



# DEFENCE

**FEW GOVERNMENTS ARE** credited with adequately funding Canada's men and women in uniform, and fewer still are able to equip the troops without blowing timelines or budgets. Liberals and Tories have both cut and boosted spending as dictated by economic hard times. The former executed deep cuts in the 1990s, and the latter chopped military spending as the government wrestled with austerity. Canada's fleet of Sea King helicopters, dismissed as "aging" for three decades, represent a long-term inability to buy new equipment free of hassle.

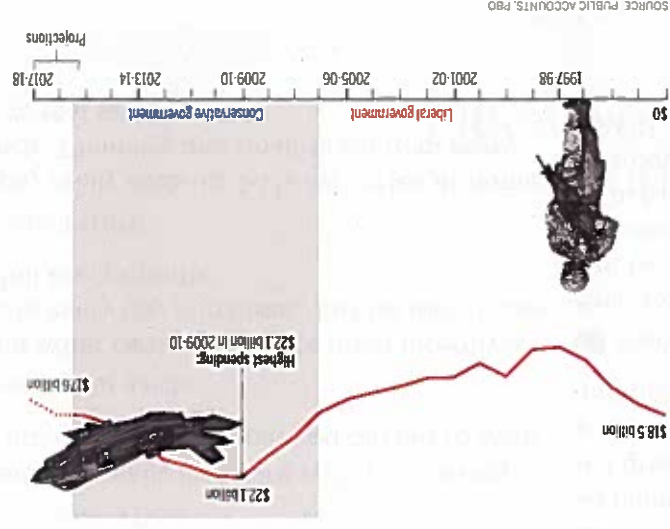
## DEFENCE POLICY AS A LEADERSHIP LENS

Like other foreign policy files, defence issues can often help a serving prime minister. Something about acting on the world stage—especially when troops are involved—ends to make a PM stand apart from his opposition rivals. Justin Trudeau undermined his own bid to be taken seriously on military matters when, just after his first major speech on the Islamic State threat last fall, he made a joke many considered juvenile. "Why aren't we talking more about the kind of humanitarian aid that Canada can and must be engaged in," Trudeau said, "rather than, you know, trying to whip out our CF-18s and show them how big they are?"

## WHERE THE PARTIES STAND

**CONSERVATIVE** While they claim defence spending has increased under Stephen Harper, that's only true until the figures are adjusted for inflation. Budget 2015 earmarked another \$11.8 billion in spending over 10 years, but that money doesn't begin flowing until 2017. Procurement headaches remain a Tory vulnerability. For instance, Conservative ministers recently announced that a U.S. company

Defence spending in Canada  
Spending in \$ billions, 2014



## BY THE NUMBERS

**LIBERAL** Under Trudeau, Liberals have piloted the Tories' record on procurement. Perhaps that support for more and better military hardware is meant, in part, to counterbalance Liberal opposition to both Canada's initial military contribution to the fight against Islamic State and the mission's one-year extension. "Under Mr. Harper, procurement has become such an disaster that vital equipment is failing to reach the Forces," Liberal defence critic Joyce Murray has said.

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**GREEN** They bemoan a recent drop in defence expenditures and the Tory record on military procurement. The Greens say Parliament should have "more substantial oversight" of defence spending. The party opposes the fight against Islamic State, and supports a "realignment" of spending to support disaster assistance and United Nations-sanctioned peacekeeping missions.

## EXPERT OPINION

"Canadians should be aware that there are major problems in how Canada replaces ships for its Navy. Today, there are critical capability gaps. Our Navy has no ships for resupply, even though a replacement has been in the works for more than a decade. Nor does it have any seaworthy destroyers. Promised ships to patrol the Arctic are years behind schedule. Canada's frigates are excellent, but other parts of the Navy are at rust-out. It is far from clear if the much-touted shipbuilding strategy, launched in 2011, will produce the ships Canada needs for its security and defence."

—Elinor Sloan, Carleton University professor

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