

**Speaking Notes for  
The Honourable Bill Graham, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of National Defence**

**at**

**The Royal Canadian Military  
Institute Conference**

**Toronto, Ontario**

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## **I. Introduction**

Thank you for that kind introduction.

Winston Churchill once said that his idea of a good dinner was, first to have good food, then to discuss good food, and after the food had been elaborately discussed, to discuss a good topic – and we all have no doubt who would be the chief conversationalist!

While I'm certainly looking forward to good food and discussion, it's not my intention to be this evening's chief conversationalist. In fact, I'd like to keep my comments as brief as possible so that I have more time to listen to the ideas that have come out of your discussions around today's timely topics.

The issues you tackled in this conference – the new strategic environment, the changing nature of peacekeeping operations, the diplomatic, defence and development interface in stability operations – these are the very issues that are having a profound impact on the Canadian Forces, on Canada's contribution to global peace and security, and on our planning for the future.

So I'm pleased to join you here this evening, once again in this impressive setting, to discuss these matters with such a distinguished and informed group.

The Royal Canadian Military Institute, the Atlantic Council of Canada, and the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies all play a critical role in raising awareness and understanding of important strategic issues in Canada.

In fact, this is my first major opportunity to speak since my appointment as Minister of National Defence and, in my view, it's more than appropriate that I do so before this audience.

Tonight, I'd like to provide you with some cursory thoughts on some of the issues that were discussed during the conference, particularly those that are having such a significant impact on what we do at Defence.

With your indulgence, I'd also like to spend a few minutes discussing my priorities for Defence over the next twelve months. It's certainly going to be an interesting year ahead!

## **II. Role as Defence Minister**

Before going any further, I'd like to say how very proud I am that the Prime Minister asked me to be the Defence Minister.

I've always considered Defence one of the most critical portfolios in government. What could be more important for a government than protecting the safety and security of its citizens? Or securing the nation's sovereignty?

These are not abstract notions to be debated by philosophers or theorists. They are fundamental responsibilities of government, and today they must be met in extremely complex and uncertain conditions.

As Foreign Minister, I always subscribed to the maxim that, while defence policy is, in many respects, derivative of foreign policy, the effectiveness of our foreign policy is very much dependent on the quality and strength of our defence capacity.

And I firmly believe the place of respect that Canada occupies in the world is one that is due, in large part, to the role that our armed forces have played, and are continually called upon to play, in world events.

I was fortunate to get to know George Robertson well through my days at NATO and he was good enough to write me to congratulate me for, in his words, being “promoted to the most important post in government.”

He made what was perhaps a characteristically Defence Minister’s distinction between my past and present roles as follows:

“Maybe briefly you will miss the honeyed words of the diplomatic world but the rewards of Defence are great and enjoyable. Putting foreign policy into practice is no small task, but there is great satisfaction in doing it.”

Defence and security are certainly key components of this government’s forward-looking agenda for Canada and Canadians. Since December, we’ve invested significant new resources to protect our country and our citizens. We’ve introduced Canada’s first National Security Policy. We’ve created the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. And we’re now in the process of conducting an International and Defence Policy Review.

We also recognize there’s more to do.

In my role as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I had the opportunity to meet with many members of the Canadian Forces. I’ve also had the opportunity to visit them abroad and witness the absolutely amazing work they do throughout the world.

I have seen first-hand the dedication, the spirit of self-sacrifice and the professionalism of our men and women in uniform. And I can say, without exaggeration, they are the best in the world at what they do.

I have also seen first-hand the difference they are making in the lives of people in need. I’ve seen the real and significant impact they’ve had on the people of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Haiti – to name but a few recent examples.

I often think of an encounter I witnessed between a Canadian Forces member and a little Afghan girl on a crowded, chaotic street in Kabul. While the soldier’s job was to provide stability and security in a hostile land, I was genuinely struck by his willingness to bring a few moments of humanity and humour into the girl’s life. I was also struck by the obvious pride he took in doing this and the warmth with which he was received by that child and her entire family.

So I've had the opportunity to become quite familiar with many of the issues now facing Defence. This is not to imply that I don't face a learning curve. I just like to think that I bring to this new task some useful insights from my previous experience and a real appreciation of the importance of Defence and all that it stands for.

### **III. Current Security and Defence Context**

#### **Changing International Security Environment**

As you discussed today, Canada faces a complex array of defence and security challenges. Fifteen years after the end of the Cold War and it's obvious the world is an unpredictable and perilous place. It's also obvious that the peace dividend we so eagerly sought in the West was an illusion.

As we begin the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we face significant new and evolving threats such as global terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the dangers caused by failed and failing states.

At the same time, threats of a more traditional nature – such as intra-state or inter-state conflicts – now exist alongside newer destabilizing factors such as environmental crises on a global scale, civil strife and pandemics.

Simply put, the lines between security and defence have blurred, if not disappeared altogether. I think the Prime Minister captured the challenge that this presents when he said: "Today's front line stretches from the streets of Kabul, to the rail lines in Madrid, to cities across Canada."

And this is having a fundamental impact on how we approach our domestic and continental security, our relations with our closest allies and partners, and on how we protect – and project – our interests and values abroad.

#### **High Operational Tempo**

The increased volatility of the international security environment has also produced greater demands on the Canadian Forces. The statistics are well known but also very telling: since the end of the Cold War, the number of operations in which our military has participated has tripled compared to the period between 1945 and 1989.

At the same time, the Canadian Forces have been called upon here at home on an unprecedented number of occasions over the past decade.

We know this unforeseen demand has had an impact on the men and women of the Canadian Forces and their families.

What is less obvious to the casual observer is the impact it has had on the broader organization: on our ability to train our uniformed members, on our equipment, and on our capacity to deploy troops domestically and internationally.

## **Changing Nature of Operations**

Of course, as you've discussed at length today, international operations are not only increasing in number but they're also changing in nature.

The days when peacekeeping operations meant deploying static observers along a cease-fire line have, for the most part, passed.

As a nation, we can – and should – be very proud of the role our country played in developing, and putting into practice, this traditional form of peacekeeping.

But equally, as a nation, we must be prepared to play a leadership role in the next generation of peace support operations that have become more common over the past decade.

Today's operations, as you've heard from Colonel Tremblay and others, are more dangerous and demanding, frequently taking place in regions where tensions are still strong or where there is little peace to keep.

Today's operations are also much more complex. In a grey zone between war and peace, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between friend and foe, especially when dealing with terrorists and suicide bombers who seek shelter among civilians.

Our militaries often find themselves working alongside international organizations, humanitarian workers, the media, and non-governmental organizations, and are often called upon to fulfill a much wider array of responsibilities.

Our mission in Afghanistan is an excellent example. As part of their duties, our troops have conducted security patrols, assisted in the disposal of unexploded munitions, delivered medical supplies and coordinated numerous humanitarian projects, such as the construction of schools and wells.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, our soldiers have played a central role in helping to establish stability and security. But when I travelled there a few weeks ago, I was also impressed to learn from our truly impressive commander there, General Beare, that under his initiative SFOR established a radio station geared toward the local youth so that they have some sense of a very necessary civic engagement. And I'm assured that it's popular and effective! Reaching out to Bosnians, sharing our views and values – all of this is absolutely critical to securing long-term peace in that country and that region.

To be successful in today's robust peacekeeping operations, it's clear that our troops must be part warrior, part diplomat and part aid worker.

Some argue this diminishes the "warrior ethic" or renders our troops less effective on the battlefield. Frankly, I disagree. Because in today's world, our soldiers must be capable of not just winning wars, but also of contributing to conditions which make it possible for us to secure the peace.

Warriors first – but not warriors only.

And I'm proud to say that, with the experience and skills they've acquired throughout the years, the men and women of the Canadian Forces are better at this than anyone in the world.

The image of warrior-diplomat-humanitarian is certainly consistent with the government's "3-D" approach to international affairs – that is the integration of our diplomacy, defence and development efforts.

With this approach, Defence is working much more closely with other departments and agencies, such as Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency, in order to maximize the effectiveness of our involvement on the international scene.

This "3-D" approach has been an unqualified success in Afghanistan: Canadian diplomats are assisting the Afghan people rebuild their country's institutions; Canadian aid workers have undertaken numerous humanitarian projects; and our troops are in Kabul contributing to the stability needed for the other two groups to succeed in their work.

Afghanistan has served – and will continue to serve – as a model for our future international interventions as it also serves as an example of the dimension and complexity of these new operations.

### **Domestic and Continental Operations**

While I've focussed my remarks thus far on Canada's role and contribution internationally, which I appreciate was the focus of today's discussions, I'd be remiss if I didn't say a few words about Defence's domestic and continental responsibilities, bearing in mind that we do live in a world of limited resources and that increased responsibilities at home do impact on how we engage abroad.

With the lines between domestic, continental and international security now blurred, the government has taken aggressive action to protect Canadians here at home. For Defence, this means enhancing our contribution to maritime security, improving our defences against nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, and better understanding, and responding to, the dramatic changes that are occurring in the Arctic.

It also means working more closely with our American neighbours to protect our citizens and our shared continent.

When I visited NORAD headquarters last year, I can't tell you how impressed I was by the level of professionalism and cooperation that I saw between our two militaries. Canadians working side-by-side with their American counterparts, separated only by the colour or style of their uniform, to protect our skies, our sovereignty and our citizens.

This is exactly the seamless cooperation that is required to address today's security challenges.

And it is precisely why we have established the Bi-national Planning Group and are in the process of discussing Canada's possible participation in the ballistic missile defence system.

We have a fundamental responsibility to protect Canadians. We also have a fundamental responsibility to contribute to the defence of our continent. Ballistic missile defence might assist us in doing this. One thing is certain: our American colleagues are determined to pursue it and it will become a part of the defence architecture of North America whether we participate or not. And so, we are exploring it – as a responsible government, conscious both of the need to protect Canada and maintain a close working relationship with our American neighbours, should.

This doesn't mean that we're going to compromise our interests or values in the process. We will not, for example, join any system that involves the weaponization of space. The Prime Minister and I have been very clear on this issue and, I can tell you, the United States understands our position.

Discussions are ongoing, after which time we will make a decision on the way ahead. But I can assure you that, whatever decision we take, Canada's interests and values will be protected.

#### **IV. Ministerial Priorities**

So continental defence will be one of my key focuses over the coming months. But it certainly will not be my only priority.

As we look to position the Department and the Canadian Forces to meet the challenges of the future, I will be concentrating on three things: first, completing the Defence Policy Review; second, ensuring the Canadian Forces have the modern equipment they need to do their job safely and effectively; and third, ensuring that we look after our people.

##### **Complete the Defence Policy Review**

I'd like to start with the Defence Policy Review because of the impact it will have on my other two priorities.

As you know, we're now in the process of completing the Defence Policy Review in conjunction with the government's overall review of Canada's place in the world being led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I know that some critics have accused us of conducting the review process in a vacuum, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

First of all, the Defence Policy Review builds on the examination that was conducted in the fall of 2002 – an examination that featured extensive consultations with a variety of stakeholders. Canadians from around the country also had the chance to express their views.

We're also making use of the work done over the last few years by a number of distinguished security and defence organizations, as well as the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, and other relevant parliamentary committees.

As former Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, I'm absolutely committed to working with my fellow Parliamentarians in charting the way ahead for Defence.

We expect to complete our review in the fall. After which, we intend to seek the views of Parliament through the committee process. This should permit ample opportunity for public discussion and input.

And, while all of this is taking place, I will continue to consult personally with key defence stakeholders. I certainly recognize that organizations such as yours have much to contribute to the discussion.

The process we've selected is meant to strike the most appropriate balance between allowing time for consultation and moving ahead on decisions that are needed.

I can't tell you exactly when our review will be submitted to Parliament, but I can tell you some of the issues that it will address.

Broadly speaking, the Defence Policy Review will identify Canada's key defence priorities. It will, in the most basic sense, help us determine what kind of military Canada will need in the future.

The review will also establish the most appropriate balance between our continental and foreign responsibilities.

It will look at ways that we can enhance the safety and security of Canadians here at home. Some of the options we're now exploring include expanding our surveillance and counter-terrorism capabilities and increasing the size and capabilities of the Reserves to deal with domestic crises.

The review will also look at working with the United States in new and innovative ways to protect North America against emerging threats.

On the international level, the review will build on our "3-D" approach to global intervention. It will look at how the Canadian Forces can continue to participate in a wide range of international operations.

As part of our Peace and Nation-Building Initiative, the government will increase the size of the Canadian Forces by 5,000 Regular personnel. This will allow our military to assume an even larger role in bringing peace, security and democracy to troubled nations.

We're also moving forward on our plan to increase the Army Reserves by 3,000 personnel. This will give Canada badly needed capacity to respond to domestic crises, including natural disasters and chemical, biological and nuclear emergencies.

Taken together, these are the most significant increases to Defence in more than a decade. And they are a very clear demonstration of this government's commitment to building a revived and robust military.

I would like to make one point very clear. Expanding the size of the Canadian Forces will not be done at the expense of our existing capabilities. This will not be a case of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'.

The additional troops will be funded through new investments by the government. And I'm working to have these new resources feature in the next federal budget.

Given the global context in which we now live, I firmly believe that the status quo is not an option. Defence must adapt to new conditions and it must have additional resources to enable it to do so. I am confident that the government will respond to this new imperative.

### **Continue to Modernize our Equipment**

Once we determine, through the review, what our key defence priorities and requirements are, we will turn our focus to ensuring the Canadian Forces have the modern equipment they need to do their job.

Modernization does not mean that we're looking to completely re-equip the Canadian Forces. Like many of our allies and partners, we're combining existing and emerging systems to enhance the capabilities we'll need in future missions or to create new ones that would give us greater flexibility and versatility.

Of course, we have a very solid foundation on which to build. Since last December, this government has committed more than \$7 billion for new equipment for the Canadian Forces, including the Maritime Helicopter Project, Mobile Gun System, Joint Support Ship and Fixed-Wing Search and Rescue Aircraft.

I think you'll agree this is all very good news for Defence. But I want to stress that the modernization of our military is not complete. For example, we're now experimenting with unmanned aerial vehicles and looking to enhance our defences against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks.

Pending the outcome of the Defence Policy Review – and building on the Strategic Capability Investment Plan – we're committed to investing in the most relevant mix of capabilities to ensure the Canadian Forces can meet their commitments.

### **Continue to Look after our People**

Regardless of how modern our military equipment is, we will not be able to meet our commitments if we can't count on quality people. Our people – military and civilian alike – remain our most valuable resource. And ensuring we take care of them is an important priority for me.

The high operational tempo that I discussed earlier has had an impact on our men and women in uniform and their families. And, as I've said before, they need – and deserve – a break.

This is why we're now moving to reduce our operational commitments and begin a period of regeneration.

For example, the improving situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina has allowed us, over time, to reduce our presence from around 1,200 personnel to 650 personnel. And it will soon be reduced even further to 80 troops. We've also reduced the number of people we have committed to the Afghanistan mission to about 1,000.

Taken together, this means we now have slightly less than 1,900 personnel deployed on operations, as opposed to the 3,300 we had in the spring.

These reductions will allow us to do some much-needed training, professional development and equipment repair. More importantly, it will allow our uniformed members the time they need to recharge their batteries both at the personal and professional level.

Although the Canadian Forces have always delivered when called upon, we're committed to doing a better job in balancing operational deployments with family life and training needs.

So, ladies and gentlemen, these are my three main priorities for Defence over the coming year: complete the Defence Policy Review, continue the modernization of our equipment, and ensure that we look after our people.

## **V. Conclusion**

In concluding, I would just say that the government has placed Defence at the forefront of its overall agenda over the next twelve months.

And we are absolutely committed to providing the Department and the Canadian Forces with the policy guidance, people, equipment and funding they need in order to meet the challenges of the future.

I could not think of a more interesting and critical time to be at Defence. I can think of no portfolio in government whose challenges are of such significance to our country, and I am certainly aware of the challenges and great responsibilities that this job entails. And for that reason, I will particularly appreciate your informed support and advice as we work to shape Defence for the coming decades.

Thank you very much.