

At the same time, we must remember that the forces shaping our future cannot be controlled by individual governments. While nations cherish their independence, we all share common concerns and are victims of common tragedies. The effects of pollution have an increasing transboundary character, as evidenced by the widespread concern over acid rain, marine pollution and the threat of global warming.

Increased interdependence is inevitable and genuine security can only be achieved through cooperation and military restraint. In the long run, our common security will depend more on factors such as sustainable development, a healthy environment and socio-economic justice than it will on the pursuit of military advantage.

B. The Military

The traditional justification for the maintenance of the Canadian Forces may not be sufficient in the context of the 1990s. The future duties of the Armed Forces may be incompatible with current equipment and tasking. However, in meeting new challenges, we must be careful not to let basic capabilities decline. Public scepticism over the utility of maintaining a given force structure may be due to the fact that much of the public is not aware of the varied day to day duties performed by the forces as part of their role in aid to the civil authority.

Canadian defence policy is currently managed in a political environment characterized not only by a declining concern with an external threat, but also by the belief that whatever remains of that threat, it can be met by others who no longer need a military contribution by Canada. If we are to prevent public indifference to military preparedness, the public will need to be able to see an ongoing clear connection between Canadian military policy and Canadian security. If this cannot be provided, then public support for adequate defence spending will continue to wither.

It is difficult to predict future requirements. Yet we must not lose sight of the need to maintain an effective capability. As argued by Major-General G.R. Cheriton (ret.) when appearing before the Committee:

Policymakers must also bear in mind that the precise future relevance of armed forces that must be sustained and modernized today, if they are to be available tomorrow, can never be predicted with confidence... they comprise a small insurance capability of fighting competence for eventualities that cannot be foreseen.⁽⁸⁾

Just as the public needs to understand and be better apprised of the various duties of the military, so too the military should not view a public request to partially shift its emphasis as denigrating its professionalism. There is no good reason why both non-military and military roles should not be appreciated by soldiers and civilians alike, provided the maintenance of a professional military force remains the first principle.

(8) Proceedings, 14:9-14:10.