

# CDF Address To The Defence Industry Association Forum – Palmerston North: 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018

**Ko te mātua, he matakīrea tō tātou, ko te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa mo Aotearoa**

*[The New Zealand Defence Force is first and foremost A Force for New Zealand]*

**Tīhei mauri ora**

*[Hence, the sneeze of life (call to claim the right to speak)]*

**No reira, e te Tii, e te Taa, e ngā rangatira, e ngā toa**

*[Therefore, to the esteemed, the chiefly, the warriors]*

**Tātou katoa kua huihui mai nei i tēnei wā**

*[To all gathered here today]*

**Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa**

*[I greet you all]*

Secretary of Defence – Helene Quilter / Greg Lowe – Chair of the DIAC;  
Andrew Ford – Chair of the NZDIA; Distinguished guests; Industry partners; Ladies and gentleman....

It is indeed an honour to be invited to speak today, my first time speaking to this group as the Chief of Defence; and at a time of significant change for our Defence Force – if not in capability, certainly in leadership roles.

It often goes without saying, but we are an armed force. This is our raison d'être – our point of difference from other agencies of state.

We exist to safeguard the freedom of all New Zealanders. Our primary task is to conduct military operations.

A secure New Zealand is critical to our country's economic and social well-being. A strong economy and a prosperous workforce are predicated on protecting New Zealanders, and securing our borders and our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

New Zealand's prosperity is linked to a stable and peaceful international environment, particularly in our immediate region.

Free and open markets and the flow of global trade are essential components of New Zealand's well-being and the Defence Force contributes to the security of New Zealand and its interests through our people deploying overseas on a range of operations.

Our country has a proud history of responding to threats to human security and well being, and our Defence Force's participation in UN and other multi-national peace-support operations underlines New Zealand's commitment to collective security and enhances New Zealand's credentials as a good international citizen.

This is what we mean when we say we are a Force for New Zealand.

While we might be tempted to congratulate our Defence Force from time to time, for its achievements in operational theatres, self congratulations today will not set the conditions for our Defence Force to be successful in future operations.

There is strong evidence that tomorrow's operations will, in many respects, be significantly different from those that we engage in today.

This is not necessarily about a new theatre, or new operation, but that we will be required to adapt more rapidly when engaged in an operation, to meet the requirements of an adaptive enemy.

Therefore we must learn to become more adaptive as an institution, before the fight, and in the fight, and there is a strong correlation that as we train, so shall we fight!

To have to think about the future though, beyond the current or next deployment, can be difficult. Organisationally, our Defence Force can be blinkered at any moment by our number one priority, which is to prepare our current force for the current operation...

That is, we can be focused one step ahead on the steep path in front, rather than pausing to look for another pathway round, or maybe to assess whether the hill we are on is even the right one to be climbing?

It was Abraham Lincoln who said: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew."

Luckily then, the development of Government Defence policy does not come with an equipment prescription in New Zealand, rather it comes with a license for us to think, to use our professional judgment, and turn this

into advice. And I like this Government's Strategic Defence Policy Statement.

It articulates the contemporary fundamentals of our profession and our requirements to meet government policy outcomes of the future.

It acknowledges that it requires constant, iterative, and often tenacious application of military art and science by our Defence Force, to ensure we are prepared for the next challenge.

During this Forum you have heard from the Defence team about the large amount of work ongoing around policy, procurement, and capability reviews; and the exciting period we are entering into for equipment, platforms and systems acquisition providing our capability enhancement.

Capability enhancement is one of the four driving themes of our Strategy25 road map, which has as its central aim for us to be a more integrated Defence Force – that is, a more connected, coordinated, and agile military force.

Through Strategy25 – Integrated Defence Force, we are clear as a Defence Force where we are heading. We have thought about the battle after next; we know which hills we must climb.

We will concentrate of course on capability enhancement; and people, information and relationships. So a core tenet of Strategy 25 is the New Zealand Defence Force's biggest asset, its people.

Our people are at the heart of what we do... our personnel in the Navy, Army, Air Force, our civilians, and the people of our commercial partners who work with and beside them.

They are the foundation of the New Zealand Defence Force.

What you do as companies to provide services and equipment to our Defence Force is very important.

Procurement is important. Plans to ensure that procurement goes smoothly are important. Supporting us is important.

Thus engagement with industry is very important.

But at the sharp end of things, it is the men and women of the Defence Force who have to deliver on the task and missions expected of us by Government... To deliver the fight.

As our industry partners, you must understand us.

It is your equipment, software, goods and services, and systems that will be used by the women and men of the New Zealand Defence Force. And at times, when they are in harms way.

In New Zealand there's only two degrees of separation between individuals, right. So the NZDF people you support may well be known to you. Some might be your family members; perhaps they are your neighbours or friends; or the family of neighbours and friends.

But my point is simply this, all NZDF people, **rely upon you**, and what you produce for us... whether it is the food our people eat, to the information and communications technologies and systems we use; to the ships we sail; the vehicles we drive; aircraft we fly (or the fuel that powers them).

So your understanding of the “end customer” – us – will deliver better outcomes for our Defence people.

We see every company that has a relationship with us, or contracts to the Defence Force, contributing in some way to the success of our tasks and missions.

You are important stakeholders in our Defence Force.

**Together**, our job is contributing to the defence, security and well-being of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

**You are a force behind our Force.**

Our Defence Force story is about New Zealanders from all walks of life doing the extraordinary task of serving and working to secure New Zealand, her freedoms, and way of life.

We must lead, train and equip our sailors, soldiers and airmen for action in the most demanding environments, so they are ready and able to protect New Zealand’s interests.

As I said earlier, this means that our people might be placed into dangerous and life threatening situations, in which personnel are required to carry out their duties.

So our primary purpose is to provide an armed force ready and able to perform in combat, should the need arise.

It means every person in our Defence Force – Regular Force, Reserve Force or Civilian Force – must understand our mission.

For those not at the frontline, or not even in uniform for that matter, are just as vital to our success.

To prepare, equip and support those who undertake combat, takes a sophisticated team of people behind them to train, feed, fuel, fix, arm, move, keep healthy, keep secure, procure, and pay them... this is the shaft of the spear that sustains the sharp point at its tip.

Those experts in:

- logistics,
- finance,
- IT,
- communications,
- administration,
- health,
- infrastructure and property services,
- security, and the list goes on – play a part in our success.

Increasingly, we see a role for you, our partners, to connect to our mission in a not too dissimilar way to our own people.

As suppliers to our Defence Force, or having an interest in Defence, we want you to understand our unique organisation, as you have a vital part to play.

More and more as an organisation, we are looking to you to help us 'sustain' the Force.

But we know we can always do more.

As Harvard economics Professor Ted Levitt so neatly put it: "The future belongs to people who see possibilities before they become obvious."

We can, and must do better, for the sake of both our people and the success of the missions we ask them to carry out.

One of the messages our people have shared with us, is that they would value short secondment or exchange opportunities in the public and private sectors as "civilian tours of duty" – to help round out executive skills, in addition to the command and leadership skills we instil and develop.

Balancing this, we are keen to extend participation in the leadership training we provide, at all levels, to civilian partners and agencies.

We are working closely with a number of organisations and entities on this. It is an opportunity for not only executives but also our younger people as we work increasingly in becoming more innovative.

Our people have also told us that exit and transition to their next challenge – as they end their military careers and move to positions in the civilian world – could be better supported and managed.

I'd encourage you, as our partners, to consider how you might engage with us in these areas. In it, there might be a win-win, for all of us.

Around the world the New Zealand Defence Force has an enviable reputation for its professionalism and skills.

We prepare our people to be physically fit, mentally agile, and to act with professionalism and mana.

I would suggest that the attitudes and skills developed while serving in our Defence Force make our men and women the type of people that would add value to your organisations.

If we as a Defence Force can remain connected to them (through say the Reserve Forces) or can attract them back to us later in their careers, when they have added extra skills and learnings from different private or public sector experiences, then we win.

This would be a step change in approach for our Defence Force. We'd need to move from viewing secondments negatively, that is, we tend to

lose our best and brightest to industry but I want to move to where we all might benefit from such exchanges and outside experiences.

So this could be something that might be potentially better for you in industry; better for our Defence Force; certainly a positive for our people; and at the end of the day, better for New Zealand.

One day not too far in the future, you won't be suitable as a CDF without having experience in leading outside the Defence Force for a period of time.

#### **[CONCLUSION]**

In closing, I wish to thank you all for the work you do in supporting us.

While it is true that in most instances we have commercial/contractual arrangements with you that define what we require; such a lens does not go to the 'how'... especially, how we get the best from working together.

Our Defence Force recognises that improving our engagement, and being focused on the quality of our relationship with industry, will help us identify new opportunities, and find solutions we wouldn't otherwise even have known existed, let alone considered.

As I've emphasised today, your support to us is an important part of the whole.

We as a Defence Force couldn't do what we do without the contribution you make... **and we appreciate and respect that.**

I trust that you have enjoyed and gained from the engagement with our people, and each other, throughout this Forum.

This evening we look forward to celebrating the NZDIAC awards, recognising the relationships between our people and yours in the delivery of positive outcomes for our Defence Force, and New Zealand as a whole.

We'll achieve together, because **together** we are a Force for New Zealand.

Thank you

[ENDS].

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