



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 66/9

CANADA'S NEW DEFENCE POLICY

Statement to the House of Commons on February 17, 1966,
by the Honourable Paul T. Hellyer, Minister of National
Defence.

It is almost two years since the White Paper on Defence was tabled in this House. During those two years, the Department of National Defence has been busily engaged in implementing the policies set out in the White Paper, including sweeping changes in its organization forecast at that time.

In introducing the 1964-65 estimates, I summarized my remarks by stating that, "notwithstanding the reduction in expenditures, we shall have achieved, within two years, a significant qualitative improvement and operational capability of our armed forces". That improvement is being achieved, as I shall outline for you in the course of my remarks today.

First, I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Associate and myself, to pay tribute to all those in the Department whose diligent work has contributed so much to the success of this immense project. As Honourable Members are aware, each new step has to be carefully studied and evaluated in relation to the whole, and in relation to the final objective. The fact that our progress toward a completely unified functional force is well in advance of what we might reasonably have hoped for reflects the spirit and enthusiasm with which the task has been undertaken.

I should also like to publicly thank my Associate Minister for his wonderful co-operation. He carries the bulk of the administrative load in the Department and performs his many tasks in a most efficient manner. Without his help, it would be impossible to cope with the extraordinarily heavy workload in the Department, particularly during this period of intense activity.

As Honourable Members are well aware, the probability of a major war arising directly between the NATO powers on the one hand and the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact on the other is remote, and would be disastrous for East and West alike. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the political problems of Central Europe are not yet resolved, and the Soviet military capability is not only being maintained but steadily enhanced. We continue to regard our membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and our military support to it as being important to our security. It is clear that instability in other parts of the world has resulted, and will continue to result, in