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THE PRESENTIST PERSPECTIVE: A RISK FOR THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

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Abstract

Assessing current challenges through the lens of contemporary experiences can lead to a limited perspective. A presentist mindset can perceive challenges as unique and unfamiliar, leading to investments of time and resources for magnitudes of change that may be unnecessary. More importantly, this lack of historical context reflects an ignorance of the experiences and lessons learned of the past. This paper selects three factors considered by some to be new to military operations of the 21st century, and asserts that in the historical context they are not new. Instead, they reflect increasing complexity of modern operations. Officers preparing themselves for theatre operations must adapt to this complexity, but in an ordered incremental fashion, not through a radical change of direction. A presentist mindset must be avoided as historical experience continues to offer much to the modern operational commander.

Introduction

The situation is one of considerable concern: the Canadian military establishment has been subject to several years of austerity, and the Canadian Forces have relied upon a major power as a parent for training, doctrine, and equipment procurement. A time of conflict has arrived, Canada has been assigned an area of operation as part of a coalition, and Canadian military leadership is struggling to adapt its resources, technology and personnel to what appears to be a new emerging reality. It is clear that the services must collaborate as never before, but each is accustomed to working within its own area of expertise, and is more interoperable with its foreign sister service than with its Canadian counterparts. Furthermore, it is a struggle to establish credibility with Allies. Although this appears to be a description of the current mission in Afghanistan, it actually refers to a situation in 1941. The location was the North West Atlantic. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) were in the throes of adapting to their responsibilities to provide protection to transatlantic shipping to and from Europe with senior leadership that had been nurtured in British battleship tactics and strategic bombing respectively.[1]

The campaign of the North West Atlantic is one of many military operations during Canada's history. Much discussion has occurred in military, academic, and

[1]Richard Evan Goette, "The Struggle for a Joint Command and Control System in the Northwest Atlantic Theatre of Operations: A Study of the RCAF and the RCN Trade Defence Efforts during the Battle of the Atlantic" (Master of Arts Thesis, Queen's University, 2002), 11-27.

government venues about the implications of a variety of factors prevalent in domestic and international operations, and in particular during the current operations in Afghanistan. Some of these factors include: technological development, highly integrated governmental approaches, asymmetrical warfare against non-state actors, a proliferation of non-state actors (e.g. international organization (IOs), non-governmental organization (NGOs), security contractors, consultants), and an all-present media. Many have regarded the implications of these factors as incurring substantial changes to military operations. Thus, the contemporary environment has been described as new, unprecedented, revolutionary, and even radical.[2]

The debate over whether current challenges represent profound change is particularly relevant today. Afghanistan is a preoccupation within government and societies throughout Canada and many other countries. Canada commenced its military engagement in 2001 as part of the US led Operation Enduring Freedom, and then in 2005 as part of the NATO led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Canadian military efforts are focused in the southern region, and other government departments (OGDs) are engaged throughout the country. The Government of Canada's participation

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[2] Stephen Biddle, "The Past as Prologue: Assessing Theories of Future Warfare," *Security Studies* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 2. Gregory Wirick and Robert Miller, "*Canada and Missions for Peace: Lessons from Nicaragua, Cambodia, and Somalia* " (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1998) [book on-line]; available from http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-29536-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html ; Internet; accessed 20 October 2007. Christopher Ankersen, "Coordination, Cooperation, or Something Else?," in *Challenges and Change for the Military: New Missions, Old Problems*, edited by Douglas L. Bland, et al., 81-100 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 81-82. Douglas L. Bland, "Introduction," in *Challenges and Change for the Military: New Missions, Old Problems*, edited by Douglas L. Bland, *et al*., 1-4 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 1-2. Wendy Gilmour, "Civilian Actors in the Three Block War," in *Beyond the Three Block War,* edited by David Rudd, Deborah Bayley and Ewa K. Petruczynik, 61-66 (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 2006), 62.

in the intervention in Afghanistan is very much in line with its International Policy Statement of utilizing a whole of government approach in failed and fragile states to protect Canadian security interests. Working closely with Allies, the operation involves intensive combat with new technology, is politicized, and decision-makers and influencers are part of a large network of government, NGOs, IOs, and private organizations. But is this particularly new? The question invites a critical examination.

It is a human tendency to anticipate the future and regard the past from a present context.[3] This 'presentist' mindset influences the opinion that much is new as we commence the 21st century. The risks associated with a presentist perspective are important considerations for military commanders as perceptions of dramatic change can result in significant step changes to investment in resources, doctrine, and force development. Presentism sets precedence for ignoring the depth of historical experience, its associated lessons and guidance, and facilitates the rejection of or distraction from effective past practices.

This paper critically reviews previous operations to question the precept that this is a time of great change. Three factors have been selected that are regarded as a reflection of the 'newness' and changes in military operations: (1) technology, (2) intra-government collaboration (whole of government), and (3) the presence and activity of non-state actors in the battlespace such as IOs and NGOs. A review of military

[3]David Darlington, "A Clear and Presentist Danger," *AHA Today* (March 19, 2007) [journal on-line]; available from http://blog.historians.org/articles/171/a-clear-and-presentism-danger; Internet; accessed 20 October 2007. Lynn Hunt, "Against Presentism," *Perspectives* (May 2002) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2002/0205/0205pre1.cfm; Internet; accessed 20 October 2007.

operations in Canadian military history indicates that there are constants that are unlikely to change in the future. They include: participating in coalition or Allied constructs (coalition of willing or reluctant, NATO, UN), being part of operations that are expeditionary and typically interventionist in nature, utilizing Canadian tactical expertise, and representing national interests in a chain-of-command direct to the national government.[4] Each factor is examined in the context of historical and contemporary operations; World War II (WWII), Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC), and ISAF. It is proposed that Canadian operational commanders of today do not face a paradigm shift in military operations, but are instead facing similar challenges as their predecessors, albeit at a rate of increased complexity. There is nothing unprecedented in today's security environment of nationalist, religious, and ethnic conflicts.

Technology

After observing the performance of military technology in the First Gulf War (1990-1991), there arose a perception that technology was radically re-writing the future of warfare. The term Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) came into vogue, and over the next decade a number of other concepts were introduced based upon the premise of technological revolution.[5] This premise was accepted by many western militaries, including Canada's. There is no doubt that technological advances are occurring, and

[4]Conference of Defence Associations Institute. Proceedings of the First Graduate Student Symposium (Ottawa, ON, 199), 90-91. Michael Hallett, "Expansion of the Spectrum of Conflict and Its Relationship to Peace Enforcement Operation," in *Challenges and Change for the Military: New Missions, Old Problems*, edited by Douglas L. Bland, et al., 23-45 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 35.

[5]Biddle, *The Past as Prologue: Assessing Theories of Future Warfare,* 1.

assessments of future security environments would be remiss without a description of the highly impressive developments. Areas of interest for military officers include precision guided munitions, transportation, communication and health. Science has indeed brought more sophisticated and complicated equipment to reality, and militaries have adapted organizationally in order to deal with the specializations and increased complexity.[6] But are the last twenty years advances a particularly new phenomenon that has caused a sunset on our collective experience and requires radical innovation?

Significant technological advances have been occurring for the last century, and the increased complexity has caused commanders to consider adjustments and incorporations into their order of battle to achieve battlefield success. However, Stephen Biddle of the Council of Foreign Relations argues compellingly that in terms of that success, the proverbial 'so what' of technological advances can be examined through the lenses of lethality and platform speed. He argues that increased lethality and speed do not necessarily translate to successful outcomes, even between adversaries where there is a significant technological gap. Capable adversaries will adapt countermeasures to the opponent's lethality and speed utilizing a number of tactics including cover, concealment, and dispersion. In the case of conflict between adversaries with a technological gap, those at the wrong end of the technological spectrum will resort to conducting their conflict at the mid to lower end of the spectrum of conflict, utilizing the strategies and tactics of the insurgent.[7]

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[6]*Ibid*., 13.
[7]*Ibid*., 2, 15.

Throughout the 20th century, states have adapted incrementally to technological advances. In WW II, the adversaries were of reasonable technological parity, yet the Germans enjoyed significant early success. The German tactic of Blitzkrieg is typically presented as a radical change of warfare that utilized doctrinal shift due to the incorporation of new technologies, specifically the tank, aircraft, and radio. In fact, Germans used doctrine developed from World War I experience, and incorporated the more lethal and rapid technology in an incremental fashion. Furthermore, they mitigated the lethality of their adversary's technology by capitalizing upon 'dated' German doctrine from WW I. Specifically the Germans were highly effective in using suppressive fire, concealment, and emphasizing small unit initiatives.[8]

In contemporary operations, ISAF in Afghanistan has a significant technological advantage, and is facing a capable adversary. There was success during the initial US invasion in identifying, targeting, and eliminating the enemy. However, the adaptation of the adversary was rapid. In fact, notwithstanding unsurpassed superiority in surveillance (reconnaissance drones, airborne radars, satellite surveillance, thermal imaging, and hypersensitive electronic eavesdropping equipment) targeting for Coalition commanders has been problematic. The adversary has mitigated the lethality of its opponent through utilization of cover, concealment, dispersion, and effective small unit initiatives. This is achieved through the advantageous use of the complex terrain, blending with locals, and low tech communications (in the field).[9] A senior Canadian officer commented upon

[8] *Ibid*., 51-52.

[9] Stephen Biddle, "Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 2 (March/April 2003): 31.

the “breathtaking [technological] capabilities” available to Canadians in Afghanistan, but regrettably this did not provide him the full spectrum of capabilities required. His situational awareness was at best ten percent of what he would have preferred and technology did not provide the complete solution; he was deficient in human intelligence (HUMINT). He also observed that the skill sets of Canadian personnel were a function of experience in-theatre, and that the relatively rapid rotation of military personnel conflicted with the necessity to have continuous time in-theatre to gain experience to understand the adversary and the Afghanistan environment.

technology has been optimized; that is to say that maximizing performance in one area typically requires compromise elsewhere.[13] It behooves commanders to be aware of these inherent strengths and vulnerabilities.

Whole of Government

The operational commander would prefer coherent strategic direction underpinned by a collaboration of national government departments. The Canadian approach during WWII was of considerable inter-departmental focus, as one would expect of a country nationally mobilized for war, and essentially formed a whole of government construct. Unlike the Westminster parliament option in the UK, Canada elected to not use a War Cabinet. Instead, the Cabinet War Committee was formed, and between 1939 and 1945 it became a powerful and respected 'engine of government.' Chaired by the Prime Minister, with the Clerk of the Privy Council as secretary, it was a prestigious committee that consisted of the most influential and experienced ministers. Officially of an advisory capacity, in reality it had the power of Cabinet, and on occasion even reversed Cabinet decisions.[14]

Interestingly, the War Committee did not concern itself with the higher direction of the war (for example battle decisions). It recognized that Canada was not a senior

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[13]*Ibid*., 28.

[14]C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), 118-119.

partner in the higher level military strategic decision-making. Instead, prescient to today's preoccupations, it focused upon Canadian activities. During its 343 formal and documented meetings, its activities included addressing: relations with Commonwealth and foreign states; the size, organization and employment of the RCN, Army, and RCAF; the appointment and removal of senior commanders; the proportion of resources allocated to home defence vice overseas operations; wartime labour difficulties; and military manpower.[15]

In addition to the Prime Minister and the Clerk of the Privy Council, membership on the Committee included the Ministers of National Defence of the Services[16], Finance, Mines and Resources, and the Leader of Government in Senate. The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (now known as the deputy minister) attended all meetings.[17] The respective Chiefs of Staff were not members, but were (eventually) invited on a periodic basis.[18] It was a powerful group, with a singular national strategic focus upon defence and security, and with the Prime Minister as the dominant force. There was no doubt that intra-governmental collaboration was not only occurring, but was effective.[19]

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[15] *Ibid.*, 118.

[16] *Ibid.*, 120-122. During WWII, there was a Minister of National Defence (MND), Minister of National Defence for Naval Services, and Minister of National Defence for Air. The MND had a "first amongst equals" relationship to the other MNDs, but was mostly preoccupied with the Canadian Army.

[17] *Ibid.*, 115. The presence of an Under-Secretary at a Ministerial committee should not be underestimated. During the War, the Under-Secretaries for External Affairs were Dr. O.D. Skelton and N.A. Robertson, Both were highly respected. Indeed, Skelton was a confidant of the Prime Minister (see profiles at http://www.international.gc.ca/skelton/about-en.asp and http://www.international.gc.ca/canada-magazine/issue07/7t7-en.asp respectively).

[18] *Ibid.*, 113-114.

[19] *Ibid.*, 119.

The military Commanders during this period had a line of communication to and from this powerful body via their Chief of Staff and respective ministers.

The use of the War Committee as a means for intra-governmental collaboration on security matters ended with WWII.[20] An interesting illustration of this is with the Canadian participation in the UN mission in the Congo 1960-1964 (Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo – ONUC). Over the four years of this mission, Canada contributed 1900 personnel to an operation regarded by some as the most important peacekeeping mission during the Cold War.[21] It must be recalled that these were early days in peacekeeping and only four years after the Canadian participation in United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Suez. In summary, UN demands to Canada were predominantly of a technical and equipment nature, the mission occurred during a change of Canadian government (Pearson to Diefenbaker), and the Canadian Services were subjected to budgetary reductions. The Congo at that time was a fragile state (its independence from Belgium occurred in 1960), with a lack of central government authority compounded by ethnic and regional fragmentation.[22] In addition, a European power (Belgium) had 'injected' military force into a secessionist province.

The Department of External Affairs (DEA) contained a UN Division and a Defence Liaison Division. Unlike the Department of National Defence (DND), it also

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[20] *Ibid*., 119. The last meeting of the War Committee was 16 May 1945.

[21] David N Gibbs, "The United Nations, International Peacekeeping and the Question of `Impartiality' : Revisiting the Congo Operation of 1960," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, (2000): 359.

[22] *Ibid*., 361.

had a liaison officer in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The process for support to ONUC was typically of a military request from the UN being submitted to DEA, which assessed the requirement on a political basis, and then liaised with DND. The Services concurrently were using their channels to the Canadian Commander in the Congo for their assessment. The two departments worked together to resolve any disagreements. It should be noted that DEA regarded support to the UN as a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy, whereas DND regarded peacekeeping as a distraction from more critical tasks, and was concerned that it facilitated a capability-commitment gap which threatened the combat capability of the Services. The stage was set for collaboration to be between two departments on a push-pull basis, with the PM being utilized as an occasional arbitrator.[23] It was a significantly different construct from the War Committee.

The UN was conducting a centrally controlled operation and Canada, via the DEA, was supporting it. The Canadian whole of government approach for ONUC was predominantly military and diplomatic. Developmental aid in Canada in 1960 was coordinated from the newly created External Aid Office (EAO) attached to the DEA.[24] The relationship between the departments could best be described as bi-departmental and occasionally piecemeal. There were a number of occasions when departmental memos

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[23]David Antony Lenarcic, "Meeting each Other Halfway: The Departments of National Defence and External Affairs during the Congo Peacekeeping Mission, 1960-64," *Centre for International and Strategic Studies* 37, no. 1 (1996): 14-16.

[24]David R Morrison, *Aid and Ebb Tide - A History of CIDA and Canadian Development Assistance* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1998), 6, 40. The EAO was established 24 Aug 60. The Canadian International Development Agency was established in 1968, and initially continued to report to the DEA.

were exchanged in an effort to resolve disagreements of providing individual personnel. An interesting illustration is the dispute to provide an air component commander in a transition from airlift operations to offensive operations in late 1961.[25] This was a clear case of mission creep, supported by the DEA, but resisted vociferously by the RCAF. The Prime Minister was approached by DEA to be an arbitrator.[26] This approach of give and take liaison across two departments does not correlate with a contemporary coherent whole of government approach, but was assessed in hindsight as a workable solution for the time.[27] It was workable in the sense that it managed Canadian support to ONUC. With respect to the ONUC mission, the Congo conflict was only resolved with a coup d'état in November 1965.

The Canadian focus in support of ISAF strives to achieve an approach in line with a whole of government referred to as 3D; [28] that is to say coherent collaboration between the department of National Defence (DND), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). This contemporary whole of government approach is situated between the WWII and ONUC intra-government relationships. DFAIT has established the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) as a means for it to engage in complex

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[25]Lenaric, *Meeting each Other Halfway: The Departments of National Defence and External Affairs during the Congo Peacekeeping Mission, 1960-64*, 6. Fighters and bombers were being added to the UN Forces inventory to deal with the growing civil war.

[26]*Ibid*., 6-8. The UN Secretary-General also consulted the Prime Minister on the matter. The resolution was that the Canadian in post at the time was extended for three months and the position was eventually filled by a Swedish Officer.

[27]*Ibid.,* 12.

[28]Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Canada's Approach in Afghanistan," http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/library/mission-en.aspx; Internet; accessed 20 October 2007. 3D is the Canadian approach of Defence, Diplomacy and Development. This link provides an overview of the application of this approach in Afghanistan.

environments and bring a diplomatic presence to peace support operations. In addition, senior bureaucrats within DFAIT have been identified as the coordinating leadership for integrating government efforts.[29] There have also been bureaucratic changes within DFAIT (as with the CF and CIDA) to better align themselves.[30] It is unlikely that we will see a national security body for ISAF or similar operations equivalent to the War Committee, but there is a thrust to enhance collaboration at the national level to better support military operations in which Canada chooses to engage. Nevertheless, it is necessary to be cognizant of the challenges.

On the diplomatic side, the military commander must realize that DFAIT does not have capabilities in reserve awaiting direction for deployment. Indeed, DFAIT is facing the same challenges as other departments, and its number of senior Foreign Service personnel is declining. Experienced experts to participate in military planning, exercises, and in-theatre operations are not readily available. DFAIT has eager young personnel who are engaged with other departments and in-theatre, but while sometimes effective, they can also be problematic given their inexperience.[31] On the technical side, the Canadian pool of experts is finite. The use of domestic specialists to support overseas development (e.g. police, infrastructure, sanitation and water engineers) reduces the

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[29]Gordon Smith, "*Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?*" (Calgary: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007), available from http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/Canada%20in%20Afghanistan%20Is%20it%20Working.pdf ; Internet; (accessed 1 October 2007), 6.

[30]Gilmour, *Civilian Actors in the 3 Block War*, 61.

[31]*Ibid*., 64-65.

capacity for Canadian domestic requirements.[32] The challenges of demographics, budget constraints, and availability of expertise are a common Canadian capacity theme and impact the objectives of mission planning and execution.

Development is coordinated within Canada by CIDA. It must be noted that CIDA does not do the development work in-theatre. Its mandate is to plan and administer development, utilizing NGOs, IOs and consulting firms. CIDA is addressing a number of philosophical shifts in order to support ISAF, while also addressing internal challenges. Unlike the CF, CIDA does not have any training system for aid workers. It is reliant upon recruiting practitioners who come from a wide background, many of whom are educated in an older context than the contemporary approach espoused within the IPS.[33] In theatre, within mid-level spectrum of conflict, it must now be recognized that security and development are integrally linked, and success cannot be achieved without both. This creates a dilemma for traditional development administrators who feel that they cannot achieve success due to their close association with the military, yet are limited in their efforts by the heightened level of conflict.[34] Additionally, there is the risk of overlapping objectives creating friction between 3D participants. Infrastructure projects (for example bridge building) intended to aid a community could also be interpreted as a

[32]*Ibid*., 64-65.

[33]Andy Tamas, *Development and the Military in Afghanistan: Working with Communities,* Report Prepared for Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (Ottawa: CIDA, 2006), 7-8.

[34]Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?,* 17.

means to aid military operations, and a military commander may suddenly be faced with an abrupt withdrawal of funding.[35]

The operational commander can mitigate some of the capacity challenges faced by whole of government counterparts by utilizing military resources for planning and coordination. Euphemistically referred to as 'leading from the rear' (as the effort cannot be regarded as a military lead), this can be employed at the national level and in-theatre. It has been an approach used by commanders since Canada's involvement in ISAF, and indeed has been used in other contemporary operations. The current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), as a former ISAF commander, actively engaged in using his role to facilitate multi-agency participation.[36] The other aspect of capacity is in-theatre development work, which in a contemporary operation is typically conducted by NGOs and IOs.

As with any mission, the challenge is the adversary, and spoiler management[37] requires the contemporary 3D approach. This is the world of reality where a tenacious adversary must be incented to accept a lower level of conflict management. During ONUC, it was in the interests of secessionists to prevent a regaining of control by the

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[35]DND, *Annex B to 3350-165 – Op Apollo, Lessons Learned Staff Action Directive*, B-20.

[36]Howard G. Coombs and General Rick Hillier, "Planning for Success: The Challenge of Applying Operational Art in Post-Conflict Afghanistan," *Canadian Military Journal* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 10.

[37] Hallett, *Expansion of the Spectrum of Conflict and Its Relationship to Peace Enforcement Operation*, 39-42. Spoilers are actors who are invested in the chaos of the situation, and for whom the movement down the conflict spectrum would compromise their objectives, whether of personal wealth, power, or ideology. The means to manage them requires a coherent approach in theatre with the underpinning strategic support. Spoiler management consists of strategies to induce behaviour that meets the mission requirements, and can include a combination of appeasement, socialization intervention, and coercion. This is regarded as incenting the spoiler to regard a more tolerable level of conflict management to be in its interests. The incentives range from destruction (application of military force) to intervention (developmental or diplomatic activities).

central government. For ISAF, the Taliban are the most prominent spoilers, and their objective of continuing to undermine the central government poses the greatest challenge. Particularly in southern Afghanistan, their objective is aided by the slow pace of economic reconstruction. The Taliban continue to be convinced that sustained fighting will reduce the resolve of NATO forces, and will achieve eventual victory. Diplomatic options for coercing change in this mindset illustrate the utility of whole-of-government. Besides the current operation, these options (admittedly unpleasant) include the acceptance by NATO to support a protracted civil war which the Taliban cannot win, or engagement into regional politics to utilize Indian participation to leverage Pakistani pressure upon the Taliban to engage in political accommodation.[38]

Other spoilers exist who wish to disrupt a nation building process. There are sub-regional or tribal warlords with strong chains of command, criminal gangs, and para-military groups. For ISAF the capacity building exercise with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) is also compromised by suspicions that these institutions have been infiltrated by criminal gangs.[39] For both ONUC and ISAF, developmental focus upon governance utilized incentives such as intervention and coercion to address these challenges.

The whole of government approach in Canada has taken different turns over the years. The national level collaboration and direction was of an extraordinarily high level during WWII due to the formal Cabinet War Committee. During the key UN operation

[38]Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?,* 22.
[39]*Ibid*., 15-17.

of ONUC it was an adhoc bi-departmental liaison approach. For the Afghanistan mission of today, there is an evolving multi-departmental coordination that goes beyond a mere liaison relationship. One can hypothesize as to how far this collaboration will evolve. However, concerted intra-governmental collaboration reminiscent of a WWII War Committee is, at best, speculative. In-theatre, contemporary operations have increasing collaboration among government departments and their resources. Operational commanders in the future can learn from historic department relationships, but as with the increased complexity of technology, there is increased complexity in meeting objectives that go beyond the application of military force. Given the reality of the 'small war' at the mid-level spectrum of conflict, military commanders must realize that their decisions are subject to scrutiny and politicization. It is prudent to recall US guidance from the early 20th century: "… the special characteristic of 'small wars' [is] that diplomacy had not ceased to function. [The] State Dept [exercises] great influence on the conduct of military operations."[40] This is indeed reflected in Canadian experience (past and present) and the relationship with other government departments, notwithstanding

development of the population. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs) represent a plethora of actors who populate the battlespace.[41] It is important that commanders understand their objectives and challenges.

NGOs have existed for over one hundred years, albeit in limited numbers. The presence of civilian organizations in times of conflict is also not new. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) participated extensively in WWII to assist prisoners of war and civilian populations.[42] In the Congo during ONUC, fifteen years after the creation of the UN, developmental efforts were centrally controlled by the UN, and for the most part were conducted by International Organizations (IOs). During this period the participation of NGOs was minimal relative to IOs. The UN control in-theatre was conducted under the Chief of Civilian Operations (CCO) and the Civilian Operations Group, who were required to identify a wide swath of requirements and then to solicit or recruit support from various countries and programs. The requirements predominantly involved technical personnel to both re-establish public services (prior to independence, Belgians and other Europeans occupied the vast majority of technical posts) as well as to

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[41] Jean Francois Guihaudis, *Relations Internationales Contemporaines* (Paris: LexisNexis, 2005), 182, 289. An NGO is defined as a group, association, movement, corporate body, or institution, created not by an accord between states, but by the initiative of any combination of different individuals of different backgrounds, from the private sector or public sector, and of different nationalities. Its focus is to engage the international, national and regional arena and to not seek monetary profit. Examples are Care Canada, International Committee of the Red Cross, and Amnesty International. An IO is an association of States established by international accord or treaty, dedicated to a common constitution and goals that has a jurisdiction distinct from its member states. Examples are UNESCO, NATO, and the EU. IOs differ from NGOs. NGO members are not states, NGOs are not established by inter-state treaties, and NGOs do not have international jurisdiction [free translation].

[42] International Committee of the Red Cross, "ICRC in WW II: Overview of Activities," http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/history-world-war-2-overview-020205; Internet; accessed 10 October 2007.

develop capacity in the population. The CCO developed an integrated plan of assistance for transport, communication, health, agriculture, education, finance and the economy. Interaction with the military was for the most part of a strictly logistic and security nature and the military contingent commanders reported to the Commander of the UN Force – General Staff (equal in status to the CCO).[43] The provision of civilian support was established as effectively as possible in an environment of civil war and tribal fighting.

The proliferation of NGOs in the international community commenced at the end of the 20th century and today there are innumerable organizations with a status of NGO.[44] Correspondingly, the number of civilian personnel intent upon providing aid and development in the battlespace has increased. In Afghanistan, the presence of NGOs and IOs is ubiquitous.[45] Their skill sets, experience, network and on-the–ground community relationships can represent a force multiplier in terms of developmental capacity.[46] Many (not all) are competent actors schooled in the complexities of reconstruction. They are another enabler, similar in context to technology, which will aid in the winning of hearts and minds given their inter-personal relations, language skills, and cultural awareness.[47]

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[43]King Gordon, *The U.N. in the Congo: A Quest for Peace*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1962), 62-65.

[44]United Nations, "Economic and Social Council: Consultative Relationship between the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations," http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm; Internet; accessed 12 October 2007. Duke University, "NGO Research Guide," http://library.duke.edu/research/subject/guides/ngo_guide/; Internet; accessed 12 October 2007.

[45]The Afghanistan Analyst, **"**Non-Governmental and International Humanitarian Organizations Operating in Afghanistan," http://afghanistan-analyst.org/ngo.aspx;Internet; accessed 1 October 2007. This site provides an overview of NGOs and IOs operating in Afghanistan.

[46]Tamas, *Development and the Military in Afghanistan: Working with Communities*, 10-12.

[47]Leslie, *Question and Answer Forum*, 99-100.

The capacity for aid and reconstruction relies upon civilian participation, and lack of security curtails this capacity. During ONUC a famine was addressed when IOs utilized a massive air-lift and ground transport to deliver aid. The withdrawal of the security forces from that area necessitated a withdrawal of relief teams, despite bitter protestations. In some cases workers remained despite the risk.[48] The Canadians in ISAF face a similar challenge in their area of responsibility. There is a dearth of NGO and IO representation given the security challenges, and the challenges are specifically poverty relief[49] and building the capacity of the weak Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). In the interim, the gap must be filled by Canadian military commanders who must utilize a combination of coercion and aid intervention to incent a diminishment of violence. [50]

During ONUC, the UN exercised central control of civilian relief and development. In Afghanistan, NATO is the coordinating body, and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are one of the means of providing relief and development. These teams are a US concept of mixing humanitarian and military efforts that was adopted by NATO at the beginning of the ISAF mission. They are used by different countries in different manners.[51] For example, the Canadian PRT in Kandahar can in

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[48] Gordon, *The U.N. in the Congo: A Quest for Peace*, 74.

[49]Smith, , *Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?,* 18. Numerous Afghan organizations have halted all operations in the south, as have large international agencies such as Oxfam. The World Food Program (WFP) estimates that 2.5M people are in need of more food assistance in this region.
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[50]Ibid., 4.

[51] Mark Sedra, *Civil-Military Relations in Afghanistan: The Provincial Reconstruction Team Debate*, Consultation on Strategic Policy Options for Canada in Afghanistan: Asia Pacific Foundation of

principal use the military directly in reconstruction work, whereas the German PRT in the north (where the violence is at a much lower level) does not.[52] However, a number of NGOs are uncomfortable with the concept of working closely with military organizations. Médicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) left Afghanistan in 2004 after 24 years of operation, citing that PRT action had "curtailed the 'humanitarian space' within which it and other humanitarian organizations could operate."[53] Another NGO regards the concept of the PRTs as: (1) essentially a means of implementing a whole of government approach in-theatre (specifically defence and development), and (2) a threat to the ability of NGOs to provide aid.[54] The ICRC has identified a number of concerns: compromise of humanitarian action upon use of military force; militaries using humanitarian assistance as a means of incenting compliance or gathering intelligence; distraction of the military from provision of security; and confusion among the population as to the difference between military and aid workers with a resulting risk to safety.[55]

Canada, (Vancouver: Asia pacific Foundation of Canada, 2004) [papers on-line]; available from http://www.asiapacificresearch.ca/caprn/afghan_project/m_sedra.pdf; Internet; accessed 1 October 2007, 5. The primary goals of the [US] PRTs were as follows: to extend the influence of the central government outside of the capital; provide a security umbrella for [NGOs] to operate; facilitate information sharing; and carry out small-scale reconstruction projects based on concise needs assessments and local consultations. Teams ranged in size from 50-100 personnel and were composed of civil affairs soldiers, special forces, and regular army units as well as representatives of USAID, the State Department, and the Department of Agriculture.

[52] Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?,* 18-19. For Canadian scale of investment, CIDA and DFAIT combined are planning to spend a combined total of $30M - $34M in aid via the PRT in Kandahar in 2007.

[53] Sedra, *Civil-Military Relations in Afghanistan: The Provincial Reconstruction Team Debate,* 1.

[54]William Reimer, "Creating Space for Peaceful, Lasting Change - the 3D's: One Non-Government Organization's Perspective," *Mennonite Central Committee – News,* April 13, 2006, [article on-line]; available from http://mcc.org/news/news/2006/2006-04-13_afghanistan2.html; Internet; accessed 1 October 2007.

[55]Sedra, *Civil-Military Relations in Afghanistan: The Provincial Reconstruction Team Debate*, 3.

The issue of culture merits closer attention vis-à-vis the interaction between NGOs and military forces. NGOs take pride in their self-reliance and independence. They regard themselves as long-term participants, first-in and last out, unlike military personnel who serve within relatively short rotations. There is a theme of social and political activism and a more youthful demographic, vice conservative hierarchical command structures. They see themselves as impartial, whereas the military may regard them as a solid source of intelligence. And most definitively, they are not trained nor inculcated to regard the application of military force as a part of their tool box. [56] There are issues of trust and distrust. Clearly, relationship-building is problematic and yet these organizations cannot be ignored, as the mission requires the expertise and experience of these players. Military power simply does not provide the solution for all aspects of a mission that entails the development of a civil society. There has always been tension between the military and the aid and development workers. However, collaboration is required to achieve the mission of lowering the level of conflict to a tolerable level that will allow a sustainable civil society.

Changing the conditions of the community is an effective means of implementing security, and aid and development workers bring this capacity through their skills and their passion. NGOs are a potential force multiplier for the operational commander, but their necessary collaboration must be achieved with care and with the awareness of their needs and differences. Regardless of preferences, NGOs will occupy the battlespace, and relationships between them and the military must be established. Development workers

[56]Ankersen, *Coordination, Cooperation, or Something Else?,* 86-91.

must learn to work with the military, while the military will have to continue to increase its skill set to support development work. This is an ongoing evolution of the collaboration between the military and the civilian relief and development workers. It is another example of principals that were utilized in the past, but with increased complexity due to an increased number of NGOs and IOs, and a more mutually agreed coordination vice central control as seen in ONUC. Past experience of collaboration with civilian agencies is pertinent to today's commander.

Conclusion

Contrary to the perspective of a presentist, factors such as technology advancement, whole of government approaches and NGO and IO actors in the battlespace are not new to the 21st century, but are evolving dynamics that we have encountered before. Canada will continue to selectively intervene in failed and failing states with coalitions which will likely have higher level of technology relative to adversaries, which will be an enabler to success, but not a solution. Intra-government collaboration will be an increasing necessity for mission success. Moving actors down the spectrum of conflict to tolerable levels of conflict management can only be achieved by a coherent use of developmental aid, diplomacy, and military force. Canada will increasingly use these instruments of foreign policy as a means of successful intervention, when and where it chooses to intervene; for as with all of our history, it will be selective in choosing its interventions. NGOs and IOs have been and will continue to be a reality of the battlespace, and their experience and skill sets can be force multipliers

for aid and reconstruction. And commanders who seek opportunities to learn from history will continue to find the experiences and lessons of yesteryear of great pertinence. A presentist perspective will obstruct the awareness and institutional memory of past experience, and lead to mistaking increasing complexity for radical change. Commanders must resist the presentist tendency, and examine critically what is presented as 'new' in the context of the experiences gained by those who have come before them. In the words of Otto von Bismarck, "Fools say they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by other people's experience."[57]

[57] Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Why Don't we Learn from History?* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 1.

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