

Speaking Notes for

The Honourable Bill Graham, P.C., M.P.

Minister of National Defence

at the

Conference of Defence Associations Institute

Vimy Award Presentation

Ottawa, Ontario

19 November 2004

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Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to join members of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, and your distinguished guests, for this year's Vimy Award ceremony.

This prestigious award recognizes a Canadian who has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and security of our nation.

Le nom même du prix attribué ce soir met certainement en évidence son importance. En effet, la bataille de la crête de Vimy a constitué un moment déterminant de l'histoire de notre pays et elle demeure, encore aujourd'hui, un puissant symbole d'unité, de sacrifice et de fierté pour le Canada et la population canadienne. Elle reste également un puissant symbole de ce que signifie porter un uniforme militaire canadien.

Il convient donc que le Prix Vimy de cette année soit décerné à une personne qui a travaillé si inlassablement et si efficacement à faire en sorte que les Forces canadiennes – tant passées que présentes – demeurent au premier plan de la conscience publique.

As a respected historian and well-regarded observer of contemporary security and defence issues, Dr. Bercuson has made a significant and lasting contribution to our collective understanding of Canada's armed forces – an understanding of their history, their contribution to our country, and the critical role they play in protecting our citizens and projecting our values to the world.

Dr. Bercuson has also expanded the scale and the scope of foreign and defence policy studies in Canada, particularly in his capacity as the Director of the University of Calgary's *Centre for Military and Strategic Studies*, and through his instrumental role as Vice-President for Research of the *Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute*.

In recent years, Dr. Bercuson has provided valued advice and support to some of my predecessors in his role as *Special Advisor to the Minister of National Defence on the Future of the Canadian Forces* and a member of the *Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces*.

His advice has been instrumental in helping Defence and the Canadian Forces overcome many of the challenges of the past decade.

As I have been adjusting to my new responsibilities as Defence Minister, I have certainly taken into account Dr. Bercuson's views on the Canadian Forces, and security and defence issues more generally.

Ce genre de contribution et de dialogue éclairé se révélera particulièrement important à mesure que nous irons de l'avant avec notre examen de la politique de défense du Canada.

J'ai hâte d'entendre vos points de vue, M. Bercuson, ainsi que ceux de vos collègues et des membres de la Conférence des associations de la défense, lorsque nous présenterons notre Énoncé de la politique de défense au Parlement au cours des prochaines semaines.

Bien sûr, M. Bercuson n'a jamais hésité à partager ses idées et ses opinions avec un plus large public.

Ses écrits ont été publiés tant dans les milieux universitaires que populaires, et tout Canadien qui s'intéresse à l'histoire militaire ou qui suit les questions de sécurité et de défense connaît fort probablement son nom.

Dr. Bercuson's historical insight and determined advocacy for the Canadian Forces made him a natural choice to serve as Honourary Lieutenant Colonel of 33 Field Engineer Squadron, in Calgary.

Honourary Colonels are seen as the guardians of regimental traditions and history, acting as a link between the regiment and its community, advising the regiment's Commander Officer, and promoting its identity.

These very same contributions to the broader Canadian Forces were central to Dr. Bercuson's appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada. And they certainly make him a fitting recipient of this year's Vimy Award.

David, you are following in the footsteps of a truly select and esteemed group of Canadians, and your place among them is very well deserved.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize and congratulate Sharon Hobson for receiving the Ross Munro Media Award. Sharon, you are widely recognized for your skill, professionalism and decency. I am pleased to see you receive such a celebrated award this evening.

I would like to thank the Conference of Defence Associations Institute for sponsoring this award and this event.

It is one of the many important contributions that the CDA and its Institute make to increasing public awareness of the vital role the Canadian Forces play in protecting Canadians and helping to ensure our place in the world.