



**Testimony of Lieutenant General Richard Evraire (Retd), Chairman  
and Colonel Brian MacDonald (Ret'd) Senior Defence Analyst  
The Conference of Defence Associations  
to  
The House Of Commons Standing Committee On Finance**

October 17, 2006

**The Chair:** (*Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC)*)

We continue now with the Conference of Defence Associations, and Richard Evraire.

**Lieutenant-General Richard Evraire  
(Chairman, Conference of Defence  
Associations):**

The Conference of Defence Associations is grateful for this opportunity to participate in these consultations.

Firstly, allow me to say that the Conference of Defence Associations is pleased with the manner in which the Government of Canada has responded to two of the priorities for funding which we identified in our April submission to Minister Flaherty. The provision of an additional \$1.3 billion to improve the funding of ongoing operations in 2006-2007 is in line with our recommendations.

Similarly, the approval in principle for projects to deal with our immediate capital requirements and well-known deficiencies in strategic and tactical lift, is also in line with our recommendations.

Now that the most immediate

requirements have been dealt with, the Conference of Defence Associations wishes to turn to the planning and funding of the future force, in the context of the continuing rust-out of critical capabilities due to aging of equipment.

As the tables in the formal statement put before you today indicate, only one of the five most important naval platforms is under half of its life expectancy, as measured by Treasury Board mandated service lives. Two are already beyond their Treasury Board service lives.

The army has only 4 of its 11 major platforms with over half their life expectancy left, and 3 are beyond the end of their service lives, though one of these will be replaced in the projects cited above.

The air force is in even worse shape— with all but one of their eight major platforms beyond the end of their service lives, though the projects cited above will replace three fleets.

Mr. Chairman, the Conference of Defence Associations believes that the publication of a comprehensive defence capability plan, which looks beyond the current five-year, 2006-11 budget window, and which is supported by a meaningful defence capability financial plan that includes financial allocations and growth, is absolutely critical to the rehabilitation and preservation of Canada's defence and security requirements.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, the CDA estimates that the government needs to assign at least 1.3% of GDP to defence needs from 2011 to 2020 if it is to ensure that Canada is able to replace its major

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capabilities and has a viable future force with a three-ocean navy, a robust army, and a revitalized air force.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I am now going to hand over to Colonel Brian MacDonald, an analyst with the Conference of Defence Associations, who will be able to answer your questions. Thank you.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** (*Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ*)

Mr. MacDonald, of the Conference of Defence Associations, has suggested we invest sizable amounts to upgrade our military equipment. I would like him to explain where the committee will find the money, given that Mr. Kyle has also asked us to invest in the Canadian Cancer Society. Prospectors are also asking for their share, as are the people responsible for student financial assistance, the universities, etc.

Who of your colleagues here today should do their part to allow for increased military investment?

**Colonel Brian MacDonald (Senior Defence Analyst, Conference of Defence Associations):**

Mr. Chairman and Mr. St-Cyr, the Conference of Defence Associations identifies the requirement based upon our analysis of the age, particularly, of equipment, and simply points out that if that equipment is not replaced as it comes to the end of its service life or indeed beyond, then the capabilities associated with that equipment disappear as well.

So the challenge goes to government to make the decisions that are going to permit the foreign and defence policy of the country to be implemented, or, alternatively, to say to the military community, "We have changed our mind. These are the directions of our policy, and we will now give you enough money to do that."

This is a decision that is the role of government.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:**

You are saying that the financial resources needed to accomplish your mission are currently insufficient.

**Col Brian MacDonald:**

That is correct, and it has been for quite some time, as you will see from the various coloured charts that indicate the stage of obsolescence of the major platforms that are involved.

So that has to be addressed over the period of time in the future in order to restore those capabilities, or else the foreign and security policies themselves will not be capable of being executed.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):**

Mr. MacDonald, I have a couple of questions for you, hopefully, before moving on to a couple of other folks.

In terms of procurement, you've laid out fairly well the purchases, what's been necessary, and the direction in terms of the future. When was the last time the forces saw any type of procurement activity like this?

**Col Brian MacDonald:**

This has certainly been the largest chunk of procurement activity for many years. I would not be able to give you a specific date, but we have been most encouraged by the announcement of the commitment to procure a number of major platform renewals. Those address critical deficiencies and will then enable the forces to carry out their duties in a more effective and efficient fashion.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:**

What do you think would have happened within the next five years had the government not gone forward and done



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what it has done?

**Col Brian MacDonald:**

Well, to take the medium airlift fleet as an example, we would have seen about two-thirds of the fleet die within the next couple of years and the rest would have followed after that. Without that critical logistical airlift capability, the rest of the forces' ability to function comes very much into question.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:**

One other point that I had some questions on is on function and capability. From that respect, how does this allow the armed forces to function differently from how it would have functioned?

**Col Brian MacDonald:**

In the case of these particular purchases, we are seeing the restoration of a strategic and logistical lift capability for both the air force and the army and, from the naval standpoint, the provision of the joint support ships, which are the operational refuelers of naval squadrons.

These are all enablers in terms of the mobility of the forces.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:**

Thanks a lot for the response.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** *(Joliette, BQ)*

I would like to come back to the Conference of Defence Associations. You are asking for—and my colleague has also raised this—a major investment, which we are not calling into question. Everyone is well aware of the state of Canada's military equipment. I think that this is obvious when we see our helicopters having a hard time taking off and our submarines, which are barely submersible.

That being said, your demand leaves

us feeling uneasy, because a lot of money is at stake and we don't feel that the federal government has a very clear vision of the role of Canada's armed forces. During the last Parliament, Liberals published an international policy statement that included a national defence component. The policy was questionable and we did not really have time to debate it, because of the general election.

The Conservatives are sending out signals, but there is not a very clear strategic vision. Let me give you an example. Whereas people believe that Canada is playing an important role in United Nations' missions, Canada currently ranks fifth out of the 95 countries that contribute to UN missions. A lot is being invested today in our forces in Afghanistan, which might explain our ranking, but does not show us where we are headed.

Does your proposal to draw up a detailed plan on our defence capacity also include, because we are talking about details, a debate on the role Canada should consider for its armed forces and National Defence?

*(The Chair intervened as M. Paquette's time for questions had expired.)*

**The Chair:**

We will go now with Mr. Del Mastro.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** *(Peterborough, CPC)*

Mr. MacDonald, the Government of Canada this summer actually rolled out quite a number of what I consider to be very important procurement announcements for the armed forces. There's certainly some misconception that some of these things that we're buying are, for lack of a better term, fancy and glitzy. These are meat and potatoes investments in the military, aren't they?



**Col Brian MacDonald:**

Absolutely. When you're talking about strategic and tactical lift, you're talking about the method of getting supplies to where they are needed.

One might make the point as well that we're not simply looking at it in terms of overseas deployments, but also in terms of the requirement of the Department of National Defence to provide aid and assistance to other government departments in such things as the problem of disasters.

The acquisition, for example, of the strategic airlifters gives us an airplane that is able to deploy large quantities of materiel in the Canadian space.

We've talked about the possibility, for example, of a disaster in the Arctic area, which is an area that we are studying at the moment. Having the capacity to lift large quantities of commodities and to lift equipment such as medium transport helicopters in the belly of one of those airplanes to where there is a requirement in terms of some sort of a disaster is a great enabler for the Canadian Forces and its role.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:**

Perhaps it could be lifting the DART team to areas where there's been a tragedy, or even Leopard tanks to Afghanistan. I mean, we just don't have these capabilities.

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