

I wish to thank the Minister and staff for the opportunity to participate in the Halifax roundtable review of the defence policy. The invitation was initially a surprise and it took me some time to understand in what context I could contribute to a roundtable of esteemed professionals, highly-decorated senior CAF officers, academics, and politicians. What could I bring to the table that would be of value?

I am not a defence expert. I have not written papers to address key topics like national security, domestic, international, or peace operations, threat identification, missile defence, or the look and feel of the CAF of the future.

I am also not an academic, well-read and -versed on international relations, terrorism, climate change, cyber threats, gender-based analysis, and child soldiers.

I do not work in a field where I can expertly speak to the challenges facing veterans with regards to medical and career transition, emergency preparedness, aboriginal issues, space, or the impact that drones are having.

Instead, I bring a perspective based almost entirely on my own personal experiences acquired during a 30+ year career that has been an even split between the Royal Canadian Air Force and employment in the aerospace and defence industry. While in the RCAF, I was actively involved in various committees for the militaries of North, Central and South America (such as SICOFAA and CONJEFEMAR); I was consulted by the Chilean Air Force and the Guatemalan Army for the integration of women into their respective militaries; and I participated in the United Nations peacekeeping mission to Guatemala (MINUGUA) as Canada's first female military observer and the only female in the international contingent responsible for overseeing a ceasefire following the end of a 36-year old civil war.

As an Aerospace Engineering Officer, my operational focus was Search and Rescue and aircrew life support equipment. During my military service, I was, on occasion, the victim of sexual harassment. In 1993, I was the victim of a sexual assault by another CF member that required stepping outside of the military to prosecute what turned out to be a repeat sexual offender and again outside of the military to access victim services. I married another service member in 1995 so I fully understand the challenges facing service couples with regards to colocation and synchronized postings – challenges that contributed significantly to my decision to leave the military and pursue a civilian career despite a promising career in the RCAF. My husband, a 25-year veteran after being released for medical reasons, lives with PTSD not contracted during an overseas combat deployment but domestically and certainly while he was a serving member. Like many other veterans, he is not getting the support required and has fallen through the cracks of a broken system.

As an aerospace professional working in the private sector, I also serve on several boards including Women in Aerospace Canada, ADIANS (Aerospace & Defence Industries of NS), and the National Air Cadet League of Canada and in so doing, I felt I represented various interest

groups while at the Halifax roundtable where many of these topics were discussed although there was insufficient time to adequately address procurement.

Given those around the table, I did not feel that the roundtable was an appropriate environment in which to use my very personal experiences to simply reinforce comments eloquently made by the other participants. Stepping away from the table, from my personal experiences I opine that:

- Given Canada's constraints for defence resources (equipment, personnel, training, etc.), public opinion and political influences, there is significant merit in strengthening relationships with allies, partnerships with various other organizations, and leveraging industry to improve the CAF's capabilities and global reach.
- Investments in research, development, and innovation with industry are key to growing capabilities.
- The CAF's culture as it relates to gender, minorities, diversity, etc must change.
- CAF members, veterans, and their families deserve better services to ensure successful career and health/wellness transitions.
- Ultimately the defence policy and procurement strategies need to drive alignment with industry.
- It is imperative that small and medium businesses are given ample opportunities to participate in procurement activities and that IRB/ITB rules for Canadian content don't change such that they marginalize or disadvantage small businesses.

As broad as the topics of the discussion were, I look forward to seeing the end result and how the public consultations eventually shape the defence policy.