

*(e) Training.*

Every navy must possess means to ensure that its officers and NCOs experience, early in their careers, the pressures and stresses which come with command. All ranks must also be given the opportunity to acquire a degree of competence in seamanship which will enable them to contribute to rather than detract from the fighting efficiency of a first-line unit when they join it. The same is true for the Reserves. First-line operational units are simply not the place to acquire such experience and elementary levels of training. Such units should always have battle-readiness as their primary aim. Naval auxiliaries provide some potential in this regard. But the ideal are small, relatively inexpensive vessels which could be effectively employed on sovereignty patrols, search and rescue, and similar duties in peacetime, and which could serve in a combatant role if war broke out. The lift-aboard sonars, navigation equipment and basic stores<sup>7</sup> suggested by F.M. McKee, of the Naval Officer's Association of Canada, would be especially helpful in this regard. Minesweepers of the less sophisticated type could fulfil these roles, as could small, armed, fast patrol vessels.

Finally, it must be remembered that, in an arena as subject to change as defence, certainty about equipment is an unattainable goal. To seek it too assiduously means unconscionable delays, ungovernable cost increases and, ultimately, failure. There comes a time when a decision must be made and the consequences accepted. Ultimately the usefulness of a defence force depends upon its being staffed by professionals provided with a range of modern equipment, who, because of their professionalism, can improvise. At some point it becomes more important to give these people something credible to work with than to attempt to meet every imaginable circumstance. Who, prior to the event, could have conceived of the Falklands? A naval historian, Dr. Barry Hunt, has made the case well:

In these matters one does not even surmount the next horizon. The best that can be achieved . . . is to institute building and associated naval programs that provide for the continued existence of a professionally competent and well-motivated permanent naval establishment that can, when the time comes, adapt itself to new weapons and new circumstances as they arise.<sup>8</sup>

*(f) The need for a mixed fleet and a balanced force.*

In sum, drawing upon observations in this chapter and those preceding it, the opinion of the Sub-committee is that Canada should set itself the goal of building a maritime force equipped with surface ships on the model of the CPF; ASW helicopters; ocean-going conventional submarines; LRPAs; minchunters; minesweepers; fast patrol boats; attack aircraft; coastal patrol aircraft; and the necessary operational support ships and auxiliaries. This does not take into consideration the special requirements of the Arctic, which will be left until later in the discussion because the Arctic is such a special case.

Each weapons platform has its own set of strengths and weaknesses. Aircraft, for example, can reach a designated area much more rapidly than surface and sub-surface units; and they can also search a much broader area of the ocean in a

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<sup>7</sup> *Proceedings of the Senate Sub-committee on National Defence*, 15 June, 1982, p. 33:13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 23 February, 1982, p. 21:17.