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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZON

BRAINDRAIN IN DND, SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

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BRAINDRAIN IN DND, SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

The end of the Cold War made many states re-assess their needs for military capabilities. The reasons varied from the desire to free up funds to spend on popular social programs - to spend the much-vaunted "peace dividend" - to quests for disarmament.¹

INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Berlin Wall occurred on Nov 9, 1989 but this special event did not really mark the end of the Cold War per se. The fall of the Wall, although significant, was followed by a series of events that spread over the next two years, which resulted in the demise of the Communist alliance and ultimately the end of the Cold War.

"Gorbachev resigned as general secretary of the Communist Party on August 24, 1991 and soon after, the Communist Party dissolved itself. On December 25, Christmas Day 1991, Gorbachev called Bush and told him it was his last day in office. In Washington, Bush made his Christmas address and announced to the world that the Cold War confrontation between the two superpowers -- which had dominated world affairs for 45 years -- was now over".²

President Bush's address can be considered to be the defining moment for the end of the Cold War. Understanding how the Cold War era ended will help to understand the post Cold War events that occurred in Canada and how these events impacted on the Canadian military.

¹ Haydon, Peter. *Sea Power and Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century. A Medium Power Perspective*. Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 2000, page 43.

² *Cold War, A CNN Perspective Series*, Cable News Network Inc. Interactive, Atlanta GA, Episode 24. <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/24/recap/6.html> (29 Jan 01).

"The Cold War abruptly and untidily fizzled out. There was no traditional war-termination process and no declaration of winners and losers."³ The end of the Cold War left nations wondering what they should do with their militaries since the arms race had led to the maintenance of massive war establishments. The new threat paradigm that evolved in the 1990s emphasised a more regional perspective as opposed to the bipolar relationship that existed between the two superpowers during the Cold War. The recurrence and unpredictability of regional conflicts today has made it significantly more difficult for nations to develop national capabilities to support UN Chapter VI and VII operations. As quoted earlier, nations were also hoping to capitalise on peace dividends but attention to UN requirements, although important, remained secondary to the newly evolving national interests in the post Cold War period. Canada began to direct funding, that was originally earmarked for the arms race, to peace initiatives and politically favourable national social programs at the detriment of its military forces. Yet, regional threats remained high and still contributed to a very unstable global security environment. The process associated with the maintenance of the militaries in peacetime to deal with regional conflicts, was exasperated by the lack of political will to address up-front the core security issues associated with these regional conflicts and to fund the militaries accordingly. Canadian citizens, for example, did not necessarily agree with the Government's approach as depicted forthwith:

"Successive cuts and increased operations over many years has left our Forces in a shambles, exerting extreme stress on those who have chosen to continue their careers. Unfortunately, this apathetic government has no immediate or future plans to change the status quo"⁴.

³ Haydon, Peter. *Sea Power and Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century. A Medium Power Perspective*. Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 2000, page 3.

⁴ Willard, David. *Call for a recruiting drive not surprising now that Forces are in a shambles*. The Ottawa Citizen Online. Wysiwyg://119/http://www.ottawacitizen.com/letters/010116/5005957.html (16 Jan 01).

The consequence of the government's attitude towards the military resulted, in one instance, in severe attrition causing manning crises at all levels in DND. DND has initiated several Quality of Life (QoL) initiatives to attempt to mitigate the exodus of people to the private sector. This essay will demonstrate that the measures implemented by DND are insufficient to mitigate the [braindrain](#)⁵ phenomenon and that the improvement in QoL and Quality of Work Life (QoWL) should take the form of capital funding to stabilize its infrastructures, equipment, training and [job fit](#)⁶ with CF personnel. These improvements will curtail the braindrain and ensure mission success while providing personnel with the requisite resources, QoL and QoWL commensurate with mission objectives and private sector trends.

APPROACH

General Baril stated in 1998 that "[there are four dimensions to operational effectiveness: good equipment, good training, good leadership, and good conditions of service. If any of these dimensions are jeopardised, operational effectiveness will also be jeopardised](#)"⁷. The essay will consider two general themes extrapolated from General Baril's statement: first, the QoL issues representing at least the leadership and conditions of service, and second, QoWL encompassing equipment, training and infrastructures. CF personnel want to work with first rate people and first rate equipment. The discussion will cover the braindrain phenomenon from a private and public sector aspect using the QoL and QoWL elements identified above. Then, a new employee

⁵ While communities would define braindrain as the exodus of talent from Canada to the US, a number of sources tend to support a more general connotation that skilled and experienced workers leave organisations for greener pastures. The essay will consider the more general case.

⁶ Pamela Holloway quotes Dr. Pierre Mornell who mentions that firms must select the right persons for the job to

empowerment paradigm will be discussed as it relates to DND's attrition problems. The analysis will proceed with an account of DND's image and reputation as reported by the media and reflect on the implications of this image on DND's personnel recruiting and retention crisis. Finally, the essay will close with comments on how DND is forging ahead with these issues.

PRIVATE SECTOR SITUATION

The private sector relies heavily on its workforce for success. "For companies and organizations (sic), the choice is simple: retain your knowledge workers and your competitive advantage, or lose your most strategic assets"⁸. Realising the fast pace with which technical change and innovation occur, firms in the 21st century cannot remain competitive if they do not have skilled and experienced employees who can readily adapt to change and grow with the changing business requirements. Firms have realised that "people are a company's number one asset, which makes the processes associated with people - like recruiting, retention and training, critical business processes"⁹. These processes can be readily associated with General Baril's elements covered by the QoL and QoWL elements defined earlier. QoL and QoWL requirements imply that firms must invest significantly in processes to recruit, train, and develop the workforce they need to fill key positions. To stay ahead of the competition, the private sector recruits the best individuals for specific jobs and considers job fit as one of the essential factors in effecting employee satisfaction and retention. Firms also recognise that a supportive training environment

⁷ Brousseau, Lt (N), S.A. *Naval Quality of Life Update, Matelot*, 3rd 1998. <http://navy.dwan.dnd.ca/mate/third98/page7.html> (25 Jan 01).

⁸ Richter, Anne-Marie. *Brain Drain or Brain Gain: Winning and Keeping your Talent in Canada*, Nuala Beck & Associates Inc. <http://www.neweconomy.com/braindrain.htm> (4 Jan 01).

⁹ Holloway, Pamela. *The Financial Impact of the War for Talent*. http://www.thepeoplepractice.com/Warfor_talent.htm (4 Jan 01).

is essential in maintaining competitiveness and job fit. Consequently, training programs are strategic to a firm's success and in the promotion of QoWL. Firms that fail to treat their people as critical resources will eventually fail to meet their business objectives. For example Robert Black, associate partner at GSI Consulting Group stated: "[Workers are routinely tempted by offers, but said uneven HR practices are partly to blame for high turnover rates... he can recall being treated poorly by employers over his career ... especially the government guy](#)"¹⁰. From his example, it is clear that there is no incentive for an individual to remain with a firm that is not responsive to his needs. Poor treatment of employees by an employer also demonstrates a festering leadership problem and exemplifies the employee's poor conditions of service. It is also noteworthy to highlight that the article implies that government employees are generally perceived as not getting their fair share of benefits from their employer. This is an important consideration in support of the braindrain phenomenon.

Situations have manifested themselves where CF personnel, as government employees, have had cause to complain about similar issues. For example, consider the never-ending process of collective agreement negotiations for civilians in the government; CF personnel pay raises are partially dependent on these negotiations and this dependency may cause levels of frustration with CF personnel. In the same article where Robert Black is cited above, Michael MacMillan indicates that the private sector is progressing steadily with employee incentive pay raises. Government has recently improved its responsiveness to pay raise issues but it is still lagging the private sector. Current private sector practices for recruiting, training, and general benefits packages offer an enticing alternative for government employees to improve their QoL and

¹⁰ McMillan, Michael. *Public, private sectors toe to toe on salary*, [Technology in Government](#) December 2000: 6.

QoWL. It is clear that the good treatment of personnel in the private sector promotes QoWL and QoL behaviours sought by employees who see this as an important job satisfaction discriminator.

How much trouble can a firm get into if it fails to address QoL and QoWL issues? Boeing began cost cutting measures as a result of severe competition from other manufacturers and instigated new work force practices. Boeing's new practices were "causing insecurity and low morale in the ranks, especially among the engineers and technical workers who are leaving the company in unheard of numbers"¹¹. By inference, Boeing appears to have failed to adequately prepare its workforce for their new strategic direction by implementing poor HR practices and by demonstrating a failing leadership structure. It is also likely that Boeing's senior management failed to effectively communicate their intent to lower management and the workers felt that the company was apathetic to their concerns and inquiries. The appearance of a don't-care attitude exasperated the leadership problem and drove employees away. "Out-sourcing, lack of direction, a lack of accomplishment, low pay, a new corporate culture, and unease about their futures are driving Boeing engineers to look elsewhere - they need to state the plan, clearly communicate the plan to employees"¹². Boeing's potential loss of its reputation as a good employer is indicative of a poor implementation of QoL and QoWL initiatives in the company. While QoL and QoWL issues of the 1990s have severely impacted some private sector firms, it is necessary to consider DND along similar criteria and ascertain DND's approach and success with respect to CF personnel.

¹¹ Engler, Scott. *Boeing suffering "brain drain" online report*. KCPQ, FOX Washington, 30 Jul 2000. <http://www.q13.com/news/local/braindrain.html>

¹² Engler, Scott. *Boeing suffering "brain drain" online report*. KCPQ, FOX Washington, 30 Jul 2000. <http://www.q13.com/news/local/braindrain.html>

PUBLIC SECTOR SITUATION

DND senior leaders actively promote CF personnel as their most important asset. This was recently re-affirmed by Vice-Admiral Garnett at the Base Commanders' Forum where he stated that "defence will continue its efforts to re-invest and nurture its human resources"¹³. This realisation comes after a long history of budgetary cuts by the government and the general neglect of DND personnel by the 'establishment' as inferred in the Maritime Capability Planning Guidance (MCPG) 2000: "we must also address measures to improve the quality of work life of our people, including job satisfaction, stress, workload, etc"¹⁴. Since the end of the Cold War, the government has experimented with several measures to reduce the size of DND, partly due to the government's belief that the organisation is much bigger than what is necessary to maintain Canada's security. The government's political goals, to repay the federal debt and the collection of the peace dividends, have been used as reasons to reduce military spending. As a result of successive budget cuts that followed a growing operational tempo, employee turnover increased dramatically to the point where, for example, "the Navy is currently confronted with several strategic training-related concerns"¹⁵. Some military occupations were so severely impacted by the 1990s personnel turnover situation that special recruiting efforts had to be instigated to attempt to mitigate the shortfall. The HR practices utilised during this period appear to have been

¹³ Garnett, VAdm, G.L. *Base Commanders Forum Cours des études de sécurité nationale*, 13 Nov 2000. http://hfx-web-01.marlant.halifax.dnd.ca/N3/Exercise_Program/BComd/BComdForum_2_00%20Presentations/Presentations/VCDS%20Presentation.ppt

¹⁴ Maddison, Vadm, G.R. *MARCOM Capability Planning Guidance 2000 (MCPG 2000)*, 1000-25-5 (DGMDO) dated 8 Sep 1999, Chapter 2 paragraph 7.

<http://www.mcan.marlant.halifax.dnd.ca/N7/N72/MCP00/MCPG%202000%20CH%20%202.doc>

¹⁵ Maddison, Vadm, G.R. *MARCOM Capability Planning Guidance 2000 (MCPG 2000)*, 1000-25-5 (DGMDO) dated 8 Sep 1999, Chapter 2 paragraph 8. <http://www.mcan.marlant.halifax.dnd.ca/N7/N72/MCP00/MCPG%202000%20CH%20%202.doc>

insufficient to establish adequate employee retention while also failing to protect the remaining personnel from severe work conditions. The Chief of Maritime Staff (CMS) Maritime Capability Plan 2000 (MCP 2000) focuses attention to these issues: "the operational tempo of the fleet has had a significant impact on the lives of our sailors and their families. We need to rebalance activities in the fleet and restore an effective balance between operations, training and quality time alongside"¹⁶. Turnover of personnel, budget cuts, and increasing operational tempo have plagued DND to the point where operations are affected. Senior managers, such as CMS, recognise this fact and are now re-emphasising the importance of CF personnel and the close link with QoL and QoWL issues.

The issue of job fit is likely to be DND's most pressing problem in the immediate future. Due to high attrition, some CF personnel have been employed in functions for which they may have received less than the optimal amount of training. The military ethos tends to support such a trend where mission comes before self. Personnel are asked to perform tasks beyond their normal job descriptions to offset missing personnel in other areas. CMS acknowledges this point in MCP 2000 by stating that "increasing manning shortages in many occupations are imposing additional demands on available personnel"¹⁷. Job fit is less than optimal and the detailed training requirements are often overlooked for expediency as infrastructure problems, difficulty in providing timely training, and mission priorities drive the assignment of tasks to individuals. Periods of On-Job-Training (OJT) have been drastically shortened in some cases to meet

¹⁶ Maddison, Vadm, G.R. *MARCOM Capability Planning Guidance 2000 (MCPG 2000)*, 1000-25-5 (DGMDO) dated 8 Sep 1999, Chapter 3 article 304 paragraph 1. <http://www.mcan.marlant.halifax.dnd.ca/N7/N72/MCP00/MCPG%202000%20CH%203.doc>

¹⁷ DND. *Maritime Capability Plan 2000*. Part 1 section 1.1. <http://navy.dwan.dnd.ca/admin/mcp/mcp00/part1%5Fe.asp>

operational requirements. This situation has led to increased levels of stress and dissatisfaction to CF personnel due to excessively low margins of error imposed by the work and the prevailing levels of public scrutiny that accompanies all missions undertaken by the CF. The personnel's stress level and dissatisfaction invariably contribute to the braindrain problem. In some circumstances, poor job fit can result in marginal performance evaluations at the detriment of the individual.

Overall DND is faced with a significant leadership problem to bring about change to keep employees from jumping ship. The issues associated with job fit and mission requirements may prove to be difficult to resolve in the short term for DND since job fit rests on selecting the right person for the right job, having adequate training, and having sufficient numbers of individuals to share the workload. Considering DND's precarious braindrain situation, it is necessary to consider the emerging employee empowerment paradigm and its contribution to the braindrain phenomenon in both the public and private sector.

PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTOR EMPOWERMENT PARADIGM SHIFT

The shortage of skilled labour has changed the degree of attention firms afford to their employees. For example, "the US Bureau of Labor (sic) Statistics shows the demand for trained IT workers increasing by 95,000 jobs per year"¹⁸. This trend is expected to continue in many different work environments and the production of skilled people to meet the demand will also be difficult to maintain by various sectors of society. This situation empowers the employee and

¹⁸ Holloway, Pamela. *The Financial Impact of the War for Talent*. http://www.thepeoplepractice.com/Warfor_talent.htm (4 Jan 01).

introduces a shift in the traditional employer - employee relationship. This imbalance in the employer - employee relationship can favour the mass movement of skilled labour, from firm to firm, as employees perceive or experience unfavourable work conditions. Consequently, firms that do not treat their employees favourably will not remain competitive in such an open market for skills.

"There's a war on - a war for finding, retaining, and developing talent. Hundreds of thousands of jobs sit vacant because companies can't find the skilled workers they need. Turnover is at an all-time high and the costs associated with replacing employees is skyrocketing"¹⁹.

In the private sector, employees now seek more than just a pay raise. For example:

"Once you get beyond a certain point, salary becomes less of an issue. Engineers are interested in the overall package ... in flexible working and in making sure that doesn't just mean driving them hard to meet some arbitrary deadline without a reward"²⁰.

The empowerment of employees has introduced a new variable in employer-employee employment negotiations. It is evident that QoL and QoWL issues dealing with conditions of service and training as part of the recruiting and retention processes form a significant challenge in employer-employee negotiations.

The exodus of talent from DND and especially in the operational trades is significant. CF personnel are perceived as taking advantage of new private sector opportunities as a result of the shift introduced by the employer-employee empowerment paradigm. CMS has raised the issue of excessive workload, shortage of personnel, and job fit as operational issues in MCP 2000. Additionally, the system is not geared for significant rewards to employees under these

¹⁹ Holloway, Pamela. *The Financial Impact of the War for Talent*. http://www.thepeoplepractice.com/Warfor_talent.htm (4 Jan 01).

²⁰ Clarke, Peter. *Brain Drain resurfaces as Europeans eye U.S. jobs*, [EE TIMES Online](http://www.phys.vt.edu/~graupner/wigr/braindrain.htm), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg Virginia. <http://www.phys.vt.edu/~graupner/wigr/braindrain.htm> (1 Jan 01).

conditions. Mr. Gaylen Duncan, president of the Information Technology Association of Canada, was interviewed recently on the subject of scarcity of talent. He stated:

"We're in a really hot industry right now and we take the best and brightest from any company and from government and we raid them, adding that the general lower compensation packages in the public sector make that raiding from government a snap"²¹.

It is well known that DND invests a significant amount of training in its personnel. These individuals consequently become highly attractive to the private sector. Recent upgrades to the CF personnel benefits packages has levelled the playing field but issues surrounding the work environment and the workload problems continue to aggravate the braindrain situation. As stated earlier, with a severe shortage of skilled people in the private sector, CF personnel are in a position of power in employment negotiations; DND's issues with its deteriorating infrastructure and job fit crisis feed an employee empowerment paradigm that aggravates the DND braindrain phenomenon. While DND is trying to come to terms with the employee empowerment paradigm, it is necessary to consider the impact of DND's public image and recruiting on the braindrain phenomenon.

DND IMAGE

What do Canadians think about DND's equipment and infrastructure capabilities? Television, radio, newspapers and more recently Internet news services have provided Canadians opportunities to voice opinions on defence matters. It is worthwhile to consider a few recent examples to see the trends that mass media appear to be setting especially as it relates to QoL and QoWL. Two credible newspapers, the Ottawa Citizen and the Toronto Star often feature articles concerning DND. An article from the Ottawa Citizen recently centred on a report

concerning the viability of maintaining the flight status of the Snowbirds due to a significant shortfall in DND funding. The Snowbirds are considered a highly visible CF recruiting mechanism and as such, media coverage must be positive. The article reported that "[because of budget problems, the military has questioned whether it can afford new aircraft to replace the Snowbird's aging \(sic\) Tutor jets](#)".²² The article also suggested that DND could cannibalise some Tutors in storage to keep the team running. Cannibalisation unfortunately gives a very marginal impression of the operation of the Snowbird team. This is inconsistent with its role as the premiere recruiting and advertising vehicle for DND, a major show-off piece to the public, and a centrepiece of Canadian pride and heritage. Regardless of the motivations that led to the options to keep the Snowbirds flying, the public's unfavourable interpretation of the situation cannot be dismissed and such approaches can affect DND's image. As fate would have it, the Toronto Star also ran an article on the same day as the Citizen's article concerning DND's cash problems. The article painted the department in a very grim situation where "[short of cash to make basic repairs and properly maintain its buildings, Canada's military could be forced to sell off as much as one-third of its real estate holdings](#)".²³ The perception is equivalent, in private sector terms, to a "going out of business" message to Canadians. DND's infrastructure and equipment problems have probably tainted DND's image and reputation as a first rate employer. This situation can impact recruiting and possibly CF personnel retention.

The Navy is experiencing a significant budgetary crisis. MCP 2000 confirms, for example, the cancellation of the Huron's refit. CMS has stated that:

²¹ Sibley, Kathleen. *Outside the Box, Technology in Government* Jan. 2001: 11.

²² Pugliese, David. *Keep Snowbirds flying: report.* [Ottawa Citizen Online](#), 5 Feb 2001. [Wysiwyg://17/http://www.ottawacitizen.com/national/010205/5118936.html](http://www.ottawacitizen.com/national/010205/5118936.html)

"This reduction caused me, during the development of this Capability Plan, to take deliberate action to reduce current year activities, reallocate funds between operating and corporate accounts, and carry forward activities and concomitant funds to next year"²⁴.

The act of mothballing a highly visible military weapons system that costs hundreds of millions to the taxpayers can only raise questions of efficacy of government policies as operational tempo increases. The government's inaction to resolve DND's infrastructure crises, despite the increasing Canadian involvement in international operations, can probably be traced to the prevailing Post Cold War attitude endorsed by politicians and the fallacy of capitalising blindly on peace dividends. Budget restrictions are so severe in the Operating Budget of the Navy that CMS forecasts that these restrictions "will impact on the resources applied to recurring requirements, with a detrimental impact on the Quality of Work Life across Maritime Command"²⁵. The Auditor General also recently severely criticised the Department's annual performance report stating that it was "a disappointing collection of 'good news' anecdotes rather than a source of genuine information on performance"²⁶. DND's image, as a potential or current employer, is tarnished by its inability to maintain a good working environment and to update its ageing equipment. The government's attitude towards a post Cold War military contributes directly to DND's problems in maintaining a positive corporate public image to recruit new personnel and to retain existing CF personnel.

²³ Lawton, Valerie. *Cash-strapped military may sell property*. The Star.com, 5 Feb 2001.
Wysiwyg://14/http://www.thestar.com/cgi-...d=968332188774&call_pagepath=news/Canada

²⁴ DND. *Maritime Capability Plan 2000*. Part 1 section 1.1.
<http://navy.dwan.dnd.ca/admin/mcp/mcp00/part1%5Fe.asp>

²⁵ DND. *Maritime Capability Plan 2000*. Part 1 section 1.1.
<http://navy.dwan.dnd.ca/admin/mcp/mcp00/part1%5Fe.asp>

²⁶ Blanchfield, Mike. *\$400M boost not enough to fix Forces*, Ottawa Citizen Online, 28 Feb 2001.
wysiwyg://6/http://www.ottawacitizen.com/national/010228/5011117.html

CMS stated last year that "the Navy is facing very serious personnel shortages in several MOCs and at certain rank levels"²⁷. This situation makes it paramount that recruiting be timely and effective to offset the critical shortages in manpower. The National Post reported DND's blunder in a recent recruitment ad campaign that was considered "somewhat risky because of the sexual connotation, but mostly because of the perceived negative tone and content of the text"²⁸. Considering the sensitivity of previous pornography scandals in the government, the image conveyed to people was unfortunate and inappropriate. The Calgary Sun reported on a related aspect that "what will bring Canadians flocking back will be a change of attitude in Ottawa"²⁹. DND was also "portrayed as a safe haven for under-achievers who want secure, if low paying, jobs"³⁰. It is difficult to believe that the effect of these derogatory statements would foster the recruiting or the retention of personnel. Then there was the series of articles published by several newspapers on the CF soldier that was supposedly poisoned by his own men in Croatia and further victimised by a botched-up investigation. The Ottawa Citizen suggested that:

"Those who served ... are now being shamelessly ignored or actively thwarted by the very government that so happily sent them to war ... the department cannot and is not trusted by its own personnel or the public ... nor should it be trusted, given the failed leadership past and present"³¹.

This article signals a serious government and DND leadership problem to Canadians and ultimately a significant DND image crisis. It is important to note the significant amount of bad

²⁷ DND. *Maritime Capability Plan 2000*. Article 106 paragraph 3.

<http://navy.dwan.dnd.ca/admin/mcp/mcp00/part1%5Fe.asp>

²⁸ Aubry, Jack. *Military scraps 'fetish' ad*, *National Post Online*, 23 Jan 2001.

Wysiwyg://4/<http://www.NationalPost.com/...ory.html?f=/stories/20010123/446572.html>

²⁹ Letter to the Editor. *Uniform discontent*, *The Calgary Sun*, 29 Jan 2001.

<http://www.canoe.com/CalgarySun/editorial.html>

³⁰ Letter to the Editor. *Uniform discontent*, *The Calgary Sun*, 29 Jan 2001.

<http://www.canoe.com/CalgarySun/editorial.html>

³¹ Coleman, Ron. *In denial*, *Ottawa Citizen Online*, 28 Jan 2001.

Wysiwyg://5/<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/letters/010128/5077408.html>

press over good press that DND has been subjected to in the recent past and the stigma that bad press brings with it. The SCONDVA committee acknowledges this by stating:

"Perhaps it is partly the fault of the media which seems to prefer scandal to good news, perhaps some of the fault lies with the Department itself and its inability to put before the public stories of accomplishment, or it may be the fault of us all for not caring as long as things are going well."³²

In the private sector, businesses go out of their way to maintain a positive image. Can DND survive this trend of negativism from the media? The exodus of personnel from DND probably represents the first casualties, to DND, of this negativism. The next casualties are the potential recruits who do not make it to the recruiting centre as a result of DND's image conveyed by the media. Lastly, the obvious casualty is the DND organisation, which is unable to seek resource approvals from government. DND bears the burden of an image to the public where equipment and infrastructure are being sacrificed because of the lack of funding and where its employees are subjected to unnecessary stresses and abuses due to marginal working conditions. These are elements that contribute to the making of a braindrain phenomenon in DND. Lastly, it would be worthwhile to look at DND programs and activities underway to rectify the situation.

SOLVING DND QOL & QOWL ISSUES

In 1998, SCONDVA provided to the government a detailed report on the QoL in the CF. The committee reported that: "often the stories we heard proved heart wrenching, making us wonder

³² Government of Canada. A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces, Oct 1998. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36/1/ndva/studies/reports/ndvarp03/09-chap1-e.htm> 6 Mar 01.

how things could have gone so obviously wrong"³³. The report listed 89 recommendations for immediate action to alleviate the years of neglect. The committee recommended that efforts be expended in 5 different categories: compensation and benefits, accommodation, care of the injured, family support, and work expectations. Lack of personal benefits and good equipment had forcibly caused significant harm to the morale and the job satisfaction of CF personnel and in some cases, such as for the maritime helicopter, safety of personnel has been raised as an issue. Last year, the Minister of National Defence submitted his year 2000 report to SCONDVA and it was reported that "35 SCONDVA recommendations out of 89 and 47 out of 116 DND initiatives were completed"³⁴. At the Base Commander's Forum 15 Nov 00, a QoL information brief was given by Col Poulter showing further progress where: "58 of 116 initiatives were finalized (sic), and 47 of 89 SCONDVA recommendations were met"³⁵. DND has moved the yardstick to fix the QoL problems and a steady state solution is now underway. The SCONDVA recommendations are by no means exhaustive in their approach to solve the QoL issues in DND. There are others, such as job fit and training in under-staffed DND units, that must be addressed immediately. The progressive implementation of these recommendations does mark a significant step forward to alleviate the braindrain problem.

Although the government has cut DND budgets during the Cold War period as a normal fiscal balancing activity the government feverishly proceeded to cut military spending as the Cold War ended while ignoring the increasing operational tempo and the significant ageing of equipment.

³³ Government of Canada. A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces, Oct 1998. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36/1/ndva/studies/reports/ndvarp03/09-chap1-e.htm> 6 Mar 01.

³⁴ DND. The MND and Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada 2000 Annual Report to SCONDVA on Quality of Life in the CF, 24 Mar 2000. http://hr.dwan.dnd.ca/scondva/engraph/2000report_e.asp

³⁵ Poulter, Col, I.C. *Base Commander's Forum, QoL Information Brief*, 15 Nov 2000. http://hfx-web-01.marlant.halifax.dnd.ca/N3/Exercise_Program/BComd/BComdForum_2_00%20Presentations/Presentations/QOL%20Presentation/QOL%20Presentation%20.ppt

DND's senior leadership was unsuccessful in conveying the urgency of the situation in terms that the government could understand. According to the Auditor General, the yearly departmental performance report did not convey effectively the message it could have conveyed to the government. The SCONDVA report also captures the essence of the problem faced by CF personnel:

"The irony of all this is that, while the peace dividend has been vigorously pursued, our troops have faced an increased pace of deployment and found themselves in far greater conflict-ridden situations than ever before. Stories told by today's peacekeepers are more reminiscent of the "fire-fight" in the Medak Pocket than of walking the "yellow line" in Cyprus."³⁶

The lack of progress on the resolution of QoWL issues continues to prompt individuals to seek other opportunities in the private sector. CF personnel perceive the difficult work conditions emanating from the government's political agenda and in retrospect, it is sad to realise that it took so long for the government to officially recognise the DND QoL and QoWL problems and to begin to identify solutions. The issues related to the equipment and the DND infrastructure are more difficult to resolve since significant capital investments are needed for both. The SCONDVA report captures the essence of the capital replacement program crisis succinctly:

"Equipment shortcomings have been well chronicled by many Defence experts, by the Auditor General, and by previous parliamentary committees. It is therefore not necessary to go into details here. Suffice it to say that budget slashing and political interference has drastically reduced the Canadian Forces' ability to replace aging (sic) equipment. Tanks are 20 years old based on a design that is 30 years old; self-propelled artillery is 30 years old; most of the towed artillery is 40 years old; Navy helicopters are 30 years old; Air Force search and rescue helicopters are 35 years old"³⁷.

Recent articles in various papers account for different aspects of the same problem:

³⁶ Government of Canada. A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces, Oct 1998. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36/1/ndva/studies/reports/ndvarp03/09-chap1-e.htm> 6 Mar 01.

³⁷ Government of Canada. A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces, Oct 1998. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36/1/ndva/studies/reports/ndvarp03/18-reform-e.htm>

"National Defence may be forced to disposed of nearly one-third of its infrastructure, from barracks to bases, because it doesn't get enough funding for basic repairs and upkeep"³⁸, "the air force has decided to sell or scrap a third of its front-line fighters as part of a program to improve the rest of the planes"³⁹, and "Government's commitment to new helicopters slipping past 2005"⁴⁰.

Senior management in DND has stated that the government will pay for the forces it wants. This attitude can only perpetuate a sad state of affairs currently witnessed in DND. The Auditor General criticised that "the Forces will never get the money they need if they continue the troubling practice of denying Parliament specific information about their state of readiness"⁴¹. The QoWL in the Navy, for example, has reached crisis levels just as it has in other DND areas where a general rust-out problem prevails. The government's post Cold War attitude will necessitate generations of DND effort, planning, and procurement to restore the QoWL in DND.

CONCLUSION

There is a braindrain issue in DND and it is not under control. Part of the problem can be attributed to the end of the Cold War, which polarised the governments' attitude towards focusing on peace dividend strategies and reduced military spending measures. This attitude contributed directly to the current DND rust-out problems and the severe braindrain. The private sector also has significantly affected the DND braindrain phenomenon by providing numerous job opportunities to CF personnel where a perceived quality in private sector QoL and QoWL was prevalent. As employees have become empowered to choose between competing job

³⁸ May, Kathryn. *DND faces selling 33% of property*, Ottawa Citizen Online, 22 Jan 2001.

Wysiwyg://4/http://www.OttawacitizenPost.com/national/010122/5038930.html

³⁹ Ward, John. *For sale: Our fighters*, thestar.com, 15 Jan 2001. <http://www.thestar.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/Ap...PrintFriendly&c=Article&cid=979533330445>

⁴⁰ Ward, John. *Government's commitment to new helicopters slipping past 2005*, Ottawa Citizen Online, 25 Jan 2001. <http://www.southam.com/ottawacitizen/newsnow/cpfs/national/010124/n012457.html>

⁴¹ Blanchfield, Mike. *\$400M boost not enough to fix Forces*, Ottawa Citizen Online, 28 Feb 2001. [wysiwyg://6/http://www.ottawacitizen.com/national/010228/5011117.html](http://www.ottawacitizen.com/national/010228/5011117.html)

opportunities in the public and private sectors, the lack of job fit in DND was shown to incite attrition in DND. The private sector is implementing enticing QoL and QoWL measures to attract candidates. In contrast, DND has a job fit crisis, which is accentuated by the lack of mitigating QoL and QoWL initiatives. The analysis has shown that a drastic change in government attitude towards its military is necessary to solve the DND QoWL and QoL issues. DND also bears the burden of an image to the public where equipment and infrastructure are being sacrificed because of lack of funding and where its employees are subjected to unnecessary stresses and abuses due to marginal working conditions. The media reported negativism on the DND QoL should change favourably as a result of the SCONDVA efforts and the government's commitment to resolve the issues. CF personnel want to work with first rate people in a first rate organisation with first rate equipment. This essay demonstrated that the measures implemented by DND are insufficient to mitigate the braindrain phenomenon and that this improvement should take the form of capital funding to stabilize its infrastructures, equipment, training and job fit with CF personnel. These improvements will curtail the braindrain and ensure mission success while providing personnel with the requisite resources, QoL and QoWL commensurate with mission objectives and private sector trends.

"Sue Riordon, widow of Gulf war veteran Terry Riordon, told the committee meeting in Halifax that many sick veterans in Nova Scotia are living on welfare and are being denied proper psychological support and home care. Mary Ann McGrath, personnel of the all-party committee on veterans affairs replied: At times I have been disappointed (in government) ... but today I am ashamed"⁴²

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Wysiwyg://4/http://www.NationalPost.com/...ory.html?f=/stories/20010123/446572.html

⁴² Mellor, Clare. *Today I am ashamed*, The Halifax Herald Limited, 9 Feb 2001. <http://www.herald.ns.ca/cgi-bin/home/loadmain?2001/02/09+208.raw>

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