

CDA INSTITUTE 19TH ANNUAL SEMINAR
CDA 65TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SOVEREIGNTY, DEFENCE AND GLOBAL SECURITY
DEFENDING CANADA'S INTERSETS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Timing is everything, and once again the instincts of the Conference of Defence Associations have proven to be finely tuned. The date had been set well in advance, but the nineteenth Annual Seminar of the CDA Institute, held in Ottawa on 27 February 2003, in conjunction with the CDA Annual General Meeting that continued into 28 February, transpired against a backdrop of truly momentous events of direct relevance to the Seminar theme. The Federal Budget 2003 that was unveiled barely 10 days previously added a most welcome (even if barely sufficient) \$800 million to the base funding of the Department of National Defence, as well as an immediate \$200 million contingency infusion to sustain on-going operations in the War Against Terrorism. More specifically, the budget also included contingency funding in the next fiscal year (2003-2004) for a new mission to Kabul, the announcement of which coincident with the budget caught all observers – including key military officers in the Department – by surprise, as appearing to preclude any significant Canadian combat contribution to operations in Iraq. Also at about the same time, the intemperate remarks of a Liberal backbench Member of Parliament brought into sharp focus the rising wave of anti-Americanism evident in a large segment of Canadian (indeed, global) society. And finally, in an act that can only be ascribed to vengeance against the too-constructive criticism provided by the CDA on the deterioration of the Canadian Forces (much of it entirely consistent with similar advice provided by the House of Commons and Senate Committees on National Defence, as well as the Auditor-General of Canada), only days before the seminar the Minister of National Defence abruptly announced that the Departmental grant to the CDA would be cut back immediately and phased-out three years earlier than previously agreed.

Lieutenant-General Richard Evraire (retd), Chairman of the CDA, was polite enough not to underscore the latter two points in his welcome and opening remarks. He did note that the Budget and the threat of war in Iraq had combined to make defence a household issue, witnessed by an impressive number of participants to the seminar, including some fifteen Senators and Members of Parliament, a wide representation of the national media, and senior students from Elmwood and Ashbury Colleges, in addition to unusually large numbers of the Canadian security and defence community and serving members of the Canadian Forces.

The Honorable John McCallum, Minister of National Defence, delivered the Introductory Address, revolving around two themes: the Canada-US relationship as it reflects North American solidarity; and the budget and the way ahead for the Canadian Forces. The presence of the media meant that he was not only speaking to the CDA audience, but his entire tone was one of uncharacteristic forcefulness for a Liberal minister. It is useful to read into the record two quotes

representing the essence of his remarks, one on each of these respective issues. First, in speaking to the CANUS relationship, he observed that, although over the years Canada and the United States have disagreed on many issues, not one of these issues has compromised Canada's core commitment to the joint defence and security of the people of North America, ending with the promise, "I can assure you today that no future action by this Government will ever compromise that core commitment." Later, referring to the Government's recent decision to commit a battle group and a brigade-level headquarters to a peace support mission in Afghanistan, he declared that, "The Government's commitment to Afghanistan [ie, instead of to combat operations in Iraq] does not reflect any lack of confidence in the combat capabilities of Canada's army. Quite the contrary. Our soldiers are outstanding Canadians who are fully capable of carrying out difficult combat missions."

In turning to "The Way Ahead," Minister McCallum revealed that he was pursuing a two-track process, the first track involving sustainability and transformation, and the second track being a defence review. While acknowledging his present focus is on the first of these, he was most emphatic on the second track: "Let me say here what the defence review is not. It is not an excuse to delay decisions. The defence review may result in more money for the Canadian Forces. Or it may not." While other of his (and later the Chief of Defence Staff's) remarks raise questions as to whether the two elements of the first track (sustainability and transformation) are not mutually exclusive in the continued restricted funding envelope, he pointed confidently to medium-term sustainability projects (the success of the recruitment campaign and addressing key shortfalls in operating budgets) and modest initiatives to accelerate the process of transformation (ISTAR and a "direct-fire capability" to replace tanks). He concluded that it has been his overriding objective to work in the direction of a forward-looking Canadian Forces that can make a real contribution for Canada and the world.

While it is not the intent of this review to capture the Question and Answer exchange after each session, two questions posed to the Minister indicated the relief yet also skepticism with which his speech was received, especially as to how far it represents the true intent of the Government. The first question was directed by Ms Rebecca Willems, a student from Elmwood College, declaring her Canadian-American joint citizenship, and requesting clarification on where the Government stood on the anti-Americanism demonstrated by several of its members. To underscore the point, Minister McCallum repeated a quote used in his speech, noting that he had personally hand-edited his notes that morning to add the following words written by Prime Minister Lester Pearson in his memoirs some 30 years previously: "Above all, as American difficulties increase, we should resist any temptation to become smug and superior. 'You are bigger, but we are better.' Our own experience, as we wrestle with our own problems, gives us no ground for any such conviction." Major-General (ret'd) Lewis Mackenzie (noting he is not a member of the CDA) raised the second question more as a concern that, in the hopefully unlikely event the forthcoming Afghanistan deployment turns into a disaster, the military will be the first to be blamed by the political leadership. To that, he obtained the very clear response of the Minister: "I as a member of the government take responsibility for that decision, and I think if things go wrong, and we all hope and pray they will not, then that responsibility will come back to the government, and I accept that responsibility."

Doctor Thomas Axworthy, Executive Director of the Historica Foundation, delivered the Keynote Address, “Global Security - Challenges for the Defence of North America”. He began with the statement that “Canada’s most profound military tradition is to be continually and woefully unprepared for conflict while the men and women in our armed services acquit themselves quite admirably once wars occur.” To that end, while the defence portion of the 2003 Budget was a useful incremental addition to Canada’s defence readiness, our times require a drastic shifting of priorities in defence policy. Drawing the parallel that “The Korean War in June 1950 was the September 11th of its era,” his unstated conclusion is that now we also are at war. He described how the government of Louis St Laurent reacted by adopting the practice of “muscular multilateralism,” defined as a cooperative approach to world problems bent on using international organizations to the full, but with Canada punching above its weight in providing armed muscle as the sinews of the international organizations we attempt to build. “What was done in 1950 in defence can be done today.”

Recalling (as did Minister McCallum) the memory of Lester Pearson, Dr Axworthy commented that, rather than being content to recite words crafted by speech-writers, Pearson had the military capability to go along with his diplomatic creativity. He challenged present-day leaders to shape public opinion rather than be led by it, and offered some advice on how to achieve that in this case. Firstly, our Government leaders must acknowledge that the threats we face from global terrorism are enormous and real. Secondly, that American national security concerns are driving their domestic and foreign agendas, and our location beside the United States means that these must also be a major factor in ours. And finally, that in order to convince Americans that multilateralism works, Canada must re-commit itself to muscular multilateralism.

The first Panel Discussion, *Sovereignty, Homeland and Continental Defence / Security*, was moderated by **General Paul Manson (retd)**, former Chief of the Defence Staff.

Doctor Frank Harvey, Director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University, addressed four main points in a provocative but thoughtful presentation on reasons for the lack of direction in Canadian foreign policy. To begin, he argued that the disjointed government response to the present circumstances has arisen from confusion in the meaning of the terms “multilateralism” and “unilateralism”, these generally being considered as poles in the debate when in fact they should be seen more properly as part of a continuum in which elements of each are always present in the other. This is because, secondly, since all states react to any given crisis out of their own interests, however broadly defined, and will attempt to draw on different levels of support from other nations appropriate to the circumstances, unilateralism in truth acts as the pre-requisite for multilateralism. Thirdly, in calling for the demise of the Canadian “default strategy of distinction over security”, he re-cast the term introduced by Doctor Axworthy as “dishonest multilateralism”. His fourth and concluding point was that it is time to re-calculate our national security strategy, to be based upon a recognition that the image of pure multilateralism is a dangerous myth.

Major-General Ed Fitch, Project Manager for the Land Force Reserve Restructuring, gave a presentation on “Army Reserves in Homeland Defence”. Beginning with a discussion of what the Army Reserve is and what roles, missions and tasks it has been assigned, he looked briefly at the structures relevant for Homeland Defence (HD) that are beginning to emerge over North

America. Specifically, in the Canadian context, the Army Reserve is a natural candidate for the regionally based, or static, component of HD, with it being based in 110 communities from coast-to-coast, its local knowledge, and ability to maintain a continuous planning relationship with first responders. To this end, as of September 2002, the 15,500 soldiers of the Army Reserve are organized into some 155 company / battery / squadron-sized building blocks called “mission elements”, assigned the primary missions of Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) and Force Protection (FP). CIP/FP requires units capable of, for example, Security Operations, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence, Urban Search and Rescue, and Protective Construction.

Mr David Pratt, MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans’ Affairs (SCONDVA) reviewed the three basic tenets of Canadian defence policy. These traditionally have incorporated shifting priorities of: the defence of Canada; assisting in the defence of North America; and contributing to international peace and security. His assessment is that the dynamics of the present security environment are such that we no longer can afford the luxury of compartmentalizing our defence responsibilities, and that the challenge is to play a proportionate role with our American and other coalition partners. “Doing the bare minimum won’t cut it any more.” **[Any other points?]**

After a break for lunch, **General Ray Henault**, Chief of the Defence Staff, opened the afternoon session with a survey of Canadian Forces operations. In detailing the contribution of the naval, air and land forces to the war against terrorism, he noted with pride the assignment of Commodore Roger Girouard as the commander of a multinational naval Task Force in the Arabian theater of operations, and the continuing CF-18 patrols of North American airspace under Operation Noble Eagle. He addressed the new Army mission to Kabul by stating “I want to put to rest any notion that the decision to send troops back to Afghanistan caught the military by surprise. It did not. The Canadian Forces were actively consulted by the Government.” Allowing that the new mission will be challenging and not without danger, it also is likely to necessitate a review of CF participation in other operations, particularly in Bosnia.

Turning to the Budget, in addition to recognizing the efforts of Minister McCallum to persuade his cabinet colleagues of the need, he also thanked “the many people who have spoken in support of the Canadian Forces.” He noted that the new funding is consistent with the amount identified by the CF to meet the minimum requirements, and in particular that “it will help to move us from a position of survivability to one of sustainability” – the first time this correspondent has noted the public use of that phrase by anyone of authority in uniform. While the additional funding will go towards helping to meet the “sustainability gap,” he reiterated Minister McCallum’s statement that “we will have to make difficult choices in order to ensure that we proceed deliberately forward on the path of transformation.” He remains confident, nonetheless, that the CF “is well placed, with the support of the Government and the people of Canada, to tackle these challenges and turn them into opportunities.”

The second panel discussion, *Peacekeeping versus Combat Readiness: Serving Canada’s Interests*, was moderated by Ms Sandra Dunsmore, President of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre.

Major-General Lew Mackenzie (retd), President of Major-General Mackenzie Enterprises Inc, proceeded with a vigorous argument that the discussion topic presented a false dichotomy – that peacekeeping cannot be undertaken without combat readiness. Indeed, he challenged the very notion that “peacekeeping” is a task appropriate for Canadian Forces, noting that since the end of the Cold War few missions have resembled the classic operations undertaken in Suez, Cyprus and the Golan. Where lightly armed constabulary missions have since been attempted (as in Sierra Leone and Bosnia), invariably the result has been disastrous, and the United Nations blue berets have had to be rescued by robust “peacemaking” blue helmets (in the cases above, respectively by British and Canadian forces). He was especially annoyed that the title construct has appeared in the Department of Foreign Affairs “Policy Consultation”, it being a “dangerous question” to ask, because the general public does not understand the nuances involved. “Soldiers don’t do social work, and social workers don’t carry guns.” He concluded that it is the responsibility of the political leadership to make foreign policy that is right for Canada, and the CF should be structured to be employed doing what it does best – the application of deadly force.

Doctor David Malone, President of the International Peace Academy, opened with the admission that he does not share the confidence of other presenters in having a grasp on the global geo-political situation. Rather, he perceives a moment of flux with any variety of outcomes, and for which military forces will be required to address a wide range of capabilities. He noted that the only two “traditional” conflicts that have survived the end of the Cold War (the Kashmir question and the Israel-Palestine dispute), in fact are the ones that most closely resemble the post-Cold War era of “internal wars”. Because they are essentially civil wars, the conflicts of today are messy, with much attendant death, which attracts media attention, in turn leading to demands for intervention. But classic peacekeeping is decidedly ill-adapted for dealing with the underlying issues of failed regimes. Instead, the security challenges of today tend to focus around the establishment of transitional administrations, none of which resembles that in any other circumstance. We are in an era of “hybrids”, coalitions will be formed as required to deal with the situations existing on the ground, and wishing for some ideal model gets us nowhere. He concluded that in trying to come to grips with the evolving situation, gaps will be manifested in what the government expects its military to do, and the Canadian government has not done a very good job of setting priorities.

Doctor Douglas Bland, Chair for Defence Management Studies, Queen’s University, provided a summary of the day’s discussion, which he categorized as very productive. He identified a number of themes. First, the need for a “mobilization” of national resources in a period of continuing crisis, turning this in effect into a “People’s War.” Second, that this will require a re-ordering of national priorities, and Parliament and the Canadian people must get used to the notion. Third, that any Defence Policy Review ought to be about the transformation of the Canadian Forces, but the present deterioration means this is a very long-term project and it will be the job of the next Government to rebuild the CF for the use of the Government after next. Fourth, concerning the coming Defence Policy Review, he observed that when policies are based on myth and reality sets in to destroy that myth, we are effectively left with nothing. Fifth, that we need leaders capable of taking the Forces and Canadians into a new generation. Sixth, a near-universal feeling that it is a myth that Canada has a foreign policy. Seventh, as an aside, he remembered thinking it odd that Minister McCallum should criticize the CDA for not thanking him for his success (on behalf of the Government) in getting money in Budget 2003 to fund the

Government's own Defence policy. Eighth, that national security requires national mobilization. His ninth point was more of a personal observation that "end-use discussion" still is much too particular, and based upon assumptions as to what the world will be; rather, it should be established more broadly as the ability to apply deadly force at the direction of the Government, recognizing that "how much" will be a particular question new to each operation. His tenth and final point (also an observation) is that global patterns are emerging of continuous warfare, without time and space boundaries, producing combat situations that cannot be resolved; and this era of stability operations – the attempt to bring peace, order and good government to the world – requires robust armed forces, not peacekeeping forces. His conclusion was that the CDA has been good at solving the problems of the present force, but it is time to turn to the problems of the future forces. The challenge is to overcome an ahistoric political leadership with little appreciation of how the present problems developed – and how they have set the tone for the future.

The morning of the second day (28 February) comprised several additional presentations as a bridge between the CDA Institute Seminar (27 February) and the CDA Annual General Meeting, as outlined below.

Mr Jayson Spiegel, Executive Director of the Reserve Officers' Association of the United States, made a return appearance, speaking to the theme that the prosecution of the war against terrorism is flagging because the United States, and not just other allies such as Canada, has not yet mobilized to a war footing. Observing that the American population is not being asked to make any sacrifice (in fact, taxes have just been cut), and that contrary to sensational media reports the general population is not really "afraid", he spoke of the absolute need to engage the citizenry in the defence debate, and of the failure of the US Government to seek this engagement. At the root of the problem is the rapidly declining portion of the American political class that can claim military experience of any sort, such that even in the White House the US military is seen as an "employment opportunity" and not a "service to country". Consequently, the US is trying to fight the present war "on the cheap", is experiencing a military resource shortfall generally, and in particular is suffering from a manpower crisis. His conclusion is that, even for the United States military, there are too many tasks for the resources being made available. If the political leadership is not willing to take the risks associated with these shortfalls, the only alternatives are to dedicate more resources or to drop some tasks. Noting that this situation applies also to Canada, he concluded that it is "deeply distressing" that Canadian Forces are unlikely to be available to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq, because Canada has a good reputation in the United States for that type of effort, and our help is desperately needed.

Lieutenant-General Lloyd Campbell, Chief of the Air Staff, opened his presentation on the state of the Air Force with a discourse on air power theory, noting its validation in the Canadian experience in the last Gulf War and over Kosovo, and concluding that air power will continue to play a major – if not pivotal – role through its utility to support of naval and land forces. Even without the deployment of fighter-bomber aircraft on offensive operations in the present war against terrorism, he pointed to the significant Air Force contribution, such as the standing air patrols over North America, the maritime air and tactical transport deployments under Operation Apollo, and highlighted the fact that a complete Air Reserve unit (#14 Airfield Support) has been

deployed on active operations for the first time since the Second World War. Turning to the future, his goal is to establish Canada's as "the best small air force in the world." The vehicle to achieving that goal is the *Aerospace Capability Framework (ACF)*, which sees four continuing elements to Canadian air power: control of the air; precision engagement; information exploitation; and rapid force mobility. He concluded on the optimistic note that the pressures to "transform" to keep up with the US Air Force are not severe, but that the steps in the process – many of which the Canadian Air Force has been engaged in over the years – allow a manageable level of risk. Not all deficiencies can be corrected with money; what really is needed is time.

Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, Chief of the Maritime Staff, opened on a similarly optimistic note, proudly stating that the naval contribution to Operation Apollo has demonstrated the validity of the Canadian naval task group concept as a highly effective instrument of foreign and defence policy. He attributed this primarily to the Navy's on-going efforts at transformation beginning in the 1980s, and also to the effectiveness of the Navy's individual and collective training regimes. He is worried, however, that the Canadian public does not understand that Canada is a maritime nation, what the Navy's role is, or that their Navy is not "insignificant", and he is determined to correct those impressions. Beyond that, his short-term goals are to: sustain the commitment to Operation Apollo or other Government-directed operations at an appropriate level while balancing personnel tempo; to conduct assigned domestic maritime surveillance missions; to conduct essential individual and collective training; and to introduce the *Victoria* class submarines into operational service. Noting that the 2003 Budget is a positive step in the right direction, he allowed that difficult choices remained to be made in shifting from "a survival mode to a sustainable mode". He foresees the supply ship replacement being a modular vessel with new manning and operating concepts, and eventually moving the fleet to a single new class of major surface combatant. With the other service chiefs, he looks to the support of the Canadian public to leverage the tools for his sailors to do the jobs asked of them.

Lieutenant-General Mike Jeffery, Chief of the Land Staff, gave a typically candid assessment of the state of the Army. He too began on a confident note, believing that the army leadership have made many of the tough decisions required to move the Army forward, aided now with the capstone document, *Advancing With Purpose*, as the Army's Strategy for 2020. This sees the Army changing in two phases: first, the Interim Model, focused on how the Army generates force, including a Managed Readiness approach to better balance the demands of training, operations and reconstitution; and, second, the transformation to the Army of Tomorrow that will change the way it actually fights, recognizing this will result in changes to the relative proportions of the force, with the command and the support base each taking greater shares of the resources than traditional core combat capabilities. This transformed force will be not dissimilar to the US Army's Interim Force: medium weight, based on the Light Armoured Vehicle family, and designed to be strategically deployable but also tactically decisive. Noting the many positives of continued success in operations, he acknowledged there remain many challenges. His greatest concern is sustainability, and while the recent budget provided some relief, it does not overcome years of under-funding. One of the greatest risk areas has been the lack of collective training, and to correct this he has ordered a Brigade-level Training Event to be conducted in the April-May timeframe in Wainright, for which trains already have begun deploying equipment. He recognizes his biggest challenge remains operational tempo, especially the danger of long-term erosion because of continually surging and placing an unreasonable and

unsustainable load on the backs of the men and women in uniform. In trying to balance these challenges, he cautioned against the danger of mis-appreciating the difficulty of implementing change. He concluded by noting his forthcoming retirement, and thanked all those in the CDA who have provided him support and advice over the years.

Lieutenant-General Christian Couture, Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Military), was the last speaker, and began appropriately enough with a truism too easily forgotten – that, since all decisions affect people, it pays to keep them in mind throughout the whole process. While their needs and wishes may not always be consistent with those of the organization (in this case, the Canadian Forces), leaders must strive to keep a balance, making choices to establish processes that are fair and transparent, and treat everyone with dignity. He spoke to five pillars of what amounts effectively to a “social contract” (without actually saying those words): effective leadership; proper equipment and manning; appropriate training and education; fair compensation; and comprehensive social support. In seeking to move on to establish an “Operational Quality of Life”, he shall work with the service chiefs with the aim of looking after Canadian military people, investing in them, and giving them confidence in the future.

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