



**OTTAWA CONFERENCE
ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE**
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MARCH 4-5, 2026

GENERAL (RET'D) TOM LAWSON

Chair of the Board

[CDA Institute](#)

Tom Lawson grew up in Etobicoke, Ontario, and attended the Royal Military College of Canada to attain a degree in Electrical Engineering, later teaching engineering at RMC. Following pilot training he was posted to various bases in Canada and Europe where he flew CF-104 Starfighters, CF-18 Hornets, Challengers and Airbus aircraft. Lawson has commanded at several levels during his career; as CO of 412 Squadron, as Wing Commander of 8 Wing in Trenton, and as Commandant of RMC.

As a General officer, Lawson was appointed Deputy Commander of the RCAF, Deputy Commander of NORAD, and ultimately

Canada's 18th Chief of the Defence Staff. As CDS, Lawson oversaw the completion of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, the deployment of Canadian troops to Eastern Europe as part of NATO's response following Russian aggression in Crimea, and Canada's contribution to the coalition effort against the Islamic State.

General Lawson now provides strategic advice to Canadian and American defence and security firms and enjoys coming up with new projects for the family cottage in Muskoka.

