

*Statements by Ministers*

in both official languages, the Government's response to Petition Nos. 332-1981, 332-1982, 332-2006, 332-2036, 332-2117, 332-2386 to 332-2421 inclusive, 332-2448, 332-2495 and 332-2574.

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[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

#### WHITE PAPER—CHALLENGE AND COMMITMENT

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, three weeks from now we will celebrate Canada's 120th birthday. But in this spring of 1987 it is fitting for us to remember that 70 years ago Canadians of all regions and of all walks of life forged, at Vimy Ridge, a new sense of nationhood, that was the beginning of modern Canada.

We are not a militaristic people, but we are a nation with a proud and long military history. In two world wars and in Korea we built an honourable reputation for pulling more than our weight when called upon to defend our way of life, our national institutions and our democratic values.

It is perhaps difficult for some to accept that these values remain under threat today. But they are, and these threats are not uniquely ours. We cannot defend this vast country against possible enemies on our own. We must seek our security through collective measures with other nations who face the common threat.

[English]

It is 16 years since the last White Paper on Defence was tabled in this House of Commons. Since that time the world has changed in many significant ways which affect Canadian security profoundly.

In the Speech from the Throne opening the first session of this Parliament, the Government promised the Canadian people a thorough review of defence policy. I am here today to honour that commitment.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Beatty:** I present to this House a coherent, made in Canada, defence policy, Mr. Speaker, which, when implemented over the next 15 years, will provide for the continuing security of Canadians in a changing world and will equip the Canadian Forces with the capabilities they need to become and to remain effective into the 21st century.

The defence policy review identified two fundamental deficiencies in current defence policy. The first is the existence of a significant gap between the capabilities required to meet the military commitments accepted by successive Governments on behalf of the Canadian people and the capabilities possessed by the Canadian Forces. This gap is widening as ships, aircraft, vehicles and equipment become obsolete before they

can be replaced. If this trend were allowed to continue, the Canadian Forces would simply rust out.

The second deficiency in current defence policy is its failure to take into account the significant geopolitical and geostrategic changes affecting Canadian security since the last White Paper was tabled in 1971. These changes include Canada's emergence as a Pacific nation with increasingly important economic, cultural and strategic interests in the Pacific area; the growing strategic importance of the Arctic Ocean as an operating area for foreign submarines, raising both security and sovereignty concerns for Canada; the emergence of Soviet air-launched and submarine launched Cruise missiles, and Canada's vulnerability to attack by these weapon systems from our three ocean approaches; and finally, the requirement for sustainable supportable ground and air forces in Europe. This requirement will become even more pressing with any agreement to eliminate or significantly reduce intermediate nuclear forces in Europe where the Warsaw Pact has a preponderance of the conventional forces.

This White Paper, *Challenge and Commitment*, provides the Government's response to these deficiencies and lays out the future course of defence policy. The main thrusts are, first, that Canada will continue to base its security policy on three pillars: the maintenance of an adequate defence; the pursuit of equitable and verifiable arms control and disarmament measures; and participation in peace-keeping operations and negotiations to achieve peaceful settlements of international disputes; second, that Canada will remain a committed member of NATO—

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Beatty:** —and will continue to contribute land, sea and air forces to the integrated military structure of the North Atlantic Alliance; third, that within this framework we will remain an active partner in continental defence arrangements with the United States and contribute forces to the joint North American Aerospace Defence Command; and fourth, that to meet the changing alliance needs and national requirements, the force structure of the Canadian forces will be modified over time to meet the requirement for a well balanced three ocean Navy, including the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines and a second batch of Canadian patrol frigates; to consolidate in NATO's central front our major land and Air Force commitments in Europe; and to revitalize the reserve forces to make them capable of supporting and sustaining our military commitments both at home and abroad.

I should like to say a few words about each of these initiatives which, together with our contributions to North American air defence, lie at the core of new defence policy.

The first key element in our new defence strategy is the creation of a three ocean navy to protect our three ocean country. The deplorable state of the navy is well known. We have not a single minesweeper in the Canadian navy and the youngest ship in our fleet was being built at the time of the last White Paper in 1971. The oldest ships are more than 30 years