

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



On behalf of the Government of Canada, I am pleased to introduce the defence section of Canada's International Policy Statement.

This document represents significant change. It is the first review of Canada's defence policy in more than 10 years and it defines a new policy that is firmly grounded in the realities of the post-Cold War, post-September 11th world. It is also informed by the rich operational experience of the Canadian Forces, both in Canada and in locations ranging from Afghanistan to the Balkans to Haiti.

The tragedy of September 11, 2001 proved to Canadians that we are vulnerable to the threat of terrorism and the spillover effects from failed and failing states. This policy, therefore, establishes the defence of Canada as our first priority. The Canadian Forces will be reorganized and retooled to tighten their focus on this primary mandate.

The effective defence of Canada and North America has always required working collaboratively with the United States. We will build on the successful bilateral defence arrangements currently in place, such as NORAD. And we will seek to develop new, innovative approaches to defence cooperation with the United States, to better meet the threats to both countries.

The Government recognizes that the Canadian Forces are a vital instrument of Canada's foreign policy, especially in today's unstable world. Our new defence policy will give the Canadian Forces the guidance they need to help Canada convey its distinct values and particular approach to conflict resolution around the world.

I look forward to the discussions this document will engender both in Parliament and across Canada. I believe they will assure the best way forward for the Canadian Forces, one of Canada's vital national institutions.

It is a privilege to be Minister of National Defence at this exciting time. The relevance and centrality of the Canadian Forces to the broad agenda of the Government are ascendant. We have vibrant, new military leadership with innovative ideas rooted in recent operational experience. We have some of the world's most dedicated, professional, skilful soldiers, sailors and air personnel. The Government has made a solid financial commitment to the Canadian Forces that is unparalleled in the past two decades. And now, with this new defence policy statement, we have the intellectual framework required to guide and shape the Canadian Forces to face the defence and security challenges of the 21st century.

16795831(6) / 16795832(1)

The Honourable Bill Graham
Minister of National Defence

Dept. of National Defence
Min. des Affaires militaires
AVR 27 2005
Return to Departmental Library
Retourner à la Bibliothèque du Ministère