

10 October 2016

Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada, K1A 0A4

NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA INPUT TO THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The following input is submitted as a follow-up to Vice-Admiral (Retired) Robertson's participation in the Standing Committee's hearing of Monday 19 September 2016.

Strategic Assessment in Support of the Defence Policy Review

The Naval Association of Canada assesses that at current budget levels, and without significant restructuring overall, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are unsustainable and that the maritime fighting fleets of surface combatants, submarines and maritime patrol aircraft will continue to decline over the coming 15 years to leave the country without submarines or patrol aircraft and fewer surface combatants than we have today. This much smaller and unbalanced future force would not be adequate to national need, either at home or abroad, especially given the rapid changes underway internationally and the demands of providing security as our much greater ocean estate in the Arctic opens to commercial and security uses.

The NAC consequently assesses the success of the Defence Policy Review depends on bringing expected defence outcomes and spending levels into balance over the medium to long term through fundamental adjustments upwards or downwards to either or both. The NAC argues that the evolving strategic environment requires increased investment in defence to secure governments' enduring expectations of defence outcomes, rather than less.

But the NAC also believes that this Defence Policy Review presents a moment of strategic opportunity - an opportunity to not only bring defence outcomes and resources into an urgently needed balance - but to allow the CAF to be restructured for the challenges of the 21st century. The force structure of the 20th century that several reviews of defence policy reconciled themselves to must be reshaped for the challenges of the decades ahead.

The NAC assesses that the priority for any Defence policy must be to maintain the confidence of Canadians in the protection of the country, and the confidence of our American allies in our contribution to continental defence. Consequently, maintaining the naval and air forces that safeguard our continental approaches above, on and under our three surrounding oceans must be the starting point for defence allocations.

The NAC consequently recommends that, while there needs to be an increase in defence spending, if the defence budget does not increase there must be a transfer of resources within Defence to fund the capital acquisitions necessary to recapitalize the naval and air force fighting fleets that defend Canada and contribute to North American defence, especially the surface combatants, submarines and patrol aircraft. Such a transfer will require substantial divestments in infrastructure and adjustments in personnel and readiness to maintain the capabilities needed to defend Canada. In so recommending, the Naval Association notes that what must be spent to defend Canada and contribute to the defence of North America will also serve the country well abroad, since for maritime forces there is little difference - strategically, operationally or tactically- between operating at home or on the far side of the world.

Fleet Renewal

Fleet renewal will not be possible without the policy measures set out above. Those measures, coupled with pursuance of the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS) as the most assured 21st century approach for recapitalizing the fleet on a sustainable ongoing basis, would enable the Government to:

- Continue to maintain the combat capabilities of the modernized *Halifax*-class frigates, especially, but not exclusively, in undersea warfare;
- Continue the procurement of the *Queenston*-class Joint Support Ships, the *Harry DeWolf*-class Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships and the Canadian Surface Combatants;
- Extend the life of the *Victoria*-class submarines into the mid-2030s as a bridge towards an eventual submarine replacement;
- Extend the life of the *Kingston*-class Coastal Defence ships so as to retain much needed fleet capacity for domestic and continental security missions, especially when the RCN undergoes the transition from the modernized *Halifax*-class frigates to the Canadian Surface Combatants from the mid-2020s through the mid-2030s; and
- Fund the recapitalization of the *Aurora* Maritime Patrol aircraft, the *Kingston*-class coastal defence vessels and the *Victoria*-class submarines.

With work ongoing to procure the Canadian Surface Combatants, the most important next step, necessary for the ongoing maintenance of a balanced, combat-capable fleet over the coming decades is the life extension of the *Victoria*-class submarines.

As always, the Government should continue to investigate innovative means to deliver essential and emerging naval defence and security capabilities in a timely and cost efficient manner.

Maritime Force Structure

Governments have for decades repeatedly responded to international events by ordering a naval task group to deploy and contribute to international security missions, while the fleet at home secured our sovereignty. Looking forward, a naval task group should consist of up to five combatants (surface and sub-surface) and one combat support ship, and requisite maritime aircraft.

So that future Governments will continue to be able to make the meaningful contributions expected of Canada in times of crisis, the Naval Association of Canada believes it is in the national interest to acquire and maintain a modern, balanced, flexible, combat-capable, maritime fleet consisting of, as minimum:

- 16 surface combatants,
- 4 sub-surface combatants (i.e. submarines),
- 4 combat support ships (i.e. underway replenishment ships)
- 28 maritime helicopters,
- 16 maritime patrol aircraft,
- 12 coastal patrol ships, with mine countermeasure capabilities; and
- 6 Arctic and offshore patrol ships.

Such a force structure is predicated on numerous factors, including, but not limited to, the nature of the future security environment, which remains difficult to predict.

The NAC appreciates the opportunity it was afforded by the Standing Committee to contribute to this most important review of defence policy.

Yours Aye,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Carruthers." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Carruthers
President
Naval Association of Canada

Cc Minister of National Defence, Chief of the Defence Staff, Commander Royal Canadian Navy