

*Let Sleeping Dogs Lie*



*Let Sleeping Dogs Lie:  
The Influence of External Studies and  
Reports on National Defence  
Policy – 2000 to 2006*

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# *The Claxton Papers*

The Queen's University Defence Management Studies Program, established with the support of the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), is intended to engage the interest and support of scholars, members of the Canadian Forces, public servants, and participants in the defence industry in the examination and teaching of the management of national defence policy and the Canadian Forces. The program has been carefully designed to focus on the development of theories, concepts, and skills required to manage and to make decisions within the Canadian defence establishment.

The Chair of the Defence Management Studies Program is located within the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University and is built on the university's strengths in the fields of public policy and administration, strategic studies, management, and law. Among other aspects, the program offers an integrated package of teaching, research, and conferences, all of which are designed to build expertise in the field and to contribute to wider debates within the defence community. An important part of this initiative is to build strong links to DND, the Canadian Forces, industry, other universities, and non-governmental organizations in Canada and in other countries.

This series of studies, reports, and opinions on defence management in Canada is named for Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence from 1946 to 1954. Claxton, the first post-Second World War defence minister, was largely responsible for founding the structure, procedures, and strategies that built Canada's modern armed forces. As defence minister, Claxton unified the separate service ministries into the Department of National Defence; revamped the National Defence Act; established the office of Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee – the first step toward a single chief of the defence staff; established the Defence Research Board; and led defence policy through the great defence rebuilding program of the 1950s, the Korean War, the formation of NATO, and the deployment of forces overseas in peacetime. Claxton was unique in Canadian defence politics: he was active, inventive, competent, and wise.

The authors wish to thank Jennifer Roche for her thorough and professional job as copy editor, as well as Mark Howes and Valerie Jarus for their continued, accomplished efforts to change the work of “mere scholars” into an attractive, readable publication. We all thank Heather Salsbury, Assistant to the Chair, for her unflagging good spirits and willing support to the Chair of Defence Management Studies. Finally, we would like to thank Inta Erwin, President of Breakout Educational Network, for her contributions to this particular research project and her many years of support to the Chair’s research and publications program.

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“In my five years as an assistant deputy minister in NDHQ, I cannot recall one instance in which the senior officers and public servants in the building – the so-called ‘level 1s’ – were briefed on or discussed even superficially any academic or parliamentary report. My colleague, the assistant deputy minister for Public Affairs, explained why.

“‘The drill here’, he said plainly, ‘is this: Whenever one of these reports arrives in the building we look at the dog. If the dog sleeps on, we simply record the report. If the dog wakes up, we put it back to sleep as quietly and as quickly as we can. If the dog howls, we have a problem and then I take care of it. The dog is the media.’”

A conversation with an assistant deputy minister who served in the Department of National Defence from 2000 to 2006

“It is simply not possible to determine with any degree of certainty the influence research institutes and think-tanks have on the public policy process.”

Professor Donald Savoie  
*Court Government and the Collapse of Accountability  
in Canada and the United Kingdom*  
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 155.



## *Introduction*

This research project looks inside the Department of National Defence (DND) at the period from 2000 to 2006 to assess how public service officials and military officers “processed” and otherwise reacted to studies and reports the department received from non-governmental research institutes, academic researchers, and committees of parliament concerning Canada’s national defence, government defence policies, and the outcomes of those policies. From that research we draw conclusions not only about the degree of influence such documents have had on national defence policies and administrative practices, but also how researchers and parliament might better present their work to enhance its influence on the public policy process.

The evidence obtained from internal DND documents and from interviews with individuals in the department who received external reports and studies and assessed them for ministers suggests strongly that these studies and reports had, at best, a minimal direct influence on the policy process within the department. For the most part, officials – and military officers to a lesser degree – routinely ignored, dismissed, criticized, discredited, and otherwise attempted to negate in the eyes of ministers and the public any influence these studies and reports might have had at all. While it is no secret that “... public servants are not inclined to produce information that would embarrass their ministers,”<sup>1</sup> most senior officials seemed to be acting not only to support the government’s policies – as the Westminster tradition obliges them to do – but also to protect the government’s partisan interests from outside opinion. There is evidence also that officials acted at times to defend themselves and their positions from external research or parliamentary oversight that challenged their advice to ministers.

This routine, however, is not entirely a public service invention. Canadian politicians since at least Pierre Trudeau’s days have been instrumental in producing and promoting a public service that today provides to ministers the “truth as they wish to hear it.”<sup>2</sup> In circumstances in which officials are held responsible for managing complex and at times classified and politically contentious policies and information, as in DND, ministers’ prime source

of the ‘truth as they wish to hear it’ is the bureaucracy. Guarding that bureaucratic domain from all challenges is critical not only to the integrity of the department’s policy process, but also to public servants’ credibility and reputation as being “reliable” before ministers and in the minds of superior public servants in the Privy Council Office and political members of the Prime Minister’s Office.

External reports reviewed during this period often offered ministers challenging assessments of their policies – ‘truths’ that, if accepted by ministers, might have derailed difficult-to-reach consensus DND officials had worked hard to establish inside the department, within the Canadian Forces, and with other government departments and the central agencies. More dangerous for senior officials, however, was the possibility that these truths might have raised awkward questions in the House of Commons or worse, embarrassed the prime minister. As every senior public servant knew then (and as they still know), these dangers could only arise if these studies tempted the media to take serious notice of them and cause a public fuss. Thus, again as the evidence suggests, in DND during this period, officials in most every instance stood ready to guard the minister’s door and slay intruding truths lest the ‘dog’ awake.

### **The Research Method**

This research project is based on requests made through the *Access to Information Act* (ATI) mechanisms for DND responses to studies and reports offered to governments in the period generally from 2000 to 2006, including reports from the Senate of Canada, the House of Commons, the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, the Royal Canadian Military Institute, the Centre for Strategic and Military Affairs at the University of Calgary, and the School of Policy Studies at Queen’s University.<sup>3</sup> In all, approximately 3,500 pages of ATI responses to research were reviewed. The documents were supported by interviews with authors of the studies, members of the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD), former members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA), public service officials, and officers of the Canadian Forces.

The objectives of this study were, first, to assess the manner in which such papers were managed by DND; that is to say, how they were received, processed, and reviewed, by whom, and for what purposes. Second, we were interested in looking for evidence that described how the minister of defence and the government generally were informed of these reports and how, for

instance, “briefing notes” were prepared and by whom, and to see if there were any common features in the way they offered their advice to ministers. Third, we tried to assess from email traffic at the time how senior officials and Canadian Forces officers and their subordinate staff officers reacted to the publications at ‘a bureaucratic level’. We were especially interested in observing how the two entities in the integrated public service/military officer centre for defence decision making, National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ), expressed their differing approaches to how governments developed and managed their national defence policies and especially those closely or critically related to responsibilities senior military officers believe fall within their customary “rightful authority.”<sup>4</sup> How, indeed, did the two professions interpret their duty to the government of the day, to the members of the Canadian Forces, and to Canada?

These objectives set the background for the deeper purposes of this study: how might researchers and authors of external studies and reports better contribute to the public policy process on matters of national defence and security? How are national defence policies formulated and managed in detail in DND? What is the nature of political/public service/military relations in Canada?

While ‘the policy’ is often at centre stage in discussions of national defence and security in Canada, understanding the public administration of defence policy necessitates that we understand clearly who in government sets before ministers the ‘choice of policy choices’ and how they do that. The constant ebb and flow of policy making is cloaked, out of sight of researchers and even parliament, but it is the stuff of bureaucratic politics and far more germane and important to policy outcomes than are public policy declarations. This project, we hope, may help to lift the cover if only a little to expose at a particular time and in particular circumstances this dynamic and perhaps encourage others to follow this story.

### **The Sources**

A brief word on sources is necessary to a better understanding of this research project’s summary. Although we accessed fifteen studies and reports, the ATI returns were uneven. This outcome is not unusual in the ATI world, but that fact forced us to rely upon a few studies and available ATI returns to paint a wider picture. This result was anticipated in that a central thesis of the project was that we expected to see studies and reports that created little media interest also produce little interest inside NDHQ and vice versa and thus few pieces of correspondence.<sup>5</sup>

Of all the academic, non-governmental, and parliamentary reports accessed under the *ATI Act* (understanding that many documents we received included duplications from separate offices), some produced no correspondence at all. The 2001 study by the Royal Canadian Military Institute, *A Wake-Up Call for Canada*, yielded but five pages. The norm, however, was between 20 and 45 individual notes per study/report request. One batch of papers, DND officials' assessment for the Liberal government of the "Defence Policy of the Conservative Party, dated June 2004," produced 209 pages. The Conference of Defence Associations paper, *Caught in the Middle*, gave us 109 pages. Reports from committees of the House of Commons in comparison received scant attention.

At the other extreme, on 3 December 2003 at a national media briefing in Ottawa, Queen's University released the study *Canada without Armed Forces?* (CWAFF?) produced in association with the Conference of Defence Associations Institute (CDAI). The dog suddenly woke up and howled across the country for about 72 hours. Officers and officials in NDHQ, as we can now see in their own words, worked feverishly to put the dog back to sleep as soon as they could get organized to do so. Their work provided this study with an ATI response of three cartons containing some 600 pages of draft talking notes, briefing notes, assessments, public affairs 'strategies', and emails of all sorts, almost all of which were produced by NDHQ staffs over a four-day period.

What accounts for the great difference in NDHQ reactions? The thesis of this study is that media attention and the government's (and senior defence department officials') sensitivity to criticism of its national defence policies and not the internal DND assessment of the worthiness of the CWAFF? study produced this flood of bureaucratic reactions. These ATI papers and interviews record that reaction and officials' hostility to the study in sparkling detail. The fact that officials did not react to this study on receiving advance copies of it, and their frantic reactions to it after the media noticed the report, supports, as well, this study's thesis that in the Department of National Defence the dog commands the review agenda.

The evidence of behaviour in DND as drawn from the ATI pages was validated in most cases through interviews conducted with the authors of the internal papers and others associated with them. These encounters were very useful and added context to the ATI responses. They also provided some very interesting insights into how public servants and Canadian Forces officers characterized their duties to ministers and governments; the working relations between officials and officers in National Defence Headquarters and their attitudes towards each other; and their particular and often very

different assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, and value of external studies and parliamentary reports to ministers and to their individual responsibilities for formulating and administering Canada's national defence policies.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Usual Process**

Members of DND policy and public affairs branches are usually aware when 'studies of interest' are coming their way. Parliamentary reports of committee work are, of course, public information usually reported in and commented upon by the media. NDHQ officers and officials, therefore, routinely appoint junior members to follow developments in parliament by attending parliamentary committee hearings and recording witnesses' comments and the questions and discussions by senators and members of parliament to allow DND officials to anticipate questions and comments that may arise subsequently.

Academic and non-governmental institutions work openly and often depend on access to officials and officers to gather research material on national defence matters. They hold open conferences and workshops and publish or report online in their websites the results of their work and their opinions. These events, too, are followed by DND policy staffs who report the main issues discussed in these meetings and afterwards alert policy and public affairs staffs of any controversial papers or discussions and any media interest in them.

Although there are very few examples of official concern with external studies sent to them in advance of a public release, once any study or report prompted a media comment or story, or a request to DND for information related to any aspect of national defence policy or the Canadian Forces, officials follow a predictable procedure. A quick assessment of the contents of such documents is made, again mainly by junior public service officials and perhaps depending on the storyline by more senior officials and military officers. These first responders typically summarize the document, outlining its themes, and note especially comments or conclusions that might challenge current policies or criticize their superiors. Depending on the media response – actual or apprehended – senior officials will order the preparation of a series of papers that are almost always a defence of current policy.

These papers may include a "Briefing Note for the Minister," a short (three or four) page summary of the document no matter the length or complexity of the original study or report. This summary may be supported by another paper, "Advice for the Minister," which provides suggested ways in

which to comment on the paper if the minister were asked to do so by the media or in the House of Commons, for example. These types of notes often go through several drafts and move up the chain of responsibility where they are routinely redrafted and amended.

Officials, meanwhile, watch for and measure reactions to the studies, reports, conferences, and workshops from the media and the government's political opponents. They also keep an eye on the political season. If the House is not sitting and the media is silent and moves on, then the public affairs staffs merely record the event and may not produce any written work at all. Certainly very little is put on paper in the ATI age for fear of exposing facts and figures best kept in-house.

If the House is in session, then the usual process quickens in time with the so-called media cycle. Public affairs officials alert NDHQ whenever a study or report is about to be released. They follow the event carefully and provide their superiors with a quick review of the work. If the dog appears interested and likely to stir, the public affairs staff will be joined by 'policy officials' and – depending on the 'sensitivity' of the issue or event – these staff officials together will prepare one or two pages of concise "Talking Points" for more senior officials and officers and for the minister's political staff. These first points might then serve as the basis for the preparation of a more detailed "Briefing Note for the Minister."

Officials may in several stages and brainstorming sessions *compose* – and that is the operative word for the development of what some might term "the spin" – sets of anticipated "Qs & As" (Questions and Answers). These approved Qs & As then form the official basis of the minister's or his or her parliamentary associate's responses in the House or in media scrums, or for a Canadian Forces staff officer (and very rarely a DND official) sent to answer media questions in public about the study or report or event of the day.

It is obvious from the internal documents we examined that the most critical variable conditioning how much effort officials put into preparing Briefing Notes and Advice for ministers is not the content of these documents, but the attention they receive or might receive from the media. Attention, however, should not be confused with influence, for as the record suggests, studies and reports that appeared to officials as having the potential to influence (i.e., upset) extant government policy were carefully managed in ways meant to negate any such possibility.

Arguably, there is one exception to this common scenario. The 2003 study conducted by Queen's University and the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, *Canada without Armed Forces?*, arrived by chance



only days before Paul Martin became prime minister. Unbeknownst to DND officials (or so it seems), Martin had for weeks been privately consulting several expert defence scholars and senior retired Canadian Forces officers and others trying to find a way out of the defence policy crisis Chrétien had bequeathed to him. The day the report was released, officials followed ‘the usual process’ and berated the study only to discover late that same day that the soon-to-be prime minister had made a personal call to the principal author of the report asking for a description of its conclusions and main ideas. Alerted by public affairs officers to the conversation, senior officials in NDHQ became confused and trapped simply because suddenly they did not know which truth the prime minister wished to hear.

### **The Studies and Reports**

In this study, we trace the “usual process” by looking at fifteen studies and reports prepared by non-governmental agencies, academic researchers, and most importantly, parliamentary committees (reports and recommendations on aspects of national defence and security policy prepared by the Senate of Canada and the House of Commons between 2000 and 2006).<sup>7</sup> These documents include:

#### *Non-Governmental Organization Studies*

- *A Wake-Up Call for Canada: The Need for a New Military*, a Proposal by the Royal Canadian Military Institute (Toronto), May 2001
- *Caught in the Middle: An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, The Conference of Defence Associations, 27 September 2001
- *A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces*, The Conference of Defence Associations, 2 October 2002
- *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves: Ten Years Later*, Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, 24 September 2004

#### *Academic Studies*

- *To Secure a Nation*, The Council for Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 9 November 2001

- *Canada without Armed Forces?*, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 3 December 2003

*The Senate of Canada – The Standing Committee on National Security and Defence*

- *Canadian Security and Military Preparedness*, February 2002
- *The Defence of North America: A Canadian Responsibility*, 3 September 2002
- *For an Extra \$130 Bucks ... Update on Canada's Military Financial Crisis: A View from the Bottom Up*, 12 November 2002
- *Canada's Coastlines: The Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World*, 29 October 2003
- *Managing Turmoil: The Need to Upgrade Canadian Foreign Aid and Military Strength to Deal with Massive Change*, 5 October 2006

*The House of Commons – Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs*

- *The Procurement Study*, 14 June 2000
- *Department of National Defence 2001-2002 Estimates: Part III – Report on Plans and Priorities*, 12 June 2001
- *State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Response to the Terrorist Threat*, 7 November 2001
- *Facing Our Responsibilities: The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, 30 May 2002

## CHAPTER ONE

### *“The Red Cross with Guns”*<sup>8</sup>

This essay deals mostly with reports and studies and ATI information from the Jean Chrétien era and Paul Martin’s brief term as prime minister. The political, public service, and senior military officer attitudes illustrated here, however, are more or less common to every Canadian government since the Trudeau period at least. Nevertheless, what is strikingly different between the Trudeau and Mulroney governments and the Chrétien and Martin governments is the near total absence in the latter’s cabinets of critical or cautionary political voices during discussions of national defence policy or the state of the Canadian Forces.

Whereas the Trudeau and Mulroney cabinets included individuals with considerable military and foreign policy experiences – including (for Trudeau) Bud Drury, Mitchell Sharp, Paul Martin (Sr.), Leo Cadieux, Barney Danson, and Gilles Lamontagne; and (for Mulroney) Erik Nielsen – the Chrétien cabinet was the first Canadian cabinet in which there was no one with any practical experience in these fields at all. Jean Chrétien, as his memoirs reveal, was mostly hostile to the demands of national defence policy and Canadian Forces leaders. Paul Martin, although he was finance minister for several years and responsible for presenting federal budgets to cabinet and overseeing government expenditures, showed little interest in the details of or relationship between defence policy intentions and budgets until he became prime minister.<sup>9</sup>

Political and election campaign rhetoric often cloak governments’ real attitudes and policy intentions. It is what governments do not say in public that is the true measure of their political attitudes and policy preferences. Prime ministers can string out the rhetoric of good intentions for many years without actually acting to change intentions into capabilities. Prime Minister Chrétien certainly did that, most notably when he encountered a strong lobby intent on pushing his government to build and maintain modern military capabilities.

His government, however, produced only one ‘white paper’ on national defence policy in ten years and significantly reduced defence spending

although his defence ministers year after year proclaimed in parliament and in scores of public speeches and media interviews that the government was committed to providing the Canadian Forces with the resources they needed to meet the government’s defence commitments. When Paul Martin became prime minister, he *discovered* that the federal budgets he had designed and managed had stripped Canada of any real defence capabilities. He reacted to this fact immediately on taking office with a defence policy statement that promised to elevate Canada to “a role of pride and influence in the world,”<sup>10</sup> but his attempts to redress the Liberal cabinets’ defence policies were much too late in the life of the Liberal government to save the party or Paul Martin from defeat in 2006.

Jean Chrétien ridiculed his defence ministers and chiefs of the defence staff: “The minister of defence and the Chief of the Defence Staff always asked for more as part of their job description, [but] I never found them especially bitter about our cuts or reallocations.”<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the prime minister was particularly bitter when he was forced by the 9/11 terror attacks on North America to spend money even to bolster Canadian domestic security: “The \$8 billion we put into security measures after September 11 was in effect new money for defence, though we never got credit for that from the military establishment or the Americans ...”<sup>12</sup>

Public servants and senior military officers aided ministers in this charade not because they were deceived by political rhetoric, but because they knew well the prime minister’s true intentions and the often hostile attitudes towards the “military establishment” held both inside government and by its supporters outside government.<sup>13</sup> Senior officials consequently adjusted their responses to external criticisms to this reality by dismissing and downplaying criticisms (which privately some considered credible and important) and by providing ministers with Talking Points, Briefing Notes, and Advice all aimed at ‘defending government policies’.

In fairness to officials, they are, indeed, obligated by Westminster traditions whenever they appear in a public forum or before Senate and House of Commons committees, to explain government policies without offering personal opinions about the policy. In the jargon, they are “answerable” to parliamentary committee members’ questions, but no tradition compels them to defend government policies.

Nevertheless, the behaviour and attitudes of many officials in NDHQ at the time these reports and studies were presented obviously were shaped by their belief or acceptance of the idea that they had a duty to ‘protect’ the government from information, comment, or criticisms of its defence policies. As we shall see in the internal NDHQ papers examined in this essay,

‘protecting the government’s policies’ became impossible to separate from the tendency to protect the government’s or the prime minister’s partisan interests. The contrary notion – that the government alone, in public and in the House of Commons, was responsible for protecting its policies and partisan interests and that the duty of the public service was in all instances to support ministers with expert assessments of policies and with frank explanations of policies’ failings, or in matters of national defence, policies’ inherent dangers to members of the Canadian Forces, to operational missions, and to Canada’s interests – was not often demonstrated in the NDHQ documents reviewed in this study.

The essence of this inquiry, however, is to discover what officials and military officers told ministers and what advice they gave them when no one else was listening. Officers, for the most part, were eager to tell ministers the truth as they saw it, while it appears officials and senior officers often told ministers the truth ministers wished to hear. The staffing process, therefore, was in many incidences corrupted by the notion that the public service had a duty to protect the government even from its own inappropriate decisions and policies’ contradictions and, astonishingly, from its own information.

Few people in NDHQ other than the CDS, the deputy minister of DND, and the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) [for] Policy had any direct encounters with Prime Minister Chrétien (or with Paul Martin as minister of finance or prime minister) or members of the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), but that fact is not relevant here. Rather, lesser policy makers and framers of Talking Points and Briefing Notes learned what they were expected to present to ministers from the directions, praise, chastisements, and winks and nods of their superiors. They learned quickly by watching to see which of their peers received career rewards or punishments. The bitterness and hostility towards some authors of external reports was displayed in many of the emails and notes we accessed. The bickering between public service and military staff exposed in these messages was, at times, startling even to someone with some years of experience in NDHQ.

Senior public servants and some senior officers behaved in this way because they understood very well Jean Chrétien’s deep-seated hostility to, and profoundly cynical views concerning, the armed forces, their leaders, and national defence policy in general. In his autobiography, he describes at length his belief that the leaders of the Canadian Forces were merely self-serving:

Whether for national security or economic growth, every government is under constant pressure to spend more and more on defence. In our case the

pressure came from the American government ... as well as from the arms manufacturers and military lobbyists for whom no amount of money is ever enough. The Canadian Forces always claimed it needed more ... but I wasn't sure that its self-interest was the same as the national interest.<sup>14</sup>

Officials conditioned to tell the truth politicians wanted to hear acted – indeed were instrumental – in defending the government's policies. It was this public service habit that became the root cause of significant discord within NDHQ. When, as the internal documents illustrate, senior military officers challenged officials' caustic responses to outside studies and the validity and value of their Notes and Advice to ministers, their exchanges reveal the fundamental divide and the weaknesses, conceptually and organizationally, that confound decision making in the supposedly harmonized Canadian Forces and DND headquarters.

## CHAPTER TWO

# *Non-Governmental Studies*

### ***A Wake-Up Call for Canada: The Need for a New Military, a Proposal by the Royal Canadian Military Institute, May 2001***

In 1890, the officers of the Toronto Garrison founded the Royal Canadian Military Institute (RCMI) to promote interest in Canada's national defence. The RCMI has since evolved into a prestigious, private establishment dedicated to raising public interest in national defence policy and policy studies especially related to Canadian military heritage and contemporary Canadian security. The RCMI "proposal," *A Wake-Up Call for Canada*, was researched and developed in this tradition.<sup>15</sup>

The proposal was written in the context of the end of the Cold War; the Chrétien Liberal government's *1994 Defence White Paper* and the significant reductions in Canadian Forces combat capabilities it demanded over the eight years that followed; the aftermath of the Somalia deployment inquiries; and the ongoing war in the former Yugoslavia in which Canadian battle groups had been engaged for almost ten years. A research committee composed of six experienced military officers and academics wrote the 27-page proposal. It sets out in ten comprehensive chapters detailed "statements of principle" dealing in depth with Canada in the world; foreign policy; the responsibilities, capabilities, and organization of the Canadian Forces; the influence of new technologies on defence policies; and defence funding and expenditures. The proposal concluded with ten final recommendations as "a basis for debating how the Canadian Forces should move forward."<sup>16</sup>

Although the report supported the main tenets of the *1994 White Paper*, it was critical of the government's failure, in the opinion of the authors, to adequately fund its policy thus raising serious questions about the Canadian Forces' capabilities to meet the commitments outlined in the 1994 policy statement. The report pointed to the growing "commitment-capability gap" and the deteriorating combat capabilities of the armed forces. The authors questioned whether the Canadian Forces could actually deploy at sufficient strength the robust "main contingent" and "vanguard forces" of "well trained, well-armed, [and] combat ready" called for in the *White Paper*.<sup>17</sup>

The RCMI made several policy suggestions intended to enhance Canadian Forces' capabilities and its responsiveness to combat operations and government commitments. They emphasized the importance of the then fashionable concept, "the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)"; the need to restructure the Canadian Forces to improve operational "jointness" among the various elements and components of the armed forces; the requirement for the government to clarify its policy that Canada would be "first in-first out" on UN and international missions; and the necessity to redress what the authors termed the "disastrous" loss of confidence in the leadership of the Canadian Forces.

The authors argued that as a matter of urgency the government should procure new fighter aircraft to replace the CF18, air-to-air refuelling capabilities, and enhanced sea and air strategic transportation capabilities. Included in this list of urgent needs was a "radical reconstruction of our forces, starting at the top." They called for a parliamentary committee to oversee the "required changes" and proposed a review of the DND/Canadian Forces relationship and the organization of NDHQ. Somewhat surprising in the circumstances of 2001, the RCMI suggested that all these program objectives could be met within a \$12 billion defence budget.

A DND official (not identified in the ATI documents) wrote a five-page assessment of the RCMI proposal. In his/her "General Impressions" of the proposal, the official lists fairly the main themes in the study and raises some important questions about the coherence between the study's facts and figures and its recommendations.<sup>18</sup>

The NDHQ assessor follows this single page of "General Impressions" with a four-page, steadfast, and mostly negative critique in a section titled "Detailed Comments (By Chapter)." For example, on "Canada and the New World Order," the assessor writes, "The RCMI's assessment ... fails to recognize that no direct conventional military threat to Canada exists and that the risk of one emerging without a long warning period is minimal."<sup>19</sup>

On Canada's foreign policy, he/she writes, "The RCMI's position ... is confusing and contradictory." The RCMI's positions are then challenged not in the context of the balance or imbalance between the government's stated international military commitments and the actual operational capabilities of the Canadian Forces, but by verbal sparring with the authors of the RCMI study over degrees of military capabilities and weaknesses of operational efforts in 2001 and in the future. For example, the RCMI declares that "Canada's input to NATO is weak and our interests may well be ignored [by NATO officials]." The assessor responds that "[o]ur participation in the



Balkans ... and a host of other contributions [to NATO]” contradicts the RCMI’s position.<sup>20</sup>

The RCMI concludes that Canada is not a “leader” in “NATO peace-keeping operations” (meaning mainly operations in the former Yugoslavia). The official claims that Canada’s commitment to the NATO operation in Bosnia refutes this assertion, but he/she does not say how this is so. Where the RCMI questions the readiness of the Canadian Forces to meet the government’s defence commitments, the DND assessor gives a familiar counter-claim: “since 1994, the Canadian Forces *have* met all these commitments.”<sup>21</sup>

On the “Restructuring of Canada’s Armed Forces,” the RCMI worries that the combat capabilities of the Canadian Forces may be inadequate and shrinking. The DND position is that the “Government is provided with a wide range of options on the military field ... and our military remains combat-capable.” Contrary to the RCMI’s critique, the DND assessor declares that “nothing justifies the reference to ‘disastrous’ loss of confidence in [Canadian Forces] leadership [a claim] which seems based merely on media hype.” The criticism of the lack of Canadian-controlled sealift capabilities for force deployments is pushed off with the assurance that “the enhancement of sealift and airlift capability *has* been given a high priority.” The RCMI’s recommendations for ‘specific’ defence reorganizations is answered with a description of the extant organization and a list of the implicitly costly “issues” that would be required to bring the RCMI’s proposals into effect.<sup>22</sup>

On defence budgets and parliamentary oversight, where the RCMI argues for what their committee thought was needed, the DND assessor argues for what was available: “Our ongoing efforts to prepare the Forces for the future include providing the best combination of defence capabilities within the current budget.” The RCMI’s “call for a Parliamentary Committee to oversee [what RCMI sees as] ‘required changes’ ignores the fact that ... parliamentary committees are regularly engaged in defence issues and already provide an oversight function.”<sup>23</sup>

The NDHQ review’s “general impression” is unambiguous:

Ultimately, the [RCMI] report is contradictory, lacks balance, makes sweeping generalizations, and makes a number of questionable and/or unsubstantiated allegations.

That said, we welcome all contributions to the ongoing dialogue between DND and external defence experts.

The Department will consider the report’s recommendations as part of its continuous review of the Defence Services Program.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, the DND assessment of the RCMI's study, *A Wake-Up Call for Canada*, is in some aspects unusual and also a preview of how future such external and parliamentary studies would be handled within NDHQ. On the positive side, the assessment is detailed and written in complete sentences, and not the usual 'bullets', and addresses chapter-by-chapter in five full pages all the issues raised by the RCMI. The assessor agrees to some degree with many of the remarks the authors made and explains how the government is attempting to implement them "within the current budget." For instance, the assessor writes, "[the Department agrees] ... that Canada should be able to perform such 'non-discretionary tasks' as coastal and Arctic surveillance, search and rescue, anti-terrorism, Aid of the Civil Powers etc"<sup>25</sup> and "... that 'our surveillance in the north could be improved' and we have made strides in this direction ..."<sup>26</sup> and that "... cyber-terrorism is a significant threat."

On the other hand, the assessment is replete with statements that seem to deliberately misinterpret the objectives of many RCMI recommendations. Officials offer no new information on the state of military capabilities or defence budgets and policies. The assessment sidesteps issues that inform the RCMI's research such as the lingering effects of the Somalia deployment and its aftermath; the serious operational difficulties facing Canadian Forces units deployed in the Balkans; the fact that despite Canada's commitments to that theatre, NATO had deliberately excluded Canada from the so-called "Contact Group" established to resolve the problems; and the embarrassing "GTS Katie incident" that left a significant amount of Canadian Forces equipment marooned at sea in a contract ship rental dispute between the government of Canada and the private ship company. The paper, as we shall see as typical in assessments of other reports, met criticisms of operational inadequacies with "trust us" promises of new planning instruments, future policies, administrative efficiencies, and earnest intentions aimed at solving the problems RCMI researchers sought to bring to the public's attention.

The fact that the ATI response produced from the sum of NDHQ's records only one paper of five pages and some public affairs "Background Bulletins" that in single sentences noticed the existence of the RCMI study, suggests that the report was not widely distributed in NDHQ and that it was recorded by the public affairs staff in DND, but only read in detail by a few junior-ranking officials in the policy branch of NDHQ.

Indeed, there is no evidence that its recommendations were considered at any meeting of senior defence policy officials or military officers. Nor is there any evidence that this detailed study came to the attention of the minister of national defence or that he or any DND official sent any form of

acknowledgement to the research committee of the RCMI after their report was received and assessed by officials in NDHQ.

The assessment did not engage the officials as one would expect if the RCMI proposals were actually “welcomed” and likely to be “considered” in future defence policy reviews. The recommendations, for instance, were not ‘staffed’ to expert branches of NDHQ and no follow-up papers exist describing how the recommendations were considered beyond the single ADM (Policy) assessment.

There is no evidence in the response to our ATI request for “all documents referring to the Royal Canadian Military Institute paper” that *A Wake-Up Call for Canada* had any direct influence on defence policy. The reality then and afterwards was that the *1994 Defence White Paper* was defended against any demand for a comprehensive review by loyal DND officials who understood that the government had no interest in a review of any kind. We shall see in these studies and reports continued calls for a defence review and, as in this case, officials in their ‘advice and talking notes for the minister’ always prompting ministers that if asked about such demands to respond as they did with regards to the RCMI proposal: “We began an internal process with the view to updating our existing defence policy ... This is part of ongoing efforts to meet challenges in security and defence as they emerge and plan for the future.”<sup>27</sup>

The remark then and in later ‘advice’ with regard to other reports and studies was offered merely for public consumption and was not meant to be taken literally within the government establishment. The *1994 Defence White Paper* remained ‘policy’ until after Chrétien left office.

***Caught in the Middle: An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces, the Conference of Defence Associations, 27 September 2001***<sup>28</sup>

The principal focus of The Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) study, *Caught in the Middle*, was the state of the operational readiness of the Canadian Forces. The study, according to its authors, “... shows in detail how the operational readiness of the Canadian Forces and their ability to fulfill operational commitments has been [negatively] affected by shortfalls in the funding of DND. The factors used in the CDA assessment to measure the state of operational readiness in the armed forces are common to most such studies made by the Canadian Forces and by allies. Information on the state of the Canadian Forces [was] drawn from DND, in both published

sources and through the Access to Information requests.” Other information flows from open sources originating in academia and the analyst community in Canada.<sup>29</sup>

The CDA on 24 September 2001 gave formal, advance notice and copies of the study to the minister of national defence, the chief of the defence staff, and several other senior Canadian Forces officers and DND officials. The report was made public on 27 September 2001 at a media briefing held that day in Ottawa. When NDHQ received the study, the acting ADM (Policy), Daniel Bon, immediately put a marginal note on his copy of the CDA notice instructing his officials: “1. Have this reviewed. 2. We’ll need a note – as MND [sic] is sure to want one as soon as the doc. hits the street, ON THURSDAY.”<sup>30</sup>

The public service and military staffs swung into action to prepare a response before the CDA’s planned press conference on the noted Thursday. By noon on 26 September – the day before the official release of the study – the staff had prepared a typical list of “Questions & Answers” (Qs & As) and a detailed, 17-point “Briefing Note for the Minister” both for use by the minister and senior officials and DND public affairs officials in case the study was reported by the media. This draft went through several rewrites all of which were prepared by the office of the Director General Strategic Planning, an unusual procedure as most such notes were prepared by the civilian ADM (Policy) staff. Nevertheless, the final Briefing Note amended to two pages of ten points was sent to the minister’s office the next day, 27 September.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, the Policy staff prepared a memorandum, “Advice for the Minister” – a list of ‘talking notes’ – for use in media scrums and in the House of Commons. As usual, the minister was advised to begin any comments by saying, “We welcome the recent report by the Conference of Defence Associations. Their views will stimulate debate and make an important contribution to the defence and security dialogue in Canada.”<sup>32</sup>

The welcome was short-lived. The minister was advised to remind audiences that “this government remains committed to maintaining multi-purpose, combat-capable forces that are equipped to perform a wide range of missions – both at home and abroad.” The advice continues “... time and again [the Canadian Forces] demonstrated their ability to fulfill commitments and meet expectations. When called upon, our men and women in uniform respond.” There is “... no secret that budgetary challenges remain ... however, the government has shown its commitment to address these long-term funding pressures.” The note then lists several projects and funding initia-

tives and concludes with a self-congratulatory flourish: “While more needs to be done, we have made good progress and we are on the right track.”<sup>33</sup>

This format and positioning of the government’s policy is common in these staff efforts. There are no direct comments on any issue raised by the CDA report; rather, the DND comments though meant to seem positive, were especially defensive and vague. For example, while the government might ‘remain committed to maintaining combat-ready forces’, the fact is Canadian Forces operational readiness was declining as the CDA’s internal sources illustrated. The DND statement that ‘our men and women respond ...’ is devious. Of course the men and women of the Canadian Forces respond – they are legally obliged to respond to lawful orders. For the minister (and his officials) to use this obligation as a sign of high operational readiness and enthusiasm in the ranks for the government’s decisions to commit them to risky operations is at least unethical, if not sinister.

The final sentence and claim – “We have made good progress and we are on the right track” – is similar in intent to the opening sentence of false welcome meant to convey the “trust us” theme typically in these types of assessments. It was also problematic, as the CDA report shows, that “[The] government has shown its commitments to address these long-term funding pressures facing the Canadian Forces,” as Prime Minister Chrétien, as we have already noted, was clearly opposed to any significant increase in “future funding for the Canadian Forces.”<sup>34</sup>

The Qs & As memorandum prepared by officials in response to the CDA report, of course, follows in considerably more detail the themes used in the note, “Advice to the Minister.” The questions developed by DND public affairs officers fairly represent some of the CDA’s more contentious conclusions and softly refute them with suggested answers that sidestep the CDA Study and instead rehearse the government’s commitments to address “challenges” sometime in the future and the lists of large and small funded projects.

The answers admit to the ‘challenges’ facing the Canadian Forces but only in ways that make the admission seem to be the solution to these central problems and deficiencies. The question about whether the Canadian Forces could, as the *1994 Defence White Paper* demanded, sustain 4,000 personnel on a single, overseas (combat/peacekeeping) operation is answered with non-operational examples. For instance, officials cite a few weeks’ deployment of more than 4,000 unarmed personnel on ‘assistance to the civil authorities’ operations in response to the 1998 ice storm in eastern Canada as evidence of operational readiness.

What is particularly interesting and instructive about the ‘usual process’ is that in this case the senior Canadian Forces officer who drafted the Briefing Note to the Minister, (inadvertently it seems) marching out of step, suggested to his political and military superiors that the CDA study had merit. On 26 September 2001, Lieutenant Colonel Francki, a senior staff officer in the Defence Force Planning and Program Coordination branch (DFPPC), apparently at the direction of his chief, Commodore Daniel McNeil, prepared a draft Briefing Note for the Minister setting out the military’s assessment of *Caught in the Middle*.<sup>35</sup>

This memorandum “prepared for the VCDS” (vice chief of the defence staff) followed the usual NDHQ format and explained the background of the study, linked it to previous CDA research, and highlighted the study’s central conclusion: “According to the CDA, the problem is a financial, not a policy one.”<sup>36</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Francki noted the CDA’s extensive use of DND documents and concluded: “... therefore, it is not surprising that [the CDA] have developed a generally accurate representation of the state of the Canadian Forces.”<sup>37</sup> He continued, “Indeed, much of what CDA recommends had already been identified by the Department in these documents. Thus, the CDA report is neither as original nor as controversial as it may appear.”<sup>38</sup> Francki consulted other expert staff officers in NDHQ and pointed out that he and his “Maritime, Land and Air analysts” thought there were “many inaccuracies and omissions in the report ... There was [nevertheless] agreement that it would be difficult to take issue with the study.”<sup>39</sup>

Although Lieutenant Colonel Francki had consulted ADM (Policy) officials while writing his assessment, his report was taking him for a shaky run off the NDHQ rails as his note more than just implied that the CDA was merely exposing what most military officers and senior officials in the headquarters knew to be true, but could not or would not say out loud. The ‘controversy’ between the CDA and the government, as Francki’s notes in his ‘background’ to the study, is, in the opinion of the CDA, a political, not a factual, disagreement.

Many of Lieutenant Colonel Francki’s detailed assessments and recommendations were deleted and amended significantly by his superior, Commodore Daniel McNeil, as the final draft was being prepared later the same day.<sup>40</sup> For instance, he played down Francki’s references to the Auditor General of Canada’s reports stating that the defence capital program is underfunded by \$5 to \$6 billion; removed suggestions that the air force was capable of conducting combat operations; and struck out Francki’s support for the CDA’s “claim of a shortfall in battle group training.” These amendments and others were made and the revised briefing note was sent to the Minister

of National Defence, Art Eggleton, on 27 September. At this point the control within NDHQ between what most everyone knew and what they were expected to acknowledge in front of the minister inexplicably broke down.

On the first page of the final 27 September note, Lieutenant Colonel Francki committed an unpardonable bureaucratic sin when he suggested to the minister: “Overall, the [CDA] document provides a fairly accurate representation of the current situation within the Canadian Forces.” He continued apace: “[the CDA] ... makes a strong case for additional resources” and their claim that armed forces’ “... modernization has been hampered by lack of capital funding is acknowledged.” He concluded his note with four succinct recommendations, the first three of which were clearly unacceptable to the minister:

- Accept the CDA Report as valuable input into public policy development.
- Note that a letter will be sent to CDA thanking them for their input but summarizing inaccuracies and omissions in the study.
- Note that the CDA analysis will be considered in the Defence Policy Update.
- Note that a range of improvements and initiatives are underway.<sup>41</sup>

What is important in this series of Briefing Notes to the Minister is the fact that some experienced senior officers and officials, including the CDS, the VCDS, and ADM (Policy), signed off on the final Briefing Note thus authorizing that it be sent to the minister. There is no doubt that the note reached the minister’s office (the registry stamp from the minister’s office indicates it did in fact) and, subsequent correspondence illustrates, that Art Eggleton was not pleased with what he read.<sup>42</sup>

As the day advanced it soon became clear that Commodore McNeil was caught in the middle of a reasonable, professional assessment of the CDA study and the political interests of the minister of national defence. The stuff in the fan was not long in arriving on McNeil’s desk.

The next day (28 September), Commodore McNeil wrote a letter directly to the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Ray Henault, titled “Briefing Note for the Minister – CDA Report on Readiness of the Canadian Forces.”

I am responsible for the wording in the Briefing Note to the Minister dated 26 Sep 01. Because the [CDA] authors used material from the department as their primary source and actually reproduced it for much of their report the analysis was accurate; however, the report lacks perspective and balance. The Sentence [sic] [in the Briefing Note] that begins the discussion: ‘Overall, the document provides a fairly accurate representation of the current situation

within the Canadian Forces' is poorly placed and should have had some stronger caveat embedded than 'fairly.' When taken out of context this could give an entirely wrong impression. My belief is that the rest of the briefing note provides sufficient mitigation to this problem. Nevertheless, if this poor choice of phrasing caused any discomfort to you or the department, I am truly sorry.

D.G. McNeil  
Commodore.<sup>43</sup>

Later the same day, the CDS sent a nearly identical note to Eggleton. "As a follow-up on our discussion earlier today, the following provides additional comment with respect to the Briefing Note on the CDA Report prepared for you by the VCDS's staff." General Henault supported his staff and told the minister that the Briefing Note "... is basically well done and valid, with one exception. Specifically, the general conclusion that 'Overall the document provides a fairly accurate representation of the current state within the Canadian Forces' is unsupported." He continues, "What the statement was meant to reflect is that the CDA Report used published information from DND/Canadian Forces Business Plans and other sources to build its case, [sic] however, the material is selectively presented and taken out of context. This together with some inaccuracies and conclusions, results in a report that lacks appropriate balance and perspectives."<sup>44</sup>

Studies that challenged the Liberal government's defence policies at the time were not welcomed in the minister's office, in the Prime Minister's Office, or in the Privy Council Office where "senior mandarins thought that defence spending was a waste of money."<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately for the CDA, its study arrived at NDHQ when the various staffs were already tangled in the midst of the confusion within the wider political and bureaucratic machinery of Jean Chrétien's government caused by competing and contradictory interpretations about how to respond to the immediate post-9/11 security situation.

Senior officials outside DND and Chrétien's close political advisors were leaning towards policies that would improve homeland security by directing new funds to the RCMP and other domestic police and security agencies.<sup>46</sup> "Art Eggleton [at the direction of the prime minister] was directing his political staff and his DND policy staff to plan for further cuts to the armed forces and the defence budget. At the same time, the CDS and his operational staff were preparing to spend huge amounts of money to prepare the Canadian Forces that was not very ready at all to suddenly go to war."<sup>47</sup>

Commodore McNeil recalls that the preparation of the final briefing note on the CDA study for the minister sparked a serious "ethical" dispute



between the military staff and the department's policy staff and minister's political staff. Senior military officers argued that it was imperative in the circumstances of the gathering crisis of post-9/11 to bring the true state of readiness of the Canadian Forces to the attention of the government and that the CDA study, because it was based on the department's own facts, provided a way to open the issue without the CDS appearing opportunistic to the cabinet. The policy and political staffs, on the other hand, clearly understood that Eggleton's reputation in the PMO was strained and that the prime minister was fundamentally opposed to rebuilding the armed forces. Eventually, the department's civilian policy staff and the military operational planning staff settled the issue by preparing "a compromise briefing note" strongly tilted to the CDS's opinion. It was, however, completely and angrily rejected by the minister.<sup>48</sup>

In the resulting confusion, McNeil "decided to take the hit [the blame for the briefing note] in an effort to prevent the sour atmosphere from derailing the post-9/11 military preparations and the CDS's relations with the minister and the prime minister's office."<sup>49</sup> In taking the hit McNeil (and the CDS in his forwarding letter to the MND) obviously tried to maintain the note's essential message – the Canadian Forces are not operationally ready – by admitting only to a "poorly placed" sentence that "taken out of context this could give an entirely wrong impression" about the value of the CDA study. The memorandum, McNeil confirmed later, was difficult to write because he had decided that if it had been rejected by the CDS or the minister that day, then he would have ended his career that day as well.<sup>50</sup>

It might seem odd to citizens who discover that officers and officials in their notes and "observations" to the minister of national defence condemned and rebutted this CDA study when, as the CDA openly declares and staff officers inside NDHQ confirmed, the study was based in large part on the review of NDHQ documents that warned the minister about the same failings as did the CDA report. Nevertheless, as we shall see in other reports, officials especially were often themselves 'caught in the middle' when they found themselves advising ministers to dismiss the observations and recommendations prepared by non-governmental organizations and parliamentary committees, even though these observations and recommendations were nearly identical to those offered to ministers by senior officers and officials in their own internal and classified correspondence.

The only immediate explanation for this bizarre behaviour is to accept as rational the notion that public servants have a duty "to be frank unto the Kaiser" – in this case about the true state of readiness of the Canadian Forces – and a contradictory duty to protect ministers from this frank

advice and these assessments if they become public knowledge. Commodore McNeil's experiences in NDHQ at this time and the correspondence our research reveals about the events surrounding the department's internal assessments of *Caught in the Middle: An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces* and other reports and studies seem to confirm this commonplace, eccentric behaviour.

***A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces,  
the Conference of Defence Associations, 2 October 2002***

Officials in the Department of National Defence were provided advance copies of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute's study, *A Nation at Risk*,<sup>51</sup> and informed that the paper would be released on 2 October 2002. DND, public affairs officers, and officials immediately began to track the media, watching for opinions and comments based on information provided in the study. For example, in their "Background: CDA Report," they reported: "On October 3, the *National Post* stated that '\$400M war on terror put the Forces in the red.'" The article, they continued, "cited several defence experts, who argued that Defence could not 'pay its bills'."<sup>52</sup>

The media Background notes also quoted the *Ottawa Sun* edition of 7 October – "the Canadian Forces raided its military equipment and hardware budgets to the tune of \$1.52 billion since 1999 to increase pay and benefits for soldiers, sailors, and air personnel." Officials cited the *Ottawa Citizen* as well noting that the *Citizen* observed on 8 October that "Washington ignores us because we're weak." They cited the same day the *National Post* report that systematic underfunding had crippled the Canadian Forces. According to the Public Affairs Background, "both articles were based on the CDA's report, *A Nation at Risk*."<sup>53</sup>

Although officials noticed the CDA report, they seemed unconcerned, assuming that the ATI search did in fact produce "all requested records that could be located using the Department's best efforts within the constraints of the [Access to Information] Act."<sup>54</sup> The search turned up one Public Affairs "Background" note, one "Briefing Note for the Minister," and two separate drafts of "Advice for the Minister" – in all, 19 pages. By contrast, the CDA's study, *Caught in the Middle*, published in September 2001 produced approximately 110 pages of NDHQ documents.

One possible explanation for this scarcity of information is that the media response to the CDA report was itself rather slim and short-lived. A second reason is suggested in the department's "Briefing Note to the

Minister” dated 9 October 2002<sup>55</sup> in which the drafters report immediately that the new CDA report simply “reiterates” in more detail the Association’s views presented the previous year in the study, *Caught in the Middle*, implying that the new report did not require significantly different responses from those given in the assessment of the former paper. Nevertheless, the Briefing Note did attack the CDA authors’ assertions and arguments vigorously.

In the six-page Briefing Note the “Background” began by stating that “[t]he CDA argues that the Canadian Forces are in decline and that ‘the fundamental cause of [this] decline ... is the failure of the Canadian Government to provide sufficient resources to implement the 1994 White Paper.’ [The CDA report] points out that the Canadian Forces have coherent plans for moving forward but that ‘there is not enough money to implement the plans.’” The Background describes (without much detail) the CDA’s lists of specific naval/army/air force deficiencies as found in the report. It highlights the report’s conclusions that the recent “Defence Update” is “no more than a stop-gap measure” which will “relegate [the Canadian Forces] to relative impotence”; that the *1994 Defence White Paper* is “badly out of date”; and that recent budget increases for pay and allowances and other administrative needs though “legitimate [may] detract from the first priority of DND, which is to maintain combat-capable forces.”<sup>56</sup>

Officials’ “Observations” on the report were in every respect argumentative and negative. For instance: “The CDA’s key messages are not new”<sup>57</sup>; “The report presents a very unbalanced account of the problems facing [DND]”; “The report identifies well-known personnel shortages ... but offers no concrete solutions other than time and money”; “The CDA appears to greatly exaggerates the impending crisis in the navy”; “The CDA is not always consistent, however, in its assessment of risks”; “[The CDA’s] ... conclusions regarding the economic consequences of Canada’s ‘underfunding’ of defence are totally unrealistic”; and “The report clearly over-states the country’s weak position in the world.”<sup>58</sup>

As we have seen and shall see in other such internal NDHQ papers, officials who understood from their daily work the actual situation facing the armed forces and the inconsistencies between political rhetoric used by ministers to describe their defence policies and rationalize these factual realities often struggled when they tried to criticize outsiders who exposed things officials knew from the inside to be true. Even officials who saw organizations such as the CDA as a type of political enemy to be put down in the interests of protecting the government of the day every once in a while inadvertently in conversation or in writing tripped over the low fence

between the worrying problems they dealt with every day and their duty (as some saw it) to defend in public the government's right to deny there were any problems at all.

This Briefing Note exemplifies this quandary. If, for example, the "messages are not new," then they were obviously known to the author of the NDHQ summary and his/her superiors. In this case, senior policy officials (and others) might have suggested to the minister the "not new" observation inside and outside NDHQ that continuing to stand behind the government's 1994 policy was a cause for concern much as the CDA and others suggested.

The authors of these various notes and observations in criticising the CDA and its report implicitly (but one assumes unintentionally) added credibility to some of the CDA's concerns. For example, the ADM (Policy) official scolds the CDA for identifying under-manned units as a problem but acknowledges the "... well-known personnel shortages" as real. The author dismisses the CDA report's concern for future naval capabilities as an exaggeration while in the same sentence adding official credence to the CDA's assessment by pointing to "the impending crisis in the navy." How is it possible to acknowledge a crisis as a defence against those who declare you are facing an impending crisis? Where the CDA argued that Canada was losing influence in the United States, policy officers respond: "The report clearly over-states the country's weak position in the world." One wonders what the minister made of this confusion.

The policy staff prepared three versions of typical "Advice for the Minister," in effect talking points for the minister's use in the House of Commons and in scrums or interviews with the media. The first two drafts, each of only one page, made six bulleted points. The third and final draft (one page) includes the six bullets and, for the minister "if pressed" in the House of Commons or by the media, a few sentences summarizing aspects of the current defence policy.<sup>59</sup>

The Advice seems to put the minister in a potentially awkward position. The opening remark suggests that the minister state: "My Department has just received the Conference of Defence Associations' report. It is a wide-ranging document which we will look at in the coming weeks."<sup>60</sup> Some might question how the minister could make a credible statement about a "wide-ranging document" that neither he nor his staff had yet reviewed. However, as the Briefing Note shows, the staff had indeed reviewed the document in detail and provided the minister with substantial comments on its arguments and recommendations.

Public affairs officials interviewed in the course of this research suggested that this opening sentence promising a future review is a "typical

pre-emptive public affairs tactic” for handling bothersome criticisms. That is to say, they advise the minister to acknowledge the document, pointing at the same time to its complexity and thus the need for detailed (implying lengthy) reviews before making a detailed public response to the report. Should anyone in the House of Commons or the media ask a question about the report, the “we’re reviewing this complex paper” response was expected to put the House and the dog back to sleep. In this case according to the ATI responses we received, the House took no notice and the dog, indeed, wandered off to other business. The CDA document apparently produced no internal NDHQ communication after 10 October, eight days after it was first passed to officers and officials in NDHQ.

Nonetheless, the “Advice” included additional information and suggested responses for the minister obviously intended to avoid creating a controversy while at the same time dismissing the CDA’s report as “nothing new.” The minister was advised to acknowledge “certain challenges” none of which are “apocalyptic and have never kept the Canadian Forces from doing their job.” He was also advised to warn audiences that “we must ensure that we have an affordable ... defence program” while emphasizing that “we are energetically addressing these challenges” and making “significant increases in defence spending.”<sup>61</sup>

Officials realized that some members of the House of Commons and the media were given copies of the report. They, therefore, added two additional “If pressed” notes to the Advice to protect the minister from detailed challenges. One concerned the report’s complaint that the government was using money intended for equipment purchases for its personnel “quality of life” program and another concerned the state of Canadian Forces “capabilities” – another key issue in the CDA report. On the first issue, the minister was advised to acknowledge the fact but to explain the operational importance of sound quality of life policies and to suggest that “... the Department remains committed to *returning capital spending* to appropriate levels.”<sup>62</sup> Here again, unintentionally it seems, the Advice seemed to confirm the CDA’s assertion that capital spending was not at appropriate levels.

In response to the second issue of capabilities, the minister, “If pressed,” was advised to repeat the claim that the Canadian Forces had “never failed to carry out their missions” and to support the claim with praise from American officers for the Canadian battalion deployed in Afghanistan. But the statement was meant to end on the side of low expectations: “That said, however, we are facing challenges, and they are being addressed. As with any armed force, our capabilities are finite.”<sup>63</sup> There is, in fact, no ATI evidence or evidence from interviewees that the minister was every “pressed” in the

House of Commons or elsewhere on any defence issue raised in the CDA report *A Nation at Risk*. Typically, therefore, there is also no evidence that anyone in NDHQ other than the public affairs and policy watchdogs paid much attention to the CDA report after the Briefing Note had been sent to the minister.

There is, however, an unusual note in the *A Nation at Risk* file, a personal letter from Minister of National Defence, John McCallum, to Lieutenant General Evraire, then Chairman of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. In it the minister offers an apology for his six-month “delay in replying” to Evraire’s covering letter to the CDA study that had been sent to his office in early October 2002. He states that “My officials and I read with interest the Conference of Defence Associations study *A Nation At Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces*.” He then continues in two pages to make the case that the “government remains committed to providing the Department of National Defence with the resources needed to fulfill its mandate.” He restates the government’s promise “to set out long-term direction on defence policy before the end of its mandate.” Finally, John McCallum reiterates the government’s fundamental concept for national defence policy and planning: “Over the long term, the key challenge will be to balance Canada’s defence capabilities, commitments, and *available resources* – and at the same time to transform the Canadian Forces into the modern military that Canada will need over the next 10 years and beyond.”<sup>64</sup> The ‘concept’ that national defence will receive only the “resources available” to fulfill the government’s defence policy and not necessarily the resources that may be needed to provide for the “modern military” the government promised Canadians they would deliver “is not new” nor exclusively a Liberal Party invention.

***The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves:  
Ten Years Later, Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at  
the University of Calgary, 24 September 2004***<sup>65</sup>

The Reserve Component of the Canadian Forces had since at least 1964 presented senior Regular Force officers with a continuing quandary. At the beginning of the war in Korea, Canadian politicians knew well that they could not conscript citizens as soldiers nor were they willing to place the voluntary Militia and Reserve units on “active service” (meaning compulsory service) to meet Canada’s unexpected UN commitment. Instead, they constructed a professional, all-volunteer force and sent it to Korea to support combat operations there. Subsequently, Canada built on this professional,

‘standing force’ model to satisfy NATO’s original strategic concept that required member states to deploy permanent “forces-in-being” at home and for Canada, the United Kingdom, and United States overseas. Thus the alliance’s standing force model became, in effect, the fundamental organizing principle for Canada’s Cold War era navy, army, and air force.

Nevertheless, within and without the armed forces, the planners, especially in the army, held to the notion that wars in the future as in the past would inevitably be fought by citizen soldiers called to arms in a crisis. For these planners, “mobilization” was the only practical organizing principle for Canada’s national defence, and mobilization, again especially for the army, required “reserve units” that could be “called up” when needed for active service. For defence planners the main planning questions were how many units, of what type and size, and with what capabilities? The answers to these questions were dependent, on the surface at least, on the present and expected wartime commitments the government had or might undertake.

In reality however, standing and mobilization operational plans were dependent on how much money and how many other resources governments were willing to provide for national defence. In the immediate Cold War period, 1952-1962, governments provided considerable resources to build and maintain a relatively large and technically advanced armed force – in 1956, that was 117,177 people and an annual average budget equivalent to 5.7 percent of GDP. Though generals, admirals, and air marshals, too, would demand more, there were sufficient funds to support the Regular standing force and many Reserve forces units and to *plan for mobilization*.

In 1964, however, Minister of National Defence, Paul Hellyer sounded the warning as the Pearson government signaled that defence spending would be reduced significantly: “We must greatly increase defence spending or reorganize our forces. The decision was to reorganize.”<sup>66</sup> Reorganization meant reductions in the size and number of all units of the armed forces and especially in the army Reserve or Militia units.

While some in the Militia saw this downsizing as the consequence of a Regular Force prejudice against the Militia (and there was indeed a whiff of such prejudice in the professional environment), the senior officers of the armed forces saw reductions in the Militia as a practical and pragmatic acceptance of the fact that without a serious crisis and with falling budgets, mobilization was a dormant, if not a completely dead, concept. Saving active “forces-in-being units” became the primary objective for military planners. And if mobilization was impractical in the circumstances, then the Reserve force, except for some minor domestic operations, was no longer needed.

Ministers of national defence most of the time saw the matter in another light. The Reserve force was composed of civilian constituents. Militia units were, at least in 1964, a visible entity in small and in some large communities and their leaders were not at all shy about playing politics with Militia policies no matter what the chief of the defence staff might say. Senior Militia officers and their civilian supporters understood that mobilization in some form provided their reason for being and that the contest to define the fundamental organizing principle of the armed forces and the fair allocation of the defence budget (as they saw it) would be decided by politicians and not professional officers. Militia leaders, therefore, stood alert whenever ministers began to speak of force reductions and efficient military organizations.

When the Liberal government under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien came to office in 1993, everyone in the defence establishment understood that far-reaching cuts were coming to the defence budget and that these cuts would lead to deep reductions in personnel and unit establishments. The Militia leaders, therefore, gathered to protect their units and budgets. Colonel Peter Hunter, a retired officer and Co-Chair of *Reserves 2000*<sup>67</sup> recalled in 2005 that in 1994 his peers knew that the Liberals' guillotine blade was hanging over the Militia establishment:

Although strenuously denied by defence planners [of the Regular Force] that any definite document existed, there was a plan, and orders were being issued, to reduce the Militia by half, both in number of units and in personnel. For the first time in modern memory, the overall Army Reserve Community across Canada coalesced to bring great pressure on the then Minister of National Defence – the Honorable David Collenette – who, to his everlasting credit, squashed the orders, put a hold on all Militia reorganization activities, and established the Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves.<sup>68</sup>

In December 1995 the minister of national defence appointed the Right Honorable Chief Justice Brian Dickson as Chairman of this Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves (SCRR), with Professor Jack Granatstein and retired Lieutenant General Charles Belzile as members, to advise him on how to improve the state of the Canadian Forces Reserves. The Commissioners' report, also known as the "Dickson Report," was submitted to David Collenette on 30 October 1995. It contained 41 recommendations on how to improve the state of the Canadian Forces Reserves, but concentrated its concerns on the Militia while also recommending changes to a wide range of national defence, Canadian Forces, and Reserve force policies.

Given the 'usual process', the determination of the Chrétien government to greatly reduce the armed forces, and the announcement in the 1994



*Defence White Paper* that the Reserves would be reduced from 29,440 to 23,000 by 1999, one would have expected a major counterattack on the Dickson Report that called for a fundamental restructuring and operational enhancement of the entire Reserve force and reinstatement of mobilization in defence policy, plans, and priorities. The reaction to the Report in NDHQ, however, was generally fair and accommodating.

The 1995 SCRR recommendations for the most part focused on internal Canadian Forces technical and organizational issues clearly related to improving Reserve Forces' operational capabilities. For example, the SCRR: recommended organization and command arrangements that would allow members of Militia units to function as sub-units rather than as individual personnel replacement cadres for under-strength Regular Force units; called for the development of a national mobilization plan "with all dispatch"; defined "viability" as the main criterion for assessing Militia units; suggested new pay and allowance policies and a modest pay increase for Reserve personnel to improve recruiting and retention; emphasized the need for better opportunities for quality training in Reserve units; and reinforced the Reserve officers' demands to be given better access to Regular Force military equipment for training, among other things.

The 41 recommendations identified most of the issues and policies that had sparked the Reserve Force community's rebellion against the government's 1994 defence policy statement. Most importantly, the Commissioners avoided alienating already stressed Regular Force leaders worried about their budgets and declining capabilities. The Commissioners also resisted those who might have wished them to challenge the government's right to set its own policies for all aspects of national defence.

There are no force structure numbers in the SCRR report, no demands to 'save' this or that regiment, and no call for increased spending for the Canadian Forces. "Improving" Reserve Force operational capabilities would be achieved not with new money, but with more efficient organization and the closer harmonization of Regular Force and Reserve Force policies, people, and equipment. Where once the Regular Force army considered the Militia a drag on its resources, the jarring 1994 Liberal defence policies led many senior officers (but not all) to see the Militia anew as a sort of army "force multiplier" once it had been properly restructured for that purpose. Few expected that the SCRR Commissioners would be able to bring together the fractious, rough-hewed political, Regular Force, and Reserve Force positions they encountered at the beginning of their review. Nevertheless, they did so and also set the table for the advent of what was to become the

“total force” concept – the Canadian Forces’ organizing principle for the new century and beyond.

Machineries of government grind and rattle noisily, signaling not imminent collapse, but rather the sound of business as usual. Nevertheless, an occasional inspection and a drop of oil may be needed from time to time to ensure the machine remains on its intended course and free of burrs and hotspots.

In 2004, two of the original three authors of the 1995 SCRR, Professor Granatstein and General Belzile (Chief Justice Dickson having died in the interim), suggested to the CDS, General Ray Henault, that it was time to “review what had happened since [1995] with regards to the implementation of the [government’s] approved [SCRR] recommendations, which ones have been altered and the rationale behind such alterations, and finally, given the current circumstances, what suggestions have been dropped and what decisions, if any, have been taken as an alternative.”<sup>69</sup>

General Belzile explained to the CDS that the project was sponsored by the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary and that their report would be presented at a conference there in late 2005. Unlike all the other lead researchers in the non-governmental studies examined in this monograph, Belzile asked for formal assistance from the CDS to conduct the study:

This letter seeks your support to have access to your staff in order to be able to gather up to date information, beyond what is available in the documents mentioned above. Informal approaches with the CLS [Chief of the Land Staff] involved with the Land Forces Reserve Restructure [LFRR project] have made it clear that a survey such as the one proposed would be welcome and timely as they continue with Phase II of their programme. While the LFRR is likely to be the most complex and demanding programme, it should be remembered that the SCRR dealt with all the Canadian Forces Reserves. It would thus appear that some discussions would also be necessary with the Naval and Air Staffs, as well as the Chief of Reserves and Cadets, in order for our survey to have a credible output.<sup>70</sup>

While a non-governmental review of Reserve Force policy might have interested the CDS, the request for direct access to senior members of NDHQ staffs who were in the midst of writing proposals for politically sensitive defence policies demanded cautious consideration. A report based on “insider information” that criticized the process or exposed a lack of progress over a ten-year period would certainly embarrass the MND, Bill Graham, and

bring the Militia community howling to his doorstep. On the other hand, to simply deny this request from two prominent Canadians (General Belzile was a former commander of the army) might embarrass them and cause, as well, equally prominent members of the Reserve lobby to ask in public: “What is the minister hiding?”

General Belzile and Professor Granatstein acknowledged in their letter that their review would be done in light of the “rapidly changing circumstances” of Canadian Forces operations, needs, and Regular/Reserve Forces relations since 1995. Thus, the CDS had to consider that the proposed request would not only check the progress of the SCRR report, but that it might open up an entirely new set of recommendations and policy complications.

Fortunately for the Minister of National Defence, Bill Graham and General Henault, the military staffs had for some time – and partly in response to the 1995 SCRR – been busy developing a significant restructuring of the Reserve Force and especially the Militia. The Land Forces Reserve Restructure (LFRR) program, a long-termed project aimed at rebuilding the Reserve Force on a foundation of new concepts and policies, was the heart and brains of this effort.

While the LFRR addressed many of the specific recommendations of the SCRR, the process had by 2004 moved beyond most of the 1995 considerations. In the circumstances of the time, however, the CDS may have thought that a report by these two well-informed and supportive individuals would reinforce and add credibility to these ongoing efforts. Nevertheless, a month passed while senior staff officers and the CDS considered the authors’ request for a citizens’ inquiry – *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves: Ten Years Later* (SCRR+10).

By 13 October 2004, the CDS had decided “to respond favourably” to the request and instructed his staff to draw up a reply to General Belzile to that effect.<sup>71</sup> The drafting of the letter of agreement began on 8 October and involved “input” from most senior officers in NDHQ including the Judge Advocate General. At a point in the drafting process, one of the three drafts was classified, strangely, as “Secret.”<sup>72</sup>

For all the high-level staff action, the final one-page letter sent to General Belzile seems rather innocuous. It carried, nevertheless, an implied request for discretion. After a brief and rather formal salutation, General Henault reminded the authors:

The Canadian Forces has indeed undergone significant change since the SCRR was launched in 1995. While many of the SCRR recommendations

remain valid and many have been implemented, others are no longer relevant or have been overtaken by events.

With the assurance of your intention that that [sic] the review will be constructive in nature and that your needs are modest, I am pleased to make elements of my staff available to assist you in your research. Naturally, these staffs are faced with many priorities, but I will ask them to accommodate your needs as best they can.

General Henault wished the authors “great success in this worthwhile project” and informed them that Major General Edward Fitch, Project Management Office, LFRR, would be their primary NDHQ point of contact for their review.<sup>73</sup>

The SCRR+10 report was written over the next ten months and drew heavily on the work of General Fitch’s staff and his close cooperation with Belzile and Granatstein. On 12 September 2005, the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute released the final report in Calgary and announced that it would be the major focus of a defence policy conference in Calgary in early December 2005.<sup>74</sup>

The release of the report was noted in NDHQ on 27 September. A brief email of 6 October from Brigadier General Dennis Tabbenor, Director General Land Reserves, to Lieutenant General Jean Caron, Chief of the Land Staff, however, appears to be the first internal correspondence to describe the report’s 13 recommendations.<sup>75</sup> Tabbenor reports that he had “read and examined the report” and that “before I provide my comments I would like to provide you some feedback from PM LFRR [Program Manager, MGen Fitch, the CDS’s contact officer for Belzile and Granatstein].” He goes on to situate the report in an NDHQ context:

The process started Jan. 05 with a review of the 41 recommendations of the original SCRR. Dr. Granatstein and LGen Belzile very quickly discerned that so much had changed since 1995 that it was pointless to stick slavishly to their original recommendations. Rather, they have produced a new paper that discusses what they believe are the issues of substance remaining to be resolved. I have discussed these with them; we agreed on some and agreed to disagree on others. This is a suitable situation going into the event for which the SCRR+10 paper was prepared: ‘U of Calgary CMSS Reserves Conference 2005’ which you are slated to attend. Gen [sic] Fitch also adds that he has been intimately involved with the process as he was the OPI for the coordination of DND support [to the authors].<sup>76</sup>

Lieutenant General Caron replied: “Thank you for this. I will study and we will probably have to sit down with MGen Fitch and prepare our intervention in Calgary.”<sup>77</sup>

At sometime afterwards, the VCDS asked LGen Caron to prepare a Briefing Note for the CDS on the SCRR+10 report. It was completed on 31 October 2005 and forwarded to the VCDS on 1 November. The Briefing Note was brief indeed. In a mere two pages, Major Peters from the LFRR staff described the background to the 1995 SCRR report and the aim of the SCRR+10 project and listed its 13 recommendations.

On the second page in his “discussion,” he remarks, “With few exceptions, the Army acknowledges that the majority of the recommendations deal with current, real issues. The appropriate solutions for these issues, however, are still open to lively debate.” These qualifying remarks made, the author notes three recommendations that he apparently judged would be of special interest to the CDS:

**Recommendation Five: Obligating RETP [Reserve Force Educational [university] Training Plan] graduates to serve five years in the Reserves after graduation.**

Response: The Army feels that this recommendation needs further study prior to proffering an opinion on this recommendation.

**Recommendation Six: Job Protection Legislation for Reserve Soldiers.**

Response: Again, the Army feels that the Department needs to examine this recommendation carefully before offering its approval or rejection.

**Recommendation Twelve: Army Reserve units ... should train on the same equipment as Regular Force soldiers.**

Response: The Army feels that a blanket statement [such as this] is not practical.

The staff officer concludes his note by recommending “that a formal response to this report not be issued until after the [University of Calgary] conference.”<sup>78</sup>

This is, indeed, a curious Briefing Note. It is bereft of detail and nuance; it seems to speak only for “the Army” though the SCRR+10 addressed Reserve Force-wide issues – a fact that might explain the Navy’s unenthusiastic response to the SCRR+10.<sup>79</sup> The note pointed to only three recommendations, leaving the CDS, one supposes, to assess the other ten recommendations in his own time. Yet the covering memorandum to the note indicates that it was sent as filed to the VCDS for onward transmission to the CDS. As no

other correspondence to the contrary was found in the ATI search, one can only assume that this brief note was the sum of the NDHQ analysis of the 13 recommendations contained in the report of the *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves 1995: Ten Years Later*.

It is important to understand that despite the curt Briefing Note and the lack of any evident post-report paper trail in NDHQ, the reaction to the SCRR+10 in NDHQ was not negative or dismissive. The entire project from the first approach to General Henault was positive, if guarded, and the cooperation of various staff officers was exceptional.

*The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves: Ten Years Later* was released by the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary on 24 September 2004 – an event to which, according to DND media officers, “all national defence media have been invited.”<sup>80</sup> The release of the publication was supported a week later at the annual meeting of the influential civilian Canadian Forces Liaison Council held in Calgary.<sup>81</sup> In early December, the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute convened another three-day conference on the same theme which brought together the authors of the study, senior Canadian Forces officers (including senior Reserve Force officers), and academics to discuss aspects of the study and the place of the Reserve Force in Canada’s national defence in general. Again, participation by senior members of the Canadian Forces in these two events was notable, even though, to understate the point, not every senior officer in the Reserve Force in attendance at these meetings was keen on the government’s proposed Reserve Force and Militia policies.<sup>82</sup>

The positive management in NDHQ of the Dickson and SCRR+10 reports stands in sharp contrast to how NDHQ managed other non-governmental and (as we shall explain) parliamentary reports. Four determining factors may account for this striking difference. First, it is important to note that the Dickson Report and the SCRR+10 report were more “welcomed” in NDHQ than the others we have investigated because both were in a sense commissioned by then ministers of national defence, David Collenette and Bill Graham. Second, the fate of the Reserve Force in both periods was not of great interest to the media or the general public and thus posed no real threat to the ministers’ relationships with the prime minister or his government’s defence policy priorities. Third, the reports as they were being constructed and in their final recommendations supported, generally, ideas and policies the government and Canadian Forces leaders, especially in the army, wished to implement with respect to Reserve Force policies and plans.

Finally, these studies were treated in NDHQ as dealing with more or less technical military matters almost irrelevant to the hard-core partisan policy issues that drove the agenda there every day. The absence in the ATI files of any correspondence of any type from the ADM (Policy) and ADM (Public Affairs) staffs – there are no “Briefing Notes,” “Advice to the Minister,” nor any “Talking Notes” at all – is evidence of this observation and may explain in large measure the positive and low-profile treatment these studies received in NDHQ.

These four factors set these two studies apart from the NGO unsolicited reports and the parliamentary reports described in this monograph in which these positive attributes were not always apparent. Moreover, the positive context created by circumstances and not, of course, by any compromises on the part of the authors of either study, “conditioned” how senior officials’ and officers’ responded to them; that is to say, with respect, genuine interest, and guarded acceptance of some recommendations, at least, in principle.

This distinction is useful to the theme put forward in this monograph as it reinforces the argument that DND officials shape their responses to external reports to satisfy the political and partisan needs of governments. In this case, the need was to support the ambitions of the Militia colonels while not upsetting extant DND and CF policies, procurement decisions, or budgets. This example supports, also, the rather obvious conclusion that influence, “the power to shape policy,” is greatest when advice is offered in circumstances where it is most likely to be accepted.

We can with some confidence predict from our research how a different report, an unsolicited Dickson Report, would have been received in NDHQ if officials sensed that the minister and the prime minister were not at all interested in the political support of Reserve Force leaders and were determined to bash ahead with David Collenette’s original plan to cut severely the Reserve Force and Militia units. In such circumstances the SCRR+10 would have been placed in the hands of policy officials, subjected to the full rigours of “the usual process,” and dismissed entirely – but with a note of advice to the minister of national defence that should he be asked about the report he should respond: “The government welcomes this report and expects it will make an important contribution to the ongoing development of future Reserve Force policies.”





## CHAPTER THREE

# *Academic Studies*

### ***To Secure a Nation, The Council for Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 9 November 2001*<sup>83</sup>**

*To Secure a Nation*, or the “Bercuson Study” as it was referred to in NDHQ at the time, was prepared over several months in 2001 with contributions from a great number of leading Canadian academic experts and former Canadian Forces officers. The study was conducted under the direction of Dr. David Bercuson, Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, and presented to the public on 9 November 2001. It criticized the Liberal government rather severely for its failures to support the Canadian Forces and the degradation of combat capabilities, and called for a comprehensive and public review of Canada’s defence policy. The study concluded with 23 detailed recommendations.

In their assessment of *To Secure a Nation*, DND officials in the ADM (Policy) branch at NDHQ first summarized the 39-page study in two pages of 15 ‘bullets’ highlighting several of the Council’s conclusions. In these “Preliminary Departmental Comments,” they state: “The Council claims that the 1994 White Paper is no longer relevant [and] calls for a full review of defence and security policy,” remarking “However, most of the recommendations do not suggest preferred [policy] outcomes.” They cite especially the Council’s view that the Canadian Forces “are underfunded to deliver all of its commitments” and its confident assertion that “the Canadian public will support additional investments in the Canadian Forces provided ‘the case is made and made clearly.’” In the same document, officials also note the Council’s argument that the Canadian Forces may become a mere “constabulary force” and its opinion that the defence budget is insufficient “to sustain current operations and modernize the forces.” Finally, the note the recommendation for “a more effective role by Parliament and consideration of an advisory machinery for the Minister.”<sup>84</sup>

The second section of the review, “General Comments” and “Detailed Observations,” is in essence the ADM Policy staff rebuttal to the Council’s

study and its recommendations. The early draft began as usual with a statement of welcome meant to serve as the first notation in subsequent ministerial and departmental “Talking Notes” and in statements in response to House of Commons or media inquiries:

We welcome all contributions to the ongoing dialogue between DND and external defence experts. The Council’s report is a valuable contribution to the current discussion of the future of Canadian security.<sup>85</sup>

In a second draft written the following day, the sentences were annotated in the margin with a bold question mark and subsequently deleted from “advice to the minister,” “talking points,” and public affairs “questions & answers” advice. The perfunctory welcome remained as the introduction to all subsequent notes intended to guide public affairs and political statements, but in a decidedly less committed tone:

We welcome the recent report prepared by the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies in Calgary. Their views will stimulate debate and make an important contribution to defence and security dialogue in Canada.<sup>86</sup>

The officials’ 14 critical “Detailed Observations” indicated that the Bercuson Study was most unwelcomed and rated implicitly as something very much less than a “valuable contribution” to any discussion in NDHQ about Canada’s national defence policies. For instance,

officials criticized the authors of the Study for failing “... [to] acknowledge that Canada was very much aware, even before the September 11 events, of new vulnerabilities to its domestic security and had been pursuing a number of initiatives.” They noted also that NDHQ “is also well aware of the new security concerns [and] ... increased accessibility of the Arctic region. DND/Canadian Forces have, therefore, launched a number of measures to enhance our capabilities in the North.”<sup>87</sup>

Officials’ comments were predictably defensive of current policies and those who manage them. “Many issues highlighted in the report are important and, indeed, are already under consideration by National Defence.” In another sub-section we read: “The report downplays the tremendous [force development] efforts that have been made in recent years ... [and it] understates the Canadian Forces’ flexibility in adapting to new demands.” And so the text continues for six pages of insistent bureaucratic ‘bullets’.

The staff “Observations,” without exception, dismiss the premise and/or the arguments presented by the Council and thus all the recommendations in

the Bercuson Study. Unlike the assessment of the RCMI study cited earlier, officials in this case could find nothing with which they could agree. Indeed, the dismissive tone was set early in the usual process.

In a first-cut document prepared on 7 November as a backgrounder to these 9 November Preliminary Comments, a junior policy official refers condescendingly to the members of the Council: “The heavy academic presence in the Council is obvious here.” He goes on to say:

On the whole, there is little in this document that we have not already heard or seen ... many of the recommendations were touched upon in [another] recent paper. That said the authors betray a fundamental misunderstanding of Canadian defence policy. Although they profess an in-depth knowledge of the 94 White Paper, some of their facts and recommendations indicate otherwise. ... Most of the Councils [sic] recommendations are so vague that the MND will have no problem whatsoever pointing to the progress DND/Canadian Forces have recently made in optimizing force structure, putting people first, and preparing for the emerging security threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>88</sup>

This early assessment and the “Preliminary Departmental Comments on *To Secure a Nation*” would serve as the basis for all NDHQ responses to the Bercuson Study. There is no evidence in the available ATI files that the study was read in detail by or drew comments from senior military officers or senior officials in other branches in the headquarters. The brief ADM (Policy) summary, however, provided other policy and public affairs officials the background they would use to prepare “Briefing Notes for the Minister” and “Talking Notes” for the minister and the CDS and their “spokesmen.”

The DND Public Affairs staff warned officials on 9 November 2001 that the Bercuson Study had woken the dog – “A number of articles in the *National Post* reported on the [Bercuson] report.”<sup>89</sup> This notice hastened the policy staff’s efforts and that day they prepared a final “Advice for the Minister”<sup>90</sup> and a detailed seven-page set of 10 “Questions and Answers”<sup>91</sup> for Mr. Eggleton’s use, if necessary, in the House of Commons or in a media scrum.

The minister was advised to begin his remarks in every situation by stating: “We welcome the recent report prepared by the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies in Calgary,” but then to defend the status quo as the staff had recommended in their preliminary notes.

Meanwhile, the Public Affairs branch issued a one-page “Media Response Line” to the outside world. It began with the approved welcome and followed it with four sentences intended to shelve the Council’s

recommendations and explain that the study had, in a sense, been sent to the wrong address:

- The report calls not just for a review of Canadian defence policy, but also of Canadian security policy in the broader sense, implicating many other departments and agencies such as the Solicitor General’s office, the RCMP, Immigration, Customs and Revenue, Transportation, Health, as well as a number of provincial and municipal stakeholders.
- The report also makes reference to the idea that such a review should be associated with a parallel review of Canada’s foreign policy.
- Only the Government of Canada has the authority to make decisions on the high-level policy issues such as those referred to in the report. The broad scope of such a review and the potential implications for a number of stakeholders at all levels of government provide a further imperative for such a decision being left to the attention of the Government. [And, therefore, not to DND or the minister of national defence.]
- The role of any government Department, including DND, is to fulfill the policy directives that are provided by the Government.<sup>92</sup>

In this final, mealy-mouthed sentence, we witness the defence bureaucracy, speechless and trapped by its self-assumed duty to defend the truth the Chrétien government wished Canadians to hear, trying to explain away in a fortune cookie-like message why it could not ‘speak truth to power’, even in the privacy of the minister’s office.

In any case, there is no evidence in any ATI file we received from DND that anyone in the policy branch in NDHQ, in the deputy minister’s office, or in the minister’s office forwarded the Bercuson Study to any other government “stakeholder” or took any initiative to suggest to the Clerk of the Privy Council that the PCO lead a team to provide a whole-of-government response to the “heavy academic presence” that prepared this study. In effect, *To Secure a Nation* became, insofar as officials and the minister of national defence were concerned, simply a dead letter.<sup>93</sup>

***Canada without Armed Forces?, School of Policy Studies,  
Queen’s University, 3 December 2003***

The 2003 research project, CWF<sup>?</sup>,<sup>94</sup> was developed not to criticize the Chrétien government directly by pointing out the consequences of its defence policies’ shortcomings, but rather to explore a particular question: What would the future state of the Canadian Forces operational capabilities

be in 2008, 2013, and 2018, assuming the extant policies and funding levels of 2003 continued unchanged in the immediate future? The methodology was straightforward and the research data for it were readily available and, indeed, much of the data were drawn from publicly available DND files, reports, and studies and from interviews with NDHQ project officers and officials serving and recently retired at the time.

The project began by gathering data on the “stock of military goods” in the Canadian Forces defined as existing major capabilities including naval vessels, army field equipment, and aircraft by type, plus equipment in the procurement pipeline *for which there was approved funding and a signed contract*. (NDHQ has hundreds of capabilities procurement projects underway at any time, but many never receive the funding or government support needed to class them as much more than wished for or anticipated capabilities.) Researchers also investigated the demographics of the Canadian Forces in 2003, because trained people are the essential component of any capability.

Military equipment is managed within a “life-cycle management system.” That is to say, each item has a start date – usually its acquisition date or operational acceptance date – and an end-of-life date, the point at which it is expected to be taken out of service. The life cycle varies for each type of equipment, but tends in peacetime to range from 10 to 25 years for major items. The researchers established the official life cycle for each major ship/vehicle/aircraft class in the Canadian Forces inventory from standards set by the Canadian Forces, industry, and government (i.e., government regulations) and – because many of the major items in the CF inventory originate in the United States – from the detailed files available from the United States Congressional Budget Office.

The next step was to examine the procurement/acquisition system and its history to determine the expected acquisition timelines to replace expired systems with replacement but not necessarily replica systems.<sup>95</sup> Some capabilities, commercial pattern trucks, for instance, can be procured relatively quickly. Other major acquisitions for such things as advanced fighter aircraft and naval vessels take much longer. The records and experiences of those who work in the system indicated clearly that most major capabilities take many years to be brought into service – DND officials stated that at the time of the study the *average* acquisition period was 15 years. The researchers, however, developed “reasonable” acquisition timelines for the major capabilities they identified based on DND records, interviews, and industry assessments and the state of ongoing procurement plans and projects.

The researchers then charted the life-cycle profile for each capability and overlaid it with the estimated acquisition timeline. In many cases, the capability reached its end-of-life date before it was possible to complete a regular replacement acquisition. Moreover, the study found that many critical capabilities would reach this state together or very near each other. Defence funding, unfortunately, would have little positive influence on this difficulty because the acquisition timeline assumed at the time in NDHQ was in many cases quite inflexible. There were, at the time, some ways the government could mitigate the “impending crisis,” but at the time of the study no such decisions had been taken and the plans that did exist – the 2003 so-called defence Strategic Capabilities Investment Plan (SCIP), for example – were not funded.

In the examination of the Canadian Forces personnel situation (in DND/Canadian Forces terminology, “HR/Mil”), the researchers looked at the demographic profile of the Canadian Forces to assess the balance within the armed forces between the long-service and experienced cadre and the short-service and inexperienced cadre. The optimum military demography is a balance of the two cadres where the former provides the leaders and trainers and the latter the main force and the source of future leaders and trainers.

When the balance is significantly upset, Canadian Forces capabilities may be degraded, sometimes seriously, to the detriment of operational commitments. As the study pointed out, the sudden reduction of the Canadian Forces by approximately 30,000 positions, a third of the total force, and the halt to recruiting for several years in the early 1990s resulted in an unbalanced demographic in the following years. By the early 2000s, the Canadian Forces were composed of an older senior cadre approaching retirement and an abundance of inexperienced recruits and younger members. Between the extremes of these cadres was a significant gap – the missing cadre of mid-career leaders and trainers who had not been recruited during the downsizing hiatus of the early 1990s. While governments might be able to build some parts of capabilities by, for example, buying equipment “off the shelf,” they cannot produce seasoned leaders simply by suddenly passing more people through the recruiting system. Even the finest equipment provides no usable military capability in the absence of experienced leaders and trained, effective sailors, soldiers, and air personnel.

Thus, and to the researchers’ surprise, the crisis facing the Canadian Forces in 2003 and for years into the future was not just equipment – as critical as that deficiency was – but rather *the critical problem* was the imbalance in the Canadian Forces personnel structure. Moreover, it was the

most costly and time-sensitive problem facing the Canadian Forces and the government's defence policy.

The CWF? study – “the Bland Study” in DND correspondence – provides a rare glimpse at how policies are made and managed inside NDHQ and how bureaucratic politics are played in that complex political/public service/military bazaar. The Bland Study is unique in the following ways: in the media attention it attracted and, thus, in the intensity of the uproar it created in NDHQ; in the extent to which it upset and, for a time, circumvented the ‘usual process’; and in the significant number of senior officials and officers who became suddenly engaged in managing the political fallout it created.

This uniqueness is demonstrated by the three cartons of internal NDHQ correspondence delivered to the researchers for the “Sleeping Dogs” project. The cartons contained some 600 pages of draft talking notes, briefing notes, assessments, public affairs ‘strategies’, and emails of all sorts almost all of which were produced by NDHQ staffs in fewer than four days. What accounts for the great difference in NDHQ reactions to this study compared to all the others we have looked at in this monograph?

On 3 December 2003, the day CWF? was released, the dog not only woke up, it howled across the country. Officers and officials in several branches of NDHQ, as we can now see in their own words, apparently caught by surprise, worked feverishly to put the dog back to sleep as soon as they could get organized to do so.

This assessment of how DND and the Canadian Forces as organizations and how individuals within NDHQ responded to the CWF? study looks at three specific, but closely related activities: the motivation for the internal review of the paper; the ‘usual process’ operating under stress; and the significant friction between DND public servants and Canadian Forces officers caused by intensely different opinions about the credibility of the study, the ‘duty’ of officials and officers to support and ‘protect’ the government from such reports, and how officials decided to explain CWF? to the minister of national defence and the public.

On 28 November 2003 advance copies of the CWF? study were sent directly to the chief of the defence staff and the ADM (Policy) for their information pending the formal release of the study on 3 December. At the same time, notices to the media outlining the main points of the study were distributed early and embargoed until 3 December. On the evening of 2 December, the independent television network IChannel aired a documentary, *Canada: A Nation undefended*, based on work completed for CWF?. According to ATI responses, no senior officer or official in NDHQ reacted to the advance issue of the monograph or to the IChannel event.

However, Melanie Rushworth, a junior, civilian member of the DND Public Affairs branch, seems to have been the first to sense that the study might need “watching” after the CDAI announced on 1 December a media event to launch the study on 3 December. Although she had not read the study, she warned her superiors “You may want to pay attention to the release of this paper – there is a section on training and ... a section on capital and MAT and O&M etc.”<sup>96</sup> A colleague offered: “I’ll keep an eye on this to see if there is any discussion of recruiting ...” and he noted the television documentary. That afternoon Rushworth emailed other junior public affairs officers that “I have an advance copy. It is 127 pages and touches on the ‘Personnel Crisis.’”<sup>97</sup>

Another public affairs official had, by early Monday morning, 3 December, read part of an advance copy of the study. He suggested to Rushworth, “Now that we have a little more detail, we should prepare some lines”:

Approach – Canadian Forces combat capable; demonstrated over past decade; govt [sic] has increased defence spending; govt well-aware of need to modernize ... working hard at it; note investments.

*Re-cycle and re-use existing material to fullest extent possible ... Should have draft lines approved up to ADM Public Affairs for end of day tomorrow so we are well-positioned to provide support if required. Following release of the report you should review quickly and prepare top 5 Q’s and A’s and then work on the A’s.*<sup>98</sup>

On 2 December, the interest at least in the public affairs branch increased and Rushworth sent another notice to a wider audience announcing the 3 December Queen’s/CDAI media briefing and (still not having read the document in detail) passed to her colleagues a few “... draft talking points that could be used to help the department respond to any media queries on the paper. Our positioning of the lines is in general keeping with the information we have received about the release. I was hoping we could group as a team to review potential Q&As and next steps for PA.” Rushworth “wondered if” anyone else in headquarters might be interested in attending the media conference. In fact, Rushworth was the only DND attendee and provided a background memorandum to her superiors later that day of what turned out to be a rather quiet affair attended by a few not-busy members of the Ottawa media corps.<sup>99</sup>

The matter was being handled by the usual process in which, generally, all outside studies and reports are considered to be media problems to be handled by public affairs officials who, as in this case, judge whether there is a problem, prepare a “position” and “briefing lines” to expected questions,



and gauge the media's reaction as defined by print columns, television highlights, and radio talk show interest. After the quiet release of the study in Ottawa on the morning of 3 December, the staff at noon merely continued in their normal routine. By late afternoon they were caught in an unexpected blizzard of media requests and panicky demands from the VCDS and the deputy minister to get the matter under control.

When the deputy minister arrived at NDHQ on the morning of 3 December she was confronted by a front-page, "above the fold" headline in the *National Post* and a story announcing the main findings of the CWF? study. She would have read the stinging op-ed based on the study written by Jack Granatstein and published in the editorial pages of the *Globe and Mail*. More than a dozen mainline newspapers picked up the story and published reports of its details and/or editorials on the weak state of Canada's armed forces and their increasing vulnerability to operational decay.

The storyline, exaggerated in some of the more than 50 radio talk shows that featured the CWF? report on 3 and 4 December, simply declared "Study says the military is doomed," which the study definitely did not say.<sup>100</sup> Some 12 media reporters had by noon the day the study was released called DND public affairs offices across the country asking for more comments and information on the report and the department's reaction to it. The study was featured on the CBC evening radio show, "As It Happens," and on the CPAC evening news and in other newscasts. At one point in the afternoon after the release, the authors, assisted by more than a dozen colleagues, simultaneously handled scores of calls from media from across Canada.

The most important call of the day came from the soon-to-be prime minister, Paul Martin, who asked to speak with the principal author of the study.<sup>101</sup> He asked for a brief account of the report and what might be needed to set defence policy on a new, more effective course. One senior DND policy official on hearing of this conversation later reportedly angrily threw his notepad across his office.<sup>102</sup>

In the midst of this flurry, officials and officers scurried to develop talking notes and briefing notes for the minister of national defence, John McCallum, who fortunately, some said, did not have to face the House of Commons which was in recess or the media as he was in Europe at a NATO conference. Needless to say, the development of the responses to the Queen's report was taken from Ms. Rushworth and passed to the most senior staff officers in NDHQ.

The chief of the defence staff and the deputy minister late in the day offered Major General Douglas Dempster as the officer who would carry the counter-message to the media on behalf of the minister. However, the

in-house message was not ready and did not get out to the public until two days after the study was, in media terms, yesterday's news. This delay was caused by the need to respond credibly to the complexities and details of the study that covered defence policy fundamentals, the state of various military fleets, the procurement system, the personnel problem, and the "gathering crisis" of defence and foreign policies handicapped by failing capabilities.

Putting the message together demanded information from most of the central bureaus and staffs on the military and departmental sides of NDHQ and the collation of that information into a politically acceptable framework. The usual process was to "recycle" terms, facts and figures, and comforting views of the future and that approach dominated the preparation of talking and briefing notes for the deputy minister and the minister. The "Talking Notes" went through four major drafts and each passed through the hands of the ADM (Policy), ADM (Public Affairs), the VCDS, the CDS, and the deputy minister before being sent to the minister on 4 December.<sup>103</sup>

As usual, once the basic structure of the Notes was set (commonly in the first draft), the following drafts held to that form and reviewers merely 'word-smithed' the text. In this case, however, the first draft was rejected almost entirely by senior policy officers. The first sentence illustrates the difficulty drafters were having producing 'notes' intended to avoid any suggestion that DND speakers or the minister were arguing with the content of the CWF? study – for to do so might lend credibility to the study's facts. Rather, the trick was to present only the government position but in a context that seemed to fit the main lines from the study.

The first draft began with the ever-popular 'we welcome this study' opening gambit<sup>104</sup>: "While I have not had the opportunity to fully review it, I understand that the paper *Canada without Armed Forces* [sic]<sup>105</sup> presents an interesting dialogue for Canadians to consider." The first sentence was obviously unacceptable and a reviewer scratches out "... presents an interesting dialogue for Canadians to consider" and inserts "... another interesting report on the state of the Forces." – i.e., nothing new.

The first drafters then offered up detailed facts under headings: "Budget and Sustainability," "Policy Transformation," "Materiel," "Training and Retention," and "Operational Tempo." All are removed in the second draft and replaced with simpler, non-argumentative bullets meant to explain in the best light the government's defence policies and programs. For example, "Contrary to what the title seems to suggest, the Canadian Forces remain a vital national institution ..."; "The Canadian Forces have demonstrated repeatedly ... that they are combat capable"; "The government has increased defence spending in four consecutive budgets ..."; "We recognize that

our forces are overstretched ...”; “No doubt Defence has made significant progress ...”<sup>106</sup>

The first sentence was amended several times and finally in the fourth version read: “While **we** [I deleted] have not had the opportunity to fully review it **at this time**, [**I understand that the paper** – deleted] *Canada without Armed Forces* **appears to be** [**presents** – deleted] an interesting **report on the state of the Canadian Forces** [**dialogue for Canadians to consider** – deleted].” An unknown senior official found even this soft sentence too much and wrote in the margin beside it: “We don’t do book reviews – political polite dialogue!”<sup>107</sup> The text was shortened and detailed references to ‘policies’ included in the first version were mostly eliminated. The text, otherwise, remained much the same through the third and fourth drafts.

The “Final Version,” however, concluded with a rather ‘trust us and look to the future when things will somehow be better’ editorial meant, one supposes, to hearten the minister’s confidence when in reality he had not much more than hope as policy to offer the Canadian Forces or Canadian citizens:

We also recognize that our forces are stretched. To better manage the impact of the operational tempo on our people, we continually reassess our military commitments around the world and try to balance our deployments from among the three environments, as best we can under the circumstances.

We are also working hard to ensure the best possible opportunities for members of the Canadian Forces. Recent recruiting efforts have been very successful, pay rates have increased and we are working to improve the Terms of Service to help with retention of our members.

There is no doubt that Defence [sic] has made significant progress over the last decade. However, we must ensure that the Canadian Forces continue to adapt to the new security environment and are prepared for the challenges of the future.<sup>108</sup>

The Briefing Note to the minister follows the usual format with a statement of the “Issue,” a “Background” explaining, in this case, the main points in the CWF? study, and three pages of “Observations” (a fact that exposes the falsehood the minister was advised to advance: “We have not had the opportunity to fully review it ...”). The background notes are mostly fair and accurate summaries of the longer arguments and conclusions contained in the study. The observations, however, are decidedly negative and dismissive; in fact, it appears from the comments of officials that the CWF? authors got nothing right. Military officers were much less sure this was true.

Again, as usual, the Briefing Note tells the minister that “there is very little new in the document. It covers much the same material contained [in reports by] myriad other organizations.” The study is “... excessively dramatic.” After these two observations, the Note lists three of the government’s accomplishments in the past years and complains that the authors offered “scant reference” to them. The main criticism is directed at the authors’ critique of the relevance of the *1994 Defence White Paper*. Six of the 14 bulleted “Observations” defend the 1994 policy statement, although only 24 pages of the 127-page study discussed defence policy as such.<sup>109</sup>

Policy officers especially complained that the study’s authors were “unfair” to bluntly state that the *1994 Defence White Paper* was irrelevant – but unfair to whom was not defined. Nevertheless, one might suppose that because the principal note writers of the “Briefing Notes for the Minister of National Defence” on the CWAF? study were directed by the principal writers of the 1994 white paper, some might have felt unfairly criticized by the Bland Report. This suspicion is reinforced, as we shall see, in the at times bitter internal NDHQ emails circulated among many of these same officials and between them and military officers.

Perhaps the rush to meet the needs of public affairs bureaucrats inhibited the note writers from taking a more measured look at the study. Or, perhaps, it was judged at first glance as other studies had been as having nothing to offer – no insights, no concepts, nor any redeeming qualities at all. The Background and the Observations even failed to mention to the minister the basic, simple premise of the study – did Canada have the time and the funds to replace in some manner basic military capabilities before those capabilities reached their end-of-life date?

What made the CWAF? study unique was the introduction to the defence policy literature of the “present force – future force” paradigm. The study focused not on the shortcomings of the present force, as most other studies had already done very well, but concentrated on the state of the future force in five-year increments. The NDHQ note writers missed this important innovation entirely in their apparent rush to dismiss the study as nothing new. The policy analysts’ political orientation – ‘protect the government’ – led them immediately and without reflection to see the study as “another” complaint about the state of the present force.

This DND official’s orientation was fundamentally at odds with the way many senior military staff officers viewed the study as we shall see in the combative, and at times, rude and condescending exchanges of emails between senior and junior officials and senior Canadian Forces officers. These exchanges were not mere quibbles over technical details. Rather, they

revealed a deep divide between officials who viewed their responsibilities in the context of protecting the government and the government's policies and officers who saw their responsibilities to the civil authority in the context of 'speaking truth to power' in the service of meeting the government's defence commitments in a professionally credible manner and of protecting members of the Canadian Forces whose lives often depended on decisions taken in NDHQ.

Whatever the circumstances, for officials or officers to offer in their advice to a minister meaningless rhetoric about the future value of "transformational technologies" and "modernization and transformation initiatives" without alerting him or her to the reality that no funds had been dedicated to advance these untested ideas was simply a tactic to misdirect public debate and media commentary. Irrelevant digressions such as claims that the authors failed to acknowledge "the fact that the Government had also committed [in the early 1990s] to reducing the country's debt ..." ten years after that commitment was made and fulfilled is hardly a valid criticism of the study and, arguably, validates this and other criticisms of 2000s defence policy. The remark that "Canada ranks third in NATO in percentage of its forces deployed on operations overseas" is an attempt to make the paucity of Canadian Forces capabilities a bragging point.<sup>110</sup>

Everyone in NDHQ understood that it required the deployment of most of the entirety of Canadian Forces capabilities to meet even small missions and that this necessity only seemed impressive if it were stated in meaningless percentages. For example, the deployment of 25 percent of Canada's naval frigate capabilities is a mere four ships with very limited range unless they are accompanied by at least 50 percent of the navy's two ship at-sea replenishment capability. The deployment of, say, 10 percent of Italy's naval assets is near enough force to control the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, to parade the so-called Strategic Capabilities Investment Plan (SCIP) as the administrative process that would solve the future defence capabilities crisis when it was, as everyone in NDHQ who dealt with it knew, a grand staff paper exercise, not agreed by government and not funded, was an outright public policy dodge meant to placate the media – to put the dog back to sleep.<sup>111</sup>

When officials parroted at every instant that "there is very little new in the document. It covers much the same material contained [in reports by] myriad other organizations," they betray themselves as helpless captives of the status quo. If myriad individuals all having to some degree credible, informed opinions about national defence policy and the state of the Canadian Forces bring to you the same message time and again, would that

fact not suggest to seasoned officials that they ought to consider seriously what ‘these experts’ are saying and that they should explain to their political leaders that these people are not all wrong all the time?

If individuals inside and outside government and in the Canadian Forces keep bringing to ministers the same messages does that fact not suggest to officials that to some degree the government’s policies are failing to address even adequately serious matters of national defence? More bluntly, if you know (and senior officers and officials, of course, knew) the true state of the capabilities of the Canadian Forces, why would you not suggest something be done about it instead of meekly going to the minister to tell him the truth you believe he wanted to hear?

The answers to these questions are evident in great measure in the CWF? files of the staff officers and officials who prepared the public affairs Talking Notes and the Briefing Notes for the minister and in the words officers and officials used to defend the government’s positions in public. And it is into this quarrel of bureaucrats we now go.

Margaret Bloodworth, Deputy Minister of DND, signed and sent the final departmental Briefing Note to Minister of National Defence, John McCallum, on 5 December 2003, two days after CWF? was released.<sup>112</sup> The Note was prepared in the offices of the ADM (Policy) and drew heavily on the “Talking Notes” composed by the public affairs staff with input from two other main sources, the ADM (Human Resources – Military), which is the Canadian Forces central personnel planning staff, and the Director General Strategic Planning (DGSP), which is the DND/Canadian Forces central force structure and capabilities planning staff.

Copies of the final Note were, as is routine, sent to DGSP for information and it set off a chain of emails that exposed the deep fissures between the mostly public service “Policy Development” staff, the mostly military staff responsible for future force planning, and the authors of the Strategic Capabilities Investment Plan. It is important to recall that in the Note to the minister the SCIP was held up as the answer to criticism from the CWF? and was also used to bolster officials’ and officers’ responses to the media. As the following set of emails illustrates, there was considerable acrimony between the staffs after the Briefing Note was signed by the deputy minister and passed to the minister.

We have included here mostly verbatim versions of the staff emails about the Briefing Note sent between 4 December and 10 December 2003 to retain the true sense of the participants’ arguments and the emotions the messages reveal. We have removed only some of the lengthy “CC” addresses

for simplicity's sake and added clarifications where necessary to explain NDHQ acronyms and jargon and to identify individuals. It is important to note, also, that the emails involved discussions within the ADM (Policy) and DGSP staffs and between members of both – joined occasionally by public service public affairs officials – and that they escalated quickly into a strong positioning by Vincent Rigby, ADM (Policy), and his immediate subordinate, Daniel Bon (Director, Policy Development, D Pol Dev), contra Major General Douglas Dempster, Director General Strategic Planning (DGSP) and his subordinate officers.

From: Eyre LCOL WD@VCDS DGSP DDA@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Thursday, December 04, 2003 4:15 PM

To: Cessford Col MP@VCDS DGSP DDA@Ottawa-Hull

I have just read with interest this report [note to the minister] on the Bland report and have some observations on ADM(POL)'s observations:

- Very defensive on the continuing relevance of the 94 White Paper. A more balanced observation would be that while parts remain relevant, it should be significantly updated.
- Although I agree that the three defence mission areas (dom, cont, and intl) [domestic, continental, international] remain valid, they should concede that they will continue to merge.
- A more effective recapitalization counter-argument is required. Transformational technologies are okay, but at what cost? What would be useful is a colour-coded spreadsheet (with red for rust) showing capabilities against time – basically what we have and will have for how long. This would make much more of an impact and the logic flow would be right in front of us. MGS arguments don't cut it. Recent strategic choices (modest budget increase, internal reallocations) as mentioned do not address the looming problem.
- Even an 11 year acquisition cycle will still leave us tripping over our own decision cycle as a nimble and adaptive enemy adopts what is on the shelf.
- MCCRT is vaunted.<sup>113</sup>

I guess what irks me [Eyre] the most about these observations is their negativity and defensive tone. Did the Bland report get nothing right? Here we have a report that can perhaps be used to gain some leverage in im-

proving the Canadian Forces, yet is being shot down by the bureaucratic machine intent on mitigating political embarrassment. Then again, maybe I just don't get it.

I just talked to Mae [Ms. Mae Johnson, staff officer, D Policy Dev] about this. Broad agreement did not occur. Sensationalism aside, there is a message that should be capitalized on, and not buried by CYA. [Cover Your Ass]

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From: Cessford Col MP@VCDS DGSP DDA@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Friday, December 05, 2003 9:07 AM

To: Dempster MGen D@VCDS DGSP@Ottawa-Hul

Sir,

Wayne's [LCol. Wayne Eyre] observation's are trenchant and useful. This report will be read broadly – by our internal and external audiences. We need to be very careful about discounting this work in its entirety – there are some findings that are sound and helpful.

MP Cessford

Col

DDA [Director Defence Analysis]

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From: Dempster MGen D@VCDS DGSP@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Monday, December 08, 2003 5:42 PM

To: Rigby V@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull;  
Taymun SM@ADM(PA) [Public Affairs]@Ottawa-Hull

Allow me to share this view with you. I believe that we need to learn to accept outside views as part of the challenge process, to help outside stakeholder groups where we can and to recognize the truth that the 1994 White Paper, no matter how good at the time, now needs updating to handle the new security environment, changed Canada-US relationship, operational lessons learned and positive government fiscal circumstances. Indeed the government has stated its intent to update its policy, so why should we be reticent about this?



I did a couple of interviews with the media last week and tried to reflect a balanced view. The ADM Pol paper was timely and useful in preparing, and the ADM PA support most helpful. The truth is that at least some of our defence media reporters are more inclined to trust outside reports than inside experts, and that at least some reporters mistrust political statements not backed up by real facts. [redacted]

We need to get the SCIP on the internet street so that it can be seen, and allow it to counter to some the degree the assertion that we can only afford a capital program for one service.

Lastly, our own troops see these reports and wonder what the truth really is. The army Strategic Planning Session 7 two weekends ago had two junior NCMs [non-commissioned members; i.e., not officers] present. They had produced a strategic analysis and asked some fine questions during the session. You can't fool all of the people all of the time, and the audience is increasingly sophisticated.

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From: Rigby V@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Tuesday, December 09, 2003 12:03

To: Dempster MGen D@VCDS DGSP@Ottawa-Hull;  
Taymun SM@ADM(PA)@Ottawa-Hull

General, [An unusually formal salutation]

- Many thx for your comments. I agree with much of what you say. Let me try, however, to address some of DDA's concerns.
- At no point in our note do we suggest that the Bland report got "nothing right". In fact, we state in the 2nd bullet of our observations section that "the report identifies many issues (e.g., equipment rust-out, overstretch etc) that have been publicly acknowledged by the Minister and senior officials". Similar sentiments are expressed elsewhere in this section. The Minister, in a "quick and dirty note" prepared in less than 24 hrs, does not need his bureaucrats detailing these problems for him -- he is fully up to speed. Moreover, he has seen all this stuff in previous reports of a similar nature -- hence our comment that Bland has nothing new to say. What the MND needs are context and balance, which are sadly missing from the Bland report. As you mention, the public takes these reports at face value, and we need to equip the Minister to deal with any misconceptions. That was the primary aim of our note -- to correct

the impression that the Canadian Forces was facing “mass extinction” in the near future (does anyone honestly believe this?). I take issue, therefore, with LCol Eyre’s suggestion that the report was “shot down by the bureaucratic machine intent on mitigating political embarrassment”. We are public servants: *we defend government policy b/c that is our job*, [emphasis added] but we also provide the best advice we have to offer. If that saves the Minister from “political embarrassment”, so be it, [redacted]

- “Very defensive on the continuing relevance of the White Paper?” Again, no one is suggesting that, 10 years later, the White Paper is perfect. But do we need to accept Bland’s reckless assertion that “the relevance and prudence of **every** [emphasis in the original] important element of defence policy are open to challenge”? If we’re “defensive” of the WP, it’s b/c the Government just last year agreed that the fundamentals of the policy remain valid. Does anyone in this bldg believe that the concept of m-p, cc forces [multi-purpose, combat capable] or the three Canadian Forces roles are outdated? That we will leave NATO? Or even that the international security environment is *drastically* [emphasis in the original] different than the depiction in 1994 (notwithstanding 9/11 and the new US assertiveness on the world stage etc, our assessment in 94 that the world remains highly dangerous and unpredictable is not far off the mark). Yes, a new policy is on the horizon, and yes, some course corrections are required, but let’s not throw out the baby with the bathwater. In my view, our assessment of the WP [1994 White Paper] is the balanced one, not Bland’s.
- Re the three missions “merging”, we do acknowledge this trend. We just caution against overplaying it. Again, it is a question of balance.
- Re “recapitalization”, we do acknowledge the problems, as cited above. We also don’t suggest that recent budget increases (which, by the way, aren’t that modest when compared to spending adjustments in many other departments around town), the MGS or an 11-year acquisition cycle are the panacea for all of the CF’s problems. Our point was simply that the Govt has made strides in addressing some of these problems. I’m also not sure that “colour-coded” spreadsheets, which the Minister has seen before, are appropriate in this type of note.
- re the MCCRT, I would argue strongly that a one-third reduction in resources and the complete move of ECS [naval/army/air force “environmental” chiefs of staff] to Ottawa, among other things, amount to a big deal. It certainly is a far cry from Bland’s contention that HQ remained “essentially unchanged in structure through the 1990s”.

- In the end, I believe that our note is far from “defensive” or “negative”. It is simply trying to provide the Minister with a balanced and accurate assessment. As for a “CYA” attitude, let’s not forget that ADM(Pol) and VCDS have been working hard together over the last two years as part of the Defence Update and MTP processes (not to mention the Sustainability exercise in 1999) to educate the Government about the problems facing National Defence and identify ways to solve them. However, over-playing those problems can sometimes backfire (witness some of the PM’s comments in recent years re the views of CDA and other organizations). All we’re saying is: let’s be careful about how we make our pitch.
- Be happy to discuss further with you and DDA.

Vincent

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From: Bon DL@ADM(Pol) DG Pol Plan@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Tuesday, December 09, 2003 2:09 PM

To: Rigby V@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull;  
Dempster MGen D@VCDS DGSP@Ottawa-Hull;  
Taymun SM@ADM(PA)@Ottawa-Hull

1. I fully agree with just about everything you say below, Vincent. If there is anything to which I would take mild exception, it’s the reference, in your penultimate bullet, to “educating the government”. This is a democracy; the government is elected, we are not; and while we certainly want to ensure it is well informed and to present it with a full set of options whenever policy has to be set or a decision made, we must assume that what the people’s chosen representatives need from us is information, not “education” – or, as Col. Cessford seems to imply, to a degree, “re-education”.

2. Col. Cessford asks whether maybe he doesn’t get it. I would like to take this opportunity to confirm for him that, yes, indeed, he doesn’t get it at all. He and we are all here to serve the country, not the other way around, and the country’s wishes and preferences are only known to us through the duly elected government -- whatever government, whatever its policies. In a democracy, there is no abstract ‘Perfect Defense Policy’ that God reveals only through His Special Representative, the Chief of the Armed Forces; there is only a defense policy for which the elected government earmarks as much of national resources as it is mandated to do within the framework of the broadest view of the national interest (and

thinks is likely to meet with the voters' approval in the next elections). The government, in other words, is elected to serve the country, not to do the bidding of its departments or of the Canadian Forces. For their part, DND and the Canadian Forces are there to serve the government's policy line -- which is the country's policy line as approved through the ballot box -- whether DND or the Canadian Forces like it or not. No one in DND or the Canadian Forces should ever, therefore, under any circumstances, imagine or presume that he or she is free to seize upon any external reports or opinion to push and prod our Minister, the government and the country towards meeting what can only be defined as corporate interests. In a democracy, there can be no legitimate defense policy or direction other than that set by the government in office. **[redacted]** No one in the Canadian Forces -- or in the Department of National Defence, or even in the Policy Group -- has to like the government's defense policy (and, by the way, defense policy is the government's policy, not DND's and not the CF's), everyone is free to totally disagree with it, **[redacted]**

3. None of what precedes should be taken to mean that individuals and groups outside DND and the Canadian Forces are not entitled to their opinions or have to agree with any government's defense policy or choices. Academics, experts, allies, etc. are all free to disagree and to criticize to their hearts' content -- and we, who are serving in DND or the Canadian Forces are also free to agree with those critics privately as well as in our own internal processes -- but that's it. **[redacted]**

Doctors, nurses and hospital administrators are free to criticize government health policy because they are not part of government in its decision-making dimension. Because members of the Canadian Forces, through the senior levels of their chain of command, are part of the government decision-making apparatus, they do not have that latitude any more than their Public Service colleagues. Personally, I think that is something that RMC and the Canadian Defence Academy could usefully emphasize in their teaching.

In a note such as the one at issue, we owe the Minister something that is useful to him, that provides him, in particular, with a fair description of the contents and contentions of the report, as well as with a solid set of points about some [of] its strengths and weaknesses. (Not to provide him with such a note would be to do him a disservice, since it could lead him to appear ill-informed and, therefore, open him to justified media critiques.) What he most certainly doesn't need from us is an opportunistic pamphlet pushing our own corporate preferences. I believe D Pol Dev's note fully met all the requirements to qualify as an excellent note.

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From: Johnson MM@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Tuesday, December 09, 2003 10:10 AM

To: Hébert PJP@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull;  
Rigby V@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull

When I spoke with Wayne on this I recognized his point that another approach could have been taken. What he would've liked is to have had the note and the MND say publicly: "Yes: White Paper is crap and should be pitched. Everything (capital, personnel, policy etc) is in the toilet. The report is 100% correct. Now give us lots of money to fix everything."

My point to Wayne was that while we would've possibly (re)gained some allies like Bland et al, we would've done a disservice to what has been achieved so far in terms of certain equipment, budget increases, personnel improvements, etc. Plus, some of what the report says is just not the plain old truth. Why can't we point out these (un?)intended inaccuracies. Maybe there's lots more to fix, but how would the MND have looked if he ignored four consecutive budget increases? I think the basis for our disagreement was essentially strategy: what's the best way to respond to these kinds of reports? I defended a more balanced (and, might I say, accurate) approach - - while he wanted to throw the baby out with the bathwater. I also don't think we can ignore the fact that reports like this show a considerable amount of public relations strategizing on the part of Bland et al. You don't usually get headlines with measured, nuanced reflection - - but "mass extinction" will earn you 5 minutes of fame.

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From: Taymun SM@ADM(PA)@Ottawa-Hull [Scott Taymun supervised to some degree the PA "Talking Note" exercise]

Sent: Wednesday, December 10, 2003 8:32 AM

To: Bon DL@ADM(Pol) DG Pol Plan@Ottawa-Hull;  
Rigby V@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull;  
Dempster MGen D@VCDS DGSP@Ottawa-Hull;  
Eyre LCOL WD@VCDS DGSP DDA@Ottawa-Hull

Before this goes further, may I offer a few observations and considerations... First, and most importantly, I believe we all share a common motivation in doing what is right to serve our country and its duly elected government, as well as a passion and concern for defence, the defence policy decisions of our citizenry through their Government, and the health

and well-being of the Canadian Forces as an instrument of defence policy and an important national institution. That is why 12, 14, 16 hour days is foreign to none of us **[redacted]**

Second, I do not believe it is our job to defend Government policy or Government decision-making. That is the Government's job. Our job is to provide the Government with the highest quality advice and information on the merits and demerits of different policy choices so they can make informed decisions, and to provide quality information more generally to Canadians so that our duly elected representatives in Parliament can debate the merits/demerits of the Government's decisions. In this vein, I believe we all agree, as MGen Dempster and Vincent both noted, that what is required is a balanced and accurate approach rooted in factual information. I, for one, for example, strongly believe that if we are going to communicate defence spending as a % of GNP, we are obligated in the spirit of informed decision-making to also communicate defence spending in actual dollars. Both statistics have value and meaning, and I compliment D Pol Dev's paper for continuing to articulate both statistics.

As a third and final point, **[redacted]**

If we have concerns, we need to dialogue at the front end, help each other out, and recognize any constraints we face such as 24 hour turn-around times.

If anyone feels the need to discuss further, may I suggest **[redacted]**

Scott

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From: Rigby V@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull

Sent: Wednesday, December 10, 2003 9:09

To: Taymun SM@ADM(PA)@Ottawa-Hull

**[redacted]**

I found LCol Eyre's comments both inaccurate and inflammatory and felt they deserved a response. I made my point, and agree that it's time to move on. Mike Cessford and I have discussed

**[redacted]** As you say, we're all part of the same team and I see this as no more than a frank exchange of views on an important issue. I have the utmost respect for my VCDS colleagues.

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Earlier in the week of 3 December, the deputy minister agreed that Major General Dempster would be the “spokesman” for DND in front of the media and directed that he was to avoid commenting on the CWAF? study, but to emphasize instead the Strategic Capabilities Investment Plan, even though it had not been sanctioned by government and was unfunded.

From: Brunner HR@ADM(PA)

Sent: Thursday, 4 December 2003 11:36 A.M.

To: Agnew Cdr J@CAS D Air PA.

MGen Dempster, DG Strategic Planning, will be providing interviews this afternoon [4 December] to CP [redacted] and CanWest [redacted]. [PA staff] is coordinating these interviews and supporting DGSP. DGSP will not be responding to specifics in the report, but will be providing factual context – i.e. explaining what the DND/Canadian Forces is doing in terms of strategic planning/future capabilities from a corporate perspective. ... I will provide Talking Points.<sup>114</sup>

Major General Dempster did brief a few members of the media and it seems he got the DND message across as directed. For instance, David Pugliese (the *Ottawa Citizen*) reported that “A top general says claims about an impending demise of the Canadian Forces aren’t accurate and the military is doing a good job of positioning itself for the future.” Pugliese noted Dempster’s claim that “while we face many challenges, I think the Forces are proving themselves [sic] relevant and credible and I think there’s no reason to think we won’t be relevant and credible in the future.” The DGSP repeated the Talking Points list of statistics of real and planned programs and emphasized that “the Defence Department has produced an investment plan [SCIP], designed to cover a 15-year period ... [and that the] Defence Minister, John McCallum is expected to approve the plan soon.”<sup>115</sup>

After he had retired, Douglas Dempster recalled vividly the sense of frustration in the various policy and military staffs in NDHQ at the time as they wrestled with the obvious need to promote a new defence policy that better met the conditions in the armed forces and in the international environment that they confronted every day in the face of a government that was more than reluctant to consider a policy review that they knew would inevitably call for significant increases in defence spending. His strategic capabilities planning staff, he confirmed, also faced irritated officials, the authors of the 1994 policy, who “in a sense owned the 94 white paper” and

were sensitive to any criticisms of it from outsiders, sensitivities clearly demonstrated in the emails noted here.<sup>116</sup>

Dempster was, however, sympathetic to the circumstances of officials who were tasked by ministers or assumed on their own that they must guard the government's policy "to prevent an across-the-board collapse of the entire defence policy whenever it was challenged no matter how much they might in private understand that many harsh critiques had merit." Through most of Chrétien's time they succeeded well enough, but by the time Paul Martin arrived in the Prime Minister's Office in the circumstances of the growing war in Afghanistan, everyone knew that bluff and posturing could not continue.<sup>117</sup> At this time, some of the previous reports, like CWF<sup>?</sup>, helped to move the discussions along.

By the time DND had responded to the study (that had been in the department since 30 November 2003) and Major General Dempster had spoken to the media on 4 December and his remarks had been published a day later, the story that filled headlines and radio talk shows all day on 3 December was old hat. Scott Taymun of the DND public affairs staff responded to a subordinate's request on 5 December for a copy of the "Queen's Report" so he could brief local media by suggesting that "I would hold and come back to it if necessary Monday ... my feeling is that this story has now played itself out."<sup>118</sup>

At about the same time, the Chief of the Air Staff worried about the affect CWF<sup>?</sup> might have on air force morale and recommended to the DND public affairs staff that he mount an internal air force campaign to rally his command. The public affairs staff politely demurred: "Sir, I do not think there is a large requirement to address this report to the internal audience. The report came out with some fanfare but has virtually disappeared. I believe that moving forward [in interviews planned for the Christmas period and afterwards] with MHP [maritime helicopter program] and the SAR [search and rescue program] will have a stronger impact than addressing this [report] specifically."<sup>119</sup>

Some Canadians might find it odd that a civilian public affairs officer would be so bold as to give advice to the Chief of the Air Staff, the general commanding the Canadian air force, about what was best for air force morale. But then the CAS and the public affairs staff had very different agendas to satisfy. The public affairs staff seems to have prevailed, as the CAS did not, insofar as the evidence shows, hold any briefing with the members of his command to allay any worries CWF<sup>?</sup> might have caused in the ranks.

Ms. Rushworth who began this NDHQ story perhaps best summarizes weeks later the reaction and attitudes towards CWF<sup>?</sup> that she saw in NDHQ



as she managed the assembly of the Talking Notes for her superiors in the days soon after the study was made public. On 30 December, when asked by the Special Assistant to the Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs) for a copy of the CWF<sup>2</sup> study, she responds: “This [a copy of 4 December Talking Notes] might help you understand what the 120 pages from Queen’s says – without having to read the Queen’s report in full.”<sup>120</sup> Her suggestion seems quite practical under the circumstances, for the Talking Notes alone, not the study’s text, apparently were good enough for most every senior officer and official in NDHQ.

However, the final evaluation of *Canada without Armed Forces?* in NDHQ and its likely influence on Canada’s defence policy had already been delivered on the day it was released in a meeting on 3 December in a comment attributed to the Deputy Minister, Margaret Bloodworth: “At the end of the day the only question left is one for ADM(Policy) to answer and that is[:] why was \$200K [sic] given to Queen’s for a special arrangement described by Dr. Bland in the opening two pages of his report, if the \$200K has only brought us more criticism?”<sup>121</sup>



## CHAPTER FOUR

# *Studies and Reports of the Senate of Canada*

We examined five reports of the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence and assessed the DND responses to them as best we could from the very few ATI files made available to us. The reason for this poverty of paper records seems to follow from officials' eager application of the parliamentary convention that Canadian governments do not owe the Senate a formal response to its deliberations. This point is made precisely by an official in an NDHQ email concerning the Senate report, *Canada's Coastlines: The Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World*:

A preliminary survey of the document does not/not [sic] reveal any request for a formal Government response (Senate rules were amended recently to make it possible for a committee to request a response). That said, it is still possible for Senator Kenny [Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on National Defence and Security] to move a motion in the Senate to request a Government response. D Parl A [Director of Parliamentary Affairs, a branch of ADM (Policy)] will monitor and provide updates as required.<sup>122</sup>

Not surprisingly, therefore, the internal NDHQ correspondence, slim as it is, concerning these Senate studies and reports reveals an almost routine indifference to what the Senate has to say and recommend. Department of National Defence assessments of Senate reports follow more or less the 'usual process' as for non-governmental studies and reports with one significant difference. In all cases, the Senate reports are reviewed and managed exclusively by officials under ADM (Policy) and not ADM (Public Affairs). Perhaps there was no fear in NDHQ that the dog might wake up at the approach of a messenger from the Senate.

Typically, an official from ADM (Policy) reviewed each Senate document, checked for any media interest, wrote a summary of its contents, assessed from the department's point of view whether the report might

require a government-wide response,<sup>123</sup> wrote a short Briefing Note for the minister of national defence, and then filed the report for later reference.

### ***Canadian Security and Military Preparedness, February 2002***

The Senate Committee on National Security and Defence in 2001/2002 conducted a detailed investigation into Canada's national security and defence policies and programs and released its first report, *Canadian Security and Military Preparedness*, in February 2002.<sup>124</sup> The report, in 100 pages of detailed text, set out the major 'preparedness' issues facing Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and addressed security in several particular aspects, including, for instance, matters of immigration and border security. The Committee made four main recommendations touching on defence policy: an increase of 15,000 positions in the regular force; an immediate increase of \$4 billion to DND's baseline budget; future annual budget increases which are realistic, purpose driven, and adjusted for inflation; and foreign policy and defence policy reviews.<sup>125</sup>

Officials in NDHQ reviewed the report and produced the usual "Briefing Note for the Minister of National Defence," which the Deputy Minister, Jim Judd, sent to the Minister, Art Eggleton, on 5 March 2002.<sup>126</sup> The Briefing Note's two-page "Summary" of the 100-page Senate report gave a fair and accurate *verbatim* description of its contents. The "General Observations" were more subjective and, at some points, defensive. The first observation declares: "Many of the issues highlighted in the report are important and have been under consideration by National Defence in recent months. They will likely be examined in the context of the upcoming defence review."<sup>127</sup>

In the very next observation, the reviewer offered not only a detailed criticism of the Senate's recommendations, but also a personal opinion of the Committee's procedures and fairness:

The Committee discounted the testimony of witnesses from [DND] who argued that the current policy is sound, on the grounds that it is the responsibility of such witnesses to support government policy. The committee was rather selective in its choices of other witnesses. A great many of them were retired military officers known to hold critical views of current defence policy and levels of funding. The results were predictable: the focus was on budget increase rather than how policy could be delivered more effectively.

Very few academics got to testify before the Committee. Chances are they would have portrayed the situation in a more balanced fashion than did retired

military officials [sic] and they may have provided different insights into the nature of the problem.<sup>128</sup>

The reviewer noted in other observations that:

The Committee considers that sweeping changes are needed in Canadian Defence policy. The Report does not explain, however, what is wrong with current policy.

The Committee recommends that the government provide DND with additional funding before a new policy is adopted. This seems to stand logic on its head ...

The Committee appears more interested in improving our ranking within NATO in terms of defence spending as percentage of GDP than in ensuring that Canada's defence outputs are in line with its defence policy.

The Committee also understates the size of the Canadian Forces by taking out of the total those members who are on basic training or taking a university degree.<sup>129</sup>

This criticism of the Senate's personnel calculation is made despite the Canadian Forces and DND definitions of the military population. In their internal reports and in testimony to parliamentary inquiries, Canadian Forces and DND witnesses routinely describe the "total force" as composed of "trained effectives" and "untrained non-effectives." Thus in DND's own terms the *effective* size of the Canadian Forces is the total force less those members in basic training or employed outside the armed forces for one reason or another. One would have thought the DND public service reviewer would have understood these basic DND personnel definitions.

The most astonishing criticism in these ADM (Policy) "General Observations" seems to argue in its rather perverse logic that operational stress in the Canadian Forces could be lessened by doing away with the armed forces entirely. "The Committee focuses on increasing the size of the Canadian Forces with a view to alleviate the operational tempo. *It fails to recognize that increasing the size of the Canadian Forces may only whet appetites for participation in more operations or larger contributions to future missions.*"<sup>130</sup> Thus, it follows from this public service argument that having no armed forces at all would suppress these appetites and solve the 'operational tempo' problem completely!

No matter. There is no ATI evidence that the minister reviewed the Senate report, spoke to it in any forum after the report was issued, or responded

to the Senate Committee at all. Mr. Eggleton, just in case someone might have asked him to make a comment, was given seven ‘bullets’ to use in response to questions about the Senate report:

I welcome the report ... [etc., as usual].

I understand that this report is ... the Committee’s introductory survey of major defence and security issues.

I expect that the Senate Committee will make a valuable contribution to the discussion of security and defence issues and I look forward to working with the Committee.

The views and recommendations of the Senate Committee will be taken into account as the Government looks at options [concerning] future security challenges.

There is no doubt that the Canadian Forces are facing serious challenges.

This Government has demonstrated a long term commitment to address funding pressures and sustain the necessary forces to meet national and international defence responsibilities.<sup>131</sup>

In the first draft of this “Advice,” the last bullet read: “Over the next 5 fiscal years ... the Government of Canada will invest more than \$5.1 billion in the armed forces.” The pledge was subsequently deleted and replaced in the final draft note with a less certain declaration: “Through budgets 1999, 2000, 2001 [the Government] authorized increases in defence spending ... which by the end of fiscal year 2006-07, will total more than \$5 Billion.”<sup>132</sup> One can only assume that officials – and the minister – were by the time the final draft was completed more comfortable speaking about past budgets than future budgets.

***The Defence of North America: A Canadian Responsibility,*  
3 September 2002**

This investigation by the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence<sup>133</sup> conducted in the context of the aftermath of the attacks on North America in September 2001, “... [addressed] two current issues we deem worthy of more specific focus: The need for the Government of Canada to act quickly to improve the tracking of ships approaching Canadian territorial waters and moving within those waters; [and] the need for the Government of Canada to act quickly to better prepare Canadian soldiers to act collectively with US or NATO troops in the defence of North America.”<sup>134</sup>

The committee made several recommendations on the need for the government to develop a “national security strategy,” to strengthen the defence of Canada’s coastal areas, to improve the interoperability of Canadian and American armed forces, and to enhance army capabilities for operations with the United States in North America. With regard to the army, the committee recommended:

That Canada and the U.S. upgrade their joint capacity to defend North America through the use of land forces in three specific ways:

Battalion or battle group Canadian Forces training exercises – particularly those permitting Canadian and American troops to function effectively in warfare – be re-instituted as quickly as possible to permit Canada’s army to work in harmony with the armies of its allies, particularly the army of the United States.

The construction of the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre at Wainwright, *not yet contracted and behind schedule*, be expedited and that the facility be prepared for large-scale training exercises for Canadian Forces troops no later than the summer of 2004.

A joint Canada-U.S. land force planning unit be established to allow the armies of the two neighbouring countries to plan for potential disasters, natural or otherwise, that jointly threaten both countries. This unit of approximately 25 people should also be located at Colorado Springs, in proximity to NORAD facilities and the recommended Maritime planning staff.<sup>135</sup>

Our request to DND for “all documents referring to the Senate of Canada committee report, *Defence of North America*,” produced a single three-page Briefing Note for the minister of national defence. The official’s assessment was remarkably concise and explained (correctly) to the minister that “[almost] half of the Committee’s specific recommendations fall outside National Defence’s mandate, such as the establishment of new regulations and procedures for ships entering Canadian territorial waters.”<sup>136</sup>

The Note offered helpful advice to the minister if he wished to rebut the Committee’s recommendations. On Canadian and American military cooperation, it reads “... the Government is exploring options ...” and “the Government foresees the establishment of a binational contingency planning and surveillance/monitoring group.” (A headquarters along this line was eventually established.) On the Committee’s recommendation that “battle group training ... be reinstated,” the Briefing Note argues that the army “... in fact never stopped conducting this kind of training ...” The Note then provides a number of policy initiatives that the reviewer suggests satisfy this

particular Committee recommendation. There is no evidence that the Briefing Note was reviewed by the army staff or that anyone outside the ADM (Policy) staff contributed to it.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, as there was no request from the Senate for a response to their report from the government, the evidence suggests strongly that no official in DND brought the Senate's broad set of recommendations to the attention of the Privy Council Office nor is there any evidence that officials in the Privy Council Office thought it necessary to prepare a government-wide review of the report for cabinet.

***For an Extra \$130 Bucks ... Update on Canada's Military  
Financial Crisis: A View from the Bottom Up, 12 November 2002***

The detailed 73-page Senate investigation into defence funding, *For an Extra \$130 Bucks ... Update on Canada's Military Financial Crisis: A View from the Bottom Up*,<sup>138</sup> was released on 12 November 2002. The ADM (Policy) staff assessment was completed in just two days (there is no evidence that the report was circulated inside NDHQ to expert staffs for comment) and sent to the Deputy Minister, DND, Margaret Bloodworth, on 14 November and by her without comment to the Minister, Art Eggleton, on 21 November.

The Senate's work and report were judged as not new and thus deserving of a recycled DND observation: "Many of the issues highlighted in the report have been under consideration by National Defence [sic] for some time." The reviewer notes that the Senate committee "criticized senior military leadership and civil servants for not being '*perfectly frank*' in their testimony, a matter the Committee raised in its February 2002 report."<sup>139</sup> The NDHQ reviewer challenges several assertions and some of the data used by the Committee. Some of these challenges seem valid; however, most of the NDHQ criticisms of the committee's report could be attributable to differing interpretations of military terms and definitions, such as "battalion group" and "battle group," by the Senate committee and officials in NDHQ.<sup>140</sup>

The report was criticized as being "rather unbalanced"—a recurring complaint made by officials in most every assessment of every report or study we reviewed. Officials in the policy branch seemed to believe (or were instructed to expect) that all parliamentary and other studies ought to be written as a type of report card listing the history of Liberal defence policy accomplishments as well as its policy weaknesses even when committees or external researchers were convened to examine and report on a particular aspect of defence policy or a particular defence program.

The DND policy staff also deemed the Senate committee neglectful for "appearing more interested in improving our ranking within NATO



in terms of defence spending as a percentage of GDP than in ensuring that Canada's defence outputs are in line with actual requirements and/or defence policy." This observation, taken directly and without change from the DND "Observations" of the previous Senate report of February 2002, shows again the tendency within DND to "recycle" text from one Briefing Note or memorandum of "Advice to the Minister" on one report or study and to use it as an "observation" in another report.

There is no evidence that the minister of national defence or the government responded in any way to the Senate of Canada. There is no evidence that the report had any direct effect on national defence policy.

***Canada's Coastlines: The Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World, 29 October 2003***

The Senate Committee on Canada's National Security and Defence (SCONSAD) tabled its report *Canada's Coastlines: The Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World*<sup>141</sup> on 29 October 2003. The same day, DND officials noted that the media was reporting that the committee "... found that Canada's coastal defences are lacking."<sup>142</sup> On 30 October 2003, the same staff reported that "there was extensive media coverage of the SCONSAD's report on Canada's poor coastal defences." They recorded also that the Minister of Transport, David Collenette, who by coincidence was in New York attending an international conference on maritime and shipping security, had spoken to a media scrum there on the issues raised by the Senate committee.<sup>143</sup> The Parliamentary Affairs staff in the ADM (Policy) branch immediately alerted several dozen NDHQ addressees that Canada's "maritime security" had suddenly become a matter of media attention.<sup>144</sup>

Nevertheless, this brief flurry of media attention soon passed and, not surprisingly, the ATI request to DND for information on the department's response to this Senate report produced a merge response. The DND ATI staff's "best efforts" produced two one-page NDHQ media "Background: Coastal Security" notes; two one-page notes, "Advice for the Minister"; and a five-page "Briefing Note For The Minister of National Defence," John McCallum, that summarized the Senate report in 10 bulleted paragraphs and assessed it in an equal number of "Observations."<sup>145</sup> These papers were prepared and finalized by the staff and sent to the minister within four days of the release of the Senate report. No other NDHQ staff actions were evident in the ATI responses.

The first line in the Advice prepared on 29 October suggests the minister begin any comments with the commonly offered sentence: "Although

*I have not seen the Senate Committee report* it is a welcome addition to the ongoing and productive dialogue on defence.”<sup>146</sup> It seems, however, perhaps odd for the NDHQ staff to then offer the minister ten speaking lines that implicitly undercut the Senate report that he had not read. The minister was probably safe enough as he was advised, as usual, not to talk about the report, but rather to reassure anyone who would listen that “protecting Canada’s sovereignty [is taken] very seriously by the Canadian Forces” and that the government had “Shortly after September 11<sup>th</sup> ... created an Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Public Security and Anti-Terrorism ... [to] ensure that government-wide security initiatives are coordinated.”<sup>147</sup>

The Deputy Minister of DND, Margaret Bloodworth, sent a five-page departmental Briefing Note to the minister on 31 October 2003 that in the usual format first summarized the main issues raised in the 70 pages of research and expert witness testimony presented by the Senate committee with regards to coastal security. The Note, in one page of “observations,” assessed the Senate’s conclusions and recommendations in a less defensive and dismissive tone than usual. The deputy minister concurs with, and who would not, the committee’s opinion “... that Canada’s proximity to and relationship with the United States makes [Canada] “less secure is both true and untrue.” To the committee’s main recommendation for improved maritime security, the deputy minister simply observed that implementing the recommendation “... would require new funding or departmental reallocations” which was, of course, the essential message the Senate was sending to the government.<sup>148</sup>

The Briefing Note was critical of only two arguments the Senators put forward. The Committee had concluded that the navy’s capabilities for “interdiction close to shore” were inadequate but caused more by the navy’s “attitude” than by any real lack of resources. The navy’s commitment to its primary role, “blue water engagement,” according to the Senators, was such that the navy was “unlikely to attach any kind of priority to upgrading its coastal defence capabilities.”

The deputy minister responded that “The committee does not seem to recognize that the navy’s supporting (rather than leading) role in interdiction close to our coasts is a question of [internal Canadian] jurisdiction rather than attitudes.” Implementing the changes the committee recommends would, she warns, “... provoke a great deal of controversy within Government.” Despite the deputy minister’s anxiety, one would hope that the mere bother of a controversy in Ottawa’s bureaucracy did not inhibit John McCallum from presenting to cabinet the Senate’s concerns for matters of national defence.<sup>149</sup>

Second, the deputy minister concedes that the committee “makes two legitimate points” with regards to naval patrols in Canada’s coastal waters: “first, the navy has important responsibilities at home and abroad; and two, if the navy were to take the lead in interdiction along our coasts ... it would require a new class of vessels, smaller and less expensive than a frigate ...” Ms. Bloodworth, then, uncharacteristically for an experienced senior public servant, appears to mock the Senators by suggesting to the minister of national defence that given the Committee’s call for smaller vessels, “It is surprising, therefore, that the Committee should not have seen in this a role for the Naval Reserves, given its constant preoccupation with the roles of the Reserves.”<sup>150</sup> A senator might have pointed out to the deputy minister that the Naval Reserve, a “component” of the Canadian Forces, is assigned to the navy.

But is Ms. Bloodworth’s remark merely petty sniping? Taken in the context of this record of how bureaucrats attempt to situate reports and studies in ways that allow them to present to ministers ‘the truth they want to hear’, what is, perhaps, more instructive in this final sentence in the Note to John McCallum is Ms. Bloodworth’s willingness to challenge the Senate and her complete unwillingness, even in private Notes to the minister, to acknowledge weaknesses in the government’s policies confirmed in her department’s internal notes, memoranda, emails, and other documents prepared by her own officials as well as by senior military officers of the Canadian Forces. As we shall see repeatedly, DND officials guarded the doors to ministers’ offices not only against the views and advice of academics and non-governmental organizations they believed ministers did not wish to see and hear, they also *protected* ministers from views and advice from parliament as well.

***Managing Turmoil: The Need to Upgrade Canadian Foreign Aid  
and Military Strength to Deal with Massive Change,  
5 October 2006***

This detailed and well researched report was released by the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence on 5 October 2006 in the first year of the new Conservative government’s first term in office.<sup>151</sup> It is instructive to note that the ‘usual process’ for handling reports from the Senate had not changed at all from the Liberal era.

The report was a follow-on study to two earlier reports: *Wounded*, that dealt with problems in the treating of war-wounded members of the Canadian

Forces, and the second, that provided specific recommendations on how best to resolve these problems.<sup>152</sup> *Managing Turmoil* outlined a number of “profound international and domestic” changes that the Committee concluded would emerge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The committee also concluded that if current defence and security policies were not significantly amended, then Canada would be unprepared to meet these serious challenges effectively.

*Managing Turmoil* made specific recommendations to address this changing environment and to improve foreign aid policies and the capabilities of the Canadian Forces. In particular, the Committee recommended increasing defence funding to 2 percent of GDP; improving defence procurement procedures; cancelling the proposed stationing of a “rapid [Canadian Forces] Response unit in Goose Bay”; setting up a “Defence Foundation” scholarship fund; improving parliamentary oversight of defence policy; improving military capabilities; entering into discussions with the United States on “Ballistic Missile defence”; increasing the “transparency of special operations forces”; limiting Canadian Forces involvement in Arctic surveillance; and increasing cooperation between the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service and the Canadian Forces.<sup>153</sup>

The ATI request to DND for “all documents pertaining ... to *Managing Turmoil*” produced only a three-page “Briefing Note for the Minister” containing a “Summary” and seven brief “Observations” to the Committee’s detailed recommendations. The first two Observations were redacted in the ATI return. The statements that followed note:

The government has been clear that it will not approach the US Government to reopen talks on Ballistic Missile Defence, making this recommendation unlikely to be acted upon ...

The committee ... does not acknowledge the May 2006 renewal of the NORAD renewal in May 2001.

The report’s recommendation to ‘set up a Defence Foundation which ... would sponsor academic chairs ...’ is puzzling as such an entity, the Security and Defence Forum already exists.

Similarly, the Committee’s suggestion to augment the role played by CSIS in the Canadian Forces ... would duplicate the functions of the Chief Defence Intelligence organization.

In the fifth statement, the reviewer suggests that the Committee’s concerns for defence capabilities planning were satisfied by its acknowledgement of the publication of “the forthcoming DND ‘Defence Capabilities Plan’.”<sup>154</sup>

There is no indication in the DND files that the Senate was made aware of these “Observations” or that the Minister of National Defence, Gordon O’Connor, acknowledged the Senate’s work in any way.

Although the Senate committee tried to engage reporters by issuing an “Executive Summary” that included “... a short list of the issues that Committee members felt might be of greatest interest to the majority of journalists,”<sup>155</sup> there is no correspondence in the files to indicate that DND public affairs staffs detected or recorded any significant media or public attention.<sup>156</sup>



## CHAPTER FIVE

# *Reports of the House of Commons*

In the period under review, the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs produced four committee reports for which there is an ATI record: *The Procurement Study* (2000); the report on the *DND's 2001-02 Report on Plans and Priorities* (2001); the *State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Response to the Terrorist Threat*; (2001); and *Facing Our Responsibilities: The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces* (2002). It is important to notice that in this period if a committee of the House of Commons made a request for a response to any of its reports or studies, then the Government was obligated to make a formal response to it. As it was common practice for the House to request such a response to its work, SCONDVA studies tended to receive considerably more attention from officials than other studies, including those of the Senate of Canada. The requirement to respond, however, did not necessarily result in any observable advantage to those studies in influencing government policies over any other report or study.

### ***The Procurement Study, 14 June 2000***

On 14 June 2000, the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs presented *The Procurement Study* to the House of Commons and the government.<sup>157</sup> The SCONDVA (at the time, a Liberal party-dominated committee in a Liberal majority government) had been particularly diligent and precise in its deliberations. The Committee heard from scores of senior officials from several departments of governments, most of the senior military cadre of the Canadian Forces, leaders from industry, academics, non-governmental organizations, and private citizens. The Committee Chair, Liberal Pat O'Brien, remarked to members of the media on the day the report was made public:

I can tell you in seven years in the House of Commons I have not served on a committee that I found worked in a more non-partisan way in the spirit of

trying to do what is best for the Canadian Forces and to recommend that to the government. So I have been very impressed with the tone of the way the committee has operated and I think the fact that this is a unanimous report, all members, all five parties signing on to it is confirmation of that.<sup>158</sup>

This unanimity, the quality of the study, and the fact that it was produced by a committee dominated by Liberal members of parliament might lead one to assume that the study was treated with special respect in NDHQ. Yet, officials responded to the report very much as they had to every other study or report on Canada's defence policies.

The SCONDVA report touched on subjects and made recommendations for change in policies that fell under the responsibilities of several departments of government including DND, Public Works/Government Services Canada (PWGSC), and Industry Canada as well as the Treasury Board. The detailed report made 38 recommendations which might, if implemented as the committee chairs concluded, "... [make] the procurement process ... leaner. It could be expedited. It could be made more effective to make sure that every defence dollar that is spent allows us to have the best product possible at the most favourable price and in a timely fashion and so the committee had some real concerns about those points as the process is now constituted."<sup>159</sup> Other members of the committee stressed also the critical importance of the SCONDVA study, and the committee's accord with its recommendations. As Member of Parliament Elsie Wayne put it: "This is a unanimous all-party strategy that we have adopted and that we are presenting today."<sup>160</sup>

The committee concentrated its attention on the critical need to ensure and improve inter-departmental planning and decision-making coordination in the entire procurement process in ways that would best bring the policies and procedures of the several departments involved in military procurement procedures into line. The SCONDVA recommended among other fundamental reforms that a new process be based on "the concept of performance-based specifications," that DND "clearly identify its estimated [equipment] deficit," and that it adopt a strategy "for increasing the capital projects portion of its budget to a minimum of 23% [of the] defence budget." The Committee asked for significant changes to the expenditure "approval authority levels" in DND to allow the department greater control over its plans and projects system. Members of the committee were especially determined to increase the SCONDVA's oversight of defence spending and to see "[t]hat all federal government departments and agencies involved in defence procurement ... facilitate the reforms necessary to increase the efficiency



and effectiveness of defence procurement” and to “improve coordination between departments to eliminate redundancy in the procurement process.”<sup>161</sup>

The remainder of the recommendations for the most part set out ways in which the SCONDVA thought coordination and planning could be improved. Most of these suggestions, derived from the “dozens and dozens of witnesses, many, many briefs”<sup>162</sup> that were presented to the Committee. These reports, briefings, and discussions with witnesses were technical in nature and dealt as often with complex areas of defence policy and military planning. The Committee asked, for example, for a complete review of the *1994 Defence White Paper*, the formation of a “defence industry advisory board” and that “operational considerations” take priority over allocation of “Industrial Regional Benefit” policies. On the surface, the SCONDVA challenged the government and the federal public service to commit to a significant, government-wide rebuilding of the defence procurement process.

At its heart, however, the committee’s principal aim seems to have been to expose the dire situation of decaying defence capabilities and to add its (supposed) authority to the growing call, even within the governing Liberal Party, for a fundamental and expensive multi-year program to build a new generation of military capabilities for Canada’s national defence. It is ironic – but perhaps no surprise to those who deride parliament’s influence on policy – that it was “... the committee’s non-partisan way [and its] spirit of trying to do what is best for the Canadian Forces ...” that immediately put the government and its officials on guard.

On 22 June 2000, Mr. Ian Green, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Operations), “suggested” to Mr. Jim Judd, Deputy Minister of DND, that he and the deputy minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada “jointly take the lead in preparing proposals for the Government’s response to the SCONDVA” report on defence procurement.<sup>163</sup> Jim Judd duly coordinated the assembly of a government response to the 38 recommendations in the *Procurement Study* most of which fell under the responsibilities of DND, PWGSC, and, to a lesser extent, the Treasury Board.

The staff response in NDHQ to this committee report was different than the staffing of reports and studies presented to governments by the Senate and academics and non-governmental organizations. The DND process for developing a response to the House of Commons was typically assigned directly by the deputy minister to assistant deputy ministers of specific branches in the department, whereas most other responses were managed and answered almost entirely by the policy and public affairs branches acting alone, though with input (sometimes) from military and technical staffs. This

high-level attention was prompted not by officials' respect for parliament or concern for the actual substance of the study, but more to the fact that the PCO was asking for an answer. Thus officials acted to pre-empt and avert any possibility that this report might disrupt the government's programs or disturb the inter-departmental consensus on, in this case, procurement policy and in doing so risk the policy consensus developed by senior public servants in several important bureaus. The career dangers that an inappropriate final response might create for senior officials was not something wise officials left to their junior staffers.<sup>164</sup>

The ATI trail within DND is short and blurred as several apparently critical internal considerations are redacted in files. The only substantive memorandum, written on 26 June 2000 by a junior staff official within the NDHQ policy branch following the usual initial review process, summarized this detailed study and its 38 comprehensive recommendations in 20 bulleted paragraphs (four redacted) in three pages.<sup>165</sup>

The summary is mostly just that, a concise statement of the Committee's detailed recommendations. There are, however, here and there among these bureaucratic 'bullets' a few editorial comments. For example, the memorandum notes that the committee called for an "update" to the 1994 white paper on defence, a recommendation the government's writer attributes to "... the claim made by several witnesses that the [white paper] no longer provides clear direction in the area of procurement."<sup>166</sup> To the Committee's recommendation that DND and the Canadian Forces develop a "scenario-based planning system," the writer remarks boldly, "... the Committee has it all wrong. Defence Policy is not based on scenarios but rather the opposite. The policy comes first and the scenarios are developed afterwards."<sup>167</sup> The memorandum correctly cautions that the "SCONDVA seeks an expanded role for the committee in the context of the DND capital procurement plan" and concludes that "... it is not clear what purpose it [a review before or after a procurement is made] would serve."<sup>168</sup>

Typically, the official's summaries of the senators' work are dismissive and in this case, perhaps, arrogant. Moreover, it is difficult to see how the author's superiors could grasp the significance of any of the 38 recommendations from these brief bullets that do not in fact, accurately identify even the gist of any of the recommendations. The writer's director, Daniel Bon, however, thought highly of the memorandum. In the margins he wrote: "This is a superb note. Congrats [sic] to Claude! I think we should [sic] be the ones to provide at best the basics of the responses for matters such as scenarios & [sic] policy. Let us know if there is a difficulty with – who?"<sup>169</sup>

On 26 June 2000, Department of National Defence officials began the long process of developing an inter-departmental response to the Committee's detailed report.<sup>170</sup> The project within DND and other departments was, as is common practice, divided between 'subject matter expert' staffs, each instructed to prepare a response to one or more of the 38 SCONDVA recommendations. The trail here, too, is difficult to follow in detail as few of the staff reports were available and most pages of those that were available were redacted. Nevertheless, the final government response was provided under the ATI, and though it appears the SCONDVA asked for a response by November 2000, the Committee did not receive the government's report until after 15 March 2001, even though the bureaucrats had a response ready in late October 2000. Eventually, the response was delivered to the House of Commons sometime on or near 21 October 2001. These delays were due entirely to the vagaries of parliamentary politics at the end of 2000.

Briefly, the SCONDVA report was presented in June 2000 to the Second Session of the Thirty-Sixth Parliament, but the government's response did not reach parliament before the dissolution of parliament on 22 October 2000. The Thirty-Seventh Parliament was convened on 29 January 2001 and the chair of the SCONDVA passed to Liberal Member of Parliament David Pratt.<sup>171</sup> In its "First Report" to parliament, the new committee convened a procedural meeting and "considered" the *Procurement Study* again; it "concurred in its findings" and requested that "the government provide a comprehensive response to it."<sup>172</sup> In effect, the SCONDVA in 2001 was tidying up its previous work and renewing its 2000 request to the government.

The parliamentary hiatus may have disrupted the bureaucratic process, but there is no evidence to confirm whether the government's final response to the SCONDVA *Procurement Study* (made available to us eventually through a June 2005 ATI request) is the same or nearly the same response prepared in October 2000. The only clue that the paper referenced here may be a modified version of the October 2000 paper is suggested in the response to "Recommendation 29" that asked the government to "... convene a national roundtable on shipbuilding in Canada with a view to establish a national shipbuilding policy." The government noted in return that "On October 20, 2001, the minister of Industry announced the creation of a National Shipbuilding and Industrial Marine Partnership Project ..."<sup>173</sup> Thus, the break between the time DND received the first report from the House of Commons, June 2000, and the final presentation of the government's response, at some date after October 2001, may have dated some, if not all of the Committee's recommendations. In other words, during this seventeen-month period,

many of the recommendations may have been overtaken by new policies or procedures; the available report seems in places to indicate that outcome.

Whether it was relevant when it finally reached the House of Commons, the government's 21-page response was comprehensive if not necessarily encouraging in its comments on the Committee's work.<sup>174</sup> In its introduction, the government seems to welcome the committee's report which it "... has considered carefully." Furthermore, the House of Commons is informed: "The Government shares the concerns of the Committee over the need to reform the procurement process. This is important in order to ensure that the Government's requirements for goods and services are effectively met, Canadian taxpayers get value for money, and Canadian economic and industrial interests are supported." This message of "concern" is reinforced by the 'cut and paste' statement used repeatedly in responses to House of Commons recommendations: "The government recognizes the importance of open and transparent reporting to support effective communications with Parliament and Canadians."<sup>175</sup>

In general, however, the government responded to House of Commons recommendations in two ways. The most common response addressed recommendations with an explanation of what the government policy was and how it was administered without conceding any points to the committee's opinions. The second most common response assured the House that the matter had been addressed already and needed no future action, or that perceived problems were, in any case, well in hand. Given the long delays in the government's response, these not so encouraging claims might have been valid in some cases, but in many cases they seemed to describe intentions rather than point to verifiable outcomes and changed policies.

In fairness to officials, many aspects of the recommendations were being addressed incrementally as other studies and reports suggest. Other assertions in the government's response, however, appear dismissive of the Committee's recommendations aimed at encouraging a deep, system-wide reform of government procurement policies and practices.

The claim, for instance, that the government was "... conducting a focused, paced, and innovative [military] modernization program"<sup>176</sup> was not at all obvious to most careful observers in 2001. In answer to two recommendations, the government asserted that it had "embarked on a major procurement reform initiative,"<sup>177</sup> but evidence of this reform at the time was, again, not obvious in 2001, and years afterwards not much has changed in the essentials of the process. In fact, the government rejected outright the committee's key structural recommendation to consider some form of integrated DND/PWGSC defence procurement organization.<sup>178</sup> The

government countered the committee's recommendation for a review of the *1994 Defence White Paper* by pointing to several procurement projects it *intended* to fund – new search and rescue helicopters, a major upgrade of the CF18 fleet, the purchase of Upholder submarines, and the replacement of the “ageing Sea King fleet” – as “... significant progress ... made since the [white paper was issued] in making the Canadian Forces more combat capable.”<sup>179</sup>

As with all the Senate and House of Commons committee reports and studies, there is no record that the House of Commons took any action to challenge the government's responses to this report or to hold ministers to account for the government's stated intentions. Nor were any witnesses recalled to the committee to explain the government's responses. Nor did the House of Commons track the government's progress in achieving its stated objectives. Where ‘reshaping extant policies’ and redirecting resources define influence, there is little evidence that this committee's report, despite its detailed analysis, had any influence on national defence procurement policies, procedures, or outcomes. Typically, the best efforts of the House of Commons (and parliament generally) produced a report and then a formal response from the government and then very little else.

***Report on the Department of National Defence 2001-2002  
Estimates: Part III – Report on Plans and Priorities,  
12 June 2001***

On 12 June 2001 in the House of Commons, the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs tabled its report on the DND's “Report on Plans and Priorities.” It is a short report containing eight recommendations, but it generated several media items critical of the government's defence policies and the funding of these policies. The Committee requested a response from the government by “not later than 9 November 2001.” The media's attention and the request from the House of Commons sparked DND's ‘usual process’ into action.

In its report, the SCONDVA, chaired by David Pratt (a close ally of prime ministerial aspirant Paul Martin), notes:

In light of the problems faced by the Canadian military, our Committee decided to undertake a series of studies to ensure that the Canadian Forces were [sic] properly prepared for the challenges facing them. Our work was done in full recognition of the fact that cutbacks, in support of deficit reduction, were necessary. But, once the deficit problem was solved, and the economy

was again on a sound footing, it became reasonable to expect an injection of new funding for the Canadian Forces. Some progress has been made in this regard, but more is needed.<sup>180</sup>

The Committee's review of the DND *Estimates* and the accompanying departmental *Report on Plans and Priorities* produced recommendations aimed at strengthening defence capabilities by taking action on the much delayed Maritime Helicopter project; increasing Canadian Forces personnel levels; building the capital budget, strategic sea and airlift, and air-to-air refueling resources; and increasing the overall defence budget.

Officials within DND kept a close watch on the committee's work and the media after the report was made public. Public Affairs officials reported several critical reports published by the *Ottawa Citizen*, *The Gazette*, *The Hill Times*, the *Toronto Sun*, and *The Chronicle Herald*, among others. This media attention prompted DND public affairs and Finance branch officials to prepare "Advice for the minister" in the usual format. The advice, intended for use in the House or in media scrums, begins with the usual opening remark: "I welcome SCONDVA's Report on the 2001-2002 Report on Plans and Priorities as a clear demonstration of the important contribution Committees can make. The Government will review it carefully and will respond as appropriate."<sup>181</sup>

This welcome is then followed by seven 'bullets' suggesting ways in which the minister, Art Eggleton, could reassure Canadians that "[t]he Government is committed to ensuring that the Canadian Forces has the people, equipment, and training it needs." The bullets provide the minister with the recent history of defence budgets and recent supplements to DND 2000-2001 funding. The advice switches in the fifth bullet to a statement of the government's support to "quality of life" programs introduced in the Canadian Forces in the previous year. Only at the sixth bullet does the advice suggest the minister speak directly to the Committee report: "Looking ahead, our objective is to increase our equipment expenditures to around 23% of the total defence budget by investing in Canadian Forces modernization priorities, such as strategic sea and airlift capabilities." This often-stated capital expenditure goal announced in many defence policy statements has rarely been achieved by any government since 1956 and was never even close to being achieved by the Chrétien government.<sup>182</sup>

Officials provided the minister with additional facts and figures dealing with recruiting and quality of life policies for use "if pressed" in the Commons or by the media. His senior staff, however, provided no advice on the actual recommendations made by the Committee or any hint on how

this “welcomed” report might be incorporated into government plans and priorities.<sup>183</sup>

The government’s response to the House of Commons – due in November – was prepared quickly. The staff simply addressed each recommendation and in six pages rehearsed government policies and accomplishments.<sup>184</sup> As with other such public remarks, the government made its best case for its defence policy and its allocation of funds to it. For example, the Committee’s recommendation to “proceed as quickly as possible with the Maritime Helicopter Project to ensure delivery of replacements ... in 2005” is countered with the simple assurance that the government “... intends to proceed as quickly as possible with the implementation of the project.”<sup>185</sup> The response suggests that a delivery of the new aircraft is possible in 2005, but cautions that the project is large and complex and “the possibility of delays exist.”<sup>186</sup> This statement, even with its caution, was grossly misleading. It was simply not credible in the circumstances of the time to suggest to the House of Commons that the procurement system could revive this mangled project and deliver *an operational helicopter unit* in less than four years.

The hint that the government was intent on building a defence budget capable of devoting 23 percent to the capital portion as suggested in the “Advice to the Minister” was simply a sound bite aimed at putting the media off the trail. In the response to parliament, the message was significantly different: “The target of 23% for the capital budget continues to be an important planning objective for Defence. *To the extent that sufficient funds become available*, this target would be achieved without sacrificing other important elements of the Defence program.”<sup>187</sup> In other words, if the government were to provide an increase in the defence budget in the range of \$2 to \$3 billion each year and devote that sum in total to the capital program, then the government could meet this objective. The chances that either of these preconditions could or would be met were simply incredible given the prime minister’s attitude towards and his government’s record on defence spending.<sup>188</sup>

The government was, however, watching the public reaction to the Committee’s work and in a Memorandum to Cabinet officials comment in some detail on the background of witnesses who spoke to the Committee. They note especially the representatives from the Conference of Defence Associations and “... a recently released report by the Royal Canadian Military Institute” and suggest that “... on the whole, most defence associations would likely agree with SCONDVA’s observations and recommendations.”<sup>189</sup> “Defence Academics” receive a special mention:

The other group that could potentially comment on the SCONDVA report and the Government Response is the defence academic community. Like the defence associations, the themes of budget shortfall, the need for more spending on the capital program and personnel shortages are commonly included in academic commentary. For example, when appearing before the Committee on April 3, 2001, Professor Douglas Bland of Queen's University expressed concern over each of these issues.

Of particular interest on the academic side will be the pending release of a report by a group calling themselves the Council for Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The group, chaired by Professor Jack Granatstein and Senator Laurier LaPierre, is undertaking a comprehensive examination of Canadian security policy in anticipation of what they believe may be a defence policy review. The core assumption of the study is that Canada needs combat-capable forces to meet the challenges of the new millennium. Contributors to the Council include virtually every well-known Canadian defence academic, several retired members of the Canadian Forces ... and a number of notable Canadians including former Defence Minister Jean Jacques Blais.<sup>190</sup>

The following 'comments' paragraph to this section was redacted from the ATI release.

Other than making this formal response to the House of Commons, there is no evidence in the ATI files that the government or DND took any action to reshape or otherwise amend its policies in response to the House of Commons committee report or its recommendations.

### ***State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Response to the Terrorist Threat, 7 November 2001***

Two months after the terror attacks on North America, SCONDVA tabled an interim report – *State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Response to the Terrorist Threat* – containing 19 recommendations and requested a response to the report from the government within 90 working days rather than the more usual 150 days.<sup>191</sup> Again, the Minister of National Defence, Art Eggleton, was given the lead by the Privy Council Office to produce the government's response to the House of Commons.

Senior military and public service officials acted quickly, because the minister of national defence insisted that DND meet the Commons' compressed reporting deadline on time. The minister and the government became engaged at the most senior levels also because the report provided a comprehensive framework of recommendations aimed at enhancing



national defence and disaster response capabilities of the Canadian Forces that challenged the government's national security policies and its future federal budget priorities.<sup>192</sup>

Although it is evident in the memoranda written by senior staff officers in NDHQ to other officers and officials in both DND and other departments that the report was a major concern, the limited number of documents provided by DND in response to our ATI request is curious. In all, we received only four memoranda: an announcement of staff meetings; a list of “proposed OPIs & OCIs”<sup>193</sup> identified to prepare comments on specific recommendations; an undated and unaddressed summary of the SCONDVA report (it has the appearance of a Briefing Note for the minister); and a copy of the final government response to parliament. What is missing from the file are the usual “advice to the minister;” policy and public affairs correspondence concerning the report even though memoranda refer to “statements by the minister”; a “media action plan”; and internal emails or other drafting documents.

The available documents display, again, senior public servants and military officers acting to support the government's pre-September 2001 policies even when the advice they provide seems problematic in the circumstances facing the Canadian Forces already in difficulty because of almost ten years of underfunding and operational stress. The internal DND summary of the SCONDVA report condenses the Committee's work into three pages. In the third background bullet, the writer notes that “[t]he report calls for a major defence and foreign policy review [sic] and a substantial increase in the base defence budget in addition to covering the increasing operational costs associated with the current campaign against terrorism.”<sup>194</sup>

In the “Summary” section, the author notices that “[t]he Committee accepts the conclusions of the 1998 and 2000 Auditor General's Reports, as well as the recent study of the CDA [Conference of Defence Associations, *Caught in the Middle: An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, September 2001], which indicate that the Canadian Forces may well be in the midst of a crisis.” The writer also highlights the fact that “[t]he Committee believes that while many of the underlying assumptions of the 1994 White Paper [on Defence] remain valid, changes in the international situation require a thorough review of our defence and foreign policies, [but that] DND funding should be increased immediately – it should not be held up by the review policy.”<sup>195</sup>

The summary paper makes four “General Observations” on the Commons' report. The first acknowledges the work of the SCONDVA: “Many of the Committee's recommendations are important and, indeed, *are already*

*under consideration by National Defence.*” The second bullet, again typical in such notes, remarks that “SCONDVA’s report downplays many of the efforts that DND/Canadian Forces have made in recent years. Nor is there sufficient recognition made of recent budget increases or equipment purchases when [the Committee is] highlighting the so-called ‘crisis’ the Canadian Forces is in the midst of.” The writer complains that “[t]he Committee’s report could easily leave the impression that the Canadian Forces are currently ill-prepared to deal with the current threat environment . . .” – which was, without a doubt, the essential message the Liberal Party-dominated SCONDVA was making. Finally, the Summary observes, “. . . there appears to be insufficient appreciation by the Committee that funding will remain limited and also fails to put a dollar figure on how much their proposed recommendations will cost.”<sup>196</sup>

The formal “Government Response” to the SCONDVA report on the “terrorist threat” reflects in more detail and careful language the sense of the Summary Note.<sup>197</sup> The 12-page response addresses each recommendation in order. The “Introduction” to the response indicates immediately that the government would treat the SCONDVA assessment much as it had the earlier SCONDVA “Report on Plans and Priorities” of 2001; that is to say, in a not-quite-dismissive manner, but in a rather condescending and lecturing tone:

Clearly, the events of September 11 have had an impact on the security environment in which Canada finds itself. Canadians have expressed concern over how to respond to these challenges and are looking to the Government and Parliament for continued leadership. SCONDVA’s Interim Report on the State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces has provided the Government with timely perspectives on a wide range of security-related issues. As [this] Response indicates, through Budget 2001 and other initiatives, the Government has taken steps to address a number of issues of concern to the Committee. It has also indicated its intention to build upon the work begun by the Departments of National Defence and Foreign Affairs and International Trade through their respective internal policy updates. The Government recognizes that the impact of the current and emerging security challenges facing Canada needs to be carefully assessed, and is committed to ensuring that Canada’s foreign and defence policies continue to promote and protect Canada’s interests and values.

The Government of Canada has considered carefully the report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA) Interim Report: State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces – Response to the Terrorist Threat. The *Government has taken note* of the nineteen recommendations in the Report.<sup>198</sup>

The “response” claims to provide parliament with “... a concise overview of the Government’s position with respect to each recommendation.” It also “provides information on the plans and initiatives in progress, and already in place ...” with respect to DND and the Canadian Forces and the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness.

As the following examples of the government’s “Recommendations and Responses” to this SCONDVA study illustrate, there was little interest in government to seriously engage parliament in the development of national defence policies or plans.

**Recommendation 1: That the Government increase the budget for the Department of National Defence.**

Response: The Government remains committed to providing *adequate funding* for National Defence. [Emphasis added. This opening sentence is followed by three paragraphs explaining the history of past defence expenditures.]

**Recommendation 3: Our Committee recommends that the current personnel strength of both the Regular and Reserve forces be reviewed.**

Response: [The size of the present] force [60,000 established by and in the circumstances of the 1994 defence policy] is intended to deliver the Government’s defence commitments at home and abroad. [The Response then explains to parliament Canadian Forces recruitment and retention policies.]

**Recommendation 4: That the Government immediately initiate a major review of our foreign and defence policies in light of the situation since September 11.**

Response: In the Spring of 2001, National Defence and Foreign Affairs and International Trade each began an assessment of overall policy directions with a view to preparing updates of [policies] in an evolving environment. [This remark is followed by three paragraphs defending the status quo and the Response then concludes.] In the new reality ... the Government is carefully assessing how best to ensure that Canada’s foreign and defence policies continue to provide the right framework for protecting and promoting our interests and values. Comprehensive reviews, of focused policy updates, *may be ways of meeting this objective and they are options under consideration.* [Emphasis added.]

**Recommendation 5: That Parliament play a significant role in both reviews.**

Response: Parliament has always contributed much to the development of Canada’s foreign and defence policies. [And] More broadly speaking,

consultations with Parliament will continue to be part of the Government's ongoing management of Canada's security interests.

**Recommendation 10: That Canada acquire additional heavy transport aircraft and replace older models to ensure the strategic lift and tactical airlift capabilities [of the Canadian Forces].**

Response: The Canadian Forces' current airlift capacity is based on the CC150 and the CC130 Hercules, as well as on the use of chartered heavy lift aircraft, when required. The Government has made a clear commitment to ensuring that the Canadian Forces will continue to be equipped to provide an effective and rapid response capability. DND has identified this as a planning priority.

**Recommendation 11: That the Government place a higher priority on providing the Canadian Forces with additional sealift capability.**

Response: The Government is committed to maintaining a modern, deployable and sustainable military capability ... [and] will consider the issue of sealift in the context of addressing the broader challenges facing the Department and the Canadian Forces.

**Recommendation 16: That more training be provided to the Reserve ... on the detection and on measures to deal with the consequences of nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks so they can operate safely ... if they are deployed to assist civilian authorities.**

Response: The Department is assessing the requirement ... in light of the events of September 11.

**Recommendation 18: That [DND] bolster the ability of the Reserves to contribute to disaster relief and to the military's response to terrorist attacks in Canada.**

Response: The Reserves are an important component of the Canadian Forces ... The Department's Land Force Reserve Restructure project is intended to further enhance the Reserve Force.

The Government's responses to the committee's other recommendation dealing with matters of the integration of security and disaster organizations and so on were treated generally with 'explanations' of the status quo and hints at future assessments. The wonder is that if parliament's recommendations are to be treated merely as pleas from the ill-informed for explanations of extant policies, then why do committees bother to hold hearings to gather advice and to make recommendations at all?

***Facing Our Responsibilities: The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces, 30 May 2002***

The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs in the spring of 2002 faced a turbulent political atmosphere as they prepared to release their important and detailed study, *Facing Our Responsibilities: The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*.<sup>199</sup> Thirty days after the SCONDVA report was released, the Minister of National Defence, Art Eggleton, who had served since 1997, left (some say “was removed from”) office and was replaced by John McCallum, a true tenderfoot in matters of national defence policy and, to his embarrassment, Canadian military history.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, during the months the report was being developed, the majority Liberal government was divided by a not-too-quiet leaders’ contest between Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. The Committee was itself divided not so much by the testimony and the evidence before them as between members who recommended a strong, assertive report and the members of the Bloc Québécois who were more cautious.

The SCONDVA was dominated by Liberal Party members, but it might as well have been dominated by members from the Opposition benches. The Chair, David Pratt, and several Liberal members of the committee were more or less open supporters of Martin’s bid to oust Chrétien. The Conservative members of the Committee keenly supported every recommendation they considered would aid the Canadian Forces and embarrass Chrétien and his government’s defence policies. This piling on by the Committee is evident in the report’s text and in its recommendations, many of which ran directly counter to Prime Minister Chrétien’s long-enforced defence policy preferences.

Federal officials had, as usual, followed the Committee’s year-long activities closely and understood where it was headed well before it was released. Bureaucrats in the PCO and NDHQ realized as the leadership contest broke into the open that the report’s pro-defence spending tendencies and its assertion that “the status quo [defence policy] is not acceptable” put them in an awkward position. Their discomfort increased considerably when, just days after the SCONDVA report was tabled in the House of Commons, Jean Chrétien “... in an interview with the CBC, stated that the Department of National Defence did not need any more money in their budget. He was also reported as saying that the war against terrorism had ‘not fundamentally’ changed the needs of the Canadian Forces.”<sup>201</sup>

The “Readiness” report in five chapters assesses the “new strategic environment,” the “limits of current policy,” operational readiness, Canadian

military “contributions to international stability,” the defence of Canada, and the state of military personnel generally. The committee built its assessments and recommendations from evidence presented by witnesses and from the background it had gathered in its four previous reports.<sup>202</sup>

The committee sets out the political context of their report in the first paragraphs of the introduction to the full report. “It was never our intention,” they declare, “to rewrite Canadian defence policy, nor did we ever assume we could do a better job restructuring the Canadian Forces than could the professionals. We see our job as one of helping the Canadian Forces recoup, and, indeed enhance, some of what they need to be able to carry on as a professional fighting force.” In the next two paragraphs, the committee openly challenges the prime minister and his defence policies:

The government’s response to our previous reports has been both encouraging and disappointing. We fully understand that not everything that we ask for can be fulfilled. However, the fact remains that the Canadian Forces continue to be underfunded, for both the short and long term.

We want to be a positive force, a vehicle through which the needs and aspirations of our serving men and women, and indeed the Canadian Forces as an institution, can be clearly put before the government. We hope also to be a vehicle for change, helping the Canadian Forces to face the many challenges of the future. Some of what we recommend will be accepted, some will not. Whatever the result, we begin with the assumption that **the status quo is not acceptable.**<sup>203</sup>

The committee makes 25 recommendations in the form of statements or demands. Of the total, three deal with funding and budgets; two with personnel policy; two with the Reserve component of the Canadian Forces; five with defence policy; three with aspects of ‘readiness’; and ten with procurement and re-equipping the Canadian Forces. All the recommendations in one form or another had been presented to the government by witnesses before parliamentary committees and in Senate and House of Commons reports, and by non-government organizations and defence policy scholars. As the committee’s report remarked, the government’s response to these efforts had been “both encouraging and disappointing.” The government’s response to this committee’s report would be mostly disappointingly cautious, and evasive.

Officials in NDHQ began immediately to prepare the first draft of “Advice for the Minister” while other force planning staff officers worked concurrently on “. . . a quick hit review/evaluation of the 25 recommendations for the minister.”<sup>204</sup> The first draft of “advice” was completed on 30 May, the

day the report was tabled in the House of Commons, and amended on 5, 12, and 19 June. Typical of the ‘usual process’, once the first draft of “advice” was completed, it, and not the report *per se*, became the overriding focus of NDHQ staff effort and the deputy minister’s attention. In the midst of this work, officials also prepared a “Briefing Note for the Minister” and sent it to the minister’s office on the 11 June.

In their first draft Advice, officials in NDHQ advise the minister to state that “[t]he Government welcomes SCONDVA’s report tabled this morning and will carefully consider its recommendations.” They suggest also that the minister state, “We expect that many of the issues identified in SCONDVA’s latest report would be considered as the Government moves forward with the Defence Update.”<sup>205</sup> In the second draft, the first recommendation is merely to thank the Committee for its report while holding to the promise to consider the report as it reviewed Canada’s defence policy.<sup>206</sup> In the third and fourth drafts, there is no ‘welcome’ nor any commitment to consider the report in the future at all.

The third and fourth drafts concentrate solely on “defence funding and capabilities.” In these concise notes, the first four ‘bullets’ are meant to remind parliament and the media that “[t]he Government is committed to ensuring that the Canadian Forces has the people, equipment, and training it needs to protect Canadian sovereignty.” They emphasize the government’s planned increases in defence spending “that will total approximately \$5 billion by March 2007” and that Canadian Forces deployments of some 4,000 personnel “on 13 operations abroad” confirm that Canada has “an effective military capable of guarding Canadian interests.” Finally, the note highlights American praise for the Canadian battalion (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry) deployed in Afghanistan apparently as an example of the combat fitness of all the units in the Canadian Forces.<sup>207</sup>

The second section of these notes addresses the SCONDVA’s concern for a new, more relevant defence policy. The minister is advised to state: “The government undertook to pursue an update of defence policy and that the Department will be looking at what this might entail over the next few months.”<sup>208</sup> The minister is advised to warn that “[t]his Update is not simply about money but more importantly how and where our resources are invested to build the right capabilities for the Canadian Forces. A final decision on how to proceed with a Defence update [sic] has not yet been taken. However, it is my intent to make the Defence Update one of my priorities and to expedite the work already underway.”<sup>209</sup> No review was undertaken. In fact, in December 2003 officials in the policy branch were still arguing strenuously against any need for a comprehensive review of the *1994 Defence White Paper*.<sup>210</sup>

The five-page Briefing Note provided to the minister by Margaret Bloodworth, deputy minister of DND, on 11 June 2002 follows the usual bureaucratic format and much of the same defensive style characteristic of other such notes. The “Background” describes in one paragraph SCONDVA’s record of reports on national defence and notes that “[t]he Committee’s final report builds on many of the recommendations made in the Interim Report, and at the same time addresses other important issues.” The deputy minister also notes the Bloc Québécois’s “dissenting report” that argues for “an extensive public debate ... [before considering a defence increase of] 33% over three years.” The Bloc’s contribution to the Committee’s work was afterwards ignored completely.<sup>211</sup>

The Briefing Note in three pages fairly summarizes the SCONDVA report by highlighting its main arguments and recommendations. Although officials in their “Observations” agreed with some or parts of the SCONDVA’S recommendations, they were for the most part dismissive of its efforts. For example, officials agreed “with a number of the Committee’s statements on Canada’s current defence environment; indeed, they are consistent with the principal tenets of our current policy.”<sup>212</sup>

Officials agreed “... that maintaining a strategic sea-and air-lift [sic] capability would allow for rapid and efficient Canadian Forces deployments” but then dismissed the Committee’s recommendation to “acquire additional heavy lift aircraft” and new ships as “not necessarily the most cost-efficient manner in which to provide the Canadian Forces with strategic lift.”<sup>213</sup> Responding to the Committee’s demand for a more rapid development of modern capabilities, officials reached for the “nothing is new” defence. “None of the capital projects identified by the Committee are new to DND. Indeed, they are all under consideration and at various stages of planning.”<sup>214</sup> This observation was not new either, nor were the ‘observations’ of several witnesses before the Committee that most of the capital projects “at various stages of planning” officials cited in this Briefing Note were not funded.

The Committee’s recommendation to increase “the budget for the Land Force ... in the next fiscal years [sic]” was acknowledged by officials as a challenge that would be met by “reducing the readiness of tank units” and “improving the effectiveness of [the army’s] light infantry battalions.” Apparently the new strategy was to build a more capable army by removing capabilities. Officials also acknowledged the weakness of Canada’s northern defence policies and reported – as every other report had assessed – that Canada’s defence and military problems were not “primarily of a military nature.” Finally, they noted that “Quality of Life measures contribute to military readiness [and] that the Department of National Defence takes these issues very seriously.”<sup>215</sup>



Officials, on the other hand, took issue with most of the Committee's other recommendations. They repeated the government's claim to adequate defence funding and criticized the Committee's recommendation to meet a so-called NATO standard base on GDP ratios.<sup>216</sup> The Briefing Note challenges the Committee's use of statistics on Canada's defence funding: "The report fails to mention that not all statistics are as unflattering for Canada" and suggests that by simply changing the funding measurement from GDP to total dollars spent annually would make things look brighter. In the Note, they continue: "The Committee does not acknowledge the budget increases provided in the 1999, 2000, and 2001 budgets."<sup>217</sup>

The Committee's recommendation to increase parliament's oversight of security and defence issues is met with a flat statement that "A number of parliamentary committees are already very much involved in discussion [sic] of security and defence issues and already provide an oversight function. And the Department is always very interested in receiving their views."<sup>218</sup> The answer as to who is to measure the adequacy of parliament's oversight function, members of parliament or national defence bureaucrats, appears from the note to have been decided by bureaucrats in favour of bureaucrats.

The Committee on advice from witnesses recommends that "... the army increase its training at the brigade level." Officials counter, as they often did to past recommendations for increased readiness training, that "... the report fails to mention that in the *past several decades* [arguably back to 1972] we have never been called upon to deploy units larger than battalion or battle groups."

In words that would astonish military officers, civilian officials rejected the Committee's main theme, a demand for increased attention to the state of readiness of Canada's armed forces. Officials simply declared that this primary military professional function was too difficult to accomplish: "Determining operational readiness has proven difficult to quantify across all three environments."<sup>219</sup> Why the Canadian Forces could not, for example, conduct specific readiness tests for the army before similar tests were in place to do the same thing for the navy and air force was not explained.

The Briefing Note to the minister of national defence was silent on several of the Committee's important recommendations. There are no "observations" or responses in the Briefing Note to recommendations "... to purchase necessary capital equipment in a timely fashion"; or that "any future defence review have a significant parliamentary and public input"; or that "... operational readiness inspections be carried out on a regular basis"; or that "The Army proceed quickly [to change] its training regime..."; or that "DND

maintain its strong commitment to [defence] research and development ...”; or that “DND undertake a study on the future of the JTF2 [Joint Task Force 2] ...”; or that “DND make a commitment as quickly as possible to fund Phase 2 of the Land Force Reserve Restructure project [and] ... amend the *National Defence Act* ... to provide job protection to Reservists called-up to duty ...”; or that the government should proceed with the “... project for the replacement of the four Tribal class destroyers ...” and give “high priority” to the upgrading and refitting of the navy’s 12 frigates; or that “no effort be spared to provide the Sea King helicopters all [assistance] necessary to ensure their effective and safe operation until they are withdrawn from service”; or that “All 18 Aurora long-range patrol aircraft be modernized ...”; or that “authorities” explore with their US counterparts ways of improving ... cooperation between Canada and the US in NORAD ...”; or that “Sufficient numbers of new and replacement aircraft be acquired in the near future to meet the domestic needs of Canada [for] search and rescue operations ...” In their advice to the minister of national defence, officials chose to ignore 14 of the 25 critical recommendations sent to the government of Canada by the House of Commons.

One series of brief emails between senior military officers betrays the politicized nature of NDHQ at the time. The principal authors of this Briefing Note, all civilian bureaucrats, were members of the ADM (Policy) branch of NDHQ acting under the direction of Kenneth Calder, the ADM (Policy) who was acting under the direction of the Deputy Minister of DND, Margaret Bloodworth. As the Briefing Note was in its initial draft, Colonel John Turner, Director of Defence Analysis, wrote to the lead civilian policy author, Daniel Bon, Director General Policy Planning, and to his own military superiors:

From: Turner Col. J@DDA [Director of Defence Analysis,] Ottawa-Hull  
 Sent: Monday, June 10, 2002, 2:44 PM  
 To: Bon DL@DG Pol Plan@NDHQ  
 Subject: BN [Briefing Note] ADM (Pol) Return on SCONDVA  
 State of Readiness Report

Mr. Bon

DGSP staff have reviewed the subject document which I understand you have prepared for the DM for her review 11-12 June 02 (?) [sic]. I believe the substance of the BN is well-written and accurate up to the point

where the Observation Section commences. It is our view, however, that the Observations section is entirely off the mark.

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Ten minutes later, the VCDS, LGen George Macdonald, contacts MGen Dempster (Turner's superior):

From: Macdonald LGen G@VCDSOttawa-Hull  
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2002, 2:54 PM  
To: Dempster MGen D@DGSP@Ottawa-Hull  
Subject: BN [Briefing Note] ADM (Pol) Return on SCNDVA  
State of Readiness Report

I have not seen the BN, but was under the impression that our offer to coordinate [it] was rejected [by the deputy minister]. Please bring me up to date verbally on where we are at with this and our own analysis. This is a little tricky to staff to the DM/CDS and higher if we are not in agreement [with the policy staff].

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The VCDS, as a result of these messages, studied the Briefing Note and was concerned enough to attempt to speak immediately with Ms. Bloodworth who, apparently, was not available.

From: Macdonald LGen G@VCDSOttawa-Hull  
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2002, 4:16 PM  
To: Dempster MGen D@DGSP@Ottawa-Hull  
Subject: BN ADM (Pol) Return on SCNDVA State of Readiness Report

Having seen the BN, I agree with John Turner's input. Let's be sure not to be considered having coordinated on the document if they [the civilian staff] don't accept all of the inputs and change the tone considerably. I also spoke to the [Executive Assistant to the] DM and he stressed that the DM would consider a Policy BN if [we] wanted to submit it to her in draft, but was insistent that it stuck to the strategic level – she does not want to bog the MND down with paper work. While your own [military] initiative to produce a thorough analysis may not, therefore, be needed soon, it will certainly be important to input to the Government's formal response.

There is no evidence in the ATI documents provided by DND on this SCONDVA study that General Macdonald's concerns were addressed or that the Briefing Note was amended to provide a military assessment of the Committee's recommendations before the Note was sent to the minister. Thus, one can only conclude that the minister was not bogged down "with paper work" sent to the government by the House of Commons. There is no evidence that the VCDS's concerns about the validity of the DND response to the SCONDVA report were included in or highlighted in the government's response to parliament.

The government's response to the report of the SCONDVA, managed for the PCO by NDHQ, was sent to the House of Commons on 25 October 2002 as the committee had requested.<sup>220</sup> In the introduction to the response the government set the boundaries for the comments to follow. "Operational Readiness," the central theme in the SCONDVA report, was not mentioned.

The Government of Canada has considered carefully the report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA) on the State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces. The Government has taken note of the twenty-five recommendations contained in the Report. The Government remains committed to ensuring that the Canadian Forces are prepared to meet Canada's security and defence needs, both domestically and overseas. At the same time, the Government recognizes – and has been very open about the fact – that the Canadian Forces face significant challenges. The world is changing and the Canadian Forces must be modernized and transformed to ensure they are able to meet their commitments today, tomorrow, and well into the future. The key is to achieve the right balance in our investments between today and tomorrow, between people and equipment, and between our ability to surge to address crises or new international developments. This balance must also include the ability to sustain Canadian Forces operations. In the Speech from the Throne, the Government committed to set out, before the end of this mandate, a long-term direction on international and defence policy that reflects our values and interests and ensures that Canada's military is equipped to fulfill the demands placed on it.<sup>221</sup>

The government then provided "a concise overview of [its] position with respect to each [of the SCONDVA's] recommendations" and also provided "information on the plans and initiatives in progress, and already in place with respect to the Canadian Forces' state of readiness."<sup>222</sup>

The government's responses were for the most part based on the text prepared for the Briefing Note to the minister of national defence sent to his office on 11 June 2002. In general, the Response is filled with hopefulness

and not much action and certainly the Government was careful not to say it agreed with any of the committee's recommendations. Throughout the text the government assures the House of Commons that it "remains committed to ensuring the Canadian Forces have the resources they need."<sup>223</sup> It was also "committed to ensuring the Canadian Forces have the resources they need including resources for the purchase of capital equipment"<sup>224</sup> and later in the text, "committed to providing Defence with resources ... in a manner that delivers the Government's defence policy as effectively and efficiently as possible."

The government also "recognizes many issues and challenges."<sup>225</sup> For example, the government "recognizes the importance of maintaining a command and control and air defence capability for its naval task groups" and it "recognizes the importance of maintaining the capabilities of Canada's maritime forces."<sup>226</sup> The government assures the House of Commons that "DND and Veterans Affairs Canada recognize that Canadian Forces members have returned from deployments with [mental and social] problems" and, therefore, "[t]here are plans in place from both departments to provide even more resources to address these significant and disabling problems." Moreover, "DND and VAC [Veterans Affairs Canada] remain committed to investing the resources required to provide the best possible care to our Canadian Forces personnel."<sup>227</sup>

The House of Commons is informed that the Government has plans, strategies, frameworks, options, and other means to address every concern raised by the SCONDVA. The government, for instance, states that it would *eventually* "set out ... a long-term direction for international and defence policy ..."; that DND is "... in the process of integrating a number of separate readiness evaluation and reporting systems for the Canadian Forces"; that "some information on readiness reporting is already included in Departmental reports"; that "The Canadian Forces are in the process of changing the framework of Army training ..."; that "Within the Departmental management framework, the examination of optimal capability delivery is an ongoing activity"; that "The department has developed a Technology Investment Strategy to meet future needs of the Canadian Forces"; that it supports the "Land Forces Reserve Restructure project"; that "DND is currently investigating options to replace its existing replenishment ships ..."; that in 2001 "Industry Canada [has] promulgated a new Shipbuilding and Industrial Marine Policy Framework"; that "the Government has several options for moving the Canadian Forces around the world by air ..."; that "there are a number of options available to maintain [the Tribal class] Canadian naval task groups into the future... [and, therefore, m]aintaining the

command and control and air defence capability may not require the one for one replacement of the four Tribal class destroyers”; and that the Government has a “unique process” to begin to replace the Sea King helicopters but warns that “the possibility of delays exists.”<sup>228</sup>

The Chrétien government never did issue a new direction for national defence. The ships project announced in 2002 is still being developed in 2011. There are no keels laid for new replenishment ships. The Sea King continue to fly, more or less. No reliable readiness system was developed. The defence procurement system is still cumbersome and overly staff-ridden. Recognition that “the Canadian Forces have challenges” brings forth rhetorical “commitments” to this and that project delivered by skilled bureaucrats who dutifully concoct improbable strategies expressed in pulp mills of paper plans supported by an ever-ready panacea of fast-fading, fantastic management frameworks. Nothing, however, is suggested in the response to the clear demand from the House of Commons: deliver a national defence policy to modernize and enhance Canadian Forces operational capabilities.

The SCONDVA’s # 1 Recommendation to the government – that “The government increase the annual base budget for [DND] to between 1.5% and 1.6% of GDP with the increase to be phased in over the next three years and continue to move towards the NATO average” – was the *sine qua non* underpinning the committee’s broader aim “... of helping the Canadian Forces recoup, and indeed enhance, some of what they need to carry on as a professional fighting force.”<sup>229</sup>

The government’s response to this fundamental recommendation sent a clear, dismissive message to the SCONDVA and the House of Commons and defined irrevocably the place of national defence policy in Prime Minister Chrétien’s agenda and his attitude towards the situation of the Canadian Forces.

The government remains committed to ensuring the Canadian Forces have the resources they need. [However] the government will continue to take a balanced approach to allocating *the available surplus* between tax cuts, debt reduction and new spending, and will consider any increase to the defence budget in the context of its overall priorities.<sup>230</sup>

In other words, the Canadian Forces would receive from the government of Canada such funds as were available for national defence and not necessarily the funds the House of Commons recommended were necessary for national defence.

## CHAPTER SIX

# *A Summary: Theory and Practice*

### **Gaining Influence by Influencing the ‘Usual Process’**

The documents and the interviews used in this study suggest strongly that it is not the quality of external studies and reports that influences defence policy. Arguably, what mattered most in determining whether external research reached the minister of national defence or influenced extant policies was the opinions senior public servants had of outside researchers and their motives and interests. Responses by officials to senators and members of parliament often depended on officials’ assessments of the “influence and place” these individuals had in government and how they were viewed in the Prime Minister’s Office. But even in cases where officials had high regard for external researchers, *receptiveness*, or the degree to which officials were willing to accept externally generated analysis and advice, was the key to gaining influence, great or small. Receptiveness in all the cases we examined depended almost entirely on the “politics of the issue,” or as one official remarked: “The view from the PMO as we perceived it from far away.”<sup>231</sup>

Clearly, during the period under review it is unlikely that senior public servants in DND and elsewhere would have supported in front of ministers research – even if it were credible in their eyes – that criticized the government’s policies officials felt obliged to protect from criticism. In the documents examined herein, public servants in DND (and in the senior ranks of the Canadian Forces occasionally) obviously chose to facilitate the government’s partisan interests rather than challenge their policy choices even in the privacy of the defence minister’s office. Whenever officials and officers who believed they had a duty to defend the government’s policies – and thus implicitly its partisan interests – received external studies critical of government policies they presented to ministers “Talking Notes” and “Advice” aimed at defending extant policies.

In every case under examination, officials provided ministers with the ‘truth they wished to hear’. In all but one case, there is no evidence that any minister was ever disappointed by or rejected any “Briefing Note” or

“Advice” even when these notes dismissed entirely the substance of the report at hand. Liberal government ministers appeared to accept without question the dismissal by officials of reports prepared by Senate and House of Commons committees on national defence even when these reports were prepared by committees that were dominated by Liberal Party members.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there is no evidence in the records that would suggest that any minister on receiving a long, detailed study – and especially one that stirred the sleeping dog – ever paused to ask officials: “Are you telling me that all these senators, members of parliament, former chiefs of the defence staff and senior officers, and academic experts didn’t get anything right?” On the other hand, in the most blatant example to the contrary, Minister of National Defence, Art Eggleton, chastised General Raymond Henault, the CDS, for bringing unwanted views to his attention and demanded that the CDS and the offending senior staff officer apologize for offering to him the truth he did not wish to hear.<sup>232</sup> Few ministers acted as Eggleton did, because, one must assume, officers and officials understood where Prime Minister Chrétien and thus his defence ministers stood in matters of national defence and, except for the Eggleton incident, acted and advised ministers accordingly.

It is difficult to point to any particular study from any source, including those from parliament, that had a noticeable effect on defence policy or that appreciably shaped it. We can conclude, nevertheless, that it is possible to determine with *some* degree of certainty *in the negative* that individually none of the external studies or reports we reviewed had any immediate influence on national defence policy at the time and in the circumstances in which they were presented.

Perhaps the most influential study in the series examined here was the monograph, *Canada without Armed Forces?*, published by Queen’s University/the Conference of Defence Associations Institute late in 2003. The study has been credited by some with initiating a sweeping reform of national defence policy and sparking Prime Minister Martin’s major defence and foreign policy reviews. Its influence could be attributed to the quality and uniqueness of the work and to a careful release and media strategy. In truth, serendipity may have played a larger role.

The study was presented when parliament was in Christmas recess, the media had little to headline, and Paul Martin was in the process of putting his imprint on government policies and rebuilding the Canadian Forces seemed to be an important part of that agenda. Certainly, Martin was leaning in that direction as evident in the reports of his “defence policy workshop” team.<sup>233</sup> The influence of the Queen’s study, such as it was, owed much to the



work and effort displayed in the many preceding studies that had gradually raised public and media awareness and interest in the state of the Canadian Forces and defence policy generally. It was the climax, as it turned out, of a long effort by academics, senators, members of parliament, and other national leaders and opinion makers to convince Liberal and Conservative politicians that they could no longer safely neglect national defence policy or the circumstances facing members of the Canadian Forces.

External studies and reports were somewhat influential to the extent that they created over time a public awareness that the defence of Canada and the nation's place in the world were in serious disrepair. The reports, from inside and outside parliament, repeatedly warned citizens of the weaknesses in the Liberal government's defence policy and created gradually a public appetite for change. They also figured prominently in the formulation of the Conservative Party's defence policy studies and the defence policy they introduced in parliament once they were in office.<sup>234</sup>

These effects should not be overstated as other factors were in play at the same time. When, for instance, the "defence deficit" the reports explained were verified dramatically by images such as the burning submarine, *HMCS Chicoutimi*, adrift in the Atlantic Ocean on 5 October 2004, in Canada's inability to respond in a timely fashion to the humanitarian disaster in Indonesia in December 2004, and in the Canadian Forces' very limited ability to join in the attacks on Afghanistan-based terrorist units after September 2001, the titles and findings and images from these reports – *Caught in the Middle; A Nation at Risk; For an Extra \$130 Bucks; Canada without Armed Forces?*; and others – came to life in the public's mind.

The collective influence of these events and these reports and studies was demonstrated by Prime Minister Paul Martin's energetic, but ultimately too late, attempts to radically change the Liberal government's national defence policies. He was unable, no matter the sincerity of his efforts, to convince Canadians and members of the Canadian Forces that the Liberal Party was on a new track and recognized the need for a significant defence policy review and appropriate defence funding.<sup>235</sup>

The new direction Prime Minister Martin intended to promote was captured first in a speech he gave in Toronto in early December 2003 while campaigning for the post-Chrétien leadership of the Liberal Party. In his speech titled, "Canada's Role in a Complex World," Martin acknowledged many of the findings in the reports and studies reviewed in this monograph, but, of course, without direct reference to them.<sup>236</sup> The concepts in his Toronto speech became eventually the framework for Martin's foreign and defence policies doctrine:

[The] attention Canada paid to its international instruments [declined] as priority was given to getting our domestic house in order. Our diplomatic network, our foreign and trade policy capacity our defence capabilities, and our commitment to development suffered as a result. Canada will have to do more if we want to maintain influence in a more competitive world.<sup>237</sup>

The prime minister described his policies in great detail in his government's document, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*.<sup>238</sup> It was a complete repudiation of the Jean Chrétien's defence doctrine: Canada, "the Red Cross with guns," and promoted, instead, a new (some might say returned) Canada to its traditional conceptual framework for Canada in the world.

These words, self-criticisms, and fine intentions could have been carried from any one of the reports and studies we reviewed and, indeed, many of the practical 'fixes' Paul Martin attempted to initiate in defence polices and the Canadian Forces were taken from these external sources.<sup>239</sup>

The external studies and reports of the kind recorded here and others of their kind have the potential to influence policies not simply because their "brute sanity" invariably overwhelms the political status quo and the policy inertia in government bureaucracies. They can be effective to the degree that they provide opportunities for non-governmental subject-matter expert researchers to engage and challenge the governments' experts in the formulation and assessment phases of particular policy processes. Moreover, external studies and reports can be influential whenever researchers make special efforts to bring their work to the attention of the media and through the media to help inform public debates about important national issues and the options and consequences of various choices governments might consider.

Academics and policy experts in non-governmental organizations can be especially effective when they provide high-quality, credible, publicly accessible research findings to parliament's impoverished committees. Expert, non-partisan testimony can arm committees of the Senate and the House of Commons with facts and insights that are (as parliamentarians have expressed often) invaluable to members of these committees who might otherwise be left with nothing but politically controlled statements presented to them by ministers who have cabinet solidarity obligations and by public servants and senior officers of the CF who are obliged by custom and the directions of the Privy Council Office to speak the government's line.

In other days and other times, one might have expected a confident senior public service to provide the leadership and the expertise necessary

to shape the government's understanding of its fundamental responsibilities to provide for the nation's defence and its international commitments. Yet, throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Canadian public servants, and not just those in DND, aided by a few senior Canadian Forces officers acted instead to thwart the efforts of citizens who attempted to fill the positions of responsibility vacated by governments' loyal public servants. In some important ways, credible subject-matter experts developed and supported by universities and policy-specific non-governmental organizations and by some business-related research programs have replaced senior public officials as advisors who speak the truths that governments and parliaments need to hear.

We imagine another day in the near future when the bureaucratic and academic communities will speak freely to each other and collaborate in the development of national policies and the processes to administer them. We hope to see someday soon, as in many other states, an open door policy that encourages a freer public service/academic fellowship environment in which members welcome ideas and opinions and invitations and offers to work together in each other's houses to enrich defence policy research to better serve Canadians.

### **Advice for the Academic Defence Research Community: Make the Dog Bark!**

The evidence from our review of this period is clear: if officials are concerned that the media or the government's political opponents may notice a study or report, then they will pay attention to it for as long as there is a threat that the dog might bark. Researchers, therefore, who wish to draw attention to their work, should create a public interest in what they have to say even before they say it publicly. They must understand, however, that getting the attention of DND officials and influencing policy are two different activities.

Those who wish to influence, to shape policy by altering the allocation of resources to defence policies and activities ought to study the modern techniques of other advocates who challenge and intend to influence other public policy issues. The strategies followed by "activists" in the gender world and for women's rights, and for the environment, and for a sovereign Quebec, for example, are worthy of study. As our review of the two Reserve Force studies we examined it is obvious that the Reserves community did follow this activist model and thus gained direct access to ministers of national defence and some redress to the policies they opposed.

Sending finely researched papers to parliament and NDHQ produces few positive results without prior public interest. Sending advance copies of studies to NDHQ simply allows officials a head start in preparing their (typically) dismissive notes. Modern policy influencers prepare careful media events, provide the media with ‘cut and paste bullets’ explaining their study’s major findings, recommendations, and arguments, and gets them out (under embargo) several days before the public release of the study.

The release strategy for the Queen’s/CDAI study, CWF?, is an example of this process aimed at overcoming the ‘usual process’. In their assessments of the report, officials confirmed unintentionally the usefulness of the strategy in their complaints that the authors were unfairly using the media to advance their views: “I also don’t think we can ignore the fact that reports like this show a considerable amount of public relations strategizing on the part of Bland et al. You don’t usually get headlines with measured, nuanced reflection – but ‘mass extinction’ will earn you 5 minutes of fame.”<sup>240</sup>

Every release plan should include a schedule of related events over several days: pre-release lures for the media; careful attention to the ‘news cycle’; ready-to-use Q&A packages for the author(s) of the report; attention to the social networks – Twitter and Facebook, for example; and a ready series of follow-on supporting studies to maintain the media’s attention. The aim is not to influence government bureaucrats but to influence public opinion with the expectation that, over time, the government’s partisan interests will produce the policy effects researchers and advocates intend.

Finally, and critically, advocates must understand that partisan and exaggerated rhetoric spun for effect alone impairs the chances that their offering might influence policies and political outcomes. Doomsday statements presented without supporting credible evidence simply provide officials with easy targets they will use immediately to discredit an entire study. Every assertion and claim in every study, therefore, must be rigorously challenged before any report is set before the public.

The Senate Committee on National Security and Defence that we reviewed provides a very important example of how committees of the Senate and the House of Commons – and not just those concerned with security and defence matters – can increase their effect on public discourse. This Senate committee devised a strategy to enhance the appeal and the credibility of their reports in the public domain. Five concepts were particularly central to the strategy.

First, the committee attempted, and usually successfully, to take a non-partisan approach to national security and defence policies. Second,

the chair and the members very carefully mapped out before any hearing the principal issues to be addressed, the strategy for digging information out of sometimes reluctant ministers and officials and officers and their plan to maximize the presentation of their findings and recommendations. These particular subject strategies then formed the framework for calling witnesses, for the questions and the challenges that would be presented to them, and the follow-on information the committees would demand from governments.

The third innovation was the decision to “take the show on the road.”<sup>241</sup> The intent, and a successful idea, was to take questions on policies and practices directly to the officials and workers and soldiers and sailors who were obliged to implement the governments’ policies. These field trips, for instance, to Afghanistan, to major Canadian ports and airport handling facilities, and to military bases and communities provided unequalled access to ‘witnesses’ who would only rarely have the means or be allowed to travel to Ottawa to meet otherwise immovable committees of the Senate and the House of Commons.

Fourth, the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence purposely designed and formatted their reports to make them clear, readable, and pointed. The texts were, in almost all cases, addressed not to expert readers and members of the Senate and the House of Commons and especially not to federal bureaucrats, but to the media and to the lay public. The conclusions were especially highlighted and reinforced with direct quotes from the “ordinary Canadians we encountered in our research travels.”<sup>242</sup>

Finally, this Senate committee very deliberately tracked the responses of governments to their recommendations and published the committee’s reaction to them. This “recall procedure” helped the Senate in some respects to overcome the inhibiting custom that governments have no obligation to respond to Senate reports (unless the Senate asks formally for such a response). The gambit allowed the Senate committee to simply recall witnesses to ask them what action had been taken to implement the Senate’s recommendations. The “threat of such confessions”, as one senator described it, seemed to sharpen officials’ and officers’ initial testimony and the attention of members in the PCO as they prepared their responses to reports.

We must note, however, that while these procedures and practices greatly highlighted and enhanced the committee’s reports, the policy influence was at best uneven. Nevertheless, the Senate’s security and defence committee was especially effective and influential in bringing to the public’s attention the insecurity in Canadian ports and in the negligent handling of stowed cargo at Canadian airports. The committee can take a great deal

of credit for significantly influencing the government's security policies in these areas and in the reallocation of government funding for national security policy generally. The prime mover in these cases was the media, well primed by a (mostly) non-partisan committee and its energetic chair, Senator Colin Kenny.

### **Five Key Recommendations for National Defence and Security Committees of Parliament**

1. Act as though parliament does not intend to be treated with contempt by ministers, officials, or other servants.
2. Conduct specific inquiries, not wide-ranging, whole-of-policy studies. For example, study in detail the specifics of individual military acquisitions and not the entire government, multi-departmental procurement apparatus. Reports on comprehensive studies merely provide governments and officials great opportunities to deliberately "miss" the vital points committees might be trying to make and give officials and their masters reasons to delay, sometimes for months, governments' responses to committees' recommendations.
3. Develop a process of "will-say" interviews to take place (perhaps in-camera) before witnesses are called to testify in public as a means of determining lines of inquiry for committees dealing with complex matters. This process is commonplace in other types of inquiries and in the production of public affairs media shows. These pre-interviews could very well be managed directly by senior, well-informed committee research staffs.
4. Always demand a comprehensive response from government for every House of Commons report – and put them on short timelines to respond. For the Senate, always use provisions that allow for committees to make demands for timely responses from governments.
5. Always conduct follow-up committee hearings and re-call witnesses to review governments' formal responses to every parliamentary report. Failure to do so not only leaves recommendations hanging in the air, but also provides a huge incentive for governments (and their officials) to return to parliament gaseous responses devoid of meaning knowing that their responses will never be challenged once they are received by the Senate or the House of Commons.

# Notes

1. Donald Savoie, *Court Government and the Collapse of Accountability in Canada and the United Kingdom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 267.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
3. The study's timetable and final monograph were in large measure determined by the response of the DND to ATI requests. In almost all cases, responses were delayed for several months over some three years of research planning, requests to government, delays in responses, and assessment of records which often resulted in new ATI requests, most of which had to be accomplished before the records and responses and interviews could begin.
4. The term is attributed to Richard Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 6.
5. A major difficulty in this ATI approach is that there may not be in some cases a complete email record to access simply because the computer system at NDHQ clears backlogged messages after a set period of time. Thus, emails especially exist because some official, officer, or clerk printed them and saved them to paper files. This was clearly the case with briefing notes and so on. "Hard copy" records placed in files proved easier to access. However, enough information was retrieved, we believe, to support our main thesis and especially so when it was used as the basis for interviews with individuals who in some cases wrote the documents.
6. We note these interviews in endnotes, but in some cases at the request of interviewees we do not identify them by name.
7. The DND officials' assessment for the Liberal government of the Conservative Party study, "Defence Policy," dated June 2004 and mentioned earlier in this paper was not examined in detail as it dealt with partisan politics and not defence policy *per se*.
8. Jean Chrétien attributes this description of the Canadian Forces to himself. See Jean Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2007), p. 90.
9. Douglas Bland, personal notes from meeting with Paul Martin, David Pratt, and others, Ottawa.

10. Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, Ottawa, 2005.
11. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, p. 304. See also p. 54.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
13. One strong minister of national defence who tried early in the Chrétien era to argue in cabinet for a strong national defence policy and a rebuilding of the Canadian Forces after the federal deficit was brought under control stated privately that he was stopped in mid-sentence by the prime minister's dismissive wave of the hand: "Look, why bother with this, there aren't any votes in it." – whereupon the discussion turned to other matters. Interview.
14. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, p. 303.
15. "A Wake Up Call for Canada: The Need For A New Military." A Proposal by the Defence Studies Committee of the Royal Canadian Military Institute, May 2001.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
17. The commitments undertaken by the Liberal government in its 1994 statement were substantial. See Canada, *1994 Defence White Paper* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada), pp. 38-39. See also Douglas Bland, *Canada's National Defence, Volume I*, pp. 289-360.
18. Canada, DND, "Preliminary Comments On RCMI Paper: A Wake Up Call For Canada: The Need For A New Military." ATI DND/NDHQ A0100673. Hereinafter, the NDHQ Review.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 3. (Emphasis in the original.)
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4. (Emphasis in the original.)
23. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
26. *Ibid.*
27. DND, "Advice for the Minister: CF Capabilities" D. Bon, DG Policy Plans, 29 November 2001.
28. At the time this monograph was published the Conference of Defence Associations included fifteen core associations and sixteen associate members and claimed to be "Canada's leading pro-defence organization." The mandate of the CDA was and remains to inform the public of issues affecting Canada's national security and defence and the state of the Canadian Forces.
29. *Caught in the Middle: An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces*. The Conference of Defence Associations, 27 September 2001, p. iv.



30. DND, CDA Letter. Minute, Acting ADM(Pol) 30923, 24 September 2001. (Capitalization in the original.)
31. DND, DGSP, "Briefing Note For the Minister: Conference of Defence Associations Report on Readiness of the Canadian Forces," 27 September 2001.
32. DND, ADM(Pol), "Advice to the minister: CDA Report – Canadian Forces Capabilities," 27 September 2001.
33. DND, ADM(Pol), Advice for the Minister, "CDA Report – Canadian Forces Capabilities" 28 September 2001. The prime minister repeated this confident theme in a formal letter of congratulations to the CDA for its "exemplaire rapport" (Canada, Prime Minister Chrétien to Lieutenant General Belzile, President of the CDA, 30 October 2001).
34. See especially Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, p. 303.
35. DND, "BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE MINISTER: CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS, REPORT OF THE READINESS OF THE Canadian Forces." **Draft 1035 hours**, 26 September 2001, p. 1/3. ("Prepared for the VCDS by LCol. Francki, Directorate of Strategic Planning, NDHQ.") This 26 September 1035 first draft was redacted in many places.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 1/3.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 2/3.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 1/3.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 2/3
40. DND, "BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE MINISTER: CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS, REPORT OF THE READINESS OF THE Canadian Forces." **Draft 1450 hours**, 26 September 2001.
41. DND, "BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE MINISTER: CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS, REPORT OF THE READINESS OF THE Canadian Forces." **Final**, 26 September 2001, pp. 1/3 - 3/3.
42. MND office record of receipt. DND, 'Briefing note for the Minister. Conference of Defence Associations Report on *Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces*.' MND [Office] Registry, MUC 2001-04264B, 27 September 2001.
43. Letter, Commodore D.G. McNeil to General Henault, 'Briefing Note For the Minister – CDA Report on Readiness of the Canadian Forces' 28 September 2001. The seriousness of this implicit reprimand is evident in the fact that McNeil was required to copy his apology to the vice chief of the defence staff, the deputy minister of DND, and the ADM (Policy). Interview, McNeil, December 2010.
44. Chief of the Defence Staff, "Briefing Note For The Minister: CDA Report 27 Sep 01," 28 September 2001.
45. Interview, Commodore (ret) Daniel McNeil, who for a time after this incident was seconded to the PCO. December 2010.

46. See Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, p. 304.
47. Interview, McNeil, December 2010
48. Interview, McNeil, December 2010, and General Ray Henault (retired), December 2010. General Henault in this interview emphasized his great difficulty at the time in working with the Deputy Minister of DND, Margaret Bloodworth, who took her guidance on defence matters from the Privy Council Office.
49. Interview and personal correspondence: McNeil, December 2010.
50. Ibid. Commodore McNeil went on to other senior appointments in the PCO and in the CF but he remarked later that "... the events surrounding the CDA study and Eggleton's reaction to the truth he did not wish to hear and my experiences working in senior levels in NDHQ, in the PCO and close to Chrétien so disturbed me that though I was later offered other senior appointments in NDHQ I declined them all and eventually left the CF early."
51. *A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces*. Conference of Defence Associations, Ottawa, 2 October 2002. Note: the CDA established in 1987 a separate, standalone Canadian Defence Associations Institute, dedicated to defence and security research. In the NDHQ files the distinction is not often recognized and thus the repeated use of the term, "the CDA study."
52. DND, "Background: CDA Report," DGPA, undated, p. 1.
53. Ibid.
54. DND, A-2004-00556/Team 3-5. Response to an ATI request for "All documents referring to the Conference of Defence Association paper, 'A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces.' December 14, 2004"
55. DND, "Briefing Note for the Minister of National Defence Conference of Defence Associations – Nation at Risk." Prepared by Mae Johnson, DG Pol Plan/D Pol Dev 4, 9 October 2002.
56. Ibid, pp. 1-4.
57. The criticism that the "key messages are not new" is a common remark in most every assessment of every study sent to DND. The only more common comment, "we welcome this report as a contribution ..." is missing from this particular Briefing Note.
58. DND, BN, "A Nation at Risk," pp. 4-6.
59. DND, "Advice For The Minister: Conference of Defence associations' Report. [*A Nation at Risk*]" Draft 8 October 2002; amended Draft 09 (draft # not entirely clear in the text) October 2002; and final draft 10 October 2002.
60. "Advice For The Minister [*A Nation at Risk*]." Final draft, p. 1.
61. Ibid., p. 1.
62. Ibid. (Emphasis added.)
63. Ibid.

64. DND, Letter, Minister of National Defence, John McCallum to Lieutenant General Evraire, then Chairman of the Conference of Defence Association Institute, 28 April 2003. (Emphasis added.)
65. *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves: Ten Years Later*. Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, 24 September 2004. The study was also known as the Dickson Study, named after its chairman, the Right Honourable Chief Justice Brian Dickson.
66. As quoted in Douglas L. Bland, ed., "Hellyer's Reorganization" in *Canada's National Defence, Volume 2, Defence Organization* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 1998), p. 113.
67. *Reserves 2000* was a Reserve (mostly Militia) lobby group intended to use the Reserves' political clout to protect them from harmful, arbitrary decisions (as they saw them) taken by the CDS or governments.
68. Colonel (ret'd) Peter Hunter, "Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves: 10 Years Later – Selected Conference Speaking Notes," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* (Winter 2005-2006, Vol. 8, Issue 2), p. 1.
69. Private Letter: Lieutenant General (ret'd) Charles Belzile to General R.R. Henault (CDS), 24 September 2004. Interview, Jack Granatstein, November 2010.
70. Ibid.
71. DND, Email Captain (N) JGV Tremblay, "SCRR Plus Ten," 13 October 2004.
72. DND/NDHQ Minute Sheet addressed to the CDS: "The enclosed letter reflects revisions recommended by JAG at your meeting last Friday." 25 October 2004.
73. NDHQ Letter, General R.R. Henault to Lieutenant General Belzile, 25 October 2004.
74. Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, "Message from the Director of Programs," 12 September 2005. There is some confusion over release dates in the ATI messages. It seems that this notice was sent in advance of the official release that, based on NDHQ message traffic, seems to have been nearer 28 September 2005.
75. LGen Caron had not been closely involved within the LFRR program in 2004-05 and had not, it seems, had much contact with the reports' authors.
76. NDHQ, Email Tabbernor to Caron, 09:20 AM, Tuesday, 6 October 2005.
77. NDHQ, Email Caron to Tabbernor, 10:28 AM, Tuesday, 6 October 2005.
78. NDHQ, "Briefing Note for the CDS," SO Comms, LFRR, 31 October 2005.
79. Interview, Jack Granatstein, November 2010.
80. DND, email, Marcotte Lcdr JJ@VCDS DGRC [Director General Reserves and Cadets]@Ottawa-Hull to various offices in NDHQ, Tuesday, 27 September 2005, 14:45 PM.
81. The Canadian Forces Liaison Council is composed of more than two hundred Canada-wide senior business executives and educational leaders and a

full-time Secretariat and a national network of Reserve officers to manage a civilian employer support program for the Canadian Forces. The civilians volunteer their time and efforts to promote the primary Reserve Force by highlighting the benefits of Reserve Force training and experience to the civilian workplace. The Council's mandate is to enhance the availability of Reservists for their military duties by obtaining the support and co-operation of organization leaders in Canada.

82. See op. cit., Colonel (ret'd) Peter Hunter, "Selected Conference Speaking Notes," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* (Winter 2005-2006, Vol. 8, Issue 2).
83. *To Secure A Nation*. The Council for Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 9 November 2001.
84. DND, Preliminary Departmental Comments on *To Secure a Nation* Prepared by the Council For Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Director Policy Development, 9 November 2001, pp. 1-2. (Hereinafter, DND Preliminary Comments.)
85. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
86. DND, "Advice to the Minister: CF Capabilities – Bercuson Report" 9 November 2001, p. 1. This advice is word for word the advice the minister was given by the ADM Policy staff on how to respond to the CDA report, *A Nation at Risk*. Yet another example of how officials 'recycled' comments from study to study.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
88. DND, "Unofficial draft report for D Pol Dev, 'Comments on To Secure a Nation'." B. Watson, 7 November 2001.
89. DND, Public Affairs, "Background: Canadian Forces Capabilities (Bercuson Report)," 28 November 2001.
90. DND, ADM (Pol), "Advice for the minister: Canadian Forces Capabilities – Bercuson Report," 9 November 2001.
91. DND, Public Affairs, "Questions & Answers: Subject – Council for Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," 9 November 2001.
92. DND, Public Affairs, DPAPD, "Media Response line," 9 November 2001.
93. Whatever the expectations in NDHQ at this time, they were not entirely successful in seeing off the Council for Canadian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Rather the opposite occurred. Early the next year (1-2 February 2002) the Canadian Alliance Party held a "policy forum on national security" that gave the Council's members and others wide coverage of the Council's report and the Liberal government's dismissal of it (*Calgary Herald*, 1 February 2002, p. A15). NDHQ was warned of the event and received, from a locally deployed defence public affairs officer, a copy of Jack Granatstein's presentation to that policy forum that had been published prominently in the *Herald* (DND, Email, [DGPA] to Ottawa, 29 January 2002). Over the next year, the Council increased its support and credibility and actively sought new members to

- conduct "... its own **People's Defence Review**" (emphasis in the original). One wonders what might have occurred had the minister sat with the principal members of the Council in 2001 and worked out an honest way to incorporate some of their main ideas into the "defence Update" that was issued in 2002. (See "CCS21 Discussion Board Participants" signed by J.L. Granatstein, 21 March 2003.) But speaking directly with authors of studies or engaging them in a critical review of their work was not the 'usual process' in NDHQ or in government generally.
94. Douglas L. Bland, ed., *Canada without Armed Forces?* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2003). (The study was conducted with and supported by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, Ottawa.)
  95. At times in the late 1990s and early 2000s, defence officials would attempt to discredit researchers from outside DND who pointed to the need to replace aging military equipment by suggesting that such demands were invalid if they suggested (and they usually did to officials in public discussions) that the critics were wed to a one-for-one exchange of old equipment for new ones of the same number, type, and capabilities when in the future this equipment might be replaced by new technologies and need not be acquired at all. Thus, so they argued, such demands were unfounded or unsophisticated and must be dismissed. The point past this sophistry was to ask officials what then were the signed, funded programs that would replace old capabilities with new, 'high tech' capabilities? During the Chrétien era officials could only answer: "There are none." The CWF? study only exposed the dead end of current equipment and did not suggest beyond generalities any specific replacement capabilities.
  96. DND, Monday, 01 December 2003, 14:12 PM, Rushworth to Scanlon. ATI 000312. "MAT" is ADM Materiel; "O&M" is operations and maintenance.
  97. DND, Monday, 01 December 2003, 14:56 PM. Rushworth to White. ATI 000311.
  98. DND, Monday, 01 December, 2003, 07:19 AM, Taymun to Rushworth. ATI 000297. (Emphasis added.)
  99. DND, Tuesday, 02 December 2003, 5:23 PM, Rushworth to Calder, JEE et al. ATI 000363.
  100. CKTB-AM St. Catharines. 03 December 2003.
  101. In the weeks before the *Canada without Armed Forces?* study was released, Dr. Bland had met Paul Martin on two separate occasions as Martin was preparing to take command of the Liberal Party. Those meetings included one with Martin's 'transition team' in which Dr. Bland and former CDS, General Paul Manson, were engaged for several hours in a frank and open discussion with Paul Martin and his team about the state of the Canadian Forces and what might be included in a future Paul Martin defence white paper to redress operational problems and rebuild defence capabilities.
  102. Interview, 8 December 2003.

103. Odd as the signature on the paper is, it is clearly McCallum's. We must assume he had just returned from Europe that day or the paper was faxed back and forth or that his office used a signing machine. In any case, interviews suggest he never read the study at all.
104. DND, "Talking Notes, Canada without Armed Forces?, Version One, 2003-12-01." ATI 000544.
105. In this and most other DND correspondence officials get the Study's title wrong – they miss the question mark at the end of the title. While it may seem a small point, the title is meant to suggest a possible future not an inevitable future. This error, in fact, repeats itself in the criticism of the study as it was viewed by officials as a "doom and gloom study." Seen as a warning, officials might have advised the minister to acknowledge the study as such rather than, as we shall see from some, as an attack by enemies.
106. DND, "Talking Notes, Canada without Armed Forces?, Version One, 2003-12-01." ATI 000544.
107. DND, "Talking Notes, Canada without Armed Forces?, Version Four, 2003-12-03." ATI 000540.
108. DND, "Talking Notes, Canada without Armed Forces?, Final Version, 2003-12-04." ATI 000431.
109. DND, "The Minister: Queen's University Report: Canada Without Armed Forces?," December 5, 2003 (signed Margaret Bloodworth). Received by the MND, 8 December 2003. ATI 000023, pp. 4-6.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 6/6.
111. Interview, Major General Douglas Dempster (retired), February 2011, Ottawa. In less than a year, ministers dismissed the SCIP as unachievable and impractical.
112. DND, Deputy Minister, "The Minister – Queen's University Report: 'Canada without Armed Forces?'," 5 December 2003.
113. "MCCRT" is the Management Command and Control Re-Engineering Initiative, a DND project aimed at streamlining and modernizing defence administration in Canada. See Michael Rostek, "A Framework for Fundamental Change: The Management Command and Control Re-Engineering Initiative," *Canadian Military Journal*, Volume 5, No. 4.
114. Context: Email to the Chief of the Air Staff's public affairs officer informing this officer that the CAS was not to respond to media questions about CWAF? assessments of the future status of the air force.
115. David Pugliese, "General says Forces will remain 'credible': Top officer expresses satisfaction with funding levels," *Ottawa Citizen*, 5 December 2003.
116. Interview, February 2011, Ottawa.
117. *Ibid.*
118. DND, email From Taymun.sm@ADM(PA)@Ottawa-Hull, to Rushworth MS@ADM(PA), 05 December, 2003.

119. DND, email, From Agnew Cdr J@CAS D Air PA to Bastien MGen R@CAS CAS Exec, 15 December 2003, 9:37 AM.
120. DND, email, From Rushworth MS@ADM(PA) to Browning SA@ADM(PA), Tuesday, 30 December 2003, 12:12 PM.
121. DND, email, Harper Capt(N) JE@ADM(HR-Mil) DTEP to Murphy Cmdre RD@ADM(HR-Mil) DGHRPP, Wednesday, 3 December 2003, 3:39 PM. The remark was recorded, according to this email, by Colonel, later Lieutenant General, Walt Semianiw, who was present at the meeting.
122. DND, Email, Miller I@ADM(Pol) D Parl A to ADM (Pol) et al, Wednesday, 29 October 2003, 11:57 AM. There is no ATI record of a request ever having been made by the Senate.
123. The Clerk of the Privy Council Office would take the decision in such cases and might assign a 'most affected, lead department' to coordinate an inter-departmental committee to prepare a response to a Senate or a House of Commons report or study.
124. Senate of Canada, Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Canadian Security and Military Preparedness, February 2002*, Ottawa.
125. Ibid.
126. DND, "Briefing Note For the Minister, 'Canadian Security and Military Preparedness'." Jim Judd, prepared by ADM (Policy), 4 March 2002.
127. Ibid., p. 2.
128. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
129. Ibid., p. 3.
130. Ibid., p. 3. (Emphasis added.)
131. DND, "Advice For The Minister: Defence Policy Review (Senate Report)," 8 March 2002.
132. Ibid.
133. Senate of Canada, *The Defence of North America: A Canadian Responsibility*, 3 September 2002.
134. Ibid. Introduction.
135. Ibid. Part III. (Emphasis in the original.)
136. DND, "Briefing Note For the Minister of National Defence: Senate Committee Report on Defence of North America." DG Pol Plan/D Pol Dev 2-1, Responsible Group Principal: ADM (Pol), 6 September 2002.
137. Ibid.
138. Canada, Senate of Canada, *For an Extra \$130 Bucks ... Update on Canada's Military Financial Crisis: A View from the Bottom Up*, 12 November 2002, Ottawa.
139. The reference is to the Senate Report, *Canadian Security and Military Preparedness*, February 2002. No reference to this "observation" was made in the March 2002 "Briefing Note For The Minister." (Emphasis in the original.)

140. DND, ADM (Policy), "Briefing Note For The Minister of National Defence," *For an Extra \$130 Bucks: Update On Canada's Military Financial Crisis: A View from the Bottom Up*, 21 November 2002.
141. Canada, Senate of Canada, *Canada's Coastlines: The Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World*, 29 October 2003.
142. DND, "Background: Coastal Security," Joanne Pfeiffer (D Parl A 2-3), 29 October 2003.
143. DND, "Background: Coastal Security," Joanne Pfeiffer (D Parl A 2-3), 30 October 2003.
144. DND, Email, "Millier I@ADM(Pol) D Parl A@Ottawa-Hull." Wednesday, 29 October 2003 11:57 AM.
145. The government seemed sensitive to suggestions that Canada's coasts were threatened and insecure and made a fair effort to provide the Senate with a detailed briefing on "Canadian and US maritime activities on the east and west coasts." On 14 August 2002, at an early meeting of the Committee, the Chief of Maritime Staff appeared before the Committee and read to them a detailed six-page paper describing the coastal territory, and how patrols are coordinated there, how operational tasking is determined, and how informational surveillance strategies contribute to national security at sea. DND, "Briefing Note For the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence: Maritime Coordination." (Circa) 14 August 2002.
146. Emphasis added.
147. DND, "Advice for the Minister: Coastal Security" (2<sup>nd</sup> draft) circa 29 October 2003.
148. DND, "Briefing Note For the Minister of National Defence: Senate Committee Report 'Canada's Coastlines: the Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World.'" ADM (Pol) Michelle Clippingdale, DG Pol Plan/D Pol Dev 5, 31 October 2003, p. 4/4. (Note the document was transmitted to the deputy minister on 3 November 2003.)
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid., p. 4/4.
151. Canada, Senate of Canada, *Managing Turmoil: The Need to Upgrade Canadian Foreign Aid and Military Strength To Deal With Massive Change* – 5 October 2006, Ottawa.
152. No information on the status of these reports was available under ATI requests. It is assumed, therefore, that no NDHQ staff action was taken on either of them.
153. Senate, *Managing Turmoil*, 5 October 2006.
154. DND, "Report of the Senate Committee on National Defence and Security, *Managing Turmoil: The Need to Upgrade Canadian Foreign Aid and Military Strength To Deal With Massive Change*." Jonathan Quinn, D Pol Dev 9, 11 October 2006, pp. 2/3, 3/3.



155. Canada, Senate of Canada, "Executive Summary: Managing Turmoil," 5 October 2006.
156. DND, Deputy Minister, Ward Elcock, received a copy of the Committee Summary on 11 October 2006. ATI 000015.
157. House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs – Procurement Study, June 14, 2000.
158. DND, DGPA "MediaQin" Transcripts: "SCONDVA – Report on Procurement and Its Interim Report on National Missile Defence." 14 June 00, 1600 hours, p. 1. (Hereinafter, "Transcripts.")
159. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
160. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
161. SCONDVA, "Procurement Study."
162. Transcripts, p.1.
163. "Under Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, the SCONDVA has requested a comprehensive Government response to the Committee recommendations in the House of Commons within 150 calendar days or by November 11, 2000." Letter, Government of Canada, Privy Council Office, Green to Judd, 22 June 2000.
164. Interview, Ottawa, 2011.
165. DND, "Memorandum 'SCONDVA Study on Procurement.'" 1180-1 (D Pol Dev 4), 26 June 2000.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 2. This statement may, indeed, reflect the policy process of the time, but if so, what that process suggests is that the government expects the world to adjust sympathetically to Canada's policies. It reflects also the Chrétien government's fundamental premise underlying its defence policies and programs; that is, the defence of Canada will receive from government the resources that are available, not those that policy and commitments suggest are needed.
168. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
169. *Ibid.*, Margins, p. 1. (Emphasis in the original.)
170. DND, Memorandum, "Draft Government Response To The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA): Procurement Study." Director, Cabinet Liaison, 26 June 2000. For some reason this otherwise routine memorandum that merely provided a "timetable to guide the preparation" of the government's responses was classified as "SECRET".
171. David Pratt was Chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs from January 2001 until November 2003 when he joined Prime Minister Paul Martin's cabinet as minister of national defence.
172. Canada, House of Commons, The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, "First Report," 15 March 2001.

173. Canadian governments continue to make announcements about new “national shipbuilding strategies,” but no keels have ever been laid down.
174. Canada, “[Government Response to] Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs – Procurement Study.” A DND copy undated.
175. *Ibid.*, p. 2. (And repeated at pp. 3, 4, and twice on page 20.)
176. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
177. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. In each sentence, the wording is exactly the same.
178. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
179. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
180. Canada, House of Commons, “Report on Plans and Priorities,” Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, 12 June 2001, p. 2.
181. DND, “Advice for the Minister – SCONDVA - “Report on Plans and Priorities,” James Groen, D Parl A 2-2, 13 June 2001.
182. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
184. DND, “Report [on Plans and Priorities] of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs. Undated and unsigned.
185. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
188. See, for reference, Brian MacDonald, “The Capital and Future Force Crisis,” in Douglas Bland, ed., *Canada without Armed Forces?* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University, 2003).
189. Canada, Memorandum to Cabinet, “The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA): Report on the [DND] 2001-2002 Estimates – Part III Report on Plans and Priorities” circa, 27 August 2001. This MC is significantly redacted under various sections of the *Access to Information Act* and nine complete pages are removed.
190. *Ibid.*
191. Canada, House of Commons, “State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Response to the Terrorist Threat: Interim Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs.” November 2001.
192. Interviews. Ottawa 2010.
193. OPI – Office of Primary Interest and OCI – Office of Collateral Interest.
194. DND, “Report on the State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Response to the Terrorist Threat Prepared by the Standing Committee on Defence and Veterans Affairs,” undated and unsigned, p. 1.
195. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

196. Ibid., pp. 2-3. (Emphasis added.)
197. The response is undated, but the draft was passed to the PCO on or about 20 December 2001 (DND memorandum) and was due in parliament by 5 February 2002 and we assume, therefore, that it was produced near that date.
198. Ibid., p. 2. (Emphasis added.)
199. Canada, House of Commons, *Standing Committee On National Defence And Veterans Affairs, Facing Our Responsibilities – The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, 30 May 2002,” Ottawa. Hereinafter, *The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*.
200. Among his blunders, McCallum confessed that he had never heard of the Canadian Second World War landing at Dieppe, France, a celebrated (if failed) Canadian attack, second only as a national military icon to the First World War successful attack at Vimy. The minister later compounded his first error when he confused Vimy with the Second World War French collaborator regime housed at Vichy, France.
201. As quoted in Canada, DND, “Background: Defence Update (SCONDVA Report),” Adam Fisher (D Parl A 2-3), 3 June 2002.
202. *Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces*; the *Procurement Study*, June 2000; the *Report on Plans and Priorities*, June 2001; and the *State of Readiness of National Defence: Response to the Terrorist Threat*, November 2001.
203. *The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, p. 1/3. (Emphasis in the original.)
204. DND, Email, Fawcett MW@DFPPC@Ottawa-Hull, June 03, 2002, 11:31 AM. (Emphasis in the original.)
205. Canada, DND, “Advice for the Minister – Defence Update (SCONDVA Report), 30 May 2002.
206. Canada, DND, “Advice for the Minister – Defence Update (SCONDVA Report), 5 June 2002.
207. Canada, DND, “Advice for the Minister – Defence Funding/Capabilities (SCONDVA Report), 12 June and 19 June 2002.
208. Ibid. On the continuing arguments in 2003 for a status quo 1994 defence policy see the comments in this monograph on the report, *Canada without Armed Forces?*.
209. Ibid.
210. See the defence policy discussions in *Canada without Armed Forces?* noted earlier in this monograph.
211. Canada, DND, Briefing Note for the Minister of National Defence, “House of Commons Report on the State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces.” 11 June 2002, p. 1.
212. Ibid., p. 3.

213. Ibid., p. 4.
214. Ibid., p. 3.
215. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
216. Ibid., p. 3.
217. Although DND officials argued that going to a NATO equivalent would force the Canadian government to increase the defence budget of “\$4-5 billion to reach 1.6% of GDP and would need to be double its current level to reach 2.2%” the point is – or ought be – that the defence budget should be pegged at a level that produces outcomes commensurate with the government’s defence policies and commitments, notwithstanding the GDP input of other nations.
218. Briefing Note, 11 June 2002.
219. Ibid, p.5.
220. The Clerk of the Privy Council Office assigned DND as the ‘lead department’ responsible for coordinating the preparation of the government’s response to the House of Commons.
221. Canada, “Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee On National Defence and Veterans Affairs: Facing Our Responsibilities – The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces.” p. 1/9. Hereafter, Government Response. See also: Canada, DND, “Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee On National Defence and Veterans Affairs” ‘News Room’, 25 October 2002. [www.forces.gc.ca/news](http://www.forces.gc.ca/news).
222. Government Response, p. 1/9.
223. Government Response, p. 1/9.
224. Ibid., p. 2/9.
225. Ibid., p. 4/9. This commitment is repeated verbatim in response to Recommendation 12, p. 5/9.
226. Ibid., pp. 5/9 and 6/9.
227. Ibid., p. 9/9.
228. Government Response.
229. *The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, p. 1/3.
230. Government Response, pp. 1/9 and 2/9. Interestingly, the wording in this response to this committee’s most important recommendation is remarkably similar to the defence funding policy of Pierre Trudeau’s government as stated in its defence white paper, *Defence in the 70’s*: “A decision on the appropriate size of the defence budget can be made only in the context of the Government’s national priorities and in the light of its consequent programs.” As quoted in Douglas L. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence, Volume 1, Defence Policy* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University), p. 170.
231. Confidential interview, Ottawa, February 2011.
232. Interview, General Raymond Henault, Ottawa, February 2011.

233. While ‘plotting’ his bid to succeed Jean Chrétien as prime minister, Paul Martin convened through a private consulting firm numerous “issue workshops” composed of his Liberal Party supporters and non-Liberal Party outside experts to prepare for the government Martin expected would introduce a series of new policy initiatives addressing issues in every major portfolio in government. David Pratt, chair of the national defence policy workshop invited “eighteen [scholars and non-governmental experts] interested on foreign and defence policy formulation to share thoughts on the forthcoming foreign and defence policy review.” The report to Martin, “Preparing for a Foreign and Defence Policy Review 2004,” was completed in January 2004 and included “thirteen clusters of [defence] policy questions” aimed at “wring the highest level of military operational capability and effectiveness from every defence dollar.” The workshop produced 11 major defence policy recommendations, many of them intended to overturn entirely the Liberal Party defence policy – not surprising given the Chair’s previous reports to the House of Commons and the inclusion in the workshop of several authors and contributors to non-governmental defence studies critical of Chrétien’s policies. Author’s private papers, 2004.
234. The Liberal government became increasingly sensitive to criticism of its defence policies, especially when it became obvious that the Alliance would make the ‘defence deficit’ a major factor in any future election. When on 2 May 2003 the Alliance released its defence policy statement, *The True North Strong and Free* (built, in fact, from many concepts and assessments referenced in the reports and studies reviewed in this monograph), the government demanded and received from the Deputy Minister of DND, Jim Judd, a very detailed, and in some respects, partisan assessment of every Alliance policy proposal in their paper including a comprehensive financial appraisal of the entire policy proposal. DND, Letter, Deputy Minister to The Minister: Canadian Alliance Paper on Defence, 11 September 2003.
235. Paul Martin attempted to separate himself and his policy ideas from those of Jean Chrétien by, among other things, visiting NDHQ and speaking there with members of the Canadian Forces and by visiting Canadian Forces bases Gagetown and Halifax, something Chrétien had never contemplated doing even during election campaigns.
236. Paul Martin, “Transcript: Canada’s Role in a Complex World,” Toronto, Ontario, undated, circa 6 December 2003. <http://www.paulmartin.ca/home/stories>.
237. Ibid.
238. Canada, *Canada’s International Policy Statement*, Ottawa, 2005.
239. As another clear indication that the party’s policies were about to change, Paul Martin appointed David Pratt, Minister of National Defence in 2004. Pratt had been, in Chrétien’s government, Chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs and as such a critic of the Chrétien defence policies.

240. DND, NDHQ, Email, Johnson MM@ADM(Pol) D Pol Dev@Ottawa-Hull.  
Tuesday, 9 December 2003, 10:10 AM.
241. Interview, Senator Colin Kenny, Ottawa, February 2011.
242. Ibid.

## ANNEX

# *The National Defence Establishment*

### **The Minister of National Defence**

The minister of national defence is a “Minister of the Crown” and serves “at Her Majesty’s pleasure.”

The Defence portfolio for the Minister of National Defence also includes the following offices/responsibilities:

- Defence Research and Development Canada
- Communications Security Establishment
- Canadian Forces Housing Agency
- Judge Advocate General
- Military Police Complaints Commission
- Canadian Forces Grievance Board
- Office of the Chief Military Judge
- Office of the National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman
- Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency
- Cadets Canada and Junior Canadian Rangers
- National Search and Rescue Secretariat

### THE NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT: PART I

#### DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

There is hereby established a department of the Government of Canada called the Department of National Defence over which the Minister of National Defence appointed by commission under the Great Seal shall preside.

## **Minister**

The Minister holds office during pleasure, has the management and direction of the Canadian Forces and of all matters relating to national defence and is responsible for

- (a) the construction and maintenance of all defence establishments and works for the defence of Canada; and
- (b) research relating to the defence of Canada and to the development of and improvements in materiel.

The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, may designate any other person in addition to the Minister to exercise any power or perform any duty or function that is vested in or that may be exercised or performed by the Minister under this Act.

## **Associate Minister**

The Governor General may, by commission under the Great Seal, appoint an Associate Minister of National Defence to hold office during pleasure and to exercise and perform such powers, duties and functions of the Minister as may be assigned to the Associate Minister by the Governor in Council

## **Deputy Minister**

There shall be a Deputy Minister of National Defence who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council to hold office during pleasure.

## **Associate Deputy Ministers**

The Governor in Council may appoint not more than three Associate Deputy Ministers of National Defence, each of whom shall have the rank and status of a deputy head of a department and as such shall, under the Minister and the Deputy Minister, exercise and perform such powers, duties and functions as deputy of the Minister and otherwise as the Minister may specify.

NDA: PART II

THE CANADIAN FORCES

The Canadian Forces are the armed forces of Her Majesty raised by Canada and consist of one Service called the Canadian Armed Forces.



### **Regular Force**

There shall be a component of the Canadian Forces, called the Regular Force, that consists of officers and non-commissioned members who are enrolled for continuing, full-time military service.

### **Reserve Force**

There shall be a component of the Canadian Forces, called the Reserve Force, that consists of officers and non-commissioned members who are enrolled for other than continuing, full-time military service when not on active service.

### **Chief of the Defence Staff**

The Governor in Council may appoint an officer to be the Chief of the Defence Staff, who shall hold such rank as the Governor in Council may prescribe and who shall, subject to the regulations and under the direction of the Minister, be charged with the control and administration of the Canadian Forces.

Unless the Governor in Council otherwise directs, all orders and instructions to the Canadian Forces that are required to give effect to the decisions and to carry out the directions of the Government of Canada or the Minister shall be issued by or through the Chief of the Defence Staff.

### *What is the relationship between DND and the Canadian Forces?*

The activities of the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence, like those of every other federal government organization, are carried out within a framework of legislation that is approved and overseen by Parliament. In most respects, the Department of National Defence is an organization like other departments of government. It is established by a statute – the *National Defence Act* – which sets out the Minister’s responsibilities, including the Minister’s responsibility for the Department and the Canadian Forces.

*Under the law, the Canadian Forces are an entity separate and distinct from the Department.* As stated in the Act, the Department is headed by a Deputy Minister of National Defence, the Department’s senior civil servant, while the Canadian Forces are headed by the Chief of the Defence Staff, Canada’s senior serving officer. Both are responsible to the Minister.

The Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence have complementary roles to play in providing advice and support to the Minister of National Defence and in implementing the decisions of the Government on the defence of Canada and of Canadian interests at home and abroad. The separate authorities of the Deputy Minister and the Chief of the Defence Staff give rise to different responsibilities. In broad terms, the Deputy Minister has responsibility for policy, resources, interdepartmental coordination and international defence relations and the Chief of the Defence Staff has responsibility for command, control and administration of the Canadian Forces.

### **Ministers of National Defence, June 1997 to June 2011**

Art Eggleton	11 June 1997 – 25 June 2002
John McCallum	26 June 2002 – 11 December 2003
David Pratt	12 December 2003 – 19 July 2004
Bill Graham	20 July 2004 – 5 February 2006
Gordon O'Connor	6 February 2006 – 14 August 2007
Peter MacKay	14 August – present (June 2011)

### **Deputy Ministers of the Department of National Defence**

Jim Judd	1998-2002
Margaret Bloodworth	2002-2003
Ward Elcock	2004-2007
Robert Fonberg	2007 – present (June 2011)

### **Chiefs of the Defence Staff**

General Maurice Baril	1997 – 2001
General Ray Henault	2001 – 2005
General Rick Hillier	2005 – 2008
General Walter Natynczk	2008 – present (June 2011)

## *About the Authors*

**Dr. Douglas Bland** was Professor and Chair of the Defence Management Studies Program in the School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, from September 1996 to 1 April 2011. His research and publishing interests are concentrated in the fields of defence policy making and management at national and international levels, the organization and functioning of defence ministries, and civil-military relations.

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