

**Transcript of the
Speech Delivered by**

**General Rick Hillier
Chief of the Defence Staff**

at the

Conference of Defence Association Annual General Meeting

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I don't know about a major presentation but I learned a long time ago that if you have a period of time and you divide that time between what you're going to say and the opportunity for questions, you should take all the time at the front, speak to it, leave no time for questions. That is my intent this morning.

Rick, merci beaucoup pour l'invitation, pour l'introduction. Tout d'abord j'aimerais vous remercier de m'avoir invité ici aujourd'hui pour discuter avec vous des Forces canadiennes, nos opérations et certainement la transformation, comme vous avez dit. Étant de Terre-Neuve, je suis bien sûr un gars du genre timide qui n'a jamais rien à dire ni d'opinion à exprimer. Mais malheureusement pour vous aujourd'hui mon épouse Joyce est également de Terre-Neuve. Elle aussi aime parler et c'est seulement au travail ou lorsque je suis invité comme conférencier quelque part que je parviens à placer un mot. Je vais donc en profiter aujourd'hui pour vous parler de ce qui me tient à coeur. Alors installez-vous confortablement. Ça va prendre une période de temps.

Tout ce dont je vais parler aujourd'hui s'articule autour de trois piliers interconnectés: les opérations, la transformation et la communication avec les Canadiens. Tous les trois sont essentiels pour les Forces canadiennes et donc pour le Canada. Il est essentiel clairement que les Forces canadiennes réussissent chacune de leurs opérations. Mais nous ne pouvons pas avoir de succès dans ces opérations sans la transformation, que c'est la transformation qui crée les conditions du succès.

Enfin, l'élément de base à notre travail dans le cadre des opérations et dans la transformation est la communication. En effet, nous ne pouvons pas accomplir notre travail sans le soutien des Canadiens et pour l'obtenir nous devons communiquer avec la population.

Communicating with Canadians is an important thing for us to do and I think we saw some of the news this morning which indicated just how fundamentally critical that is to what our men and women do. And all of those three things are interconnected — the operations we do, the transformation and how Canadians view us and see us.

I have to tell you just recently we hosted General Peter Pace and his wife Lynn. About a month ago they came to Canada. It was the first opportunity he had to travel outside the United States for a specific country visit. He asked to come here and we spent some significant amount of time in fact discussing all of those things because there are many lessons to be learned from each other and many issues that we deal with together continentally or around the world.

As part of that weekend of work we were in Toronto and I said, you know, I wanted to showcase a little bit of Canada and I said I want to take you, first of all, since we are going to have dinner I want to show you an engineering marvel, an architectural feat of Canada and that is the CN Tower. So we went for dinner in the CN Tower. What I had not counted on was that his wife Lynn Pace has a deathly fear of heights. So going up the elevator on the outside of the building, as many of you have been there, I'm sure, we really had to sort of surgically remove her nose from the back corner of the elevator by the time we got to the top and she really wasn't keen on jumping on that glass floor and looking down the 1,100 feet to the street below. Nonetheless, a great evening, great opportunity to showcase a significant part of our country and what we actually can do as Canadians.

I said the second thing that I want you to see is the world's best hockey team play hockey so we're going to the Air Canada Centre after that. Unfortunately, that night it was Phoenix that was the world's best hockey team. It's tough being a Leafs fan. Tough being a Leafs fan. And even after, you know, decades and decades of losses here we're still not used to it and I've got to tell you I still find myself on occasion wishing for last year when at least we went undefeated as a Leafs team there in the season. My Leafs folder is starting to fall apart on me. Some people say that that reflects probably the state of the team and it's a good thing I didn't bring my Team Canada folder today obviously here.

I'm at a stage now where my entire family cheers for the Ottawa Senators and so I walk into a hostile — unlike here where friends and family and allies are obviously in evidence — I walk into a hostile environment at home and my only solace is our 16-month-old grandson. He comes in and he makes a beeline for his Toronto Maple Leafs slippers that I bought him to wear here. So I have one convert in the household.

I mention those things just a little bit because I had a chance to talk to Pat Quinn at the game. I went down after the game. I had a chance to talk to Pat Quinn and John Ferguson and I told them I'd like to see he and some of the Leaf players, maybe guys like Ti Domi, and the Stanley Cup in Afghanistan this summer and get an opportunity to showcase how important they think what Canadian soldiers and sailors and airmen and air women do, how important they think it is and show them by their presence and then of course Pat has got the heart of a soldier, there's no doubt about that. So he understood when I quickly qualified it and said I'd like to see Pat and some of those players with or without that Stanley Cup this summer. I wasn't sure we were actually going to in fact be able to take it with us.

A major part of what I do as your Chief of Defence Staff is help ensure that that connection to the Canadian population is done and that our population really

does take ownership of the Canadian Forces. And we've been coming at that in various ways and one of those ways was to not long ago, as I'm sure many of you are aware, was to take a small Team Canada into Afghanistan to visit the troops deployed there and to create conditions we believe for some 32 million Canadians to see through the eyes of those visitors, those celebrities, the work that our men and women in uniform do for them and to allow those men and women in uniform to see back through the eyes of those celebrities the support that they get from the population and the country for what they do so willingly.

And we took in just over a dozen people including Daniel Igali our world champion wrestler, Guy Lafleur, incredibly great hockey player despite the fact that he probably played for the wrong team. I had to be very careful about my words during that trip. Catriona Lemay Doan, our world champion speed skater, an extraordinary Canadian. And of course Rick Mercer. Incredible visit throughout. Guy Lafleur played hockey wherever he went. After all, we are Canadian. And had the opportunity to play hockey in Kandahar, in Kabul and in other places where we went and there's great photos of him, big individual that he is, taking a young soldier into the boards and trying to wipe him out. The boards gave way. The soldier fell on top and Guy Lafleur fell on top of him. And we got a great photo of the two of them grinning into the camera. He was a hit wherever he went. He gave me one of his Montreal Canadiens hats that he signed and asked me to wear it when I dropped the ball to start a game in Kabul and so I had to put my Leafs sweater on at the same time. That's the only way I could actually wear it.

Catriona Lemay Doan was awesome, absolutely awesome. Her million-watt smile, her engaging personality, her absolute energy to go out and meet every single soldier and sailor and airman and air woman that was in her vicinity. She had her photo taken at least 10,500 times. She got up and went for a run in the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar in the morning with all the female soldiers. All the male soldiers got up and went for a run right at the same time. It was just absolute -- so I wonder.

I actually had to give the flight crew on our C-130 a bit of lambasting. For those who've been on a C-130 you understand that the cockpit is about the size of a small room and in fact there's eight or nine, 10 people that can be in that cockpit at various times here. We were sitting in the front. Catriona Lemay Doan has a little bit of claustrophobia and really didn't like being back into the packed aircraft so I got her to sit next to me on a seat at the back of that cockpit and as we were getting on to go into the flight and you put on your flak vest and helmet because you're in an air defence zone, I noticed that the entire air crew was helping her adjust her flak vest and her helmet and her webbing and everything else. I said to the guys, "Okay, nobody has helped me put my flak vest on here." She was absolutely incredible.

Daniel Igali, I don't know how many folks know Daniel. He's about this wide here, about this tall, about two inches taller than our Vice-Chief of Defence Staff Ron Buck. Shoulders this wide. Incredible Canadian. Talked to those men and women and told them that he had a pride that was phenomenal when he wrestled for Canada representing the Maple Leaf and our country but the pride that he had seen in those men and women in uniform serving our country made what he felt almost minuscule in fact and he was just absolutely from the heart telling them how much he appreciated their work and he was very effective at doing it. One of our big, tough, strong young soldiers, actually a young special forces guy, six-foot-five, had about 120 pounds on Daniel, challenged him to wrestle. Big, strong, mean kid. Good hands and feet as Dave Barr and his company would say in that business, right? Five minutes, Daniel pinned him three times. I think the difference between being big and strong and mean and a world champion wrestler, right?

On the way out of Kabul I've got to tell you I was exhausted, been on the go weeks prior to that. Four and a half hour flight out of Kabul back to our sustainment base. I was in the cockpit. There's a bunk at the top. I said as soon as we get airborne I'll flip that bunk down, get up on top of it and get about three and a half hours sleep so I'm good to go for the next week, week and a half here in what we were doing. I did that. Got up on the bunk, squirmed around a bit, turned to face towards the cockpit, ready to settle in for a three and a half hour nap, four inches away from my face was Rick Mercer. Rick Mercer spoke for three and a half hours on the way out. And talked about how he wanted to communicate in fact what men and women were doing for Canada and some of the things that he would in fact offer up.

And, as a result of that, we went down about five days later to Trenton to the Canadian Parachute Centre. He and I went and jumped. We jumped from 10,000 feet. We did about 5,000 free fall and about 5,000 and a bit under canopy so six minutes air time or so. Rick Mercer talked for all 10,500 feet. He never missed a beat.

The no-fail operations, transformation to make us more effective and more relevant in those operations and certainly as I've said now several times supporting the first two, connecting into Canadians in a way that we have never done before drives my schedule, my work and my life and as I speak for our Canadian Forces and more accurately the men and women wearing our flag on their shoulders in the Canadian Forces are conducting operations around this country, across the continent and across the world — in fact in some 19 different countries. From routine support to communities to high-risk search and rescue off our coasts, to assistance when necessary in the interdiction of drug traffickers, to the exercise of our sovereignty across the North we are busy in and around our home.

Internationally we participate in large numbers of UN missions either directly or indirectly in the Middle East, in Eastern Europe, throughout Africa and of course in Afghanistan. The Afghan mission remains right now our great focus, a mission where the opportunity to do good and the risk are equally high. We now have some 2,200 soldiers, sailors, airmen and air women in Afghanistan. And they are all there. There are about 100 in Kabul and in fact they call themselves the Kabul 100. There are soldiers in the PRT, the Provincial Reconstruction Team. They have been there since last August helping Governor Asadullah develop his province, Kandahar, as fast as possible.

They are in the battle group, which commenced full operations today under Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Hope and they are in the command group, which under Brigadier-General Dave Fraser will assume command of military operations in the southern part of Afghanistan next week. In addition to us Canadians, his command will include some thousands of soldiers from the U.S., United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Denmark, Romania, Australia and perhaps some other countries where decisions have not yet been made.

Dave Fraser and his merry band of men and women, regular force and reserve, Canadians all, are in Afghanistan for many reasons. And you heard some of those reasons yesterday from our minister. You heard some of them from General Henault, the Chairman of the Military Committee and you've heard those reasons articulated by the Ambassador from Afghanistan to Canada and others. But I do come from the Joey Smallwood School of Public Speaking and if it's worth saying once, it's worth saying at least five or six or seven times. So let me just tell you why I believe, my personal perspective, why I believe we are in Afghanistan.

We are in Afghanistan firstly because we as a country, we as Canadians refuse to accept terrorism and its indiscriminate violence as a way of making change. We are there to ensure that fertile garden of the failed state of Afghanistan, that Petrie dish really that permitted Al-Qaeda, like-minded terrorist groups and the Taliban to recruit, resource, recover, prepare, plan and project their violence worldwide does not reemerge. We must be imparting the conditions for stability there before that instability is exported here.

Equally important, however, is that we are in Afghanistan to help Afghans. We're not there to build an empire. We're not there to occupy a country. But we are there to help Afghan men, women and children rebuild their families — not an easy task after over two million of them were killed and over eight million were driven out of their country out of a population of approximately 27 million. We're there to help those families rebuild their communities to a level where perhaps the medical standards are improved enough so that two children out of five do not die before the age of five, where security means that not dying from a suicide bomber's actions while shopping for food is possible, where schools are

open and where students — both boys and girls — are being taught by teachers who do not fear being killed and decapitated for what they do, communities where women can play an equal part in the society.

And we are there to help those communities come together as a country guided by the Constitution that the Afghans developed, led by a president that the Afghans elected, represented by a parliament that the Afghans chose. We're there to help a country improve its per capita income from about \$300 per year to something significantly more. And when you talk to the United Nations representatives from their drug organization they say that the mark where a country stops exporting, being an exporter or a net exporter of drugs is around a thousand dollars per capita income. We are there to help Afghanistan become a stabilizing factor in a region that is usually inherently unstable, a region that is a source of most of the world's heroin. Last year over 3,000 tonnes of opium were produced in the country. And a region that includes three nuclear powers and potentially a fourth as we know. We are in Afghanistan to protect our interests, to project our values and to help ensure the long-term stability and security of the place that we know and that we love called Canada.

Throughout history Canada has not flinched when meeting responsibilities shouldered as a founding member of NATO, as a founding member of the United Nations under whose Security Council resolution the mission in Afghanistan is conducted or as a member of the G-8. And let me tell you, viewed by the rest of the world as rich and with a duty to help. Our men and women in uniform do not flinch now. Dave Fraser and his band of men and women will not flinch. But they need, as never before, our country's visible support.

Now I beg your indulgence for a few minutes more on that topic just to tell you that the men and women who execute that mission in Kandahar and Kabul and around other parts of Afghanistan are the best-equipped contingent in that country out of the 35 or so military forces being committed — bar none. From exceptional hot weather boots and uniforms, to knee and elbow pads, to protective and tactical vests, to the personal radios which do the job superbly, night vision goggles, camelback hydration systems, ballistic eye protection, Kevlar helmets, modern weapons, all the bells and whistles, Global Positioning Systems for navigation, Light Armoured Vehicles-III, the best of its kind in the world in my opinion, G-Wagens, the Nyala vehicles, satellite communications and of course, since we're Canadian, hockey rinks in every camp where we go. Any equipment that we lack such as heavy lift helicopters is being contributed as part of a multinational effort until we can provide our own. Our contingent — you and Canadians should be confident, should be comfortable with — has the equipment, it has the training and it has the organization and leadership that is second to none. Those men and women are ready and they are equipped and prepared to do their job.

Those young soldiers, sailors, airmen and air women use those advantages well whether it's organizing a soccer tournament for young men, an art competition for school girls, coordinating reconstruction of infrastructure or with a long range sniper shot stopping those that would prevent that progress, the dedication, the

courage, the pride and the patriotism are always evident and never more so than in times of stress. These great Canadians who wear our uniforms face those who would kill us with raw courage, perseverance and tenacity without flash, without glitz and without bravado. And they are simply Canada's soldiers in that most generic sense of the word protecting Canada's interests.

But these soldiers and sailors and airmen and air women are on a mission that illustrates the change in operation since the end of the Cold War. Chaos is a great threat and with those who advocate it not part of any one state. In short, we face an enemy that lacks a postal code. The traditional inter-positioning of troops between two belligerents who just need some help in implementing a peace accord is no more. Whether in Darfur, the Congo, Haiti, other UN missions, the operations, the threats and the forces are very similar. We are there to help people like that build their nation and in the early going that means much help in the security sector.

On the transformation, our transformation is designed to ensure that these men and women continue to have conditions set for success in everything that we ask them to do and at the same time have the direct risk to them reduced to the lowest level possible knowing that we cannot reduce it to zero. We are working and our aim is to achieve significant strategic effect for Canada by producing one integrated effect on every mission that the Canadian Forces undertakes whether it is here in Canada, on the continent or overseas. It's not about separate land, air or sea components on a mission that we accept, where our significant contributions from a national perspective because of a past silo approach sometimes did not appear on the radar scope internationally, and this compartmentalized or piecemeal approach reduced our impact and certainly did not enable us to get the strategic impact for Canada that we wanted. And what we want to do is maximize the impact, increasing Canada's profile and increasing our effect in the world in a very real way, shaping the places where we go in accordance with our interests and with our values. This is the guiding light of transformation for us, one effect.

We've used six principles to illustrate and guide our work and they are in short: first, a Canadian Forces focus and culture, precedence over service component or unit, build on the strengths of the land, sea and air forces, give them the strategic guidance and direction and context to work within, and direct their contributions to achieve that one effect, the effect that we seek.

Second, operations primacy. Our *raison d'être* is to conduct operations and at times in the past our structures have not reflected that. Operations primacy.

Thirdly, command centric. A clear separation of the command responsibilities and the staff responsibilities so that we have individuals who are clearly identified as having the authority, which is our fourth, our authority, the

responsibility to conduct operations with that authority and the accountability to do so.

Mission command. Command by intent and initiative. What I want to do as a greedy Chief of the Defence Staff is get a return on that immense investment in selection and education and training and experiencing and promotion of the men and women in the Canadian Forces, set them up for success, let them know what they have to achieve, give them the context in which to achieve it and then hold them accountable for exactly that.

And, lastly, our structure, an integrated Canadian Forces structure must reflect regular, the reserve and the civilian components that we are. Ce dernier principe qui régit la transformation des Forces canadiennes a trait à la structure à l'organisation. Nous avons mis en place une structure qui reflète vraiment qui nous sommes — la force régulière, la réserve et le personnel civil et ce que nous faisons. En mettant sur pied nos nouveaux commandements opérationnels nous avons créé des postes pour tous, quel que soit l'élément auquel ils appartiennent.

Par exemple, le commandant adjoint du Commandement Canada sera un réserviste. À la Défense, les hommes et les femmes de la force régulière, les réservistes et les employés civils travaillent en équipe au profit du Canada. Notre nouvelle structure reflète cette situation et encore une fois va produire un effet global pour le Canada.

Dans le cadre des changements structurels et organisationnels nous établissons une séparation entre le niveau de commandement stratégique et le niveau de commandement opérationnel. Il existe une claire distinction entre les deux. C'est la raison pour laquelle on a décidé de démanteler l'organisation du sous chef d'État-major de la Défense nationale et de la remplacer par un petit État-major interarmée stratégique composé de 300 personnes et établi au Quartier général de la Défense nationale, ainsi que par les nouveaux commandements opérationnels. L'État-major interarmée stratégique va me fournir le soutien d'État-major opérationnel et va permettre aux commandements opérationnels d'accomplir effectivement leur travail.

Comme je l'ai mentionné, il y a des nouveaux commandants, des nouveaux commandants opérationnels — un qui est chargé des opérations nationales, un autre des opérations internationales et un troisième les opérations spéciales.

Our entire transformation is based on a Canada First attitude. To meet the intent of those principles, we've stood up Canada Command on 1 February with a commander, Vice-Admiral J.Y. Forcier, and a small command and support team and six regional commanders building on the structures we had in place across our country — not adding new ones — to have the responsibility and

authority to conduct all operations in Canada and across the continent to undertake all routine and crises operations including search and rescue, coastal and Arctic surveillance and assisting with our provincial or Government of Canada response to a disaster or terrorist attack.

And let me just tell you what I've told J.Y. Forcier and that really holds true for each of the operational commanders. I've told J.Y. that he must, first of all, ensure that the command and control structure works, that it's set up for success. As I reminded him that success in dealing with any operations, whether routine or emergency, terrorist attack or natural disaster, the success will be determined in that first 24 hours with the psychological impacts that come from perceived success or perceived failure being substantial. I think all you have to do is recall Hurricane Katrina and what occurred in those first hours. I call that actually psychological security. Win those first 24 hours.

I've directed him to develop the standards, the readiness levels and the necessarily domestically-focussed capabilities to enable us to meet our enormous responsibility here at home in Canada.

And, lastly, I directed him to lead us from crises to contingency response by preparing for, planning for and exercising to death probable scenarios that may occur based on our large population centres. When crisis occurs and stress levels are high we must be implementing contingency plans that have been developed and practised. And we are not becoming first responders in doing that, nor indeed second responders. But we want to become third responders of the first order.

J'ai déjà parlé du Commandement Canada. Je vais donc mentionner rapidement COMFEC, le Commandement de la Force expéditionnaire du Canada, qui est chargé des opérations internationales. Il a la responsabilité de mettre en place les conditions pour le succès de nos hommes et femmes dont j'ai déjà parlé pendant les missions à l'étranger. Mike Gauthier, le commandant, aura aussi la responsabilité pour la force opérationnelle permanente de contingence qu'il nous reste encore à mettre sur pied. Je désire que la force opérationnelle permanente de contingence qui sera une force opérationnelle à haut niveau de préparation soit opérationnelle d'ici 2008. Je ne sais pas encore quelle en sera la taille et je suis certain qu'il existe de nombreuses opinions à ce sujet.

Enfin, parlons du COMFOSCAN, le Commandement des Forces d'opérations spéciales du Canada. Nous avons déjà pris une longueur d'avance dans la constitution de ce commandement et nous allons renforcer leurs effectifs jusqu'à ce que nos forces d'opérations spéciales atteignent un niveau significatif. Il est prévu, cependant, qu'il faudra plusieurs années avant que cet élément atteigne son stade de maturité.

Transformation, however, includes more than a vision, principles and organizational change no matter how much those three things are needed. It also needs capabilities to ensure that the organization and the right people in it with the right skill sets are matched to the right equipments for success and those capabilities demand many things for us to be successful but let me speak briefly to four.

One: clear priorities. Since everything we do will never be affordable, let there be no doubt in any plan we bring forth that we have a responsibility to our political masters in the country of Canada to articulate clearly the priorities that we see from the military side. In the plans that we bring forth airlift will be line 1. Without the replacement of the C-130 Hercules in the very near future we run a risk that that fleet will end up grounded and our ability to conduct operations significantly constrained or stopped internationally or domestically. In the triage of military life this is urgent. We have just grounded our second out of 32 aircraft permanently and many others are moving rapidly towards that fate. Our aircraft are high hours of usage — many in the 40,000-hour bracket plus. And we have become world leaders with that fleet in a place where we really do not want to be world leaders.

We need a fixed wing search and rescue aircraft to help replace some of the Hercules and the Buffalo aircraft itself for those life and death operations in Canada. We need a heavy lift helicopter for both domestic and international operations because that is what the demand calls for and we need the guaranteed strategic airlift. Airlift in all of our military planning occupies line 1.

Point two, we need an acquisitions process that delivers. Firstly, it delivers what the men and women in uniform need to do their job and be successful and, secondly, it delivers it when they need it. We as a military leadership and me personally have to clearly state the priorities in equipments, as I already mentioned, necessary for military success. But we have to clearly state what each of those equipments must achieve, not the specifications but what we require in performance output and ideally in a half a dozen bullets that say what we must achieve. We must then take and enforce an appetite suppressant on modifications of in-service equipment or equipment coming into service to avoid being the owners and operators of a unique Canadian orphan vehicle, airplane, ship or any other piece of equipment. We must push military off-the-shelf purchases from our perspective to the limit. We do not want to become the designers of unique aircraft, ships or fighting vehicles for the Canadian Forces.

That's our job as military leadership, mine as Chief of the Defence Staff and clearly there is much work to be done in the Canadian Forces to make that a reality. There's much work to be done to pile on that outside of the Canadian Forces and the department and we work with Ward Elcock and the civilian team

every single day to achieve this and there's an enormous amount of work to be done across the Government of Canada structure to ensure all of it can succeed. Revolutionizing the present acquisition process will not in and of itself ensure the success in transformation and operations. But not revolutionizing it will ensure the failure.

Three, we need money. Despite the increase of some \$500 million in the budget of 23 February of last year that we now have, some of which was taken back by other government programs leaving us with about 350 million increase for this year that we are in now, we have not yet managed to regain the spending levels of 1991. So you're clear what our challenge is on the dollar side, we remain short about three-quarters of a billion dollars just to sustain the present Canadian Forces, everything from married quarters to spare parts to ammunition to running of simulators to gas or oil and to rations and to everything else necessary to march or fly or sail.

The bow wave, as it is sometimes described, of things that we have not done, that we have put off, that we have pushed to the side but still remains whether that's maintenance of buildings or that's equipment fleets that have to be replaced or equipments that have to be upgraded is enormous and it is going to take us billions of dollars to dig out of that hole and I mean billions with a capital B. Everything we do is more expensive. Old equipment if you keep it long enough is more expensive to operate because it's old and you can't get parts for it unless you go out and make them specifically. New equipment with the high technology that comes with it is more expensive to operate it.

We need money to sustain ourselves, then to increase our numbers to flesh out the skeletal units that we have in some places across the Canadian Forces. We need money to modernize those units and then we need to recruit and train and equip new ones.

Our infrastructure burden is significant. We have a lot of infrastructure, a lot of buildings in the Canadian Forces and that's increasingly weighty and costly. And my estimate is that we have anywhere up to a quarter of our infrastructure which is not operationally required.

Fourth and last point, we need a culture and an approach that is radically different for how we recruit and how we train to take us much further than the approaches of these past years. I remain puzzled as to with the excitement that we offer in the Canadian Forces to young men and women, the security that we provide for jobs, the challenge that we give, the training and education that we ensure and the salary and benefits that we offer, I remain puzzled as to why every single Canadian — man and woman coming out of high school, college or university — does not want, does not seek to join us. If you want to go sail the seven seas in the most high tech ships in the world, you come see us, you can do that. If you want to fly high performance aircraft, something like the CF-18

which we are modernizing now at great cost to have a world-class aircraft, again, you come see us. And if you want a physical and mental challenge with the satisfaction of dealing directly with people when they desperately need help almost every day of your life and want to come and join the army, you come see us. We can offer you that.

The answer — and it explains my puzzlement — is because most people don't know about us. And we have to get back into advertising — and it was mentioned by Jayson earlier on here this morning — in a big way with realistic ads that show what we do, that show the excitement that I feel myself here. And you remember that appalling ad from the '70s of the young officer getting off an aircraft with a briefcase? That ain't us. I just want to tell you.

We've got to make recruiting every service man and woman's business and I mean this. Going from 300 recruiters at present to very quickly 30,000 recruiters and then eventually to 80,000 recruiters touching every community, geographical and ethnic, in Canada. And we're moving from a passive approach on recruiting where essentially we sat around waiting for you to come to us to a more active and aggressive one, an approach that continues the good work done to date also in sorting out some of the administrative frustrations. Reducing the majority of recruiting times is our goal here down to a month in the majority of cases here. And this means we've got to continue the work that's been done and a lot of successful work has been done, I will tell you, to revamp the administrative process, to revamp the medical procedures and to revamp how we approach security clearances. It means using a hub and spoke recruiting system here. Take those recruiting centres and give them all the tools they need to be effective and use that as the hub, and then use the spokes as mobile recruiting centres, every man and woman in uniform, and in particular step to our reserve units to become the way we reach into every neighbourhood across this country and reach into those populations that I've talked about.

It means a different look and approach to offering -- Jayson talked again this morning about many things the United States Forces are doing, offering many things like that. You know a week off to somebody who brings a friend or an individual into the recruiting centre and if they enroll offer them a week of leave gratis. My little concern is that is we'll have press ganging back in and the streets of Pembroke will be having guys knocked on the head and dragged off to the recruiting centre by somebody who seeks a week of leave here.

We've got to look at the thing in a different dynamic and maybe we want to go and seek with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, maybe we want to go and seek with them an agreement that if landed immigrants join the Canadian Forces they have an accelerated route to citizenship in our great country. We have to come at this in an entirely new approach. I believe it's possible to be successful in this one. We've got to focus though. We've got to focus, for example, on the

major events across Canada where almost a half of our country's population in one year go. You know the Calgary Stampede, let me just tell you the experience I had.

There last year they wanted to showcase the Canadian Forces. We were there and we had some good representation — slightly uncoordinated — but as I looked around at the opportunity to impact on 1.4 million visitors, 1.4 million, from a population that is traditionally very supportive of Canadian Forces and therefore an easier opportunity to take, I looked around and wondered where the Snowbirds were. Well, they were flying that day but it wasn't in Calgary. And the Sky Hawks were jumping that day but it wasn't in Calgary. And so we're going to focus on seven big events across Canada as an operation under Canada Command: Pacific National Exhibition; Calgary Stampede; Canadian National Expedition; Canada Day here in Ottawa; Carnaval in Quebec City; Nova Scotia Tattoo; and of course the Grey Cup Game here. And when we're going to do these things Canada Command will run it as an operation, and if the Snowbirds are flying that day they're going to be flying in Calgary and if the Sky Hawks are jumping that day, they're going to be jumping in Calgary or else the Chief of the Defence Staff, who will be there, will be jumping up and down also.

Equally important though to the attraction and the recruiting part is the training once we have the men and women in uniform. We know we can be successful. We offer so much. It's as simple as that. And our approach has got to be now a mobilization approach. You heard our minister yesterday and we know what the Conservative government's platform is for the Canadian Forces. And if we're going to take in those large numbers of men and women, many of whom are destined towards the land forces, we're going to take some operational units and General Marc Caron, the Chief of Land Staff, Commander of Land Forces right over here, has already thought through. We will take operational units in lower states of readiness and turn them into schools to train those men and women in about 80 to 85 percent of the skill sets that we need. What we want to do is drive them to the recruit training centre down in Borden and St. Jean to do the training for those specific technical trades until we can start shifting that technical training out to Canadian colleges under a contractual basis. I mean we spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year for education across our country and I don't feel obligated to repeat all the same thing inside the Canadian Forces when it can do it for us as easily with an agreement that we would have.

The last thing I would say to you: connecting to Canadians. And I won't take long with this one. Having been disconnected from the population for many years in my view, disowned by Canadians in this past decade and seeing their confidence in us plummet, we have an obligation to ensure that we as Canada's armed forces are seen by our population, by those 32 million Canadians as exactly that, their armed forces. Our approach has got to be recruit a family and recruit a nation. And we bring three messages to them because we believe our

credibility is the centre of gravity here.

One is that Canada First drives everything that we do. That's why I come to work in the morning. That's why I wear this uniform and that's why I'm so proud to wear that Canadian flag on my shoulder. Everything we do is about Canada and serving Canadians better.

Two, we are a force for good. Everything that we do, our job is based on Canadian values and protecting particularly the weak and vulnerable who cannot protect themselves. If that happens to be at home because of a domestic disaster, we do it here. But Canada plays a role around the world as all of us know and we do it internationally also.

And, thirdly, your Canadian Forces are your pride. And if Canada's pride is not satisfactory to you, get engaged, get involved and help sort it out. Canadians need to see and hear about those incredible young men and women — soldiers, sailors, airmen and air women — who are the very credentials of our country representing in fact what I believe is a national treasure, and around the less fortunate spots of the world they are the face of Canada that millions see and millions remember as a bright and a shining beacon in a world that seems very dark. In Canada when people desperately need help they appear, those men and women, 10 feet tall.

We who wear the uniform, though, we who are visible are the volunteers. But those who constitute our families are not. And they are brought into this high stress environment that we occupy, usually very unaware of the demands that they will face. You know what they are: long absences, missed family events, burdens carried alone and we all know that things only happen when a family member is away. A family's sacrifice and the commitment and the dedication and the perseverance are as essential to operational success for us as is that of the soldiers and the sailors and airmen and air women. That, unfortunately, is completely unseen by our country. The greatest gift and really the greatest sacrifice that a family can give to their country is their personal hero — their family member. And I would like today to recognize those families and thank them for their support to our country and helping other Canadians when they need that help, or helping those around the world when their societies explode.

Our men and women in uniform and their families will remember their lives in service to Canada — the work comradeship, the challenge, the missions, the satisfaction — and all of it for them will add up to lives well lived. They have been part of something and will have been part of something greater than themselves, something extremely worthwhile in life. And I believe all of us seek that. They will, even if they do nothing else with their lives outside of the uniform branch — I know that's not true because these are achievers — they will have already accomplished more than 98 percent of Canadians do in their entire life.

And when they're older, when they're retired, when they're sitting on the back porch of that retirement home — probably in their diapers — some noise, some word, some smell is going to cause the memory to work and they're going to remember lives well lived.

I'm going to close by just saying I can't say that very well. But let me just tell you that a lady did touch me recently and perhaps some of you have heard this. This is Colleen Salikin, mother of Private Will Salikin. And of course she went over to meet her son in Landstuhl, Germany, came home with him. I had the opportunity to meet young Will, to meet Colleen also obviously. I pinned his medal on her and had a chance to talk to her. And let me just tell you the letter that she wrote, let me just read parts of the letter that she wrote to the members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar. And she addresses it to them.

"My name is Colleen and this is written to you from Landstuhl, Germany, from the Fisher House, a place similar to Ronald McDonald House in North America. I am with my son Will, or as you so fondly call, Sal. It has been in my heart these past days to sit down and write you to express in words what I feel. Will is okay and will be back in Edmonton soon. He is one pretty tough kid and I know with no hesitation that he will be fine. He has given us several good signs and he continues to improve with time even if it is slow progress."

"Even though he has a biological family, Will has another family, a much larger one full of caring brothers and sisters — you his comrades. And over the past two years he has often spoken of how strong the bond has grown between everyone, how proud he is to be serving with you and his pride in being a Canadian."

"During the last few days I have had the honour of knowing that I'm part of this awesome armed forces family. The incredible caring, support and protection that has been given to my family is like nothing I have ever experienced before. I am so blessed. Thank you for the unbelievable skills, kindness and support of all the Canadian and American doctors and staff in Landstuhl, our assisting officers, escorts and others. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the gift of my son."

"It is good to know that more Canadians are starting to speak up for the support of our armed forces. It is so good to feel this country uniting under a common bond. Many churches have been holding you and your families up in prayer since your departure from Canada and have committed to continue until you are all home."

"I want to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart and to tell you how proud I am of you and that you are most dear to me. Down the road

I look forward to meeting with you and promise a hug to each and every one of you regardless of rank." I had my hug from Colleen. "I guess that is one good thing about being a Canadian and a simple citizen."

"When you get back to Canada, pop by and say hello to Will. It will cheer him a lot and probably you as well. Bless you all and when it is time, safe journey home."

Colleen Salikin said if she was 30 years younger she would join the Canadian Forces to do what her son is doing. Will Salikin was released from hospital yesterday in Edmonton.

So it's an incredible letter I think which reflects truly what I would like to tell you. And I'm going to end there.