

From: Chief of the Defence Staff/Chef d'état-major de la Défense
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Subject: CDS FALL SITREP / SITREP DE L'AUTOMNE DU CÉMD

Le texte français suit

CDS FALL SITREP

With the transition into the Afghanistan training mission largely complete, and our air and maritime assets redeployed after very successful operations in Libya , it's a good time to take stock of where we are, and where we need to move over the coming year.

First, while the combat mission in Kandahar has drawn down, we remain deployed in Afghanistan and continually tasked elsewhere. As the recent deaths of Sgt Gilbert and MCpl Greff remind us, all CF missions can be dangerous. In particular, an operational theatre as vast and varied as our great country demands vigilance, robust capability, and operational agility – qualities that Canadians rely upon on a daily basis, and which make the CF a potent force internationally, as well as here at home. Even at home however, the CF must confront and mitigate hazards through a commitment to training and readiness.

Sustaining today's readiness levels will be a challenge. Increased investment in the CF over the past few years has resulted in new equipment, capabilities, and structures, allowing us to excel in full spectrum operations. But the proportion of the Defence budget we spend on overhead has also increased. At the same time, our Government has asked us to reduce spending wherever possible. The first round of Strategic Review identified approximately 5% of the CF/DND annual budget for reduction, with a further 5-10% being sought through the Strategic Operating Review. In the coming months, we must strive for greater efficiencies to preserve and build upon the essential operational capabilities needed in an ever-turbulent world. To do this, we will build upon the recommendations of the Transformation Report to further rationalize our processes and organizational structures, while continuing to focus on readiness as the cornerstone of successful operations.

The recent announcement of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy is great news. We need to recapitalize our fleets, as we seek to advance the Navy's program in

parallel with the progress made by the Army and Air Force. But the challenges of the future are not confined to the sea. Around the world, militaries are urgently grappling with the peril posed by transnational cyber threats – a critical warfare domain that will increasingly rival the traditional land, sea and air environments in importance. And of course, we must preserve our vital telecommunications and surveillance interests in space – the strategic high ground upon which so much of our information infrastructure depends.

Finally, on a personal level, I remain strongly committed to the vital task of caring for our soldiers, sailors and airmen and women, as well as their families, and the families of the fallen. Huge strides have been made over the past several years, and we continue to advance, investing in Military Family Resource Centres, in community health clinics, and providing resources for rehabilitation and counselling. But the need is great – some of you are returning from Afghanistan and other theatres wounded in body and mind, often in ways that are not always obvious or easy to treat. The challenge for command, as resources become scarcer, will be to find more efficient ways to deliver the services required, while continuing to focus on readiness and operational effectiveness. Individually, I urge everyone to “be the difference;” to support each other, and to demonstrate compassion for those recovering from their wounds.

We are privileged to be part of a strong family and have continuous support from the Department of National Defence. We are also fortunate to have dedicated partners in other Government Departments, non-profit organizations such as the True Patriot Love Foundation, Canada Company, the Military Families Fund, and ordinary Canadians, who show their support in a myriad of ways. More than ever, Canadians understand and appreciate the essential security role the CF can play in an uncertain world. In return for their trust and support, we must continuously work to demonstrate not only our operational relevance and competence, but also our integrity, loyalty, honour and compassion– qualities that distinguish the men and women of the CF.

In conclusion, you should be rightfully proud of our accomplishments at home and around the world. We are entering a difficult fiscal time that will challenge our ingenuity

and leadership. It will also present opportunities for the CF to continue to demonstrate excellence in operations around the world. We will be busy, but I am confident that we will rise to meet the challenges we will face in the future. I ask of you all, as ambassadors of the CF, to maintain your professional standards and to support our fellow Canadians and the communities in which we live and work.

Thank you for your service. I am proud to be your Chief of the Defence Staff.

W. J. Natynczyk
General