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NATIONAL SHIPBUILDING – CANADA COULD HAVE HER CAKE AND MORE

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JCSP 43 DL

Exercise Solo Flight

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A BILL FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Canadian history, the story of defence procurement has more often than not been characterized by massive inefficiency and waste.¹

- Eric Morse, Canadian defence procurement still looks like massive case of Charlie Foxtrot

Defence procurement for any country is a very large, complex system with multiple levels of inter-agency relations and numerous stakeholders that have a lot to gain or lose. This is particularly true with respect to Canadian defence procurement where, “Canada is seen to have a more onerous and unpredictable procurement process than other nations.”² The main reason for the unpredictability is the promise of cancellation or manipulation of large, expensive procurement projects during election campaigns for political parties to gain votes. In most circumstances, it forces the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to spend extra time and money on maintaining the old systems and then completely restart the same project for a requirement that still remains. This paper will examine why the Canadian public “accepts” the governmental parties’ actions, why the politicians do it and show past and current examples of delays and effects to large procurement projects being manipulated by the political parties during elections. In the end, this paper will show that the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) must convince the Minister of National Defence (MND) to introduce a bill in the House of Commons to prevent the discussion or management of procurement projects during and shortly after election campaigns.

¹ iPolitics, “Canadian defence procurement still looks like massive case of Charlie Foxtrot,” last accessed 22 April 2018, <https://ipolitics.ca/2017/01/03/canadian-defence-procurement-still-looks-like-massive-case-of-charlie-foxtrot/>.

² Defence and Security, “Improving Canadian Defence Procurement,” last accessed 22 April 2018, <https://www.defenceandsecurity.ca/UserFiles/File/IE/Annex%20E%20-%20Consultation%20Summary.pdf>.

This will benefit the government in power (and all political parties), as well as DND and the Canadian public.

THE PROBLEM SPACE

In Canadian defence procurement, “delays in the procurement process are the primary problem.”³ There are many aspects that contribute to these delays such as insufficient numbers of hired personnel to complete all the work where defence project staffing levels have been reduced from 9,000 to 4,200 from 1990 to 2004.⁴ Defence spending is lacking as it is only at 1.2 percent of the Gross Domestic Product⁵ but “[t]he official North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) target, agreed to in 2014 by all allies, including Canada, is 2.0 percent.”⁶ The lack of a single governing body for defence procurements as responsibility is shared between the MND, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED), and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement (PSPC).⁷ The “rotational nature of military personnel moving in and out of the procurement group within DND”⁸ causes a lack of project continuity. Even if all of the aforementioned issues were resolved completely, it would not matter because the government in power is making rash decisions or promises to cancel or alter projects without understanding the full context of the project in an attempt to gain or keep political power during elections. Examples of this will be shown later but first an understanding of how politicians are able to do this is needed.

³ David Perry, "Putting the 'Armed' Back into the Canadian Armed Forces Improving Defence Procurement in Canada," *Vimy Paper*, no. 21 (2015): 3.

⁴ CBC, “Defence procurement delays, cost overruns caused by staffing cuts,” last accessed 14 May 2018, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/defence-procurement-delays-cost-overruns-caused-by-staffing-cuts-1.2900150>.

⁵ Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: National Defence, 2017), 46.

⁶ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 109.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

According to Kim Nossal, the following factors have a critical impact on a state's power; geographic location, economic structure, group dynamics, and capability.⁹ Of these, geographic location and group dynamic are the most applicable where the surrounding three oceans and the relationship and border with the United States (US) offer Canada significant protection, particularly due to the US concern for its own protection.¹⁰ Due to Canada's geographic location and the protection that the US offers, the Canadian population has never had a significant motivator to generate a large military, aside from the World Wars. Using this historical culture of Canadian security, "Canadian politicians have [had] no hesitation in playing politics with defence procurements when it suits them."¹¹ Voters will not reward political parties by solving problems that do not see results for many years.¹² People want to see instant gratification or results so the only motivation for political parties is "saving money" in the eyes of the public. Additionally, "[w]hen new prime ministers come to power in Canada, they invariably seek to put their own stamp on Canada's engagement in the world."¹³ As such, each of the seven white papers written for Canadian defence (1964, 1971, 1987, 1994, 2005, 2008, and 2016) were not written for strategic defence reasons but to distinguish the new government in power.¹⁴ These papers were not created for the sole purpose to increase military capability but to conform to political party ambitions, removing the great work of previous parties in power with a negative

⁸ J.C. Stone, *A Separate Defence Procurement Agency: Will it Actually Make a Difference?* (Ottawa: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, February 2012), 12.

⁹ Kim Richard Nossal, Stéphane Roussel, and Stéphane Paquin, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 4th ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 9.

¹⁰ Canada, Global Affairs Canada, "Address by Minister Freeland on Canada's foreign policy priorities," last accessed 20 December 2017, https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/address_by_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicypriorities.html.

¹¹ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 102.

¹² Sohail Inayatullah, "Six Pillars: Futures Thinking for Transformation," *Foresight* 10, no. 1 (2008): 9.

¹³ CDA Institute, "The Strategic Outlook for Canada 2017," *Vimy Paper*, no. 34 (2017): 1.

¹⁴ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 149-150.

spin or tailoring key future dates to political campaigns.¹⁵ The next section will demonstrate how past and present governments have played partisan politics with defence procurement projects to the vast negative effect for DND and for all of Canada.

CF-105 AVRO ARROW

The Avro Arrow had the potential to be a massive, positive turning point in Canadian history. An aircraft that was designed and to be built by Canadian companies was breaking aircraft limits in test designs and staged to be a world leading aircraft for other countries to purchase for their own national defence. Unfortunately, “[t]he Avro Canada CF-105 Arrow remains the most iconic example of a Canadian defence procurement project gone wrong.”¹⁶ Costs of the projects had escalated so high due to added development costs (from 1.5 million dollars to 12.5 million dollars per jet) for various systems that changed over the airframe’s development that the Liberal government was considering to cancel the program but held off due to the upcoming election in 1957. In 1957, the Conservatives won a minority government and wanted to cancel the program as well but held off addressing the issue until they won a majority government in 1958 and eventually cancelling the program in 1959.¹⁷ The failure of the Avro Arrow is not was not fully the responsibility of the government in power but delaying the cancellation of the project was, which added wasted project costs and wasted man-hours that could have been put to better use. This is especially true and applicable since the requirement for a fighter replacement was still required. The success of this program would have put Canada into the aviation industry challenging American companies and potentially, Canadian defence

¹⁵ Aaron Plamondon, *The Politics of Procurement: Military Acquisition in Canada and the Sea King Helicopter* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), ix.

¹⁶ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 42-43.

procurement would not be experiencing the more recent political dithering if we had a Canadian aviation solution.

CF-188 REPLACEMENT

The next example is the on-going project to replace the CF-188 Hornet. The replacement of Canada's defence fighter jet is one of the more important projects Canada has, as they contribute to Canadian defence as well as to the defence of North America through North American Air Defence (NORAD). Also, they are used extensively for Canadian contributions to foreign missions, such as those in Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, and Syria.¹⁸ Since the defence of Canada and North America are directly linked, Canada requires high integration with the US as well as other allies for foreign missions. Since the US is replacing the majority of their fighter aircraft with the Lockheed Martin F-35 and that Canada needs a high level of integration with the US, the F-35 was initially selected as the CF-188 replacement aircraft. Unfortunately, the Conservative government politicized this project, "[s]eeing the F-35 as a useful way to boost their political fortunes."¹⁹ The Liberal government used the project for their own campaign stating that they would cancel the purchase of F-35 jet fighters on the basis that they were too expensive.²⁰ The focus here was towards the Canadian public's view on money spent and not best value. There was no discussion on requirements, nor the positives and negative aspects of the project other than money because that is what political parties can use during campaigns to win votes.

¹⁸ Government of Canada, "The Role of Canada's CF-18 Fighter Fleet," last accessed 20 May 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2016/11/role-canada-18-fighter-fleet.html>.

¹⁹ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 75.

²⁰ Major Devin Conley and Dr. Eric Ouellet, "The Canadian Forces and Military Transformation: An Elusive Quest for Efficiency," *Canadian Army Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 81.

Furthermore, during Justin Trudeau's campaign, he claimed that the F-35 would not be allowed to compete in the "open" competition for the CF-188 replacement.²¹ This demonstrates rash political promises to garner votes without understanding the full context. When the Liberals came to power, they were quickly advised by their lawyers of the error of their decision to cut the F-35 from the competition to potential lawsuits and being frozen from Lockheed Martin's global value chains.²² Although Trudeau made some brash public comments regarding the F-35, the F-35 is still being considered as a potential replacement but due to the delays caused from the election campaigns, the CF-188 will need an interim solution until the replacement project can come to fruition. Trudeau wanted to buy Super Hornets which are more modern versions of the CF-188 and used this as a pitch to use Super Hornets as the CF-188 full replacement. Unfortunately, the Super Hornet is a completely different type of aircraft compared to the CF-188 and it would require its own new maintenance cycle, training, etc., much like a brand new fleet. It took a letter from many previous Commanders of the Air Force to convince Trudeau that this was not a good option and buying used F-18's close to the same variant as Canada's would be a better temporary solution.²³ Several man-hours and funding was lost due to the fact that this project was used as a pawn in a political campaign chess game.

CH-124 SEA KING REPLACEMENT

Since the Avro Arrow procurement is the most iconic based upon the massive turning point this would have been in Canadian and World history, the CH-124 Sea King replacement is

²¹ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 81.

²² CDA Institute, "The Strategic Outlook for Canada 2017," *Vimy Paper*, no. 34 (2017): 2.

²³ Canada, Senate Canada, Report of the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, *Reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces: A Plan for the Future* (Ottawa: Senate Canada, May 2017), 77-78.

by far “Canada’s longest running military procurement.”²⁴ It has been an embarrassment to Canada that this project is still ongoing and experiencing significant problems all due to the fact that Jean Chrétien used this project in its earlier stages in order to generate votes to remove the Conservative government from power. This has been described publically in MacLean’s magazine and it refers to other projects that were awarded not on merit but in a “cynical effort to generate votes.”²⁵ The EH-101 was to replace the Sea King helicopters through the New Shipborne Aircraft (NSA) project and replace the CH-113 Labrador helicopters through the New Search and Rescue Helicopter (NSH) project. Having the EH-101 replace both fleets offered fleet commonality, reduced maintenance costs and reduced training for aircrew and technicians. These benefits were eradicated by the project’s cancellation once Jean Chrétien came to power as part of his campaign promise. He did this by a misinformation campaign by extrapolating project costs and stating that the EH-101 is an attack helicopter only (no mention of search and rescue use) not needed in a post-Cold War era.²⁶ This cancellation would have created 45,000 person-years of employment over ten years, the Canadian variant would have been more than 50 percent Canadian-made and Canadian companies would have had technological transfers given to them.²⁷ Moreover, 400 companies were to be employed²⁸ where 113 percent of the purchase price was expected to flow back into Canada, thus it would have given the Canadian economy a 13 percent increase in simple math.²⁹ In total, 478.3 million dollars had to be paid out due to the

²⁴ Aaron Plamondon, *The Politics of Procurement: Military Acquisition in Canada and the Sea King Helicopter* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), 111.

²⁵ MacLeans, “Military procurement is a national disgrace,” last accessed 17 February 2018, <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/military-procurement-is-a-national-disgrace/>.

²⁶ Aaron Plamondon, *The Politics of Procurement: Military Acquisition in Canada and the Sea King Helicopter* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), xiv.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 107.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 111.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 109.

EH-101 cancellation but this does not include the loss to the Canadian economy where Canada lost research and development and many Canadians were laid off.³⁰

This political interference for votes has further substantiation. Since the NSA and NSH replacement projects were still required, these projects were separated to speed the replacement of the search and rescue (SAR) helicopters. The EH-101 won the contract for the SAR helicopter replacement because it was the right helicopter for the job but this brought a great deal of embarrassment to the Liberal party in power who had cancelled the project earlier at great loss. After the EH-101 won the contract to replace the CH-113 Labrador search and rescue helicopters, the government forced DND to reduce the 1400 mandatory requirements to 475 requirements for the continuing Sea King replacement project in order to ensure that the EH-101 did not win this contract as well. The process to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) was dragged out to not favour the EH-101 and to have another prime minister in charge when the contract was awarded.³¹ Additionally, the Liberal government attempted to destroy all NSA documentation to remove any historical criticism.³² These actions are not the representative of a responsible government and it has resulted in great loss to Canada. If politicians never had the opportunity to use procurement projects as part of election campaigns, this could have been avoided for the benefit of all.

³⁰ Aaron Plamondon, *The Politics of Procurement: Military Acquisition in Canada and the Sea King Helicopter* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), xv.

³¹ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 69.

³² Aaron Plamondon, *The Politics of Procurement: Military Acquisition in Canada and the Sea King Helicopter* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), xv.

THE SOLUTION

“Since 2005, the Government of Canada mantra has been, ‘Deliver services smarter, faster and at a reduced cost’.”³³ Additionally, the three key objectives of the Canadian government’s approach to defence procurement are to:

1. deliver the right equipment to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Canadian Coast Guard in a timely manner;
2. leverage our purchases of defence equipment to create jobs and economic growth in Canada; and
3. streamline defence procurement processes.³⁴

To date, and based upon the few examples shown in this paper, the government has not followed its own policy and guidance to the detriment of Canada. The wrong equipment has been delivered in a not so timely manner, jobs have been lost due to cancellations, the process can never streamline if it continually has to restart. It is understood that there are many problems with defence procurement but the “[p]oor management of defence procurement has never been a central issue in any election campaign and is unlikely to become one in the future.”³⁵ So the use of procurement projects during election campaigns is strictly to garner votes based upon the “picture painted” to the public, which is the selected information presented to elicit a reaction. The solution is to remove the ability to discuss or modify procurement projects during and shortly after election campaigns.

³³ Marion Soublière, *Getting Work with the Federal Government: A Guide to Figuring Out the Procurement Puzzle* (New York and Bloomington: iUniverse Inc., 2009), 1.

³⁴ Stone, J. Craig, “Implementing the Defence Procurement Strategy: Is It Working?” *Canadian Global Affairs Institute* (July 2016): 1.

³⁵ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 112.

This may have a non-desirable appearance but “[t]here actually is a good reason for foregoing the short-term benefits of playing politics with defence procurement: self-interest.”³⁶ Leaving defence procurement to progress unhindered by political parties allows the projects to finish sooner, costs less money and most importantly, it allows political parties to not inherit long-term problems of procurements should their party get into power. This also benefits the main stakeholders within the procurement world. DND obviously benefits by acquiring equipment and capabilities quickly in order to defend Canada, North America and project international interests. This does not prevent the government in power from managing DND as this can occur through the normal process of Memorandums to Cabinet with each project. It also improves the confidence in the relationship between DND and the government in power.

Another stakeholder is PSPC, who are responsible for the contracting aspect of procurement projects. By avoiding large delays or introducing uncertainty of procurement projects from promises during election campaigns, PSPC could focus on each project and reduce the turn-around time to meet key milestones for each project. This time reduction would enable the processing of more projects with limited staff which was already identified within this paper. This time reduction and increased work efficiency equally applies to DND as well as ISED Canada, who are, in simple terms, responsible for economic growth and development in Canada, which translates to Canadian jobs. ISED Canada should not have to worry as Canadian jobs and resource income is secured through the Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITB) policy which ensure 100 percent of project costs are to return to Canada.³⁷ Reduced delays in procurement projects translates into more projects being processed and increased rates of new jobs as a result

³⁶ Kim Richard Nossal, *Charlie Foxtrot: Fixing Defence Procurement in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016), 160.

³⁷ Government of Canada, “Industrial and Technological Benefits,” last accessed 23 May 2018, <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/086.nsf/eng/home>.

of ITBs of those projects. Reduced project timelines were successfully demonstrated with the Harper administration when the CC-130J and CC-177 fleets were quickly acquired, as well as other urgent requirements for the Afghanistan war.³⁸ At that time, political parties could not or would not try to drive a different solution or try to limit the flow of information because so much information was being provided by the media of the war in Afghanistan. With no political manipulation, the procurement process was able to function as designed and troops in Afghanistan were supported, as well as support to follow-on Canadian international interests with the CC-130J and CC-177.

The largest convincing argument is to save money. With no political party manoeuvring or posturing during election campaigns, projects progress quickly like the CC-130J and CC-177 fleets, and do not get dragged out indefinitely. If the projects are delayed, “keeping project offices open can cost more than 10 million [dollars] annually.”³⁹ Using the CH-124 replacement project as an example, Jean Chrétien cancelled the project in 1993 and the project needed to remain open for another three years. The project team is still running and will continue to run for an undetermined amount of time until the CH-148 issues are resolved so the additional project office costs alone, as of today ($\{2018 \text{ minus } 1993 \text{ plus } 3 \text{ years}\} \text{ times } 10$), are 120 million dollars and rising. Add this to the 478.3 million dollars paid in penalties, the unaccounted costs of lost jobs and technological gains in Canada, as well as the ever increasing maintenance costs of the old CH-124, virtually totals the cost of a complete procurement project with never have benefitting from it. This money could have been used to hire more staff or acquire more equipment, all of which would have cascading benefits into other projects.

³⁸ David Perry, "Putting the 'Armed' Back into the Canadian Armed Forces Improving Defence Procurement in Canada," *Vimy Paper*, no. 21 (2015): 4.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

The solution is to prevent these massive projects delays as a result of political campaigns (i.e. political leaders mismanaging procurement projects outside the normal methods and for the wrong reasons) to remove the discussion or promises towards any procurement projects during election campaigns completely. The MND's first line of accountability is to the House of Commons, while the second is to the Prime Minister.⁴⁰ This accountability and support from the other key ministers, the Minister of PSPC and the Minister of ISED, as their agencies would benefit as well, gives the MND solid substantiation to submit a bill for action in the House of Commons to prevent the discussion or manipulation of procurement projects during and shortly after election campaigns. With the removal of sudden changes by politicians outside the normal mechanisms, other agencies, such as DND, PSPC and ISED Canada can focus on fixing other procurement issues.

CONCLUSION

Fortunately for Canada, Canada experiences a great deal of security due to its geographical location by being surrounded by three massive oceans and only has a border with the US. The US, being the world superpower and due to its own self-interest of defence to North America, offers Canada added protection. This great sense of security removes the constant reminder to the Canadian public the requirement for well-equipped defence forces. Politicians have used this safe culture as a mechanism to promise to cancel or make sudden changes to procurement projects to "save money" in the eyes of the public during election campaigns to gain votes. Three main replacement projects that experienced significant delays due to political games during elections were given as examples (the Avro Arrow, the CF-188 and the CH-124). Based upon these examples, needless delays were incurred and large amounts of time and money

⁴⁰ Philippe Lagassé, "Accountability for National Defence: Ministerial Responsibility, Military Command

were wasted. The CH-124 replacement has been and still is Canada's longest running project, 478.3 million dollars was paid in penalties, plus additional project running costs, additional increased maintenance costs and lost Canadian jobs. It has also been shown that procurement projects can proceed quickly when unhindered by politicians such as the CC-130J and CC-177 projects. Since the governments in power have not been following their own policy for procurement and that the MND has direct access to the House of Commons, he can introduce a bill to prevent future politicians from causing these massive delays during the course of elections, thus this paper has shown substantiation that the CDS must convince the MND to introduce a bill in the House of Commons to prevent the discussion and management of procurement projects during and shortly after election campaigns. This will benefit the politicians with no negative consequences from previous election campaign actions, speed the process for procurement and save money for Canada, thereby eliminating the "massive inefficiency and waste" as highlighted by Eric Morse.

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