Cooperation.” British High Commission, New Delhi, www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-new-delhi. The MoU framework governs officer exchanges with DSSC Wellington, the Royal College of Defence Studies, and the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC) on a standing bilateral basis.
37. "Conclusion of 21st Edition of Exercise Yudh Abhyas." Embassy of India, Washington, D.C., 14 Sept. 2025, indianembassyusa.gov.in/News?id=250079. See also exercise reports via U.S. Army Pacific Command, army.mil. During US-hosted editions, Indian instructors from HAWS delivered avalanche survival training, high-altitude illness prevention protocols, and extreme-cold equipment maintenance.

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38. "Cyber Security Foundations Programme (CSFP)." Royal Military College of Canada, www.rmc-cmr.ca. See also: "Annual Report 2024." Ministry of Defence, Government of India, mod.gov.in. Cyber operations elevated to domain-level priority under the theatrisation framework; Army Cyber Group established as a separate command element.
39. “Programmes at the Canadian Forces College.” Canadian Forces College, Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/248-eng.html. The Master of Defence Studies is awarded through RMCC upon completion of the optional MDS component of JCSP. The Master of Public Administration is awarded through the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC) upon completion of NSP requirements. See also: “Master of Public Administration.” Royal Military College of Canada, www.rmc-cmr.ca/en/registrars-office/master-public-administration.
40. "80th Staff Course Commences at Defence Services Staff College in Wellington." Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 3 June 2024, pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2022583. DSSC Wellington MSc accreditation is provided through Madras University under a longstanding academic affiliation. An analogous arrangement between RMCC and a designated Indian institution (NDC, DSSC, or a civilian university) would create comparable graduate qualification pathways for exchange officers.
41. “Factsheet on Deliverables Announced during the Visit of Prime Minister Mark Carney to India.” Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2026/03/02/factsheet-deliverables-announced-during-visit-prime-minister-mark. The factsheet records: UBC South Asia Hub announced to advance academic, research, and innovation partnerships; McGill–Jubilant Bhartia Centre of Excellence in AI Education signed.
42. Census in Brief: Immigrant Population in Canada. Statistics Canada, 26 Oct. 2022, www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021009/98-200-X2021009-eng.cfm. Indian-origin population in Canada: approximately 1.86 million, representing approximately 4.7% of the total population. Concentrated in the Greater Toronto Area, Metro Vancouver, and the Calgary–Edmonton corridor.
43. “2023–25 Canada–India Diplomatic Row.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, Mar. 2026, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada%E2%80%93India_diplomatic_row. The underlying structural tension over Khalistan-related political activity in Canada and India’s characterization of Canadian political accommodations as enabling extremism predates the Nijjar killing. The 2026 diplomatic reset does not resolve this tension.
44. “General Security of Information Agreement (GSOIA).” Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, www.international.gc.ca. A bilateral agreement enabling the exchange of classified national security information and governing its protection. Canada has SOIAs with all Five Eyes partners and NATO allies. The absence of a Canada–India SOIA has precluded classified intelligence sharing and co-development of sensitive platforms. Negotiation of a General SOIA was agreed in principle on 2 March 2026. See also: “Factsheet on Deliverables Announced during the Visit of Prime Minister Mark Carney to India.” Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 2 Mar. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2026/03/02/factsheet-deliverables-announced-during-visit-prime-minister-mark.
45. “Welcome to Defence Services Staff College.” Defence Services Staff College, dssc.gov.in. DSSC Wellington FFC nomination cycle typically requires 12–18 months advance notice. The 82nd Staff Course is scheduled to commence June 2027; nominations for FFC places are therefore required by approximately Q3–Q4 2026.

ENDNOTES

46. "Prime Minister Carney Launches Canada's First Defence Industrial Strategy." Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, 17 Feb. 2026, www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/02/17/prime-minister-carney-launches-canadas-first-defence-industrial. See also: "Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy." Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/industrial-strategy/security-sovereignty-prosperity.html. Total committed expenditure: CAD 81.8 billion over five years. CAF recruiting shortfall: approximately 16,500 personnel against Regular Force establishment as of late 2024 (DND Annual Report 2023–24).

Cover Image

EX COLD RESPONSE

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion of The Royal Canadian Regiment, Bravo Company, move while conducting a company attack on an enemy position in the mountains near Gratangsbotn, Norway during Exercise Cold Response.

Photo : Cpl Stuart MacNeil

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