

Candidate disagrees with Navy assessment

(Re: Canada's Navy under Harper is 'just not seaworthy, August 20)

Unlike the previous Liberal government, who allowed Canada's military to fall into disrepair during what former Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier called a "decade of darkness", our Conservative government has provided our Armed Forces with the equipment they need to get the job done.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, our Conservative Government increased the annual budget of the Canadian Armed Forces from \$13 billion in 2005, the last year the Liberals were in power, to over \$20 billion today.

When we first took office, we made several major purchases to make up for years of Liberal neglect. This includes five new C-17 Globemaster strategic airlift craft, 17 new C-130J Hercules tactical airlift craft, 15 Chinook helicopters, new Leopard II tanks, upgraded Halifax frigates and Aurora surveillance planes, and we launched the National Shipbuilding Program.

All these purchases greatly increased the capabilities of our Armed Forces, especially during the Afghanistan mission. Meanwhile the Liberals opposed our efforts - John McCallum, the Liberal member for Markham-Unionville, a former Liberal Defence Minister no less, said in 2008: "I think the Defence budget has gone up at an alarming rate."

With respect to the Royal Canadian Navy, thanks to investments made by this Government, our Navy is undergoing the most intensive and comprehensive fleet modernization in Canada's peacetime history.

The Halifax-class modernization program is giving our frigates new equipment, sensors, and weapons. Once modernized, these ships will have a world class, multi-role combat suite capable of conducting complex missions in both the open-ocean and coastal environments. The program is on track and on schedule.

During this intense period of transition, the Royal Canadian Navy will be able to count on its modernized Halifax-class frigates, its Victoria-class submarines and Kingston-class vessels to carry out tasks and missions set by the government.

Our Conservative Government remains committed to ensuring the Canadian Armed Forces have the equipment it needs and is delivering on this commitment.

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