



National
Defence

Défense
nationale

ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)
SOUS-MINISTRE ADJOINT (AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES)



Speaking Notes for

Notes d'allocution de

General Wayne Eyre

Acting Chief of the Defence Staff

Chef d'état-major de la défense

**Kingston Conference on International Security Keynote
Address**

25 October 2021

Check against delivery

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. Bonjour. Kwey.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging that I'm speaking from the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people.

Thanks for that kind introduction, and thanks to Stéfanie for inviting me back to the KCIS.

You may not be aware, but Stéfanie is the Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel of the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment in Kingston.

She's also co-host of the Battle Rhythm podcast, one which I listen to on a regular basis, as issues related to the CAF are routinely discussed.

In both of these roles, as well as through her work at the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen's...

Stéfanie is an important voice, an important part of the conversation, at this pivotal moment in the history of the CAF.

Before we get into the subject of this keynote, I'll say up front that we are determined to transform our institutional culture.

To rebuild our military to be more open and welcoming to the best people Canada has to offer.

To evolve and become the best that we can be – an inclusive organization

where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Concrètement, nous sommes déterminés à être un employeur de choix dans un marché très concurrentiel.

Plus profondément, en tant qu'organisation qui représente et incarne les valeurs qui sont si chères aux Canadiens, nous sommes déterminés à regagner la confiance.

Je suis donc très heureux d'être ici avec Stéphanie aujourd'hui, et avec vous tous.

Je suis aussi heureux que cette importante conférence reprenne cette année, après avoir fait une pause l'an dernier, et j'ai hâte au jour où nous pourrons de nouveau nous réunir en personne.

This is actually my third time addressing this conference.

In 2017, I participated in a panel discussion about enhancing soldiers' performance.

And in 2019 — drawing on my experience as Deputy Commander of UN Command in South Korea — I spoke about the tectonic changes we're seeing in the global security environment...

Many of which are rooted in that part of the world.

In 2021, we're still seized with the challenge of the pandemic — which remains, after a year and a half, an unavoidable influence over every facet of our lives and work.

That we are together today — albeit virtually— to study COVID is testament to this conference’s ongoing relevance.

And I’d like to thank the partners in the Kingston Consortium who’ve brought us together again...

- The Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen’s University;
- The Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre;
- The Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College;
- And the NATO Defense College;

A personal aside: I’ve got personal connections to three of the four partners: I’m a graduate of both Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre and the US Army War College.

And my wife is a graduate of Queen’s.

So it’s good to be back again.

GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The consortium is a great partnership doing important work.

It brings together the best minds from all sectors of society — government and NGOs, academia and the military, the private sector and other

stakeholders — to deepen our understanding of an ever-evolving and more complex global security environment.

Un environnement dans lequel l'ordre international fondé sur des règles que nous connaissons depuis 70 ans est sous pression, fragile et vulnérable.

Devant ce qui constitue essentiellement une réorganisation des choses, nous ne pouvons plus tenir pour acquises la paix et la prospérité que cet environnement nous donne depuis des générations.

Ours is an increasingly multi-polar world – with authoritarian states on one side, liberal democracies on the other, and a number of states sitting in the middle...

Watching, waiting, wondering which way the balance is going to swing, and ready to line up behind whoever seems to have the most to offer them.

Our way of life — and the global stability that makes that way of life possible — hangs on them making the right choice.

And these authoritarian states are growing in influence...

Seeking to undermine the liberal democracies of the world...

Employing tools and tactics just below the threshold of violent conflict.

And during my time in Korea, I saw just how fragile peace is — and how easy it would be for aggressive competition to slip into open war.

En même temps, des groupes terroristes, des organisations criminelles complexes et des éléments extrémistes – dont certains se trouvent au Canada – menacent aussi la stabilité et la sécurité partout dans le monde.

Les nouvelles technologies, de l'intelligence artificielle aux armes hypersoniques, en passant par l'informatique quantique, changent le visage de la guerre.

For the first time in seven decades, liberal democracies are overmatched quantitatively and qualitatively.

We are called upon to defend our interests not just at sea, on land, and in the air, but now in emerging domains of conflict such as space and cyber.

And all this is happening in the context of a world disrupted by climate change, mass migration, resource scarcity, political polarization and cultural conflict.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Of course, the most immediate challenge is the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has occupied much of the CAF's energy and effort over the past year and half.

Operation LASER is our Armed Forces' general support for federal and provincial governments in response to pandemic.

And Operation VECTOR is our support specifically for the distribution of

life-saving vaccines.

Right from the beginning, CAF members were there to help Canadians scrambling to return home from all corners of the world, before the borders shut down.

In fact, in March 2020 we put 24,000 members on standby to do whatever was required to fight the spread of COVID-19.

To express the magnitude of this mobilization — and the pressure it put on the CAF — consider this: Besides drawing on our regular forces, it included the largest activation of reservists since the Second World War.

As far as domestic operations go, the COVID-19 response has been historic — unprecedented in scope and tempo.

Since then, our people have responded to nearly 70 COVID-19-related requests for assistance from federal and provincial governments and agencies.

They've cared for the most vulnerable among us in long-term care homes.

They've assisted more than 100 First Nations communities.

They've worked with the Public Health Agency of Canada to make sure medical gear, Personal Protective Equipment, and most notably vaccines got where they were most needed across the country.

Nos gens ont aidé à planifier et à coordonner le transport, l'entreposage et

la distribution des vaccins.

Ils ont soutenu l'Agence des services frontaliers du Canada et l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada dans l'établissement de sites de dépistage aux postes frontaliers terrestres, à la frontière canado-américaine.

Ils ont livré cinq congélateurs à basse température de qualité médicale dans nos territoires nordiques.

In Newfoundland, Canadian Rangers helped get vaccines to communities, or individuals to vaccines — whatever it took.

In Nova Scotia, CAF members assisted at test sites.

In Ontario, CAF members assisted with contact tracing and associated reporting.

In Ontario and Manitoba, CAF members made sure vaccines made it to the most remote settlements, and Indigenous communities.

In British Columbia, we provided the arena at CFB Comox to serve as a vaccination hub for the surrounding area.

In Alberta, right now, some of our CAF nurse officers are helping ease the load on overburdened hospitals, and we've just started helping out in Saskatchewan with medical support.

For more than a year and a half now, when asked, CAF members have been there:

-
- Helping with wellness checks on individuals;
 - Producing and distributing non-medical – but still vital – supplies such as food, water, firewood, and other necessities of life;
 - Les membres des FAC ont assuré le transport de marchandises et de personnes vers les lieux où ils étaient le plus nécessaires;
 - Ils ont donné des soins médicaux et du soutien;
 - Ils ont aménagé des installations d'isolement pour les personnes atteintes du virus et formé du personnel civil pour assurer le fonctionnement et l'entretien de ces sites.

I could keep going with that list. It's been a long 19 months.

Now, when the average Canadian thinks of their Navy, Army, and Air Force, these are not the images that usually come to mind.

But the pandemic has drawn on the entire range of talent the CAF has to offer...

Skillsets many Canadians probably don't even realize we have:

Doctors and pharmacists. Planners and administrators. Engineers and IT experts.

Many, many, many different kinds of boots on the ground — but the people wearing them have two very important things in common:

They all wear our flag. And they're committed to serving Canada and Canadians.

Nous nous attendons à ce que ces services demeurent nécessaires dans un avenir prévisible... peut-être même pendant plusieurs années. Au pays, si le gouvernement en fait la demande, et ailleurs dans le monde.

THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON THE CAF

But of all the challenges our people have faced, maybe the biggest has been doing all of this while dealing with the deeply personal aspects of the pandemic.

Comme tous les autres Canadiens, les membres des FAC ont dû se reprendre en main dans un monde chamboulé.

Nos maisons sont devenues des bureaux... des écoles... des services de garde....

We've been cut off from extended family, and our real-life social networks.

We've lived in fear for the health and safety of the people we love, with the despair of isolation, and with the stress of not knowing when — or, for a time, if — it would ever end.

But for an institution such as the CAF...

An institution dedicated to service...

To stepping up when others step aside or step back...

For our people, hunkering down at home to wait it out was never an option.

We made the health and safety of our members our top priority, found ways to adapt, and kept working.

I am beyond proud of each and every member of our team, and will be forever grateful for their service in these extraordinary times.

Still, the pandemic has had far-reaching effects on the CAF's strength and readiness.

Comme je l'ai expliqué, notre engagement nécessaire aux opérations au pays a réduit les ressources disponibles pour faire face aux défis et aux menaces à la sécurité mondiale dont le nombre ne cesse d'augmenter.

Et en termes de nombres, nous sommes loin de la force qu'il nous faudrait, surtout dans une cohorte particulièrement essentielle.

The Regular Force has shrunk by more than 2,700 since the beginning of the pandemic, a number mirrored in the Reserves.

Our recruiting is already challenged by an erosion in the CAF's public image, driven by revelations of misconduct...

And heightened competition with other employers for Canada's brightest and best.

But COVID has further exacerbated this challenge, and our recruiting has been at about one-third its normal rate due to pandemic-imposed restrictions.

In a recruiting system that was already challenged in throughput, COVID has extended these timelines.

Nos gens ont fait tout ce qui était humainement possible en utilisant les outils numériques pour continuer à attirer des recrues...

Mais pour certaines parties essentielles du processus – par exemple, les examens physiques – rien ne peut vraiment remplacer une interaction en personne.

This challenge in recruiting, combined with attrition heightened by the pressures of the pandemic, means we find ourselves short about 7,500 in our Regular Force trained effective strength.

And these are the heart of our command structure, the “missing middle” – Master Corporals, Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, Majors...

Master Sailors, Petty Officers, Lieutenant Commanders.

All vital leadership roles, both in the field and as we address the existential imperative of changing our internal culture.

And we reckon it could take about five to seven years to undo the damage.

Our training has also been hampered.

Les restrictions de santé publique ont exigé une adaptation de l'instruction...

Pour mettre l'accent sur l'amélioration individuelle, par exemple, ou sur des travaux qui peuvent se faire en ligne ou au moyen de simulations.

Parfois, il a fallu modifier l'instruction, par exemple en réduisant le nombre de participants.

Et dans certains cas, l'instruction a été carrément annulée.

MAPLE RESOLVE is our Armed Forces' largest and most complex annual training exercise.

In 2020, we had to cancel it.

In part for the safety of our troops, but also to allow our members to isolate and be ready to respond to requests for assistance from various governments...

Wisely, as it turned out, when our people were desperately needed to shore up or replace civilian staffing in long-term care homes.

This year MAPLE RESOLVE went ahead — albeit with restrictions, and reduced participation, especially regarding the participation of our international partners.

It's important to note that training with our international partners and allies has continued as much as possible.

For example, exercises with our NATO allies in the U.S. and Latvia.

Shutting down this training completely was never an option. It is essential to our ability to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our partners, friends, and allies against myriad adversaries who threaten global security and stability.

Through it all we have demonstrated, emphatically, that it is possible to train responsibly and effectively despite the challenges posed by COVID-19.

However, there is no denying the unfortunate truth: a training backlog still exists.

Ce n'est pas entièrement à cause de la pandémie. Ici aussi, le problème du « chaînon manquant » est un facteur.

Mais la COVID a empiré la situation.

And again, the effects of this will be felt for years to come.

RECONSTITUTION

All this being the case, the CAF is in the front end of a substantial, Forces-wide reconstitution program.

This program is being driven by two imperatives:

- First, the restoration of activities and readiness that have been adversely affected by the pandemic;

-
- And second, the ceaseless task of improving and modernizing our operational capabilities in the face of evolving threats, at the same time we are carrying out the essential work of culture change.

Like every element of society, the CAF has likely been forever changed by COVID-19.

The world we knew before March 2020 no longer exists.

Will the post-pandemic CAF be the same? No.

But we will never compromise excellence or readiness.

That means we will have to be hyper-disciplined — ruthless, even — in examining our institution and continually challenging the status quo:

Is this essential?

Is this discretionary?

Should this be left behind?

Notre réponse déterminera notre orientation pour l'avenir...

Et les améliorations que nous apporterons à notre état de préparation pour les opérations en cours, pour celles qu'on entrevoit déjà et pour la suite.

These will be difficult questions with no easy answers.

The CAF's reconstitution will prioritize three areas:

First, **people and culture**.

Meeting the challenges of the future will require an even more diverse and representative Armed Forces.

As I said earlier, every Canadian needs to see the CAF as a first-rate career choice, where they will feel welcome, valued, and safe to bring their talents to bear in service of our country.

And this will only happen when we take the painful but necessary step of confronting elements of our institutional history and culture that we're not proud of.

This means, among other things:

- investing substantially in the work of our newest L1, the Chief Professional Conduct and Culture;
- aligning our military justice system with contemporary values and legal norms by implementing recommendations of the Third Independent Review of the National Defence Act;
- établir un cadre réglementaire pour promulguer le projet de loi C-77, ce qui comprend la Déclaration des droits des victimes;
- et examiner attentivement les recommandations qui émergeront de l'examen interne complet et indépendant mené par la juge Louise Arbour.

These are all positive steps toward renewing – rebuilding - our culture so we are the safe and inclusive organization that Canadians – and our own membership – expect us to be.

And this renewal is the responsibility of every single person who wears the uniform, no matter their rank, role, or service.

But our crisis of culture is also a crisis of leadership.

And in my role as acting Chief of the Defence Staff – I am personally committed to repairing our military’s credibility – to rebuilding the trust – that is essential to our success as an institution.

We must also acknowledge the personal toll the pandemic has had on our personnel and place a renewed emphasis on rebuilding personal strength...

Indeed, the strength of our people and our culture are issues of national security — because Canada needs us to be at our best.

If there ever was any doubt, I hope the pandemic has provided laser-like clarity in that regard.

The second priority in our reconstitution will be operational excellence.

This means reviewing and assessing all operations and plans, including our readiness training, — at every level and in every command — against strict and specific criteria:

Ces opérations et ces plans sont-ils durables?

Est-ce qu'ils correspondent-ils à notre mission et à notre vision globales?

Comportent-ils une valeur?

Quelles sont les répercussions de ces opérations et de ces plans sur nos alliés?

And then setting our operational expectations accordingly.

In all we do, we must always be ready to conduct contingency operations.

The third priority for our reconstitution is modernization.

To remain ready and relevant, it's imperative that we invest in sweeping upgrades to our sustainment function, and our digitization efforts.

And we have to recognize that our current force design...

How we approach operations and manage our people, both Regular Forces and Reserves...

Is still rooted in the Cold War era.

It's difficult and often painful to upend traditional approaches that go back generations... the tried, trusted, and true...

But this too is work that must be done — up to and including structural changes to the Services.

Tout cela se passait avant la COVID-19, et n'est donc pas un résultat direct de la pandémie.

Mais il reste que cette reconstitution doit se faire dans le contexte de la pandémie de COVID...

... et parallèlement à un examen post-opérationnel détaillé de la réponse des FAC à la pandémie.

Cet examen est à venir.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

But that said, let me share some initial observations:

1. Doing command and control virtually will never completely replace hands-on supervision, or face-to-face intervention. The human interaction is still needed.
2. Given a do-over, and the critical importance of readiness, I would find ways to maintain higher levels of training and recruiting.
3. The pandemic revealed the vulnerabilities of supply chains, ours included.

We work closely with many industry and government partners.

Where they were affected — by necessary restrictions, border closures, regulations, and, most importantly, concern for everyone's health and

safety — so were we.

But through constant communication and collaboration, we kept moving forward.

4. Le rôle des Rangers canadiens consiste à être nos yeux et nos oreilles dans le Nord, et leurs activités sont censées se limiter à un mandat très précis : ils ne devraient pas aider les autorités civiles dans des situations qui comportent un risque de confrontation.

Bref, leur rôle consiste à soutenir les FAC, et non pas à agir comme agents de la paix ou à faire du travail de développement communautaire ou d'aide sociale.

Or la portée du travail accompli par les Rangers canadiens depuis le début de la pandémie est considérable, et les risques sont allés bien au-delà de leur mandat original.

5. CAF health services — which are really just intended to support members of the CAF, who are not covered by provincial and territorial health services under the Canada Health Act — were already at a strained capacity pre-COVID...

...and the pandemic pushed that even further.

Every medical professional who's called upon to assist our government partners here at home is one who's not free to deploy on other operations...

Or available for CAF members who need their help here at home.

Or to process recruit medical files.

This is part of a broader issue — the CAF’s evolution over the years from a resource of last resort to a force of first choice — that, going forward, needs to be addressed in a national context.

READINESS IN THE NEW WORLD

The CAF’s leading role in Canada’s national effort to combat COVID-19 is really just the culmination of a trend that’s been quietly creeping upwards for years now.

Between 2014 and 2019, we saw a 10 fold increase in person-days devoted to domestic operations when compared to the preceding five years.

More and more frequently, our federal and provincial partners are calling on the CAF to perform non-traditional tasks.

Why is this?

Well, to put it simply, we’re up to the job.

When the CAF responds to a request for assistance, the requesting party gets a disciplined labour pool of highly trained professionals with its own internal command-and-control capacity.

With an internal communications system already established.

With its own resources to draw upon.

Un bassin capable d'effectuer des tâches très diverses de façon efficiente et efficace, et dont le succès est presque certain.

Un bassin de main-d'œuvre autosuffisant, qui se déploie et s'administre de façon autonome — un effectif prêt à l'action. On épargne beaucoup de temps, en évitant l'intégration des employés, les tracas liés à la paye et d'autres tâches administratives et de bureau.

And its planning capability, its mastery of logistics, has a sophistication that is simply an easy solution when crisis hits.

And here I have to give a nod to the Canadian Army Command and Staff College.

Ce que le Collège enseigne à nos officiers, c'est exactement de cela que je parle. C'est cette formation professionnelle exceptionnelle qui nous permet d'exécuter ces opérations.

The skills necessary to integrate various capabilities, to provide some structure over chaos, and to plan a way forward has its roots right here in the training and education at Canadian Army Staff College.

The value of this education and training has been proven hundreds of times over the course of this pandemic.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE PANDEMIC AND AN EVOLVING ROLE FOR THE CAF

The pandemic has provided some valuable takeaways for everyone involved in the response.

One is this: We need — as a country — to take a long, hard look at the domestic role of the Canadian Armed Forces.

What it has become, and why.

It's clear that, as I've said, the CAF has in recent years gone from being the force of last resort to often a force of first choice.

This year alone, besides our full-on commitment to pandemic response, we've deployed hundreds of personnel to British Columbia and Manitoba to help fight wildfires, while other troops and Canadian Rangers helped with forest-fire evacuations in remote communities in Ontario.

We've been called upon to help mitigate flooding in Yukon.

Last year, when a major snowstorm shut down parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, we got the call.

En 2019, les membres des FAC :

- ont été déployés en Nouvelle-Écosse après le passage de l'ouragan Dorian;

-
- ont aidé à évacuer les membres de la Première nation de Pikangikum en Ontario en raison de la fumée intense provenant des feux de forêt au Manitoba;
 - ont envoyé plus de 2 500 militaires pour soutenir les efforts déployés pour aider les victimes d'inondations au Nouveau-Brunswick, au Québec et en Ontario.

This should cause us to pose the question as to if we need a comprehensive review of roles, responsibilities, and resourcing of all branches and levels of government to update their delineation in light of the increasing demand, the increasing frequency and intensity of domestic disasters.

This includes for the CAF so that we can prioritize our force development, training, and readiness accordingly.

The essential function of the Canadian Armed Forces is to defend Canada and Canadians.

How do we need to define “defend” going forward?

How our Reserves fit into this picture is another element we have to consider: Does Canada need troops dedicated to civil defence, like during the Cold War?

Les réponses à ces questions guideront notre planification en termes de conception et de développement de la force dans le futur — et ces

réponses doivent s'inscrire dans un contexte national.

Un large débat national au sujet de qui fait quoi, à quel moment et pourquoi. Et où se situent les FAC dans ce contexte plus large, celui de l'ensemble du gouvernement.

The future of military conflict is one of precision, of advanced technology, of engagements in non-tradition domains such as space and cyber.

While domestic operations, like the ones we've undertaken more and more often of late, depend on deploying large numbers of CAF members, many boots on the ground, to do hard, physical work.

Precision versus mass. This is one of the force develop tensions we will face.

How we find a balance between these two vastly different visions of a modern military is one of the great questions of our time.

We do know this:

Meeting the demands of the post-pandemic world will demand creativity, adaptability, and resilience.

It will require a relentless identification of priorities, and shrewd stewardship of our resources — our materiel and, even more importantly, our people.

Je pense que nous pouvons affirmer sans risque de nous tromper que le rôle des FAC dans les situations de crise au pays continuera de s'élargir, de même que nos militaires seront appelés à effectuer davantage de

tâches non traditionnelles.

This is key to our post-pandemic operational review.

As is this: It will happen again. There will be another pandemic.

We don't know when. But we must be ready. Eternally vigilant.

We owe it to future generations of Canadians.

The world is more dangerous now than it has been since the end of the Cold War. The threats and risks to our country are multiplying.

To address the future security environment, the demands on the CAF will only increase. Canada needs the CAF now more than ever — even if not all Canadians realize it.

Thank you, Merci, Megwitch.