

## **CANSEC 2022 Opening Address**

CANSEC speech

June 1st, 2022 08:00, EY Centre, Ottawa

Ladies and Gentlemen, delegates, honoured guests - Welcome back to CANSEC. Bienvenue à CANSEC.

I've waited three long years to say those words. Trois ans remplis d'incertitude et de frustration, de détermination et d'espoir, de collaboration... et maintenant, de conflit. If you'd told me when I walked off this stage in May 2019 that it would be June 2022 before I got back up here again, I wouldn't have believed you. Because what could possibly stop us - this community of innovators and problem-solvers?

Surely no obstacle was insurmountable. Surely the show must go on.

But we have lived through something unprecedented. The pandemic has tested our businesses, our sector, our military, our government and our citizens in ways big and small, public and private. In recent months, we have also seen the disruption of a global order that we took for granted. We have witnessed both horrors in real-time and the resilience of a people, the Ukrainian people fighting for their country and our democracies.

Each of you in this room is keenly aware of the toll all of this has taken on you, on your families, and on our world. I am not here this morning to dwell on what's been lost and what we could still stand to lose. I want to focus instead on what we've gained, on all we have accomplished, and on all we have to look forward to.

In 2019, I began this address by saying how proud I was of our community and all it does for Canada. But it was nothing compared to how I felt - how I know many of us felt - when COVID-19 reached Canada's shores in March 2020 ... and rather than stepping back or stepping aside, our industry stood up, and said: "What can we do? How can we help?"

Within weeks, PPE rolled off assembly lines. Field hospitals and checkpoints went up. Medical apps and cyber resources were launched. Rapid-testing pilot projects rolled out. Then the first planes and trucks filled with life-saving vaccines began to arrive, and again we asked: "What can we do?" We made ventilators, clinics opened in company parking lots. Nurses were deployed to remote communities. Shots went into arms. Families were reunited.

And still we asked: "What can we do? What more can we do?" So we did what we've always done best, churning out the kind of economic activity that we knew would bolster Canada's recovery. Nos chantiers, nos entrepôts, nos salles de réunion et nos laboratoires bourdonnaient d'activité, et de nouveaux métiers se sont ouverts ici au Canada et à l'étranger.

We adapted, and we collaborated. We put choppers in the air. We put ships in the water. We put Canadians to work.

And then, just as it seemed some sense of normalcy was returning, we were confronted with a new threat; a threat to international peace and stability. To democracy, and national sovereignty. So again, our industry asked: "What can we do?"

Canadian companies have stood shoulder to shoulder with government and the CAF, providing equipment and services to the people of Ukraine as they defend their native soil.

These past 27 months have shown me exactly what Canada's defence, security and cyber industries are capable of. And you've proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that we are at our best when called upon to be part of something bigger; to lend our creativity, talent, and expertise to the shared defence of this nation, its people, and our allies.

That's a lesson we must take to heart as we move forward. As Canada works to shore up international alliances in a volatile world. As new threats emerge. And as the largest military modernization in recent memory continues to unfold.

I mean "modernization" here in the broadest sense. Yes - Canada must be prepared to defend itself. But there's an evolution we're witnessing within the Canadian Armed Forces. Throughout the pandemic, in our darkest hours, the CAF was there - in communities across the country and when those same communities were threatened by fire, or flood, or a tainted water supply, our men and women in uniform were there. When our international community called for aid, they were there. We are profoundly grateful. Each time CAF boots hit the ground - in British Columbia, in Kabul, in Iqaluit, in Ukraine - they are supported by equipment and technology that industry is proud to have made. We probably made the actual boots.

We must also acknowledge and support the most important work unfolding within our military right now. Namely a change in its culture, and the rebuilding of trust. These are matters of national security. Industry too has to work to ensure that our community is one where everyone can feel welcome and secure.

I want to conclude this morning on a note of optimism. As I said off the top, it's been three long years since we've been able to gather under this roof. In a time of relentless technological advancement and global instability, it might as well have been three decades. Our industry is not what it was the last time I stood before you. Our world is not what it was.

But our commitment to the safety and security of Canadians - to that sacred, shared responsibility - will never change. It, above all else, endures.

After all we've achieved, after all we've overcome and even amidst the world's chaos, how can we not be hopeful? The long arc of our sector's evolution bends toward a bright future. When I look to that future, I see Canada and Canadian industry continuing to play a pivotal role in innovation, in exploration, and in solutions to our greatest challenges. I see Canadian-made ships patrolling our waters. Canadian firewalls around our critical infrastructure. Canadian eyes on our northern borders. Canadian astronauts on the Moon.

There is so much to look forward to. But for today, I hope you will simply take time to savour this moment. Because against all odds, we're back.

Je vous souhaite un excellent deux jours ici à CANSEC. I wish you all a fantastic show. Thank you.