



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA'S DEFENCE PRIORITIES

A Statement in the House of Commons on November 27, 1975, by the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable James Richardson.

Decisions of far-reaching importance for the future of the Canadian Armed Forces have been made by the Government, and I wish at this time to inform the House of the conclusions the Government has reached at this stage of the defence structure review.

The Government has confirmed the four priority roles of the Department of National Defence, which are: first of all, a commitment to the defence, security and sovereignty of Canada; secondly, a commitment to the defence of North America; thirdly, a commitment to collective security within the NATO alliance; and, fourthly, a commitment to our country's unique and important contribution to international peace-keeping.

The conclusions of the defence structure review confirm that Canada will continue to have a combined regular and reserve force of more than 100,000 personnel, made up of 78,000 regular personnel and 22,000 reserve personnel. This combined regular and reserve force of 100,000 will ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces will continue to be able to protect Canadian sovereignty, to contribute to national security, and to provide timely reaction to any civil emergency tasks to which only the forces can respond.

The Government recognizes that substantial modernization and replacement of major items of military equipment must be started immediately in order to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces maintain their capability to carry out effectively their four priority roles.

Other major decisions that I wish to announce are: First, Canada will continue to maintain in Europe a land force and an air force designed and equipped to contribute a strong combat capability to NATO's collective defence of the central region. Second, modern and effective main-battle tanks will be provided, either by "retrofit" or acquisition of new tanks, in order to ensure that our army contingent in Europe possesses the necessary up-to-date equipment to fulfil its assigned tasks beside our NATO partners. Negotiations for the acquisition of new tanks, or the complete modernization of our present tank force, are to be initiated immediately.

Third, to replace our *Argus* aircraft, the Government has decided to
