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EXERCICE/EXERCISE NEW HORIZONS

‘Punching Above Our Weight’

A Validation of the Canadian Naval Task Group Concept.

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La présente étude a été rédigé par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale.

Abstract:

For a nation to make a meaningful contribution to international peace and security it must first possess the political will to act against aggression and thereafter field sufficiently robust forces to permit it to translate this determination into clear military action. Beyond merely having forces, a country must also organize them in a manner that maximizes their effectiveness in light of fiscal restraints. In terms of naval forces, the above assumptions beg the question – what is the best way to structure a country’s naval forces?

This paper argues that the Canadian Forces (CF) should retain and in fact bolster its ability to deploy multi-ship Canadian Task Groups (CATGs) so that they may continue to make an effective contribution to multinational maritime operations. To reinforce the Navy’s decision to select the TG concept, the paper will also explore and analytically refute suggestions that the CF should pursue a less costly maritime force structure, one that is based on single ship deployments.

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“Sovereignty best demonstrates itself by having influence in the international system.”¹

For a nation to make a meaningful contribution to international peace and security it must first possess the political will to act against aggression and thereafter field sufficiently robust forces to permit it to translate this determination into clear military action. Beyond merely having forces, a country must also organize them in a manner that maximizes their effectiveness in light of fiscal restraints. In terms of naval forces, the above assumptions beg the question – what is the best way to structure a country’s naval forces?

In an effort to resolve this challenge the Canadian Navy has chosen to organize its maritime assets using a construct commonly referred to in maritime doctrine as the Task Group (TG) Concept.² Under this organizational design, a variety of surface, subsurface, and aerial platforms are brought together under one commander, rather than operating these same units as autonomous forces. This concept arguably produces a more efficient, mutually supporting, multi-purpose

¹The prominent naval analyst, Dr. Stan Weeks, made this statement. He is a senior scientist with Science Applications International Corporation, and an adjunct professor at the US Naval War College. The quote appeared in an article by Canadian Sharon Hobson entitled “Leadmark Spearheads Canada’s Naval Strategy for 2020.” In the article Dr. Weeks discusses the important contribution that Canada’s Naval Task Group (CATG) has made in Operation Enduring Freedom (War on Terrorism). <http://www.jni.janes.com/> posted 18 April 2001. Leadmark is the Canadian navy’s vision document designed to guide the service towards the challenges out to 2020. More will be offered on this document later in the paper.

² Peter, Haydon, “The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group.” Canadian Gunboat Diplomacy, Eds. A.L Griffiths, P.T. Haydon, and Richard H. Gimblett, (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies Dalhousie University, June 1998), p. 96.

force that can offer significantly greater capability than the mere sum of its parts.³ This structure has become the heart of the Canadian Navy's concept of operations.⁴

However, one of the realities of this type of functional design is that it requires a country to maintain a broad and often expensive array of maritime capabilities. Fleets of this type can be more costly than a navy designed for the conduct of simpler single unit deployments. If the Canadian Navy wants to maintain the fiscal support necessary for this TG concept, it must clearly enunciate why the benefits of this option outweigh the costs.

Clearly, identification of the advantages of the TG concept over simpler models is vital to the continued relevance of the concept itself. This paper will strongly argue that the Canadian Forces (CF) should retain and in fact bolster its ability to deploy multi-unit Canadian Task Groups (CATGs) so that they may continue to make an effective contribution to multinational maritime operations. To reinforce the Navy's decision to select the TG concept, the paper will also explore and analytically refute suggestions that the CF should pursue a less costly maritime force structure, one that is based on single ship deployments.

The essay will first clarify some of the key concepts surrounding the TG concept and give the historical context behind Canada's decision to assume this model of fleet organization. Secondly, it will offer examples of other nations that have successfully implemented the same fleet structure. Thirdly, the essay will

³ Richard, Gimblett, "Caught in the Middle – Update - A Nation's Navy at Risk." [A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces](#), (Ottawa: The Conference of Defence Associations Institute, September 2002), pp. 8-9.

⁴ Haydon, "The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group." p. 95.

argue in support of Canada's TG model, and show the level of contribution that has been achieved by our maritime forces. Fourthly, the paper will explore and refute counter arguments to the CATG model. Lastly, in an attempt to encourage further discussion and research within the broader maritime academic community, the essay will discuss some of the challenges that the author feels lie ahead for the Canadian government and the Navy if they intend to fully develop the TG concept.

One of the best definitions of the TG concept comes from the well-respected recent Royal Navy (RN) publication *Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine* (BR 1806). In this document the TG is described as "A grouping of units under one commander subordinate to a task force commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a specific function or functions."⁵ The document goes on to describe that the TG structure supports three important functions:

It provides the highest level of naval forces a medium power can contribute to a combined and/or joint operation [and provides] the training framework not only for such missions but also for individual units assigned to multinational formations [and gives] experience for future commanders of multinational formations. [Finally] It provides a

⁵ Quoted from the *Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine* (BR 1806). Available online at: <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk> reference cited in Haydon, "The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group." p. 96.

mechanism whereby the state can deploy naval forces for a complex mission.⁶

Canada's own naval strategic document *Leadmark* describes the TG as a “task tailored mix of capabilities”, which it argues, possesses both military and political appeal in the evolving and complex environment envisaged out to 2020.⁷ One of Canada's maritime scholars, and one of the original architects of the *Leadmark*, Dr. Richard Gimblett, further describes the TG as a “mutually self supporting multipurpose force... [with] military and political appeal [that] correlates directly to the Naval Task Group as a symbol of the nation's sovereignty and capacity for independent actions on the seas.”⁸

Dr. Gimblett stresses that Canada's navy has garnered a solid reputation abroad and at home because of its willingness to use its TGs to contribute to international maritime missions in support of peace and security. With a credible TG concept and the willingness to deploy these forces, Canada's maritime forces have received a favourable grade in the typology /ranking of maritime forces offered in *Leadmark*. The document rates navies from a Rank 1 – Major Global Force Projection Navy down to Rank 8 or 9 navies that are of a Token or Constabulary nature. Canada's navy is favourably assessed as a Rank 3, Medium Global Force Projection Navy; “navies that may not possess the full range of capabilities, but have the credible capacity in certain [capabilities] and

⁶ Haydon, “The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group.” pp. 97-98.

⁷ *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020*, (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2001). Available online at: http://www.navy.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index_e.asp.

⁸ Gimblett, “Caught in the Middle – Update - A Nation's Navy at Risk.” pp. 8-10.

consistently demonstrate a determination to exercise [these capabilities] at some distance from home waters, in cooperation with other Force Projection Navies, E.g., Netherlands, [and] Australia.”⁹

Some recent examples of Canadian naval task group operational deployments include the 1990-91 dispatch of two destroyers (DD) and an auxiliary oil replenishment ship (AOR) to OPERATION FRICTION during the Gulf War, followed in 1993 by an AOR and up to three DDs to OPERATION DIALOGUE off Haiti, and most recently the TG of five ships sent in 2001 to the Arabian Gulf region under OPERATION APOLLO (War on Terrorism). Clearly a task group is a distinct maritime unit which, when used with resolve at home and abroad, can earn a country tremendous respect from its international peers.

What is the historical context that describes how Canada’s navy was transformed from being a small fleet within a much larger British Imperial maritime structure, to a Rank 3 navy with its own deployable national task groups? The development of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) TG concept is best described by Peter Haydon, one of Canada’s most noteworthy maritime scholars, in his article “The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group.”¹⁰ He describes how the RCN came out of World War II (WWII) with a desire to transform from a navy that merely injected forces into the operational structures of other larger navies, to one that could forge a more unique national role in maritime affairs.

⁹ Leadmark, pp. 44-45. This is a direct quotation from the typology found in the source.

¹⁰ Haydon, “The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group.” *Et passim*.

Canada developed separate Canadian Escort Groups in the 1940s and later began to adopt the TG structure as it introduced naval aviation to the fleet.¹¹ The 1950s saw the creation of Operational Training Groups based around distinct Carrier Groups (with Carriers such as the *HMCS Magnificent* and *Bonaventure*). By late 1954, the RCN had formally endorsed the TG concept with the creation of the Canadian Carrier Group, with a commanding Commodore and his staff embarked onboard the carrier itself, operating under Canadian operational command. Haydon described this accomplishment as “the culmination of the RCN’s dreams of an autonomous naval task group.”¹²

Eventually carrier aviation outstripped the budget capacity of the RCN, and the last surviving carrier, *Bonaventure*, had to be decommissioned in the 1970s. As a result of this decision, there was arguably no uniquely Canadian role for the navy for the next twenty years, other than contributing to pan-NATO Anti-submarine (ASW) operations. As a result, the prominence of a national TG concept in Canada waned through the 1970 and early 1980s, particularly with the lack of truly command capable warships around which to maintain the TG structure.¹³ By the early 1980s, NATO’s operational planning began to evolve significantly. The process shifted from injecting the ships of individual countries

¹¹ Haydon, “The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group.” p. 102. Here Haydon shows that the first formal recognition of the move to the TG concept is contained in the minutes of the 228th meeting of the Canadian Naval Board in October 1947.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 108.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 115. The 280 Tribal class ships introduced in the 1970s had a moderate C2 capability that permitted them to command tactical units at sea but they lacked long range air defence weapons and robust C2 suites until they were modernized under the TRUMP project in the 1980s and 90s. See Marc Milner, Canada’s Navy- The First Century, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 287.

into *ad hoc* NATO multinational task groups, to one where ships were assigned missions on the basis of unique national task groups. This reorganization initiative, referred to as COMAROPS, encouraged NATO navies to develop viable national task groups that could eventually be pulled together into an effectively multinational force.¹⁴

Fortunately for the Canadian Navy, in the 1980s and 1990s the political will was present to both rebuild and modernize the navy's fleet. This trend was realized with the *Iroquois* Class update and the delivery of the twelve new *Halifax* Class Frigates, allowing Canada to reaffirm its commitment to the TG concept of fleet organization.¹⁵

In summary, the RCN emerged from its WWII imperial arrangements, evolving through the ASW oriented Cold War era, to a fleet of new and improved ships, employed in national task groups. This commitment to continuously improve the professional quality of the Navy allowed Canada to contribute a national task group during the first Gulf War in 1990-91. The TG's interoperability with the United States Navy (USN), allowed it to be given a distinct command responsibility, notably as the multinational Combat Logistics Force Commander. The USN's selection of Canada validated the rationale for adopting the national TG concept from the outset. Even though the TG ships

¹⁴ Ironically the NATO committee that created the CONMAROPS reorganization was chaired by Canada's representative to the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT) Rear Admiral Dan Mainguy. See, Milner, *Canada's Navy- The First Century*, pp. 286-287.

¹⁵ This renewal included the update all four of the *Iroquois* class command and air defence destroyers and the procurement of 12 new *Halifax* class state of the art, general-purpose frigates.

were older, they nonetheless formed a competent national TG that had the respect of its peers.¹⁶

Since 11 September 2001 Canada has also made a significant maritime contribution to the War on Terrorism as part of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. Since its initial TG surge deployment of five ships in October-November 2001, Canada has held significant command responsibilities in the operation.¹⁷ The navy has already deployed 15 of its 18 major ships to the area, producing solid results in its Maritime Interception (MIO) and Leadership Interdiction (LIO) operations.¹⁸ This contribution is at its highest level at present with Canada's assumption of command of Task Force 151 (TF 151), one of the geographic maritime surface warfare commanders.¹⁹ Under these duties the Canadian TF commander and his staff have had direct operational control over more than 16 ships and aircraft from up to 8 different countries.²⁰

Many other countries have also adopted the TG concept, enabling them to make significant contributions to recent maritime multinational operations.

¹⁶ Lieutenant R.H. Gimblett, and Major J.H. Morin, OPERATION FRICTION – The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997), pp. 179-180.

¹⁷ To date the Canadian Naval TG Commanders in OP APOLLO have included Commodores Robertson, Murphy, Lerhe, and Girouard.

¹⁸ http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_home/index_e.asp.

¹⁹ Note that a Task Force Commander is superior to a Task Group Commander. Command of TF 151 is presently held by Canadian Commodore Roger Girouard. This command is exercised over the geographic area of the Gulf of Oman and Southern Arabian Gulf. Source: interview with Canadian Staff Officer from the Directorate of Maritime Force Development, Chief of the Maritime Staff – Ottawa 15 April 2003.

²⁰ Commodore Drew Robertson, "The Canadian Naval Task Group in OPERATION APOLLO." Maritime Affairs, Autumn 2002/Winter 2003, (Ottawa: Naval Officers' Association of Canada, 2003), p. 3. <http://www.naval.ca>. The eight countries include, Bahrain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, and Canada. This duty brought with it a significant span of control and high level of authority.

Clearly the USN and the RN have the lead in this area by organizing their TG and TFs around their aircraft carriers and Marine units, giving them a well defended expeditionary, operationally manoeuvrable, amphibious capability. The French and Italian navies have also organized their national TGs around their carriers, allowing them to contribute to the ongoing maritime OEF operations.²¹ Finally, navies of a similar scale to Canada, such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Australia, also have used the TG structure to develop surface groups, but in this case around their destroyers and frigates. It is important to note that most of world's navies contributing to maritime peace and security operations are doing so with naval units organized fundamentally around the TG concept.²²

What are main advantages to organizing and operating a navy under the TG structure? First, a national task group creates a distinct and sovereign team of maritime units having both political and military unity. Secondly, by grouping the individual units into formed TGs, a more significant force can be created, thus maximizing the individual contribution to the greater whole. Thirdly, when maritime units are organized into standing task groups ahead of time, they permit the rapid and flexible deployment of a significant national force. Lastly, the training regime of a navy organized around the TG concept creates a pool of

²¹ Captain P. Wisecup and Lieutenant Tom Williams. "Enduring Freedom - Making Coalition Warfare Work." United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Volume. 128/9/1,195. (Annapolis Maryland: USNI, September 2002). pp. 52-54.

²² World naval national task group data and OEF contribution information primarily from Jane's Navy International Website <http://www.jni.janes.com/>. Specific information on Australian task group doctrine found in the naval publication, Australian Maritime Doctrine. (HMAS Creswell, Jervis Bay NSW: Sea Power Centre, 2000), pp. 93-94.

professional commanding officers and complementary staffs that are more ready to assume significant command duties at short notice, far more than would be possible in a navy that only operates single ship deployments.

What are the disadvantages to assuming the TG model? Canada's navy could assume a niche role rather than develop the expensive broad range of capabilities necessary to be able to deploy task groups to distant waters. Secondly, this focused fleet would be far cheaper to generate and maintain. Thirdly, the fleet could be better employed in the conduct domestic operations, and lastly, when called upon to undertake international missions, Canada could do so with single symbolic units only. With this brief synopsis of the arguments for and against the TG concept now laid out, let us take a more detailed look at the individual arguments.

First, the TG creates a distinct and sovereign group of units that has both political and military appeal. By having a sizeable enough force involv(m)Tj12 0 0 1i6T 435 322.61

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typical at sea today.²³ By being present in sufficient numbers and well equipped, the units are more likely to stay together as a national TG, rather than being parceled off one at a time to operate as mere tactical injects into another country's force. In this way the Canadian government can retain sovereign command and control over the TG, thus making the force a clear instrument for the demonstration of national will.²⁴ More importantly, the Canadian government could, through the visibility of its military commitment, earn international political respect making it more disposed to support its military forces.

Secondly, by operating as a formed group the contribution of the TG becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Because the group possess a variety of capabilities such as a robust command/air defence ship, escorts units (surface and/or subsurface), its own afloat logistics support capability, and organic air assets, the TG will be able to deploy a strong, self sustaining force around the globe for prolonged periods.²⁵ The inherent flexibility and adaptability of the TG makes it able to more readily support a full spectrum of operations from peace

²³ C4ISR refers to command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. In essence, this is a modern expansion of what has traditionally been referred to as command and control (C2).

²⁴ Rear Admiral David Morse, "The Canadian Naval Task Group." Canadian Gunboat Diplomacy, Eds. A.L Griffiths, P.T. Haydon, and Richard H. Gimblett, (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies Dalhousie University, June 1998), p. 287.

²⁵ The original, formal composition of the task group was presented in the 1994 Defence White Paper, (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1994), pp. 38-39 and amplified in the recent naval document Leadmark, p. 108, http://www.navy.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index_e.asp. In essence, both documents present a TG "comprised of up to four combatants (destroyers, frigates or submarines) and a support ship, with appropriate maritime air support." However, Leadmark goes further than just the numbers of units required; instead, it describes what capabilities the TG must possess such as, C2, self defence, fleet replenishment, along with the multipurpose flexibility of surface ships, submarines and coastal defence vessels. The document also reinforces the vital support offered by maritime helicopters and long-range patrol aircraft.

through to war.²⁶ This flexibility also makes it possible for the TG to become a force multiplier within both joint and combined operations worldwide.²⁷ On arrival, the TG can be ready to work alongside a myriad of other nations' armed forces. In this way the TG is able to optimize the level of contribution it can make to the overall operation, far more than would be possible with single units.²⁸

Thirdly, the existence of standing task groups permits the rapid deployment of a significant force to a majority of the world's maritime regions. Following soon after the 11 September 2001 tragedy, Canada tasked its Standing Naval Force Atlantic (SNFL) frigate to the Gulf region on 7 October 2001. Next, by 16 October 2001 the Atlantic Fleet Commander (COMCANFLTANT) ordered the East coast naval TG (comprising two combatants and a support ship with embarked helicopter air detachments) to deploy to the region. By November 2001 the Pacific Fleet Commander (COMCANFLTPAC) was also able to deploy

²⁶ A naval TG has the ability to make a significant contribution to every single one of the 11 Force Planning Scenarios laid out in Canada's capstone Defence Planning Guidance (DPG) publication. These scenarios form the basis for capability based planning within the CF, and range from domestic support roles such as Search and Rescue all the way to international missions such as Collective Defence. http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/dda/scen/intro_e.asp. This point is also emphasized in Appendix B to Leadmark, p. B-1. http://www.navy.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index_e.asp.

²⁷ The Canadian Joint Task List (CJTL) establishes a framework for describing, and relating, the types of capabilities that may be required, by the CF. The CJTL has eight major capability areas: Command; Information and Intelligence Capabilities; Conduct Operations Capabilities; Mobility Capabilities; Protect Forces Capabilities; Sustain Force Capabilities; Generate Forces Capabilities; and Co-ordinate with Other Government Initiatives Capabilities. The TG concept allows the Navy to make a significant contribution to all of these types of Joint operations. http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/dda/cjtl/cjtl14/intro_e.asp.

²⁸ Commodore Robertson, "The Canadian Naval Task Group in OPERATION APOLLO." *Et passim*. Canada's initial OEF deployment of 5 ships serves as an excellent example of the impact that a national task group can have on operations overseas. Commodore Robertson's article clearly highlights that Canada was able to make a meaningful political and military contribution; in fact Canada continues to be the fifth largest naval force in the campaign against terrorism.

one of his task group frigates to the area to join a USN carrier battle group.²⁹

These swift deployments into the maritime theatre of operation have assisted in the containment and arrest of fleeing Al-Qaeda terrorists. Moreover by rapidly denying these forces the use of the maritime domain as an option to flee the region, the naval forces were able to directly assist the robust OEF operations that have been undertaken ashore. By sending a group of capable multipurpose ships the force can have a more marked influence on the operations that are underway within an operation. This clearly illustrates the influence that can be exerted by maritime units operating in groups vice solo deployments.

The final advantage of this type of operational structure is the positive professional effect it has on the naval service. In order to effectively operate these larger formations, a navy must generate higher-level operational training for its commanders and staff. This developmental and experiential process in the end creates a pool of professional officers that are completely ready to assume and excel when given significant command duties on short notice. If the use of task groups is an ongoing concept of operations for a navy, then the valuable lessons learned from important TG command opportunities can be readily shared amongst the service's officers and jointly within the entire armed force. This ever-increasing depth of experience within a country's profession of arms also brings it significant credibility in its coalition allies' eyes. In this fashion the argument in favour of the TG concept goes well beyond mere organizational or technical reasons but more importantly towards the core professionalism of the service.

²⁹ http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_home/index_e.asp. SNFL Frigate (*HMCS Halifax*), Atlantic TG (*HMCS Iroquois, Charlottetown, and Preserver*), Pacific TG ship (*HMCS Vancouver*).

This same depth of experience would be difficult to emulate if a navy was not functioning in this broad and challenging task group structure.

In summary, one can readily see that organizing a navy under the TG concept creates a force with political and military unity, enabling a level of joint and combined contribution that is far greater than the sum of its individual units. As well, standing task groups permit a navy to deploy a robust force rapidly to the area of crisis. Finally, the deployment of the naval forces into these challenging theatres, along with the assumption of campaign leadership roles, enhances the professional knowledge of the service.

So what are the arguments against assuming the TG model of fleet organization? Firstly, one could argue support for a niche role rather than the TG model. Some of the specialized roles might include naval units capable of only domestic inspection and interdiction duties. This mission could be undertaken with a fleet comprised of less expensive, smaller corvettes requiring only limited self-defence systems. Also a navy could undertake to specialize in afloat logistics and sealift support, maritime disaster relief, mine countermeasures, or even in the form of an armed maritime constabulary, to name a few. Clearly some of these specialized roles would give a navy a moderate capability to operate at home and abroad, at far less cost. This type of specialization can be tolerated with little overall risk when countries are operating in large fixed alliances in predictable theatres of operation, as NATO has done for over fifty years. The consistency of

the member states and regularity of their operations are necessary for niche roles.

However, the major flaw with assuming that a country's ability to contribute to coalition operations that are undertaken outside of traditional alliances reduces the ability of a country to make an effective contribution to coalition operations. Nations, such as Canada, that participate in coalition operations that are far from their traditional alliances are not as members of a formed alliance.

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it ages. However, when a government chooses to simply remove capabilities from its fleet in order to reduce its spending, it must recognize that once that competence is gone, it is extremely expensive to regenerate if required later.³¹ Measures such as the decommissioning of an entire class of large ships (such as Canada's modernized *Iroquois* destroyers) would provide no long-term fiscal solutions to a government unless they ultimately decided to completely abandon their blue water fleet, so well served by such an important class of ships. To date the Canadian government has displayed enthusiasm towards remaining engaged in vital international maritime peace and security operations, such as OEF, so it would be wise for it to avoid the collapse of its naval capabilities into cheaper niche roles, given the expense of regenerating a robust fleet once lost. Also, abandonment of a blue water fleet for Canada would seriously limit its ability to contribute to international maritime stability operations, potentially damaging its international reputation.

The third argument against the TG concept in Canada comes from critics that suggest that it is a relic of the Cold War, and that in the absence of a direct threat to national security the country could simply meet its obligations with a domestic coast guard rather than a navy.³² Once again the government has not indicated that it intends to withdraw from its international commitments, so why would it reduce its navy's ability to remain engaged in global security arrangements abroad. This type of international isolation and entrenchment

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 2-3.

³² Peter Haydon, "The Canadian Naval Task Group." p. 2.

would be inconsistent with Canada's foreign policy that champions multilateralism and a commitment to international peace and security.³³ Most would agree that in Canada there is an irrevocable link between global security and our standard of living at home, particularly in view of our reliance on foreign trade (much of it coming by sea).³⁴ If Canada was to convert its credible international naval forces into a domestically focused coast guard this would be out of line with her foreign and defence policies, and most certainly out of tune with the responsibilities that she holds as a medium power, G7 nation. In this way the lose of this a TG capable fleet would have a political price internationally. If Canada truly wants to continue to play a leadership role in international affairs then it would be wise for her to maintain a TG-capable blue water fleet, particularly one with a solid reputation for contributing to these types of operations.

This third argument is supported by the fact that it is also very expensive to maintain two separate naval fleets - one for foreign and one for domestic operations. It is therefore more logical for a country to build one blue water fleet that is sufficiently robust to operate both abroad and at home. This fleet could work as a formed task group overseas, and if required, be recalled swiftly to home waters in a protracted domestic crisis that cannot be handled by the domestic

³³ This policy is contained in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's latest policy document Canada in the World - Canadian Foreign Policy Review 1995. <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/world/menu-en.asp> for a transcript which in part states that, "Part of our [Canada's] mandate is to maintain international peace and prevent violent conflict. We do this through a range of initiatives, including collective security and defence arrangements. Successful political and commercial relations with other countries [comes from] our ability to conduct international activities in a spirit of shared enterprise, while continuing to promote and protect Canada's values and interests."

³⁴ Peter Haydon, "The Canadian Naval Task Group." pp.2-3.

coastal guard force. Clearly a coast guard fleet or a small coastal naval fleet would not possess the capabilities necessary to safely operate far from home. TGs that are capable of doing war fighting are also able to do non-warfighting roles; this is not true of a lesser force.

Lastly, one can argue that instead of deploying task groups abroad Canada could simply choose to dispatch single units on symbolic, solo deployments. It could be argued that this type of lighter commitment would give Canada sufficient visibility in international maritime security operations. One could say that this is true if the single units join large formations such as USN carrier task groups. However, it could also be argued that because these units are only tactical injects into larger formations that they in fact have little lasting recognizable value. In this way Canadian ships simply become part of someone else's mission, immersed and unrecognizable.³⁵

The final section the paper will discuss some of the challenges that lie ahead for the Canadian Navy if it wants to fully develop its task group capability. These points are raised to stimulate informed debate about the kind of existing capabilities that must be sustained if the navy truly wants to continue to exploit the clear advantages of organizing its fleet under the TG concept.

³⁵ By way of background only, it is interesting to note that the 1998 Maritime Capability Planning Guidance (MCPG) states that “given the Canadian policy of committing units under Canadian command, rather than as piecemeal contributions, the Chief of the Maritime Staff [CMS] shall maintain one TG at 10 days notice to deploy, and a second TG at 30 days.” Deploying capable task groups under the logic of the TG concept avoids such ‘piecemeal contributions.’ This reference is quoted within the original draft letter, Concept of Employment for the Canadian Task Group, (Canadian Maritime Warfare Centre Halifax: CFMWC-3250-1 Sec MWA, 29 June 1998), p.3.

One area of risk that presently exists in the navy centers on its ability to maintain its command and control air defence destroyers, referred to as the *Iroquois* Class. These large command ships form the nucleus around which all TG assets operate. These are the only ships in the fleet that possess the robust C4ISR suites that allow the Commander and the embarked task group staff to effectively coordinate maritime TG operations at sea in a multinational environment. This class of ship also fields the long-range air defence missiles that provide an umbrella under which the TG can operate safely. Cost cutting measures have reduced the availability of this class from its original four ships down to only three.³⁶ Even though these vessels are expensive to operate, the navy must maintain or replace these important C2 and air defence ships if it intends sustain its effective TG capability.³⁷

Another area of risk involves Canada's operational support ships. The navy has only two ships of this type, referred to as the *Protecteur* Class. These vessels were built in the early 1970's, and to-date have only received minor upgrades; they will reach the end of their service life by 2010. These afloat logistics ships provide the vital at-sea provisioning and helicopter repair facilities that allow the naval task groups to operate effectively for prolonged periods far from home. The maintenance or replacement of this class of vessel is also an integral part of Canada's ability to project influence abroad in support of

³⁶ The Pacific fleet *Iroquois* class ship *HMCS Huron* has been laid up in a state of extended readiness as a result of these fiscal measures.

³⁷ The capital project designed to replace the *Iroquois* Class ships is referred to as the Command and Control and Air Defence Replacement (CADRE). It is schedule to cost up to 4.5 billion dollars in Fiscal Year 2000/2001 (FY00/01) equivalent dollars. Source: Maritime Capital Plan 2000. <http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/level1bcp/CMS/Part4.doc>.

joint and combined peace and security initiatives.³⁸ Even though there are other projects that are vital to maintenance the TG concept, this project has pressing need given the mature age of the existing class of *Protecteur* ships.³⁹

In summary, the essay has provided a clear rebuttal of the weak arguments against the TG structure, along with a description of the solid evidence in favour of the concept. It has proven that the task group framework produces a naval force having both political and military unity, allowing the service to generate the highest level of military contribution it can to the joint and combined operations it undertakes. As well the visibility of this military commitment earns Canada international political respect making it more disposed to support its military forces. The inherent logic of the TG structure also permits Canada to rapidly deploy a credible multi-unit force, giving it the opportunity to assume significant leadership roles, which in the end have a dramatic and lasting impact on the professionalism of the service. However, within the next decade the Task Group capability could be sacrificed if the units that the navy draws upon to generate the TG are allowed to wane. The paper argues that the TG concept is without reservation the most effective method for Canada to maintain and employ its maritime forces in its ongoing efforts to maintain international peace and security.

³⁸ The replacement project for this class of ships is referred to as the Afloat Logistics and Sealift Capability (ALSC), with cost of up to 1.75 billion dollars in FY00/01 equivalent dollars. Source: Maritime Capital Plan 2000. <http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/level1bcp/CMS/Part4.doc>.

³⁹ Other important projects include the Frigate Life Extension (FELEX) at 3.0 billion FY00/01 equivalent dollars, and the Submarine Life Extension Project (SELEX) at 0.4 billion FY00/01 equivalent dollars. The navy is also completely reliant on the Airforce for maritime helicopter and long-range maritime patrol aircraft services, so it is carefully watching the capital projects designed to replace and/or upgrade those airframes.

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