

that talking is hugely preferable to fighting, but I continue to believe that the use of military force, when that is necessary, has a vital role to play in the conduct of world affairs, and that the ability to develop it and to wield it effectively is an integral part of nationhood. The Prime Minister said as much in his address to the Conference of Defence Associations Institute here in Ottawa last week.

I was born two years before World War II broke out and I grew up in the U.K. in the aftermath of the failure of appeasement to prevent a second world war in less than half a century, one which was only ended by the effective application of armed force. At the age of thirteen I was required to join the Cadet Force at my Edinburgh school in preparation for two years compulsory national service. Instead of being conscripted I came to Canada five years later and joined the Canadian Army, spending the next thirty-five years preparing to fight the forces of the Warsaw Pact in central Europe. Fortunately that never happened but there were instances when it seemed close – in 1956 in Hungary, in 1962 in Cuba, in 1968 in Czechoslovakia and in 1981 over the establishment of unions in Poland. I was aide-de-camp to Canada's Chief of the General Staff in 1962 and at one point in October that year, when missile-carrying Russian ships were heading towards Cuba, I had to tell my boss that I had just sent his driver home to pack his bag, as he was now on thirty minutes notice to move to the Government Emergency Centre at Carp. The bag got packed but fortunately it never got to Carp.

In 1990, when I was CDS and the Cold War was ending, I was invited by the Soviet Forces Chief of Staff, General Moiseyev, to visit the Soviet Union. A Colonel-General named Omelichev was assigned to accompany me around the military installations that I visited in Moscow, Ryazan, Severomorsk, Murmansk and Leningrad. During our travels we spent much time talking through interpreters, and we discovered that in 1965 when I was commanding a Canadian mechanized infantry company in the northern part of West Germany, he was commanding a Soviet mechanized infantry company in the northern part of East Germany. We both concluded it was a good thing that we were now meeting for the first time. I say that not to sound clever, but to note that I believe both Omelichev and I reflected in that instant how fortunate it was that jaw jaw had brought the Cold War to an end and not war itself.