

Rémi Landry, June 6, 2016

**Defence Policy Review
Montreal roundtable meeting (Quebec)
June 27, 2016**

Rémi Landry, Lcol (retd) OMM, CD, Associate Professor Université de Sherbrooke

Hello,

First, thank you for the invitation to participate in the Montreal roundtable. You will find below a brief summary of the issues I want to raise at the June 27 meeting chaired by the Honourable John McKay, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence.

My thinking stresses the historical weight of certain characteristics, considered immutable since the early days of Confederation. I am of the opinion that we must take into account these characteristics to ensure an efficient and effective use of financial resources dedicated to Defence. This practice will optimize the conversion of these resources into sustainable military capabilities required by our professional Armed Forces. In addition, I argue that there needs to be a more flexible CAF structure, which will be able to better respond to the characteristics of the relationship of our government towards its Defence needs.

My comments are grouped into five sections:

- 1) Unchanging characteristics which historically limit reviews of defence policy.
- 2) What are the main challenges for the security of Canada?
- 3) What are the roles and objectives for the CAF in facing these challenges?
- 4) What resources and capabilities do the CAF need to address?
- 5) Revise the current structure of the CF and determine our capabilities based on our national needs.

Unchanging characteristics which historically limit reviews of defence policy:

- Canada was never capable of ensuring its security alone;
- Canada has always enjoyed the support of a great power to guarantee its security;
- Canadians feel safe and perceive no direct threat to the territorial integrity of their sovereignty;
- Defence has never been a priority in Canada, except during threats/crises;
- Canada invests the minimum required in Defence, in order to maintain among others the perception that it is doing its part in the collective security effort with its alliances;
- It is expected that the CF are and remain the institution of last resort in Canada;
- Canada has never entered into an operation abroad or in an armed conflict alone; it has always done so within coalitions and/or with its allies.

What are the main challenges for the security of Canada?

1) The need to:

- maintain organizational flexibility and adaptability towards an unpredictable international environment;
- anticipate the consequences of climate change on national sovereignty;
- foresee the consequences of the gradual disappearance of borders of sovereignty between the national and international stage;
- maintain a degree of operability in an increasingly multi-weapon, multi-departmental, multi-organizational, multi-dimensional, and multi-national environment;
- have a non-partisan review.

2) Recognize that defence budgets cannot be guaranteed.

What are the roles and objectives for the CAF in facing these challenges?

- It is the PM who, in symbiosis with Foreign Affairs, Public Security, Finance, and Defence, determines the role that Canada and the CAF should play on the international and national stage. Only after this can Defence convert it to national objectives and needs, according to the limitations imposed;
- Maintain multipurpose, combat-capable maritime, ground, and air forces to ensure the safety of Canadians and promote their interests and values both abroad and at home;
- Recall that Canada has always had many difficulties determining and defining what it wants as an Armed Forces, although it easily manages to state what it expects of it.

What resources and capabilities do the CAF need to address?

- Professional armed forces must possess every capability if they wish to remain an institution of last resort. Once the role is assigned and objectives determined, the form that each of its capabilities will take can then be determined;
- The financial resources allocated will determine what, and what quantity, must be maintained or acquired for each of the capabilities. These resources should be guaranteed for a minimum of 10 years, with growth linked to the annual cost-of-living index, preferably for the whole budget. If not, at least for certain CF spending areas, to avoid the most damaging disruptions caused by budget cuts, following the commitments of government;
- The aspect these capacities will take and the choice to be made as to the scale and the variety that each of them will adopt are, above all, an exercise that must be done by specialists — the military.

It is necessary to provide the CF with a structure that will allow them to optimize their future and their resources within these unchanging parameters. Four proposals on what the Defence Policy Review must, among other things, study:

1) Let us complete the unification of the CF introduced in the late '60s and revived by General Hillier

- Let us put the three components under one command and ensure that the COS, the Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command, and the future Commander of a Joint Task Force will represent the three components;
- Avoid, among other things, that the situation of obsolescence in which the Royal Canadian Navy fleet finds itself does not recur.

2) Integration of Defence HQ, including balancing the decision-making between civil and military

- In 1976, there were 9 assistant deputy ministers of whom 6 were military; in 2005, 15 of whom 6 were military; in 2016, 17 of whom 6 were military.

3) Change in organizational culture, adoption of the US Marine Corps concept where the three components are integrated

- Flexible structure that easily adjusts to international and national situations;
- Despite the recent unification efforts of the three branches regionally, the historical concept of the regiment on which the ground forces structure is built is no longer valid during operational deployments.

4) With this review of the present structure, let us adopt the military capabilities of our Armed Forces to our national needs

- These capabilities will then become ones we will be able to put at the service of our needs and international commitments. Let us be inspired, among other things, by the spirit of the Australian Defence Review in 2000.