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Dr. Jack Granatstein: Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. This seminar is about combat capability and what needs to be said at once is that for most of Canadian history combat capability was not a phrase that could be applied to Canadian arms. There was no combat capability in the militia of the pre-confederation period. None in the militia or tiny Navy of the pre-great war period. In fact only during the great war, the Second World War and most of the Cold War years have the Canadian Forces had any military capability at all.

Why? Because Canadians have always been reluctant to pay the costs to have a professional well trained, well equipped military. 19th century Canadians resolutely refused to provide money for fortifications, to defray the costs of professional troops from overseas. Or to make the militia reasonably efficient. All men were liable for service. But at most they were called up for a roll call once a year which was usually an occasion for a shambles of a parade and a great drunk.

Volunteer units bought themselves fancy uniforms but few lasted for very long. This mattered within a few years of Confederation when the British military presence disappeared and Canada was left with only a few professional soldiers. In fact they were neither very professional or real soldiers. And they acted as a militia training category. Little money or narrowly was provided for the permanent force or the militia and only if Ottawa became frightened of the United States did anyone even think of defence. And when it did worry Ottawa usually bought only a few more rifles and created a training course or two for a few more junior officers. Invariably within a few months everyone sank back into somnolence and militia and permanent force commissions continued to be rewards for party services.

The Navy like the regular army was mired in patronage politics. It's few obsolete ships undermanned and unsure of their role in the event of war. When the great war began in August 1914 there were sixty thousand almost wholly untrained militia and some three thousand members of the permanent force as well as a handful of sailors in Canada's tiny tin pot Navy. We went to war for one reason. Because Britain went to war. The Ottawa government was literally a colonial government and it was bound by Britain's decisions. Canada had no say in the decision to fight, indeed it was not consulted at all.

What we could do was to decide how we would participate. Aside from a handful of officers and men who had seen service in the South African war there was almost no one who had heard a shot fired in anger or knew how to fight then a modern war. No one even knew how

to train men. And the first contingence of the expeditionary force were in fact little more than a mob in karki(sp). Predictably the karki was inferior in quality because like the rifles, boots, wagons and all the rest of the equipment it had been purchased from friends of the government.

In the first few years of the great war lives in fact were lost because of this lack of training and shoddy equipment. But Canadians could learn to soldier. And in the course of the war the combat capability of the Canadian expeditionary force increased exponentially. And the Canadian Corp had more punch than any formation of it's size. It became highly professional, highly efficient, arguably the best corp in France. And officers like Currie, McDonnell(sp), Gresback(sp), Lipsid(sp), Lumis(sp), Watson, Berstill(sp) and dozens more developed into fine commanders.

No Canadian general however had any role in making allied strategy. We were providers of men for the front. Even so Canadians gave more than six hundred thousand of their sons to the war effort. And they imposed conscription on a reluctant nation to sustain the Canadian Corp in battle.

But as soon as the armistice came Canadians and their governments turned their minds elsewhere. The world was now safer, democracy and government spent their money on things other than defence. The permanent force, the tiny Navy, the Air Force mustered at most ten thousand officers and men and sank back into decay. And the reserve forces became virtually disarmed and completely irrelevant.

The combat capability developed in wartime disappeared like the snow in spring. Let someone else defend us next time seemed to be the message. And of course there was a next time. Thanks to the Statute of Westminster of 1931 Canada was now an independent state able to make it's own foreign policy. A British declaration of war did not bind us as it had in 1914. But psychology Canada was still a colony, one that looked to Mama overseas.

When Britain went to war on September the 3rd, 1939 again without consulting Canada the MacKenzie King government followed one week later. The forums of independence were observed. The reality of a colonial response was still there. Significantly when we went to war again Canada once more began from scratch. And once more had to suffer casualties when relatively unprepared men went into action as at Hong Kong, Dieppe, in the North Atlantic and in the air.

Not until 1943-44 did the forces become truly capable of fighting well against a first class enemy. The Air Force eventually became a quarter million strong. Operating a bomber group with countless fighter transport and anti submarine squadrons at home and abroad. The Navy with a hundred thousand in it's ranks learned on the job to become the third largest Navy in the world and to escort half of all conveys across the North Atlantic. The Army also became very large with five divisions and two armoured brigades fighting overseas. And by 1945 First Canadian Army in Colonel Jack English's words was the best little army in the world.

It wasn't so little in fact. Once again conscription had had to be used to sustain the army at

the front. And once more exactly as in the cold, as in the great war Canadians had no role in making allied strategy. Even though one point one million men and women out of a population of eleven million were in uniform. We did what the combined Chiefs of Staff asked us to do. And what they asked us to do was provide men to fight. We did. And the combat capability of the three services became very great.

Once again splendid commanders emerged. Simmons, Hoffmeister(sp), Matthews, McQuen(sp), DeWolfe(sp). With the return of peace in 1945 our military again disappeared. The great war time host almost overnight became an ill trained regular force of twenty five thousand with aging equipment, scant funding, no combat capability. The Soviet Union soon became a threat as we remember. And Canada helped create the North Atlantic treaty. But not even joining NATO did much for rearmament. It took the Korean War that began in late June 1950 to turn the governments attention to the state of the Armed Forces.

We subsequently raised and dispatched the brigade of troops and an air division to Europe and provided a large Naval contingent for Atlantic service. The government raised and sent an infantry brigade, ships and transport aircraft to the far East. Within a few years under the leadership of such able officers as Charles Folkes(sp) and Guy Simmons Canada had it's first peacetime truly professional armed forces respected by our friends and maybe even feared by our enemies.

British officers and NATO declared the brigade group there the best professional force in the world. And it may even have been true. The air division of Sabres in NATO was just as good. And provided a disproportionate share of forward air defence. The Navy's superb anti submarine capabilities dominated the North Atlantic. By the late 1950's Canada had one hundred and twenty thousand men in the three regular forces, well equipped, well led, well financed and with high value combat capability. We were definitely punching above our middle power weight. Although we had no real role in making NATO strategy which remained largely the preserve of the United States.

The reserves were shortchanged then. But with large efficient regular forces National Defence thought that this was unimportant. National Defence was wrong. At home Canada joined with the US and NORAD in 1957-58. The threat to North America from Soviet bombers was real. And our superpower neighbour took the threat very seriously. The radar lines across Canada were the first measures of cooperation in air defence. NORAD was the next. Very simply Canada decided that there was a genuine threat that it could not handle alone.

Secondly, that the only way it could have any influence on American decisions about continental defence was to be in the room when those decisions were taken. And to have military assets to put on the table. Predictably critics in Parliament, the media and academe viewed this cooperation as a sell out of Canada's sovereignty. That the option was limited to either share in NORAD decisions or to stay aloof and to have no share in those decisions did not seem to matter.

The professional peak of the armed forces came at the end of the 1950's. And thereafter

decay slowly progressively set in. Beginning with the Deifenbaker government there were budget and personnel cuts. Equipment shortfalls. Unification of the forces. Social engineering. And most notably the complete lack of political will to have a proper military. The result after 40 years of continuous cut backs is that the regular Canadian forces today are in their weakest condition since the beginning of post war rearmament. The weakest they have been in a half century.

And the reserves arguably more critical today than ever. So short are the regulars for personnel are in a terrible condition. Under strength, ill equipped and suffering from a severe moral problem that has blighted the military for decades. A few months ago John Manley declared that Canada was punching above it's weight internationally. The Minister a few minutes ago said the same thing. This can only be true if there's a boxing category below junior fly weight.

(Laughter)

In military terms today Canada carries no weight at all. Why are we in this state? I suggest that Canadians have never lost the Colonial attitude that they had at the foundations of European settlement and well into the 20th century. I regret to say we are a people who ordinarily expect someone else to do the fighting for us. First France. Then Britain. Now the United States. Protected by three oceans. Linked with the great powers. Except in the two World Wars and in the unique decades of the early Cold War Canadians have always been prepared to let someone else make the strategic decisions, pay most of the bills and do most of the dying.

This by definition is a Colonial attitude. It is an attitude that reflects a weak sense of self, a weak sense of sovereignty, a weak understanding of our national interests. This should infuriate us. It certainly infuriates our friends. An American diplomat who spent time in Ottawa in the 1990's summed up the American view. We have watched he said with regret what Canada has spent the past 50 years backing away from it's previous levels of defence excellence. Canadians appear to have decided he went on that any external threat serious enough to menace Canada would also menace the United States. And the Americans would have to address it. The Americans are addressing it.

President Bush on January 23rd said that our first priority is the military. The highest calling to protect the people is to strengthen our military. And Bush is raising defence spending to three hundred and eighty million dollars a year and that's in real money. Not ours.

In Canada in the December budget the Minister's words this morning notwithstanding let us recall that the Forces received only a hundred and nineteen million for expansion of JTF2. A hundred million in contingency funds and three hundred million in one time money for unspecified equipment. Frankly I find Shane Henry's analysis of the budget more persuasive than the Ministers.

Does our defence weakness matter? It does. To the military of course. To the nation. To the rest of the world. Because it indicates our lack of seriousness. Combat capability is a key

indicator because if the government leaves it's military in decay in a world of war, cold war and terror this is a confession of lack of will. Our governments have lacked will and we will pay for this.

Indeed we are paying for it. The Americans know that we are slackers on defence. And while I do not believe that all issues are linked I do believe that our inability to get the White House to take a positive interest in our softwood lumber difficulties or our, or the attacks against the Canadian Wheat Board just might have something to do with our attitude on defence.

Perhaps the reflective anti Americanism that characterizes so much of the public debate in this country has something to do with our guilty conscious. We're a defence freeloader. And like freeloaders everywhere we dislike those who carry the burden for us. I'm a Canadian nationalist. I always have been one. But I like to believe that my nationalism is founded on my understanding of our national interests. To me a weak Canadian military means that we have to rely on the United States for homeland defence and defence from external threat.

A weak military means that we must allow the United States to define the strategic parameters. A weak military means that we must rely on the United States to transport our equipment to operational theatres when it fits their schedule. How does this serve our national interests?

I'm heartened by suggestions that the department is seeking to join the United States in an integrated continental defence command. Exactly as with NORAD. If we are in the room we'll have the chance to help make the decisions. If we are not present we will almost certainly be faced with American fete accomplis. But we must have some tangible military assets with genuine combat capability to put on the table. Why else would the Americans listen to us at all.

The reflective anti Americans who occupy the Liberal, Conservative and NDP benches in Parliament and fill our universities and media have already begun to denounce this proposed continental command. But they are missing the point. To be an effective as opposed to a rhetorical nationalist required, excuse me, requires a clear sense of Canadian interests. We might expect that Professor Janice Stein could understand this. It's too much to expect Lloyd Axworthy, John Godfrey or Svend Robinson to do so.

(Laughter)

Does it serve our interests to allow the US to defend us. And for Canada to be so dependent on Washington that we must be immediate after the fact to it's strategy. The way to maximize our independence is to stop acting like a teenager. Absolutely certain that we know best. And regularly spouting catch words like sovereignty and nationalism and misreadings of the Geneva convention.

The word sovereignty is particularly misapplied by those who claim working with the United States threatens our independence. We are a sovereign state whether we are linked with the US in a new military command or not. To join or not is a sovereign decision. We can agree

or not to a particular policy or action as we wish. Sovereignty is the right to say no. And this is as it must be. But we must a national interest calculus when we make decisions that may shape our future course. And not irrational emotional anti Americanism.

We have no obligation to say ready aye ready every time Washington calls. But we must be clear on what serves our interests best. Our short term and our long term interests. In other words lets exercise our sovereignty for once and not just prattle about it. We all know instinctively that we cannot be truly independent in the military sense. But we can work with the United States when it suits us as it surely does in the global war against terrorism and in any new continental defence command.

If we do not provide a credible military to help defend North America and the values of freedom, democracy, secularism and pluralism that we share with the US the Americans will do it for us. Because they must. What threatens our sovereignty more. Hiding our heads in the sand and let the Yanks do the job without consulting us. Or acting like adults by working with our friends and enhancing our capacity to protect our citizens and our values.

To have a credible military very simply gives us a voice and offers options that weakness does not. To me these answers are self evident. But too many Canadians believe that we're a moral superpower so beloved by the world for our peacekeeping service and selfless internationalism that we have no enemies and need to combat capability. Some also believe like Prime Minister Chretien in his end of the year television remarks that we can get by with an ill equipped military that should never fight. They are utterly wrong.

To want a well equipped military is not to be war monger or to be trapped in a 1939 mind set as Mr. Chretien said. The key fact of life is that we do not know what the next five or ten or fifty years holds for us. We cannot know what kinds of conflicts we might have to face. And indeed we never have. In 1914 who imagined the war of attrition fought in trenches from Switzerland to the North Sea. In 1939 who envisioned Blitzkrieg. Who in early 1990 anticipated that a huge coalition would fight an air and armoured war against Iraq. Who on September the 10th last year believed that Canada today would have troops in Afghanistan. And parenthetically who could believe that once having begged the Americans to let us into their Afghan war Canadians would then tell them at the earliest opportunity how to run that war.

Mr. Chretien used those who called for more money for defence as backward military thinkers stuck in 1939. He is dead wrong. The one certainty in a world of uncertainty is that we do not know the future. The one constant is that whatever that future holds for us we will require well equipped, well trained professional soldiers, sailors and airmen. We will certainly required broad based reserve forces, trained and equipped for a variety of roles. Forming our mobilization base and constituting Canada's primary homeland defence.

I suggest that it is long past time for Canadians to act like a sovereign nation and that means having a substantial military with well educated, well trained people, modern equipment and the necessary funds to guarantee those things. This is very much in the national interest. And

it is also very much within our national capabilities.

September 11th demonstrated that there are new threats to democratic society. And while the war on terrorism goes on some Canadians will think fleetingly of the military. We do not have the military capacity to do very much to help in this war. But if we hear the wake up call and it was interesting that the Minister also used that phrase we might be better positioned to react in the next crisis. Because there will be a next crisis. There always is. But I wish I believed that Canadians will hear that call and answer it. Regrettably I have lost faith that they will make the right answer. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Moderator: Ladies and gentlemen Dr. Granatstein's consented to a question and answer period. Who will put the first question and whoever does will use that microphone on my left, the other one seems to be out of order or in fact disappeared. Please.

Question: I'm Retired Major Gary Delvelano(sp). I've watched since being in the militia in 1953 through the regular force for 32 years, watched us peak as you described in 1959-60. And this dreadful slide. I can't help but think this country is leaderless. There is a serious problem here. How is that wake up call to come without the pressure of a world war? Or an iron curtain?

Dr. Jack Granatstein: I regret to say that I don't think it will. There is a, there's a leadership in the country that's not complying to the government. It exists all across our parties and I think in other areas of society. In part because it's tough to be out front in Canada. The media is invasive and destructive of people's personal lives. And why would anybody expose themselves to that kind of pressure if you don't have to. But it will take a crisis to wake us up. I thought fleetingly that September 11th might be that crisis. The budget of December 2001 made very clear that the government for all practical purposes had ignored that (Inaudible), that wake up call. It probably will take another one before this government begins to think that defence matters.

Happily for once the Canadian people are well ahead of their government on this issue. In the last polls in the last four or five months have been very clear that Canadians aren't all that concerned with the old definitions of sovereignty and do want to see more money put into defending them. They recognize that there's a threat to them. And that I think is very important. So there's, that's the one ray of hope. But it's going to require a major public relations campaign. CDA does good work in this. There are other organizations that do. And it seems to me that that's the only way it can work.

Moderator: Dr. Granatstein thank you very much for your cold shower of historical reality that we suffered this morning. And it's always a pleasure to listen to you sum up those things. I'd like to first of all make a point and that is that you are part of a group that has produced a document called "A Secure Nation" which in fact is calling for a defence review. A large defence review. But not just a defence review, a security review in Canada. We heard the Minister talk this morning about a defence review. And there was some kind of a

scapegoat clause into it which I would call an internal quick review or some whatever expression he used. I would like your opinion with your historical background to give us an idea of what you would see as the process that we should undergo now in the serious conditions we find ourselves with a non funded policy at the present time. And where you see that, how would you see us arriving at that process. Even, as a new defence policy or a new security policy if you could be so kind.

Dr. Jack Granatstein: Well the Minister didn't give any indications of how this review was going to take place. He was absolutely unforthcoming on that. I rather liked the way we did the 1994 white paper process. It was, it involved Parliament, it involved consultants, it involved outside groups. There were many people participating officially and unofficially and it seemed to me that the net result of that was that a good piece of work came forth. That was I think the first time that we've had so open a process. Usually reviews have been done internally. Certainly the one in Donald McDonald's time as Minister at the beginnings of the '70s was written almost literally by one man, Gordon Smith and the Minister.

So I think that process once having been done it would be very hard to the '94 process. It will be very hard for the government to turn it's back on it and do anything more closed than that. So that's the one hope I think that one would have. And I think that kind of process offers opportunities for people who are interested in a more robust defence capacity. I actually think the Minister wants that. I think the Minister can be a great advocate for that.

Why the Minister is still in office after his signal failure to get any money in the budget however is a real question. There was a call from the floor that the Chiefs shouldn't fall on their swords which I agree with. I think the Minister should have.

Moderator: (Inaudible)

Question: How long, over what period of time did it take to establish the 1994 white paper?

Dr. Jack Granatstein: Actually Doug Bland who's sitting over there was more heavily involved with it than I was. How long did it take Doug? A year? Ten months? Okay two years from start to finish.

Question: Because we've heard rumours on the hill that they are looking at another white paper. And I'm saying to myself if that's the case it would take another two years and then we have to wait until those two years are up for the new white paper. And then they didn't adopt all the recommendations in the 1994 white paper. So the best thing for us to do is to deal with just updates to the 1994 white paper Doug if they're going to do that just a little bit you know. But I have to say when I asked the present Deputy Prime Minister about shipbuilding and I asked him like we tabled a document from our defence committee which is all parties and we've tabled two of them, one of the chairman of Pat O'Brien and the other David Pratt.

And we made recommendations with regard to our military. And we also called for a national shipbuilding policy. And when I asked the present Prime Minister and he was Minister of

Industry at the time, or Deputy Prime Minister he said well we're into high tech. I said I beg your pardon? He said well we're not into shipbuilding, we're into high tech. I said mother of God do you not know that ship, the ships that we build today are high tech. And that really worries me. When I you know if our Deputy Prime Minister doesn't understand that when you have a frigate it's high tech. For God sake we're not out there rowing it.

(Laughter)

So we do have work to do. But I, there's another question. I just found this out in the past week. I was told that our policy for engaging young people in the military they have to be, have a grade 10 education and they're suppose to be I believe 17 or 18 years old or they can join the military if they have grade 10 and they're 16 years old with the permission of their parents. Is that still a policy that is in place? Because we have a change in our society today?

Dr. Jack Granatstein: I don't know if that's still the policy. But, on age. But I do believe the grade 10 minimum is the requirement still.

Unknown Male: (Inaudible)

Question: It's still the policy. Well I don't see anything wrong with the grade 10 but I worry a little bit about a 16 year old.

Dr. Jack Granatstein: I worry more about the grade 10.

Question: Oh do you? Okay.

(Laughter, applause)

Question: Well I have to, I think there has to be a way for us to encourage our young people to look at the military but of course until we increase the numbers that we'll allow in the military there, it's still a difficult role for them. But I think that somehow we have to paint a positive picture for them as well.

Dr. Jack Granatstein: Well I was heartened to hear the Minister this morning talk in terms of a regular force strength of sixty thousand. That's the first time I've heard that mentioned. So I think that's a real plus from our present fifty two thousand active personnel.

Question: I just hope all of us with this white foam on the top live to see that sixty thousand figure.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Dr. Granatstein the CDA is very grateful to you. You've given us the very essential historical background to our debate today. One background that will stand us in good stead as we move through our agenda. On behalf of all of the members of the CDA and the CDA Institute I offer you our sincere thanks. We look forward to further contributions from you, one of Canada's foremost historians. And to borrow an expression used by the Japanese to characterize those who are in receipt of the order of Canada, one of

our national treasures. Thank you very much Jack.

(Applause)