



## Securing the Homeland: Scenarios, Implications, and Preparedness for Military Domestic Operations on Canadian Soil

Major Lisa M. Nodwell

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# **SECURING THE HOMELAND: SCENARIOS, IMPLICATIONS, AND PREPAREDNESS FOR MILITARY DOMESTIC OPERATIONS ON CANADIAN SOIL**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) stands ready to fight at anytime and anywhere. That includes Canada. While the CAF is experienced in domestic operations such as responding to provincial Request For Assistance (RFA) related to floods and fires, little consideration has been given to scenarios where military force on Canadian soil might be required. The CAF must prepare and train for these scenarios, as they are foreseeable and would necessitate a force the size of the CAF for a response. These scenarios present serious implications for the security and sovereignty of Canada and, while uncomfortable to imagine happening, are necessary to accept as plausible. The planning and training of such scenarios involves not only standard military considerations but also unique interactions with other government departments, agencies, and the public, which must be explored. There are also unique security considerations given the potential adversaries in the scenarios belonging to other government departments and/or the Canadian public. Though hard to imagine, the possibility of the CAF employing force and violence in specific deployments within Canada necessitates a transition from viewing the military as a force of last resort to one engaged in proactive planning, specialized training, and comprehensive readiness to address any potential domestic threat. This paper examines likely scenarios where military force on Canadian soil may be required and the implications for planning, training, and security considerations to ensure success.

### **A World of Insecurity**

Canada, internationally and domestically, is facing an increasingly complicated world with emerging threats and the renewal of peer competition and conflict. Global security challenges, both uniquely and collectively, mean national security is an important topic. The role of the CAF in Canada's security, both at home and abroad is ever more poignant. Top Canadian military member, Chief of Defence Staff, General Wayne Eyre stated "take a look at the world security situation, which is deteriorating around us. The demand signal for those primary tasks we're responsible for is only increasing."<sup>1</sup> The complex multipolar world and great power competition between China, Russia, and the United States has unveiled a multitude of tactics that fall below the threshold of armed conflict but sit squarely in the realm of hybrid warfare.

Canada is not immune to these tactics and has seen these influences play out inside of its borders. Domestic concerns have been cited by Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) of state-sponsored threat activity to the Canadian government and Canadian businesses; various sophisticated, persistent, and pervasive foreign

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada. Standing Committee on National Defence, "Rising Domestic Operational Deployments and Challenges for the Canadian Armed Forces" Meeting 82. 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament. 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 23 November 2023.

interference activities aimed at the government, the private sector, civil society groups, and Canadian communities; state-sponsored threat actors exploiting investment and trade with Canada; cyberattacks; and clandestine procurement of sensitive, restricted, and dual-use goods and technologies to further their own Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs.<sup>2</sup> As an example, in 2022, CSIS also reported that the People's Republic of China (PRC) Ministry of Public Security (MPS) had set up three overseas "police stations" in Canada, without permission from the Government of Canada.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the Government of Canada is presently conducting a federal inquiry regarding the alleged Chinese and Russian foreign interference in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.<sup>4</sup> Other incidents contributing to unrest or dissention in Canada include incidents of Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE), which resulted in killing 26 people and wounding 40 others on Canadian soil since 2014.<sup>5</sup> These concerns ultimately affect Canada's security, sovereignty, national interests, and values. They form part of broader international insecurity concerns resulting from destabilizing efforts by Russia and China, challenges to the rules-based international order, and the rise in authoritarian nationalism.<sup>6</sup> These scenarios should awaken Canada and its population from its slumber of comfort.

The Canadian population has largely been lulled into a false sense of security due to the relative calm during the period following the end of the Cold War and the lack of large-scale terrorist attacks in Canada following the September 11<sup>th</sup> Attacks (9/11). It is not that Canada is a comparably unsafe country, but it is not the "...fireproof house, far from inflammable materials..." that Senator Dandurand claimed it to be in 1924.<sup>7</sup>

It is reasonable, therefore, to consider the above-mentioned concerns to contribute to large-scale threats like urban riots or cyberattacks that might liberate prisoners en masse, or the attempted overturn of the government. It is also reasonable, therefore, to consider how our security forces, namely the CAF, would manage these large-scale security challenges within Canada. The CAF should consider the need to fulfill calls to address domestic security challenges. Even though this shift reflects a broader North American trend towards the militarization of domestic security, it would demonstrate the government seeks to ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens in an era marked by terrorism, civil unrest, and other threats.

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<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada. Canadian Security Intelligence Service. *CSIS 2021 Public Report*. 2022. p.16, 20, 21, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. Canadian Security Intelligence Service. *CSIS 2022 Public Report*. 2023. p.20.

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada. Foreign Interference Commission. *Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions*, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada. *CSIS 2021 Public Report*. 2022. p.16, 20, 21, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Bessma Momani. *International Security: Canada's Role in Meeting Global Threats*. Waterloo, Ontario: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2021. p.1.

<sup>7</sup> Garrett Hallman. *Domestic Operations Readiness: Evolving to Match Preparedness to Threats*. Toronto, Ont.: Canadian Forces College, 2018. p.76.

## CAF Increased Focus on Supporting Domestic Operations

Provinces and territories suffering from domestic emergencies such as floods, fires, hurricanes, and ice storms must first utilize their own resources to address the situation. If the need is beyond the scope of the province, there is an established procedure for a request of military assistance. A RFA is made by the provincial/territorial government to the federal government. Such large-scale RFAs generally involve requesting the CAF directly. All instructions to the Canadian Forces, whether from the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, or the Governor General must “be issued by or through the Chief of Defence Staff”, a uniformed member appointed by the Governor in Council and charged with the control and administration of the Canadian Forces: “all orders and instructions to the Canadian Forces that are required to give effect to the decisions and to carry out the directions of the Government of Canada or the Minister shall be issued by or through the Chief of the Defence Staff.”<sup>8</sup>

The CAF has been increasingly looked upon to support domestic operations, largely provincial and territorial RFAs for floods and fires. In the past ten years, those requests have increased substantially. Between 2010 and 2016, RFAs averaged two per year from the provinces and territories. However, in 2023, there were eight.<sup>9</sup> This corroborates data collected since 2012 that show a 187% increase in climate-related domestic operations, 67% increase in deployed personnel, and 170% increase in deployment days.<sup>10</sup> While the CAF has been viewed as a tool of last resort when primary responses by municipal, provincial, and federal capabilities are exhausted,<sup>11</sup> this increase would suggest a changing expectation toward the CAF to assist in exceptional events of national interest.

The Chief of Defence Staff argues that, while it is a tidy and complete package to call upon, the CAF is a very expensive package and CAF readiness to conduct high-end combat is decreasing in part due to these domestic responses.<sup>12</sup> This is a partly valid assessment, particularly given CAF recruitment and retention rates currently equate to an unsustainable attrition rate of military members.<sup>13</sup> While the new defence policy update includes initiatives to overcome these challenges, these changes and goal markers extend out to 2032.<sup>14</sup> A very real lack of military personnel presently exists. However, the defence policy update also contends, that the military “is helping meet a growing need to support civil authorities in natural disaster response, both at home and abroad, and will

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<sup>8</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence Act, R.S.C. 1985. c. N-5 Part II, s. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Government of Canada. Standing Committee on National Defence. “Rising Domestic Operational Deployments and Challenges.” 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada. Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) *Report Summary: Ready Forces Integrated Strategic Analysis*, 2023. p.4.

<sup>11</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. “*Canadian Forces Joint Publication 3-2 Domestic Operations*”. 2011. p.1-3.

<sup>12</sup> Government of Canada. Standing Committee on National Defence, “Rising Domestic Operational Deployments and Challenges.

<sup>13</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence*. 2024. p.17.

<sup>14</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence*. 2024. p.18.

continue to respond to calls for help.”<sup>15</sup> In the past, it was asserted that participation in domestic support during the Oka crisis and other operations were experiences that “complemented training for high-intensity war (the army's primary mission) and did not detract from it.”<sup>16</sup> Given the security implications of large-scale natural disasters, political impetus for the CAF involvement may be viewed as part of fulfilling the CAF’s most important role of defending Canada and Canadians. Indeed, five of the eight core missions identified for the CAF in the new defence policy update include domestic and North American priorities. The remaining three are related to international missions. This eliminates doubt on the priority placed by Department of National Defence (DND) and the CAF on home and continental defence.

Within Canada, there are multiple agencies responsible for national security. Though spearheaded by Public Safety, national security of various elements is embedded in nearly two dozen agencies.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the more commonly-referred departments like Communication and Security Establishment (CSE), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), CSIS, Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the CAF, other departments like Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), Correctional Service of Canada (CS), and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) play a critical role in ensuring national interests are protected.<sup>18</sup> All of these play a role in counter-terrorism, whether domestic or abroad, as well as incidents like large-scale riots or prison breaks.<sup>19</sup> In addition to Canadian legislation that carefully outlines the roles and responsibilities of each department when it comes to national security issues, the *National Security Act, 2017* provides agencies with “clear constitutional and legal framework they need to do their work effectively while safeguarding Canadians’ rights and freedoms.”<sup>20</sup>

## DISCUSSION

### Scenarios for military Use of Force

The Canadian military possesses a long history of domestic operations. While recent operations have involved RFAs from provincial and territorial governments to aid with natural disasters like floods, ice storms, hurricanes, and fires, Canadian history has recorded military action in stopping rebellions, aiding in riots and strikes, and assisting

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<sup>15</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence*. 2024. p.3.

<sup>16</sup> Sean M. Maloney. "Domestic Operations: The Canadian Approach." *Parameters* 27, no. 3 1997. p.150.

<sup>17</sup> Government of Canada. National Security.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/nationalsecurity/national-security-transparency-commitment.html>. Retrieved 3 May, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Government of Canada. National Security.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/nationalsecurity/our-security-our-rights.html>. Retrieved 3 May, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada. Public Safety. *Building Resilience Against Terrorism Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. 2013. Annex A.

<sup>20</sup> Government of Canada. National Security.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/nationalsecurity/our-security-our-rights.html>. Retrieved 3 May, 2024.

law enforcement and penitentiaries.<sup>21</sup> These kinds of potential scenarios that could cause wide-spread threat, terror, or implications for national security should be considered in the context of military use of force. Persistent planning and training should be developed for urban riots, coups d'état, prison breaks, and indigenous independence movements. These are not unlike the scenarios for which the CAF trained when it deployed 16,000 personnel for the 1976 Montreal Olympics and the 1976 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver. Training specifically focused on dealing with threats like bombings, assassinations, demonstrations, barricaded hostage rescue, lone mad-men, and hijackings.<sup>22</sup> In these cases, planners wanted to present a visible deterrent; soldiers were not in full battle order but still in regular uniform with weapons. This such consideration is exactly what must be determined for each scenario as well as other unique planning, training, and security considerations.

## Urban Riots

One potential scenario that could require the use of military force is urban riots or large-scale protests beyond the capacity of police. In recent years, cities around the world have experienced riots and civil unrest sparked by a variety of factors, including economic hardship, social inequality, and political turmoil.<sup>23</sup> While Canada has been relatively spared from such events, the possibility of urban riots breaking out cannot be ruled out entirely. In fact, in 2022, Canada faced large-scale protests over COVID-19 public health measures. Protestors occupied the border crossing in Coutts, Alberta and the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, Ontario. There was also a “Freedom Convoy” of protestors and their families who parked their vehicles – including eighteen-wheelers – on downtown Ottawa streets and did not leave. The protest lasted several weeks and finally, the federal government issued regulations under the *Emergencies Act*. Although the media spread wide speculation about the use of the CAF, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau did not use the *Emergencies Act* to employ the CAF in assisting the public order emergency. Rather, the regulations concentrated on extraordinary powers related to freedom of assembly and dismantling financial support for protesters.<sup>24</sup>

Urban riots pose a significant challenge to domestic security and can escalate quickly, leading to widespread destruction and violence. In the event of urban riots, the CAF may be called upon to support law enforcement agencies in restoring order. This could involve deploying troops to key areas to deter rioters, assisting in the evacuation of civilians, and providing logistical support to law enforcement. During the Muskrat Falls Protests in 2018, the RCMP responded with a surge of personnel to the region to subdue

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<sup>21</sup> Chris Madsen. “Reserves in Aid to the Civil Power: Past Practice and Current Requirements”, draft. 2024. p.1.

<sup>22</sup> Sean M. Maloney. “Domestic Operations.” 1997. p.142.

<sup>23</sup> Markus Holdo and Bo Bengtsson. “Marginalization and Riots: A Rationalistic Explanation of Urban Unrest.” *Housing, Theory, and Society*. 37, no.2. 2020. p.163.

<sup>24</sup> Tyler Wentzell. “Not in the Cards”: The Non-Use of the Canadian Armed Forces in the 2022 Public Order Emergency. *Criminal Law Quarterly*. 70 C.L.Q. 310. 2022. p.8.

the protests and allow construction resume. The CAF, however, did not provide support beyond accommodations in the area.<sup>25</sup>

To prepare for this scenario, the CAF must conduct realistic training exercises that simulate urban riot situations. This training should involve coordination with law enforcement agencies and other emergency responders to ensure a coordinated response.

## **Coup d'état**

Another scenario that could necessitate the use of military force is a coup d'état, given that it is not undertaken by the military or elements of the military, as is often the case.<sup>26</sup> In such a scenario, where the federal police attempted to overthrow the government, the CAF would likely be called upon to restore order and uphold the rule of law. While coups are rare in Western democracies, they have occurred in the past and could potentially happen again. While it seems rather unlikely that Canada would experience a coup d'état, research has shown that there were more successful coups from 2005-2014 (17) than in the decade preceding (15 from 1995-2004); further, the majority of leaders to fall to a coup in the first timeframe were actually governing democracies.<sup>27</sup> Essentially the very idea that such a threat is underestimated means that they are twice as likely to succeed in democracies.<sup>28</sup> This is because "the institutional constraints that keep democratic leaders from making brash accusations against potential rivals also reduce the government's ability to foil plots."<sup>29</sup>

The 'FLQ crisis' in 1970 was a good example of an attempt to overthrow the Quebec government, or at least advocate for independence from Canada. Following more than a decade of riots, bombings, and thefts, including the theft of weapons and explosives, the *Front de libération du Québec* (FLQ) issued a press conference where they stated they would begin a campaign of 'selective assassination'; less than two months after that British Trade Commissioner, James Cross, was kidnapped. Just days later, Quebec Labour Minister, Pierre Laporte, was kidnapped.<sup>30</sup> This precipitated a response from the Government of Canada, which deployed around 9,000 soldiers as part of Operation ESSAY (in Montreal, in aid of the civil power) and Operation GINGER (in Ottawa, to assist the RCMP), and enacted the *War Measures Act*.<sup>31</sup> While the deployment of soldiers provided a massive show of force and resources with which to address the conflicts, the *War Measures Act* gave certain extraordinary powers to the police. Prime

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<sup>25</sup> Terry Roberts. "Emergency Measures, Military Support: Documents Reveal Heightened Concern about Muskrat Falls Security." *CBC News*, February 1, 2018.  
*CBC News*. February 01, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Erica De Bruin. *How to Prevent Coups d'État: Counterbalancing and Regime Survival*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Ithacca: Cornell University Press, 2020. p.15.

<sup>27</sup> Curtis Bell. "Coup d'État and Democracy." *Comparative Political Studies*. 49, no 9. 2016. p.1168.

<sup>28</sup> Curtis Bell. "Coup d'État and Democracy. p.1167.

<sup>29</sup> Curtis Bell. "Coup d'État and Democracy. p.1193.

<sup>30</sup> Dan Loomis, *Not Much Glory: An Account of the Canadian Forces Adaptation to the FLQ Crisis and Other Low Intensity Conflicts*. Toronto, Ont: Deneau Publishers, 1984. p. 28. See Ch 2 for a complete description of FLQ activities.

<sup>31</sup> Sean M. Maloney. "Domestic Operations." p.139.



Minister Pierre Trudeau explained it simply in his national address hours after its enactment:

...the Government, following an analysis of the facts, including requests of the Government of Quebec and the City of Montreal for urgent action, decided to proclaim the War Measures Act. It did so at 4:00 a.m. this morning, in order to permit the full weight of Government to be brought quickly to bear on all those persons advocating or practicing violence as a means of achieving political ends. The War Measures Act gives sweeping powers to the Government. It also suspends the operation of the Canadian Bill of Rights. I can assure you that the Government is most reluctant to seek such powers and did so only when it became crystal clear that the situation could not be controlled unless some extraordinary assistance was made available on an urgent basis. The authority contained in the Act will permit Governments to deal effectively with the nebulous yet dangerous challenge to society represented by the terrorist organizations. The criminal law as it stands is simply not adequate to deal with systematic terrorism. The police have therefore been given certain extraordinary powers necessary for the effective detection and elimination of conspiratorial organizations which advocate the use of violence. These organizations, and membership in them, have been declared illegal. The powers include the right to search and arrest without warrant, to detain suspected persons without the necessity of laying specific charges immediately, and to detain persons without bail.<sup>32</sup>

Researchers who studied this piece of Canadian history described the actions of the FLQ as a “long and protracted revolutionary war in its early stages, and could have been a long and bloody one had it not been quenched by determined Canadian leaders wholly prepared to meet the challenge.”<sup>33</sup>

Preparing for a scenario like a coup d'état requires careful planning and coordination with other government agencies. The CAF must be prepared to quickly deploy troops to key locations to secure government buildings and infrastructure. Additionally, the CAF must be prepared to deal with potential resistance from coup plotters and ensure the safety of civilians. Consideration must also be given to preparing to respond to a scenario where the CAF would be without support and potentially against the national policing force, if the RCMP were to organize a coup. A very plausible

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<sup>32</sup> Trudeau, Pierre Elliott. *Notes for a National Broadcast, October 16, 1970* Library and Archives of Canada, 1970.

<sup>33</sup> Dan Loomis. *Not Much Glory*. p.14.

scenario is described by Madsen (2023) where the RCMP and CAF would be in direct conflict.<sup>34</sup>

### **Large-Scale Prison Break**

A third scenario that could require the use of military force is a large-scale prison break. While prison breaks are relatively rare in Canada, they do occur from time to time.

In such a scenario, the CAF could be called upon to assist law enforcement agencies in capturing and detaining escaped prisoners or confining prisoners within an established perimeter (i.e. building, cordoned area).

Preparing for this scenario involves conducting training exercises that simulate a prison break situation. This should include coordinated hunting teams for violent offenders, cordon and search, and possible hostage scenarios. This training should involve coordination with law enforcement agencies, other emergency responders, and public affairs and public safety to ensure a swift and effective response.

### **Indigenous Independence Movement**

Finally, a fourth scenario that could necessitate the use of military force is an Indigenous independence movement. While the vast majority of Indigenous peoples in Canada support the country's unity and attempts at reconciliation, there are some who advocate for independence. In such a scenario, the CAF could be called upon to maintain order and protect national sovereignty. This is exactly what happened in the aid to the civil power by the CAF at Oka in 1990 and with the RCMP and First Nations Sun Dancers in Gustafsen Lake in 1995. The Oka response showed that the CAF possessed skillsets among their personnel to manage riots and civil unrest when widespread rioting by the Quebecois population began and provincial police lost control of the situation.<sup>35</sup> Conversely, in Gustafsen Lake, military equipment was primarily requested to provide better armoured protection to the RCMP through the use of armoured personnel carriers.<sup>36</sup>

Preparing for this scenario requires sensitivity to the historical and cultural context of Indigenous issues. The CAF must engage with Indigenous communities to build trust and ensure that its actions are seen as legitimate. An important lesson learned in the Oka crisis is the importance of exhausting all means of communication as a first resort.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Chris Madsen. 2023. "Military Against Gendarmerie: Contingency Planning for a Police-Led Coup D'Etat to Control Or Overthrow a Democratically Elected Government in Canada." *Salus Journal* 11, no. 2, 2023. p.1-4.

<sup>35</sup> J.L. Granatstein. "The Canadian Forces and Aid to the Civil Power." *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, November 24, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Chris Madsen. "Reserves in Aid to the Civil Power", draft. 2024. p.8.

<sup>37</sup> Billy Shields. "Some 30 Years on, What Have we Learned from the Oka Crisis?" *CTV News*, July 10, 2020.

## Commonalities

While these scenarios may seem diverse, they share some commonalities. They each require a swift and effective response to restore order and uphold the rule of law. They also require coordination between the CAF and other government agencies to ensure a coordinated response. Much like our military operations abroad have a Whole-of-Government (WoG) approach, these scenarios will also necessitate buy-in from other agencies to validate their plausibility, training, and coordination. A final inherent commonality is that the CAF will be the entity that will act professionally and in such a way that protects Canada and its citizens.

All these scenarios involve training that would be outward facing to the public. This means that parts of the public and Canadian citizens would be exposed to the training as the scenarios would inevitably dictate. The exercising and training of the CAF in Canadian communities requires an openness by the CAF on training objectives, a willingness on the part of the public to accept these threats as viable and necessary to plan against, and greater interaction of the CAF with the public during their training for such scenarios.

## Planning, Training, and Security Considerations

Canadian Joint Operations Command possesses a publication, Standing Operations Order for Domestic Operations (SOODO), which specifically addresses “the conduct of defence and routine CF [Canadian Forces] operations, security and safety operations within the territory of Canada and Canadian territorial waters.”<sup>38</sup> These orders include contingency plans for hijacked terrorist aircraft, defeating maritime threats, disaster relief, and pandemics (like COVID-19); it ought to include specific scenarios like those described in this paper.

Effective planning for potential domestic military operations requires collaboration not only within the military but also with other government departments, agencies, and stakeholders. The SOODO outlines almost 30 different Other Government Departments (OGDs), Agencies, Offices, and Inter-departmental forums and Watch Centres that form the WoG partners with which to liaise.<sup>39</sup> This includes law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, and local authorities. This collective planning should be based on realistic scenarios and account for the unique challenges of operating within Canada's borders – such as the multi-cultural aspect of Canadian society, the extreme weather patterns across the country, and large sparsely populated areas difficult to patrol and difficult to navigate. The planning process should also consider legal and ethical considerations. The use of military force on Canadian soil is a sensitive issue, and any actions taken must be in accordance with Canadian law and international norms.

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<sup>38</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *Standing Operations Order for Domestic Operations (SOODO)*. 2012. p.1.

<sup>39</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *SOODO*. p.3.

Additionally, plans should address the potential impact on civilians and ensure that their rights are protected.

Effective training is essential for ensuring that the CAF is prepared to respond to potential domestic security challenges. Like planning, this should occur in close coordination with other government departments and agencies, as well as with provincial and municipal authorities. It should also consider the unique nature of domestic operations, namely the unique legal, public affairs, and interoperability requirements, which will require different tactics and strategies than those used in international peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, training must confirm the contingency plans and “be conducted in a learning environment where capabilities practiced and validated through specific domestic collective training exercises are available throughout Canada.”<sup>40</sup>

Training is also critical for ensuring that CAF personnel are prepared to respond to potential domestic security challenges. It should involve simulations and exercises that are realistic and scenario-based, allowing personnel to practice the skills and techniques they would need to respond effectively in a crisis situation. It should also involve public affairs training, to ensure that CAF personnel are able to communicate effectively with the public and manage perceptions during a crisis. This includes providing information about the situation, addressing concerns, and managing expectations. The location of the training should vary so that the multi-faceted aspects of Canada can be addressed: rural, urban, and isolated.

The SOODO currently devolves training and training timelines to its regional joint task forces, the Joint Force Air Component Command, and the Maritime Component Command to participate in three exercises annually: a spring exercise, a fall Canada/US exercise, and a northern exercise.<sup>41</sup> Although the SOODO outlines contingency plans, CAF’s high readiness forces do not necessarily maintain the types of skills that would be needed for these threats.<sup>42</sup> Exercising contingency plans is important to “gain a more detailed picture and understand factors previously left unappreciated as well as exercising the skills and decision-making of prospective staff and commanders.”<sup>43</sup>

Another important aspect to train is rules of engagements and how they govern the application of force and/or armed violence to stop terrorists, escaped prisoners, or crowd control. This is because there are legal consequences to potential and real use of force related to the lack of peace officer status of military members and their lack of arrest and detention.<sup>44</sup>

Security considerations for domestic military operations are multifaceted and important when planning for potential domestic security challenges. These include identifying potential adversaries within the government or the public, such as domestic

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<sup>40</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *SOODO*. p.BB-2

<sup>41</sup> Government of Canada. National Defence. *SOODO*. p.BB-3.

<sup>42</sup> Garrett Hallman. *Domestic Operations Readiness*. p.17.

<sup>43</sup> Chris Madsen. “Military Against Gendarmerie.” 2023. p.70

<sup>44</sup> Tyler Wentzell. “Not in the Cards.” 2022. p.7.

terrorist groups or criminal organizations, and understanding their capabilities and intentions. It also involves assessing the security risks posed by other government departments or the Canadian public. Another key security consideration is the protection of critical infrastructure. In the event of a domestic security crisis, the military may be called upon to protect key infrastructure such as power plants, transportation networks, and government buildings. Ensuring the security of these assets is essential for maintaining public safety and national security. Additionally, the military must consider the potential use of cyber warfare or other non-traditional methods of attack. This requires a comprehensive approach to the domains of cybersecurity and information operations.

### **Discomfort With Military Use of Force on Canadian Soil**

The belief that Canada is immune to internal threats or that such scenarios are unlikely can create complacency and undermine the importance of maintaining a capable and vigilant military force. The discomfort surrounding the notion of military force being employed on Canadian soil can lead to significant consequences if left unaddressed. The first result is a lack of preparedness within the CAF to effectively respond to potential threats. This unpreparedness could manifest in ad hoc responses, resulting in delays in mobilization, inadequate resource allocation, and overall inefficiency in handling crises that require military intervention. Such unpreparedness can also increase the risk of civilian casualties, infrastructure damage, and prolonged unrest, ultimately compromising national security and sovereignty. Moreover, failure to address this discomfort perpetuates a false sense of security, leaving Canada vulnerable to threats that require a unified and decisive military response.

Failure to address this discomfort can have long-term implications for Canada's strategic posture and international standing. As the global security landscape evolves, Canada must be prepared to adapt to new and emerging threats. Ignoring the discomfort surrounding domestic military operations may hinder Canada's ability to effectively respond to these threats, diminishing its credibility as a reliable partner in international security efforts, not to mention leading to increased anxiety and uncertainty among the population during a crisis. Another longstanding concern of military use of force on domestic soil is related a fear of militarization and to possible erosion of basic civilian liberties:

Some of the most basic civil liberties and human rights are threatened by the domestic deployment of the armed forces. Such fundamental principles as freedom of speech, association, assembly and movement, no detention without trial and freedom from arbitrary rule can be violated, pushed aside or made difficult to exercise under conditions where troops can be called out to suppress social, political or industrial discontent, or where citizens

live under the intimidating shadow of possible military intervention.<sup>45</sup>

Media assertions have suggested that the CAF re-direct energy from responding to armed threats to other more pertinent and relevant threats to Canada. Specifically, Canada needs to have the ability to respond just as quickly to:

do contact tracing, bring food to the quarantined, dig out trapped people under buildings, fight fires, construct both fire breaks and fire walls, clean up oil spills, go to and assist the addicted, and intervene in suicide epidemics and housing and water crises in Northern and remote communities. These are the sorts of current, continuing and predictable threats we face.<sup>46</sup>

The discomfort surrounding the idea of military force being used on Canadian soil seems deeply rooted in Canada's historical and cultural identity. Canada has long prided itself on being a peace-loving nation that subscribes to international rule of law and is dedicated to resolving conflicts through diplomacy and international cooperation.<sup>47</sup> This commitment to peacekeeping and conflict resolution has shaped Canada's national narrative, emphasizing the importance of peaceful coexistence and non-violent conflict resolution. Additionally, Canada's multiculturalism and respect for diversity have contributed to a societal aversion to militarization and internal conflict. The idea of military force being used against Canadian citizens or within Canadian borders runs counter to Canada's values of inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for human rights. This cultural aversion to violence and conflict has led to a reluctance to discuss or plan for scenarios that involve the use of military force on Canadian soil. Moreover, there is a perception that discussing such scenarios may undermine Canada's image as a peaceful and inclusive society. There is a fear that openly acknowledging the possibility of domestic military operations may be seen as militaristic or aggressive. And if the CAF is indeed capable of handling these threats, there must be an acceptance of possible bloodshed through the use of armed force. Finally, there may be a lack of awareness or understanding among Canadians about the potential threats facing the country and the role of the military in addressing these threats. This lack of awareness can contribute to a sense of disbelief or denial regarding the need for domestic military operations, further perpetuating the discomfort surrounding the issue. These considerations can be summarized in the following quote:

Moves toward greater reliance on the military for domestic security indicate that serious societal threats are anticipated, not

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<sup>45</sup> Michael Head and Scott Mann, *Domestic Deployment of the Armed Forces: Military Powers, Law and Human Rights*. 1st ed. Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2013. p.175.

<sup>46</sup> Kevin Patterson. "'Defence' Doesn't Fit the Job of Canada's Military Anymore. Let's Create a Department of National Safety Instead: Increasingly, the Foes we have to Fight Aren't Foreign Armies, but Pandemics, Climate Change and Other Disasters that Destabilize the World Around Us. Our Armed Forces Should Adapt Accordingly." *The Globe and Mail*. July 17, 2021.

<sup>47</sup> Government of Canada. Veterans Affairs. "The Faces of Peace – Canadian peacekeepers " Accessed 3 May, 2024. [https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/cr/pi-sheets/peacekeeping\\_e.pdf](https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/cr/pi-sheets/peacekeeping_e.pdf)

just to public safety but also to political stability. At the same time, recourse to the armed forces to deal with these threats raises serious questions about basic democratic rights, and the state of democracy itself. This is particularly so in light of the longstanding public antipathy toward internal military intervention, and the legal and constitutional traditions against such mobilizations. It can be anticipated that attempts to use the armed forces against protests, industrial action or other forms of civil unrest could be resisted, possibly triggering serious conflicts.<sup>48</sup>

From a military perspective, there may also be discomfort in the idea of applying military force on Canadian soil. This is understandable given that the CAF may conduct these operations in such a way that its members, their families, or their communities may be impacted. It is important to emphasize that preparing for potential domestic military operations does not mean that such scenarios are inevitable or even likely. Rather, it is about being prepared for any eventuality in order to protect the security and sovereignty of Canada. As in other operations, creating a high level of professionalism, transparency, communication, and relevant legal, ethical, and cultural training will reinforce the appropriate attitudes and perspectives when called upon to act in this capacity.

To overcome the discomfort surrounding the idea of military force being used on Canadian soil, it is crucial to engage in open and transparent dialogue with the public and key stakeholders. Transparency and accountability are essential in overcoming discomfort. Providing clear information about the potential threats facing Canada and the rationale behind military preparedness efforts can help build trust and understanding among the public. It is important to ensure that any plans or actions related to domestic military operations are conducted in a manner that upholds Canadian values of peace, democracy, and human rights. Additionally, efforts should be made to involve diverse stakeholders, including indigenous communities, civil society groups, and academia, in discussions and planning related to domestic military operations. By including these voices, a more comprehensive and inclusive approach can be developed, addressing concerns and perspectives that may not have been previously considered. At a societal level, there is a need to have a broader discussion about the role of the military in Canadian society and its relationship to concepts of security and sovereignty. Is Kevin Patterson right about re-directing Canada's armed forces' efforts to something more similar to national safety?<sup>49</sup> Or should we be discussing more deeply the notion of democratic survival and global credibility with existence of an armed force capable of protecting Canada's rights and those of our allies?

Education and awareness campaigns can also play a significant role in dispelling misconceptions and highlighting the necessity of preparedness for potential domestic threats. One approach to overcoming this discomfort is to emphasize the distinction between preparing for potential scenarios and actively seeking out conflict. It is essential to communicate that preparedness does not equate to a desire for conflict but rather a

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<sup>48</sup> Michael Head and Scott Mann, *Domestic Deployment of the Armed Forces*. 2013. p.169.

<sup>49</sup> Kevin Patterson. "'Defence' Doesn't Fit the Job of Canada's Military Anymore". 2021.

responsible approach to ensuring the safety and security of Canadians. By framing preparedness in this context, it may be possible to alleviate some of the discomfort associated with the idea of military force on Canadian soil.

In the past, police forces adopted a soldier or warrior perspective on policing. However, changes in policing over the last decade have seen police forces moving from a warrior mindset to a guardian mindset.<sup>50</sup> Specifically, a guardian mindset approach “encourages community engagement, fosters trust, and builds lasting community partnerships” based on five principles: respect for human dignity, empathy, patience, inclusivity, and introspection.<sup>51</sup> Guardian mindset training focuses on transitioning from policing the community to being part of the community and is therefore more suitable for policing.<sup>52</sup> Liu (2022) states that a warrior mindset increases police shootings and mistrust in marginalized communities, where their job is in the communities and to safeguard them.

Warrior battleground [is] a mindset that teaches officers to imagine each civilian encounter as a life-or-death situation, encouraging officers to “control” the power dynamic and “dominate” the street. This pedagogy emphasizes honor, courage, and other ethos traditionally valued by soldiers, giving officers a philosophical grounding for treating community members as enemies. However, the warrior battleground training method is counterintuitive as it fosters the escalation of conflict.<sup>53</sup>

This transition of police culture and mindset may prove to signal an unwillingness of policing forces to engage in more complex and dangerous scenarios like those discussed. Over time, this could also lead to diminished interest and skillsets to manage more complex and dangerous scenarios. This would therefore increase the reliance on the CAF to be capable and ready to respond.

## CONCLUSION

As Canada navigates an increasingly complex and uncertain security environment, it is imperative that the CAF is prepared to respond to a range of potential threats, including those that may require the use of military force on Canadian soil. While the idea of domestic military operations may be uncomfortable, it is a reality that must be acknowledged and addressed through careful planning, training, and consideration of security implications. The scenarios where military force on Canadian soil may be

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<sup>50</sup> Val Van Brocklin, “Warriors Vs. Guardians: A Seismic Shift in Policing or Just Semantics?” *Police1*. June 30, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Kyle Znamenak, “Warriors, Guardians or Both: A Grounded Theory Approach of Exploring the Development of Patrol Officers in Urban Community Relations” (Ph.D., Cleveland State University), 2020. p.42.

<sup>52</sup> Kyle Znamenak, “Warriors, Guardians or Both”, 2020, p.40.

<sup>53</sup> Vincent Liu. “Soldiers to Guardians: Transition to a Community Policing Model,” *Chicago Policy Review*. January 19, 2022. p.1.



required, such as urban riots, coup d'états, prison breaks, and indigenous independence movements, highlight the diverse and evolving nature of domestic security threats. These scenarios underscore the need for the CAF to be ready to respond swiftly and decisively to protect Canadian citizens and uphold the country's sovereignty. To effectively address these challenges, collaborative planning involving multiple government departments and agencies is essential. Training exercises that simulate realistic scenarios should be conducted regularly to ensure that the CAF is prepared to coordinate with civilian authorities and other security agencies effectively. Additionally, security considerations, including the safeguarding of sensitive information and infrastructure, must be carefully managed to mitigate potential threats. The discomfort surrounding the idea of military force on Canadian soil can be addressed through transparency, open dialogue, and education. By engaging with the public and key stakeholders, Canada can build a greater understanding of the need for preparedness while ensuring that military actions align with Canadian values and democratic principles. By acknowledging and preparing for the possibility of domestic military operations involving use of force, Canada can enhance its ability to respond to evolving security threats while upholding its commitment to peace, democracy, and the rule of law.

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