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Canadian Forces College/Collège des Forces Canadiennes  
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**Leading the Willing:  
Canadian Command and Control in International Operations**

By/par Colonel Matthew K Overton

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## *Abstract*

The security dynamic post-Cold War presents Canada, and other “middle power” nations, with new challenges in exerting influence to affect crises in concert with Canadian national interests. Ad hoc coalitions created to deal with specific issues require participation structured differently to that aimed at long-term alliances.

At the same time, the Canadian government has demonstrated a stronger interest in providing a more active leadership in the international security domain, such as was the case in Haiti (1996), the Democratic Republic of Congo (1997) and Afghanistan (2003). To realise such leadership in the military domain requires the ability to provide command and control capabilities at the operational or even strategic level to gain the influence necessary to shape the campaign in a manner consistent with Canadian national interest. Consequently, the CF must pursue the establishment of the capacity to command deployed military forces at the minor theatre and operational levels in joint and combined coalition operations.

In discussing the issue, this paper reviews the strategic context of international coalitions and doctrine concerning the command and control of multinational forces as the background for discussion of specific developments in the capability of the Canadian Forces for deployed operations. The deployment of the Australian Defence Force to East Timor in 2000 is used as an example of how a middle power can successfully exert leadership in a minor theatre.

*“A force that only shares the cost of an operation will probably not be perceived as being as militarily effective as one that provides a niche capability or achieves independent success. Similarly, strategic influence is most likely to proceed from the preservation of autonomy in the command of national forces.”<sup>1</sup>*

*The Force 2020 will operate within the framework of a joint and combined force in which it will lead joint tactical forces, often as part of a coalition force and, at all levels of command, operate with non-military partners.<sup>2</sup>*

## **Introduction**

With the advent of the unipolar world dominated by the United States, significant change has been wrought in international relations. To no little degree, the world has obtained essentially what many nations craved for so long: a dominant position for the nations of the Western world with the United States taking a powerful role among this select group. This happy result has proven in reality to be less than the unalloyed joy imagined. Removed of the pressing fear of nuclear annihilation from a superpower conflict, the nations of the world, including the United States, have begun to express more freely differences of opinion and more independence of action in addressing areas of concern in the world.

Neither a major nor minor Power internationally, Canada has struggled since Confederation to find and maintain a comfortable position from which to

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Ryan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor: Australia, the Asia-Pacific and ‘New Age’ Coalition Operations* (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2000), 66.

<sup>2</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Strategic Operating Concept 2020 (Draft), Strategically Relevant, Tactically Effective*, available from [http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/dda/cfsoc/chp10\\_e.asp](http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/dda/cfsoc/chp10_e.asp) accessed on 20 October 2003.

influence world events according to Canadian interests. In this “middle power”<sup>3</sup> position, Canada has pursued the twin principles of internationalism and functionalism to exert influence in protecting Canadian national interests because of the practical limitations of Canadian national power. These two principles have resulted in Canada gaining membership in an extensive variety of international institutions across a broad spectrum of activities to provide wide latitude of action in choosing when and where to act. Canadian international intervention, whether diplomatic or otherwise has focused on “delivering results when and where it mattered, in times of deadlock and crisis”, with tangible, practical results the goal to be achieved.<sup>4</sup>

In the military domain, Canada international functionalism found expression through membership in NATO for collective defence and participation in United Nations for collective security through peacekeeping and peace support operations. In the latter case, whether under direct United Nations control or more recently under NATO or coalition control in support of the United Nations, Canada established a strong and leading reputation as an effective supporter of international collective intervention at the tactical level. Canadian military forces,

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew F. Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada, 1997), 19-22. The author, after discussing other frameworks for the examination of Canadian foreign policy, settles on the middle power model as the one that “meshes most comfortably with Canada’s self-perception”.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 36-37.

in addition to their tactical warfighting competence developed through their NATO obligations, exhibited flexibility and innovation as “buffers” between belligerents.<sup>5</sup>

This reputation for effective action has resonated strongly with both Canadian governments as well as the Canadian public despite the growing pains that have been associated with the widening of peacekeeping into peace support operations and the consequent, often critical examination of the ability of the international community to manage this transition. Not only did it provide a tangible commitment to collective security within NATO and the UN, but it also provided a major differentiation between Canadian foreign policy and that of the US, a traditional concern.<sup>6</sup> Despite the flaws and challenges that have been revealed about supporting peace support and peacekeeping operations into the future, “the national consensus about the essential worthiness of Canada playing a lead role in this sphere of activity has remained firm.”<sup>7</sup> This strategic reality is reflected in the latest draft of the *Canadian Forces Strategic Operating Concept 2020*, which notes:

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 181.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 190-3, 197-8. The widening of mandates from the pure separation of belligerents to include a host of humanitarian and nation-building tasks has not been a smooth transition. The interaction with NGOs, PVOs, the ability of military forces focussed on traditional combat-oriented roles to adapt to more complex environments and the commitment of the nations themselves to the longer-term natures of the missions themselves have all been the subject of criticism.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 204.

“Finally, based on the experience of the last decades, it is clear that the government of Canada will want to retain the ability to play an important role in contributing to international peace and security. Although, historically, Canada has led international operations at the strategic and operational level only on rare occasions, the Canadian Forces must be prepared, as part of a national effort, to lead small but critical operations. The Canadian Forces has on repeated occasions over the last fifty years, successfully exercised a leadership and command role at the tactical level and must build on this experience.”<sup>8</sup>

It is in this context that Canada must re-consider the implications of the reduced impact of military contributions focussed at the tactical level to influence allies and others in meeting Canadian national interests successfully. In order to gain influence on the military campaign and thereby exercise the leadership necessary to shape the nature of the response to situations that are of interest to Canadians, capabilities that provide impact beyond the tactical level will be required. To this end, the development and exercise of Canadian operational level leadership capacity in coalition and alliance operations has the potential to directly improve Canada’s capacity to influence international operations in an independent and effective manner. Consequently, the CF must pursue the establishment of the capacity to command deployed military forces at the minor theatre and operational levels in joint and combined coalition operations.

## **The Strategic Reality**

Since the end of the Cold War, regional and local conflict has come to the fore as a principal preoccupation of the world. In some cases, these friction

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<sup>8</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Strategic Operating Concept 2020 (Draft)*, Supporting Concepts – Command and Control,

points were already at the forefront of international attention for reasons other than superpower competition, although the Cold War exerted a powerful influence on world reaction to events in the region. These longstanding concerns have been joined by a host of regional conflicts, such as Haiti, the former Yugoslavia, the former Zaire, East Timor, a host of failing African states and the War on Terrorism, a uniquely global/regional campaign.

A new dynamic has replaced the artificially static nature of the Cold War. As pointed out in *Military Assessment 2002*, the new security dynamic caused by rising regionalism and the new security arrangements that result will be some time in maturing, making them unreliable as cornerstones for consistent strategic decisions.<sup>9</sup> Although Europe has finally developed a relatively stable security framework, this is far from the case in the rest of the world.<sup>10</sup>

Without a reliable structure for collective action, nations have turned towards ad hoc coalitions in order to act where there is a collective consensus to address a particular situation. This changes not only the power and influence dynamic between traditional allies but also that between formerly neutral, disinterested or even opposing countries as well.<sup>11</sup> For example, while American involvement is often desired due to the resources and power that would be made

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<sup>9</sup> Department of National Defence, *Military Assessment 2002*, (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2002), 17.

<sup>10</sup> Alan Ryan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor: Australia, the Asia-Pacific and 'New Age' Coalition Operations* (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2000), 19-33. In addition to discussing the world situation in general, the author discusses many of the international dynamics in their Asia-Pacific context.

<sup>11</sup> Denis Stairs, "Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future", in *Behind the Headlines* Vol 59 No 3 Spring 2002, 2



available, not every emergency in the world is likely to demand central and significant US involvement. This could place the US in a supporting role for a given situation rather than that of the automatic leader, a concept decidedly at odds with conventional post-Cold War power relationships.<sup>12</sup>

This changed international security dynamic poses significant challenges, and is not unique to Canada. Each nation is reviewing their relationships to others to determine how best to apply their national assets, including military forces, to best influence events and retain a measure of independence in an interdependent world. Unlike static alliances however, where long-term relationships over a variety of issues enables nations to parlay indirect or relatively minor participation into a significant cumulative effect, participation at minor or tactically focused manners in an ad hoc coalition presents little to no opportunity to wield influence over coalition decision-making activities at either the operational or strategic levels.<sup>13</sup>

While collective action through the UN and NATO remain central to Canada's relationships in the world, how to express Canadian interests through

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<sup>12</sup> Ryan, From Desert Storm to East Timor, 16-17. Other authors have also commented on Administration interest in a lower key US involvement, and the support that exists domestically for such a concept. See Colonel W.J Natynczyk, *Coalitions of the Willing: Where is the Will?* (Leavenworth KA: US Army War College, 2002) 7-8, Major James F. Glynn, *Operation Stabilise: U.S. Joint Force Operations in East Timor*. Unpublished Thesis (Quantico VI: Marine Corps University, 2001) 30-31 and Alan Ryan, *Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks – Australian Defence Force Participation in the International Force East Timor* (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2000) 31-32

<sup>13</sup> Bensahel, Nora, *The Coalition Paradox: the Politics of Military Cooperation*. Unpublished Dissertation, (Ann Arbor MI: UMI, Stanford University, 1999) 10-20. The author provides a good background of coalition issues from the theoretical point of view. See also Middlemiss and Stairs, *The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability*, 31.

these organisations for any particular situation has become less clear than previously assumed. NATO, having expanded dramatically in recent years, is struggling to achieve political equilibrium. In addition, the ongoing reality that there are few if any operations likely in the NATO traditional area of operations further stresses the NATO ability to develop consensus.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, the defence calculation made for a Canada in a stable environment, centred about the UN and executed largely through NATO is no longer applicable. While NATO continues to provide a strong basis for technical interoperability, it has become an increasingly difficult tool for the exercise of operational or strategic influence.<sup>15</sup>

Rather than a well-defined and understood framework for international operations, participation in any particular military mission to resolve a crisis is likely to be a unique equilibrium based on the nations involved and the nature of their national interests in resolving the conflict. For Canada, the carefully built understanding of the inter-relationships within NATO, while of continuing and enduring value for their contacts and insights on individual nations, is no longer as useful as before for the determination of how and when to participate in military operations. Ad hoc coalitions do not provide the time necessary for extended periods of skilful and patient negotiations, leaving nations that have not provided for an effective presence at the operational or strategic leadership

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<sup>14</sup> James Fergusson, *A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep: Multilateralism and the Command control of Multinational Military Forces in Peace Operations*, (Toronto: York University Centre for International and Security Studies, 1998) 32.

<sup>15</sup> James P. Thomas, *The Military Challenges of Transatlantic Coalitions*, The International Institute of Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 333 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 66. See also Bensahel, *The Coalition Paradox*, 245.

levels few options to exert influence in shaping the coalition campaign.

Effectively, such nations are constrained to accepting or refusing the tasks assigned, a minor and largely negative role.<sup>16</sup>

The traditional Canadian level of participation gauged at a level designed merely to gain a seat at the table has little credibility in ad hoc coalitions engaged in applying force rather than demonstrating resolve and unity of purpose to deter force.<sup>17</sup> With little to no involvement in providing coalition military command and control capabilities at the operational or strategic levels, Canada gains marginal influence or independence in international situations. Limited to merely accepting or refusing the tactical missions assigned, Canada is at best a passive, indirect participant in world events that are of interest to her leaders and people. More to the point, the credibility and influence gained is likely to have little enduring value beyond the dissolution of the coalition at the declaration of success.

The question then, is how to participate in future missions in a manner relevant to both the Canadian national interest and the operations of the coalition. Clearly tactical elements, while useful to the coalition and provide the nation with the satisfaction of participation, cannot influence coalition activities to

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<sup>16</sup> Bensahel, Nora, *The Coalition Paradox: the Politics of Military Cooperation*. Unpublished Dissertation, (Ann Arbor MI: UMI, Stanford University, 1999) 10-20. The author provides a good background of coalition issues from the theoretical point of view. See also Middlemiss and Stairs, *The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability*, 31, and Fergusson, *A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Danford W. Middlemiss and Denis Stairs, "The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability: The Issues", in *The Canadian Forces and Interoperability: Panacea or Perdition?* ed. Ann L. Griffiths (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 2002), 9.

any extended degree nor guarantee useful relevance. Operational relevance, with the increased possibility of strategic relevance, requires not only tactical assets, but also the ability to concentrate them and employ them beyond the tactical formation level. The provision of a coherent, tactically integrated contingent to a coalition operation, including a robust command and control capability, while reducing the national presence across the coalition, provides more direct influence at the operational level and indirect influence at the strategic level.

Within a larger theatre of war, a combination of Canadian assets from a single environment or across the range of CF capabilities could be used to advantage for assignment of a mission beyond the tactical level. This was the case recently with a Canadian naval task group assigned independent warfare responsibilities.<sup>18</sup> In the more demanding context of providing political and military leadership in a minor theatre however, self-reliance and tactical interoperability between various CF elements will be essential as it is unlikely that any one environment will be able to provide all the assets required for a leadership role in the mission.

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<sup>18</sup> Richard H. Gimblett, "Canada-US Interoperability: Towards a Home Port Division of the United States Navy?" in Griffiths, *The Canadian Forces and Interoperability*, 103. As noted by Robert H. Thomas however, the naval task group, like the brigade-group and air wing is essentially a tactical formation with little operational-level relevance unless considerably reinforced in the joint domain. Robert H. Thomas, "If You Can't Work with Your Allies, Who Do You Want to Work With?", in Griffiths, *The Canadian Forces and Interoperability*, 211-212.

## Canadian Operations

The NATO model of operations has largely informed Canadian experience in international deployments: small tactical contributions under separate operational commanders with individual staff officers and occasionally select senior commanders. In a number of more recent operations however, Canadian contingents have formed a more central and coherent contribution that included the possibility of influence at the operational and strategic levels.

The first of these was in 1993 during OPERATION DELIVERANCE, where Canada controlled a region of operations and all the Canadian task elements concentrated under the command and control of the CJTF Commander. While this was not the original intent, it made sense in the operational context and provided for Canada a direct hand in accomplishing mission goals at the operational level.<sup>19</sup>

In 1996, the Canadian government took the opportunity to take a leadership role in UN operations, only this time closer to home. Having directly supported the return of President Aristide to power in Haiti, the US administration was anxious to withdraw American troops as promised.<sup>20</sup> In the complex and drawn out negotiations in the UN that occurred in the early months of 1996, the

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<sup>19</sup> Department of National Defence, CJFS HQ 3350-52-19 (COS) 4 November 1993 AFTER ACTION REPORT – OP DELIVERANCE, 2. The regrouping of the Canadian elements under Canadian command and control was consistent with the coalition commander's operational intent

<sup>20</sup> Lieutenant Colonel James A Helis, *Haiti: A Study in Canadian-American Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere*. Unpublished paper. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2000) 19. The situation in the region was highly problematic for the United States, with difficulties from Haitian refugees and a confrontation with Cuba over the downing of two Cessna aircraft.

Canadian government moved decisively to break the deadlock that threatened to undo the progress attained and seriously embarrass the UN and the US. The Canadian suggestion proved acceptable and consequently Canada took over command of the mission and provided a significant portion of the contingent, including a voluntary commitment of troops beyond the UN mandated numbers in support of the democratic process in Haiti. Occurring as it did during a period of serious and publicly known overstretch of the CF, it indicated a serious interest in taking a more influential role in regional and world affairs.<sup>21</sup>

Again in 1997, the government expressed interest in another leadership role in international military activities by declaring Canada the lead nation in a coalition operation to address the situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa. As was subsequently discovered however, the government, the Department nor the military were prepared for the full range of activities that this would require. The result was a mission that saw some strategic success in generating international attention but uncertainty at the operational level, as Canada could not influence other nations to make contributions of any substance.<sup>22</sup> In the event, historians will be left to argue whether the mission was a success before it really took shape due to the mass movement of the refugees or a failure due to Canada's inability to rally sufficient international commitments to support a military mission fully. Beyond dispute however, was the fact that the Canadian

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<sup>21</sup> Albert Legault, *Canada and Peacekeeping: Three Major Debates*, (Cornwallis NS: The Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, 1999) 90-91. See also Helis, *Haiti: A Study in Canadian-American Cooperation*, 19. Both authors note the impact that this action could be expected to have with the UN, the OAS and the US.

government remained interested in exerting influence in international operations beyond that which could be achieved in the provision of tactical elements.

Most recently, Canada has agreed to a significant role in the ISAF in Afghanistan, providing the brigade commander, his headquarters and one of the subordinate infantry battlegroups.<sup>23</sup> In addition, while NATO will be providing the headquarters including the staff, Canada will provide the ISAF commander for a six-month period.<sup>24</sup> Canadian influence in the theatre will be significant, and has regained for Canada a measure of influence in NATO, though to what degree is yet unclear.

The advisability of more active participation by Canada, especially in the last two cases has been questioned, but more so as a matter of timing and location than intent.<sup>25</sup> The exact where, when and type of Canadian involvement will continue to be a combination of a number of factors, both domestic and

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<sup>22</sup> Natynczyk, *Coalitions of the Willing*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Stephen Thorne. Canada to take over Kabul peacekeeping. Canadian Press, 26 September 2003. Available at <http://www.canada.com/national/story.asp?id=CDA00DFC-AA6F-4889-BE39-DC791320D79D>, accessed 1 October 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "The road to Kabul" *NATO Review*, Summer 2003. Available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/art3.html> accessed 1 October 2003. Before NATO assuming the force generation responsibility for the ISAF HQ, four nations (two separately, two sharing responsibility) had provided the staff, infrastructure and strategic information support, a constant churn of experience. Canada's acceptance of the tactical leadership role for 12 months has also eased the turbulence and will help to encourage confidence in the mission.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew F. Cooper, "Between Will and Capabilities: Canada and the Zaire/Great Lakes Initiative" in *Worthwhile Initiatives? Canadian Mission Oriented Diplomacy*, eds. Andrew F. Cooper and Geoffrey Hayes (Toronto: Irwin, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 2000) 66-70. In response to criticism over the Canadian decision to seek the mission in Afghanistan rather than the warfighting mission in Iraq, the MND felt obliged to respond. See McCallum, The Honourable John, Speaking notes for The Honourable John McCallum, P.C., M.P. Minister of National Defence at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, 12 September 2003. Available at [http://www.f20.65.92007 Tm\(nou\)oc3tes foerce, 12 Septer The Ho notes fo notes for The Honoudiafelt obliir of](http://www.f20.65.92007 Tm(nou)oc3tes foerce, 12 Septer The Ho notes fo notes for The Honoudiafelt obliir of)

international, informed by the military capability but clearly not driven by it. More importantly for the Canadian Armed Forces, it is clear that the Canadian government has developed a continuing interest in playing a more significant role in the direction of international operations, one that the Honourable Paul Martin is likely to reinforce. In reviewing his comments concerning the situation facing the Congo in May of 2003, he clearly favoured Canadian leadership in the area but understood that the command and control capabilities were not resident in Canada.<sup>26</sup>

## **Doctrinal Considerations**

International operations form in as many manners as there are missions. The challenge for the operational leader, and the subordinate formations, is to determine the manner in which operational effectiveness may be best created while catering for individual national concerns or imperatives. Canada is not alone in the level of interest expressed for national oversight or control of national forces. As noted by Robert W. Riscassi in discussing the complexities of coalition warfare, “relinquishing national command and control of forces is an act of trust and confidence that is unequalled in relations between nations”.<sup>27</sup> Where the alliance is longstanding and the aims fully understood this level of trust is far

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<sup>26</sup> Albert, Sheldon and Edwards, Steven. “Canada can’t help in Congo, Martin says”, *National Post*, 17 May 2003. “I mean, you have troops from the African countries who are prepared to go in there. But no country is capable of taking the overall command. I think that is a responsibility the developed world should have. I think it is one that Canada has the capacity to do. But we haven’t given our military the assets.”

<sup>27</sup> Robert W. Riscassi, “Principles for Coalition Warfare”, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 1 (Summer 1993): 67.



easier to create than in ad hoc coalitions where rapidly developing situations allow little time for even close allies to discuss how their national aims converge.<sup>28</sup>

Doctrine provides the framework within which the various nations or alliances provide themselves guidance for military forces and operations. In the context of coalition operations, not only Canadian doctrine but also that of significant allies will be relevant for any Canadian involvement in the command structure.

Both NATO and US Joint doctrine describe the command and control arrangements that may be necessary in coalition operations. Both clearly indicate that the integration of national contingents as a coherent entity is a valid construct for use within the command and control structure.<sup>29</sup> While integrated unity of command is the ideal state in any operation, there is recognition that for national purposes, a variety of command structures may be necessary to effect useful command and control. The American doctrine is more specific than that for NATO and classes the arrangements for alliance or coalition command as integrated (such as found in the NATO formal command structure), lead nation, parallel or a combination of lead nation and parallel.<sup>30</sup> American doctrine is also

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<sup>28</sup> Fergusson, James. *A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep*, 27-29.

<sup>29</sup> NATO Publication AJP-01 Allied Joint Doctrine, Article 0406. See also Article 0326, which specifically indicates that Spanish forces, while part of NATO will work “through independent, co-ordinated, or combined operations” rather than part of the integrated forces. See also Government of the United States, Joint Publication 3-16, Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations, 5 April 2000, Article II-4.

<sup>30</sup> US Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-16, Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations, 5 April 2000, articles II-5 and II-6.

quite clear in underlining the reality that “each coalition or alliance will create the structure that will best meet the needs, political realities, constraints and objectives of the participating nations”.<sup>31</sup>

Given Canada’s close cooperation with both NATO and the United States, it is unsurprising to note this theme reflected in Canadian doctrine. The latest draft of CF Doctrine specifically addresses the operational environment for the employment of Canadian contingents, noting:

“Although tactical components of the CF will frequently be part of larger coalition or allied formations for the conduct of international operations, the three services of the CF must be prepared to mount operations and fight together in pursuit of national interests. The ability to provide individual components of each service to larger coalition forces may facilitate CF participation in multinational operations, but must not be seen as an end in itself.”<sup>32</sup>

This is a clear statement of the interest that Canada and the Canadian Forces take in the operational command and control of the deployed forces. In addition to the subordination of tactical elements into a more integrated or lead nation framework, operational command and control of a Canadian Joint Task Force is an option for national consideration. While not necessarily expected in the context of NATO or NATO dominated operations, operational command and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, article II-4. This parallel structure was employed for U.S. forces supporting INTERFET, for example. See also Glynn, *Operation Stabilise*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Doctrine (Third Draft) March 2003, 36.

control of CF contingents is clearly possible in more ad hoc international operations.<sup>33</sup>

Increased national command and control in operations does not lead automatically for a corresponding decrease in interoperability with our principal allies. Rather than decreasing the demand for systems and capabilities that work well alongside the forces of the United States and other notable allies, it reinforces this requirement while adding further requirement to develop the ability to provide CF capabilities that are mutually supporting. The draft CF Operational Force Employment Concept 2012 is particularly clear in this regard, noting:

“In this context the ability to remain interoperable with our principal allies will continue to be critical alongside with an increasing need to appreciate the joint employment of forces within a combined multinational coalition structure.”<sup>34</sup>

This in itself will be a considerable challenge as the tactical combat capabilities currently resident in the CF develop their interoperability with foreign services more quickly than with each other. As one commentator points out, “the greater challenge for the CF rests with the conduct of purely joint operations where the challenge of overcoming internal environment-related doctrinal perspectives, technical limitations and protection of turf remains large”.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Operations, 18 December 2002, article 803. In discussing operational command, the doctrine points out the full scope of operational planning that would be required.

<sup>34</sup> Department of National Defence, CF Operational Force Employment Concept 2012 (draft) 17 September 2003, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas, *If You Can't Work with your Allies*, 212.

The Canadian concept of how to exert leadership in the international military environment is developing to account for the new strategic and operational realities. The United States, blessed with a commanding array of strategic, operational and tactical capabilities has been able to take a strong central position in leading international coalitions, often providing the core of the full range of capabilities required. It is likely to remain the sole nation able to lead in this fashion; consequently, Canada and other nations have been searching for alternative concepts to exert leadership. The concept under development by Canada is described in the latest draft of CF Doctrine:

“Coalitions will normally be formed within a lead nation concept – the selection of a lead nation will occur within the international strategic context as a coalition begins to form. A lead nation is defined as: *that nation with the will and capability, competence, and influence to provide the essential elements of political consultation and military leadership to co-ordinate the planning, mounting, and execution of a coalition military operation.*”<sup>36</sup>

Canadian doctrine goes on to indicate that central to the leadership role will be the provision of the command and control capabilities and combat capabilities that will “maximise the potency of the larger Joint, Multinational and/or Inter-Agency effort”.<sup>37</sup> While single environment missions will continue to be a regular feature of CF deployments, the development of capabilities that permit a joint, relatively independent deployment with the capability to command

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<sup>36</sup> DND, CF Doctrine (Third Draft), 46-47. The definition is taken from Multinational Interoperability Council (MIC) draft White Paper, the *MIWG Report to Multinational Interoperability Council – Topic: The Lead Nation Concept in Coalition Operations*, 20 December 2000.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 47. See also DND CF Operational Force Employment Concept 2012 (draft), 3.

both Canadian and foreign forces will be a major part of the future envisioned for the CF.

## **OPERATION STABILISE**

In developing such a capability and approach to international intervention, there is doubt that such a mission is feasible. In a world familiar with the US approach of “all-inclusive” coalition leadership, would a mission in which members participated on a more equal footing and in which the lead nation provided only certain capabilities with the remainder to be provided from across the other nations actually work? In 1999, Australia provided a successful example of medium power leadership in a limited theatre.

Australia, broadly similar to Canada in national power and a desire to exert regional and international leadership, has and is facing similar issues in adapting to the new international order. While the regional dynamic in the Asia-Pacific region is substantially different from that to found in the Americas, the problem of retaining relevance and independence in an era of one superpower is of importance to Australia. Like Canada, it is basing its approach from the same general tradition of limited tactical participation in international military missions.

Australia took a significantly different approach by taking on lead nation responsibilities in OPERATION STABILISE in late 1999. The impetus for Australian action in East Timor had its roots in government activities in the Asia-Pacific region over the previous decade and even as far back as World War II. While the exact motivations for Australian action in this particular case are

outside the scope of this paper, it does illustrate the requirement for senior political and bureaucratic involvement in the decision to provide leadership in international coalitions.<sup>38</sup>

Australia led the international diplomatic and economic efforts that resulted in the Indonesian acceptance of a UN-mandated force. Within eight days the lead elements of the Australian contribution were arriving in the theatre, led by Major General Cosgrove, himself supported by the ADF Deployable Joint Force Headquarters. The force, initially built around an Australian light infantry brigade group with supporting air, naval and special forces elements eventually grew into a force of 11,000 at it's peak from 22 different nations.<sup>39</sup>

Before the operation in East Timor, Australian participation in international activities had been a long-standing commitment of battalion-sized contingents operating at the tactical level with great success. While brigade-group activities were used as a staff training model with a larger formation construct, there was little to no expectation that the nation would take on a significant theatre leadership role.<sup>40</sup> As would be the case for the CF, taking the central role at the operational role presented significant challenges for the ADF, however the

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<sup>38</sup> John Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre: The Australian-led Mission to East Timor*, Working Paper no. 118 (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2002), 7. The author stresses the unanimity among the Australians generally for the mission, which in turn generated and reinforced the desire for action in this particular case. See also Ryan, Alan. *From Desert Storm to East Timor*, 67-72.

<sup>39</sup> Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre*, 3. Of this force, 5,550 were Australian.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 11-12. In fact, the author points out that Australian defence planners were as concerned with "punching above our weight" with their tactical contributions as their Canadian counterparts.

existence of the DJHQ permitted a rapid adaptation to commanding a coalition joint force roughly equivalent to a division in size and complexity.<sup>41</sup>

The Australian commitment of forces centred on a robust command and control capability plus elements of the combat forces that were used as the framework about which the remainder of the forces, which were tactical level conventional combat elements, were added. The ADF contingent also included intelligence analysis, psychological operations and electronic warfare elements that were key combat multipliers.<sup>42</sup>

As the lead nation, Australia faced imposing challenges in mustering sufficient military forces and the expeditionary nature of the mission. They met the challenges with the participation of US in a subordinate, supporting role. The US provided significant direct and indirect support in the form of political and financial pressure in the initial stages<sup>43</sup>, and then heavy strategic lift, the presence of a Marine Amphibious Unit in the general area plus intelligence, communications and civil affairs specialists for the mission.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 12. Preparation of the DJHQ included periodic exercise for national command of Australian forces in a minor international role only, nothing on the scale or central nature of the INTERFET deployment.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 40-47.

<sup>43</sup> Alan Ryan, "The Strong Lead-nation Model in an ad hoc Coalition of the Willing: Operation Stabilise in East Timor" *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 2002, 27. See also David Dickens, "The United Nations in East Timor: Intervention at the Military Operational Level" *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Available at [http://search.epnet.com/direct/a](http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=5203724) sp?an=5203724, accessed 23 September 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Glynn, *Operation Stabilise*, 8-9 and Annex B. See also Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre*, 49. The author later points out that these additions addressed concerns identified very early in the developing crisis, Ibid, 23.

The mission faced a host of issues with the integration of the various national components, most significantly the reassurance of the contributing nations of their overall access to their contingents and the lack of tactical interoperability of the forces. First, nations retained full access to the INTERFET HQ, notwithstanding the strong Australian flavour, permitting them complete access to the planning for their forces. Second, tactical effectiveness was maximised through the Integration of the smaller components into tactically sound units and the employment of larger contingents into logically arranged task groups that highlighted their operational strengths and minimised the cultural or doctrinal dissimilarities.<sup>45</sup>

As the leader in the international arena, Australia was able to exert a strong and effective influence on the conduct of operations despite the limited amount of co-ordination of policy guidance from the government itself as the operation was planned and implemented.<sup>46</sup> In providing the theatre headquarters and then key combat and information operations assets, Australian interests and concerns drove the timing, activities and sequencing of the campaign. This included the determination of mission endstate achievement, a critical element for an Australia concerned with rebuilding its relationship with Indonesia.<sup>47</sup>

As importantly, the success of the mission both militarily and politically enhanced Australia's status within the region, and within the UN. As Blaxland

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<sup>45</sup> Ryan, "The Strong Lead-nation Model", 31.

<sup>46</sup> Blaxland, Information-era Manoeuvre, 21.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 49.



and others have pointed out, it was “a ‘by the book’ example of applied military force for limited strategic aims in a coalition environment – an appropriate way to use military forces as an extension of national and international policy”. The central involvement of a “medium power” with operational command capability, assisted by other nations less capable but nonetheless interested in participating tactically is a viable model when key strategic support is available.<sup>48</sup>

### **Operational Command Implications**

Commanding at the operational level within the coalition context will expose both Canadian commanders and their staffs to challenging tasks. Not only will there be the requirement to match the various national and service capabilities to the mission assigned, but there will also be equally demanding requirement to manage the campaign to meet both coalition and individual nation expectations.<sup>49</sup>

Technological compatibility issues will be forced to second place behind the management of the individual capabilities offered by the various troop-contributing nations. Where the dissimilarities are most severe, it is likely that greater focus will be placed on national command and control of the assets to maximise their value and minimise debilitating conflicts. This will place a significant burden on the commander, their staff and the command and control

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 53-4. See also Natynczyk, *Coalitions of the Willing*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Ryan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor*, 61. The author quotes LGen Sanderson of the ADF on his experience in Cambodia, where “the Force Commander becomes a factor in the domestic politics of many, if not all, of the contributing countries”.

capabilities of the headquarters to bring unity of effort to the coalition. It will also test the commander's resolve in designing a campaign that is likely to involve significantly greater risk than might otherwise be the case, and their abilities to gain active support from the contributing nations.<sup>50</sup> In short, effecting operational leadership will have an impact on the design and execution of the campaign plan, thereby influencing the strategic level of the coalition.

Part of the solution may lie in the assignment of missions, rather than geography as the focus for coalitions. As pointed out by Durrell-Young, "a battlefield division of labor could also be based on tasks rather than geography, with more technologically adept coalition partners assigned jobs best suited to their skills such as battle management, intelligence, deep strike and missile defence".<sup>51</sup> There is a danger here however that in developing a heterogeneous structure, risk sharing is uneven. While the lead nation may be providing key command and control capabilities and their enhancements, as was acknowledged by the CF Doctrine, attention must be paid to the critical combat elements of the force.

As the commander of joint and combined air or naval forces, the challenge for the commander in meshing dissimilar capabilities is relatively easier than for ground forces. Where in the air and maritime environments the focus is on employing the effects of platforms and their weapon systems, ground warfare

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<sup>50</sup> Thomas Durrell-Young, "Command in Coalition Operations", in *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations*, (Carlisle Barracks PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1997) 55-56.

<sup>51</sup> Durrell-Young, "Command", 62

can integrate national efforts to the level of small sections in a much more personal manner. Not only are there more opportunities for misunderstanding but also the human interaction aspects of ground operations usually arouse the political dimension in more direct manner.<sup>52</sup>

In providing operational level command and control capabilities, the commander and his staff must be prepared for operations not only in the multinational sphere, but also in the joint. As has been discussed, single service or environmental contributions, even at the formation level, are usually not sufficient to gain influence at the strategic level. Joint operations, capable of either theatre leadership or those significant enough to have an impact on the theatre will be the means by which the lead nation will gain for influence for itself in the campaign and on the international stage. This type of influence, of interest to the Canadian government, will therefore only be gained by a headquarters and its supporting infrastructure that is prepared to conduct deployed joint operations either with Canadian assets primarily or in concert with other nations.

The CF Joint Operations Group is the designated operational command and control capability for the CF in deployed operations. Developing the capacity for the operational command and control of international missions, in addition to confirming the operational capability of the CF Joint Operations Group for the command of deployed CF contingents, must also involve a re-examination of the

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<sup>52</sup> Riscassi, "Principles for Coalition Warfare", 67. This is not to imply that integration of naval or air operations are simple tasks; recent examples of combined operations clearly indicate the opposite. Where land operations become more complex is the fact that combinations of units

combat and support capabilities being generated. Current capabilities, principally oriented towards conventional combat interoperability with other nations, would require at the least reconfiguration for closer tactical integration as a coherent deployed contingent or possibly replacement with other capabilities that would exploit the strengths of the three environments in a more central and co-ordinated manner.

In addition, the CF must review plans for the expansion of such command support capabilities such as the components of Information Operations and other “soft kill” capabilities as force multipliers for the conventional combat forces. Given the complex nature of international deployments, the ability to operate confidently in the traditional and non-traditional battlespace will be a key element to success for the international coalition commander.<sup>53</sup>

Current planning for the CF JOG falls short of this goal. Limited to operational command of domestic deployments only, it does not have the assets necessary to support national interests in exerting operational level command and control of either national contingents or international forces in international operations.<sup>54</sup> While current direction does not encompass this latter capability, name Operational Capability Level 3 (OCL 3), conceptual documents under

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and their firepower are not clean, neat and at arms length. See also Ryan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor*, 54-55, and Durrell-Young, “Command”, 30.

<sup>53</sup> Ryan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor*, 98. The author, in discussing low intensity operations has suggested enhanced Civil Affairs capabilities for example. Recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq provide other examples of mid-intensity conflicts where this capability could be employed effectively.

<sup>54</sup> Department of National Defence, Briefing to AFC, CF JOG Full Operational Capability Declaration, 21 May 03, 13/14.

development, such as the CF Operational Force Employment Concept should they retain their current orientation, will provide the conceptual and doctrinal frameworks necessary to pursue this end.

## **Conclusion**

The Canadian government has clearly demonstrated a consistent interest in taking a more active leadership role in the use of military forces to achieve national aims internationally. The successes of the leadership roles taken on by Canada in facilitating the withdrawal of US forces from Haiti, the crisis in the African Great Lakes region and ISAF all contribute to the desire of the government to exercise a more significant, direct influence in world affairs.

This change reflects the post-Cold War reality. Long-term relationships from the Cold War are not as useful for the application of military power as they once were. NATO, where power and influence relationships were well understood and thus cemented into infrastructure and permanent command and control architectures is struggling to maintain a central position in military operations for alliance partners.

While NATO remains a vital element in developing common understanding, procedures and experience, the reality of differing national aims and interests outside the strict limits of the alliance boundary seriously strains its ability to conduct operations. Members may not agree to the use of the alliance, or may opt out of participation either with tactical forces or in providing personnel to the HQs. The addition of non-alliance coalition nations further complicates the

structure as suitable arrangements rarely maintain complete unity of command. The operations in the Balkans, Somalia and Iraq, whether involving NATO or not, are indicative of the widening complexity of international operations and the difficulties they pose for nations, military forces and the command structures necessary for the mission.

These major commitments of government intent complement and expand upon the traditional role played by Canada on the international stage of minor, reinforcing ally within a strong alliance context. While the provision of individual leaders and tactical capabilities that supplement more significant contingents provided by other nations remains a fixture of Canadian participation in coalition activities, the focus is shifting. Canadian interest in exerting a greater leadership role is driving a shift from passive participation in order to secure a “seat at the table” towards participation that is more active, with a higher level of commitment of the national resources, including military. The resultant assessment of how much to be “just enough” changes substantially. It also implies a concentration of effort and a greater national involvement in the application of national resources towards the goals of the alliance and in the manner the coalition objectives are achieved.

For the Canadian Forces, the advent of greater government interest in influencing coalition activities heralds a departure from the purely tactical, foreign-force interoperability focus of deployed forces. These traditional deployments, which cede a significant degree of control of the operations to coalition leadership, provide neither effective, coherent national influence over

tactical activities nor the influence within the coalition structure to shape the objectives and campaign plans. Canadian influence that is limited to withholding Canadian assets for particular missions, which is leadership in a very indirect sense, does not provide the active leadership that appears to be a growing hallmark of government interest.

It is without doubt that in order to exercise leadership internationally, Canadian political leaders and diplomats will need to be actively engaged in a consistent and concerted manner. As both the Canadian operation in Zaire and the Australian in East Timor demonstrate, focused leadership rather than passive consensus building is essential in creating and motivating a military coalition. In missions where Canada wishes to exert a strong influence, this focused attention remains key whether Canada chooses to play a central role or not.

A key step in exerting national influence in coalition activities is the development of a robust command and control capability, prepared to work in the joint and combined context. Such a headquarters could provide the basis for operational command and control as a minor theatre headquarters or CJTF within a theatre. In either role, such a headquarters would provide both a focal point for the integration of national assets in a coherent manner to achieve national ends and a commander of significance within the coalition structure to influence coalition activities.

In either case, the commander will be addressing significant command challenges at the operational level, whether international forces are directly under their command or not. Campaign planning, the development and maintenance of

coalition coherence, co-ordination through the battlespace, and the achievement of national objectives within the coalition environment will all require commander attention.

Australia has provided an excellent example of how such a capability could be employed, in the context of a strong national government commitment for leadership and suitable coalition composition that provided the components necessary for operational and tactical success. The DJHQ deployment to OPERATION STABILISE proved that operational command and control could be exerted by a regional or middle power. Of particular note was that while provision of tactical force elements remained an important aspect of the lead nation role, provision of the command and control enhancements such as intelligence, civil affairs, communications and liaison was equally powerful in contributing to success.

Creation and maintenance of such a capacity is a significant task, especially when it is likely to come at the expense of more traditional and well-established tactical capabilities themselves struggling to modernise and maintain relevance. Expanding the operational capability of the JFHQ to include operational command overseas will require difficult decisions about other CF capabilities. The fact remains however, that if Canada is to gain strategic influence and thereby participate in a useful way to shaping the future in a manner satisfactory to Canadians, the ability to command deployed military forces at the minor theatre and operational levels is a key element of the



relevance of the Canadian Forces into the future. The Canadian Forces must develop this capability for the joint and combined reality of coalition operations.

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