

## *Canada's Army – Post Peacekeeping*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: General MacKenzie's remarks have been transcribed from his oral presentation. Some editorial changes have been made in order that the text conforms to JMSS standards of readability.

Hello

I really like getting back to Calgary. It is like a second home for me. I was commissioned in 1960 and I arrived at the train station in downtown Calgary and caught the bus. Those of you who are old enough to remember will remember, will remember that that the bus didn't come as far as Currie barracks. It turned around at the loop. It dropped me off there didn't know where I was and I walked another 300 yards in those days to the front entrance to the camp. I came back in 1971 as a company commander with the Patricia's this time and there were quite a few avenues beyond Currie barracks and then the real shock was coming back in 1977 as the commander of PPCLI and you could drive half the way to the mountains and you were still in Calgary. Flying in this morning I couldn't believe it, I come here to the city probably three or four times a year and it's like Phoenix – it just keeps expanding.

I am delighted to be here and am honoured to be doing the lecture series. I did some research into Colonel Ellis, naturally, like anyone does who is honoured to speak

in his name. He was decorated in WWII, a soldier, a successful business man and a successful politician. Does that sound familiar to anybody? I immediately thought of one of my early mentors General Stan Waters who became Canada's first and only elected Senator and tragically never took his seat as he succumbed to cancer before he had the opportunity.

It is a real pleasure to be here. And David, thank you very much for the invitation. I am delighted to be here. Congratulations to you, David and your Centre, because education in this country for the public is somewhat lacking and it's really nice to have some sane commentary as opposed to some of the wackos on the left that they get on CBC and other networks. I went through some of the previous presentations that have been given at this series and I see that not that long ago you had my nemesis here, Carol Off, who used that occasion to continue the vilification of me, having based her *Lion, the Fox and the Eagle* book on me. I am the 'scully' fox having taken her version from one side in a three sided civil war. I'm told she did that to raise controversy for sales but considering the sales for her book, it wasn't terribly successful.

There could be a problem for me tonight. I haven't had a big meal in 12 hours. You might wonder what that has to do with making a presentation. You remember Pavlov's dog – Pavlov fed it two times a days for two weeks and every time he fed the dog he would ring a bell and two weeks later he rang the bell, didn't feed the dog but the dog drooled anyways. So the conditioned reflex definition was invented. My first 29 nights back from Sarajevo in 1992 I was asked to speak for my dinner and on 20 of those days I spoke for my lunch. On the 30<sup>th</sup> night, unfortunately I made the mistake of taking my wife to McDonalds on Young Street in Toronto and half way through a Big Mac stood up and made an unsolicited presentation on Sarajevo. I made that up to lighten up an audience in Toronto, you frequently have to do that and wouldn't you know that there was a reporter there from the *Globe and Mail* who reported it as fact. So I'm frequently introduced as the retarded Major General that goes around to McDonalds

It is difficult to introduce humour into any presentation in politically correct Canada these days without offending some religious, ethnic, territorial, chauvinistic or feminist special interest group. Some one's come to our rescue. Dr. Jim Downy, outgoing president of Waterloo University, Canada's leading oxymoron, a

Newfoundlander with a Ph.D. in English. Don't laugh too hard, my mother is from Newfoundland. Dr. Downy has a theory that no nation can tell jokes without mentioning the nation's name. If they are instantly recognizable as that nation without mentioning that nation's name they are brand name jokes.

For example, there is a large island off the east coast of Canada. My mother was born there. It joined confederation in 1949. Last year they sent a competitor to the Indy 500, during the race he stopped three times, once for fuel and twice to ask directions. You can apply that to any ethnic group in Canada you want. This is not a brand name joke.

Brand name jokes are more sophisticated. For example the government ran a competition to insert the word elephant in the title of a book. Returns came back in two weeks later. From France came Love life of the Elephant. From the US came, Raising Elephants for Profit, from Germany came "Building Bigger and Better Elephants". The overwhelming Canadian response was "The Elephant: A Federal or Provincial Responsibility". Or if you like that sort of thing, a play of the parable of the good Samaritan. "And low he left Calgary and proceeded towards Bragg creek and on the way thieves fell upon him and beat him and left him bleeding in the ditch. Two social workers came upon him and said my god we have to help the people that beat up this man." If that's not Canada, nothing is.

Before I get to the future and the CF, I want to talk a little bit about the history. This is a little intimidating when we have one of Canada's most eminent historians in the audience and mine is going to be somewhat superficial and seen through the eyes of a soldier.

I guess probably, I better start with the myth, the big myth, the number one Canadian myth, that we are a peacekeeping nation. I know why they do it, I am talking about governments but it still irritates me. At the height of our peacekeeping contributions and do not get me wrong. We do it really well. We have outstanding soldiers, sailors, airwomen airmen, outstanding. We don't have any colonial background; we don't have any territorial ambitions. God knows we don't want any more territory. We can't look after what we have. But, nevertheless, we are good at it but we're not the best in the world and on any day in the week maybe we are and then

maybe we are number three. We are amongst the best, no doubt about it, but at the height of our peacekeeping reputation, in the 1970s and 1980s when we have maybe 2000 troops outside of the country. We had over 10,000 heavily mechanized troops on the central front of Europe, navy at sea, world-wide air forces dominating over Canadian airspace and participating European airspace armed with nuclear weapons. The honest john missile system next door to us in Fort McLeod the queen's own in the early 1960s and the Cf104s were available to deliver tactical nuclear weapons into the SU. That was our number one foreign policy priority, not peacekeeping. But why did successive governments of both political stripes push the peacekeeping thing? It's cheap. It costs only blue berets and pistols. It was a great way to chop defence budgets and get away with it with the public.

I read as recently as yesterday that we are peacekeeping in Afghanistan. I read every other day that we should return to our historical role as world's peacekeepers. We didn't abandon peacekeeping, peacekeeping abandoned us. If you are going to go somewhere to keep the peace these days, and I'm often criticized for this comment, you have to be strong enough to say, "Look, Keep the peace or I will kill you." You have to be in a position to do that so that women and children and elderly are not slaughtered in refugee camps or displaced persons camps or whatever in UN safe havens. That's what you have to be strong enough to do but yet this myth is just perpetuated day by day which is very very frustrating.

When I did a documentary on the United Nations and its problems, in 1993, I found the original propaganda film that was put out by the UN that was made in order to sell it to the American audience and I mean propaganda in its purest form. It was done to convince the American population that the UN and the permanent five Security Council were a good idea. It is black and white, it has this art deco headquarters on a hill and it talked about how the permanent five countries, the US, the UK, SU, France and China, their chiefs of defence, with all of their available soldiers were available to respond. It talks about an operational centre there (they still don't have one yet but there is a centre in the movie) and there is a crisis over the horizon you can see the things exploding in the air

And this force of 500000 troops, 2000 ships, 3500 aircraft responds and the nuclear weapon is launched by the UN. They are back in two weeks having sorted the

problem out. That's how the world is going to be looked after because the permanent five wouldn't fight each other but they would put down any problems worldwide. Five star generals from those five nations (the permanent five) were to get together every week to make sure that all of their resources were available to the UN and on good levels of readiness. However, these general haven't ever met since 1945. The five countries meet weekly in New York at the full colonel level with one agenda item: What time are we going to meet next week?

This whole 'wonderful' idea collapsed with the beginning of the cold war and the iron curtain coming down. Then 1956 rolls along not that long thereafter, some 9-10 years and President Nasser says to himself, "You know that bloody canal runs through my country. I think I should be running it, not the Brits and the French. I am going to nationalize it." When he nationalizes it, it looked like [the price of] gas was going to go 4.5 cents a litre and destroy the international economy.

So the Brits and French parachute in and the Israelis arrive overland to take it back for the good guys – us. When that happened, there was a Lot of tension between Russia and America, and when there is tension between Russia and America, we Canadians have to remember that our high school teacher lied to us - the shortest distance between two points on the face of the earth is not a straight line, it is a curve and it [the line between the Soviet Union and the United States] normally goes over Canada. We are not the boy scouts of the world. It is in our national self interest to make sure that there is less tension between Russian and America on a continuing basis.

So Lester B. Pearson, a pretty good hockey player in his day, at that stage, he was foreign minister. If you watch a hockey game very closely, a lot of fighting breaks out. It is funny how it breaks out close to the referee. It's the macho thing [fighting] to do but make sure there's somebody around to stop it as quickly as possible. So Pearson said, we have a few thousand troops over here, maybe 10000 tanks artillery and aircraft and an equal number over here on this side of the canal. I know, we'll put some Canadians with pistols on their hips in between and give them the excuse to stop. I wasn't in the regiment yet but the Queen's Own were selected. One of the three Pearson principles is that you have to be invited in by all sides on the conflict, another one is impartiality and the other one is light arms for self defence only.

Naser said “Only Queen’s only Rifles of Canada? That sounds a bit British to me. No, I don’t accept them” so there ended up being a lot of Scandinavians. But the concept works. When nations go to war in the vast majority of cases, the first thing they are trying to do is find an excuse to stop. Pearson gave them the excuse to stop. He did not invent peacekeeping. There were all kinds of ideas floating around about impartial forces going between belligerent countries. What he did that earned him the Nobel prize, the reason he deserved it, was he actually stick handled the decision through the UN, and boy if you don’t think that’s an achievement, you haven’t been paying attention to the genocide in Darfur about which the UN can do nothing. The fact that he took the idea, allegedly a Brit brought it up in an elevator in the UN during a discussion, and actually turned it into a policy and got it through the UN was absolutely brilliant. That concept worked 13 times in spite of the flaw on the very first deployment. I was part of UNEF II for two year tour in 1962, not the force [UNEF I] in 1956. I Joined UNEF for a two year tour in 1962 and we weren’t allowed to go into Israel because Israel refused to recognize UNEF 1. As a result, all of our bases were on the Egyptian side in Rafah, just outside the Gaza Strip. We would get our pictures taken with one foot in Israel and then come back. It was so bloody silly. In fact, when we drove to Lebanon through Egypt, we would be customs sealed in our vehicle with a little lead seal. What they failed to notice in the fine print in the agreement, which those of us who were single at the time and living on a base with 1400 guys and 13 Swedish nurses who were our grandmothers because they were 35, the fine print said you could break the seal only if you break down, so we would get outside of Tel Aviv, open the door, break the seal and take a wheel off the jeep, lean It up against the jeep. Then we’d go into Tel Aviv for a night on the town. It was great, except the very first time that we did that, we came back to the jeep and someone had stolen the wheel. But it didn’t matter because there were 13 other Canadian vehicles broken down in the same spot. That’s how silly it was. But this system worked 13 times and some of those missions are still going on. Even in Kashmir, for example.

The principle of trying to provide a macho excuse for nations who go to war to stop proved to be pretty valid and pretty effective. Now, come the end of the cold war, the first dramatic thing that happened was Gulf War 1. Gulf War 1 ended with President Bush senior saying [that a] new world order [now existed] and this coalition that we put together worked so efficiently and, by the way, we had the 5<sup>th</sup> largest contribution to that particular war. But [we must be] careful about bragging about it

because we created caveats (we are pretty hard in some of the countries, rightfully so fighting in Afghanistan or not fighting as the case may be). In the Gulf War our navy wasn't allowed to go to the northern part of the gulf. It was more dangerous up there. This had nothing to do with the navy. It was a political decision. And our air force CF18s weren't allowed to fly over Iraq until the Brits and the Americans had removed the anti-air defence. This was nothing to do with the air force. [Once again, these were] political decisions. [They were] scared to death of casualties in Ottawa, inside the Ottawa city limits, and the political process.

Now after that, Michael Ignatieff probably explains it better than anyone, in his book *Blood and Belonging*. During the cold war you were in one of two camps, you could be some indistinct out of the way country in the middle of nowhere and if you had a port or an airfield or some minerals both the Soviet Union and NATO and the West, the world of the West, were interested in you and they were prepared to buy you and pay you off and when they did that it kept all that internal strife under control - religious, ethnic, historical, even tribal. All those tensions were kept under control. As soon as the cold war ended, there was only one guy in town. By the way, America woke up one morning as the sole remaining superpower. It is sort of like a dog chasing a school bus. It's really fun while he's chasing it but when he catches it, he has to do something with it. And those that think that America's only desire to become the only super power in the world, baloney. All of a sudden they had no choice, by default they were the only superpower. And all of these tensions started to cause a lot of internal conflict and the litmus test which failed miserably was the former Yugoslavia. I'm not going to linger on it for a long period of time but I have to get to a point because now the slope becomes slippery for the UN.

And the reason is that Cy Vance went over in 1991 to broker a cold war style peacekeeping solution to what was happening with the declaration of independence by Slovenia and Croatia contrary to the constitution of the former Yugoslavia. He decided that he would send 14000 troops, of which 2000 were Canadians to protect the Serbian enclaves in Croatia because, when Croatia declared its independence, there were a lot of Serbs there and a significant amount of fighting broke out. A lot of people were being killed.

So cold war practices meant that there are these places where [the UN is] going to put the UN [forces] to separate Croats and the Serbs. Of those of us that went to New York, 6 Generals, I was the only that had been on UN duty before. You all know we defend democracies in the military but don't practice it. But it is different in the UN and I was elected spokesman. All the locations for our troops were turned down for political reasons, they had to be adjusted. And in fact, we went over and Don Ethel was already there because the European community couldn't have a military force without a Canadian expert. No matter where we go, they want Canadians. So Don was over there as the Chief of Staff, trying to show them what to do.

And all of a sudden the UN comes in late to the game. We were ordered to put our headquarters in Sarajevo, which was probably one of five dumbest decisions made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the UN. We told them that. As the spokesman, I said, "Look put us in Gras, Geneva, Zagreb, Belgrade but don't put us in Sarajevo, that's still part of the former Yugoslavia. If we put our UN flag up, it is going to be a lightning rod for every problem that the Bosnians have." [We were told] "Shut up sit down and go to Sarajevo". So we arrived [in Sarajevo] on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1992. Immediately, there were indications that Bosnia was going receive independence on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April so we phoned home (you are not allowed to do that in the UN) to our governments to tell them "Don't recognize Bosnia, it's going to be war". (Only 5 of us out of 35 nations had a satellite phone.) We were ignored so we did what soldiers do really well. We started a pool. Put in ten bucks and guess when the war starts. One of my Majors won 1200 bucks US for picking 2:30 p.m. on the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup> of April when snipers opened up at the Holiday Inn at the crowd in front of the Presidency. I had 2:32 p.m., others had 2:31, 2:28. It didn't take 20 years in the diplomatic corps or a PhD in Political Science to see it coming.

We're now in a new country with no mandate and ultimately when we started to take casualties we were ordered to withdraw and go to Belgrade and we did that and when we arrived in Belgrade we were pissed off. We had told the UN not to send us to Sarajevo so General Satish Nambiar, my boss and the finest general I've ever worked with and for, the number one rated 3 star general out of 96 in the Indian army, Cedric Thornberry, political advisor, and General Philippe Morillon [two star general from the French Foreign Legion], who, you might remember, replaced me, all said we might as well go back to Sarajevo. I said, "Why don't I go see President Milosevic with



Christiane Amanpour and tell him, "Look, nasty things going on down there even on your TV. Why don't you get Karadzic on the phone and tell him to give us the airport and we'll go down there and bring in food and medicine and you'll look like a good guy.'" The amazing thing was that phone connections were good. The agreement was made. We got 15 volunteers, of which 6 were from the same country – Argentina. Every other officer said "No, they are not going to pay me more. I will stay here in Belgrade". And we went down and borrowed the Canadian battalion for 30 days. It's important because the myth is that because I was Canadian, we took the Canadian battalion. [It] had nothing to do with that. The Canadians had 'cheated' more than any other battalion in the mission area because [although] they were ordered to bring 13 armoured personnel carriers (apcs), they brought 83. The French brought 83 apcs also but they had wheels and they called them armoured trucks. Our guys got caught and they were there before anyone else. Do you know why?

They came from Germany; the 1st continent came to me in 6 hours. Every armoured personnel carrier had a 50 calibre cannon and anyone who has ever operated it on that piddle mount know you can't hit a thing. But none of the enemy knew that, and [there is the sound it] makes. Next to the Huey helicopter, the thump, thump, thump of the 50 calibre going off is one of the most recognized sounds even to this day on the battle field. So as they are roaring down Sniper Alley<sup>1</sup> and a sniper opens up from a high rise, they turn, hit the high rise, and that's all that really counts when you're peacekeeping.

Why do I take us to this point - because this is the slippery slope. How bizarre is this? This is like during the seize of Stalingrad, me flying in and going up to the rear of the German commander's vehicle, tapping on the rear door and it comes down, saying "Sir , I am General MacKenzie from the UN. Now, I can see you are doing a great job killing a lot of people and there are a lot of Russians but I was sort of wondering if you would mind if I took in 300 tonnes of food and medicine every day to give them a hand." And he says yeah, go ahead – NOT. But that's what we were about to do, totally ignoring the conflict, totally ignoring the root causes of the conflict, totally

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<sup>1</sup> Informal name for name for the main boulevard in Sarajevo which during the Bosnian War was lined with snipers' posts, and became infamous as a dangerous place for civilians to traverse. The boulevard itself has many high-rise buildings giving sniper shooters extensive fields of fire.

unable to protect anybody although some idiot had given us the title *The UN Protection Force* because that applied up in Croatia but not down in Sarajevo.

And that flaw continued into Somalia, a grossly misunderstood mission because the initial deployment into Somalia was a Pakistani battalion that wasn't allowed out of its barracks by the warlords. That's when the US quite rightly high-jacked the decision making process and organized a chapter 7 multinational force, including Canadians, the most successful intervention in the history of the UN while the Americans were running the show. [The Americans] arrived [in force] on the beaches of Mogadishu and, you remember, the media was there first with their lights and the people laughed. Don't laugh! Going to a knife fight? Take a gun. The warlords disappeared because the Americans arrived with more than was needed. The UN always arrived with less than was needed.

Now I'm not a journalist, I'm a pseudo journalist and I've been to Belet Uen three times. I've been mobbed the last two times because that's after the Airbourne Regiment left. [They were] begging me to have the Airbourne Regiment sent back. [The people] thought I had some authority. Some authority! I was a civilian reporting for CTV. And if the Somalia inquiry would have reached the last stage then General Zinni and General Johnson, were to appear at the commission, the Somali enquiry, [they would] have stated that the best unit in the entire 36,000 person force was the Canadian Airbourne Regiment. Every time a [new] national commander reported in to General Zinni's headquarters, they were sent to Belet Uen to get an idea on how to run the region properly. One despicable act and another couple of questionable acts of torture and murder in 15 years [and the regiment] was portrayed as some band of white racists running around the horn of Africa but the people in Belet Uen did not feel this way. Most of you [know that, in the current book, I talk about a trip I took with] Tom Clark over to Belet Uen – affectionately known as the Lewis and Clark expedition. We found the father of Shidane Arone, the murdered teenager, and with about 100 people around us, we interviewed him and we asked “What do you want from the Canadian people?” Mr. Arone said something and there was a great murmuring in the crowd. Then somebody else spoke to him – “What do you want the Canadian government to give you. He told us and it was interpreted as 50 camels. And that, in fact, was about the amount of money the Canadian government paid to the family. When we came back, we got a young Somalia Canadian to listen to the tape and when we'd asked the father

what he wanted from the Canadian government the first response was five camels but the crowd figured that wasn't enough so they upped the ante to 50 camels so he ended up getting the value of 50 camels.

In Rwanda, the UN really [had] a problem because they [didn't] like what happened in Somalia because, as you recall, the Americans left because President Clinton said he would pull them out. But they were convinced to leave 2000 soldiers under the command of a good friend of mine from the US Army War College, Tom Montgomery, as a reserve for the Three Star Turkish UN Commander. He heard I was in town for the change of command and the Turkish commander takes me into his office and says "What in God's name is the UN doing to me? I have no combat power at all, I have no logistics, I have 2000 American soldiers but I'm not allowed to deploy them. I can only ask my deputy commander if I can deploy them, the deputy commander being an American Two Star general." That's when *Blackhawk Down* happened, not during the American command which is another myth. It is the UN command that was incapable of taking the mission over from the American leadership.

The last chapter in a really miserable sequence of failures was Srebrenica. I appeared in front of the US Congress where I was asked by a well known senator, Sam Nunn, how many soldiers [it would take] to defend the safe havens that have been declared in Bosnia. I replied, "135000 or 140000." He asked, why so many? Like the stones in a quiet brook, the fact is that you have to go out to artillery range in Srebrenica, then they [the enemy] move back then you have to go out to artillery range again so you have to pretty much pacify the whole country. The new UN commander, Belgian General Francis Briquemont said "I've heard General McKenzie's interview and I agree with him but I will try to it with 65000." The secretary-general of the day, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, went to the Security Council and recommended 27,500 additional troops. The Security Council approved a force of 12,000 and, six months later, fewer than 2,000 additional soldiers had been added to UNPROFOR for the safe-haven tasks.

The UN, in a despicable act, went back to the [safe-haven] resolution and changed the wording from 'the UN would defend the safe havens' to 'by its presence the UN will deter attacks on the safe havens'. One guy and a pistol would qualify.

Canadians went in first, replaced by the Dutch. By this time, there were inadequate resources to do what they supposed to do in Srebrenica. The Bosnian government infiltrated fighters. They went out of Srebrenica and started raping and murdering their way through local Serb villages. The Serb commander who was a bully, Radco Miladvic, said "Enough of this" and went in and created a massacre. Probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2000 men and boys were slaughtered – the initial figure was 8000 but an awful lot showed up and voted in the next election. Nevertheless, it was a war crime, it was a massacre. I don't consider it a genocide which is controversial because if you are committing genocide, you don't put all the women and children on buses and send them off to a safe have on their side of the border which is what the Serbs did. You kill the women first when you're committing genocide because you are trying to remove a section of that particular culture. So that whole slippery slope in Sarajevo, I'm afraid, didn't do a lot of favours for the 1990s when the UN just couldn't cope.

Now, if this is going to be a sign of things to come - radical Islam, civil wars as opposed to big armies fighting each other, what should we be doing with our best little military in the world? During the cold war, we were pretty static in the army. We just drove around Germany, had a good time, [held] all kinds of great exercises, but we didn't have big strategic moves to make. We knew trains. That's how the battle group got to me so quickly in Sarajevo. We knew how to board trains and tie down tanks and apcs in Germany. We were good at train work. But trains don't get you across the Atlantic or Pacific or Asia or whatever. So we were pretty static in the military. If you were late arriving on a UN mission, it didn't matter. Not many people were being killed, if any, in a place like Cyprus for example. So if you showed up a couple of weeks late, no big deal. We showed up about three weeks late in UNEF II in Cairo and it was no big deal. The Poles were there doing the work before we got there.

The fact is that strategic lift was not that important but in 1965, showing my age, as the only lieutenant on a brand new course called Staff School One at Avenue Road and Eglinton in Toronto. I was taking a Platoon through opc with someone some of you will know, Ike Kennedy. [He] had the other platoon. They wouldn't let me off to take the company commanders course so that conciliation prize was staff school in Toronto. I shouldn't complain, I met my wife there. The biggest part of your final mark was an essay. I was egotistical enough at 25 years of age to write an article that of all the

countries in the world that should have an amphibious expeditionary capability, it should be Canada and, yet, we were parking the HMCS Bonaventure and the Magnificent. By the way, the Maggie is what allowed us to be one of the first to show up in the Suez crisis. They were strategic lift and we were selling them for razor blades or whatever. I thought this [essay was] pretty good stuff. Somebody is going to pay attention to this. However, in those days, essays written at staff colleges, now no longer the case and this is good news, were just parked and filed somewhere. About 1993, after I had come back from Sarajevo, Commander Ralph Fisher, now retired on the west coast, called me and we talked about this amphibious capability. He had served on both aircraft carriers and thought it was a good idea. We mulled it over for the next few years and then, [in] the late 1990s, I am in Halifax (a great place to raise an issue of amphibious capability), and I go on a rant, at a seminar, about amphibious capability. It stimulated the interest of a whole bunch of people. Ralph Fisher, Adm Harry Porter and I put together a thing called *Sea Horse*. *Sea Horse*, endorsed by 19 admirals and generals retired (can you imagine 19 of our people ever agreeing on anything?) [called for] an assault ship on each coast [which] would have 1000-1100 soldiers, helicopters, vehicles, and medical facility and would be available for rapid deployment.

It would provide a number of advantages. The first one is that it would allow the politicians to make reasonable decisions. Right now, the politicians have to rush through their decisions to deploy any force from Canada. Why? Because when they say to the army, go somewhere, the army says "Well, we have to contract the cheapest ship and it's in the Indian ocean right now so it will take about a month and half to get to us and then we got to get have to get to the other coast and we have to load and deploy so, yes sir, we will be there in about three and half months". So, the politicians rush through their decision making process because they know it is going to take us so long. Afghanistan, 9/11, JTF 2 got some guys over there almost immediately but the fact is that 9/11 was 2001. 3 PPCLI arrived on the ground in March 2002, that's how long it took us to get there. Charter some boats, Ukrainian aircraft, yes we would to rent some, sorry they are all booked, and so very very slow movement. In addition, you don't want to have to land anywhere. You remember bungle in the jungle when Prime Minister Chrétien decided we were going to intervene in Zaire because he saw some really nasty pictures on TV on a Sunday afternoon at his cottage and he said, "My God, we have to do something." It had been going on for months but nevertheless he

phoned his nephew the ambassador in Washington, and said, "We have to take the lead on this." They couldn't even get to Zaire because they landed in a neighbouring country, at the juxtaposition of the French and British colonial empires of the old days, and couldn't get permission to come into Zaire. They couldn't find the problem because it was done so fast with so little training. This is very high profile, especially during an emergency humanitarian disaster. You show up, like at the tsunami, with one of those assault ships with the medical facilities and copters and you rescue people, you provide water you purify water, you bring them to your hospital, you get a lot of kudos, there's no doubt about it.

As far as the military is concerned, you can't just throw a whole bunch of soldiers on a ship. Boy, do I know that. We were in EXERCISE CANLEX in 1965 with Charles Belzile as the company commander in Victoria, with HMCS Mackenzie. They threw our company on two ships, we were sick and we were still tied up. We had to do an assault landing which was rowing whalers ashore around Coburg Inlet on the west coast of Vancouver Island. You have to train and live on the ship and maintain your marksmanship and your fitness and all of that and it is not the most simple thing in the world. Some critics who shall remain unnamed figured that ships will be just tied up, they won't be very busy. Trust me, they will be busy doing all kinds of training exercises for various units within the army.

*Sea Horse* was getting a lot of support, ironically, from Prime Minister Martin. Why ironically, if that's the right term? Because in the 2004 election, but in 2003 when *sea horse* went in the pm of the day liked what he saw and made the tragic mistake of saying were going to buy hybrid carriers, not assault ships. You know what the opposition was going to do with that. "Do you want aircraft carriers or health care?" You remember the picture of the Argentinean air craft carrier that was used in the Liberal ad. I mean, it scared the death out of Canadians. It is not a zero sum game but nevertheless, we are not talking aircraft carriers with fast air off the roof, we're talking helicopters and troops and all of their kit. But when he became prime minister and had the [intestinal fortitude] and much credit goes to him and Bill Graham, for selecting an operator, for Chief of the Defence Staff Rick Hillier. We had Graham, Martin, Hillier, O'Connor, Mackay any number of people supporting the concept and I thought I will go to my grave having seen amphibious ships on each coast of Canada. Not!

What's now happened is, with Afghanistan and the reduction in funds to the three services army navy and airforce, it is understandable that the two Generals and an Admiral commanding those forces are fighting for survival, keeping their heads above water financially. You need joint thinking, you need the three of them thinking and backing the concept together for an amphibious force.

Right now parts of the army are broken big time. It will be totally broken by 2011. Equipment [is] being beaten to death and I'm not just talking [by] IEDs, I'm talking the terrain in Afghanistan and what's being done to it and all the controlled reclamation otherwise known as the cannibalization that's happening to vehicles back here and there, replacements going over, the navy tying up ships, the air force sacrificing valuable flying hours and their competency eroding as a consequence as a result of that. Don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about incompetent, I am talking about not having the number of hours that allow them to beat the living daylight out of anybody else on Top Gun, that type of thing, or Maple flag.

It is a real tragedy because we have this Canadian expeditionary force, CEFCOM command, and a stand-by contingency force as part of that on 10 days notice to move. We have everything to undertake that particular mission except the lift, the ships. Spain, Italy, France, UK, US, and our buddies Australia have provided the design the Canberra ship, a modification of a Spanish design. [It] carries 1100 troops and their kit. They are building two of them. Two of them cost 3 billion dollars, 3/5 of one percent of the DND budget over the next 20 years so it is not a big item. However, the odds are not good that it's going to be approved in the near future because of one other factor. [Because of] the 2010 Olympics, the stand by contingency task force has been put on hold and any discussion of amphibious assault ship is not very popular.

The only good news in this story is that we, the group, discovered about 6 years ago the Shearwater base. Let me put it this way, I appeared in front of a Senate Defence Committee and said to them, "You know, if you're going to approve this expeditionary force, you need a launch base and you need a base with a rail head, a road head, an air head, you need a port, you need a crane, you need a deep water port, and you need a dock. It is going to cost you billions but the good news is we already have one. It is called Shearwater with a 9,300 foot runway that is still an alternative landing site for the space shuttle." The military sold Shearwater, hundreds of acres, at \$3,000 an acre,

where a lot in Halifax was going for 20,000 and they were going to cut the runway in half. Fortunately, we were able to mobilize the mayor, the provincial government and the senior Member of Parliament from NS, Peter McKay to intervene and they are in the process of buying that property back although it is a legal battle.

According to a report that didn't exist (which is how they coned Gordon O'Conner, no fault of his), they told him there was a report that said it would be \$100,000 million dollars to refurbish the airport to make it proper. However, the manager of the Halifax airport came to the Shearwater 9300 runway and said, "I wish my airport was in as good a shape as this one is." [There is] no need to spend money like that to put it back in top condition. So on the east coast at least the launch site is there and by the way you need accommodation lifestyle and lifestyle and lifestyle in Halifax is not that back for sailors and airmen and soldiers. We have everything but the ships.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, if you believe as I do that a nation's obligations abroad are somewhat equivalent to its blessings at home this country has one hell of a bill to pay and right now that bill is being paid by three groups big time. The bravest of the brave are unarmed civilian aid personnel, two of whom were murdered, executed, last year. Police from the federal, provincial municipal level doing great work they are only 3000 instructors short to instruct the Afghan police so you can imagine the extra work our guys and gals are doing and our friends, men and women in the Canadian Forces, some of whom are on their fourth tour. Unbelievable commitment as David [Bercuson] said it makes you humble when you go and visit.

Let me give an example of how the army has changed. I am the last to criticize my generation. We were cold war warriors. Someone else chose that role for us. I was with one particular group that had just come in from a patrol, a recce [reconnaissance] platoon from 1 PPCLI, three years ago and they had been in a fairly major fire fight and as they came in and went into the quarters they didn't go have a shower which I thought was unusual. They rushed immediately to the ATCO trailer where the telephones and the computers are located so I naturally assumed, [as an] old soldier, they are phoning their mothers, their families, "Don't worry about us we'll all ok". No, they are googling the construction of grape drying huts in Southern Afghanistan. Because when they go out tomorrow and have to fight the Taliban again through the



grape vines and the berms which are like anti-tank obstacles and they get to one of those grape drying huts which are designed a specific way to let the air blow through them to dry the grapes

They'll know how to fight their way through them better. And I thought "We've come a long way, these guys are ready for what they are taking on." So it is my conclusion and my recommendation and my dear hope that at some time in the not too distant future after the Olympics that we will have an army component of battalion size with all the supporting friends that make the infantry work on board a ship on each coast to go anywhere and do what's required from rescuing people to, if necessary, using deadly force in support of government policy.