

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: THE CANADIAN FORCES AND THE FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT MARITIME ACTIVITY

A. AN OCEANS POLICY FOR CANADA

Throughout this report, the Committee has attempted to describe the current state of Canada's capability to ensure national sovereignty and to look to future needs.

The preoccupation of the Committee has been with how Canada's maritime sovereignty can be enhanced to meet current national and global challenges and those that are now appearing on the horizon. With those concerns in mind, a number of witnesses stressed the importance of developing a new policy framework that includes a comprehensive oceans strategy for Canada, as well as a wider, up-to-date security strategy.

In his presentation to the Committee, Rear-Admiral Crickard (ret.) stated that the Oceans Policy for Canada articulated in 1987 by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans adopted as a national policy "a strategy to seize development opportunities on Canada's ocean frontier," but neglected to mention how the activities of the Department of National Defence should be coordinated with other oceans-related programs.⁽⁵²⁾

The goals and action plan of Oceans Policy for Canada are a welcome first step in the formulation of an integrated and comprehensive oceans policy. However, the role of Canada's naval and maritime air forces as the ultimate guarantors of that sovereignty, and their many activities in support, ranging from fisheries surveillance to northern operations and search and rescue, received scant attention.⁽⁵³⁾

Throughout their testimony, representatives of the Naval Officers Associations of Canada also addressed the necessity for an integrated oceans policy involving the Armed Forces.

Committee members share the view that a clearly articulated and comprehensive policy, including assessment of the future military, economic and environmental threats to Canada in the maritime domain is essential. The Committee hopes that its recommendations on maritime issues provides some ideas and impetus for a wider review, as well as timely action in the specific areas underlined in its report.

(52) Proceedings, 13:7.

(53) *Ibid.*, 13:8.