

REINVESTING IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES: A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence

The Honourable Daniel Lang, Chair
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AUXILIARY OILER REPLENISHMENT SHIPS NEEDED!



RESOLVE CLASS AOR



(SOURCE: FEDERAL FLEET)

Project Resolve involves the conversion of a modern, European-built containership into an Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment ship. The concept of converting a containership into a naval fleet auxiliary ship is not a new one – it has been performed on several occasions over the past decades including by the Royal Navy and the United States Navy.

Designed by NavTech, a leading Canadian Naval Architecture firm and Rolls Royce Marine, the ship will be converted at Federal Fleet Services' sister-company, Chantier Davie Canada in Quebec. A pan-Canadian supplier network spanning six provinces has been selected to provide equipment and services for the program.

The ship will then be made available to the Royal Canadian Navy with full services provision for the following 10 years. The government of Canada possesses an option to buy the ship at the end of the 10 years.

Source: Federal Fleet

It is essential to ensure that the Navy possesses sufficient at-sea refuelling support in both the Atlantic and in the Pacific. Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment ships core capabilities include: provision of fuel, ammunition, spare parts, food, and water, and other supplies; modern medical and dental care facilities, including an operating room; repair facilities and expertise to keep helicopters and other equipment functioning; and basic self-defence functions.⁷⁸ Without this capability, a forward deployed vessel's captain will spend time worrying about where to obtain fuel next. This impacts what the ship does, its speed, where it goes and how effective it will be at sea. To ensure optimal capabilities of Canada's naval war ships, it is vital to secure our own Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment support ships.

This means that the Government should aim to provide two underway support ships for the fleet in both oceans, allowing one to always be available for operations when the other is in refit/maintenance or if it is deployed elsewhere. Since only two Joint Support Ships are likely to

⁷⁸ LEADMARK 2050, page 41

be constructed under the National Shipbuilding Strategy, the Government should act to retain the current Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) Resolve-class vessel being converted by Davie Shipbuilding, and also procure an additional vessel of this type by 2018. This will provide Canada with four supply ships, two AORs by 2018 (one on each coast) and another two, when the Joint Supply Ships are delivered by Seaspan.

These four ships also possess a modest secondary capacity to support forces ashore and can therefore significantly enhance the Navy's ability to respond to humanitarian emergencies. By basing these four ships, two on each coast, the government will be able to significantly bolster the government's desire to contribute to peace support and humanitarian operations, in line with the Minister's Mandate letter.

In order for the Royal Canadian Navy to simultaneously meet a high readiness state as part of NORAD and NATO, and to effectively defend Canada, it is recommended that the Government of Canada commit to a balanced naval capability with an effective presence in all three of Canada's oceans and that it:

Recommendation 16:

Procure a second Resolve-Class Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) ship by 2018 to address an urgent capability gap on each coast.

MARITIME COASTAL DEFENCE VESSELS INADEQUATE



HMCS Yellowknife conducts Hoist Ex with United States Coast Guard Helicopter

Source: Royal Canadian Navy

The Committee is concerned that the Navy's current fleet of Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels is inadequate to the many roles that are assigned to it. These vessels are not only tasked with patrolling Canadian coastal waters, they are also key training assets for the Navy and are the principal naval platform tasked with a mine countermeasures role. With respect to the latter role, the Committee notes that other allies are now engaged in a significant modernization of