

Speaking Notes for  
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Chief of the Defence Staff

at the

Conference of Defence Associations  
Annual Seminar

"The Canadian Forces and the Public"

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Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the warm welcome. I must say that it is a great pleasure to be here again, at the annual seminar of the Conference of Defence Associations.

The topic that you have chosen to discuss this year -- the Canadian Forces and the Public -- is an important one.

If it could be somewhat ignored in the past, it is certainly not the case today.

The relationship that exists between Canadians and their military has far-reaching affects on defence-related issues. It is a complex relationship -- and one that undoubtedly deserves our fullest attention.

Before moving on to address the topic of this seminar, allow me to give you a quick review of the last year from an operational perspective.

It was another busy year for the Canadian Forces. Not quite as busy as we were at the end of 1999, when close to 4,500 troops were deployed overseas. But nonetheless -- busy.

In fact, as I speak, there are approximately 3,000 Canadian soldiers, sailors and air personnel on operations around the world.

This level of overseas commitment is significant. From an organization of our size, it means that operational tempo remains high.

High -- but manageable, given the rationalization of our commitment in the Balkans last year and the outsourcing of some support functions.

We have been able to accomplish a great deal with our deployed forces. Just consider for a moment our activities over the last year:

Nous maintenons nos engagements permanents envers nos Alliés en affectant du personnel, de l'équipement et des unités des FC à divers quartiers généraux et groupes opérationnels. Un de nos navires de guerre, par exemple, est actuellement en service au sein de la Force navale permanente de l'Atlantique. La Force mobile du Commandement allié en Europe est commandée par un général canadien. Des militaires canadiens sont également affectés au système aéroporté d'alerte et de surveillance (AWACS), au siège de l'OTAN ainsi qu'au NORAD.

We are supporting the United Nations – and the will of Canadians - in efforts to bring peace and security to the world. In this regard, we have forces deployed to places like the Congo, Sierra Leone, the Sinai, and Iraq-Kuwait. We have sent over 500 personnel to serve as part of the Multinational Standby Force High Readiness Brigade to the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. And just this week it was announced that a Canadian, Major-General Bob Meating, would take command of the Multinational Force and Observers in Egypt on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Nous avons également contribué largement à la paix et à la sécurité internationales en participant à d'autres opérations multinationales. D'ailleurs, notre contribution de plus de 1 500 militaires à la Force de stabilisation de l'OTAN en Bosnie-Herzégovine constitue notre plus imposant déploiement. Nous avons fourni des éléments de la Force terrestre, des Forces maritimes et de la Force aérienne à la mission au Timor-Oriental. Le navire CHARLOTTETOWN rejoindra bientôt la Force multinationale d'interdiction dans le golfe Persique. En outre, nous avons récemment redéployé nos ressources aériennes d'Aviano au terme de l'opération aérienne menée au-dessus de la République fédérale de Yougoslavie.

All of these operations have been in addition to more 'routine' CF activities at home – such as search and rescue, sovereignty operations, assistance to law enforcement, and fulfillment of Government priorities.

I am proud of these accomplishments - both as a soldier and as a Canadian. Moreover, I am extremely proud of the men and women in uniform who have made it happen.

Les Canadiens aussi sont fiers. Ainsi que le Ministre l'a mentionné ce matin, un sondage effectué en octobre dernier indiquait que **88 p. 100** des personnes interrogées avaient une opinion générale positive du personnel des Forces canadiennes, et **81 p. 100** convenaient que les Forces canadiennes font du bon travail.

Ces chiffres font honneur aux Forces canadiennes. Ils mettent aussi en évidence la qualité des relations qui ont été établies avec la population canadienne au cours des dernières années.

De tels résultats sont significatifs. Car, si les Canadiens et Canadiennes sont fiers -- s'ils ont le sentiment que leur forces armées servent leurs intérêts au pays et à l'étranger et qu'elles font honneur au Canada -- nous savons dès lors que nous faisons bien notre devoir.

Parce que nous nous faisons notre devoir, les Canadiens continuent de nous appuyer dans notre travail.

Like the Government, it is ultimately the Canadian people that we are serving. It is their interests that we represent. And it is their values, beliefs and priorities that must be reflected in our organization. This requires a healthy and constructive relationship between the two.

The relationship between the military and the public is -- by necessity -- unique. There is no avoiding the development of a distinct military culture that is fashioned by operational demands and rigorous training -- a culture that ultimately enables us to do our job.

Individuals must be disciplined. Units must be cohesive. And missions must be focused.

The relationship between the CF and the public is further complicated by circumstance. Canadians are a peaceful people. Over 50 years have passed since the last world war, and generations have grown up having had limited exposure to the military. Bases are less in number and the Reserve Force has shrunk -- eroding our visibility and leaving fewer citizen-soldiers in our communities and universities.

And, currently, there are other priorities competing for attention at the national level, such as health, child poverty and economic development.

Under these conditions -- where there are so many legitimate issues competing for the attention of Canadians -- it is essential that the Forces actively work to build a healthy and productive relationship with the Canadian public. This must not be done as an afterthought.

A healthy relationship requires trust -- military trust in political masters, and public and political trust in military leaders.

We must respect each other, and recognize that we are all players on the same team -- only with different roles to fill.

At the same time, we must keep the lines of communication open.

The Department and the Canadian Forces must actively engage Canadians, whether it is politicians, industry, academia, media, or the general public. We must be ready to talk about current issues facing the armed forces and prospective solutions.

In this respect, there is no doubt in my mind that we have come a long way over the last few years.

We have strengthened the relationship by listening to Canadian needs. During the last defence policy review -- the results of which underpinned the 1994 Defence White Paper -- the Government, Parliament and the Department conducted thorough consultations with Canadian organizations, interest groups, and individuals. The result was a well-balanced and realistic defence policy, one that reflects the needs and expectations of Canadians.

This process of engagement is ongoing, and we continue to foster Canadian interest and participation in defence issues. This is being achieved through a number of programs, such as:

the Security and Defence Forum, which funds centres of expertise at universities across the country.

the Department's annual Policy Forums, which work to engage and solicit opinions from experts on specific matters of security and defence; and,

The annual surveys which indicate what, generally, Canadians think of us -- and what they consider important defence issues.

Through these and other means, we are careful to remain sensitive to the expectations and concerns of the general public.

However, in order to remain relevant to Canadians, we have not only listened to public expectations -- we have also delivered on our promises.

Conformément aux demandes des Canadiens, aux directives du gouvernement et aux exigences militaires, nous avons mis en oeuvre d'importantes réformes institutionnelles dans l'ensemble du Ministère et des Forces canadiennes.

Nous sommes devenus de meilleurs gestionnaires. Grâce à une planification bien ciblée, à une gestion financière saine et à la modernisation de la fonction de contrôleur, les Forces canadiennes sont plus à même d'utiliser sagement leurs ressources et de rentabiliser au maximum leurs investissements.

The Quality of Life initiative has brought military living standards into line with modern societal norms. Through work of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans' Affairs, the hardships and conditions of military life were brought to the

attention of Canadians. And, as a result, added resources were committed and important changes were made.

La solde des militaires a été augmentée. Des améliorations sont apportées aux logements. Les politiques en matière de ressources humaines ont été assouplies. Les soins de santé font l'objet d'une réforme, et nous fournissons un meilleur soutien aux familles.

Bref, la vie dans les Forces canadiennes s'est considérablement améliorée.

We have become a better learning organization that will ensure leaders in the Canadian Forces have the skills and knowledge necessary to function effectively.

This is key - for the world is more complicated than when I was a Platoon Commander or Battalion Commander many years ago. Operational environments are increasingly ambiguous and complex. To meet these challenges, and fulfill Canadian expectations, our leaders will require fresh and innovative thinking.

We need to encourage a culture of continuous learning that will in turn, reinforce a work environment that attracts and retains Canada's best and brightest.

Les Forces canadiennes se sont également transformées pour projeter une image plus conforme à ce qu'est devenu le Canada et mieux représenter tous les Canadiens. Nous faisons des efforts additionnels pour recruter un plus grand nombre de militaires chez les minorités visibles, les femmes et les Autochtones. Nous adoptons en outre les mesures d'adaptation culturelle qui s'imposent pour que des Canadiens et Canadiennes de tous les horizons puissent fièrement servir au sein des Forces.

Not only do Canadians demand this. But also to maintain the highest operational standards, the Canadian Forces must be able to select the best applicants from across the Canadian society.

We have also had to become better communicators. We have significantly improved our ability to promote our success, communicate shortfalls, and generally inform the public of defence issues.

Nous y arrivons d'une multitude de façons, notamment en nous servant : des sites Internet de meilleure qualité, notre Revue Militaire Canadienne, des programmes d'approche ciblant divers auditoires canadiens, un centre d'information des médias ultramoderne, cinq bureaux régionaux d'affaires publiques -- et la liste se poursuit.

Nous avons augmenté et amélioré la pertinence des principaux rapports et publications. J'ai publié, il y a trois ans, le premier Rapport annuel du CEMD, qui donne un aperçu de l'état des Forces canadiennes.

Our current policy allows all CF members to be interviewed in their official capacity by the media, to speak about what they do. After all, it is our young men and women in uniform who are our best ambassadors, who tell it the way it is, and who are believed!

By openly communicating with Canadians, we are building trust in our organization and interest in our work. We are strengthening the relationship, and laying the foundation for continued co-operation between the Canadian public and its armed forces.

While we have accomplished much, we must work at keeping these lines of communication open -- and, keeping Canadians informed of the challenges that we face.

Three areas where the Canadian Forces currently face challenges are People, Force capabilities, and Resources.

In terms of people, I can summarize the main challenge in five words: we need more of them. At the moment, our numbers are below 60,000 Regular Force and 20,000 Reserve Force personnel, and attrition is continuing to outstrip intake.

There are many reasons for this trend. The economy remains strong and jobs are plentiful. High operational tempo over the last decade has put strains on certain trades - - and added demands on individuals.

We have made some progress, but -- unfortunately -- there is no magic solution.

Improving quality of life has certainly made the Canadian Forces a more attractive employer for current and prospective members. We are also reducing some of the burdens on our people by outsourcing and managing our operational tempo prudently.

This year, funding for recruitment advertising has more than doubled. Signing bonuses are being offered for certain qualified applicants, such as medical doctors. We are making an all-out effort to get more people through the front door of our recruiting centres, into uniform, and trained for action.

But, in spite of these efforts, recruiting remains a challenge -- as it does for most other western militaries. And, it will likely continue to demand our attention for some time to come.

Another challenge is building forces. And by this I mean the process of choosing and investing in the capabilities that are best able to fulfill the mission of the Canadian Forces.

For any professional military, this process is -- or at least should be -- perpetual. For this reason, it should surprise no one that it occupies my thoughts, and the thoughts of my senior leadership.

However, force development is of particular importance today.

The Revolution in Military Affairs has introduced new technologies that must be exploited to our advantage. What is more, maintaining the relevancy of the Canadian Forces to Canadians requires the development or enhancement of specific capabilities, such as deployability, interoperability, and mobility.

These are exciting challenges, and we are making steady progress.

We are putting more money into research and development. We are continuing to identify useful technology through Concept Development and Experimentation, and Modeling and Simulation. And, we are finding new and better ways of serving Canadians.

Take, for instance, the surveillance of Canada's north. This is an issue of growing concern to Canadians. And, we are acting on those concerns.

Advanced technologies currently under development -- such as long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles and high-frequency surface wave radar -- promise to improve our ability to monitor Canadian territory, especially in the far North.

The international strategic environment has also changed. It is now hard to predict where the Canadian forces will be sent next, or what challenges they will face once in theatre.

What we do know is that Canadians want their armed forces to remain capable of contributing to multinational operations. To meet these expectations, we are:

studying means to become more deployable;

designing forces that are highly mobile;

improving interoperability; and,

acquiring weapons that are more accurate.

We are also improving the Reserves.

The Land Force Reserve Restructure -- which was announced just before Christmas -- will create a framework and the consultative process from which the rejuvenation and strengthening of Canada's Army Reserve can occur.

To maintain its strong links to communities across the country, the Army Reserve will be increased and continue to form the basis for mobilization. It will be better equipped and trained to improve its ability to augment the Regular Force, and to fulfill newly assigned roles, missions and tasks.

I have outlined for you some ambitious projects. However, I have yet to mention one of our greatest challenges -- a challenge that affects all others -- and that is Resources.

The last decade has been difficult, and fiscal cuts and constraints have meant tough choices for the Canadian Forces. This will not come as news to anybody here.

More recently we have had some relief. The Department of National Defence has received increased funding in the last two Federal budgets. This will add more than \$2.5 billion to Defence over the next few years.

Nevertheless, Canadians demand that we continue to spend that money wisely, and look for further areas where efficiencies might be gained.

To carry out the Government's policy effectively we need to invest now in certain capabilities to prepare us for the challenges of the future.

In addressing this issue, we have developed a long-term plan called "Shaping the Future of Canadian Defence: A Strategy for 2020."

This plan translates the broad objectives of the Government's defence policy into a corporate vision of how to deliver that policy. And keeping in mind the fluid defence environment in which we operate, it maps out the future direction of the Canadian Forces in terms of the kind of military capabilities, people, and equipment that we will need.

With the support of this strategy, we will maximize the return on investments, and find areas for improved efficiencies. We are building the force of the future that Canadians expect, ensuring that Canadian interests on foreign and domestic operations are served.

In the future, I fully expect that the cost of doing business will continue to increase. Therefore we will have to find innovative solutions, do things smarter and more effectively, and continue to make difficult choices.

Let me conclude by saying that we have made real progress in strengthening the relationship between the Canadian Forces and the Canadian public. This is reflected not only in opinion polls, but also by a renewed interest in military affairs.

It has not come around by accident. We have invested a lot of time and effort in bringing the Canadian Forces into line with the modern demands and expectations of Canadian society. We have listened to and been told what Canadians want, and we have changed accordingly.

Canadians have a right to know the progress we have made, as well as issues that we currently face. As members of the wider defence community, we all have a shared

responsibility to deliver this information to the public in an objective and constructive manner.

We must build upon the foundation of open dialogue, trust, and transparency that has been established over the last few years.

And in so doing, the Canadian Forces will be better positioned to tackle some of the pressing issues it currently faces -- issues such as recruiting, force development, and resource management.

Through this, we will become a better force -- and a force better able to serve all Canadians.

Thank you.