

DECISION NOTE FOR THE MINISTER

US GERMAN MARSHALL FUND PROPOSAL FOR A NOVEMBER 2009 SECURITY CONFERENCE IN HALIFAX

ISSUE

- The German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States has proposed to host a prestigious, high-level conference based on the model of the Brussels Forum (see attachment A) to discuss transatlantic security and defence issues in Halifax, November 20-22, 2009 – the “Halifax International Security Forum.”
- As part of the proposal GMF has approached the Government of Canada, through DND, as a potential partner and sponsor to assist with financing.
- GMF anticipates USD\$2.8M (CAD\$3.25M) would be required to offset the overall costs of the event. For its part, the GMF would provide roughly USD\$500K (CAD\$581K) to cover overhead expenses. Given the proposed venue in Halifax, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has indicated that it would provide CAD\$1.5M. DND has been asked to provide up to CAD\$1.5M. However, GMF would fundraise against the funding set aside by the Government. The expectation, therefore, is that through offset fundraising the overall Government contribution would be considerably less than the identified CAD\$3M.
- Given that attendance would likely include senior political representatives and government officials from the US and other allied nations, the conference will likely involve additional costs related to security and will require close coordination with the RCMP and local police.
- ADM (Fin CS) has advised that a Treasury Board Submission, as well as the development of a memorandum of understanding with GMF, will be required. We would work with TB, as well as ACOA, to find the most appropriate mechanism for supporting this initiative

BACKGROUND

- The German Marshall Fund (GMF) has proposed that Canada serve as the venue for one of GMF's well established fora on transatlantic security and defence issues. The conference would bring together some 300 senior politicians, officials and representatives from think tanks and the media from both sides of the Atlantic and around the world to discuss pressing strategic issues in an informal setting. The GMF has held similar prestigious conferences in other allied capitals, including the Brussels Forum which has become the leading conference on transatlantic issues in the past four years. The proposed conference in Canada would be the North American equivalent of the Brussels Forum, and a first on this side of the Atlantic.

- We recommend that you support this initiative and authorize the Department to undertake all necessary work with TB, OGD partners and GMF towards a November event.

CONSIDERATIONS

Key advantages

- Based on our experience with the Brussels Forum and other GMF events, the proposed conference would provide a prestige setting for serious, in-depth discussions amongst distinguished politicians, officials and experts on security and defence issues. Its format has proven successful in provoking lively and substantive discussions with experts, many of whom do not have access to restricted events such as NATO ministerials and summits. GMF has indicated that it would seek senior-level attendees including Vice President Biden, a senior US congressional delegation, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; defence and foreign ministers from other allied nations and partners; and the new NATO secretary-general. They are intending on leveraging Canada's contacts to engage non-traditional GMF partners, such as Australia, and key players in the Americas, to broaden the reach of the transatlantic forum.
- The event would offer a unique opportunity to advance the Government's overall agenda with respect to international leadership as well as Canada-US and Canada-Europe relations.
- The conference would be seen as a key event in the international schedule of meetings this fall. The conference would be held over two and a half days in November 2009 (notionally November 20-22). Beyond this, it cannot be ruled out that a successful conference held in Canada could evolve into a major annual event like the Brussels Forum or Munich Security Conference.
- The conference would also be of significant value in terms of informing Canadians about the importance of the transatlantic relationship and Canada's contributions to it. GMF also engages youth and local residents (students and others) in supporting the conference.
- GMF has a highly developed relationship with the US and global media. We anticipate that a Halifax conference would draw considerable domestic and international media attention.
- Given that Halifax is also the home port of Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT), we would also explore opportunities to show the Navy and Canada's role in contributing to trans-Atlantic security.

Organizational and financial considerations

- The total direct cost of the proposed conference is approximately USD\$2.8M (approximately CAD\$3.25M), which would be funded by a partnership between the

Government of Canada (DND and potentially other government partners like DFAIT, with whom we are in touch), the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), and the GMF. The contributions would be approximately CAD\$1.5M each from DND and ACOA, and CAD\$581,000 from the GMF. The GMF will fundraise against this amount with key Canadian private sector players.

- Preliminary consultations with VCDS/DFPPC and ADM(Fin CS) officials indicate that any support provided by DND to the GMF would likely require Treasury Board approval under its policy on Grants and Contributions and the inclusion of the grant in future Supplementary Estimates. In addition it would be necessary to develop a memorandum of understanding with GMF as it is a non-Canadian organization. We would also need to confirm whether or not a Memorandum to Cabinet would be required to inform Treasury Board that the GMF is a one-time recipient of DND sponsorship (our preliminary assessment is that an MC would not be required).
- If approved, there may be additional costs on other federal departments and agencies, the Government of Nova Scotia, and the City of Halifax given the security implications of hosting this event. Security arrangements would require a coordinated, interdepartmental and intergovernmental planning process which would include representatives from Canada Command, Public Safety Canada, the RCMP, CSIS, and the Halifax police department, among others. It is also likely that as the event approaches, further coordination may be required with foreign agencies such as the US Secret Service.
- All matters directly related to the organization of the event itself would be carried out by the GMF. That said, the GMF has committed to closely consult DND and the Government on the agenda and proposed panellists. Given the wide range of likely discussions, Defence will coordinate closely with PCO and other government departments (e.g. DFAIT).

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that, pending the necessary confirmation of financial authorities, DND agree to support the event with a contribution of up to CAD\$1.5M and seek to facilitate GMF contacts for their fundraising purposes.
- As invitations for such a high-level event need to be sent by mid-June, we need to act urgently if we are going to support this opportunity.

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Halifax International Security Forum

Reference:

- The Supplementary Estimates (B) list a Transfer to Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency – to assist in the organization and delivery of the Halifax International Security Forum. (p. 108)

OPI(s): ADM (Pol)/ D Cab Ln, ADM(Fin/CS)

Top Lines:

- DND transferred \$1,917,315 to Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) to assist in the organization and delivery of the Halifax International Security Forum. DND and ACOA agreed to support this Forum for 4 years through partial annual funding. (Fin CS)
- The 2011 Halifax Forum brought together 300 world-renowned thinkers and policy-makers to share ideas and solutions to pressing and emerging global issues. Key participants included the US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, the UK Minister for International Security Strategy Gerald Howarth, and Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak. (ADM(Pol))
- The conference is a rare opportunity for like-minded nations to come together in an informal setting, and speak frankly about their concerns through unregulated exchanges and debates. As in previous years, this year's conference featured lively and dynamic debates on a number of pressing and emerging global issues. (ADM(Pol))
- This year's discussions were particularly focused on the impact of fiscal restraint on security, as well as the emergence of new regional powers in the Middle East. Other key topics included changes to the security environment since 9/11, the future of the transatlantic alliance, as well as the future of Israel-Palestine relations. (ADM(Pol))

Questions:

- 1) **Why is DND providing so much funding to an event organized by a non-government organization?**
 - Recognizing that defence and security is inextricably linked with economic and social challenges, Minister Peter MacKay has hosted the Forum since the inaugural conference in 2009. Now in its third year, the Forum has established itself as *the* gathering place to discuss global issues. From the Americas to Asia, from the economy to emerging threats, the Halifax Forum fosters frank and informal discussions on issues that define our time. (D Cab LN)
 - DND has provided seed money to allow this initiative to get off the ground. Conference organizers have committed to make the Forum self-sustaining by the end of the conference in 2013. The Forum has already begun to attract other contributors. This year, NATO was one of the financial sponsors. (D Cab LN)
- 2) **Why is DND funding this event at a time when funding for academic institutions dealing with defence issues – such as that provided by the Security and Defence Forum (SDF) – is under review?**
 - Since 2009, the Halifax International Security Forum has been bringing together creative thinkers from different backgrounds to share lessons learned and develop innovative approaches to meet today's challenges and prepare for what we will face tomorrow. As such, the Forum is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to Canadians and key international security decision-makers how Canada continues to lead on the global stage. (D Cab LN)

3) **For how many years will you continue to fund the Forum?**

- The Department of National Defence (DND) and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) have provided approximately \$2.5M a year to help support the Forum since the inaugural conference in 2009. This financial contribution is scheduled to continue through the 2013 conference. For their part, conference organizers have committed to make the Forum self-sustaining, beginning in 2014. (D Cab LN)



4) **Does DND have any say in the planning of this event?**

- DND assists the organizers in shaping the agenda as well as identifying and recruiting potential invitees. Many prominent Canadians attend this event, which is hosted by MND, Peter MacKay. This year, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister of National Defence all attended the event, along with many high ranking military officers, including LGen Bouchard, who commanded NATO forces in Libya. (D Cab LN)

5) **Is DND funding or in any way paying for the speakers who attend this event? For example, do you pay for travel, honorarium or hotels?**

- The DND and ACOA contribution supports the costs associated with staging the HISF, including facility rental, logistical and technical support, consulting, publications, translation services, travel and accommodations for the speakers, and catering. (ADM (Pol) – D Cab LN; ACOA PA Team)

6) **DND has been funding this forum since 2009. How come you do not have the costs of staff and travel for the 2009 and 2010 events?**

- Forthcoming from D Cab LN.

**Pages 90 to / à 93
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sont retenues en vertu des articles**

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