

A contribution to:

Canada's Department of National Defence
Defence Update Consultations

Submitted by:

World Federalists of Canada

Ottawa
September 20, 2002

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Hon. John McCallum
Minister of National Defence
NDHQ,
101 Colonel By drive
Ottawa, Ont.
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Dear Minister McCallum,

I am pleased to provide responses to many of the questions posed as part of your department's Defence Consultations Update. These views are submitted on behalf of the World Federalists of Canada (WFC).

WFC is a national non-profit membership organization with 1,600 supporters across Canada. WFC promotes global governance that is democratically accountable and based on the rule of law. We support pragmatic improvements to international organizations and governance regimes. For example, since 1996 we have been the lead Canadian non-governmental agency in support of the International Criminal Court. We support a number of other projects aimed at strengthening the United Nations system and achieving a more just and sustainable world order.

While we welcome the opportunity to provide responses to questions posed through the online consultation process at the DND website, we also have some concerns regarding the overall procedure being employed to update Canadian Defence policy. The current process appears to differ markedly from that which led to the 1994 White Paper.

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We understand that the Defence Update includes additional meetings with parliamentarians, experts and stakeholders. We would welcome an opportunity to participate in such meetings in future, with you or the Department's officials. As you can see, we have considered views to bring to bear on many aspects of the ongoing update. The responses submitted here are brief, in order to conform to the limits imposed by the Defence Consultations Update guidelines.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute and look forward to participating more extensively in the near future.

Sincerely,

Fergus Watt
Executive Director

CC. Hon. Flora MacDonald, National President

Question 1

Since the end of the Cold War, the CF have been asked to sustain significant and simultaneous overseas commitments in multiple theatres around the world. From Europe to Asia, Africa to Latin America and here in Canada, the CF have deployed more than 70 times since 1989.

Do you think that they will be asked to do more, about the same or less over the next decade?

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The frequency of armed conflict has remained at a relatively constant level since 1945, with an average of approximately 30 such conflicts per year. Canadian polls infer the public favours the CF's participation, particularly in UN peace operations. Over the past decade, there have been 14-16 UN operations each year, with the CF initially at the forefront of contributors. Since 1996, there has been a steady decline and a drop to minimal participation, with contributions that rank in the low-to-mid thirties.

Recently, there has been temporal support for defence cooperation in American-led wars, albeit support that is likely to diminish in the future unless there is a strong humanitarian rationale. Should mid-to-high intensity war-fighting remain the CF priority, the frequency of deployments will decrease as political and public support, as well as the budget diminishes. The CF may provide elements that support such operations, but such participation is likely to be controversial, costly and viewed as token assistance, controlled by others.

Irrespective of how heavily Canada invests in such preparation and equipment or how interoperable and standardized the CF are with their principal allies, they will not be perceived as sufficient in any comparison with American Forces. A Government that pursues such a path will face constant criticism and pressure to do more. This is a trajectory that is unnecessary, unaffordable and unsound.

In short, Canadian political culture will remain one of the more powerful determinants of whether there are more or less deployments over the next decade. The evidence suggests Canadians will support active participation in missions authorized by the UN, even in demanding, robust peace operations. If Canadian defence priorities preclude such participation or limit it to the token level of 220 personnel now active in such operations, DND and the CF will risk losing support.

Question 2

Do you believe the Canadian Forces are able to respond during a crisis as quickly as they need to? Why or why not?

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We strongly support further efforts to improve Canadian capacity for rapid deployment to diverse UN and domestic operations.

In an earlier period, the CF were capable of rapid deployment to crisis at home and abroad. Over the past decade, they have been constrained in this respect by size, structure and equipment, as well as the high operational tempo from participation in numerous overseas missions. Rather than rapid deployment, routine delays have become the norm.

Rapid deployment poses considerable demands and cannot be conducted in the absence of any integral element. Achieving high readiness in the CF has been difficult as personnel with critical skills are often in constant demand elsewhere. A battalion cannot be promptly deployed when it has been skimmed to provide communication specialists, engineers and technicians to another CF formation.

As a result of the need to rotate the readiness status of the three Brigade Groups, the Government has not been able to earmark a specific CF commitment to the UN Standby Arrangements System or the Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade for UN operations (SHIRBRIG). Rather than being perceived as a vanguard, the CF are now viewed by others as a useful, although reluctant 'backstop' to peace operations, but not particularly quick at mounting, deploying or participating alongside partners from developing member states.

Without a fourth mechanized, (wheeled) brigade group, the CF will likely be stretched too wide and too thin to achieve high readiness or rapid deployment.

The structure of the three brigade groups of the CF remains problematic. Each is encumbered by heavy mechanized, tracked armour and artillery that is of diminishing relevance in contemporary operations. These systems cannot be moved into theatres abroad without foreign assistance. They also require an extensive logistics train -- far more support, maintenance, fuel and recovery vehicles. There are cost-effective, Canadian-made options that provide greater mobility, flexibility and protection (e.g. the LAV-3, the Coyote and the new proto-type LAV-5)

Despite Canadian Government initiatives to enhance the rapid deployment capabilities of the UN and other member states, insufficient attention or resources have been devoted to restructuring the CF for such operations. For example, without strategic

air lift and sea-lift, there are difficulties in moving personnel, equipment, vehicles and supplies. There are also difficulties in sustaining operations. Renting or requesting foreign assistance to transport the CF does not provide sufficient reliability for rapid deployment.

Moreover, without prior training for diverse peace operations, the CF will continue to require a longer period of mission-specific training. Both the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and the Peace Support Training Centre should be tasked to address the training requirements for rapid deployment to diverse operations.

Having encouraged others to participate in and prepare for rapid deployment, as well as protection operations, the Government is obliged to participate and prepare the CF accordingly. At this time, numerous NATO allies are restructuring their defence efforts to emphasize rapid deployment, as well as offensive long-range, force projection capabilities. While this has become a fashionable trend in the international defence establishment, there is little evidence to substantiate the need for long-range strike forces. There will soon be a surplus of expensive, offensive systems that are of limited applicability to the prevailing pattern of contemporary armed conflict. Regrettably, the demand in the latter is unlikely to diminish or relieve the pressure to respond with increasingly sophisticated efforts. Canada might be well positioned to develop a niche in the initial stages of complex, multidimensional peace operations.

Specializing in rapid deployment to diverse UN and domestic operations would be an appealing, cost-effective primary role. It could provide a 'win-win' solution that advanced an array of Canadian, continental and UN objectives. While addressing the wider human security agenda of protecting civilians, preventing armed conflict and peace operations, it also corresponds to national security requirements, NATO commitments and Canadian traditions.

It is also noteworthy that the current American administration has indicated they will not be providing military personnel for UN peace operations, and that they expect the role to be carried by allies such as Canada. As American Governments have frequently requested the prompt participation of the CF in UN operations, Canada could provide assistance in a distinctive, useful and popular role; one that complements our interests, values and foreign policy objectives. Moreover, such a specialization has the potential to mobilize a constituency of support at home and abroad.

Although the CF have existing expertise and recently-acquired resources, there will be a need for additional people within a fourth brigade group, further training, and strategic lift for prompt transport. Rather than search for relevance in the least likely, most demanding and expensive forms of modern war, the CF should be prepared for responding rapidly and effectively to diverse emergencies. There is a compelling sense of purpose in stopping genocide, protecting civilians and preventing the escalation of atrocities and armed conflict. The world desperately needs such services.

Question 3

The CF are comprised of approximately 60,000 Regular Force (full-time) members and about 21,500 Primary Reservists (part-time members).

Do you believe that the CF have enough personnel for operations at home and abroad? Should we try to maintain (or even increase) the number of CF personnel, even if this means decreasing funding for sophisticated new equipment?

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See response to question 2.

To alleviate the strain on an overstretched land force and to ensure a capacity for rapid deployment to diverse operations, the CF will need an additional brigade group of approximately 7,000 personnel. This will also entail acquiring new equipment and new expenses for the CF, (approximately \$1.4 billion start-up and recurring costs of approximately \$1 billion). Developing and equipping another brigade group and acquiring strategic air- and sea-lift for prompt transport will ensure Canadian military credibility and usefulness far more than an equivalent investment in sophisticated, high-tech weapons.

The Persian Gulf War, Kosovo and the War over Afghanistan demonstrated that even an enormous investment in precision-guided munitions could have little practical effect on an adversary, but major adverse consequences for innocent people, the environment and necessary infrastructure.

It makes sense to invest in Canadians who can protect civilians, who can help to prevent and manage armed conflict and who can contribute to the institutions dedicated to peace, security and development. In contrast, the primary challenges of the near future are unlikely to be adequately addressed through the acquisition of increasingly expensive and sophisticated weaponry.

Question 4

Do you believe that the CF have the necessary equipment to carry out operations at home and abroad? Is there any type of equipment that the CF will require in the future that they do not currently have?

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The equipment of the CF has improved markedly over the past decade. Despite their high expense, the navy's frigates are first rate. Similarly, the CF-18 are among the best aircraft currently available for its two designated tasks. These ships and planes have proven that they are an asset to, and interoperable with, the most sophisticated military in the world.

Despite the media hype, the Sea King Helicopters are still a sound platform; one recently refurbished with new engines, transmissions and electronics. When replaced, the emphasis should be accorded to a multi-purpose helicopter rather than one designed primarily for anti-submarine warfare. The one hundred Griffon utility helicopters were a sound investment for the Army.

In most respects, the Land Forces' vehicle fleets are excellent. While the heavy and medium weight all-terrain trucks are superior, there is a case to be made for either replacing or supplementing the Iltis jeep with a heavier four-wheel utility vehicle similar to the Hummer. The wheeled armoured personnel carriers, including the 240 Bisons and 650 LAV 3s are a vast improvement, as are the 200 Coyote reconnaissance vehicles. Each has added protection, increased mobility and unique assets in areas such as surveillance, night vision, speed and firepower.

Two related, major capital acquisition programs may be necessary to ensure a capacity for rapid deployment. There is a sound case for acquiring strategic air-lift and/or sea-lift as a means to move emergency assistance, personnel, vehicles and equipment. The UN has asked for help in this respect as only a few countries can provide such transport. This shortage has already led to frequent and very costly delays. The cost of acquiring four Globemaster III planes could exceed \$2 billion. It is assumed that there would be a similar cost in developing four strategic, multi-role, aid, replenishment and transport ships. While it might be appropriate to purchase the planes outright and off-the shelf from Boeing, there would inevitably be competition from Canadian industries in St John and Quebec for the contracts to develop new ships.

Question 5

Should the CF focus more, less or about the same on high-tech capabilities (such as precision-guided weapons and advanced information systems)? If more, what high tech capabilities should they focus on? If less, what high tech capabilities should be eliminated?

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Technological advances in weaponry are inevitable, particularly when American defence spending increases by nearly one hundred billion dollars. There will be commensurate pressure arising from the Pentagon, DND and the corporate sector to buy into the Revolution in Military Affairs, to acquire new high tech capabilities, and to remain interoperable with American Forces.

Yet the CF have remained remarkably interoperable with their principal allies, including the U.S., despite what pundits view as significant technological gaps. Moreover, in the vast majority of contemporary armed conflict, advanced technology has seldom been the principal determinant of success.

There are substantive costs associated with increasing the emphasis on high-tech capabilities. Whereas the CF may acquire several systems useful in high-intensity warfare, they are likely to have fewer resources, personnel and systems for the more likely, less technologically dependent roles.

The so-called Revolution in Military Affairs is being led by Canada's closest ally; the country that now accounts for half of global military expenditure or approximately eight times the next highest defence budget. It should be no surprise that the American Ambassador to Canada conceded that his principal assignment was to increase Canadian defence spending. They will have to market and sell the expensive high-tech systems somewhere. Given extensive bilateral defence integration, it is understood that Canada's defence establishment will champion the need.

Question 6

With a presence in every province and territory, Defence is responsible for the largest amount of infrastructure (such as buildings, properties and roads) in the federal government. Should Defence increase, maintain the same level or decrease the amount of infrastructure for which it is currently responsible?

No response from World Federalists of Canada.

Question 7

The ability to work together on operations with Canada's closest allies has been a priority for the CF in recent years. Do you believe that Canada should enhance, maintain the same level, or decrease this ability to work with our closest allies?

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The emphasis on defence cooperation and interoperability with Canada's closest allies reflects the CF's preference for 'big-league' professional soldiering roles and the envy stemming from working closely with those who have a surplus of everything. While also reflecting political expediency, it will slowly shift the onus for defence planning to Washington, limiting Canadian political oversight and control of the defence effort.

Already, it has created a considerable constituency of military, defence industrial, political, corporate, media and academic lobbyists, here and in the U.S. This complex will continue to demand higher defence spending, enhanced interoperability, further defence integration, as well as participation in dubious developments such as the Revolution in Military Affairs and Ballistic Missile Defence, irrespective of the consequences for other Canadian policy priorities and social programs.

As a result, Canada is also losing political and diplomatic influence with other middle and small powers, many who formerly looked to Ottawa for inspiring leadership on the issues that matter. The implications for Canadian foreign policy are disturbing.

Whereas multilateral cooperation, particularly through institutions such as the United Nations has been a cornerstone of our engagement with the wider world, the recent priority placed on cooperation with our closest ally has done little to expand our circle of friends or provide the Government with any discernible influence over the most powerful in Washington.

Fewer and fewer countries will see Canada as an impartial, helpful fixer or useful mediator. As bilateral defence cooperation has increased, Canada's contributions to global institutions and multilateral UN peace operations has decreased. Whereas Canadians acquired a hard-earned reputation for being at the forefront of UN peacekeeping, the recent contribution of approximately 200 CF personnel ranks us 30th. This is a lamentable contribution which leaves others to view Canada as unwilling to share in policing a disorderly and violent world, despite the benefits and profits derived from all regions of the world.

Constructive multilateralism, participation with diverse multinational partners, respect for a rule-based system and active engagement in global institutions are now key to avoiding a more divided and dangerous world. These are security imperatives.

Question 8

In response to the 1998 Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, Defence has made substantial improvements in such areas as pay and benefits, parental leave and cost of living arrangements for personnel who are required to move. Should the CF do more, about the same or less regarding the quality of life of their members and that of their families? If more, is there anything the CF could stop doing – or do less of – to fund new quality of life initiatives?

No response to this question from World Federalists of Canada.

Question 9

The Reserves provide an important link between the CF and local communities and a component of the Total Force that integrates full and part-time military personnel. As part of this concept, Regulars provide the Government with a ready-response capability, while the Reserves augment and help sustain Regular units and in some cases, perform their own unique tasks, such as in the crewing of Maritime Coastal Defence vessels.

In recent years, the Reserves have played a significant role both at home and on overseas operations. Is this approach to the reserves appropriate? Why or why not?

No response to this question from World Federalists of Canada.

Question 10

Defence spending for 2002-2003 currently stands at \$11.8 billion. Should the defence budget increase, stay the same or decrease? Should additional funding for defence be one of the Government's top priorities?

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Spending levels for Canada's defence commitments necessarily flows from political decisions regarding defence priorities and policy.

In general, we would support the Canadian Forces being provided a budget sufficient to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

A modest increase in defence would be justified if the CF restructured to emphasize support for the wider human security agenda, particularly UN peace operations, the prevention of armed conflict, the protection of civilians and rapid deployment to diverse emergencies at home and abroad.

On the other hand, a policy framework that places undue emphasis on defence cooperation with Canada's closest ally and the attendant neglect of UN operations, as well as multinational partnerships, would leave many Canadians inclined to support cuts to the defence budget.

The priority which the government and the public allocate to the defence budget will continue to be determined by the extent to which our defence priorities are seen as a compelling contribution to peace and security, as well as support for the global institutions responsible for preventing and managing conflict. With only 220 CF personnel deployed to UN peace operations, DND is not well positioned to claim that it is active in responding to wider Canadian interests and values.

Given the absence of a direct military threat, additional funding for defence is unlikely to become one of this Government's top priorities.