

**CDA Institute – 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar  
“Protecting Canada’s National Interests in  
an Uncertain World”**

**“Beyond the Celebration:  
The Next Naval Century”**

***Luncheon Keynote Address By:***

**Hon. Hugh D. Segal, C.M.  
Senator (Kingston-Frontenac-Leeds)**

***\*Check Against Delivery***

**Wednesday, March 3, 2010  
1:00 PM  
Chateau Laurier Hotel  
Ottawa**

My appreciation for having been invited to reflect on the Navy with you today is undiminished by the fact that you just might have preferred to have the Prime Minister or Defence Minister here instead. First, because I respect and share your preference, and second, because I understand how the rigours of a Throne Speech and Budget Week might well make those two distinguished gentlemen a little busier this week than usual and substantially busier than your luncheon speaker. My belief in what this organization does, and the importance of its work, is so pervasive and deep, that being invited to appear in any capacity, even as second or third choice, would always be a humbling honour.

In this year of the Canadian Navy's Centennial, when we celebrate and commemorate one hundred years of the Navy's service, sacrifice, innovation, professionalism and loyalty, it is a good time to talk about some of the future choices Canada and Canadians have with respect to its Navy. If our year of celebration is not to generate a mist of nostalgia that obfuscates hard choices, then it is good that we punctuate the celebration and justified rejoicing in accomplishments, past and present, with the odd volley of tough questions that need to be asked, about the future.

In so doing, I of course do so as a member of the upper house; as neither a member of the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, a deliberating member of the Government, nor an active Naval Officer within the Chain of Command. I understand that I have more freedom to speak candidly than those with more serious responsibilities; the constraints others face relate to the roles they play which I respect and celebrate. The Navy is fortunate to have the remarkable leadership it has now in Admiral McFadden, an articulate, able, enthusiastic, measured and broadly experienced Naval Officer. His message about the role of the Navy, its needs, legitimate aspirations and diversity of duties to Canada's humanitarian values and genuine geopolitical security, trade, economic, sovereignty and environmental interests has been and is spot on. If every Canadian had the chance to hear the outstanding speeches he has been making, the public clamour for more intense Naval investment would be deafening. In this regard, he follows in a tradition of naval leadership that has with almost no exceptions, made real the motto of "Ready Aye Ready". We will always think of the ships, submarines, the Naval aircraft and all their respective crews who have served since the Naval Act of 1910 with such courage and acuity. The hull numbers and ship's names of the last century are etched in our collective memory and across the breadth and width of Canadian history and world events. Building on that history however, with its many

triumphs and days of sorrow, requires us to focus more intensely than ever on the professionalism, skill set and determination that has made the Canadian Navy the trusted, technically adept and valuable ally to our friends, leader of friendly sea forces as in Gulf War One, scourge of our enemies and chosen instrument of rapid deployment on combat or humanitarian mission for any Canadian government over the last several decades.

If we think of the events that characterised the last Naval Century - there is no common technical or context framework for any of them. Whether it was the debates about the Naval Services Act itself among Liberals and Conservatives - where fringes in both parties were less sure than their leadership about its necessity, to the establishment of the Naval Volunteer Reserves in 1923, to the fateful creation of Canadian Northwest Atlantic Command two decades later in the middle of a bitter and horrific war, each context was different, each outcome dictated by present and prescient circumstance. The 1966 unification insanity of the Hellyer-Pearson era reminds us all of another salient reality of our naval history. Whatever battles our sailors, commanders and flag officers are preparing to fight abroad in defence of Canada's freedom, security and sense of humanity, there is always a front right here in Ottawa. That Ottawa front is not usually fatal to the men and

women in uniform serving above and below the seas. But it can always be a potentially deeply harmful threat to the institution whose centenary we celebrate this year and that institution's capacity to continue serving Canada and Canadians in the future. The strategic importance of contextual awareness calls upon all of us, optimists and pessimists alike to be aware of this repetitive and salient reality from our Naval history.

The superb work of our anti-submarine trawler force in World War I, when our allies were too busy to help, reflected Naval determination to use what we had to great and positive effect - something Canadian Naval officers and sailors have done consistently over the years. When HMCS St. Laurent opened fire against German artillery at St. Valery en Caux in June of 1940, long before Dieppe, long before our southern neighbours deigned to enter the War, St. Laurent was the first Canadian Ship ever to open fire in anger and express Canadian anger at Nazi aggression. In November of that year, HMCS Ottawa helped sink an Axis Submarine and in September of the following year the corvette HMCS Levis became the first Canadian warship sunk by the enemy.

And while Mackenzie King struggled with conscription at home, he did not struggle when deploying three Canadian destroyers to British waters in May of

1940, embracing that the defence of Canada was better addressed in foreign waters far away from our shores - an embrace which is a primary pillar and purpose of the blue water fighting navy we rely upon today. The list of Naval engagements, as we protected the lifeline convoys of democracy during that same war, contributed 125 Canadian ships and ten thousand sailors to Operation Neptune, an integral part of D Day, or sailed years later to provide fire and combat support as part of the UN policing action in the Korean War, all of these underline the same remarkable and intergenerational skills: professionalism, technical competence, flexibility and courage.

If “Ready Aye Ready” is our Navy’s motto, then professionalism, technical competence, flexibility and courage are the underpinnings that make that motto real as opposed to simply wishful thinking.

Refitting and using to great enemy damage, the fast but difficult Corvettes, marrying helicopters with destroyers to increase contextual and combat capacities, the one-stop shopping approach of oilers that provide more than just oil, the rapid supply of Mr. Pearson’s peacekeeping initiative in Suez through HMCS Magnificent and supportive fleet in 1956 - marking a Naval peacekeeping first - combined with technical innovation to keep our Navy at the

forefront of national service and international relevance. Every innovation from the Beartrap Shipborne Helicopter landing system, to the Anti-Acoustic Torpedo, to the towed array surveillance system and integrated Shipboard communication systems continued this Canadian tradition and exigency of excellence.

When you cannot aspire to be the largest naval force in the world, an aspiration Canadians have never shared, one must make one's existing and modestly expanding force more effective, efficient, deadly and competent. This our navy has done, over the decades, sometimes with and sometimes without the help of the duly elected government du jour.

And when governments have engaged helpfully, as with the St. Laurent Class procurement, the Canadian Patrol Frigates, the added instrumental capacity given the Navy translated quickly into added instrumental foreign, development, humanitarian and trade instruments for all Canadians. That was true then and, in this Naval Centennial Year, we had best be clear that it has never been more true than now.

And we must also be clear about the relationships between combat readiness, sharp end naval deployability, naval missions successfully executed, interoperability and our broad geopolitical interests.

In the same way as Robert Borden insisted on a separate Canadian voice, signature and ratification at the 1919 Versailles negotiations, as a result of the remarkable per-capita Canadian contribution at Vimy and elsewhere during the First World War, so too did the work of Canada's Navy (which I continue to think of as the "Royal Canadian Navy" - new politically correct speak be damned!) in defending and resupplying the sea lanes of democracy, along with the remarkable success and sacrifice of our other Armed Forces on land and in the Air, assured Canada a founding place at critical tables where the Atlantic Charter was framed, the UN conceived and shaped. There has never been a disconnect between our projected military capacity on the ground, in the air and on, above and beneath the seas in combat, humanitarian or patrol and stabilization roles, and our economic and trade interests world wide.

Only the intractably naïve or disconnected themselves can fail to see the linkage. And always the very same capacities one requires for humanitarian efficiency and global reach - as we have seen in Haiti and elsewhere, are

precisely the same capacities required for hard power alliance or stabilization roles. Prime Minister Harper was absolutely right to make that point the other day as he prepared to spend the evening with sailors aboard HMCS Athabasca off the coast of Haiti, after visiting sights where Naval forces were actively engaged in saving lives, dispensing humanitarian care and reflecting in their every action and deed, who we are as Canadians.

To continue to do in the future what our Navy has done so well in the past and present, is not a “wouldn’t it be nice” policy option. Although, in facing the battle of Ottawa, contextual awareness forces us to be clear about what some among the forces of darkness might dearly want.

There is a list of things that the good folks at Treasury Board, Supply and Services Canada, Finance Canada and often the Privy Council Office, deeply dislike - notwithstanding which political party is in power. On an even handed basis, they dislike the following things:

- A. Tax Cuts
- B. Structural transfers to the provinces
- C. Foreign and Defence Policy demands that upset financial plans

D. Long Term Defence Capital.

E. Agricultural support

Why? It's very simple. All of the above remove money and clout from their hands and put that money to other uses - sometimes over a long period of time. And at some level, and I have actually had these discussions some years ago at the highest levels, many simply do not believe that spending in these areas produces any measurable return on investment - or that Canadian spending can make any real difference in terms of outcomes.

Now, I happen to be someone who disagrees profoundly with that defeatist belief. National Defence is a clear federal Section 91 obligation. Many other areas of federal expenditure over the decades are not. I am gratified that governments on occasion have grasped this and redirected expenditures to defence as a result. Mr. Martin deserves credit for doing this after he slashed defence expenditures in the mid 90s and admitted he had done so. Prime Minister Harper also deserves credit for having made a serious investment in a range of capacities the benefits of which we are seeing today.

But serious investment in the Navy is now called for. It has not happened in real terms for far too long. But the four bureaucratic horsemen of the fiscal eclipse, places like Treasury Board, Finance Canada, PCO and Supply and Services, often described by insiders as the places good ideas go to die, will no doubt try to seize the present re-balancing moment to claw back future funds defence and especially our Navy needs to maintain and continue to serve our national and international requirements for sovereignty, peace, freedom, security, and humanitarian outreach. The “responsibility to protect” means little without this capacity to deploy. Even without this Centennial moment, it is clearly the Navy’s turn with respect to modernization, replacement and new capacity. Any lack of coherence on that message, will assist the Four Horsemen - and the Hellyer experience should remind us all, that we understate that risk at our collective peril.

Today is not a day for gloom and doom. It is a day for rational optimism and determined rededication. The professionalism, flexibility, courage and competence that have served the Navy so well over the last century must be the hallmarks of our Naval strategy for this century and beyond. Now is the time, with fleet expansion and upgrading, to set structure for both amphibious and sea-based capacity in the future. Now is the time to increase recruiting and

reserve training days as ways of bringing more citizens to the technical and career opportunities of today's and tomorrow's Navy.

And let me say just one word about flexibility. Canada and the officers and men and women of the Royal Canadian Navy of the past did not insist that all ships must be made in Canada to be seaworthy or of value in combat operations. Circumstances required our men and women in uniform to be flexible, and they were. That flexibility, courage and determination is how they served, how they moved the cause of freedom ahead, how they re-supplied the British Isles when those Islands stood alone. Outstanding Canadian ships in the past have been made in Canada - but just as many have not.

When I hear civil servants address naval procurement requirements that are real and pressing with multi-month and multi-year shipbuilding strategies and elaborate discussions and consultations, I can see an ambush of the highest and most compelling sophistication taking shape. And I can hear the hooves of the four horses of the fiscal eclipse. Some no doubt involved in this, from industry, from the Cabinet are sincere and well-meaning. I do not doubt that. But remember, in the battle of Ottawa, delay is victory for the four horsemen, not for the forces of light and deployable military naval capacity.

Colleagues, I stand here respectfully before you, as a Canadian who believes we will never be able to adequately thank the men and women who served under the “ready aye ready” motto, and who serve today; nor can we ever adequately thank their widows, parents, brothers, sisters, children and loved ones when injury or the ultimate sacrifice took those who served, from those who served by waiting.

When I hear Naval bells ringing, view sail pasts or march pasts, or attend the myriad of outstanding events across Canada the remarkable team at the Naval Centennial operation have structured both frugally and in the best of taste, I will not be only reflecting on the past. I will, like most of you, be reflecting on where our present and future might have been without those who defended against submarines in World War I, resupplied Churchill and the forces of light, facilitated landings at Juno and with our mine sweeping capacity at Omaha Beach, joined the Korean campaign at sea, moved and protected the United Nations Emergency Canadian Force to Suez, sailed against Soviet Submarines and Fleets as part of NATO’s remarkable Atlantic commitment, and today, deal with bomb disposal in Afghanistan, provide medical care in Haiti, patrol in face of Russian-Venezuelan intimidation in the Caribbean and serve as a key

sovereignty instrument in our Arctic, while seeing to the delivery of food off the pirate strewn African coast, while interdicting illegal drugs and migrants, and illegal shipments world-wide.

And at a time when new American naval doctrine calls for more cooperation with allied Navies world-wide, our naval capacity needs to expand not plateau or contract. And at a time when our Prime Minister has established a policy that no serious military deployments will take place without a full vote and debate in parliament, only Canada's Navy provides the diplomatic and foreign policy capacity to deploy at full combat readiness towards a target region with steadily increasing commitment, as parliament decides or NATO ministerial or UN bodies determine next steps. A Canadian Naval task force and fleet-ready and self-contained and able to engage, can await further orders while steaming towards the humanitarian, stabilization or combat requirements a Canadian government and parliament might set. Flexibility and adaptability are the key tactical requirements of present and coming foreign policy challenges. The navy stands alone in offering that kind of capacity to our foreign and defence requirements.

The naval capacity to patrol, engage, interdict, supply, stabilise, train, cooperate and combat is at the very centre of our humanitarian and defence capacities as a country and ally.

This capacity is central to who we are and what we believe. “Ready Aye Ready” has a vibrant and compelling history. We must all in this room and across the country re-dedicate ourselves to an even more compelling and dynamic future for Canada’s Navy. No belief in freedom, in our own sovereignty, in the alliances we share or the values they defend, can be seen as sincere or determined if we do not build the Navy’s future.

To the men and women of Canada’s Navy, I say happy birthday, joyeuse fêtes; it is our collective job as citizens to ensure that you have many, many happy, robust, and well equipped, full capacity returns.

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