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**ESTABLISHING 'TRUST' IN PEACE SUPPORT LEADERSHIP**

By/par

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## ABSTRACT

‘Trust’ is accepted as the *sine qua non* component of leadership and command. Trust must be resident in unit and formation leadership (chains of command) in order for the CF to achieve continued mission successes. However, the challenges to leadership that a commander faces in establishing trust today are little written about or discussed. The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) briefly discusses the “Concept of Trust” in his *Guidance to Commanding Officers*. The Canadian Army has identified ‘trust leadership’ as essential to the application of mission command in manoeuvre warfare. Today, commanders are expected to create a leadership climate that encourages independent thought, initiative, *trust* and mutual understanding, while accepting and encouraging risk taking. Some desirables here appear at odds with the operational environment in which the Canadian Army, in particular, deploys to today.

This paper analyses some challenges for senior leaders (at unit and formation level) to the establishment of trust in recent peace support operations (PSO). Four recent PSO are analyzed using the ‘CORE’ principles of trust defined by Larry Reynolds in *The Trust Effect*. These principles are ‘competence’, ‘openness’, ‘reliability’ and ‘equity’. As well, for an operation to be successful, trust-building extends in both vertical and lateral dimensions. The paper will demonstrate that the trust-building challenges facing senior leaders in PSO are largely due to factors or conditions beyond their immediate control.

# ESTABLISHING 'TRUST' IN PEACE SUPPORT LEADERSHIP

“Those who study why men fight suggest that commitment is most evident where there is stability, *trust*, and a positive outlook.”

*FM 22-103*

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Army capstone manual, *Canada's Army* (CFP 300), qualifies 'leadership' as an art which most people can learn. Leadership is defined as “the way of influencing human behaviour in order to accomplish a mission in the manner desired by the leader.”<sup>1</sup> This definition varies little from the 1973 Canadian Forces (CF) definition other than the word 'art' has been replaced by 'way'.<sup>2</sup> Canadian Army operational level doctrine states that “leadership is a projection of the personality, character and will of the commander.”<sup>3</sup> It reinforces this statement with Field Marshall Slim's more soldierly and tangible definition of leadership as “that mixture of example, persuasion and compulsion which makes men do what you want them to do”.<sup>4</sup> Hence there is no ideal definition or human pattern to direct task completion.

Leadership is one of the three vital elements of command, along with 'decision-making' and 'control'.<sup>5</sup> Leadership is “the purely human attribute of command.”<sup>6</sup> The ability to lead is the most critical feature of command; leading is the commander's most important activity on the battlefield. Leaders establish purpose, provide direction, and generate coherence and motivation within their commands.<sup>7</sup> Good leadership is what most inspires individuals with the will to victory and shapes them into a cohesive, effective force in pursuit of a common cause. Good leadership requires that commanders maintain and promote the military ethos at all times, reflecting it in their actions.<sup>8</sup>

Besides promoting an ethos, leaders must work to create an environment of *mutual trust* between ranks, as Canadian troops will only follow those in whom they have confidence and respect.<sup>9</sup> In his recent *Guidance to Commanding Officers* the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) underscores the importance of trust within the chain of command, to wit: “to be able to influence any relationship and to develop mutual purposes, there is a requirement to have a solid foundation on which the leader and follower can build. This foundation is called trust, mutual trust”.<sup>10</sup> CDS Guidance further states:

“it is common knowledge that no organization can function efficiently without trust. Individuals that do not trust each other must be forced to cooperate...through a set of rigid rules that need to be negotiated beforehand and enforced throughout the process. In a non-trusting environment,

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<sup>1</sup> *Canada's Army: We Stand on Guard for Thee*. (CFP 300). (DND: April 1998) 41

<sup>2</sup> *Leadership (Volume 2): The Professional Officer*. (CFP 131-2). (DND: July 1973) 2-1

<sup>3</sup> *Conduct of Land Operations: Operational Level Doctrine for the Canadian Army*. (CFP 300-1) (DND: September 1996) 3-3

<sup>4</sup> FM Sir William Slim quoted in *Conduct of Land Operations*, 3-3

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-2

<sup>6</sup> *Command* (CFP 300-3) (Kingston: July 1997) 6

<sup>7</sup> *Conduct of Land Operations*, 3-3

<sup>8</sup> *Canada's Army*, 41

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 41

<sup>10</sup> *Chief of Defence Staff Guidance to Commanding Officers 99/00*. (DND: 2000) Chapter 2, 7/45

trust is replaced by a legal apparatus to establish what is right and what is wrong. There is no flexibility in this type of environment. Every member of the military profession, even one with very little experience, understands the tragic consequences that may result from a lack of trust among military members.”<sup>11</sup>

Although seemingly evident, the need to establish and retain trust remains a long-term articulated priority in the CF. The CF document *Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* lists ‘decisive leaders’ as one of eight strategic objectives for the next 20 years...the intent being to “develop and sustain a leadership climate that encourages initiative, decisiveness and *trust* while improving our leaders’ abilities to lead and manage effectively.”<sup>12</sup>

Acknowledging that trust remains an essential ingredient to successful leadership, this essay will examine current challenges to leaders to establishing trust in the operational environment of today – that of peace support. McCann and Pigeau, in their seminal work *The Human in Command* (2000), highlight that building an effective coalition force in today’s operations requires that a leader be able to weld together military personnel from different cultures, who have varying abilities and expectations. Military leaders can find themselves caught between political masters, allies, and the UN and belligerents, with only an ill-defined mandate or no mandate at all.<sup>13</sup> How then does a leader build a team, instilling cohesion and trust in such an environment?

This essay will also examine the narrow term of ‘trust leadership’ in Canadian Army doctrine which is fundamental to mission command in manoeuvre warfare. Trust leadership has received little comment to date as to its applicability in peace support operations. Overall, this paper demonstrates that there are challenges for operational leaders to establishing trust in peace support operations (PSO) largely due to factors or conditions beyond their immediate control.

The focus in this essay will be on senior leadership at the operational level, ie., those at unit and formation command level in PSO. This essay will proceed as follows: firstly, ‘trust’ will be defined; secondly, ‘trust’ and ‘leadership’ will be situated within the capability set (defined by McCann and Pigeau) required of a commander; thirdly, the narrow term ‘trust leadership’ as espoused by Canadian Army doctrine will be defined; fourthly, the CORE principles of trust as defined by Larry Reynolds in *The Trust Effect* will be stated; and lastly, using Reynolds’ principles an analysis of trust issues in recent PSO will highlight trust-building challenges to senior operational leaders.

## PLACING ‘TRUST’ IN CONTEXT

“[T]o establish trust, you, the leader, must manifest to the troops the true belief that you have their best interests at heart. This is not just an ROE issue, but a basic leadership issue”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> *Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Draft 5.1)(Ottawa: September 2000) 15

<sup>13</sup> C. McCann and R. Pigeau, eds. *The Human In Command: Exploring The Modern Military Experience*. (New York: Kluwer/Plenum, 2000) 395-6

<sup>14</sup> A statement regarding ‘trust’ made by Colonel (retd) Don Matthews during the AMSC 3 discussion on Rules of Engagement (ROE) on 25 Oct 00. Colonel Matthews commanded a Canadian fighter (CF-18) squadron in the 1990-91 Gulf War and later a Canadian National Support Element in Haiti. (He authorized use of this quotation on 19 Nov 00.)

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines ‘trust’ as “firm belief in [the] reliability, honesty, veracity, justice, strength, etc., of [a] person or thing.”<sup>15</sup> From an organizational behaviour perspective, two complementary descriptions of trust by American authors are provided here to orient us for the ensuing analysis:

\* Robert Shaw in *Trust in the Balance* qualifies ‘trust’ as being “more than simple confidence and less than blind faith”. He describes ‘trust’ within the work environment as the “belief that those on whom we depend will meet our expectations of them. Trust has become ever more important [today] because it helps to manage complexity, fosters a capacity for action, enhances collaboration, and increases organizational learning.”<sup>16</sup>

\* Gilbert Fairholm in his book *Leadership and the Culture of Trust* cogently illustrates ‘trust’ as follows:

“Trust may be the first principle of human interaction. It is the foundation of success in interpersonal relationships. Trust lets us act *as if*. Trust lets us act as if information is true without solid evidence, or any evidence at all. Trust lets us act as if people we work with are competent – before they prove to be or not to be comp

creatively and adapt new ideas. While militaries value customs and traditions, and stability helps to reduce stress in demanding situations, traditions can also stifle creativity and inhibit risk-taking.<sup>20</sup>

**Secondly, emotional capability:** Emotional fitness is essential for commander effectiveness. “Resolve, resilience, adaptability, patience, an ability to keep things in perspective, and a sense of humour are key personality characteristics for maintaining motivation and propagating the will to achieve”.<sup>21</sup> Emotional capability is related to how individuals respond to stress. It is a challenge to make decisions when sleep deprived, cold and wet, missing one’s family, and when unsure if one’s presence is making a difference to a conflict. Commanders must know how to cope with stress, and be able to assess and treat soldiers in theatre.

**Thirdly, interpersonal skills:** These skills form the base of the core command function - leadership. Several attributes of good leaders tend to be visibility and presence, approachability, the ability to motivate and inspire, the ability to assess subordinates capabilities and limitations, and the ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally, and with media. Interpersonal competency is especially important in PSO where cultural awareness, negotiating skills and linguistic proficiency are necessary;<sup>22</sup> and

**Fourth, team-building capabilities:** These are closely tied to inter-personal skills. A leader must be able to recognize and select team members based on a mixture of competencies; to instil supportive attitudes; *to establish trust, confidence and cohesion*; and to distribute authority and responsibility among team members.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, as espoused by CDS Guidance and reinforced by Shaw, Fairholm and ‘The Human in Command’ Workshop participants, trust is essential for the success of an organization. Leadership is exercised predominantly with interpersonal and team-building capabilities. The responsibility to foster a trusting environment lies with the leader (commander).

## ‘TRUST LEADERSHIP’: CANADIAN ARMY DOCTRINE

Our Land Force’s warfighting philosophy is ‘manoeuvre warfare’, which “seeks to defeat the enemy by shattering his moral and physical cohesion, and his ability to fight as an effective coordinated whole, rather than by destroying him physically through incremental attrition.”<sup>24</sup>

The command doctrine underlying manoeuvre warfare is ‘mission command’, designed to achieve unity of effort, a faster tempo, and initiative at all levels. It requires decentralization of authority and decision-making. Adopted from the German doctrine of *auftragstaktik*, mission command assumes that subordinate commanders can think and act relatively autonomously. It requires the development of two-way trust and mutual understanding between commanders and subordinates throughout the chain of command. Timely and effective decision-making, together with initiative at all levels, are key to ‘getting inside’ the enemy’s decision-action cycle. Commanders at all levels

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 393

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 394

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 394

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 394

<sup>24</sup> *Command* (CFP 300-3), 8

must be able to issue mission orders and intent, then allow subordinates to get on with the task.<sup>25</sup> The commander's intent is central to mission command. When unanticipated situations arise, subordinate commanders need to understand their superior commander's intent well enough to act decisively, confident that they are doing what their commander would order done were he present.<sup>26</sup> The combination of expected subordinate initiative and decisiveness, two-way (mutual) trust and commander's intent, is what CFP 300-1 labels 'trust leadership'.<sup>27</sup> Both *The Human In Command* (Chapter 12) and *Command* (CFP 300-3, chapter 3) imply that the degree or effectiveness of 'trust leadership' within a unit or formation is directly proportional to the degree of 'shared implicit intent' present (or conformance to unvocalized expectations – cultural, military and personal).

Commanders must create a climate that encourages independent thought, initiative, trust and mutual understanding, while accepting and encouraging risk taking. At first glance, the mission command approach with a basis of trust leadership seems particularly suited to army operations in the post-Cold War era, wherein it is difficult to plan every operation in detail, and decision-making and initiative must be left to local commanders.<sup>28</sup> However, trust leadership is "the most difficult aspect [of mission command] to achieve as it is inherent in our nature to want to over control our subordinates, and with modern information and communications systems it is becoming ever easier to do [so]."<sup>29</sup> This is especially true in PSO, as demonstrated by over 30 years of experience, where section level problems can quickly escalate to the political level.<sup>30</sup> The paradox is present: the Canadian Army doctrine of 'trust leadership' is essential to operational success but, at the same time, the actions of even the smallest unit are subject to strategic level scrutiny and control.

## REYNOLDS' CORE PRINCIPLES

Larry Reynolds', a British management consultant states in his book *The Trust Effect* that "it is the relationships between people, not the people themselves, which distinguish a great organization from a mediocre one. In fact, the quality of relationships can mean the difference between success and failure".<sup>31</sup> Reynolds indicates three ways of conducting relationships within organizations: power-based, hope-based, and trust-based.

In a trust-based relationship people will perform for their superior not because they have to (power-based), not because they hope it will do them good (hope-based), but because they genuinely want to. The subordinates are confident that their superior is concerned about them, and they closely identify with the superior's values and beliefs. As well, in a trust relationship if people do not perform the required activities then there is the immediate issue of 'accountability'. When trust is broken the relationship between the 'truster' and 'trustee' ends. Trust relationships are more effective than power- and hope-based relationships and cost less to maintain.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the quality of trust is "the most significant interpersonal element in determining [organizational] effectiveness."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Conduct of Land Operations*, intro and 3-11

<sup>26</sup> McCann and Pigeau, eds. *The Human In Command*, 95

<sup>27</sup> *Conduct of Land Operations*, intro para 6

<sup>28</sup> McCann and Pigeau, eds. *The Human In Command*, 217

<sup>29</sup> *Conduct of Land Operations*, intro para 6

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>31</sup> Larry Reynolds. *The Trust Effect* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1997) 5-8

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10

<sup>33</sup> Carl B. Rogers (1964) quoted by Fairholm, *Leadership and the Culture of Trust*, 103



Transcribing Reynolds' description of workplace relationships to a PSO, there exist three sets of trust relationships that a senior operational leader must achieve for the operation to be successful.<sup>34</sup> These are the vertical relationship (to higher HQs and down to staffs, subordinate commanders and soldiers under command), the lateral relationship to fellow COs or commanders, and the relationship (usually lateral – outside the organization) to parties to the conflict, warring factions, other governmental agencies (OGAs) and non-government organizations (NGOs).

Also, according to Reynolds there are four 'C-O-R-E' principles at the heart of the 'trust effect'. These also have application for leaders in a military environment. They are as follows:

- \* **Competence:** the ability to do the job well. This principle is usually evident from a leader's training, experience, skills and credentials. Competence extends also to 'promoting learning' and 'choosing the right people';
- \* **Openness:** this entails transparency in relationships, frequent feedback, 'telling people the score', taking people into your confidence, demonstrating concern, allowing subordinates to air their concerns, and allowing subordinates to learn from mistakes;
- \* **Reliability:** the keeping of promises, acting with integrity, and making people accountable. People will only trust the leader if he/she is reliable, dependable and consistent; and
- \* **Equity:** this is not synonymous with 'identical'. However, workloads, risks and rewards need to be shared evenly.<sup>35</sup>

Employing the Reynolds' CORE principles, an analysis of trust in four peace support operations of the past decade, three Canadian-led, will highlight trust-building challenges to the operational leader.

## **Case Number 1: The Dutch Experience in UNPROFOR (1994-95)**

The experience of the Dutch contingent in Bosnia in 1994-95 illustrates the challenges to establishing trust leadership due largely to doubts of competence and reliability.

As in Canadian Army doctrine, Dutch Army doctrine suggests that mission command be applicable in all operations. However, in *The Human In Command* two Dutch psychologists highlight the challenges to trust leadership in operations where there are significant political implications. They state that in these operations higher commanders may feel compelled to intervene in the decisions of subordinate commanders, short-circuiting mission command.<sup>36</sup>

Within the Dutch infantry battalion in UNPROFOR (Dutchbat), and its associated logistics battalion (Logbat), many platoon commanders operated autonomously, yet restricted, by imposed parameters. As Logbat platoon commanders led vehicle convoys throughout Bosnia they were forced to resolve

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<sup>34</sup> Reynolds. *The Trust Effect*, 11

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-30

<sup>36</sup> A. Vogelaar and E. Kramer. "Mission Command In Ambiguous Situations", *The Human In Command*, 217-8

most problems on the road and on their own. As well, infantry platoon commanders operated observation posts and led patrols removed from main camp for several weeks at a time. However, their 'autonomy' belied the restrictions imposed on them by their orders and SOPs. Patrols were ordered to only follow fixed routes when patrol commanders thought another route or patrol would provide more information. The progress of patrols and convoys was closely monitored by unit leadership from the battalion operations centre. As well, in many cases, the battalion operations centre intervened in the decisions of subordinates, by-passing the company commander.<sup>37</sup>

Another condition that hampered mutual trust was that Logbat rotated one-third of its personnel every two months. Hence superiors would not know how a new convoy commander would react to situations enroute. Likewise, when a superior commander rotated out, the platoon commander had to adapt to the expectations and intent of a new commander. In contrast to Logbat, the Dutchbat rotated together. Although an infantry battalion, some platoons were not filled until a few months before deployment. This was detrimental to group cohesion from the outset. As well, in both units the chains of command were altered from that in the Netherlands, which led to conflicts between levels of command that should have been reliant on each other. The lack of mutual trust caused company commanders to deliver precise orders to convoys and infantry patrols, the justification being that small mistakes could have drastic consequences. Hence platoon and group commanders felt that this situation contradicted mission command, and it was interpreted as a strong signal that the chain of command lacked trust and confidence in their abilities and judgement.<sup>38</sup>

The Dutch experience also illustrates the problems of implementing mission command in missions with high political profile. While a clear mandate and the means to fulfil it will facilitate mission command, if such conditions are not present then mission command is possible only if mutual trust and shared-implicit intent are very high at the outset. Dutch superior commanders harboured doubts regarding the COMPETENCE and RELIABILITY of their platoon commanders. The conditions of altered chains of command on deployment, frequent personnel rotation (in LogBat) and little knowledge as to how superiors or subordinates would think and respond in situations, all contributed to a general lack of shared implicit intent in the two units.

One could opine that the Dutch experience indicates a dissonance in mission command doctrine versus today's operational reality. From an American perspective, decentralized operations are here to stay. Bernard Bass states in Leading In The Army After Next that "decentralized operations are envisioned for the Army After Next to provide the tactical speed and agility to win battles. Professional trust and confidence between leaders and led will be essential."<sup>39</sup> Certainly that statement is reflective of the expectation that relatively stable and long-standing units will fight national wars in mid-to-high intensity conflicts.

Is the Canadian Army training with a command doctrine suited only for mid-to-high intensity conventional operations, whilst our operational reality is at the low intensity (PSO) end of the conflict spectrum? While Canadian battalions usually rotate on a six-month basis in PSO, similar to the Dutch situation some platoon/sub-unit establishments are not manned until a couple months before deployment. [In a Canadian context the pre-PSO augmentation of a unit does impact on its cohesion. Colonel M.D. Capstick qualifies this as "a fact of life and a clear trust-building challenge

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 221-2

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 227-8

<sup>39</sup> Bernard Bass. "Leading In The Army After Next", *Military Review*. March-April 1998. 48

for leaders.”<sup>40</sup> The Army has tried to deal with this by forming units 90-120 days in advance for training.]

## Case Number 2: Canadian Contingent SFOR

Colonel M.D. Capstick commanded the Canadian Contingent to the NATO Stabilization Force (CCSFOR) in the former Yugoslavia during 1997-98. His experience, captured in his essay “Command and Leadership in Other People’s War’s”, brings implicitly to the fore the trust principles of OPENNESS, EQUITY and RELIABILITY.

As a preface, in his reflection on the post-Somalia fallout Colonel Capstick states his belief that there exist some leadership problems in our Army, vice a leadership crisis. As well, he states that the ‘concept of trust’ extending through the chain of command has been seriously weakened and needs to be restored. There are three main aspects of the problem:<sup>41</sup>

- \* the Army has not reconciled its views of leadership with an army in which *occupationally* oriented soldiers seem to outnumber those with a *vocational* orientation; the challenges of leading both groups in PSO presents problems and friction is present between them;
- \* the Army has not successfully inculcated an appropriate military ethos in soldiers with an occupational outlook; and
- \* the basis for the Army’s view and study of leadership was developed in the Cold War era of preparation to fight for national survival. It has not been adapted to professional armies involved in ‘other peoples’ wars.’

With regards to leading occupational soldiers, Colonel Capstick exhorts that such soldiers expect more in the way of amenities and material support than did their predecessors in war. They are not in a PSO to fight for Canada, but are volunteering to help others. If the CF fails to provide the ‘requisite’ amenities, then essential confidence and trust in the chain of command is eroded, impacting on cohesion and unity of effort. A ‘lack’ of amenities or comforts is interpreted by occupational soldiers that the ‘system’ is not interested in their welfare. As Colonel Capstick states: “The challenge in a Canadian contingent is to find ways of looking after soldier welfare while simultaneously maintaining operational effectiveness of the force.”<sup>42</sup> [“Although this comment applies more strongly to those at the occupational end of the spectrum, it is true for ALL soldiers employed on PSO.”<sup>43</sup>]

Aside from the expected amenity support, it was also Colonel Capstick’s view that occupationally motivated soldiers tended to have unreasonable and unrealistic expectations of military service in a PSO theatre, eg., attempting to work regular ‘garrison’ hours. This attitude, he states, presents a larger challenge to leaders in PSO “to appreciate the qualitative difference between fighting in [Canada’s] wars, vice being involved in someone else’s. The difference is not subtle and goes to the heart of the principle of unlimited liability.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Colonel M.D. Capstick’s remarks during a review of this essay on 10 Nov 00.

<sup>41</sup> Colonel M.D. Capstick. “Command And Leadership In Other People’s Wars”, *The Human In Command*, 85-86

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 86

<sup>43</sup> Colonel M.D. Capstick qualified the preceding quotation (footnote 42) during a review of this essay on 10 Nov 00.

<sup>44</sup> Capstick. “Command And Leadership In Other People’s Wars”, *The Human In Command*, 87

It is also Colonel Capstick's view that the Army needs to evolve leadership styles in order to build trust. Many patriarchal practices of the Regimental system are no longer appropriate for Canadian soldiers employed today in PSO. Today's soldiers are older, better educated, and capable of making decisions on their own. They expect their experience, expertise and professionalism to be respected. Also, in PSO the junior NCOs and officers have more freedom of action and responsibility. Therefore leaders must accept these facts and learn to take advantage of their soldiers' experience by adopting 'consultation' as a regular part of planning and battle procedure.<sup>45</sup> This underscores the requirement for OPENNESS and RELIABILITY in building trust.

Colonel Capstick also highlights the need for EQUITY and transparency in building trust. "Leaders need to be careful to avoid any perception that officers and Senior NCOs can take advantage of their positions to make their lives more comfortable than their subordinates, or to avoid compliance with unpopular policies. Canada is an egalitarian society and soldiers do not respect artificial class differences that were once common and essential to the regimental system."<sup>46</sup>

As banal as it appears, this review of command experience in a Canadian contingent indicates that our commanders can be held 'hostage' to trust erosion if the CF 'system' is not reliable in providing sufficient amenities or comforts. Colonel Capstick's experience highlights challenges to establishing trust (OPENNESS, RELIABILITY and EQUITY) due to two major factors beyond his immediate control: reconciling the work ethic of occupational versus vocational soldiers; and ensuring the provision of adequate amenities and material support (mostly for the needs of occupational soldiers).

While the principle of EQUITY was explicit as an issue in the Canadian Contingent (ie., officers and Senior NCOs must not gain an advantage from their positions), in a broader sense it must be remembered that in a multinational PSO the participating forces are not equally capable. Coalition leadership must be sensitive to this and assign individual forces the missions they are able to accomplish. Understanding this, force partners can share burdens *equitably* – *not equally* – as each nation contributes what it can to accomplish a mission.<sup>47</sup>

### **Case Number 3: Experiences of Commander UNAMIR (1993-94)**

In his essay "Command Experiences In Rwanda", LGen (ret'd) R.A. Dallaire highlights the leadership challenges he faced in building cohesion and trust in a multinational force. Implicit in his reflections is the need for a commander to be OPEN and RELIABLE toward the many national contingents. UNAMIR presented many paradoxical issues. For example:<sup>48</sup>

\*Concerning risk: how many casualties would national contingents absorb before pulling out? What would inspire troops to commit themselves to great personal risk when they knew other countries would withdraw either after (or before) taking casualties? Should

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 89-90

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 89-90

<sup>47</sup> Steve Bowman. "Historical and Cultural Influences on Coalition Operations." *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations*. Thomas J. Marshall, Phillip Kaiser, Jon Kessmeire, eds. (Carlisle: USAWC Strategic Studies Institute, 1997) 3

<sup>48</sup> Lieutenant-General R.A. Dallaire. "Command Experiences In Rwanda", *The Human In Command*, 37-43

commanders spare the lives of troops and sacrifice a mission, then face national and global moral acrimony?

\*The UNAMIR mandate did not address all aspects of the peace agreement signed by the belligerents. Hence the warring parties were not fully committed to its support. Such conditions required leadership to maintain the mission intent, while dealing with uncertain and fluid circumstances.

\*The delays in the U.N. response and force deployment created difficulties in establishing an operations plan and cohesive force. Military cohesion was further complicated by a large training variance among member contingents, including issues of equipment and sustainability. As well, there was the problem of a HQ staff who spoke neither the same language nor exercised similar SOPs.

\*In some cases coalition nations were previously enemies to a faction in Rwanda which made building and maintaining UNAMIR cohesion difficult. The factions could try take advantage of a lack of common standard and commitment by UNAMIR militaries by playing some contingents off against others.

On establishing a personal bond of trust with subordinates, LGen Dallaire relates that to be an effective commander one must present orders personally, stand behind them, and be present to see the results. For his first operations order in Rwanda he provided his staff only the mission statement and intent. The staff wrote the order. After casualties were taken with the first operations order, he then wrote the orders himself with staff input. He then personally presented the orders to the troops at as many levels as he could manage. Each time he told them they were going into harm's way he made clear the limited ability of UNAMIR to extract them to safety should they be injured or captured. Furthermore he stated, "when they returned from dangerous missions I was there to cry with them over the loss of comrades. The troops had to realize that I also suffered when personnel under my command were injured or lost."<sup>49</sup>

On 'trust' explicitly, LGen Dallaire wrote: "[S]enior officers must create an atmosphere that demonstrates their confidence that subordinates will undertake proper and competent actions. Until officers can project this confidence – a cornerstone of effective leadership – then personnel at all levels will be looking over their shoulders during conflict resolution operations and lapsing into inaction. Should this happen the mission is doomed to fail."<sup>50</sup>

While LGen Dallaire may not have been able to influence much the staffing of UNAMIR HQ, his decision to write and deliver orders personally to subordinate forces (OPENNESS), and to establish a personal and emotional bond with them (RELIABILITY), may indicate that establishing trust between himself and subordinate command levels (for cohesion and unity of purpose) was more important than delegating the preparation of orders to his HQ staff. He does not allude in his essay to any lack of trust of his HQ staff which caused him to adopt the approach he did.

Four years later during a lecture at the Royal Military College, LGen Dallaire underscored again the importance of OPENNESS and RELIABILITY for trustful leadership, to wit:

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 45

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 46

“You can lead without ethics, but it is costly. Loyalty is a key element of ethics, but there is a caveat. It must be based on trust. Loyalty based purely

against him was endangering the lives of everyone who worked with him. He departed UNPROFOR that month.<sup>56</sup>

Certainly from a Canadian perspective, MGen MacKenzie exhibited outstanding military leadership whilst U.N. commander in Sarajevo. As a senior Canadian officer later stated: “We had no trust in anybody above MacKenzie”.<sup>57</sup> However, the lack of lateral trust accorded MGen MacKenzie by the factions (due to his OPENNESS and EQUITY) affected those associated with him – vertically and horizontally. He became the lightning rod for the belligerents’ lack of trust in a global institution. The threat to U.N. workers in his name undermined his efforts and were critical in the timing of his departure from UNPROFOR.

MGen MacKenzie’s dilemma seemingly represented a no-win situation. By the Reynolds’ model trust is necessary in later

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cooperation or success, and to ensure that subordinates/co-workers have freedom of movement. The experiences of MGen MacKenzie indicate that future PSO leaders must be prepared to shoulder in lateral relations the level of ‘institutional’ trust they represent and the impact of a lack of lateral trust on subordinates/co-workers.

So what tangible leadership lessons or tools can we draw from the above cases in order to build high trust units or formations? Many complimentary views are offered below by an array of sources, but none are ‘silver bullets’ which will assure high-trust achievement.

Fairholm states that the ‘first leadership task’ is “shaping a culture in which group members can trust each other enough to work together. It [culture] creates the context within which leaders can lead, followers can find reason for full commitment, and both can achieve their potential.”<sup>59</sup> He suggests three supporting tasks to developing a trust culture:

- \* encourage people to agree to work in ways that allows them to make a strong contribution to the organization and to themselves;
- \* recognize success; and
- \* give encouragement after failure.<sup>60</sup> (Note: This latter task is difficult in the CF culture where we tend to look for immediate accountability following personal, task or mission failure. Second chances do not come easy. While holding people accountable can build trust within a unit or formation, there is a fine line between accountability versus looking for a media or chain of command scapegoat.)

In comparison, according to Shaw, a leader’s role in building a high-trust organization also involves three tasks:

- \* personally modelling trustworthy behaviour; (eg., this could be inferred as leaders acting according to CORE principles, not abusing power, etc.)
- \* building trustworthy leadership teams; and
- \* developing trust-sustaining organizational practices<sup>61</sup> (eg., build cooperation and independence. Leaders should demonstrate what they require others to do, build initiative, then step back and let others govern themselves.)

Within the CF, and Army in particular, we may not be able to change quickly the manner in which units are composited and manned for a PSO, nor can we impact on the clarity of a given mandate. However, as a start point for developing trust the CDS *Guidance to Commanding Officers* proposes five steps (which appear more as traits): be honest; exercise very high moral behaviour; demonstrate professional competency; distribute accurate and timely information; and demonstrate genuine concern for the needs of subordinates.<sup>62</sup>

Closer to the Army coal-face, the recent *Report of the Special Review Group: Operation Harmony (Rotation 2)*, which analyzed the leadership problems within 2PPCLI (specifically D Company), offers tangible kernels for leadership (and trust) improvement:<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Fairholm, 3

<sup>60</sup> Fairholm quotes J.B. Harvey (1983), *Leadership and the Culture of Trust*, 123

<sup>61</sup> Shaw, 121

<sup>62</sup> *Chief of Defence Staff Guidance to Commanding Officers*, Chapter 2, p.8/45

<sup>63</sup> Detailed Report of the Special Review Group: Operation Harmony (Rotation 2), 16 June 2000. ([www.dnd.ca/menu/press/Reports/harmony\\_2/annexa\) 10-12](http://www.dnd.ca/menu/press/Reports/harmony_2/annexa) 10-12)



- \* verbal communication (explanations/exchange with soldiers) is vital to building trust. Without a full explanation, and inviting two-way exchange, soldiers will not react positively to difficult challenges;
- \* the dichotomy between mission accomplishment versus force protection in a PSO must be openly recognized. In a dangerous PSO the “dogmatic adherence to conventional warfighting doctrine [and the priorities of ‘mission, own troops, self’] is unlikely to receive sustained support from subordinates”; and
- \* the Debrief the Leaders Project (1999) should be institutionalized to allow for the continuous debrief of the leaders - officers and NCMs - upon their return from operations. This would serve to identify leadership problems in a timely manner. The results/lessons would be used to monitor and adjust training programs and leadership philosophies. (PS: The Op HARMONY Report clearly indicates that a leadership lessons learned system would be effective if based on a ‘no fault’ or ‘no blame’ philosophy. The intent must be to record and analyze leadership experiences, not criticize specific individuals.)

In closing, in our quest as military leaders to create high-trust units and formations we would do well to heed Shaw’s reminder:

“Since trust always exists in relation to distrust, to raise the issue of trust can raise the possibility, or even desirability, of distrust; a focus on trust can therefore inadvertently raise the level of distrust within an organization or team. This is not to suggest that trust should become a taboo subject. But leadership should take care; people become suspicious if they believe their trust is being forced or manipulated.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Shaw, 120

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