

CLS Address to CDA

Intro

General Belzile, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a pleasure to address the Conference of Defence Associations for the first time as Army Commander.

As the old saying goes we have no problems only challenges. The past ten years have been full of them for the Army and many of you are well aware of that history. You may wonder, as I stand before you today, what if anything is different. Is this yet another Army Commander trying to put the best face on an increasingly difficult situation?

I have a strong view that reality is quite different than what most believe. I believe that in far too many cases we have a black and white mentality for what is a very grey world and in addition providing you an overview of the army, I also want to share that perspective..

In the short time I have available today, I want to give you a personal sense of what I see as the state of the army and highlight the major goals I will focus on as Chief of the Land Staff. The context for my comments is the current Defence policy, budget and strategic framework (Strategy 2020). It is also the comments made by the Minister and CDS yesterday. For as Army Commander, I am speaking about the army.

Past ten years

The past ten years have been quite a challenge. We have seen the end of the Cold War, the withdrawal of our forces from Europe, a change in the nature of operations to a preponderance of Peace Support Operations and a tremendous increase in operational tasks. At the same time we have seen great change within the institution, as we deal with resource and personnel reductions, organizational re-engineering and cultural change. We have also seen, through that period, institutional failure, as we have not responded as well as we might in meeting all of the challenges. However we have also seen operational success and we should all be proud of how well Canadian troops have performed.

State of the Army (Regular/Reserve)

Against that backdrop, what is the current state of the army?

First of all I believe that overall the operational effectiveness of the army is good. That is to say that Canadian soldiers continue to perform the assigned missions extremely well. Indeed as I travel to different missions, it is clear from both what I see and others tell me, our troops are as good as any.

Particularly impressive is, indeed, the quality of our people and our soldiers and leaders are sound, and well motivated to the task. As well our equipment capability is good and getting better, indeed today we have somewhat a crisis of riches as we try to bring into service a large amount of equipment in a short period of time.

However not everything is in good shape. Given a continuing shortage of resources and a high tempo of operations, sustainment of the army continues to be a concern. In short, I believe there are too many tasks and insufficient resources to maintain the army over the long term, as it is currently structured. This means the strain is felt in a number of areas. First we are demanding a great deal of our people and over and above the operational tempo we face a very high personnel tempo, particularly amongst our leaders. Collective training is not adequate to maintain collective warfighting skills and we are seeing significant skill fade in some areas. Finally, I am concerned given the turmoil of the past ten years about the moral health of the army. We face a sense of uncertainty caused by constant change and not insignificantly a sense of mistrust of the senior leadership of the army.

So if I could summarize the situation, I would say that the Army continues to be operationally successful but is out of balance and somewhat fragile. This must change.

The Way Ahead

In facing these and many other issues, I am focussed on taking the army forward. Time precludes a detailed look at all that we are facing but I would like to speak to what I believe are the four major strategic goals upon which the army must focus.

First however, let me "christen the ground" and talk to the evolving army conceptual framework that we are using.

Develop Future Force Structure

The first goal is to develop a future force structure. Here there are two objectives that we are seeking to achieve; greater sustainability of the army and an improvement in operational capability.

Greater Sustainability. The issue of greater sustainability is a tough one. We must balance the army's resource demand against the resources available and, given the limited flexibility the army has, that almost certainly means a change in structure and probably means some reduction in Regular Force personnel. However, I must also balance the demand for manpower against a diminishing manpower capacity due to --increasing attrition, decreasing recruitment, and an understaffed undermanned training system. Here again structural change is necessary to produce a certain type of structure that has a greater capability but with fewer resources demanded. (Use example of the Lynx replacement).

Operational Capability. At the same time structural change is one of the key elements to achieve improvements to operational capability. In some respects the army has not kept pace with changing

technology and operational requirements and new capabilities have to be introduced. For example, in this information age and with information or knowledge-based operations being increasingly the norm, the army must improve Command Support, Information Operations and our ISTAR. Increasing the army's knowledge capabilities requires additional internal adjustments.. As well, its structures reflect only capabilities required for combat operations, when other types of operations must also be conducted. General Krolak of the USMC talks about the three- block war; humanitarian operations, peace support operations and combat operations all conducted by the same unit within a three-block radius. That is the sort of operations we face and the capability that we must have and our structures must adapt.

LFRR. As part of that force development, we must address the matter of Reserve Restructure. The framework for LFRR is outlined in the LFRR Strategic Plan approved last year, but the work on actual structure for the Reserves must also be aligned with that of the Regular Force. Here we must come to grips in a fundamental way with the issue of how the Regular and Reserves components should be structured to be complementary. We have had the model for years that the Reserve structure is largely a mirror image of the Regular force, albeit at a lower level of readiness. I view the Reserves as a future-oriented capability. They must be able to mobilize for the worst of future scenarios not past experiences. The question that needs to be asked is, "What is the optimum Reserve structure that can both augment for today's demands and mobilize to meet future threats? This is not a question that can be answered easily or quickly but we need to engage on the issue. This discussion will be held by working closely with the Reserve community through an agreed consultative process and in conjunction with the newly established Project Management Office for LFRR. The establishment of that office clearly illustrates our resolve and my commitment to a process that will yield results.

Process. The process of re-structuring is a long one, with more evolutionary steps than revolutionary leaps. The first and critical step will be to make adjustments, primarily to the Regular force to ensure continued sustainability of the Army. I already plan to make some minor adjustments this year but would anticipate even more substantive changes starting in 2002. To guide longer-term restructure, we will be developing a blueprint for the Army of Tomorrow, which must include both Regular and Reserve structures. This work will be done over the next 18 months to two years and include considerable debate and consultation across the broad army community. I do not see the implementation of changes based on this Army of Tomorrow model being implemented immediately but rather it will serve as the target for changes over a considerable period of time.

I want to be clear as to my intent. The objective is to achieve a sustainable army structure as quickly as possible and to improve this model over time by incremental adjustments to its capability.

Implement Managed Readiness

The second goal is to implement a managed readiness system within the army. Historically we have attempted to keep all units at a uniformly high level of readiness. As the tempo of operations has increased, this has been more difficult to sustain. The result is a failure to achieve adequate collective

standards in warfighting and an unacceptable strain on our people, as they are required to move from one high priority task to another. While with experience we have better managed the load, the army is still out of balance.

As with the human body, an army cannot surge everywhere, all of the time. The implementation of a managed readiness approach, must ensure that we achieve the levels of capability and readiness required but also that we build in "down time" for individuals and units.

In some respects the level of readiness is already lower than I would like, but without the potential benefits of a managed systems approach, it would be worse. By better managing the time and activity of the army we ensure that over time all units and people receive the appropriate training, while maintaining a reasonable quality of life.

The intent is to ensure that at any one time approximately one third of the Regular Force is operationally ready or deployed, one third in a concentrated training period that will culminate in an operational evaluation; and one third is in a reconstitution phase, where postings occur and the units and teams are reformed.

As part of the managed readiness approach, I also intend to include formed Reserve contributions on Operations. The LFRR plan has as one of its objectives the provision of at least one formed Reserve Platoon per Land Force Area per year within the next two years. This I expect to achieve. Also, we currently have plans that could see the commitment of a formed Reserve Infantry Company for operations in Bosnia for Rotation 11 starting in Fall 2002 . Now as you know the reserves have been augmenting Regular Force units on operations for a long time and they make a sizeable contribution. However, the initiatives to send formed Reserve Platoons and Companies are important for two reasons. First, they reduce the load on the Regular Force, particularly amongst the leadership, for this is the part of the Regular Force that is stretched the most. Second, it provides an opportunity to quickly develop leaders within the Reserve Force, which is essential to achieve a healthy and sustainable reserve. Such an approach cannot impede the attainment of the LFRR objectives but my hope is that such initiatives will in fact enhance achievability.

A managed readiness system is vital if the army is to sustain the recent operational tempo. This much more disciplined approach will ensure greater predictability for all soldiers, but of course it will reduce flexibility at some levels. Implementing this approach will take time and benefits won't be immediate. But it will, it must, improve the situation as quickly as is possible. Of course there are limits to any system and, while I am convinced that overall we can better sustain the load, the overall capacity of the army is finite.

Shape army Culture

The third strategic goal is to shape army culture. This issue is one of the most difficult and sensitive to deal with because it gets to the very root of who we are as an army . By culture I mean learned wisdom

of what works and what does not work. These lessons shape the way we do things, the way we behave as an institution. Culture is a very difficult thing to describe but even more difficult to change.

Our regimental system has continued to be a fundamental foundation of the army and our units have maintained high cohesion and a true fighting spirit that we are proud of. And that culture has also permitted us to undertake the many and varied tasks from peacekeeping to peace support operations. So you may ask why the culture needs to change?

An army needs youth. Should we fail to attract the Millenium generation--those born after 1984- we will fade away. A living culture survives and we must adapt.

Our objective, must be to attract the most dedicated intelligent young Canadians possible. The changing demographics of Canadian society and the increasingly rigorous competition for the brightest and best young people in today's labor market mean that we cannot maintain the Army from its traditional recruiting base.

The young people we wish to attract must see the Army as a place they want to be, and having enrolled, find an experience that makes them want to stay. This means we must adapt the very nature of our culture to be more attractive to Canadians. This does not mean the Army culture will completely reflect the attitudes and values of society for there are unique institutional requirements, but it must be complimentary to mainstream Canadian society and acceptable to the vast majority of Canadians. Indeed, that is where the institution draws its moral license to exist.

Our objective must also be to create an environment within the army that maximizes the capabilities of every soldier regardless of rank.. In the Army of Tomorrow, quality not quantity will be key. There will be fewer soldiers and every one of them will have far more technology and overall capability at their fingertips than ever before. They will also have far more autonomy and must have the intellectual capabilities to make the essential decisions. This means that we must build that soldier from the outset as a quality thinking person, expected to think for her or himself, and act either independently or as part of a team depending upon the circumstances. Such a soldier is much harder to develop, than one just trained to follow orders. But having developed them, the capabilities are far superior. It is these capabilities that the army will need in the future.

I emphasize here that change must not erode the Army's ability to do its job. Our mission is a demanding one. No human experience is more challenging than combat. We must have people with the personal, physical and psychological strength to accomplish the mission and to withstand the rigors of operations. Equally important, we require people who can work together as a team under very demanding circumstances, for it is the cohesion of the team that will make the difference. We need an Army where the sum is more than the total of its parts.

As with any large organization possessing rich traditions and its own unique culture, it takes time to adapt and is not without its difficulty. Problems will arise in the future. But the time for discussion on

whether we will go down this road is long since past. The focus should now be on how do we get there. We must ensure that every dedicated soldier with ability has an equal opportunity to serve. The senior leadership of the Army is firmly committed to this goal. Anyone who is unwilling to help us achieve this goal is impeding our progress and - I will be blunt here - we intend to move forward without them.

Connect with Canadians

The final strategic goal that I intend to pursue is that of connecting with Canadians. Now the Minister and the Chief of Defence Staff both addressed the importance of our relationship with the Public, so I won't revisit that area. Suffice it to say that relationship is critical.

But the nature of that relationship is my focus. I recall the days "before media discovery" when the leadership wished for almost any media coverage or attention. Be careful what you wish for. We certainly get a great deal of attention today. Rarely does a day go by that we aren't covered somewhere. The problem of course is that, as with most news, much of it is negative or at least controversial so that a largely uninformed public assumes the worst. The Canadian public knows who we are but doesn't understand us. We need to improve their understanding and ensure they are more discerning in their perception of media coverage.

So connecting to Canadians goes far beyond just communicating to the public. It means ensuring all Canadians understand us, where we are going and what a reasonable sense of the truth is about Canada's Army. For as I travel around I find a great deal of misinformation and misperception, even among those who are considered to be informed. Indeed we have the problem internal to the Army where even Canadians in uniform are unclear about where we are.

The problem as I have identified it is, in part, communications. We are not doing a good job of getting the word to all Canadians as to where we are. However, an equal if not greater problem is that of expectations. You see I believe that we have focussed so much attention on Army problems in recent years that no one is really sure what ground truth is. Even worse, the confidence in the leadership and trust--that they know what they are doing--has ebbed to an extent that rhetoric is unlikely to restore balance. For when we do achieve a success, it is considered an anomaly and discarded.

I could choose many examples but let me provide you with fresh perspective using two equipment examples.

As with all armies, replacing equipment is a long and difficult process. At any given time, part of various equipment fleets is relatively new and part is aging. Often some part is truly obsolete and many here have personal examples of that.

Such is the case today. The Army has equipment that is at or nearing the end of its useful life. An item such as the ILTIS Light Utility Vehicle, which is scheduled for replacement, is difficult to keep going. Others like the AVGP fleet are tired and plans are to refurbish some of them for different roles and to provide improvements in protection and ease of maintenance.. Both are still in use and all things considered are still useful systems. But they are difficult to sustain and less

capable than we would like. SLIDE

At the same time we have introduced the Coyote Surveillance and Reconnaissance Vehicle, which is among the best in the world and we are introducing the LAVIII a third generation wheeled APC which is in a class by itself. It is performing admirably in Eritrea. And it has been purchased by the US and NZ Armies. The US army is particularly impressed by it and as the Vice Chief of the US Army said to me before the buy was announced, if we don't get it, our soldiers will be awful upset."Given those extremes – what is the true state of our equipment?

One of the most emotive aspects of equipment is on clothing. As we know everyone is an expert.

ENTER SOLDIER 1

Our basic combat clothing system, has been in service since the 1960's, albeit with many improvements., Our basic load carrying equipment was introduced in the 1980's and helmet and fragmentation vests were purchased in the 1990's. These improvements have come under considerable criticism, not only for being inadequate but also for being poorly maintained.

I would suggest to you that this basic ensemble is a reasonable set of personal clothing and protection equipment. It is still very serviceable and is probably as good as most armies have in service today. The one current problem is that because this is being taken out of service, for those still wearing it we have some shortages and there are some serviceability problems.

ENTER SOLDIERS 2 & 3

It is being replaced by two ensembles. The Improved Environmental Clothing system , or I-E-C-S, (IECS) and the Canadian Disruptive Pattern camouflage, or CADPAT.

The IECS has been in service with our operationally deployed troops since 1988 and has been introduced into most of the Regular Force. It has also been distributed to the entire Reserve force except for one militia brigade which is receiving it now. Note that the reserves will have the IECS before the regular force has finished receiving it.

The CADPAT--the camouflage clothing is being introduced beginning in April and distribution will be complete by November 2002. It will be issued in line within our operational rotation schedule, so the troops in operations will have it first.--

These clothing systems are far superior to the present one and place Canada on the forefront of clothing and protective equipment.

You may be interested to know that our new cold weather clothing (IECS) is one of the selected ensembles being trialed by NASA's extreme climate trails currently underway in Northern Manitoba.

I find it interesting that when anyone mentions equipment, the belief and assumption is that we in Canada have it wrong. Indeed even our soldiers complain that we don't get good kit even though the latest Gortex clothing--jackets and socks--are envied.

So what is ground truth?

What we are facing is an issue of management of expectations. The public, of which you are part, has a less than complete understanding of what the Army is today. In many cases their perception of the army is through the prism of their own, often dated, experiences. And we in the army have not done a good job of education.

Unfortunately, we have also started to accept much of the negative rhetoric. Indeed even worse, our soldiers have started to believe it. It is resulting in a growing cynicism and belief that we aren't good. My perception is that if the majority of Canadians heard a positive and a negative view on an army issue, the dominant perception would be negative.

I am not saying everything is rosy. I have made it quite clear that the army is stretched and fragile. Equally I am not saying that we shouldn't identify the faults and flaws. Indeed we need public awareness and even public debate to keep us on track. But we all have to be very careful that we don't become part of the problem. There are real issues that require real answers. Too often, our effort is diverted to issues resulting from false perceptions.

It is for this reason that the army must connect with Canadians. All Canadians.

We need to make sure that they know what Canada's soldiers are doing and how they are doing. But more importantly we need to ensure that the message that Canadians and our soldiers get is a balanced one.

The solution has been, is, and will always be leadership and here I am also looking to you for help.

Summary

In summary, from my vantage point, the army is at a significant cross roads. It has weathered the tumultuous changes of the 1990's and has acquitted itself well. It is operationally effective. It is a quality force. But it is fragile. It needs to be properly cared for to assure its sustainability and to enhance its capabilities for the challenges of the future. This means that it must change, both to live within its resources and to modernize. It must ensure a managed approach to readiness that reduces personnel tempo and maximizes capability. It also means that we must shape army culture to ensure the continued relevance and acceptability to Canadians. Finally we must connect with Canadians for the army is very much part of the fabric of Canada and must remain so. For that is the road to success.

Thank you for your attention.