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Energy Security in the Indo-Pacific: Strategic Implications for Canada

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Energy Transition as a Security Issue

Over the past decade, climate change and the global energy transition have begun to reshape the strategic landscape of the Indo-Pacific. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires rapid decarbonization across energy, transportation, and industrial systems.[2] In response, governments around the world have accelerated efforts to expand renewable energy, electrify transportation, and build new industrial capabilities in clean technologies. What was once treated primarily as an environmental policy agenda has increasingly become a matter of economic strategy and national security.

Nowhere is this transformation more visible than in the Indo-Pacific. The region accounts for a rapidly growing share of global energy demand while simultaneously serving as a central hub of clean-energy manufacturing and technological innovation. Major economies across Northeast Asia, particularly China, Japan, and South Korea, have

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[2] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*. Geneva: IPCC, 2022.

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launched ambitious initiatives to expand renewable energy deployment, strengthen domestic clean-technology industries, and secure access to critical minerals required for the energy transition. As a result, climate policy, industrial policy, and energy security have become increasingly intertwined.[3] Energy governance now intersects with questions of technological leadership, supply-chain resilience, and long-term strategic autonomy.

This evolving landscape reflects a broader shift in how energy security is understood. Traditional conceptions of energy security focused primarily on securing reliable access to fossil fcuels at affordable prices.[4] In that framework, the central challenge was protecting supply stability through diversification of imports, strategic petroleum reserves, and the safeguarding of shipping lanes—a perspective that had long been held in the Indo-Pacific. The global transition toward low-carbon energy systems has significantly expanded this agenda. Energy security now involves securing access not only to energy resources but also to the technologies, industrial capabilities, and mineral supply chains necessary to sustain a decarbonized economy. These challenges fall squarely within the framework of non-traditional security (NTS), which recognizes that threats to stability increasingly arise from transnational economic, environmental, and technological pressures rather than from conventional military conflict alone.[5]

Recent geopolitical shocks have further reinforced the security dimensions of energy transition governance. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in globally integrated supply chains optimized for efficiency rather than resilience, prompting governments to reconsider dependence on external suppliers for critical goods and technologies (Colgan et al. 2021). Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the current 2026 Middle East conflict have underscored the geopolitical risks associated with continued dependence on imported fossil fuels. The Indo-Pacific is especially exposed: in 2025, about one-quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade transited the Strait of Hormuz; around 80 percent of those flows were destined for Asia (International Energy Agency

[3] Yves Tiberghien and Sun Ryung Park, "Green Industrial Policy Race in Asia Quickens despite US Retreat," *East Asia Forum Quarterly* 17, 3 (2025).
[4] Yergin, Daniel. *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power*. New York: Free Press, 1991.
[5] Mely Caballero-Anthony, ed., *An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies: A Transnational Approach* (London: SAGE Publications, 2016).

2026). At the same time, intensifying strategic competition between the United States and China has increasingly extended into clean-energy technologies and supply chains, transforming sectors such as batteries, solar manufacturing, and critical minerals into arenas of geopolitical competition. In this sense, these geopolitical shocks do not weaken the case for decarbonization; they rather strengthen it by showing that renewable deployment and supply-chain diversification are increasingly treated not only as climate policy, but also as instruments of resilience.

Understanding how governments respond to these pressures requires a framework that captures the strategic dimensions of energy transition governance. This article draws on the concept of *green energy statecraft*, developed by Thurbon et al. (2024), which describes how governments strategically guide the green energy transition to advance a broader national security–enhancing agenda. The framework highlights several dimensions of transition governance, including the strategic mindset through which policymakers frame the energy transition as a national priority, domestic industrial strategies designed to build competitive capabilities in emerging clean technologies, and international economic strategies aimed at securing supply chains and markets. These elements illustrate how energy transition policy can function as a form of strategic statecraft rather than merely an environmental policy instrument.

This article examines how Northeast Asian governments increasingly govern the energy transition as a strategic project. China is set as a structural driver of the transition given its large-scale industrial policy to secure sheer dominance in the global renewable manufacturing and battery supply chains. Japan and South Korea, while operating under different institutional constraints, have likewise expanded state-led initiatives to strengthen clean-energy technologies and reduce strategic vulnerabilities associated with imported fossil fuels. These developments illustrate how energy transition governance is increasingly embedded within broader strategies of economic security and technological competition.

The article then considers the implications of these developments for Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy. Canada's 2022 strategy emphasizes deeper engagement with the region across trade, security, and sustainability. However, it provides relatively limited guidance on how energy transition governance intersects with evolving patterns of regional competition and cooperation. By analyzing the strategic approaches adopted in

Northeast Asia, this article argues that Canada should integrate energy transition governance more explicitly into its Indo-Pacific engagement. In particular, Canada's comparative advantages in critical minerals, clean energy technologies, and low-carbon resources position it to play a meaningful role in emerging regional supply chains and energy partnerships.

The Energy Transition Landscape in Northeast Asia

This section illustrates how Northeast Asia has become a central arena of the global energy transition. The region combines several structural characteristics that make it pivotal to the transformation of global energy systems: rapidly growing energy demand, expanding renewable deployment, and intense competition over emerging clean-energy technologies.

China as Structural Context

China, in particular, occupies a distinctive position in the Indo-Pacific energy transition. Rather than functioning as one comparable national case among others, China increasingly constitutes the structural context within which regional energy transition strategies unfold. Its industrial scale, manufacturing dominance, and control over critical supply chains have reshaped the strategic environment confronting other states in the region.

Over the past decade, China has mobilized extensive state resources to accelerate the deployment and manufacturing of clean-energy technologies. According to IRENA, China accounted for almost 64 percent of global added renewable power capacity in 2024, including the dominant contributor to global wind expansion as well.[6] In the global electric vehicle (EV) supply chain, China's dominance in battery manufacturing and vehicle production is particularly visible. Chinese firms control around three-quarters of global EV battery production capacity**,** while companies such as CATL and BYD together accounted for more than 55 percent of global EV battery installations in 2025.[7] Large-scale public investment (e.g., Made in China 2025), a series of coordinated industrial policies

[6] IRENA, *Policies for the Electrification of Road Transport* (Abu Dhabi: International Renewable Energy Agency, 2025).
[7] IEA, *Global EV Outlook* (Paris: International Energy Agency, 2025).

with long- and short-term targets, and centralized governance have all enabled China to build commanding positions across key sectors of the green economy. This is the clearest example of green energy statecraft operating at scale.

Equally important is China's position within global critical mineral supply chains.[8] While extraction of minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements occurs across multiple regions, a significant share of global processing capacity is concentrated in China. This concentration has strategic implications for the energy transition because many clean-energy technologies—from batteries to wind turbines—depend on refined materials that pass through Chinese processing facilities. As a result, concerns about supply-chain resilience and technological dependency have become increasingly prominent among advanced industrial economies.

China's early industrial push has also helped catalyze a broader global policy response. Beijing's large-scale green industrial policy initiatives since the mid-2010s effectively triggered a wider *green technology race*, prompting other economies—even in neoliberal contexts—to adopt more proactive industrial strategies in response.[9] Major policy responses in the United States and Europe increasingly frame the energy transition through the lens of supply-chain vulnerability, particularly in relation to dependence on China's green manufacturing capacity. In this sense, China's actions did not simply accelerate domestic decarbonization; they reshaped global expectations about the role of the state in guiding the energy transition.

The result is an increasingly securitized landscape in which technological leadership in clean-energy industries is linked to economic competitiveness and national security. Governments across the Indo-Pacific now treat renewable energy technologies, batteries, and critical minerals not only as components of climate policy but also as strategic industries. Within this environment, Japan and South Korea have intensified their own transition strategies in order to maintain industrial competitiveness while reducing exposure to supply-chain vulnerabilities.

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[8] Kristin Vekasi, "The Geoeconomics of Critical Rare Earth Minerals," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 22, 2 (2021): pp. 271–79.

[9] Park and Tiberghien, "The Indo Pacific's Green Industrial Policy Race."

Japan and South Korea: Strategic Adaptation

This study treats Japan and South Korea as cases of strategic adaptation under intensifying great-power competition in global energy security and an increasingly China-dominant green supply chain. Both countries illustrate forms of state activism under structural constraints, consistent with the three pillars of green energy statecraft suggested in the earlier section.

Japan's energy transition has been shaped by the interaction of post-Fukushima energy insecurity, industrial policy concerns, and the state's effort to preserve technological competitiveness under conditions of intensifying geoeconomic rivalry. The 2011 Fukushima disaster forced Tokyo to reconsider its energy mix and exposed the strategic vulnerability of an economy highly dependent on imported fossil fuels.[10] Since then, energy security has remained a central axis of Japanese planning, now increasingly linked to decarbonization and industrial upgrading.[11]

The most important recent institutional manifestation of this shift is the Green Transformation (GX) agenda. Japan's GX framework is not simply a climate platform; it is an attempt to combine emissions reduction with industrial revitalization, energy security, and technological leadership. Ministry of Trade, Economy, and Industry (METI) has reorganized parts of the state apparatus to push this agenda more coherently, including the integrated promotion of hydrogen and ammonia policies. The 2025 Seventh Strategic Energy Plan likewise emphasizes both energy security and economic security, while seeking to maximize the use of renewables and nuclear power under the familiar S+3E principle: safety, energy security, economic efficiency, and environment.[12]

Hydrogen is especially important to Japan's strategy. Tokyo has long viewed hydrogen not only as a decarbonization tool but as a way to create future industrial advantage and reduce vulnerability in hard-to-abate sectors. METI's revised Basic

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[10] Yves Tiberghien, "Kishida's Climate Policy and Opportunities for US-Japan Cooperation," *Asia Policy* 18, 1 (2023): pp. 49–65.

[11] Sun Ryung Park, *The Case for Canada–Japan Co-operation on Semiconductors and Supply Chains* (Vancouver: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2026).

[12] Sun Ryung Park and Yves Tiberghien, "Green Technology Transition from Above: Drivers and Constraints in Japan and Korea," in *East Asia's Green Energy Transition*, ed. Joanna I. Lewis et al. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, forthcoming).

Hydrogen Strategy in 2023 set ambitious targets, including hydrogen utilization of 12 million tons by 2040 and electrolyser capacity of 15 GW inside and outside Japan by 2030. Subsequent policy steps institutionalized this direction. The Hydrogen Society Promotion Act, in force from 2024, introduced long-term support mechanisms for hydrogen projects and a certification scheme aligned with carbon-intensity thresholds. Japan has also used international ministerial and bilateral channels to promote hydrogen standards, finance, and cross-border cooperation.

This does not mean Japan has fully displaced China in green industrial sectors. Rather, its strategy is selective and adaptive. Japan is making large bets on technologically differentiated niches, such as next-generation solar and hydrogen-related technologies, in an effort to avoid strategic marginalization.[13] Japan's response is therefore best understood as a state-led attempt to re-secure competitiveness in a regional order increasingly shaped by China's scale.

South Korea's transition strategy has followed a more overtly industrial logic. Like Japan, Korea is resource-poor and heavily dependent on imported energy. But its response has been especially tied to export competitiveness, advanced manufacturing, and the repositioning of climate policy as a growth strategy. This shift is understood as elite-led change in which Korea moved toward a more entrepreneurial state role, using industrial tools to accelerate innovation in renewables, EV batteries, and strategic sectors central to the transition.[14]

Korea's structural constraints remain severe. Fossil fuels still account for more than 80 percent of total primary energy consumption, and renewables remain comparatively weak in the power mix. Renewables contributed only about seven percent of electricity in 2023, the lowest share among International Energy Agency (IEA) members, while fossil-fuel dependence and nuclear power continued to shape the overall energy system (International Energy Agency 2024).

These constraints are precisely why the transition has been framed not only as climate policy but also as industrial and security policy. The major turning point came with the Moon Jae-in administration's Green New Deal and the broader carbon-

[13] Park and Tiberghien, "Green Technology."
[14] Park, "Reframing Growth."; Park, *An Entrepreneurial State in Green Transition.*

neutrality agenda in 2020–2021. During this period, Korean policy elites increasingly reframed climate action as a strategy for industrial competitiveness, embedding this shift in policies such as the Green New Deal, the 2021 Framework Act on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth, and enhanced 2030 targets. This shift demonstrates how rapidly climate and industrial objectives fused in Korean policy discourse. This strategic orientation has been reinforced under the current Lee Jae-myung administration. In April 2026, the government presented an Energy Transformation Plan that explicitly reframed energy security around reducing fossil-fuel import dependence and electrification.[15] The subsequent First Basic Plan for Renewable Energy set targets of 100 GW of renewable capacity by 2030 and a renewable share exceeding 30 percent of electricity generation by 2035.[16]

Korea's industrial strengths are visible in batteries and EV supply chains. The IEA identifies Korea, alongside Japan, as one of the few significant producers of battery components outside China, especially cathode materials.[17] That industrial position has been reinforced by overseas investment and supply-chain diplomacy. The Korea-US High-Tech Industry and Clean Energy Partnership MOU, for example, expanded cooperation in batteries, hydrogen, renewable energy, and critical minerals, while Seoul committed major support for battery and mineral-related investments in North America. Recent Korean policy also places increasing emphasis on the circular economy, rare-metal recycling, and the internalization of key resource chains, including battery reuse and recycling. In other words, Korea's adaptation is a broader strategy to secure industrial competitiveness and national resilience under conditions of energy vulnerability and technological rivalry.

Taken together, Japan and South Korea demonstrate that China's rise has not produced simple imitation. Rather, it has generated differentiated forms of strategic adaptation. Japan has prioritized managed diversification, hydrogen, and industrial repositioning within a bureaucratically coordinated GX framework. South Korea has leaned more heavily on executive-driven industrial policy, battery leadership, and strategic supply-chain partnerships. In both cases, the energy transition is no longer treated as a narrow

[15] Kim, Sung-hwan. "Energy Transformation Policy Announcement." April 2026.
[16] Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment of Republic of Korea. "First Basic Plan for Renewable Energy: Detailed Strategy for the Early Achievement of 100 GW by 2030." May 2026.
[17] IEA, *Global EV outlook 2025.*

environmental issue. It is increasingly embedded in questions of national resilience, geoeconomic competition, and long-term security.

Evolving Landscape of Energy Security and Its Strategic Implications for Canada

The emergence of green energy statecraft in Northeast Asia carries profound implications for Canada's Indo-Pacific engagement. China's leadership in green technologies has been accompanied by much broader adjustment mechanisms through which states respond to the erosion of the liberal globalization paradigm and the rise of geoeconomic competition.[18] Within this shifting order, the global energy transition has triggered a "green technology race"—a battle for dominance over future industrial hierarchies.[19] Under this reshaped strategic environment, the issue for Canada is not whether it can replicate a full-spectrum green industrial ecosystem, but how it can secure strategic positions within supply chains. These developments reinforce the need for Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) to evolve beyond broad diplomatic alignment toward a "concise agenda."[20]

For Canada, central to this transition is a strategy of selective integration grounded in its comparative advantages. Ottawa should anchor its engagement in a focused but diversified group of strategic partners. Replacing dependence on one supplier with exclusive reliance on another is not ideal. Canada offers substantial critical mineral resources, relatively low-carbon electricity generation, particularly in provinces such as Quebec and British Columbia, and its reputation as a stable, rule-of-law jurisdiction. Rather than remaining a mere exporter of unprocessed minerals and energy sources, Canada can leverage these advantages to attract East Asian firms seeking to diversify and de-risk their North American supply chains. This would require long-term offtake agreements, joint financing and investment, and the development of domestic processing capacity.

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[18] Pascale Massot and Yves Tiberghien, "A Wave of Indo-Pacific Strategies and Canada's Positioning: Reckoning with Global Power Rebalancing and the Crisis of Hyperglobalization," *Interventions Économiques* 72 (2024): pp. 19–42.
[19] Park and Tiberghien, "The Indo Pacific's Green Industrial Policy Race."
[20] Vina Nadjibulla and Erin Williams, *Indo-Pacific Forum 2025: Charting Canada's Next Phase of Regional Engagement* (Vancouver: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2025).

Critical Minerals and Supply-Chain Cooperation

Canada's principal advantage within the emerging energy security landscape lies in its substantial critical mineral endowment. The country ranks among the leading global producers of graphite and nickel while possessing significant untapped deposits of lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements, required for batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable-energy infrastructure.[21] The federal government's 2022 *Critical Minerals Strategy* explicitly presents Canada as a potential supplier of choice for low-carbon technologies.[22] This resource advantage has attracted international interest: inward foreign direct investment into Canada's critical minerals sector increased significantly between 2020 and 2024 as firms sought secure long-term access to upstream supply.[23]

Japan and South Korea are particularly plausible partners because their vulnerabilities and industrial capabilities complement Canada's resource position. Both economies remain heavily dependent on imported minerals and exposed to China's dominance of processing.[24] Integrating Canadian extraction and processing with Japanese and Korean manufacturing ecosystems could diversify supply while supporting their green industrial strategies. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy already identifies both countries as key economic partners, while initiatives such as the Canada–Japan battery supply-chain partnership demonstrate growing interest in linking Canadian resource development to downstream clean-technology production in Northeast Asia.

Canada–Japan cooperation has recently developed through the 2023 Memorandum of Cooperation on Battery Supply Chains[25] and the 2026 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which emphasized reliable supply, value-added processing, and diversified manufacturing ecosystems.[26] Corporate activity illustrates how public finance

[21] Government of Canada, *The Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2022).
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Anastasia Ufimtseva et al., *Critical Mineral Investment between Canada and the Indo-Pacific Region: Trends and Opportunities in the Extractive Sector* (Vancouver: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2025).
[24] Chan Mo Ku, *A Canada–Japan–Korea Trilateral Framework for Arctic Defence and Critical Minerals* (Vancouver: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2025).
[25] Natural Resources Canada, "Canada Invests in Battery Innovation Roadmap," 2023.
[26] Sun Ryung Park. *With New Landmark Partnership, Canada and Japan Expand, Redefine Co-operation.* (Vancouver: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2026).

can be combined with long-term demand. Panasonic Energy's investment in Nouveau Monde Graphite includes an offtake agreement, while Sumitomo Corporation has worked with Ucore Rare Metals on rare-earth processing, and Hanwa concluded an offtake agreement with Kap Minerals in 2026.[27] For Japan, Canadian projects offer significantly greater supply-security benefits when Japanese financing and purchase commitments help establish non-Chinese separation and refining capacity.

Canada–South Korea cooperation displays a similar pattern. The institutional components have been established through the 2022 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the 2023 Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Memorandum of Understanding, and the 2024 Action Plan, placing minerals within the bilateral economic-security agenda.[28] Korean firms have also made a significant industrial presence in Canada's resource sector: Volta Energy Solutions invested in copper-foil production in Quebec, POSCO Future M and General Motors developed cathode-material capacity in Bécancour, and SK On, EcoPro BM, and Ford pursued another cathode project in the province. Cooperation has advanced most visibly in downstream battery materials, while progress in mine development, graphite purification, rare-earth separation, nickel sulphate, and commercial recycling remains limited.

These patterns support an approach based on asymmetric resilience rather than domestic replication of entire supply chains. Canada should concentrate on segments where its resources and low-carbon electricity provide a credible advantage while cultivating overlapping partnerships, diversified buyers, and multiple processing routes. The next stage should focus on a limited pipeline of commercially viable projects in which Canadian project finance, tax incentives, and infrastructure support are coordinated with Japanese and Korean policy-bank lending, export insurance, and private investment. Long-term offtake agreements can provide Canadian developers with demand certainty, while joint stockpiling and early-warning arrangements can protect against short-term disruptions.

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[27] Panasonic Energy Co., Ltd. "Panasonic Energy to Invest in NMG," news release 19 February 2024.
Ucore Rare Metals Inc. "Ucore Rare Metals and Sumitomo Corporation of America Announces Strategic Collaboration in Rare Earth Supply Chain," news release, 15 June 2026.

[28] Sun Ryung Park. Canada and South Korea Need a Critical Minerals Partnership That Delivers. *Policy Magazine.* TBD.

A central constraint for Canada is multi-level regulatory fragmentation: Mining falls primarily under provincial and territorial authority, while federal approvals are required in other areas, producing overlapping processes across jurisdictions.[29] The scale of this coordination challenge is substantial—Canada had 171 advanced critical mineral projects and 28 processing projects as of March 2025—helping explain recent federal efforts to streamline approvals through a "One Project, One Review" approach.[30] Projects also depend on electricity, transportation, and logistical infrastructure, while their viability is inseparable from meaningful Indigenous partnership and environmental-risk management. Long development timelines, volatile commodity prices, technical qualification requirements, and uncertainty surrounding North American trade and industrial policy further complicate investment decisions. Canada's success should be measured not by the number of agreements signed but by whether cooperation produces financed projects, binding offtake commitments, viable non-Chinese processing capacity, and commercially scalable production. Through such selective and diversified integration, Canada can become a complementary upstream and midstream node within Northeast Asian clean-technology supply chains.

Electric Vehicle and Industrial Partnerships

Electric vehicles have emerged as one of the central industrial arenas of the global energy transition (International Energy Agency 2022). Electrification is reorganizing automotive production around batteries, critical minerals, power electronics, software, and advanced manufacturing, while governments increasingly treat these capabilities as matters of economic security and technological leadership. EV policy extends beyond accelerating consumer adoption. It has become more of an issue of where production occurs, which firms control key technologies, including batteries, and how states position themselves within the global EV supply chains.

Canada occupies a potentially valuable but structurally constrained position within the evolving EV industrial landscape. It lacks the manufacturing scale and technological depth of the major Asian automakers, but combines an established automotive sector with critical-mineral resources. A landmark example is the CA$15

[29] Government of Canada, "Regulations for Critical Minerals Development," last modified 2024.
[30] Government of Canada, "Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy: Progress Update," last modified 2025.

billion Honda EV Hub in Ontario, announced in 2024, which represents Canada's first comprehensive, end-to-end EV supply chain—integrating vehicle assembly with battery component manufacturing.[31] These developments have been supported by Canada's access to critical minerals, relatively low-carbon electricity generation, and policy incentives designed to integrate domestic production into North American clean-technology supply chains. As a result, Canada increasingly functions as an important upstream and midstream node within emerging EV manufacturing networks.

Partnerships with Japan and South Korea are particularly relevant because both possess capabilities that Canada lacks. Japanese and South Korean firms remain global leaders in battery technologies and advanced automotive manufacturing. Several Korean-led investments have moved into production: the NextStar Energy facility in Windsor, a joint venture between LG Energy Solution and Stellantis, began producing battery cells in November 2025.[32] Furthermore, in early 2026, Canada and the Republic of Korea signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding on Industrial Cooperation, specifically targeting future mobility and battery materials to ensure supply chain resilience against global market volatility. Canada and Japan have likewise used the 2023 Memorandum of Cooperation on Battery Supply Chains and the 2025 METI–Natural Resources Canada Joint Statement to promote investment, policy exchange, and research collaboration across the wider battery ecosystem.

Recent experience, however, demonstrates the vulnerability of a strategy anchored in large foreign investment commitments. Honda's proposed C$15-billion Ontario EV hub, announced in 2024 as Canada's first comprehensive end-to-end EV supply chain, was postponed in 2025 and placed on indefinite hold in 2026 amid weaker-than-expected North American EV demand and wider changes in the company's global strategy.[33] The contrast between NextStar's transition into production and Honda's withdrawal illustrates that announced investment does not necessarily create durable industrial capacity. Canada's EV trajectory also remains closely tied to access to the US market and

[31] Honda, "Honda Plans to Establish Comprehensive Electric Vehicle Value Chain in Ontario, Canada," news release, 25 April 2024.
[32] Ontario Newsroom, "Ontario Celebrates Grand Opening of NextStar Energy's Battery Facility in Windsor," news release, 5 March 2026.
[33] Abby Hughes. "Honda Indefinitely Suspends $15B EV Plant in Ontario." CBC News. 14 May 2026.

to rapidly changing American tariff, subsidy, and content-rule policies. North American integration provides scale and investment incentives, but it simultaneously exposes Canadian projects to policy decisions made in Washington.

The strategic value of these partnerships should not, however, be measured simply by the size of announced investments or the number of assembly plants. Foreign-led projects generate more durable benefits when they develop domestic supplier linkages, processing capacity, engineering and research functions, workforce capabilities, recycling systems, and opportunities for technological absorption. Canada's critical minerals and clean electricity can complement Japanese and Korean manufacturing expertise, but assembly operations dependent on imported components provide limited resilience and value capture. Public support should therefore prioritize investments that fill identifiable gaps in the Canadian value chain and establish commercially sustainable links among minerals, battery materials, cells, vehicles, and recycling.

EV cooperation should be understood as a strategy of selective integration rather than a route to industrial autonomy. Canada can strengthen its position by cultivating a diversified group of partners and targeting investments that deepen domestic capabilities. Partnerships with Japan and South Korea offer access to technology, industrial demand, and established manufacturing networks, while Canada contributes resources, clean electricity, and a North American production base. The objective is to use external investment to build a more deeply integrated and adaptable Canadian EV ecosystem in the context of a changing energy security landscape.

Conclusion

The global energy transition is rapidly transforming the strategic landscape of the Indo-Pacific. As decarbonization accelerates across energy systems, transportation, and industrial sectors, the governance of energy transitions has become increasingly intertwined with questions of economic security, technological leadership, and supply-chain resilience. This article has argued that the concept of green energy statecraft provides a useful analytical framework for understanding these developments. Rather than treating the transition to low-carbon energy as a purely environmental challenge, governments are increasingly approaching it as a strategic project aimed at strengthening national competitiveness and securing long-term economic and technological advantage.

The experiences of Northeast Asia illustrate how this transformation unfolds across different contexts. China's large-scale industrial mobilization has reshaped the structural context of the global clean-energy economy. Through coordinated industrial policy, state financing, and long-term planning, Beijing has established dominant positions in renewable manufacturing, battery production, and critical mineral processing. Japan and South Korea, operating under resource constraints, have pursued distinct strategies of adaptation—through technological specialization, industrial policy, and supply-chain diversification—to maintain competitiveness and reduce strategic vulnerabilities. Across these cases, the energy transition is consistently embedded within broader state strategies that link decarbonization to industrial upgrading and national resilience.

These findings also refine the concept of non-traditional security introduced earlier in the article. While traditional energy security frameworks focused on the stability of fossil-fuel supply, the cases show that contemporary energy security increasingly hinges on control over technologies, industrial capabilities, and supply-chain networks that underpin the low-carbon economy. Vulnerabilities arise not only from resource scarcity or price volatility, but from structural dependence on external manufacturing ecosystems, concentrated processing capacities, and critical logistical chokepoints. Recent developments during the 2026 Iran war further underscore this transformation: across parts of Asia, rising oil prices, supply disruptions, and fears of blackouts have accelerated interest in renewable deployment as governments and households seek insulation from external shocks.[34] Rather than contradicting the energy transition, such crises reinforce its strategic logic. In this sense, the energy transition itself constitutes a core domain of non-traditional security, where economic, technological, and environmental risks are increasingly inseparable from geoeconomic competition.

For Canada, these dynamics carry important strategic implications. The analysis suggests that Canada's most effective pathway does not lie in replicating the large-scale industrial ecosystems of Northeast Asia, but in pursuing a strategy of selective integration into emerging clean-technology supply chains. By leveraging its comparative

[34] A. Jones and Biman Mukherji, "Shock Therapy: War Forces Oil-Addicted Asia to Finally Go Green," *South China Morning Post*, 16 April 2026.

advantages—particularly in critical minerals, low-carbon electricity, and upstream resource production—Canada can position itself as a complementary node within regional production networks while contributing to broader supply-chain resilience. Recent geopolitical shocks also point to a more limited but still relevant role in energy diversification. Canada's emerging LNG export capacity may enhance its value as a reliable supplier to Indo-Pacific partners during periods of fossil-fuel disruption, but this role remains transitional and does not alter the structural trajectory toward decarbonization. At the same time, constraints in governance capacity, infrastructure, and industrial scale condition how effectively these advantages can be translated into strategic outcomes.

Ultimately, reconnecting the non-traditional security framework to the Indo-Pacific energy transition highlights a broader redefinition of security in the contemporary global political economy. Energy governance is no longer confined to managing fuel supply or protecting maritime routes; it increasingly involves securing technological capabilities, industrial ecosystems, and resilient supply chains. For middle powers such as Canada, navigating this environment requires recognizing that energy transition governance is not simply a matter of climate policy or industrial development, but a multidimensional security challenge. Embedding energy transition cooperation within Indo-Pacific engagement—through targeted partnerships, coordinated industrial strategy, and strategic resource development—therefore represents not only an economic opportunity, but a necessary adaptation to an evolving non-traditional security landscape.

Disclosure Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used Generative Artificial Intelligence for the purpose of proofreading and improving the language and readability of the text. The author takes the final responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the final work.

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