

Minister
of National Defence



Ministre
de la Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

FEB 10 2009

Lieutenant-General Richard J. Evraire, C.M.M., C.D. (Retired)
Chairman
Conference of Defence Associations
400B - 222 Somerset Street West
Ottawa ON K2P 2G3

Dear Lieutenant-General Evraire:

Thank you for your letter of November 18, 2008, and your update on the recent activities of the Conference of Defence Associations.

I am pleased to hear that your Vimy Dinner was a success and of your recognition of General Rick Hillier and Mr. Alec Castonguay, highly deserving individuals who have contributed much to Canada and the cause of defence.

I read with great interest the Conference's position paper, *Funding for National Defence*, and can assure you that this government remains committed to rebuilding and re-arming the Canadian Forces with the best possible equipment. The Canada First Defence Strategy, supported by predictable long-term funding, articulates the Government's firm commitment to rebuilding the Canadian Forces into a first-class, modern military. In addition to expanding the Canadian Forces to 70,000 Regular Force personnel and 30,000 reserves, we have committed to renewing most of the major fleets of aircraft, ships, and land combat vehicles and systems. We fully understand that this is an expensive undertaking, but it is also an investment in Canada and will result in the creation of new high technology jobs for Canadians.

The Government also believes that investment in infrastructure, particularly in the face of economic challenges, is important to the economic health of the country and therefore intends to follow through with the commitment to renew investment in defence infrastructure.

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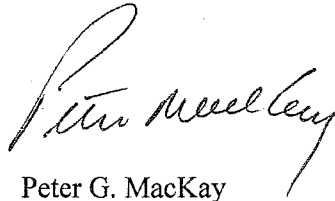
Canada

As part of the Government's commitment to keep Canadians safe, we recognize that a strong military, prepared to take action on the direction of government, requires an investment in readiness, that fourth and critical pillar of the Strategy. Government funding for contingency operations is fundamental to the fiscal framework of defence, and just as we have provided funding for those costs that are incremental to the Canadian Forces in operations up to this point, we will continue to do so on a case-by-case basis.

The benefit of the Strategy, in addition to increased security for Canadians, is the increased investment in Canada's defence sector, infrastructure, and people that is critical as Canadians face uncertain economic times.

Thank you again for writing. I appreciate your comments and support as we fulfil our commitment to rebuild the Canadian Forces. I commend the Conference of Defence Associations for its dedication to the furtherance of defence issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter MacKay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Peter G. MacKay