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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
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CANADIAN OPERATIONAL SUPPORT COMMAND: MYTH OR MODEL

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We are breaking new ground in Canada by being the first to have a truly joint operational support Command. Everyone recognizes the benefit of what we are doing; especially the United States and the UK, and therefore we are being watched closely by our allies.

Major General D. Benjamin¹
Commander CANOSCOM

INTRODUCTION

Canada's Defence Policy Statement released in April 2005 recognized that the international security environment had changed considerably since the singular, doctrinally predictable enemy of the Cold War.² It identified that the Canadian Forces (CF) had to be ready to meet the new threats posed by failed and failing states, international terrorism and long standing regional tensions in various parts of the world. The document provided a new vision for the CF and is described as the blue print for Canadian Defence Transformation³ that would see the operational transformation of the CF with a focus on the establishment of new joint organizations and combat structures to meet the Government's expectations for effectiveness, relevance and responsiveness.⁴

From a purely Support oriented point of view, the opportunity presented itself to address long standing shortfalls in the CF approach to supporting operations. A favoured topic of Logisticians, much has been written concerning the continuous ad hoc approach to operational support and the reluctance or inability of the CF leadership to take positive steps to improving the situation. Following the high operational tempo of the 1990s, attempts were made to realign support organizations with the National Military Support Capability (NMSC) study which resulted in the stand up of the Joint Support Group (JSG) under the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS).⁵ Since 2000, three papers prepared for the Advanced Military Studies Programme (AMSP) have addressed the

¹ MGen Benjamin – the first Commander CANOSCOM

² Canada's International Policy Statement – *A Role Of Pride and Influence in the World* – DEFENCE 2005, Ottawa, Associate Deputy Minister (Public Affairs), 2005

³ Department of National Defence (DND), Canadian Forces General Message (CANFORGEN) CANFORGEN 077/05 CDS/DM Message - *New Defence Policy Statement* CDS 032 211940Z APR 05

⁴ International Policy Statement – DEFENCE..., 11.

⁵ Canada, Department of National Defence, *National Military Support Capability (NMSC) Project* BG-01.029, (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, August 2001), 1.

shortfalls in existing operational support capability. All present a common theme, that while the CF recognizes that there is a capability gap, the steps taken do not go far enough to resolve the deficiencies in providing sustainment at the operational level.

One of the outcomes of the CF Transformation process was the stand up of a Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM) with the goal of establishing a single focal point for all CF operational support at the national level that encompasses all national level operational support disciplines with one commander responsible to provide or arrange for support to CF domestic, continental or intercontinental operations.⁶

The quote at the beginning of the paper was made by the Commander CANOSCOM following a presentation to the Senior North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Logisticians' Conference in Brussels in May 2006. The Comd was joined in the praise of CANOSCOM in June of 2006 by then Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS), Vice Admiral (VAdm) R. Buck who stated:

By having a truly joint operational support capability which focuses on theatre level setup, support, and sustainment and reach back, we are overcoming the challenges that many of our allies continue to face in their theatre of operation.⁷

Given that CANOSCOM had only been stood up four months prior to this statement and that the Command had inherited a major existing deployed operation, it may appear somewhat presumptuous to make these claims.

AIM

AMSP papers written in 2000, 2002 and 2004⁸ identified serious deficiencies in the CF approach to sustainment at the operational level. The aim of this essay is to

⁶ DND, CANFORGEN 013/06 *CDS Organization Order – Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM)* CDS 009/06011330Z FEB 06

⁷ Maj Johnathan Diderich, "CANOSCOM – Allies keeping a watchful eye," *The Maple Leaf*, Vol 9 No. 25 28 June 2006

⁸ B.M. Weadon, "Canada's Joint Sustainment Coordination Capabilities." (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2000). A.J. Kerr, "The Canadian Forces Joint Support Group – Logistics salvation or a commitment unfulfilled?" (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2002). K. Ritchie, "Joint Sustainment at the Operational Level: A Bridge Too Far?" (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2004)

demonstrate that the stand up of CANOSCOM has set the conditions for success to address the capability gap.

THE FRAMEWORK

To accomplish this, the paper will first review the major issues raised by previous authors to identify the deficiencies and the steps taken by the leadership of the day to address them. Second, CF Transformation will be discussed to provide the organizational environment that resulted in the stand up of CANOSCOM as a stand alone formation and its stated role and assigned responsibilities to determine how this is different from previous reorganization exercises. Third, the stated capabilities of CANOSCOM will be measured against recognized logistic principles to determine if the conditions for success exist.

Both Capt (N) B. Weadon and Col K Ritchie⁹ include all aspects of logistics¹⁰ as well as medical, and personnel support. Ritchie includes Military Police¹¹ and Commander AJ Kerr¹² limits his review to supply and movement of materiel.¹³ Consequently, it is appropriate to conduct the assessment of CANOSCOM against the widest range of sustainment functions. To further set parameters to demonstrate the aim:

Operational Logistics can be defined as:

...a collection of means, resources, organizations sustaining campaigns and large scale military operations. This collection, which is derived from the strategic logistics level, is utilized by the campaign leaders as input for the tactical logistics. Operational Logistics is designated [sic] to sustain battles that are distributed in time and space.”¹⁴

⁹ Capt(N) Weadon - A senior CF Logistics Officer AMSP 3 (currently RAdm – ADM Fin and Corporate Services). Col K. Ritchie - A senior CF EME Officer AMSP 7 – (currently Comd ASG Montreal)

¹⁰ Department of National Defence, B-GG-005-004/AF-000 Canadian Forces Operations (Ottawa: DND Canada 2000) 27-1.

¹¹ Ritchie, *A Bridge Too Far*..., 5.

¹² A senior CF Logistics Officer AMSP 5 – Currently Capt(N) – CMS)

¹³ Kerr, *CF Joint Support Group* ..., 3.

¹⁴ Moshe Kress, *Operational Logistics The Art and Science of Sustaining Military Operations* (Boston/Dordrecht/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 40.

CF Doctrine subscribes to three levels of command: Strategic, Operational and Tactical. The Operational Level is defined as:

That level of command which employs forces to attain strategic objectives in a theater or area of operations through the design and organization and conduct of campaigns and major operations. ... Activities at this level link strategy and tactics.¹⁵

The three levels of conflict and the logistics associated with them are defined below:

LEVELS OF WAR	LEVELS OF LOGISTICS
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategic</u></p> <p>A nation determines national or multinational strategic security objectives and guidance and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategic</u></p> <p>Industrial base, Strategic lift, material readiness, permanent ports and bases, strategic stockpiles, mobilization, procurement, deployment support, regeneration</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Operational</u></p> <p>Links the tactical employment of forces to strategic objectives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Operational</u></p> <p>Reception, staging, onward movement, integration of forces, theater distribution, intra-theater airlift, reconstitution, sustainment, redeployment, host nation support, intermediate staging base</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Tactical</u></p> <p>The employment of units in combat... The ordered arrangement and maneuver of units in relation to each other and/or to the enemy to use their full potential.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Tactical</u></p> <p>Arming, fixing, sustaining soldiers and their systems, manning, transporting, fueling</p>

Figure 1: Logistics functions of the three levels of conflict¹⁶

THROUGH A REAR VIEW MIRROR ...

Weadon's observations came after a decade that not only saw huge reductions in the size of the force but also one of the highest periods of operational tempo ever

¹⁵ Canada, *CF Operations* ..., 2-5.

¹⁶ Major Kent S. Marquardt, "Devising Operational Logistic Doctrine", Army Logistician Jan-Feb 2000

experienced by the Canadian Forces. While troops stationed in Europe were repatriated, the CF undertook operational deployments to Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Former Republic of Yugoslavia and Kosovo under the auspices of United Nations and NATO mandates. As operational tempo increased, changes were required in National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) to meet the additional demands of operational deployments. The continental staff system was adopted with a J1 Personnel, J3 Operations and J4 Logistics Staff created to coordinate the issues in the various areas however, operational level sustainment relied on ad hoc arrangements for each specific mission.¹⁷

To explain the rationale for this change it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of this staff system.

Combined operations are those that include the forces of other nations and it is basic CF doctrine that Canada will generally operate abroad and on some domestic operations as part of a coalition. Hence, there is a vital requirement for interoperability within the sea, land and air environments and with Canadian allies in all types of operations. For this reason, a common staff system was developed based on the "Continental Staff System" in use among Canada's allies in NATO.

The essence of this system is a combination of letters and numbers, which indicate the level, and purpose of a given appointment. For example, in a headquarters there will be a number of principal staff branches, usually Personnel, Intelligence, Operations and Administration/Support, plus others added as necessary numbered from '1' on up. Thus personnel will be '1'; intelligence will be '2' and so on. A prefix is added to indicate the type of staff. A hierarchy of officers and NCMs will exist under each of these organizations.

The above has been modified to add additional categories as required. The specific organization will be addressed when the individual environmental commands are described. Suffice for the moment to say that the Navy uses the prefix N, the Army uses the prefix G and the Air Force uses the prefix A to describe its staff appointments. Joint Staff use the prefix J.¹⁸

¹⁷ Weadon, *Canada's Joint Sustainment ...* 1.

¹⁸ Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Logistics Branch Handbook*, Volume 1, Ottawa, Canada, December 2000

Predictably, the strain placed on available support organizations and personnel resulted in the creation of the National Military Support Project at the end of the decade to address the “inefficiency and the inability to consolidate theatre level support to meet the disparate philosophies of the Navy, Army and Air Force.”¹⁹

Weadon used the experiences from OP FRICTION²⁰ to identify weaknesses in the operational level of support. While he gave credit for strategic successes²¹, he also identifies significant deficiencies in the command and control of operational assets. In the absence of a single national, operational level organization to provide direction, two distinct organizations were initially formed to provide service specific support. Later in the mission, five different support relationships were created to deal with single service tactical units/formations. This added to the confusion and only ad hoc arrangements and personal initiative appeared to save the day. The overall result was mission success but it was clear that there were several opportunities for a reversal of the situation. The confusion that was generated by infighting between traditional stovepipes wasted time and valuable resources.²² Following OP FRICTION, the National Military Support Capability was created to address deficiencies identified during that Operation. Although five distinct national level units were created, a number of shortfalls in the organization were identified by Weadon:

- a. each of the five areas covered by the National level unit was also covered by a separate functional staff in NDHQ;

¹⁹ Kerr, *CF Joint Support Group* ...1.

²⁰ Canadian deployment to the Persian Gulf in 1990

²¹ Weadon, *Canada's Joint Sustainment* ...3.

²² *Ibid.*, 3-4

- b. the five NMSC units were a notional capability that did not in fact have an actual establishment and the personnel required would have to come from existing units/formations; and
- c. sustainment of these organizations was not addressed.²³

The National Military Support Capability had not been developed to the point that it could be activated to support major operations in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Consequently, history repeated itself and operational sustainment was generated from across the Canadian Forces. All three services played a role in the various deployments which required integrated logistics sustainment that once again placed a significant burden on the support occupations of the Forces which were going through a period of significant force reduction.

In addition, the high operational tempo of the 90s generated reports highlighting personnel issues, specifically, Dr Franklin Pinch²⁴ and a Board of Inquiry (BOI).²⁵ Both reports dealt with personnel issues arising from the ad hoc approach to personnel sustainment and training issues that resulted in very high levels of stress for both CF personnel and the Canadian Forces institution. Additionally, the BOI²⁶ into the CF deployment to Croatia identified “... the requirement to establish a single operations center to address all sustainment issues” at the strategic level. However, Weadon accurately points out the applicability of this at the operational level as well.

²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁴ Dr. Franklin C. Pinch, *Lessons from Canadian Peacekeeping Experience: A Human Resource Perspective*, (Gloucester: FCP Human Resource Consulting, 1994), 15.

²⁵ Dr. Ken Reynolds, “*Canadian Forces Operations in the Balkans, 1991-1995*,” Reports and Studies: Board of Inquiry Croatia, (Ottawa, Department of National Defence, 2000) 3.

²⁶ Canada, Department of National Defence, *Final Report: Board of Inquiry Croatia*, (Ottawa, Department of National Defence, 2000) 32

At the end of the 1990s, after a government imposed force reduction, a smaller CF necessitated a re-examination of the National Military Support Capability as the initial numbers identified to support a major deployment were no longer feasible.²⁷

Consequently, a Military Occupation Structure Working Group proposed the creation of a single composite theatre support organization which eventually resulted in the creation of the Joint Support Group. It appeared that the stand up of a formed unit focused on operational level support would resolve many of the previous stated deficiencies.

Weadon does point out flaws in the organization specifically:

- a. JSG would not provide the Task Force Commander (TF Comd) with a single point of responsibility for sustainment planning and coordination as both the TF HQ and JSG HQ were assigned responsibility for coordination with Component and strategic level staff;
- b. Personnel management outside of the JSG or regeneration for theatre level personnel management was not assigned to the JSG but to the Joint HQ's J1 which would require liaison and coordination with a number of organizations thereby increasing the complexity of this important area;
- c. Command and control of air assets was not addressed; and
- d. Information Management Systems were not addressed.

Weadon's conclusion accurately reflected that the JSG, while an improvement, did not provide the TF Comd with a single point of contact for sustainment issues and

²⁷ Weadon, *Canada's Joint Sustainment...*, 12.

that failure to assign responsibility for personnel management would allow for a reoccurrence of sustainment problems previously experienced.

In 2002, while the JSG continued to develop its capabilities, the effectiveness of the organization came under examination again.²⁸ Kerr examined the requirement for the JSG in the context of functionality against allied logistics doctrine and emerging logistic trends although only from a supply and transport perspective. He provided a snapshot of the CF supply chain to demonstrate that when things go wrong there is no one organization responsible for logistics. This makes it exceedingly difficult to identify the cause of the error and take remedial action. The authoritative manual of the day²⁹ did not provide any logistics sustainment principles so the author utilized American doctrine which provided seven principles to consider which are: responsiveness; simplicity; flexibility; economy; attainability; sustainability; and, survivability. . He assessed the functionality of the Joint Support Group against these principles and came to the conclusion that:

The primary rationale for proceeding with the NMSC was to eliminate the ad hoc nature of support to CF deployed operations. ... The JSG will be faced with significant challenges in coordinating actions of units for which it has no authority and will be attempting to bring together disparate activities of NDHQ staff with the tactical concerns of force generators, with little authority beyond its powers of persuasion.³⁰

By 2004, the CF had participated in a number of missions contributing personnel in various areas although no significant sustainment issues were experienced. In 2000, a 450-strong CF contingent (Operation ECLIPSE Ethiopia/Eritrea) helped establish a mission in a six-month commitment during which the Canadians were integrated with the Dutch contingent to form a Canadian-Dutch battle group. In 2001, OP APOLLO, the Canadian response to the 9/11 attacks on the US saw the deployment of maritime, land

²⁸ Kerr, *CF Joint Support Group ...*, 8.

²⁹ Department of National Defence. B-GG-005-004/AF013 *Logistic Support to Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa, DND Canada, 1998) Section IV.

³⁰ Kerr, *CF Joint Support Group...*, 13-14.

and air assets to the Persian Gulf. Ritchie provided reflection on the process used to stand up the CF commitment identified that many of the mistakes made in preparation for OP FRICTION in the previous decade were repeated. Of note is Ritchie's comment that the decision to establish a joint support structure for forces assigned to OP APOLLO was not made until after an army Battle Group was included despite the fact that the CF strategic planning process had been essentially completed.³¹ Once again, a single service approach to the support of each environment's force contribution was required.

This state of affairs existed until 2002 when it was decided to create a National Support Unit. Ritchie goes to great lengths to identify the problems associated with creating an overarching organization after the fact. Blurred command and control and unclear communications prevented the establishment of a functional joint support organization. Environmental units/formations were reluctant or unwilling to participate in the joint organization resulting in confusion over many logistic functional areas and uncoordinated personnel movements.³²

One of the significant shortfalls described by Ritchie was in the area of asset visibility. The supply system in use was American in design and would not accept Canadian data and was controlled through the centralized J staff in Ottawa. Communication between strategic and operational staff was hampered by incompatible secure data transmission systems. Ritchie also utilizes the principles of logistic support to measure the success of joint sustainment in this operation. Asset visibility, prioritization of flow, coordinated planning and interoperability are identified as critical

³¹ Ritchie, *A Bridge Too Far?...*, 14.

³² *Ibid.*, 14-17.

to the success of joint sustainment of operations.³³ There is no evidence that the existing Joint Support Group was utilized to address the shortfalls identified in previous operations but rather the single service, ad hoc approach was used, found wanting and required to be overhauled mid operation. It is interesting to note Ritchie's observation that the Joint Support Group concept should be modified to include a Command dedicated to operational support.³⁴

In summary, the need to provide a single focus for operational support was identified and substantiated through more than a decade of high operational tempo through lessons learned or post operation reports yet nothing was done to address this critical issue. Fractured or confusing chains of command, incompatible communications or reporting systems, environmental prejudices and frequent mixing of line and staff responsibilities remained the status quo and attempts made to resolve the problem were met with limited success because the source of the problem was left untouched. The fragile and ad hoc approach to operational support could not withstand a significant breakdown or a true test of its effectiveness.

Both Weadon and Kerr arrive at the conclusion that implementing a system in use by our allies would be a satisfactory resolution to the operational sustainment deficiencies faced by the CF as opposed to maintaining the status quo of continued ad hoc approaches. Weadon examined the American model which doctrinally addresses the shortfalls experienced by the CF.³⁵ It indicated that the logistic functions (supply, transport, maintenance, etc) closely matched the CF approach.³⁶ The significant shortfall that

³³ *Ibid.*, 9-22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁵ Weadon, *Canada's Joint Sustainment...*, 19.

³⁶ United States, *Doctrine for Logistic Support to Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 4-0, April 2000, v-vi

rendered it unsuitable in its existing form was that it made single services (Army, US Navy, US Marines, US Air Force) responsible for sustaining their own forces. This approach was not feasible in the CF given the size and composition of the force.³⁷

The second model examined was the NATO model however; it too was found lacking due to complex sustainment command and control relationships and the lack of formed units which mirrored the CF problem.³⁸

The third alternative model was that of the United Kingdom. According to Weadon, it best met the needs of the CF by providing a Joint Force Logistics Component Commander with assigned responsibility for regeneration, reconstitution and rehabilitation at the operational level.³⁹ Although modifications would be required, it appeared to offer the best fit.

Kerr's perception of the problem was that the supply chain organization in existence at the time was not flexible enough to meet the demands required in the sustainment of operations. While National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) had adopted the continental staff system, organizations responsible for the support of deployed operations under the DCDS were employed in a different organization for day to day activities only turning to operations during actual deployments.⁴⁰ This staff focused organization violated a number of the principles of command required to command and control CF Operations specifically unity of command, chain of command and freedom of action.⁴¹ Additionally he recommended adoption of a model similar to the US Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM). It highlighted the benefits of consolidating

³⁷ Weadon, *Canada's Joint Sustainment ...*, 19.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁰ Kerr, *Canadian Forces Joint Support Group ...*, 7-8.

⁴¹ Canada. *CF Operations ...*, 2-3.

expertise, maintenance of unity of command and the continuity of supporting all operations. A noticeable shortfall of the Joint Support Group was that it would not exercise command over units of the CF Supply System that would be supporting operations.

Another shortfall identified with the capability gap was the inability to address emerging logistics trends. In the absence of a single point of focus for operational sustainment, issues such as asset visibility could not be professionally assessed or examined with any benefit to the CF.⁴²

The deficiencies raised by the three selected authors⁴³ remained unaddressed despite a major deployment of the Canadian Forces to South West Asia (OP APOLLO) in 2002. Single service support elements were the order of the day and NDHQ still managed operations from a staff matrix for the first half of the decade. Little did anyone guess that significant changes were coming?

CF TRANSFORMATION

As stated at the beginning of this paper, release of the International Policy Statement – Defence (DPS) in 2005 provided a new vision for the CF to deal with a changing international security environment. Based on this vision, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), Gen R. Hillier’s intent to drive Transformation was to fundamentally re-shape the operational command and control construct of the CF.⁴⁴ This was to be completed by creating a clear and unambiguous delineation between the strategic and operational levels of command. Six transformation principles were

⁴² Ritchie, *A Bridge Too Far?* ..., 19.

⁴³ Weadon, Kerr and Ritchie

⁴⁴ Gen R. Hillier, *CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: file 1950-9(CT), 10 November 2005

established: CF Identity; Command Centric Imperative; Authorities, Responsibilities and Accountabilities; Operational focus; Mission command; and Integrated Regular, Reserve and Civilian Canadian Forces. While all are important to the success of Transformation, one of the key elements for the purpose of this paper is clear delineation and separation of staff and line functions by creating separate organizations to manage operations outside the NDHQ matrix.

In May 2005, the CDS created an organization to manage the Transformation process and established four CDS Action Teams (CAT) to develop options and propose recommendations for the implementation of CF Transformation principles. The four teams were:

- a. CAT 1 – Command and Control;
- b. CAT 2 – Force Generation;
- c. CAT 3 - Operational Capabilities; and
- d. CAT 4 - Institutional Alignment.⁴⁵

The final report of CAT Team 1⁴⁶ provided the basis for the creation of Canada Command (Canada COM), Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM).⁴⁷ This organizational adjustment also addressed the disposition of formations/units formerly assigned to the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS) specifically the CF Joint Operations Group and the Joint Support Group. For the first time it was evident that operational support issues would be addressed with a formation of a new General Support Formation however no details were provided at that time.

⁴⁵ CANFORGEN 077/05

⁴⁶ NDHQ, *CAT 1 Final Report – CF Command and Control* dated 29 Jun 05

⁴⁷ CANFORGEN 184/05 CDS 098 061344Z DEC 05

In February 2006, CANFORGEN 013/06 announced the stand up of Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM). The concurrent organizational changes also assigned functional units such as the Joint Support Group, Joint Signals Regiment (JSR) and Canadian Materiel Support Group (CMSG) to CANOSCOM. Supply Depots and Ammunition Depots were assigned to CMSG as well as the CF Postal Unit, 3 Canadian Support Group (3 CSG) and 4 Canadian Forces Movement Control Unit (4 CFMCU). The stated intent was to create one organization that encompassed all national level support with one Commander responsible to provide for support to CF domestic, continental or intercontinental operations. Key tasks were and remain:

- a. to coordinate the generation of task tailored operational support organizations for employment in theatre activation and opening operational sustainment and mission close out;
- b. to support operational commanders in planning and preparing for operations including the execution of operational support at the national level; and
- c. to reach back and coordinate the provision of national and strategic support.⁴⁸

Changes to the existing organization also included assigning the CF Health Services Group under the operational control of the Commander as well as 202 Workshop Depot and the Communication Reserve. Communication and Military Police J Staff organizations (J6, J3 Engineer and Canadian Forces Provost Marshal) are to be responsive to the commander for support matters within their jurisdictions.⁴⁹

With the stand up of CANOSCOM, it would appear that many of the deficiencies identified by Weadon, Kerr and Ritchie have been addressed as well as meeting the goals of CF Transformation. Creating a new formation at the operational level certainly recognized that while the capability to execute some of the operational sustainment tasks existed, they were distributed across several Force Generators or staff matrices and had no clear focus or mandate to plan, organize, train or operate in a joint manner for this critical role. On the other hand, CANOSCOM is comprised of the full range of command support/communications and information systems, health services, general support,

⁴⁸ Department of National Defence, CANFORGEN 013/06, CDS 009/06 011330Z FEB 06

⁴⁹ CANFORGEN 013

military engineering, logistics, land equipment maintenance support and general and close military police operational support.⁵⁰

The Concept of Operations indicates that operational level support be provided as:

... the delivery of specialized support functions that are not air, maritime or land component command unique but routinely have an impact on CF operations planning, deployment, execution redeployment and reconstitution either in Canada or abroad.⁵¹

THE REPORT CARD

CANOSCOM has been in existence for approximately 18 months. It has not been responsible for any deployments on its own but rather inherited responsibility for CF assets in Task Force Afghanistan (TFA) from the DCDS organization and the Joint Support Group. It can be considered a work in progress but sufficient information is available to determine the progress made, if any, in relation to operational sustainment issues. One year after the stand up of the new commands, the CDS requested a functional review of progress made in order to validate the transformed command structure. The comments provided by the validation team will be used in the following assessment.⁵² Prior to conducting the assessment it is prudent to confirm the operational mission and the standing tasks of CANOSCOM:

Operational Mission

To provide effective and efficient operational support to Canadian Forces operations be they domestic, continental or expeditionary.

Standing Tasks

- a. to coordinate the generation of task tailored operational support (OS) organizations for employment in theatre activation and opening, operational sustainment and mission closeout;

⁵⁰ Department of National Defence, *Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM) Concept of Operations*, 1 February 2006, 1-2

⁵¹ CANOSCOM *Concept of Ops* ...3.

⁵² LGen (Retd) RR Crabbe, VAdm (Retd) L.G. Mason, LGen (Retd) FR Sutherland, *A Report on the Validation of the Transformed Canadian Forces Command Structure*, 31 January 2007

- b. to support the operational commanders in planning and preparing for operations including the execution of OS at the national level; and
- c. to reach-back and coordinate the provision of national and strategic support.⁵³

CANOSCOM has been positioned in the organizational hierarchy at the operational level and it has been assigned resources and is responsible for carrying out the responsibilities required at the operational level. This has addressed a significant shortfall of previous organizations such as the Joint Support Group that were implemented at the tactical level with no single point of focus or clear chain of command to address sustainment issues.

The significant organizational changes and reorganization of the command and control construct that included the creation of CANOSCOM under CF Transformation have resolved critical deficiencies identified by Weadon and Ritchie. Specifically, the divisive single service support construct and the NDHQ management of operations from a staff matrix were disregarded under the new organization. Additionally, the stated capabilities of CANOSCOM can now be compared to the seven accepted principles of logistics used by Kerr in evaluating the Joint Support Group.⁵⁴

Logistics Principles

In 2002, the publication “Logistic Support to CF Operations” did not provide any logistics sustainment principles.⁵⁵⁵⁶ For clarification, CF doctrine issued in 2000 used these principles with the exception that foresight is used in lieu of responsiveness.⁵⁷ At time of writing, this doctrine is being rewritten.⁵⁸ Kerr used the United States (US) doctrine for logistics support of joint operations in the absence of current CF doctrine. The seven principles are: responsiveness, simplicity, flexibility, economy, attainability, sustainability and survivability.

⁵³ Department of National Defence, *Canadian Operational Support Command Directive*, CANOSCOM Organization, Directive 00-01-001, 1 February 2006

⁵⁴ Kerr, *Canadian Forces Joint Support Group* ..., 8-13.

⁵⁵ *Logistics Support to CF Operations*, 1998 ..., np

⁵⁶ United States, *JP 4-0 Log Sp to Joint Operations*..., II-2.

⁵⁷ DND, *CF Operations*..., 27-3.

⁵⁸ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-300/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005) 31-1.

Responsiveness (Foresight)

CANOSCOM is mandated and provided the requisite authority to carry out assigned tasks. The organizational restructure positioning the JSG and the JSR and the creation on the CMSG will prevent interference from outside the chain of command so that operational sustainment can be planned and coordinated effectively. The Validation Report is acknowledged for actively engaging in investigating options for more effective support, including forward basing of stocks.⁵⁹ Of specific interest is the priority being given to establish an operational support hub architecture to provide a global reach for the CF. From a purely CF perspective, establishment of this network will improve the CF's ability to deploy and sustain operations but the possibility to expand usage to other government departments (Foreign Affairs and International Trade, CIDA) would facilitate the movement of people, materiel and information to areas in the network if needed during environmental disasters or other emergency situations.⁶⁰ CANOSCOM has also made progress in the area of Total Asset visibility particularly in the area of operational stocks. This may be considered a significant accomplishment as the goal of knowing the aggregate status of supplies on hand, in transit or on order is of significant value to commanders in the field. While the joint logistics community has made advances it still has a ways to go before achieving full visibility of operational stocks.⁶¹ Another example of its ability to respond effectively was that shortly after stand up, CANOSCOM effectively assumed responsibility for the CF deployment of TFA at Kandahar. CANOSCOM coordinated sustainment issues with NATO allies.

Simplicity

Allocating required resources to a single chain of command will simplify many of the problems faced by previous organizations. For example, virtual organizations or organizations that relied on augmentation (NMSC/JSG) were hard pressed to develop a concept of operations or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The streamlined chain of command will permit training and exercises to be conducted to meet future operational

⁵⁹ Validation Report, 21.

⁶⁰ Col FM Boomer, *Operational Support Hubs: Global Reach for the CF*, 2006.

⁶¹ LCol James C. Bates, *Joint Asset Visibility: Why So Hard?*, Army Logistician, July – August 2007.

requirements as well as retain the corporate memory required to develop an effective lessons learned process. It also has a direct effect on the requirement for the JTF Comd or subordinate commanders to become involved in logistics issues with less being better. One of the significant shortfalls is concerned with personnel management and personnel support services. While CANOSCOM has been assigned responsibility for logistics activities, medical support, communications and information systems there has been no forward movement on assigning resources to address personnel management issues. Some of the major challenges faced in theater are related to personnel management and personnel support services specifically repatriation of personnel, human remains and mortuary affairs although these issues are not under the purview of the Comd CANOSCOM.⁶² This remains a shortfall that was identified in the papers and must be addressed.

Flexibility

Flexibility in this context is associated with systems. In general, it refers to the ability to effectively handle changes in a system. A system is said to be flexible if its entities and processes can quickly respond to new constraints, demands and environmental changes in such a way that its objectives can still be achieved effectively.⁶³ In the follow up report of the Validation Team sponsored by the CDS, it was noted that the reorganization to separate line and staff functions had inadvertently created a capability gap. During Transformation a number of former J4 functions were moved from the Materiel Group (ADM (Mat)) leaving only the procurement and maintenance of DND materiel in the NDHQ matrix. Concurrently, the entire logistics supply chain was transferred to CANOSCOM which has resulted in there being no dedicated staff with strategic level responsibility for the logistic supply chain with the following negative results:

- a. logistics policies, doctrine and standards will become increasingly out of date and unresponsive;

⁶² Comd CANOSCOM, presentation to AMSP 10, 20 Sep 07.

⁶³ Kress, *Operational Logistics* ..., 62.

- b. the logistics leadership interface with key external agencies in Ottawa will degrade; and
- c. NDHQ will not have a J4 logistics for coordination at the strategic level.

The Validation Team reported that an effective working relationship had been established.⁶⁴ This should be considered as an interim measure and every effort should be made to address the shortfall to limit the involvement of CANOSCOM at the strategic level to ensure that gains made to date are not lost.

Economy

Kerr described this principle as pertaining to the accomplishment of an objective with the fewest possible resources. He raises concern that there is no coordination of the logistic requirement between the TF Comd and the JSG in its initial configuration and that logistical provisioning would have been complete without requisite oversight.⁶⁵ The current organization clearly assigns CANOSCOM to support operational commanders in planning and preparing for operations. This early contact should go along way to prevent the inappropriate application of logistics discipline in the early stages of an operation.

Attainability

Kerr refers to providing essential support services at the onset of operations and how the organization responsible for supporting deployed operations would maintain their effectiveness in the absence of operations.⁶⁶ This is no longer a major concern as CANOSCOM has been assigned responsibility for domestic, continental and expeditionary support as well as a requirement to help shape support capabilities for CF operations.

⁶⁴ Author discussion with LGen (Retd) Sutherland – Member of the Transformation Validation Review.

⁶⁵ Kerr, *CF Joint Support Group ...*, 11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

Sustainability

While the standup of CANOSCOM has adequately addresses several shortfalls in the operational sustainment of operations, this area has not dealt with the issues facing previous organizations. CANOSCOM is responsible for theater activation and opening of a theater of operations. As with the former Joint Support Group, the organization was only expected to populate Roto 0 and then repatriate their personnel to reconstitute the capability. Attempts were made to identify high readiness personnel from other Force Generators but this was considered impractical as call up of these high readiness personnel negatively affected the ability of the single services to meet their own support requirements. Unfortunately, a similar situation exists under the current construct. The Validation Report found it necessary to comment on the vagueness of the guidance for generating the National Support Element (NSE) as the personnel and assets required to generate national level organizations belong for the most part to the Environmental Commanders (ECs). CANOSCOM has identified this as a key area and is seeking continued improvements to the operational support tasking and Force Generation processes as well as implementing a managed readiness system for all Joint operational support capabilities. Additionally, there is an expectation that the CF be able to support two lines of operation in separate theaters.⁶⁷ Given the current allocation of resources this is not achievable due to a lack of personnel across the CF. Similarly, CANOSCOM is assigned responsibility to provide operational support to domestic operations. To date CANOSCOM has not been required to respond to this contingency. Contingency

⁶⁷ Validation Report..., 21.

planning in support of OP PONTOON⁶⁸ indicated a number of potential problem areas⁶⁹ in regards to areas of responsibility that will be reviewed as the formation prepares for operational support challenges anticipated for support to the 400th anniversary celebration in Quebec City and the Vancouver Olympics in 2010.

Survivability

There is no integral force protection within assigned CANOSCOM units. This issue will be addressed during the planning phase of new operations but will most likely require the assistance of the Land Forces Component Commander (LCC).

The comparison of CANOSCOM against the stated logistic principles indicates that the organization, in its current forms meets the majority requirements. There are shortfalls in certain areas that have been identified and will have to be addressed over time but there is a clear indication that CANOSCOM has the ability to provide a much more coordinated effort in operational sustainment than any of its predecessors.

CONCLUSION

In his paper of 1996 titled *Logistic Pillars at the Operational Level of War and the Role of the Joint Force Commander*, LCol Bruce. E Bissett, USMC wrote that Logistics influences every aspect of operational planning and execution.⁷⁰

The Canadian Forces did not attempt to develop a functional organization to address this critical aspect of operations until faced with lengthy periods of downsizing and increased operational tempo. These attempts were unsuccessful as key elements such as establishment of the formation at the appropriate operational level, assignment of

⁶⁸ Author - CF preparations to respond to BC Floods in spring/summer 2007. Not activated as provincial government did not request assistance.

⁶⁹ Comd JSG – presentation to AMSP 10, 26 Sep 07.

⁷⁰ LCol Bruce E. Bissett, *Logistic Pillars at the Operational Level of War and the Role of the Joint Force Commander*, Naval War College, 1996, ii.

units/formations to the formation with a clear chain of command and specific assigned tasks as well as assigned responsibility for personnel management were either ignored or overlooked. The National Military Support Capability Project correctly identified the problem but was limited to creating a virtual organization that resided at the tactical level and was so ambitious in its manning requirements it was never activated. Its successor, the Joint Support Group, moved marginally beyond the theory of NMSC, but again suffered from a chronic failure to establish one organization responsible for all national level support disciplines with a single clear chain of command with assigned responsibilities and the necessary forces to implement them. Conditions for success were improbable if not impossible to achieve given the double-hatting of Headquarters staff with line and staff responsibilities and a persistent ad hoc approach to operational sustainment.

The CDS took the opportunity for significant Transformation following release of the Defence Policy Statement in 2005 which clearly indicated that the threats of the Cold War era had been replaced by failed and failing states and the Canadian Forces had to change to meet the new threats. CANOSCOM was created to provide the single point of focus for operational sustainment and assigned resources to complete assigned tasks. The new organization reflects the accepted principles of logistics with some exceptions although as the organization is in the process of fully developing its capabilities, these shortfalls are not considered as serious impediments to success if the momentum currently achieved can be maintained.

Given the relative short period of time that CANOSCOM has been in existence, there are specific areas that need to be addressed:

- a. personnel management issues must be re-examined and the appropriate level of responsibility assigned to Comd CANOSCOM to allow adequate control over this area on deployed operations as well as assist in the management of Force Generation issues or competition for limited personnel resources with the Environmental Commanders may prove to be a significant limiting factor for continued success;
- b. the assumption of responsibility for the CF logistics supply chain created a vacuum at the strategic level that must be addressed as part of the CF Transformation process to ensure that efforts in the primary area of operational sustainment are not diluted or relegated to a lower priority; and
- c. doctrine and procedures must be developed at the earliest opportunity

The CDS' vision to create a single accountable command for the provision of operational support to Canadian Forces deployed operations has been accomplished with the creation of CANOSCOM.⁷¹ The claim by the VCDS and the Comd CANOSCOM that the stand-up of this organization is a model for our allies is accurate. While some of the goals achieved by the Canadian organization were made possible by our relative size and previous unification, the principles of logistic doctrine and unity of command form the basis of what will prove to be an effective model for operational sustainment. Despite existing issues identified in the preceding paragraph that have yet to be addressed, the conditions for success are present and CANOSCOM has proven to be a model for sustainment at the operational level.

⁷¹ Validation Report..., 23.

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