

# RUSSIA'S NEW MILITARY DOCTRINE

In April, President Putin signed Russia's new Military Doctrine: the first since the Great Changes began (the 1993 version was never signed off). We have been told that this is the fourth draft in the last three years, and there have already been hints that this one may be temporary. But it's official, for the moment at least. The Secretary of the Russian Security Council has said that changes in the last few years have "forced us to take a more pragmatic look at things, especially in the field of defence."

The changes he is referring to, and the principal themes of this document, as well as those of most present-day Russian statements on foreign relations these days, are *multilateralism-unilateralism* and *international terrorism*. Rightly or wrongly, Moscow fears that the world is becoming one in which the US is the sole actor, doing whatever it wants and ignoring everybody else. Other countries are also apprehensive, and a major thrust of Moscow's foreign policy will be an attempt to recruit other protesters to its cause. International terrorism is the theme under which Moscow is packaging the war in Chechnya. It claims – with quite a lot of justification – that much of what is going on there is an internationally-supported attempt by foreign Muslim jihadists to take over Chechnya and the North Caucasus. It, and most of the Central Asian countries, sees a similar threat in Central Asia. Everyone who meets Russian officials is going to hear these themes.

A considerable amount of fuss has been made – almost to the exclusion of anything else – about the 'lowering' of the nuclear threshold. The Doctrine states that Moscow might use nuclear weapons if faced with an attack by weapons of mass destruction, but also that it might use them if faced with a conventional attack "in situations critical to national security". Well, no kidding! No nuclear state is ever going to say anything different, unless it is making propaganda. The Russian obsession to get everything down on paper opens them to criticism where smudged verbiage would not. However, there was a *political* intention to the wording, which perhaps can be summed up as 'there's a limit to how far you can push Russia around'.

There are two more significant differences from the draft of 1993. The first is the statement that Russia "implements a joint defence policy together with Belarus." For some years, there have been

attempts to form a 'union' with Belarus. Politically or economically, they have never amounted to much but the sentence suggests at least an attempt to give some reality to military 'union'. How real this will prove to be remains to be seen; probably not very – deployments are more significant than words and Moscow has no troops stationed along the traditional invasion route from the West. The other change is that the armed forces have a responsibility in 'domestic armed conflicts'. This used to be the preserve of the Interior Ministry, but two wars in Chechnya have changed that assumption.

The Russians are addicted to producing documents like this – philosophical disquisitions which exhaustively enumerate every eventuality. Whether this is a Russian characteristic or a leftover from Marxism-Leninism I don't know, but they feel the need to do these things and we do not. A comparison between this document and NATO's Strategic Concept shows the difference: while NATO avoids saying what it means, the Russians go on and on cataloguing everything they can think of. For example, a typology of wars takes up 12 per cent of the document – wars can be classified as just or unjust, using WMD or not, local, regional or large-scale, and so on. It's a kind of primer on all the possible kinds of wars there can be.

The Ministry of Defence is not the only government department with a 'doctrine' – the Education Ministry has also produced a similar one. To no one's surprise, education is said to be a vital national priority deserving a large pot of cash – 6 per cent of GDP today, and rising to at least 10 per cent. Anyone reading this material will soon realize that the authors are emphasizing the importance of education in their play for more status and resources. In other words, these documents are weapons in the bureaucratic struggle. But there are plenty of people in the West who will read the Military Doctrine and not very many who will read the Education Doctrine. These people, who tend to overestimate the importance of the military in Russia, take the document too seriously (Russia's defence spending last year – *fighting a war* – was 2.6 per cent of GDP: a little more than twice Canada's proportion). The Defence Ministry is another ministry insisting that its 'ox' is the most important and should not be gored by anyone else's.

We have to see the new Military Doctrine in context. And there are two quotations that suggest

that context. The recently approved Concept of National Security, which is the mother document, so to speak, of the Military Doctrine, places economics right at the top of national security. "Russia's national interests may be assured only on the basis of sustainable economic development. Therefore, Russia's national interests in economics are of key importance." Put in himself has said, "It will take us approximately fifteen years and an annual growth of our GDP by 8 per cent a year to reach the per capita GDP level of present-day Portugal or Spain."

Meditating on these two statements makes it pretty clear that bad relations with the West will preclude high-speed economic growth and, therefore, that the military are not going to be taking the lead. Thus, whatever the General Staff may dream about, the armed forces are not the primary component of Russia's relationship with the outside world. Or even of national security.

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## HISTORY AND HERITAGE by Dean F. Oliver, PhD

# THE CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM: THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

**T**he Canadian War Museum (CWM) has long been the poor cousin of major international counterparts like the Imperial War Museum and the Australian War Memorial. With cramped, badly-lit exhibits in a former archives building, and storage and research facilities in a former street-car garage, the museum is a sad testimonial to Canada's veterans and a woefully inadequate instrument for educating Canadians about their military past.

As the *Ottawa Citizen's* Christina Spencer noted recently, an air of informality and quaintness does infuse the permanent galleries at 330 Sussex Drive, but these hardly compensate for a small staff, limited exhibit space, and deficient environmental standards. Visitor surveys that regularly demonstrate general satisfaction with the exhibits' visual appeal also sound a drum-beat of specific criticism over historical errors in text and captions, the lack of heavy weapons and vehicles on display, the absence of visitor parking, and a poorly stocked gift shop. Moreover, recent public controversy over the proposed placement of a Holocaust gallery in the museum highlighted in recent years the museum's long-term inadequacies and demoralized its staff. In appearing to depict a facility expected to be at once a national war memorial and a centre for research excellence, but which — in truth — had neither the mandate nor the resources to perform either role, such public disputes created the conditions for a radical shake-up.

Appointed in July 1998, historian J.L. Granatstein became director and chief executive offi-

cer of a museum whose public image was in serious disrepair. He accepted a two-year contract and set to work, along with the Honourable Barney Danson, chair of the museum's Advisory Committee and General (ret'd.) Paul Manson, head of the Passing the Torch fund-raising campaign, to reinvigorate the institution. The goals were ambitious: reshape the museum's image, bolster programmes, update the public galleries, and address head-on the limitations imposed by inadequate facilities. The latter, especially, was a tall order, for it involved rejecting an existing plan to modify and expand the permanent galleries and, instead, proposing to construct an entirely new facility.

Fortunately, there were solid foundations on which to build. A sound education programme, professional collections managers, and tireless administrative and technical staff belied the public's impression of a bloated, ineffective crown agency. (Indeed, the CWM may well be the only major national cultural institution in the Western world run by less than thirty permanent staff.) Financial and personnel help from CWM's parent organization — the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation (CMCC) — facilitated reform and established good working relations between senior management at both institutions. The Friends of the Canadian War Museum volunteered in droves to drive forward a multi-pronged, labour-intensive attack on the status quo.

Other problems required substantial resource commitments. In addition to Granatstein, the museum added three new historians to bolster research capaci-



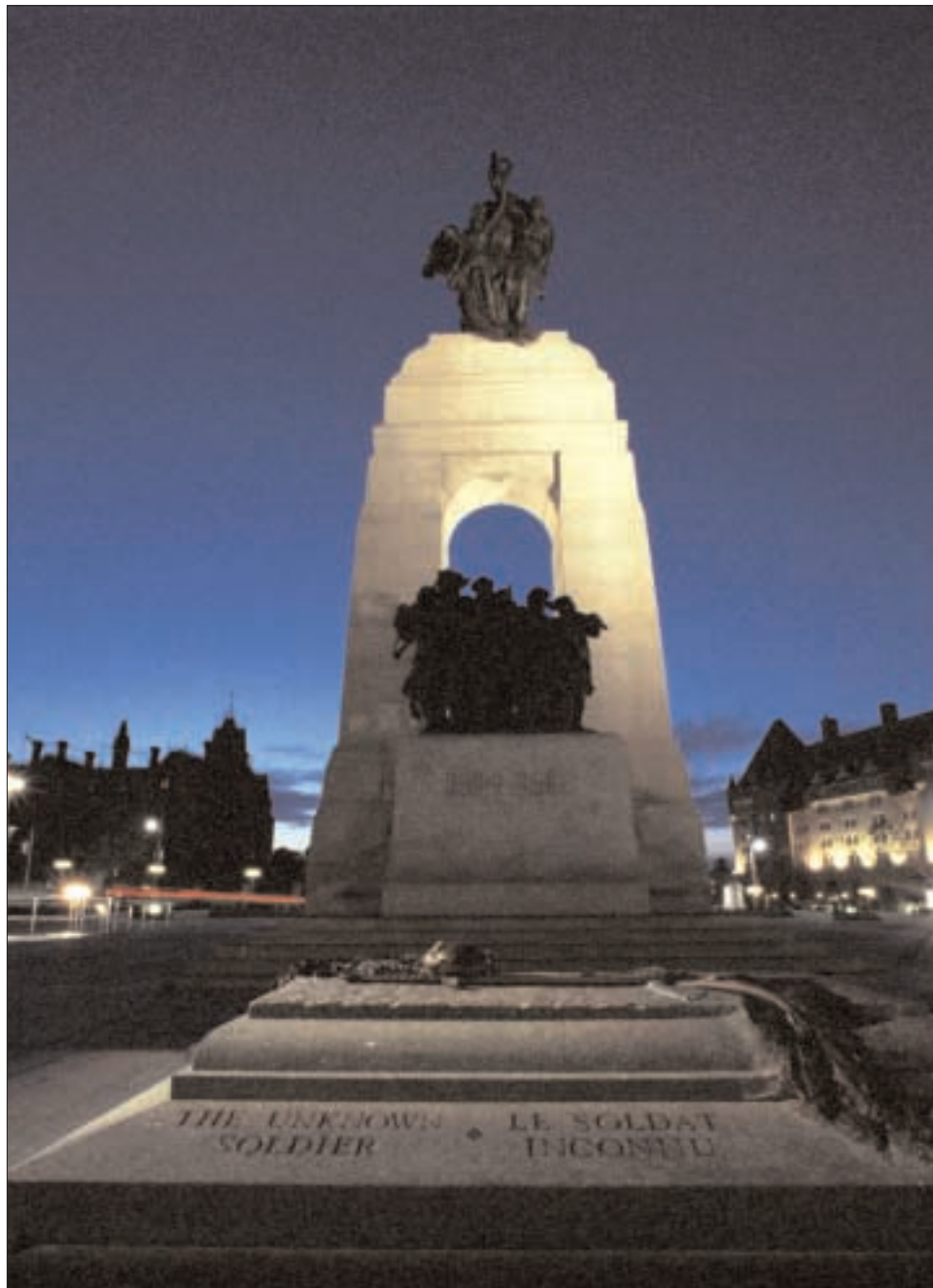
ty and to survey thoroughly the existing galleries. With additional money from CMCC, a series of traveling exhibits, military antique road shows and educational visits attempted to establish a firmer national presence. The museum sought to re-establish links with the broader cultural community, and especially within the Organization of Military Museums of Canada. Publication subsidies and co-publication agreements, a speaker series to attract world-class talent, and a concerted effort to improve public access to museum collections all followed. Museum officials, especially Granatstein and division heads Roger Sarty and Dan Glenney, made media liaison a priority and gave scores of interviews, briefings and commentaries. An ambitious exposition of Canadian war art, *Canvas of War*, supported by the Donner Foundation, has drawn rave reviews and blanket publicity.

It was an arduous, frustrating, frantically exciting two years whose strategic goal was securing the professional, political and public support necessary for additional funding and, officials hoped, a new building. The end result was spectacular. In March 2000, Heritage Minister Sheila Copps announced \$58 mil-

lion in federal funding for a new Canadian War Museum building to be constructed by 2004 near the Canadian Aviation Museum in Rockcliffe, on land previously donated by the federal government. With CMCC providing \$7 million, most of the rest of the estimated \$80 million price tag (\$15 million) will come from the museum's own fund-raising.

With the announcement, and Granatstein's decision to retire at the end of his term on 30 June 2000, the CWM enters a new era. Additional resources, including staff, are already being made available to undertake the most important operation in the museum's 120-year history: its move into a purpose-built, state-of-the-art structure. The work ahead is daunting — planning the building, designing new galleries, crafting out-door programmes, preparing the collections, developing public outreach efforts, establishing a new Canadian Military History Research Centre — p 103-105 but thrilling.

*Next issue... A Canadian Military History Research Centre*  
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Canadian Forces Photo by DGPA

## **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

**following the dramatic ceremony  
at the National War Memorial  
in Ottawa on 28 May 2000**

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