

of Commons by the Minister of Defence on 5 June 1987. The Defence White Paper provides a new defence strategy for Canadian Forces over the next fifteen years.

Current Canadian Position

On 18 February 1987, the Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson, announced that \$200 million of the defence budget for 1987-88 would be deferred until 1988-89.¹ The defence budget for 1987-88 is therefore \$10.14 billion.²

The White Paper stated that there have been significant changes in the international environment since the publication of the last white paper (1971). These include changes in the Pacific area - possible conflicts between Asian countries, the economic rise of Japan - and the new strategic importance of the Arctic especially in view of the threat of new Soviet cruise missiles.³ Although deterrence has endured, the international arena remains dominated by the rivalry between East and West. Canada's security rests first and foremost on the promotion of a stable international environment and therefore continuation of Canada's commitment to central Europe is essential.⁴

The White Paper stated that after a review of Canadian defence policy, a "significant commitment-capability gap" was found to exist. This has come about as a result of a long-term trend of spending less on defence. The gap has reached such significant proportions that if current trends were allowed to continue Canadian Forces would face a situation of "rust-out" by the mid-1990s.

Three options to rectify the situation were outlined: increase funding

¹ Commons Debates, 18 Feb. 1987, p. 3576.

² DND, National Defence 1987-88 Estimates, Part III.

³ DND, Challenge and Commitment, 5 June 1987, p. 6.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 3, 5.