



Testimony of Colonel (Retired) Alain Pellerin
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to the
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Today my remarks will focus on the crucial link the Canadian military plays as a tool in the achievement of foreign policy goals and advancing Canada's role in the world.

The CDA, through its Institute, has conducted several in-depth studies on the current state of the armed forces and Canada's defence policy. Our most recent publication is entitled *Understanding the Crisis in Canadian Security and Defence*. The CDA has also conducted an analysis of the five components of the international policy statement. I've left copies of that with the clerk.

In summary, we are encouraged by the overarching approach the government has taken in the IPS, that links national and international security concerns and prescribes solutions affecting Canada's major national tools of power--i.e., diplomatic, defence, development, commerce, and trade.

In essence, the Conference of Defence Associations fully supports the leadership of Canada's military and the Minister in their visionary approach to transforming the Canadian Forces. The recent policy announcements send a clear signal that the decade-long military transition from Cold

War thinking to present realities is at an end.

Despite the fact that many legacy issues regarding personnel, infrastructure, and capital equipment acquisition require resolution, the major thrust of the new defence policies is rooted in a coherent assessment of strategy determinants that shape Canada, and provides a sound base from which to move forward. However, the CDA does have the following misgivings.

The Canadian Forces' zeal to implement the defence policy paper appears to be greater than that of other federal, provincial, and municipal government departments and agencies, many of which play vital roles. If this large-scale integration of effort--historically, rarely achieved save in war time--is impeded by a lack of focus or experience, policy implementation will surely be delayed, inadequately carried out, or made impossible. The current state of government leadership, federal government impediments to public administration of defence policy, and the DND/CF desire to transform virtually everything in a short space of time also weighs against success.

The IPS also makes no mention of any real role for Parliament in overseeing the implementation of government defence policy. In order to ensure long-term policy consistency and in order to develop a culture of knowledge and awareness amongst members of Parliament and future ministers, such a role is, in our view, essential for long-term policy success. There is no recognition of this in the IPS.

In general, the defence portion of the IPS gives little sense of the real crisis that

This testimony has been edited to include only the testimony of the speaker and the questions directed to him. It has also been lightly edited to correct syntax errors. For the original text, the Proceedings of the Committee can be consulted on the Parliamentary website at:
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/38/1/FAAE/Meetings/Evidence/FAAEEV49-E.HTM#Int-1353045>



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the CF is now in. The 2003 report by defence experts at Queen's University and the CDA Institute, entitled *Canada Without Armed Forces?*, noted that the failure of key CF capabilities is now a certainty due to past government neglect of defence. Two years later, this is still the case. Achieving the goals of the IPS will require both long-term funding consistency--not a strength of past governments, you would agree--and a complete reform of the existing approach to administering defence policy in Canada.

Allow me to highlight, for instance, one existing impediment: capital equipment acquisition, contributed to mainly, but not exclusively, by other government departments and central agencies. At present, DND has inadequate numbers and expertise, both military and civilian, to execute the existing departmental plan, the strategic capital investment plan.

In recent months, those responsible for advancing capital acquisition projects have missed 90% of their milestones. When that staff was twice its current size, it took 15 years to process major acquisitions. In the case of the maritime helicopter program, with which we're quite familiar, by the time the helicopters are operational it will be close to 30 years in length.

Today, existing government policy concerning military acquisitions and a dearth of project expertise leads to the troubling conclusion that transformation of the Canadian Forces, based on the implementation of the existing plan, would not be possible much before the year 2020.

Without the cooperation of other departments and central agencies, and personal involvement from the very top of the government, this transformation of the CF, which is essential if the vision of the Prime Minister and the government is to be met, will not be possible. This will severely limit the foreign policy tools at the disposal of Canadians and our government. A credible foreign and defence policy is not based on well-written policy documents but rather on the national tools at hand on the day of need.

Canada is currently suffering an indeterminate period of shortage of military tools. The length of that period is governed not by a lack of vision, leadership, defence policy, or even money. It is governed by the inefficiencies of the public administration of defence.

The government currently finds itself in a period in which its foreign policy options are fewer in number than they could be, in part because of the limitations of its military capabilities--this at a time when options would need to be greater in number. The loyal, disciplined force of last resort, the Canadian armed forces, should not find itself ill-equipped and under-strength at this juncture.

The Conference of Defence Associations believes the impediments in the public administration of defence are on Canada's foreign policy decision-making critical path, and need to be reduced or eliminated. If they aren't, the required transformation of the Canadian Forces will suffer time delays that will put the men and women of the Canadian Forces at risk and continue to provide Canada with a limited number of security, defence, and foreign policy options. This issue is of great importance to the nation, and by its nature will require the personal attention of the Prime Minister.

IPS 2005 is a good start. However, it still remains a vision. Until the Canadian Forces are restored, transformed, and modernized, many of Canada's foreign policy objectives will languish.

Mr. Stockwell Day: In my view, it should be very clear that the safety and security of our citizens is the government's first responsibility, and the primary purpose of the military is to deter or, if necessary, destroy an enemy. The purpose of aid is to bring aid to people in need. The military assists in securing the ability and capability of groups to provide aid, and a blurring of those lines is problematic. Soldiers who are disciplined and trained, and as loyal and courageous as the Canadian soldiers are, and always have been, should not be the ones



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performing the humanitarian aid itself. They should have a humanitarian face when necessary, but they should be there to provide the safety, the umbrella under which that can be accomplished.

Colonel Pellerin, it is a huge concern to us, and of course to many Canadians, that the state of our Canadian Forces has been allowed to dilapidate. When I say that, I'm not talking about the members or the forces themselves, either full-time or reserve; I'm talking about their logistical capability to do their job. Everybody has agreed that we don't have the capability to accomplish our foreign mission policies, which is a grievous state for any nation to be in. We always think of that in terms of the actual soldiers, the boots on the ground, and we know we don't have the capability to do what we'd like to do.

You have commented not just on that but on the fact that there's a capital plan in place, which we agree is deficient. But even with the capital plan in place, the people aren't there to implement the capital plan that would get the resources to the soldiers to do the job. In fact, in terms of capital acquisitions, just in the planning stage—correct me if I'm wrong in this—you said they have missed 90% of their milestones. That's no reflection on their capabilities; it's sheer mass of people.

First, how do we correct that? We know we need to increase the number of full-time forces and reserves, but now we're talking about people who are actually there to look for the helicopters and make sure the resources are there, whether it's helicopters, uniforms, or whatever. How do we address that? Is that strictly a hiring problem, and we need to hire more people? We know and accept that we don't have the capability established to be in other parts of the world that desperately need help.

I want to go one step back now and talk about our own national defence, our border defence, our continental defence. The official opposition has long been concerned about the capability, whether it's coast guard capability, to maintain and

properly survey our own coastline, for instance.

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: Those are two very important issues. I know the minister is personally involved in trying to address the issue of the capital acquisition. Otherwise, as I mentioned, the defence policy will not move forward.

There are two parts. Internally at DND, when the forces were reduced by some 25% in the nineties, a lot of the project managers also disappeared, but the number of projects have increased. There aren't enough people to manage the projects, so that has to be addressed.

The more difficult issue to address is to a large extent outside the control of DND, and that's capital acquisition. For instance, for a contract that is more than \$200 million, some 12 departments and agencies would be involved in the process and have signed on. If it's less than \$200 million, the same 12 agencies and departments would be involved, but you'd add another three, including Indian Affairs--and that's beyond the control of DND. That's why I say it has to be addressed at the highest level of government. The acquisition policy has to be streamlined, has to be addressed. A time lag of some 15 years is not acceptable.

I think we're very lucky now that we have an excellent Chief of the Defence Staff who has a great vision, and I think we can all agree with that. Also, the last two defence ministers were, in my view, excellent. They're on board, and I think they're working hard as a team, but these impediments are outside their control, so the government has to be involved to try to reduce the time lag.

As an example, the maritime helicopter acquisition was identified in 1983 as a priority for the Canadian Forces. By the time the helicopters are available as an operational fleet--the 28 helicopters that have been purchased--it's going to be 2011 or 2012. So it's a period of 30 years, and that's the big problem. We can talk about transforming the forces, but it's like a big ship, it takes a very long time to turn around, and that's part of the problem.



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Now, you mentioned also the capabilities that are required for force projection abroad, and also for protection of Canada. We've identified the problems of the modernization of the fleet to protect our air space, the modernization also of the ships. Very quickly, ships 20 years of age have to be modernized, and not just the hulls. Communications change rapidly, as you know; every two years or sooner you want a new computer.

But I'll just give you an example of projection abroad. We are talking about projecting our forces, whether they're in Afghanistan, now, or Darfur or Bosnia. I think we all agree that they do a wonderful job, once deployed, and help the population there provide security. One of the big problems, for instance, is that our airlift is almost non-existent. It's based on a fleet of 32 Hercules. Almost two-thirds of those are over 40 years old. Therefore, you have a fleet that is becoming very rapidly obsolete, and there's no plan yet to replace that fleet. In 10 years' time the full fleet will be obsolete. You might as well close down the base at Trenton--because that's the *raison d'être* of Trenton--because of all that neglect of the last 10 or 20 years.

And I don't point the finger only at the Liberal government. I think it's the nature of the beast in Canada. I think we should all read Jack Granatstein's recent book, *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* You'll find out that, unfortunately, the military in Canada has been treated as a spectator sport by whichever government is there. We talk a lot; unfortunately we don't provide them with the required tools and spend the money on them.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Could you expand a bit more on the types of soldiers that we need in your opinion?

I would just like to give you a brief example. I accompanied Minister Axworthy to Pristina, in Kosovo. While I was there, I met with soldiers responsible for keeping the peace. They were doing all sorts of other work at the same time, including refitting the roof and plumbing system of a school. I

was present when it was reopened. Hundreds of young Kosovars were able to go back to school.

The European Union has debated the issue of training a new type of soldier for peacekeeping missions. They would be somewhere between a soldier and a police officer. It seems to me that we are increasingly seeing two types of soldier emerging. There are those that are deployed as peacekeepers and those sent into conflict zones with modern equipment. This phenomenon has been raised at several meetings we have had.

Some stakeholders want our military to be multi-tasking, but I am not so sure that that is the way to go. The Government's foreign policy ought to clearly state that Canada focuses on peacekeeping. Indeed, it is common knowledge that these missions are often tough. As a result, our military has to be prepared, but they do not need to be Rambo types.

I saw that NGOs were also operating in Pristina. There needs to be co-operation between these bodies and the military. However, from what my NGO friends have told me, it is extremely important that people perceive these entities as being totally separate. I have been told that if the military is perceived as assisting humanitarian organizations, then they may also be seen as enemy targets. Indeed, by definition, humanitarian organizations are non-partisan.

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: Ms. Lalonde has made a very good point. It is a fundamental issue, given the current context, for the Armed Forces, be they Canadian, U.S. or any other nationality for that matter.

I had an infantry career spanning 36 years in the Royal 22nd Regiment. Needless to say, we are very familiar with the type of missions you have mentioned.

The Government's approach, and I think it is the right one, is to train soldiers for military operations, but not necessarily for Cold War-type situations involving thousands of assault tanks in the European theatre. The Government feels that this type of training prepares military personnel for all types of



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missions, be they peace keeping or humanitarian in nature.

Consequently, in terms of national defence policy, the Chief of Defence Staff and the Minister of National Defence refer to three types of military operation. The first of these is humanitarian assistance, such as the support provided in Kosovo that you alluded to earlier. It is important to understand that we do not normally provide direct humanitarian aid as such, but we often operate in situations where we are called upon to help in providing humanitarian aid or to ensure the safety of NGOs and humanitarian organizations

Situations often change without warning. This requires soldiers to adapt to a new type of military operation. A case in point would be Afghanistan.

The second type of military operation is that of stabilization. The presence of U.S. troops in Iraq is an extreme example. The war has been over for two years, but U.S. troops are still engaged in stabilizing the country. These troops require specific skills.

Lastly, armed forces must be prepared to fight in specific situations. For example, the Canadian Forces mission to Afghanistan will change this summer. There will be more focus on humanitarian support. Under this new mandate, teams will be deployed to Kandahar. The situation there is reminiscent of the Wild West. In February, a 1,000-strong combat detachment will also be sent in. You only have to see the recent events reported in the newspapers to see that the situation is far from being under control in Kandahar.

As a result, if the Government intends to deploy military personnel to areas of conflict, soldiers have to be prepared for the worst. If in fact the worst possible scenario fails to materialize, then at least they were prepared to face it had it happened.

The whole issue of humanitarian support should be discussed. For instance, we took part in a seminar with Hugh Segal at Queen's University last week on these very issues. The chairman of CARE, Mr. Watson also took part. It is very important to ensure there is co-operation between the military

and NGOs on the ground so everyone knows what they have to do. This allows progress to be made.

It is just as important to undertake pre-deployment preparation in order to gain a better understanding of the various organizations operating on the ground. This can be done by talking to organisations such as CARE and the Red Cross prior to departure. I think that this goes to the heart of the problem. Very often, the various organizations are not very aware of each other. The military does not know much about the operations of the humanitarian bodies in the field. In turn, the humanitarian agencies shy away from associating themselves with the military, because they feel that they will become a terrorist target if they do.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Consequently, in your opinion, is the training strategy set out in the policy statement the right one?

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: Absolutely.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: You have said that there is not enough money in the military. The changes haven't taken place. What do you feel is needed?

I'd like you to expand on that. We want to make sure we don't have a problem. We want to create the peace and then be sure we can keep the peace. I understand that there are not enough dollars in this country for many things, but in general, what approaches could we take? We have \$5 billion going into the military, but it's not enough, or maybe it won't come soon enough. What should be done? Do we need the carriers to move our equipment? This is the line of thinking I am on.

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: I wouldn't want to get involved in commenting on the force structure and type of equipment that is required. I think the minister and the chief of defence--who's also the principal adviser to the Prime Minister on military issues--have put teams together and will report to the minister at the end of this month on structures. I think what is important is that we're seeing this move ahead well with the current chief of defence and the minister. I



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think they have a vision, and they know what is required to implement the defence policy. The difficulty, obviously, is how long it will take to implement.

As I mentioned before, when you talk about major capital acquisition, historically it takes 10 to 15 years--and sometimes, as with the helicopters, it will be closer to 30 years--mainly because of the government policy in place, what is required, all the hoops to jump through, to address that. I think this needs to be addressed in order to reduce these time lags, especially since most of them are outside of the control of the Department of National Defence. It's a government policy that you need to go through 12 departments and agencies before you get the agreement on how you will purchase a piece of equipment. Well, that takes two years for most major equipment. It's a very slow process.

What I'm saying is that the defence policy that has come out gives a clear vision of where we should be going, but based on past precedent, it's going to take a good 15 years to implement it. I know the chief of defence would like to have most of it in place for the Olympics in Vancouver five years from now. I think in a lot of cases he'll probably be disappointed.

The other thing, also, is that the government has promised \$13 billion for defence over a five-year period. It is remarkable that a government would promise this over five years. All we hope of those who've followed the file in the past is that they'll deliver--whichever government is in place.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I don't think there's any member of any political party who doesn't share the concern about the fits-and-starts approach to our military. So often over the years, in the absence of a real multi-year comprehensive military acquisition program—I'm not sure if that's the right terminology, but I think it's the concept—we've had decisions being made about what would be funded, what wouldn't, what would be acquired, what wouldn't, more based on quite limited, narrow

political perspectives, even of a very immediate local nature, which doesn't make for very good policy.

At the same time, it's also clear that military commitments and military expenditures have considerable impact economically. I'm wondering if you can comment on whether you feel the IPS puts us on track to finally put in place the comprehensive approach to this or you feel we are still very much at risk of the fits-and-starts approach.

I just want to use one limited example. In the province I come from, the ability to produce naval vessels is well demonstrated, but it's also true, in the absence of a comprehensive Canadian shipbuilding policy, that the benefit of the massive investments that have been made to put us in the position of being able to produce really good naval vessels is jeopardized, because you can't keep having an assembly line approach to this.

I'm wondering if you could comment on whether there are additional measures that we need to be considering in addressing this problem.

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: The short answer to your question is no, it hasn't been addressed in the IPS. That's the big problem, how to implement the defence policy.

On the issue of capital acquisition, I think you've put your finger on a major problem: we have the tendency to buy things and keep them for a very long time. Our Hercules planes are 40 years old, our Sea Kings, which you're familiar with, are 40 years old or more. Only in Cuba do you find people going around with vehicles that are that old. So that's part of the big problem.

The frigate problem, which you're familiar with, is a good example. In the eighties, when the decision was taken to modernize our fleet and build 12 frigates, first you had to gather a team of naval architects and project managers and what not, and start from scratch. Then the shipyards, Irving and also Lauzon, started from scratch to build a fleet of 12 frigates. Once they were built, nobody from outside



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bought any. We tried to sell some to Saudi Arabia. It didn't happen. Finally, Irving closed down last year. Lauzon is doing oil platforms, essentially.

We have the largest coastline in the world and we have no naval shipbuilding policy in Canada, which is incredible. Therefore, we're talking now about modernizing the fleet, especially the supply ships. They're talking about an assault ship. Again, one option is to start from scratch and build. That's going to take another 10 or 15 years. But if you want to speed up the process and implement the policy more rapidly, then start looking around the world at countries where they've built similar ships, or at least get the design from them and build them in Canada. Or go out and buy them in the U.S., the U.K., Holland, or Germany

So that needs to be addressed. It's a big problem in Canada.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: We're not so pleased with the results of the subs at the moment. We might be better to begin to build up our own capacity and keep it going.

Isn't it a problem that if we go overseas to purchase, we will never develop our own capability, and then it becomes all the more difficult for us to make the case for massive investments that have zero economic impact? Politically they're more difficult to sell, and we don't end up having control over our own industry. In a crisis, if we're depending on purchasing from elsewhere and there's a squeeze on their resources, or they're facing major demands to ramp up their own capacity, don't we end up out in the cold, with no control over our own security and defence needs?

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: You're absolutely right, but then are we willing to pay the price? Unfortunately, when the decision is taken to replace major pieces of equipment it is very expensive, even for relatively small projects. For instance, the trucks, starting with the jeep and then medium-weight trucks and heavy-weight trucks, were all built in Canada under licence. You remember the Bombardier Iltis.

Well, we could have bought those in Germany--they're essentially built on a Volkswagen Rabbit frame. It would have cost \$26,000, but we said no, we wanted to build them in Canada and it cost \$81,000 per jeep. Then we only sold some to Belgium and the production line closed. But we kept them for 20 years, so we didn't have enough spare parts and we had to use spare parts from other vehicles or go back to Volkswagen to get them.

It is a very difficult decision. Obviously we try to get the best equipment for the troops at the best price, or try to have equipment that will satisfy the *retombées économiques* for the various regions of Canada. But there's a price to pay.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: As you reviewed the international policy statement, one of the things that really struck me was the number of areas we try to deal with as a country. And I often wonder whether, as a world society, we are caught in something that happens even within our own country when roles and responsibilities aren't clearly defined. What I mean by that is the issue of duplication.

Do you think we, as a world community, have come to the point where in fact nations ought to be looking at specializing in certain areas, whether it be education or local economic development, and develop a toolkit, an international toolkit, where resources would be better utilized?

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: There is a danger with the niche approach. In my own experience in NATO, when I was involved in NATO, this issue came up quite often. Normally it was considered a buzzword used by nations that wanted to do less and spend less on defence and therefore raised the issue of niches--we should build a niche to do that. Therefore, when the issue came up, people would say, that particular country is not very serious about its defence; they pretend they want to specialize, but we know what they really want to do.

I'm not sure what the answer is as far as Canada's foreign policy goes and how to implement it. I think there is a sound



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approach in the IPS, built on the three Ds essentially. I think we'll see that with our new mission in Kandahar, starting in August with the provincial reconstruction team, where an element of the Canadian Forces--maybe 200 to 250 people--the RCMP, CIDA, and I guess the NGOs will play a role together. I'm not quite sure how it's going to work out, but I think it's probably the way to go. Obviously there'll be lessons learned from that particular experience. I think that should be our approach, trying to get the key elements of the key components of our foreign policy involved.

Now, to coordinate that with other countries is always difficult, although again, the example of Afghanistan is probably a good one. NATO is getting more and more involved, not just providing security around Kabul, but deploying troops around Afghanistan--these provincial reconstruction teams. I think again there'll be lessons learned about whether we're doing the right thing. It won't be easy. It's going to be very difficult, I would suggest, in Afghanistan.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I have had a concern for quite a while about CIDA being used as a slush fund for the military. We've seen the budget. From some of your comments, Mr. Pellerin, I sense agreement from you. I would like a comment on that.

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: I'm not sure I agree with your comment that CIDA is a slush fund for the military. I think the military has a budget of \$13 billion, and the amounts of money transferred from CIDA and Foreign Affairs to DND are relatively limited. This happens, for instance, when there's a mission like the tsunami, where CIDA had to provide funds for the transport of the DART team.

I agree that as a country we need to look at whether showing the flag with the DART team is the best way to invest limited funds in relief of situations like the tsunami. It does show the flag, but I would suggest there are cheaper ways to provide drinking water to the population in the region.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Pellerin, I know that we do not have much time, but I

would like you to address the issue of Canada's role within organizations such as NORAD or NATO. What, in your opinion, does the future look like?

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: I think that NORAD remains crucial to Canada. As you know, NORAD is part of an agreement under which Canada and the U.S jointly manage the security of North America. This will continue to be necessary. However, requirements change, and it will perhaps be necessary one day to include marine or land security in the NORAD agreement. However, I do not think this will happen the next time the agreement is up for renewal.

As far as NATO is concerned, its purpose may well have changed since the end of the Cold War, but we have witnessed NATO involvement in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, where approximately 10,000 NATO troops are stationed alongside the 18,000 or so U.S troops. Consequently, NATO also has a presence there. For example, at its ministerial meeting last week, NATO decided to provide logistical support to the effort in Sudan.

NATO has undergone a transformation, which, in my opinion, effectively addresses Canada's requirements. In fact, both organizations meet Canada's needs very well.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Monsieur Pellerin, do you believe there is a common understanding between the Department of National Defence and Department of Foreign Affairs on the tasks involved in an international operation, from traditional peacekeeping to combat operations?

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: I think that the relationship between the two Departments is better now than it has ever been. One of the reasons for this, in my opinion, is that the International Policy Statement process has forced the two Departments to discuss a wide range of issues and to reach an agreement on the way forward. There has never before been an over-arching policy providing a framework for co-operation or discussion.

I have worked very closely with the



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Department of External Affairs in the past. I believe that the working relationship is better now.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I recently saw the film *Peacekeepers and Peacemakers: Canada's Diplomatic Contribution*, which was funded in part by CBC and DFAIT, and it certainly dispelled any notion that peacekeeping is a picnic. It's highly dangerous and demanding work.

My question is whether you have a sense that the film can and should be used as an educational vehicle for Canadians. I raise the question because following the film there was a panel wherein there was a lot of concern expressed about insufficient attention to the humanitarian aid side of the preventive measures needed. Could you comment on that?

Col (Retired) Alain Pellerin: I must admit I haven't seen the film, but I'm aware of it.

I've been involved for so many years in this issue of peacekeepers in Canada, and I think there is an element of myth that still exists. For instance, if you look at the peacekeeping monument, the way peacekeeping is portrayed has changed completely. The peacekeeping that is portrayed on the monument--and also if you look at the flip side of your \$10 bill--is the old UN-type peacekeeping that took place in Cyprus. The two parties agreed to peace, and it was kept for 30 years. Canada was there for 30 years, and except for the 1974 war, it was benign peacekeeping.

What we see now, starting with Somalia, Bosnia, Sarajevo, and Afghanistan, are more peace-making operations, and it's important for the soldiers to make sure they have the right tools and are well trained for that sort of mission.

To answer your question, it is important to show that film and have these discussions about how peacekeeping has changed over the years. It's not the benign type of peacekeeping we used to do in the 1960s and 1970s; it's much more dangerous and needs robust forces to implement it.

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