

CDAI 22ND ANNUAL SEMINAR:
23 FEBRUARY 2006

“NATO in Transition: The impact on
Canada”

CDA 69TH ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING: 24 FEBRUARY 2006

“CF Transformation”

The 22nd Annual CDA Institute Seminar and the 69th Annual General Meeting of the Conference of Defence Associations were held in the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel, Ottawa, on the 23rd and 24th of February 2006. It was clear to those attending these events that a new dynamic was in place. The usually moderately full Chateau Laurier Ball Room was full to capacity; electronic and print media were in attendance; and senior officers and officials, present in large numbers, stayed to hear all the presentations.

The participation, as Keynote Speaker for the Seminar, of the newly appointed Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Gordon O’Connor, as well as that of the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier during major portions of the Seminar and the AGM, drew a large group of attendees eager to know more about the Conservative Government’s recent pronouncements on defence and security issues and on the standing up, on 1 February 2006, of **four** new Canadian Forces Commands.

NATO in Transition: The impact on
Canada

Following the Minister of National Defence’s Keynote presentation (his first public pronouncement on defence issues

since the election, and a copy of which can be found at www.cda-cdai.ca under ‘Seminar’), General Ray Henault, President of the Military Committee of NATO, emphasized the importance of understanding global transformation as a precursor to understanding NATO transformation. He described the global dynamic of increasing integration and terrorism; threats he suggested were blurring the distinction between homeland defence and forward defence. He also pointed out that the broadening of relationships with the European Union, the Organization of African Unity and a number of Asia-Pacific countries had pulled NATO onto the global stage, as does the presence of 30,000 NATO troops worldwide, from the Balkans to Darfur to Afghanistan.

General Henault outlined the following four principal elements of NATO transformation:

- The adoption of a capability-based approach and greater interoperability;
- Preparation for expeditionary operations;
- A NATO Response Force of 20,000 to 25,000 service members; and
- Transformation of the political decision-making process.

Dr. Alexander Moen, Simon Fraser University, spoke of what he termed the ‘storms of change’. The first of these, he contends, occurred at the end of the Cold War with the end of superpower tension and the emergence of national aspirations; changes that drew NATO into Croatia and Bosnia. The second storm has its roots in 9/11 when the

United States' unilateral action changed the strategic landscape.

Dr. Moen then went on to describe the effects of these two storms on European and American military capability. In his view, the American expeditionary capacity has grown and has created a wide Europe-America military capability divide. That few European countries have an expeditionary capability is particularly worrisome to him, given the approaching Middle East storm.

Mr. James Appathurai, NATO Spokesperson, spoke very eloquently and emphasized the value of the NATO military alliance. His focus on the benefits of shared lessons among nations was particularly germane to the interests of the Seminar audience, some of whom are involved in a 'lessons learned' process regarding recent and on-going Canadian Forces' operation.

General (Retired) Klaus Naumann, former Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, spoke in less optimistic tones. He argued that Europe is far from holding a unified view on strategic assessments, and that the 1999 NATO strategic concept is not sufficient for this era. He offered a novel perspective on the American and European views regarding the cessation of Cold War 'hostilities', suggesting that the Europeans deduced success was the result of persistent and patient diplomacy, whereas the United States viewed it as a consequence of military and economic strength. General Naumann concluded that the dichotomy between the arrogance of power and the arrogance of moral suasion will revisit NATO in the next crisis - Iran.

The views of other speakers ranged from the optimism of General Henault to the pessimism of General Naumann.

General Smith, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation explained why NATO had embarked upon a transformation process, and explained what transformation meant, and how it was being achieved. His visual aids described transformation capabilities and objectives in terms of precision, mobility, decision superiority, coherent effects, etc., his concluding slide stressing interoperability, ownership of transformation, and the necessity to act.

Mr. Jason Spiegel, former Executive Director of the Reserve officers Association (U.S.A.), provided counter-points to General Smith's offering by illustrating some of the difficulties involved in transformation, while General Swan, the director of Development and Concepts, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Futures Centre, described "modular capability" in future symmetrical warfare and added that the U.S. Army acknowledges that transformation is continuous and involves the Active and Reserve components of the US Army. He further pointed out that the US Army will transform from a division-based structure to that of Brigade combat teams; that both the Active and Reserve components will need to adopt to a cycle of managed readiness varying from three to six years; and that while future equipment will be designed for symmetrical warfare, asymmetrical combat will be the product of professional development.

CF Transformation

Presentations by the Minister of National Defence (MND), the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and by five senior officers left no doubt in anyone's mind that the Canadian Armed Forces are indeed being transformed.

The MND reviewed and emphasized the major planks of the Conservative Party defence platform, and illustrated that while priority was to be given to a Canada First approach, his Party's plans aimed at also ensuring Canada would not neglect its international security responsibilities. He clearly stated that Canada needs a 3-ocean navy, a robust Army, and a revitalized Air Force, and set the tone for the CDS speech by quoting Prime Minister Harper: "Our forces stand on guard for us. We must stand up for them."

The Chief of the Defence Staff shared with the audience his recent experiences with Canadians and the media, demonstrating, in the process, his excellence as a communicator and providing rare insight into his life and responsibilities as CDS. He then moved on to the essential theme of the CDA's AGM, CF Transformation, explaining that it was essential that transformation first deal with command and control issues. He told the audience that the breadth of operations had outgrown the Cold War command structure and that the new dynamic of simultaneously conducting national and international operations required a Canada command, an expeditionary command, a special operations command and a joint support command all of which he 'stood up' on the 1st of February 2006.

The CDS was clear about his priorities: acquisition (airlift, fixed wing search and rescue aircraft and heavy lift helicopters) and expanded recruiting and training. He also offered that the capital equipment acquisition process should be triggered from DND by statements of performance, and not by statements of requirements, advocating in favour of off-the-shelf solutions and against the military propensity for modifying an already 'good' design.

As an illustration of transparency and openness, two of his many qualities of leadership, the CDS explained that former government claw-backs had rendered increases to Budgets 2004 and 2005 essentially ineffective and that as a result he was still managing a sustainment shortfall of \$750 million. He concluded this portion of his presentation by stating that the CF needs more money if current operations, transformation and expansion were to be sustained.

The CDS spoke at some length on the expansion challenge. Evidently, young Canadians are showing an interest in their military. One hundred and fifteen thousand (115,000) of them visited recruiting centres in 2005. However a weakened training system does not yet have the capacity to generate the numbers of qualified personnel in a timely manner.

The CDS wants to make recruiting a task for every soldier and wishes to ensure that the Canadian Forces are present at several of Canada's national celebrations in order to achieve the maximum amount of visibility across the country. In anticipation of a training surge, he intends to adopt a mobilization

approach to training by using 'offline' operational units as training units while leaving the responsibility for generating technically skilled personnel to the central training system and to community colleges. He closed his presentation by stating that "to recruit a soldier one has to recruit a family; to recruit a family one has to recruit a nation. Canadians need to discover their treasure—their military".

Major-General Leslie, Director General Strategic Plans, and Major General Natynczyk, Chief of Transformation described the history of transformation by referring to the four teams and studies that were initiated by the CDS through to the 1 February 2006 "standing-up" of the new command structure. They went on to outline the four-phase planning timeframe from 2006 to 2025, explaining that in the current phase they are focusing on the enablers of: the separation of policy and service delivery; personnel policies; Reserve initiatives; intelligence renewal; integrated managed readiness; joint training construct; and span of control of commanders. Their next published product should be the Defence Capability Plan.

Both senior officers gave frank assessments of the Navy, Army and Air Force. The Army is hollow; it has too few soldiers. They spoke highly of the Navy and its heritage of interoperability, but it needs new replenishment and support ships. The Air Force was "in a whole world of hurt "; many aircraft are at the end their service lives and in urgent need of replacement.

In the final panel presentation of the day, the commanders of the new Canada

Command (VAdm Forcier) and of the Expeditionary Force Command (MGen Gauthier) provided briefings on their Commands, adding anecdotal insights that persuaded the audience that the transformation of command, one of the CDS's priorities, had been achieved.

To conclude the panel's presentations, MGen Petras, the Chief of Reserves and Cadets, spoke on the impact of transformation on the Reserve community, pointing out how it is felt as Reservists interface with the transforming Regular force. He emphasized the valuable contribution of the Rangers and junior Rangers' in arctic sovereignty and brought to everyone's attention the fact that Canada is second only to the United States of America in the employment of Reserves on operations (as a percentage of total strength). Approximately 3000 Reservists have been deployed on SFOR and ISAF in the last five years, for example.

MGen Petras pointed out that many of the new enablers of transformation belong, or are found in the Reserves. These include CIMIC, Psychological Operations, CBNR, Geomatics, Air Field Engineers, Information Operations, Maritime Intelligence, Health Services and Military Police. The audience was left to conclude that transformation from a Reserve perspective includes greater integration with the Regular Force.

Summary

By any measure, the 2006 CDAI Seminar and CDA Annual General Meeting were highly successful. Those who attended were treated to world-class speakers and to a number of new

insights on the themes of NATO and Canadian Forces transformation.

While it was clear that the United States and the Canadian Armed Forces are serious about transformation, it was less clear whether the majority of European nations would follow suit in an enthusiastic manner. Additionally, while some NATO nations are clearly comfortable with the Alliance's agreed strategy that entails both forward defence and regional security, others prefer to focus on and limit their military contributions to regional security.