

**PRESENTATION
66TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS**

**Mr Jason Spiegel
Executive Director, Reserve Officers Association of the United States**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to again appear before you. I highly value the relationship between the Reserve Officers Association of the United States and the CDA and believe that our continued cooperation and dialog is important to our respective armed forces.

I would like to focus on two themes that flow from the remarks Dr. Bland gave at the end of yesterday's session. First, both the U.S. and Canadian governments must engage their respective citizenry in a serious discussion of defense policy and the need for a robust armed forces.

Second, I will talk about the shortages facing our respective armed forces. Notwithstanding that the U.S. defense budget provides for about \$1 billion (American) per day in expenditures, the American military is short of money. In addition, the U.S. is short of personnel in uniform. As a result, the U.S. defense program is facing a looming manpower and fiscal crisis. Finally, there has been a shortage of leadership to commit the U.S. and its allies to do what is necessary to win the war against terrorism. If not addressed, all these shortages foreshadow serious problems for overall national security.

Before I get into the substance of my presentation, let me recommend to you a book I just finished reading, *What If?* edited by Robert Cowley. In this book, noted military historians speculate how the world would be different if certain military conflicts had turned out the other way. In particular, the book focuses on conflicts where victory hinged on a fluke or where the underdog triumphed.

For example, if the summer of 1526 had been drier so that Suleyiman could engage in operations, Austria and Germany might today be Moslem countries. As relevant to the US and Canada, the book examines what the world would have been like if the British had won the American Revolution. Had the colonies been defeated early, Washington and Jefferson would have been hanged but eventually the colonies would have enjoyed some self-rule.

However, if the larger British force in Newport had destroyed the smaller French force when the French landed in 1780, America would certainly have lost the war. By 1780, the British had sustained many casualties and felt great bitterness toward the colonies. Accordingly, had the Americans lost in 1780 – as opposed to 1776 - the colonies would likely have been repressed by a large standing British army.

More important would have been the impact on the United Kingdom. Hardliners in the aristocracy, backed by a narrow-minded king, would have emerged victorious. They would have ruled with an iron fist and created a state relentlessly intolerant of democracy. Consider, therefore, the impact on U.S. and Canadian history if the British march toward democracy had

been halted because of a British victory in the American Revolution.

Why do I go into this? I submit that our respective peoples no longer grasp the important role of the military in society and how a strong military is a prerequisite to the preservation of liberty. Most of our citizens no longer understand that preserving freedom necessitates a robust military capability and demands sacrifices of all our citizens during time of peril. As the gulf between military and civilian society widens, and the percentage of veterans in the population declines, the public's connection to defense issues may further evaporate and their tolerance for sacrifice may lessen.

Perhaps as a consequence, our respective leaders have failed to ask anything in a serious way of our societies. As Dr. Bland said, if we are in crisis, then our respective leaders must mobilize their populations and marshal all resources to confront the crisis. I submit that our leaders have failed to rise to the occasion, even though we are currently engaged in a war where the battlefield is our own backyard. The purpose of terror is to scare the population and to affect public will. Terrorists will, therefore, strike either where we least expect it or where there would be maximum psychological impact. Even if you accept the proposition that terrorists will not target Canada unless they cannot attack the U.S. directly, it is entirely likely that terrorists could attack Canada as a means of attacking the U.S. Accordingly, they may seek to disrupt a sporting venue in Canada where American teams are participating. Or worse, they could simultaneously attack schools in multiple locations – or nations – to strike unprecedented terror in the hearts of our people.

Even though we find ourselves at war, our leaders have not called upon us to make any sacrifice to further national commitment and resolve. In every past war, Americans were asked to make some sort of sacrifice in the form of conscription, rationing or a tax increase. In this war, Americans are being told not that they should sacrifice, but that they need a tax cut so that they can enjoy even greater material comfort. I defy any of you to identify even one sacrifice that any American or Canadian civilian has been asked to make to further the global war on terrorism. Unlike President Kennedy's exhortation 40 years ago, this generation is not being asked to "pay any price or bear any burden ... to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

Although President Bush has asked Americans to volunteer two years to the community over the course of their lifetimes, the administration apparently does not consider joining the armed forces to be part of community service. Those responsible for the USA Freedom Corps view military service as a "job," and therefore, do not include it as a form of service to the community. If you look at the White House website, www.whitehouse.gov, and go to the link for the USA Freedom Corps, you will find no mention of military service. What greater evidence could there be of the gulf between military and civilian society?

Unfortunately, few figures in our popular culture are veterans. It did not use to be that way. Jimmy Stewart, Ted Williams, Benny Goodman all had distinguished service records. Today, you would be hard pressed to identify even one entertainer or athlete who ever wore a uniform. The same trend extends to our elected officials. Not only are there fewer veterans in Congress, but also only one Member of Congress has a son who serves in the enlisted ranks. Senator Tim Johnson (Democrat of South Dakota) has a son who served in Afghanistan and will almost

certainly serve in Iraq. It says something about American politics that the Republicans ran an aggressive campaign against him last year, charging that he was “soft on defense!”

Earlier, Dr. Axworthy suggested that Americans are living in fear. I disagree. When the terror level was raised to code orange earlier this year, it seemed that everybody ignored it. Fully 40% of the cities polled by the National League of Cities stated that they did nothing in response to the new terror alert because it costs too much money for municipalities to increase security. Most of these jurisdictions are facing a severe budget crisis and the President’s budget does not provide enough funding to state and local government to cope with increased terror threats. Across the board, the U.S. is not spending enough on homeland security. At any rate, raising the terror level is starting to resemble the boy who cried wolf.

I further disagree with Dr. Axworthy’s observation that everything in America is about security. He suggested that Congress would close the U.S./Canadian border if the U.S. perceived that Canada was not doing what is necessary to eliminate the terrorist threat. I believe that American politics is still centered on the economy. U.S.-Canadian trade is as important to us as it is to you – after all, Canadian exports are American imports. I do not believe American business would tolerate further slowing the velocity of trade even to increase security.

Based on all of the foregoing, I am concerned that current defense policies may contain the seeds of their own destruction. The federal deficit has exploded as a result of the 2001 tax cut, massive increase in defense spending, economic downturn and failure to cut domestic spending programs. The cost of the war in Iraq and a further tax cut will further increase the red ink. Inevitably, Americans will again become “deficit hawks” and determine to balance the federal books. Short of cutting popular domestic spending programs – a dubious political proposition – the only source of cuts will be defense. If the American public continues to view defense as a distant problem, one whose burden is shouldered by others who are removed from their civilian society, they may not hesitate to scale back funding for the armed forces.

In fact, we have already seen attempts to run the war on terrorism on the cheap. Last spring, plans were made to demobilize nearly all reservists, not because they were not needed, but because the Office of Management and Budget concluded that saving money on personnel costs would hold down the size of the deficit. It was only after howling from the Combatant Commanders, Congress and a few in the public that those plans from the green eyeshade circle were killed.

In order to reorder national priorities, we must convince our respective peoples that defense matters to them personally. If the war on terrorism matters – and it is obvious that it does – then all combatants, i.e., all our citizens, should be asked to sacrifice in support of the war. If the home front does not feel a personal stake in defense, then indifference will allow the budget to overrule requirements. I applaud your willingness to stand up to the Minister and plead for more funds for the CF. I urge you to keep up the fight.

How then should we determine the resources needed for defense? I submit the following six-step process.

1. The government must determine an overall national security policy.
2. The government should decide what part of national security policy should be executed by force or the threat of the use of force, i.e., by the military as opposed to diplomacy, foreign aid or the private sector.
3. Policy-makers should identify the requirements and tasks imposed on the military to execute the policies identified in step two.
4. They must then identify what resources the military will require to perform those tasks.
5. If sufficient resources are not provided, defense leaders must identify the risks that flow from insufficient resources. The risks may take the form of increased casualties, equipment failure, inability to perform tasks in the required time or the inability to perform certain defense tasks at all.
6. If the risks identified in step five are unacceptable, then defense leaders must identify to their superiors what requirements they cannot perform, at which point you go back to step three and continue from there.

It is obvious to me that the requirements imposed by the government on the CF exceed the resources provided. Yesterday, the Defense Minister said that the upcoming deployment of a battle group and brigade HQ to Afghanistan will limit the ability of the CF to deploy land forces for up to one year. Yet he also acknowledged a “Pearsonian instinct” to help nations in distress. As a result of this instinct, I don’t believe that Canada will be able to resist the call to participate in the post conflict phase in Iraq. Given the ethnic strife between Kurds and Turks, Sunnis and Shiites, tribes and clans, there will be suffering and misery that requires amelioration. Canada’s particular expertise in operating in that kind of environment will be essential to ensuring success. Will Canada sit on the sidelines? I hope not. Iraq needs your unique skills and expertise.

Yet just as the CF has a critical manpower shortage, so too does the U.S. armed forces. Despite an explosion in requirements, the size of neither the Active nor Reserve Components has not increased. As of late February, over 170,000 American reservists have been mobilized out of an available pool of 900,000. Given that all port security assets are in the Coast Guard Reserve, it is not surprising that over 50% of all Coast Guard Reservists have been mobilized – some more than once. I have heard estimates that as many as 400,000 total reservists may be mobilized.

Among those mobilized are 10,000 National Guardsmen who were mobilized to guard Air Force installations because the Air Force is short of security personnel. National Guard leaders have predicted that at least 60% of the personnel mobilized for this mission will leave the service at the first opportunity because they did not sign up to patrol a perimeter. They enlisted to drive tanks and shoot artillery.

As a result of the manpower shortage, the Pentagon has imposed “stop loss” on the military, where personnel are held indefinitely after their enlistments have ended. Notwithstanding this form of conscription, the Pentagon has rejected the calls to increase the size of the Active and

Reserve – it costs too much to do so. Yet even if the Pentagon authorized a personnel increase, it is unclear if the military could attract enough recruits. The youth propensity to serve continues to decline, which is perhaps not surprising in a society grown less accustomed to sacrificing for the common good.

These trends will continue after the war is over in Iraq. There will be thousands of boots on the ground in Iraq for years to come. Democratization will be hard – Iraq is not a homogeneous society like Japan or Germany. For three thousand years those who live in the Tigris-Euphrates valley have never tasted democracy. Convincing groups to work together who desire nothing other than to kill each other is going to be an unprecedented challenge. Those who believe that the Americans will leave Iraq quickly should recall that President Clinton promised that the U.S. would be out of Bosnia in only one year.

In fairly short order the majority of personnel in Iraq will be reservists and mobilizations for duty in Iraq will continue indefinitely. This will strain the Total Force policy as never before. Although employers have been supportive of their employees who are mobilized, small businesses are hurting and it remains to be seen how supportive they will be when their employees are mobilized for a second time.

In closing, let me say a few words about the relationship between the United States and Canada. Last night, somebody asked me my reaction to Carolyn Parrish's observations about Americans. I thought a moment and then pointed out that my wife calls me worse things on a daily basis. Ever since we entered into our domestic version of the Ogdensburg Agreement, my wife and I have managed to remain together notwithstanding our differences. So too will the U.S. and Canada survive the current disagreement. We are tied together by more than the 49th parallel – we share the same culture, values and trade. I submit the US needs you now more than ever. I urge CDA to continue to fight for the CF because the US needs a robust and modernized CF to work in coalition with the US armed forces to pursue common objectives.