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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

**Achieving CF Transformation:  
One Soldier at a Time**

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29 April 2005

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*La présente étude a été rédigée 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.*

*It is not the strongest of the species that will survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.*

Charles Darwin

## INTRODUCTION

Nearly 150 years have passed since Charles Darwin published his groundbreaking theories of evolution and natural selection after observing species variations on the Galápagos Islands.<sup>1</sup> He eventually related these theories to the evolution of humanity, clearly establishing our natural ability to adapt to our environment over time.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Darwin also determined that it can take generations to achieve a single adaptation and normally requires a coercive external stimulus to force the change.<sup>3</sup> More contemporary research reveals that the pace of modern life has overwhelmed this glacially slow and obstinate human adaptation process and has, in fact, left the human brain outdated and improperly hard-wired to respond to many present day situations if left to instinct alone.<sup>4</sup> Given such an innately poor aptitude for adapting to change at an individual level, it should not be surprising that achieving major change within large organizations presents such a routinely daunting challenge.<sup>5</sup> For a highly complex institution, such as the Canadian Forces

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859).

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia, "Charles Darwin," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Darwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Darwin); Internet; accessed 03 March 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia, "Natural Selection," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural\\_selection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_selection); Internet; accessed 03 March 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 21-22.

<sup>5</sup> Daryl R. Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos: How to Create the Nimble Organization* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 10-11.

(CF), additional complicating factors such as protective service cultures, competition for limited resources and external political expediencies make major transformation initiatives even more elusive. Fortunately, unlike any other species that Darwin may have studied, human beings are capable of overriding the mere stimulus-response approach to change by tapping into uniquely human characteristics such as intellect, emotion and imagination.

The CF has already identified “adaptability to change”<sup>6</sup> for Officers and “responding to rapid change and creatively integrating new ideas”<sup>7</sup> for Non-Commissioned Members (NCM) as being key learning objectives in their respective professional development. The next logical step, recognizing that these are not instinctive skill sets, is to identify and provide the necessary training to set the conditions “that address the human response to change.”<sup>8</sup> The thesis of this paper contends that, to achieve its transformation objectives, the CF must increase its focus on individual commitment to transformation by implementing a CF-wide training program that address the human elements of change to include: key aspects of organizational change theory, the concept of “dynamic followers”<sup>9</sup> and a standardized change management process.

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<sup>6</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Detailed Analysis and Strategy for Launching Implementation (Officership 2020)* (Ottawa: Vice Chief of Defence Staff, 2001), I-14.

<sup>7</sup> Department of National Defence, *The Canadian Forces Non-Commissioned Member in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (NCM Corps 2020)* (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2003), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos...*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Sharon M. Latour and Lieutenant Colonel Vicki J. Rast, USAF. “Dynamic Followership: The Prerequisite for Effective Leadership,” *Air & Space Power Journal* (Winter 2004). [journal on-line]; available at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj04/win04/latour.html>; Internet; accessed 28 February 2005. 1.

To fully develop the above thesis this paper is divided into three major sections. Section 1 (Background) describes the theoretical conditions that motivate individual commitment to change and relates them to the current set of CF, Canadian and world affairs. Specific motivating factors discussed include: evidence of the critically unsustainable CF commitment-capability gap, the looming imperatives of the future security environment (FSE) and the emergence of a new leadership-driven vision for Canadian defence that has the potential to inspire a unity of effort not seen in the CF in decades. Section 2 (A Soldier's Guide to Constant Change) describes how individual perceptions of transformation must be reconceived from the notion of a process with a fixed start, transition and end state to a new hyper-paced condition of continuous improvement and innovation. This section includes recommendations for supporting the new centralized vision for the CF in a decentralized manner by leveraging key elements of well-established doctrinal concepts such as "operational art"<sup>10</sup> and "mission command."<sup>11</sup> Finally, Section 3 (Empowering the CF Agent) describes the strategy and training that the CF could employ to help the men and women of the CF better appreciate the critical nature of their role in achieving transformation goals. This final section includes recommendations for the implementation and training of a "dynamic follower"<sup>12</sup> concept and a CF-common eight-stage change process.

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<sup>10</sup> Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 2-1.

<sup>11</sup> Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-003/FP-000 *Land Force: Command* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1996), 30.

<sup>12</sup> Latour and Rast, USAF. "Dynamic Followership...", 1.

## SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

*If you don't like transformation,  
you're going to like irrelevance even less . . .*<sup>13</sup>

General Erick Shinseki  
United States Army Chief of Staff

### **More Than Just a “Burning Platform”<sup>14</sup>**

There are only two general conditions that will motivate an individual to commit to a fundamental change: fear that maintaining the status quo will generate unacceptable consequences in the immediate or near term or, overwhelming confidence that the change will produce an immediate or future payoff.<sup>15</sup> Nearly two decades ago, while describing the first condition, noted change consultant and corporate advisor Daryl Conner described a real-world incident that took place on an oil-drilling platform off the coast of Scotland.<sup>16</sup> On a fateful July evening in 1988 an explosion engulfed the platform in flames sending more than half of the 129 crewmembers and two rescuers to their death. In recounting the testimony of one of the survivors who had jumped 15 stories—at night—into the frigid and oil-laden water of the North Sea, Mr. Conner coined the term ‘burning platform.’ He reasoned that the man “jumped because he had no choice—the price of staying on the platform, of maintaining the

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<sup>13</sup> US Army War College Library, “Human Dimensions of Strategic Leadership: A Selected Bibliography,” Compiled by Jacqueline Bey (December 2002). <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/library/bibs/humandim02.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 March 2005, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos...*, 118.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

status quo [staying on the burning platform], was too high.”<sup>17</sup> Since then, the term has become a widely used buzzword in change management theory. Unfortunately, many leaders falsely interpret this dramatic metaphor to imply that extreme fear of a dangerous status quo is the only motivator to major organizational change.<sup>18</sup> Any such interpretation ignores the potential of the more ideal human motivator of an inspiring vision that promises a payoff at some point in the future. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on your point of view, both types of motivators exist within the CF and must be leveraged to fully engage individual commitment to transformation.

### **The CF Platform: Burning in Broad Daylight**

Evidence of the CF’s ‘burning platform’ status is not difficult to find. Terms such as “crisis”<sup>19</sup>, “irrelevance”<sup>20</sup> and “a fool’s paradise”<sup>21</sup> are now commonly used in characterizing current and future Canadian military affairs. A steadily growing list of articles, reports and books from a wide array of historians, scholars, journalists and senate committees are all sounding warnings of the looming consequences of continued under investment in the CF:

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>19</sup> Douglas Bland, *Canada Without Armed Forces?* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), xi.

<sup>20</sup> Paul T. Mitchell, “A Transformation Agenda for the Canadian Forces: Full Spectrum Influence,” *Canadian Military Journal*, no. 4 (Winter 2003-2004). Journal on-line; available from [http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/engraph/Vol4/no4/pdf/transformation\\_e.pdf](http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/engraph/Vol4/no4/pdf/transformation_e.pdf); Internet; accessed 28 January 2005. 55.

<sup>21</sup> J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* (Toronto, ON: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004), 2.

The lament comes from all quarters. The studies of the military—there were a dozen major ones in 2001 and 2002 alone—all reach much the same conclusion: the forces are so underfunded, understaffed, and ill-equipped that they can no longer defend the country or advance its interests overseas. The titles of these reports reflect the despair and resignation: ‘A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the Canadian Forces’; ‘A Wake-up Call for Canada: The Need for a New Military’; ‘Facing Our Responsibilities; The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces.’ All of them point out that Canada’s hopes are outstripping its means. ‘Our foreign policy is writing cheques our defence policy can’t cash,’ says David Pratt, the ch

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delay it ultimately causes in acquiring replacement equipment. To highlight a specific example, consider the quarter century old MLVW truck that now costs nearly \$50,000 a year to operate, with repairs and parts making up nearly 75% of that cost.<sup>23</sup> Likely to be maintained for another ten years, the total operating cost will top nearly a half a million dollars per truck.<sup>24</sup> Within the CF, attempts to bring attention to these issues has grown steadily as illustrated by the last three annual reports of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) titled *At a Crossroads*<sup>25</sup> in 2002, *A Time For Transformation*<sup>26</sup> in 2003, and *Making Choices*<sup>27</sup> in the most recent report of 2004. A rising sense of urgency is evident from the titles alone. Clearly, the status quo has been unsustainable for some time, let alone in the near term.

### **Preparing for the FSE**

So from an already disadvantaged position, the CF must look to the future to ensure it is prepared to respond to FSE requirements. Fortunately, many emerging trends are evident

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<sup>23</sup> Howard Marsh, "Sensitivity Analysis of Canadian Defence Spending Value For Money – Cost of the Canadian Forces," Chap. 3 in *Understanding the Crisis in Canadian Security and Defence* (Ottawa: CDAI, 2005), 30; available from <http://www.cda-cdai.ca/english-frame.htm>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2005.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Department of National Defence, A-JS-015-000/AF-003 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2001-2002: At a Crossroads* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Department of National Defence, A-JS-015-000/AF-004 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2002-2003: A Time For Transformation* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> Department of National Defence, A-JS-015-000/AF-005 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2003-2004: Making Choices*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004).

that provide a compelling basis for military transformation objectives.<sup>28</sup> Significant trends include: “. . . Globalization, . . . Rapid Scientific and Technological Innovation, . . . Demographic Shifts, . . . Resource Degradation and Scarcity,”<sup>29</sup> “. . . Climate Change, . . . Criminal Activity, [and] . . . Failed and Failing States.”<sup>30</sup> The future effects of any one of these trends have predictable repercussions for military requirements, not the least of which is increasing expectations of the need for future military intervention around the world. For example, consider the effects of rising population growth combined with a limited water supply. Given that the availability of fresh water is a matter of survival, it has already proven to be a major source of disagreement between nations such as in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>31</sup> With countries such as China starting to face similar water shortages, this trend is expected to continue.<sup>32</sup> Analysing each trend in detail is beyond the scope of this paper but, overall, the collective implication of these trends yields the nearly unanimous conclusion that “militaries will not only need to be combat capable, but lighter, more mobile, agile and sustainable than ever before”<sup>33</sup> if they hope to continue to provide a relevant and worthwhile contribution to the attainment of national policy objectives.

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Johnston and Dr. Michael Roi, *Future Security Environment 2025*, (Defence Planning and Management Ottawa: Operational Research Division Directorate of Operational Research (CORP), (05 March 2004), Section I, 1; available from [http://www.vcds.dnd.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/ord/fse2025/intro\\_e.asp](http://www.vcds.dnd.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/ord/fse2025/intro_e.asp); Internet; accessed 03 March 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Gizewski, “The Future Security Environment: Threats and Risks,” in *Towards the Brave New World: Canada’s Army in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Kingston, ON: Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts, 2003. 57-68.

<sup>30</sup> Johnston and Roi, *Future Security Environment 2025*..., Section V.

<sup>31</sup> MidEastWeb, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in a Nutshell,” <http://www.mideastweb.org/nutshell.htm>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2005.

<sup>32</sup> MoneySense Magazine. “China faces severe water shortages, mounting pollution problems.” [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.moneysense.ca/news/shared/print.jsp?content=b032608A>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Gizewski, “The Future Security Environment...”, 68.

## Transformation Strategy and Getting The Message Out

The CF has responded to this type of analysis with strategic guidance such as *Strategy 2020*<sup>34</sup> and service-specific direction for each of the Army,<sup>35</sup> Navy,<sup>36</sup> and Air Force.<sup>37</sup> In addition, publications such as *bravo Defence* provide ongoing updates of successful Department of Defence (DND)/CF initiatives and help bring visibility to the status of transformation milestones.<sup>38</sup> Again, as important as the details of these higher-level CF transformation objectives and milestones are, they are not the focus of this discussion. This paper is focused on how to achieve stated objectives—not what they are or should be. Nevertheless, once transformation goals have been set, every member of the CF must be actively engaged in moving towards them if transformation is to be successful. As already discussed, one of the primary means of motivating the requisite level of individual commitment to change is a clear articulation of an unacceptable status quo. No one is more aware of the unsustainable nature of the current CF capability-commitment gap than the men and women of the CF. However, individual commitment will only be realized if leaders at all levels are seen to be candidly providing professional public acknowledgment of the reality that members of the CF experience every day. Understanding the desire to not sound

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<sup>34</sup> Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Department of National Defence, *Advancing With Purpose: The Army Strategy* (Ottawa: Chief of the Land Staff, 2002).

<sup>36</sup> Department of National Defence, *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020*, (Ottawa: Directorate of Maritime Strategy, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Department of National Defence, A-GA-007-000/AF-004 *Strategic Vectors: The Air Force Transformation Vision*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Department of National Defence, A-JS-007-000/JP-001 *Bravo Defence: Transformation, vol. 4* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004).

unnecessarily alarmist, using under-descriptive terms such as “fragile”<sup>39</sup> to characterize a clearly unsustainable situation creates little, if any, urgency for individual commitment to change. Fortunately, an increasing number of senior leaders within the CF have begun to speak out. More importantly, government policy has finally openly acknowledged that “[t]he status quo is not an option.”<sup>40</sup> This trend must continue if the motivating value of the CF’s ‘burning platform’ is to be fully realized at the individual level.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Cost of Platform Repair**

From its current weakened state, but with a well-reasoned understanding of future requirements, the next logical question is whether the CF is actually capable of transforming? The simple answer is no—unless—a sustainable balance between commitments, capabilities, and funding is achieved. The basis for this assertion comes from the well-established fact that achieving major change in any organization is nearly always a resource-hungry endeavour. When the majority of available resources are already being consumed by current operations, such as is the case in the CF, effective development of future capabilities is simply not possible:

During change, the competition for resources increases. The demands for resources by the change effort begin taking valued resources away from ongoing operations and other highly desirable activities. It is necessary for a change leader to be ready to take

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<sup>39</sup> DND, A-GA-007-000/AF-004 *Strategic Vectors...*,2.

<sup>40</sup> Department of National Defence, A-SJ-005-000/AG-001 *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: DEFENCE* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 12.

<sup>41</sup> Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, *For an Extra 130 Bucks . . . , Update On Canada’s Military Financial Crisis: A View From the Bottom Up*, (Ottawa: The Committee, 2002), 25-27.

a global view and redirect resources while understanding that other key parts of the organization will suffer and reduce its capacities.<sup>42</sup>

For nearly a decade now the CF has struggled to fund immediate requirements from within its shrinking resource envelope, often at the expense of investing in future capabilities as already illustrated in Table 1. Even incremental upgrade programs have been negatively affected. The CF-18 fighter aircraft upgrade, for example, has taken a staggering fourteen years to get under way from the time the requirement was first identified. Once the upgrade is completed, the service life of the updated capability could be outdated in as little as eight years.<sup>43</sup> Clearly capability development timelines of this magnitude are unsustainable and unacceptable. Furthermore, there is ample evidence at the strategic level that progressing transformation objectives has stalled under the pressure of resource constraints:

Within the framework of current policy expressed in the 1994 White Paper, and in line with the objectives articulated in Strategy 2020, all three services and several other key components of the Department are engaged in modernization projects that are collectively overwhelming the available funds for capital investment. Put simply, we have a four-service program and a two-service budget.<sup>44</sup>

To be fair, it must be acknowledged that funding is not the only enabler to transformation. For example, the “non-military goals of government”<sup>45</sup> can actually be more critical than funding. Since the end of the Cold War, for example, regional benefits policy has prevented

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<sup>42</sup> John L. Bennett, *Leading the Edge of Change: Building Individual and Organizational Capacity for the Evolving Nature of Change* (Mooresville, NC: Paw Print Press, 2000), 58.

<sup>43</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence—Upgrading the CF-18 Fighter Aircraft,” in *2004 Report of the Auditor General of Canada* (Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2004), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Lieutenant-General R.J. Hillier, *Strategic Capability Investment Plan – Land Effect*. National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: file 3136-5 (CLS), 26 June 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Marsh, “Sensitivity Analysis of Canadian Defence Spending...,” 29.

infrastructure rationalization such as base closures. Using the Air Force as an example, while force strength has been reduced by nearly half in the past decade, only a 20% reduction in associated infrastructure has been achievable over the same time period.<sup>46</sup> Forces-wide, the cumulative effect of this type of non-military objectives can effectively rob the CF of nearly half of its annual multi-billion dollar budget.<sup>47</sup> Even though these factors are largely outside CF control, the men and women of the CF understand that “a vision without resources is a hallucination”<sup>48</sup> and will only commit to transformation if they believe sufficient resources and balanced policy will be available to give it a real chance of success.

### **“The Promised Land”<sup>49</sup>**

Fortunately, there are signs of real hope. For the first time in more than 20 years the federal budget tabled last February included a substantial investment in defence totalling \$12.8 billion over five years.<sup>50</sup> While this forecast injection of funds amounts to less than half of what was recommended by the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, it is substantial nonetheless, and reason for optimism.<sup>51</sup> More importantly, and in

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<sup>46</sup> Lieutenant-General Ken Pennie, “Transforming Canada’s Air Force: Vectors for the Future,” *Canadian Military Journal Vol 5, No. 4* (Winter 2004-2005), 39.

<sup>47</sup> Marsh, “Sensitivity Analysis of Canadian Defence Spending...,” 29.

<sup>48</sup> Agence France-Presse, “NATO commander upbeat on expanding Afghan mission,” (25 June 2004). [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.spacewar.com/2004/040625043851.f4oiztnj.html>; Internet; accessed 06 March 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Crookall & Harvey Schachter, *Changing Management Culture: Models and Strategies*, Report prepared for the Treasury Board of Canada (Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002), 19.

<sup>50</sup> CBC News, “\$12.8B increase means ‘good day’ for military,” <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2005/02/23/budget-military050223.html>; Internet; accessed 24 February 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence. *For an Extra 130 Bucks . . .*, 15.

line with the second type of change motivator described earlier (i.e. overwhelming confidence that a change will produce an immediate or future payoff), the increased funding is now coupled with a renewed vision for the CF—driven by government and senior military leaders. Released as a sub-section of *Canada's International Policy Statement*,<sup>52</sup> the defence section “. . . is the first review of Canada's defence policy in more than 10 years and it defines a new policy that is firmly grounded in the realities of the post-Cold War, post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world.”<sup>53</sup> It describes greater emphasis on the defence of Canada and North America (including a new command structure), a force expansion of 8000 personnel, a new special operations group and a focus on integrated operations to name only a few of the specifics.<sup>54</sup> More importantly to this discussion, this new document highlights that “[a]bove all, this policy is about change, and providing our military with a bold new vision to deal with an increasingly uncertain world.”<sup>55</sup> Change consultants would refer to this type of change motivation as “the promised land”<sup>56</sup> and many would argue it is sufficient on its own to generate individual commitment to major change. Therefore, with the CF now having both a ‘burning platform’ and a ‘promised land,’ there is certainly no shortage of sources of motivation that can be leveraged to encourage individual commitment to transformation.

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<sup>52</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World* (Ottawa: DFAIT Canada, 2005).

<sup>53</sup> DND, A-SJ-005-000/AG-001 *Canada's International Policy Statement: ...DEFENCE...*, Message from the Minister, The Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of National Defence.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-16.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Crookall & Schachter, *Changing Management Culture...*, 19-21.

## SECTION 2 – A SOLDIER’S GUIDE TO CONSTANT CHANGE

*Change was once a discrete event with a beginning, middle, and end. At the end things got back to ‘normal.’ Today, change is a constant; multiple changes happen simultaneously with no ‘normal’ in sight.<sup>57</sup>*

Jeanenne LaMarsh  
Consultant, Speaker, Educator  
President LaMarsh & Associates

### How do you spell transformation?

Ask a dozen soldiers to define military transformation and you are likely to get a dozen different answers, or more. The U.S. Department of Defense defines it as “a process that shapes the changing nature of military competition and cooperation through new combinations of concepts, capabilities, people and organizations . . .”<sup>58</sup> However, even Arthur Cebrowski, Director of the U.S. Office of Force Transformation, openly acknowledges the challenge in trying to pin down a single definition of transformation but emphasizes that it is ultimately “about changing behaviour.”<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, given such a broad definition, it is not surprising that even after years of transformation effort and expense there is still no “clear understanding at the Pentagon of what the term means.”<sup>60</sup> Findings of a review conducted by the U.S. Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) in 2003 confirmed this

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<sup>57</sup> Jeanenne LaMarsh, *Changing the Way We Change...*, 1.

<sup>58</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Transformation Planning Guidance* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 2003), 3.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas E. Ricks and Josh White, “Scope of Change in Military is Ambiguous,” *Washington Post*, 01 August 2004, 6.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*



lack of common understanding of what transformation means.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, it also revealed that while a great deal of strategic transformation direction has been issued “it has not provided sufficient, useful guidance for the many decision-makers and action officers that must be involved in any implementation.”<sup>62</sup> Yet another study revealed that within a cross-section of U.S. military officers there was “no unified set of attitudes toward transformation”<sup>63</sup> and that commitment to various transformation objectives varied significantly by rank group as well as by parent service.<sup>64</sup> Not surprisingly given the strategic emphasis to date, support for transformation was strongest amongst senior officers and least supported by junior officers, indicating that transformation effort has been less effective at the lower levels.<sup>65</sup> Achieving unity of effort towards transformation is highly unlikely if there is no common understanding of what it means and if individual soldiers, sailors and airmen and women are not adequately engaged at their own level.

While the same level of data is not available for the Canadian military, the CF approach to transformation has largely paralleled that of the U.S. For example, the CF defines transformation in a similar way, as a process that “focuses on people, technology,

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<sup>61</sup> Edgar M. Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk: Implications of Transforming the Culture of DoD*, Report prepared for the Office of Force Transformation (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2004), II-1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Mahnken and FitzSimonds, “Revolutionary Ambivalence...”, 115.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-148.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

ways of conducting operations and ways of thinking”<sup>66</sup> and has established the office of Director General Strategic Change. While not without tactical effect, as discussed in Section 1 the major effort to date has been focused at the strategic level. Extrapolating from the U.S. experience, this strategic foundation now needs to be translated down to the individual level.

### **Re-conceptualizing Transformation From the Bottom Up**

As uncomfortable as it may be, complex, rapid and unrelenting change is now a fact of life for any large organization and leaders are struggling to get used to it and to learn how to thrive in it.<sup>67</sup> Transformation initiatives must help individual CF members understand this new reality of constant change and help them get comfortable with the fact that the new normal is that there is no normal.<sup>68</sup> Regrettably, for many military personnel, some elements of basic doctrine and training can actually conspire to work against establishing a more flexible mindset. Take for example the concept of end states. Every member of the CF has been inundated throughout his or her career with the notion that defining a clear and achievable end state is paramount to mission success. It is, therefore, not surprising to see a spill over of this concept in transformation direction and guidance where terms such as “roadmap,”<sup>69</sup> “blueprint,”<sup>70</sup> “vector,”<sup>71</sup> and “leadmark”<sup>72</sup> are commonly used. These terms

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<sup>66</sup> DND, A-JS-015-000/AF-005 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2003-2004...*, 3.

<sup>67</sup> Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos...*, 1.

<sup>68</sup> LaMarsh, *Changing the Way We Change...*, 1.

<sup>69</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Transformation Planning Guidance...*, 14.

<sup>70</sup> DND, *Advancing With Purpose: The Army Strategy* (Ottawa: Chief of the Land Staff, 2002), 8.

<sup>71</sup> DND, A-GA-007-000/AF-004 *Strategic Vectors...*, 6.

identify a finite point in space or straight-line path that individuals can visualize in their mind and towards which they can work. Why then has the CF concluded that “[t]he transformation process is evolutionary and has no definable end state?”<sup>73</sup> This often-misunderstood paradox must be reconciled in the hearts and minds of CF members if individual commitment to transformation is to be achieved.<sup>74</sup> However, before recommending strategies to accomplish this task, the core elements of a contemporary change environment must be examined by reviewing the implications of the increasing “speed, complexity, and volume of change.”<sup>75</sup> As one author notes, “[r]egardless of how ready people are to face it, more change is moving toward us at greater speeds and with more complicated implications than we have ever seen.”<sup>76</sup>

## Speed

In discussing the pace of change, there is a tendency to focus primarily on technological advances, especially when attempting to describe the driving factors of the so-called “Revolution in Military Affairs.”<sup>77</sup> However, equally persuasive arguments can be made that suggest technological change has had more of an evolutionary vice revolutionary

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<sup>72</sup> DND, *Leadmark...*, Foreward.

<sup>73</sup> DND, A-JS-015-000/AF-005 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2003-2004...*, 3.

<sup>74</sup> LaMarsh, *Changing the Way We Change...*, 15.

<sup>75</sup> Bennett, *Leading the Edge of Change...*, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos...*, ix.

<sup>77</sup> Elinor C. Sloan, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: Implications for Canada and NATO* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), ix.

effect on warfare over time.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the two points to note for this element of change are: it is the rate of change that has been steady, i.e. acceleration—not speed and, while technological advance is a driving factor in transformation it is the human element that ultimately must incorporate that change. With respect to speed, one author makes the observation that “the pace of change is increasing, and is unlikely to slow in our lifetime.”<sup>79</sup> If change acceleration is more or less a constant, it follows that the speed of change will generally continue to increase daily. Have organizations such as the CF kept pace with the now cumulative effect of this rate of change? “[I]f our adversaries operate at the speed of business while we’re operating at the speed of doctrine – who wins? The rest of the world doesn’t stand still while we take 20 years to field a new ship, a new aircraft, or a new vehicle.”<sup>80</sup> Transformation initiatives must enable individuals to first catch-up to the current pace of change, and then to keep pace into the future.

## **Complexity**

The next element of change that must be understood is the increasing levels of complexity and interdependence. Within the spectrum of evolutionary to revolutionary change there are three broad categories: “minor, significant and traumatic.”<sup>81</sup> Minor changes happen daily with little consequence, significant change is more disruptive and occurs

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<sup>78</sup> Stephen Biddle, “Land Warfare: Theory and Practice,” in *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, ed. by John Baylis, *et al*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). 106-110.

<sup>79</sup> LaMarsh, *Changing the Way We Change...*, xi.

<sup>80</sup> Arthur Cebrowski, “Transforming Transformation,” *Transformation Trends* (19 April 2004). [journal on-line]; available from [http://www.oft.osd.mil/library/library\\_files/trends\\_367\\_Transformation%20Trends-19%20April%20%202004%20Issue.pdf](http://www.oft.osd.mil/library/library_files/trends_367_Transformation%20Trends-19%20April%20%202004%20Issue.pdf); Internet; accessed 15 January 2005. 8.

<sup>81</sup> Bennett, *Leading the Edge of Change...*, 7.

perhaps every couple of years, and traumatic change occurs less frequently but is the most challenging to cope with.<sup>82</sup> Regardless of their category, it is important to note that all three types of change now commonly occur simultaneously. Furthermore, the interdependency between each type of change can have unintended second, third or higher order consequences that must be considered and managed. Furthermore, change initiatives can frequently span several levels of command simultaneously and can be interpreted radically different by various rank levels, services, and units.<sup>83</sup> This point highlights one of the most important aspects of the complexity of organizational change—cultural diversity.<sup>84</sup> Given the inherently elusive nature of intricate military cultures, these are often overlooked in transformation initiatives:

The change process frequently focuses on the tangible changes—changes in operations, systems, and procedures—which are the easiest to identify. But effective implementation mandates that all changes be clearly connected to an organization’s culture.<sup>85</sup>

CF transformation strategy must address the complexity of change produced by multiple types of change, occurring simultaneously and across interdependent and sometimes competing cultures.

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas G. Mahnken and James R. FitzSimonds, “Revolutionary Ambivalence: Understanding Officer Attitudes toward Transformation,” *International Security*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 116.

<sup>84</sup> Culture is generally defined as a set of commonly shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. Edgar M. Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk: Implications of Transforming the Culture of DoD*, Report prepared for the Office of Force Transformation (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2004), II-4.

<sup>85</sup> Timothy J. Galpin, *The Human Side of Change: A Practical Guide to Organization Redesign* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 53.

## Volume

The final element of the new nature of change is volume. Linked to complexity, we have already discussed how multiple types of change can, and do, occur simultaneously. This is one facet of change volume; the other important element is largely driven by information technology. Consider the fact that “[a] Sunday issue of the *New York Times* contains more information on one day than the average person was exposed to in his/her entire life just 100 years ago.”<sup>86</sup> For military operations, the implications of similar extraordinary levels of information proliferation have led to network-enabled information systems becoming a primary objective of transformation with the hope of achieving a faster decision making process.<sup>87</sup> A refocused CF transformation strategy must provide individual soldiers with the ability to deal more effectively with this high-paced information environment.

## Counter-Chaos Strategy

With the very nature of transformation in transition because of increases in the speed, complexity and volume of change, how can the CF prepare its members to thrive in such a turbulent environment? The two-part answer is simple but not necessarily easy: first—by making the nature and elements of change discussed above an integral part of CF training programs and, second—by applying the tenets of select military doctrine to transformation strategy by leveraging concepts such as “operational art”<sup>88</sup>, “mission command”<sup>89</sup> and

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<sup>86</sup> Bennett, *Leading the Edge of Change...*, 14.

<sup>87</sup> DND, A-JS-015-000/AF-005 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2003-2004...*, 15-16.

<sup>88</sup> Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process...*, 2-1.

<sup>89</sup> DND, B-GL-300-003/FP-000 *Land Force: Command...*,30.

“decentralized execution.”<sup>90</sup> With respect to the first case, and since it is evident that there is no naturally occurring common understanding of transformation and the characteristics of change, CF training must integrate these skills and knowledge into routine professional development and career training. This type of baseline transformation training was one of the major recommendations of the U.S. IDA report discussed at the beginning of this section.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, this type of training would provide the ideal opportunity to help clarify the end state versus never-ending process paradox of the transformation process.

With respect to the latter case of leveraging doctrine, there are powerful parallels in operational doctrine that can be translated to the transformation environment. For example, CF doctrine describes that conflict operations are “inherently confusing and complex and tend to appear chaotic”<sup>92</sup> resulting in the centuries-old development of an ‘operational art’ to help bridge the gap between strategy and task under conditions that Clausewitz referred to as “the fog of war.”<sup>93</sup> After hundreds of years of hard-fought refinement, military organizations have developed a high level of expertise at succeeding in chaotic situations, even being referred to as *Masters of Chaos*.<sup>94</sup> Given that similar characteristics of confusion, complexity and chaos are evident in major change initiatives, it follows that there should be similar advantages in applying similar fundamentals to transformation strategy and training.

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<sup>90</sup> United States Air Force, *Air Force Doctrine Document 1: Air Force Basic Doctrine* (Washington: Chief of Staff of the Air Force, 2003), 28.

<sup>91</sup> Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk...*

<sup>92</sup> DND, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process...*, 2-1.

<sup>93</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 101.

<sup>94</sup> Linda Robinson, *Masters Of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces* (Philadelphia: Perseus Books Group, 2004).

Likewise, ‘mission command’ and ‘decentralized execution’ have evolved to promote maximum “initiative, situational responsiveness, and tactical flexibility”<sup>95</sup> during mission execution. Given the implications of convoluted lower-level cultures and the speed, complexity and volume of contemporary change, the advantages of employing a similar decentralized transformation methodology are obvious. While there are certainly unique military requirements, corporate leaders have come to similar conclusions and “are convinced that today’s leaders must create strong, shared corporate values to unite their increasingly decentralized operations.”<sup>96</sup> Recognizing that enabling this type of approach at lower levels requires an accompanying acceptance of leadership risk, individual training again becomes paramount to ensuring that the appropriate skill sets and ‘tools’ are provided along with delegated authority.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> United States Air Force, *Air Force Doctrine Document 1...*, 28.

<sup>96</sup> James O’Toole, *Leading Change: Overcoming the Ideology of Comfort and the Tyranny of Custom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), xiii.

<sup>97</sup> Crookall & Schachter, *Changing Management Culture...*, 6.



### SECTION 3 - EMPOWERING THE CF AGENT

*There are three certainties in today's world: death, taxes, and change.  
While we have limited control over death and taxes, fortunately change  
can be harnessed . . .*<sup>98</sup>

John L. Bennett  
MPA, President Lawton & Associates  
Former CEO Red Cross Biomedical Services Division

#### CF Agent Everyone

The term ‘agent’ is a common expression in traditional change management theory that categorizes three types of individuals within a given organization during a major change initiative: “sponsors”<sup>99</sup> who set the conditions for change to occur, “agents”<sup>100</sup> who make the change happen and “targets”<sup>101</sup> who have to change. This theory acknowledges that an individual can be any one of the three types at different stages of a change effort and that the ‘target’ terminology can carry negative connotations.<sup>102</sup> However, given the relentless rate of change and the desire to inspire individual commitment and initiative, there is merit in considering the use of only the term ‘agent’ but with more situational-dependent terms of accountability. Ultimately, every member of the

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<sup>98</sup> Bennett, *Leading the Edge of Change*..., 3.

<sup>99</sup> LaMarsh, *Changing the Way We Change*..., 73.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

CF must be an agent of change and be prepared to enable, implement or embrace change—perhaps all in the same day.

### **What’s in it for me?**<sup>103</sup>

To empower the CF agent, how change is perceived must be clearly understood. Given that “all change is personal,”<sup>104</sup> it is important to acknowledge that with each new transformation objective the first question individual CF members will want answered is “what’s in it for me?”<sup>105</sup> Regardless of the motivation sources, in order to effectively engage individual soldiers to embrace transformation, it must be recognized that they will be looking for “the advantages to them and their [s]ervices from active participation.”<sup>106</sup> This is a fair demand on which any of us will instinctively insist when faced with a new change proposal. Fortunately, research suggests that if the members of the CF are anything like their civilian corporate counterparts, they will be eager to commit to a leadership-driven vision that is properly resourced.<sup>107</sup>

### **Leading Transformation with “Dynamic Followers”**<sup>108</sup>

For CF members to have the appropriate mindset to implement decentralized transformation, they must see themselves, and be treated as, “dynamic followers”<sup>109</sup> as

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<sup>103</sup> Timothy J Galpin, *The Human Side of Change: A Practical Guide to Organization Redesign* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 47.

<sup>104</sup> Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos...*, 11.

<sup>105</sup> Galpin, *The Human Side of Change...*, 47.

<sup>106</sup> Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk...*, II-3.

<sup>107</sup> Terry Pearce, *Leading Out Loud* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), ix-x.

<sup>108</sup> Latour and Rast, USAF. “Dynamic Followership...”, 1.

described in a recent U.S. Air Force journal.<sup>110</sup> While core competencies identified in this concept, such as “loyalty”<sup>111</sup> and “initiative,”<sup>112</sup> are evident in CF Officer and NCM professional development guidance,<sup>113</sup> there is a fundamental difference in an empowered follower construct in that it focuses on how to be an effective follower vice leader. Without question, leadership is a critical factor (if not a prerequisite) to major organizational change.<sup>114</sup> However, leaders cannot lead if followers are unwilling or unprepared to follow, especially if the personal consequences of change are negative. The difference between a predominantly leadership focus and an effective follower focus is powerful:

We are followers—following is a natural part of life and an essential role we play in fulfilling our war-fighting roles and missions. Since most institutions conform to bureaucratic or hierarchical organizational models, the majority of any military institution’s members are, by definition, *followers* more often than leaders. Few professional-development programs . . . spend time developing effective follower cultures and skills.<sup>115</sup>

Given that this concept is targeted at creating committed engagement and decentralized initiative, it is an ideal companion to major change initiatives and should be incorporated into CF individual transformation training.

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> DND, *Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...*, I-14, and DND, *The Canadian Forces Non-Commissioned Member in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...*, 11.

<sup>114</sup> Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk...*, ES-2.

<sup>115</sup> Latour & Rast, USAF. “Dynamic Followership...,” 1.

### Adopting an Eight-Stage Process

The CF has a standardized process or procedure for nearly every conceivable routine and obscure military requirement, but none for managing change below the strategic level. There is an operational planning process, a grievance process, and even a process for obtaining approval to serve refreshments.<sup>116</sup> But for managing change, a now routine requirement for nearly every member of the CF and designated by the CDS as his second highest priority, there is no standardized process that individuals can understand and use.<sup>117</sup> While higher-level planning guidance and directives discussed in Section 2 provide objectives and guidelines, they do not provide an easily understood and “systematic process for transformation”<sup>118</sup> at the user level. Given that dealing with change is such an unnatural skill, this is a critical shortfall that must be rectified if any semblance of unity of effort is to be realized.

A consolidated review of three of the most prominent change management models is available in a research report sponsored by the Treasury Board of Canada, titled *Changing Management Culture: Models and Strategies*, published in 2002.<sup>119</sup> Of the models listed, the one that would be the most universally effective for the CF at all levels is an eight-stage process developed by renowned change expert, professor John Kotter of the Harvard

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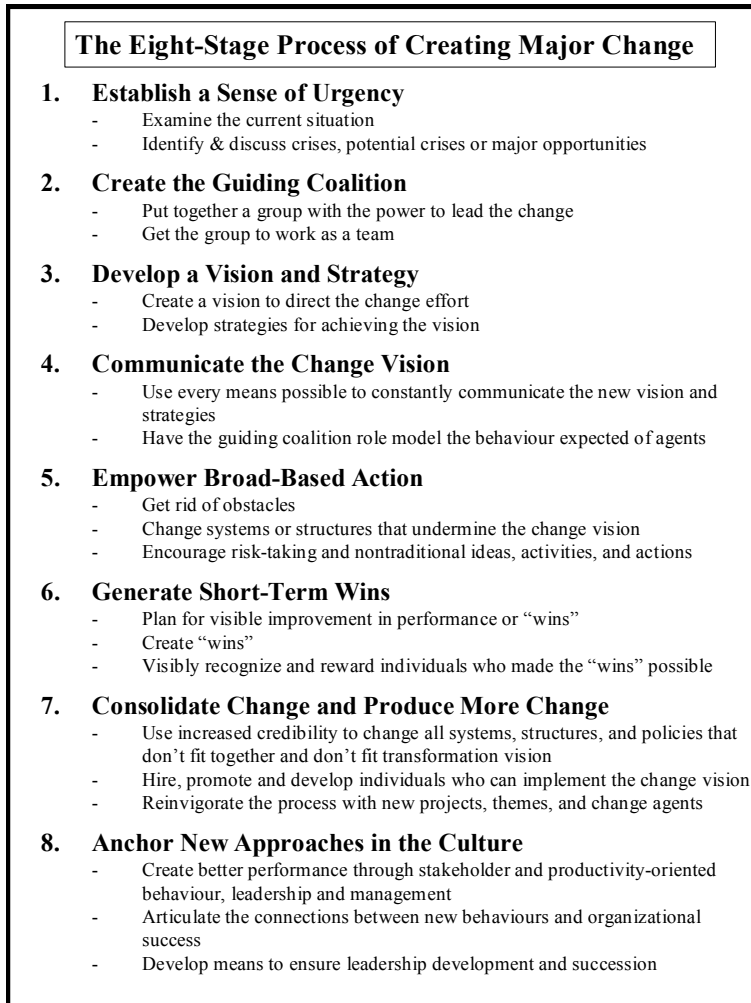
<sup>116</sup> Department of National Defence, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: 1017-1, Procedure for Extending Hospitality in Canada* (Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister (Finance and Corporate Services), 1998). [publication on-line]; available from [http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/admfincs/subjects/daod/1017/1\\_e.asp](http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/admfincs/subjects/daod/1017/1_e.asp); Internet; accessed 29 March 2005.

<sup>117</sup> DND, A-JS-015-000/AF-005 *Annual Report of the Chief of the Defence Staff 2003-2004...*, 4.

<sup>118</sup> Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk...*, II-7.

<sup>119</sup> Crookall & Schachter, *Changing Management Culture...*, 1.

Business School (See Figure 1).<sup>120</sup> This simple and intuitive process contains elements of every aspect of transformation discussed in this paper, as well as other important factors such as the often-underestimated need to communicate a change vision and strategy with relentless repetition.<sup>121</sup>



**Figure 1: The Eight-Stage Process for Creating Major Change (modified)**

Source: Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996. 21.

<sup>120</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 21.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95.

Figure 1 provides a brief description of each stage but consider, for example, “Stage 1 – Establishing a Sense of Urgency.”<sup>122</sup> This stage parallels the discussion from Section 1 of this paper. If individuals are not convinced that there is an immediate need or future payoff, the change effort is doomed from the beginning. In his world-renowned book, *Leading Change*, professor Kotter notes: “[e]stablishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation. With complacency high, transformations usually go nowhere because few people are even interested in working on the change problem.”<sup>123</sup> Kotter’s book provides real world corporate and public service examples for each stage and details strategies for implementing each stage and pitfalls to avoid. Like a simple checklist, the process is applicable at strategic, operational and tactical levels and is simple enough for every CF member to understand and use.

In its second revision, *The Heart of Change*, the eight-stage process has been further updated and now better relates the human emotional approach to change adding a “see, feel, change”<sup>124</sup> construct to the model. By better understanding our positive and negative emotional response to change, professor Kotter has closed the loop between his original eight-stage change process and the inner workings of the outdated hard-wiring of the human brain discussed at the beginning of this paper. This model and process should be adopted by the CF and training in its use provided at all levels.

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>124</sup> John P. Kotter, *The Heart of Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 181.

## Conclusion

Darwin established long ago that human beings in general do not have a great track record of embracing major change unless it is forced upon them.<sup>125</sup> Members of the military are often perceived as being among the most averse to change. In fairness to the life and death nature of the tasks that military personnel are required to perform, holding to proven techniques and procedures and avoiding the risks that can be associated with the introduction of new concepts is an understandable instinct.<sup>126</sup> However, if the CF is to effectively meet future requirements, this instinct must be overcome through a focused effort to make every member of the CF an inspired and effective change agent. Fortunately, the CF has established a sound strategic transformation foundation that can now be leveraged at the individual level.

To meet its transformation objectives, the CF must now set the conditions that “address the human response to change.”<sup>127</sup> Individual commitment to transformation must be encouraged by implementing a CF-wide training program on the human elements of change to include elements of organizational change theory and the concept of “dynamic followers.”<sup>128</sup> Both an unacceptable status quo and an inspiring vision now exist providing every opportunity to help individual members of the CF to embrace their role in transformation. CF-wide training must incorporate the primary elements of the new steady

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<sup>125</sup> Wikipedia, “Natural Selection,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural\\_selection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_selection); Internet; accessed 03 March 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Bernd Horn and Regan G. Reshke, “Defying Definition: The Future Battlespace,” in *Towards the Brave New World: Canada’s Army in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Kingston, ON: Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts, 2003), 87.

<sup>127</sup> Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos...*, 7.

<sup>128</sup> Latour & Rast, USAF. “Dynamic Followership...,” 1.

state condition of constant change while emphasizing that transformation is “a journey, not a destination.”<sup>129</sup> Leveraging doctrinal concepts such as the principles of ‘operational art’, ‘mission command’ and ‘decentralized execution’ will help foster the most productive environment of continuous improvement possible. Finally, to provide the men and women of the CF with the appropriate skill sets required for them to actively contribute to transformation initiatives, “dynamic follower”<sup>130</sup> concepts and a simple CF-common change management process must be implemented at all levels. The recently released defence policy statement aptly identifies that “[f]or transformation to be successful, our military personnel must possess the skills and knowledge to function in complex environments where operations and technologies are changing at breakneck speed.”<sup>131</sup> The change management theory and training identified in this paper are critical elements to satisfying this requirement.

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<sup>129</sup> Johnson, *Workshop Introducing Innovation and Risk...*, II-1.

<sup>130</sup> Latour & Rast, USAF. “Dynamic Followership...,” 1.

<sup>131</sup> DND, A-SJ-005-000/AG-001 *Canada’s International Policy Statement: ...DEFENCE...*, 12.



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