

Canada Defence and Security Report Q2 2014

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Abstracts

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The Canadian government has been one of the most outspoken G-7 members in its condemnation with regards Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Indeed, as well as being one of the first countries to impose financial sanctions and travel bans on various Russian officials, Ottawa, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has also recalled its ambassador to Moscow, suspended all military cooperation with Russia and provided US\$196mn in financial aid to Ukraine. Prime Minister Harper was also the first G-7 leader to travel to Kiev and directly lend his support to Ukraine's interim government. Canada's hard-line response to Russia's actions in the Crimea must be seen through the prism of Ottawa's broader defence and security concerns and objectives.

The current crisis in the Crimea also has implications for NATO, and more specifically Canada's position within it. In Q114 Canada brought to an end its 12 year mission in Afghanistan, with its last 100 troops returning home. Over the 12 years of its deployment Canada lost 158 troops and one diplomat, the highest per capita fatalities of all NATO partners involved in Afghanistan. Canada's Afghanistan experience has somewhat soured Ottawa's view of NATO, with senior officials, reportedly including the prime minister, believing that too few NATO countries are bearing the burden and cost of security for too many. In short Ottawa views its investment in NATO as providing little in the way of returns. Given Canada's very principle-based foreign policy as well as significant concerns over an increasingly aggressive and expansionist Russia, it will be interesting to see how Canada's position within the NATO alliance evolves.

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