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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

**THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS'
MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT-SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE (MEU-SOC)
AS THE FOUNDATION FOR
CANADA'S STANDING CONTINGENCY TASK FORCE (SCTF)**

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ABSTRACT

The 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS) directed that the Canadian Forces (CF) establish a unit called the Standing Contingency Task Force (SCTF). The primary purpose of the new unit will be to rapidly deploy, by sea, a joint force capability into crises areas anywhere in the world. This type of unit is relatively unfamiliar territory for the CF of today. Thus, there is no Canadian precedent on which to base the organizational and doctrinal structure. On the other hand, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) has been in existence since 1775 and has developed a comprehensive and powerful amphibious capability, based on its core unit called the Marine Expeditionary Unit-Special Operations Capability (MEU-SOC). This paper argues that the organizational structure, expeditionary culture, and basic doctrine of the USMC, and in particular the MEU-SOC, provide a suitable foundation on which to establish the SCTF.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Defence Policy Statement (DPS) issued by the Government of Canada in 2005 outlines a new, modernized vision for the Canadian Forces (CF). It presents a distinct focus towards an enhanced expeditionary capability for the CF, while retaining the capacity to respond to crises on the domestic front. A quick look at CF operations of the last one hundred years clearly shows that Canadian soldiers, sailors, and airmen are no strangers to operations abroad, from Europe to Afghanistan.¹ The major difference with the DPS vision and the future deployment concept, however, is the approach that has been articulated in relation to the CF organizational structure. Until now, seemingly ad hoc contingents and task forces have been assembled for overseas missions based on traditional units of the Army, Air Force and Navy. With some exceptions, such as the provision of tactical airlift to primarily Army missions, recent operations have tended to be environmentally independent of one another, with very little, if any “jointness” amongst the three services. With the ongoing development of the Standing Contingency Task Force (SCTF) as directed in the DPS² and articulated in the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) vision³, the CF is in the midst of transformation to a truly joint expeditionary capability; a capability that will see rapid combat-capable response anywhere in the world, deployed by sea, but consisting of a joint capability of Army, Air Force, Navy, and Special Operations forces.⁴ The CF is likely years away from the full implementation of the SCTF as a combat-ready deployable force, and trying to create this

¹ Bernd Horn and Peter Gizewski, *Towards a Brave New World: Canada's Army in the 21st Century* (Kingston, ON: Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts, 2003), 26-27

² Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence* (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2005), 13

³ Department of National Defence, *CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation* (Ottawa, ON, 2005), 7

⁴ Government of Canada. *Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence...*, 13

joint force may involve some struggle to bring the services together toward a common objective. To better understand how the SCTF might become a CF reality, it is useful to study other expeditionary force models, particularly with regards to organizational structure, culture, and doctrine. While many nations have as part of their force structure an expeditionary capability, perhaps the most prominent of these is the United States Marine Corps (USMC).⁵ The USMC is particularly recognizable by its truly joint force projection capability, consisting of naval, air, ground, special operations and logistics forces, all working toward a universal mission and perhaps more importantly, within a common mindset. Assuming that Canada will never achieve the military funding levels of its allies south of the border, it would be unrealistic to explore the creation of a massive separate service such as the Marine Corps in the Canadian context. The question that requires answering, then, is how to make the SCTF concept work for Canada within the limitations of Canadian defence realities. The Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) concept that forms the basis of the Marine Corps deployable capability warrants investigation. A MAGTF employs a full complement of naval, air, land, special operations forces (SOF), command and control (C2) and combat service support (CSS) elements required to accomplish a variety of missions across the full spectrum of operations, anywhere in the world. They vary in size, but the principle USMC MAGTF is the Marine Expeditionary Unit-Special Operations Capable (MEU-SOC).⁶

⁵ Tom Clancy, *Marine – A Guided Tour of a Marine Expeditionary Unit* (New York: Berkley Books, 1996), xiii

⁶ Headquarters United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Concepts 2004* (Official US Marine Corps Website, 2004), 241

The DPS sets out specific objectives for the CF with regard to international operations.⁷ These will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. The DPS specifically states that a transformation is necessary to achieve these objectives.⁸ Furthermore, the CDS, General Rick Hillier, has articulated six principles⁹ that he deems to be essential to the success of CF transformation. At least two of these can be directly related to the SCTF capability – the precedence of operational focus and a renewed CF culture to accompany it. This paper will demonstrate that the US Marine Corps' MEU-SOC structure, culture and doctrine meets the DPS-directed expeditionary objectives for the CF and provides a suitable framework for the building of Canada's SCTF. Emphasis will be placed on the suitability of the MEU-SOC concept as the basis for the creation of a realistic Canadian joint expeditionary capability, including the development of a unique organizational structure, integration of the services into a single deployable formation, the building of an expeditionary culture that supports a common objective, and probable future tasks.

⁷ Government of Canada, Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence..., 8-15

⁸ Ibid., 11-15

⁹ General R.J. Hillier, *CDS Transformation SITREP 02/05* (Ottawa, ON, 2005)

CHAPTER 2: CANADA'S STANDING CONTINGENCY TASK FORCE

In order to compare the suitability of the MEU-SOC, it is first necessary to outline the Canadian government's expectations for the SCTF. Table 2.1 summarizes initial expectations of the requirements and tasks associated with the new unit:

Figure 2.1: CF Force Provider/SCTF Tasks

ELEMENT	TASKS	SCTF CAPABILITIES
National Assets	Sustain a land or sea based Command Element for up to six months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy on 10 days notice. • Provide initial CF presence in conjunction with security partners. • Stabilization of crises situations abroad. • Deploy rapidly in support of humanitarian crises. • Facilitate deployment of larger, follow-on forces into theatre of operations (based on Mission Specific Task Force (MSTF)).
Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of two ships each with one helicopter indefinitely. • Provision of fire support capability integral to the Task Group (TG) for land forces ashore, for six months. • Provision of a second TG as follow-on force for another six months. 	
Air Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of two maritime patrol helicopters and one Aurora maritime patrol aircraft indefinitely. • Provision of up to two Aurora aircraft to support land and sea based operations, for six months. • Provision of up to six maritime helicopters and up to six medium/heavy lift helicopters in support of land operations for six months. • Implied but not explicitly stated is the ability to provide land-based fighter support to the formation. 	
Army	Provide a land unit capable of embarking and operating from a maritime platform.	
Special Operations	Provide task specific SOF capability to the TG.	

Source: 1. Rice, Colonel (Ret'd), *Synopsis and Highlights of Future Canadian Armed Forces Tasks*, 1-2
 2. Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence*, 13

Currently, the SCTF concept remains in its infancy, with direction that it be operationally ready by the end of 2008.¹⁰ The first personnel and elements of the unit are being established in Shearwater, Nova Scotia in mid-2006. The fact that the establishment of

¹⁰ Department of National Defence, *CDS Planning Guidance...*, 7

the SCTF is in such an early stage is in itself a compelling reason to explore the MEU-SOC concept as a model.

There has been some speculation as to what elements would make up the unit. Notably, in a paper written by Colonel Gary Rice (Ret'd) for the Conference of Defence Associations entitled “Making Canadian Amphibiosity a Reality” a proposed organizational structure was presented for the SCTF.¹¹ The structure seems realistic in a Canadian context and is similar in nature to that of a unit-level MAGTF, such as the MEU-SOC. Col Rice’s organizational design is as follows:

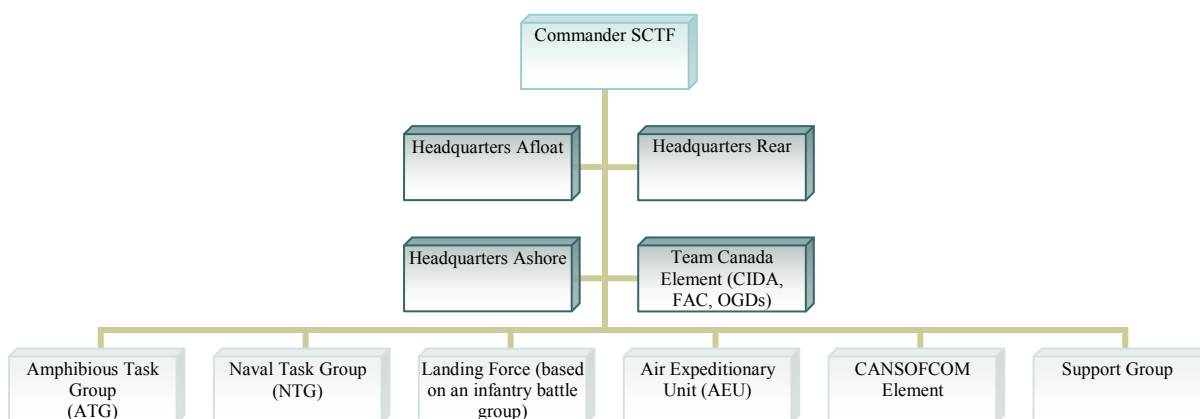


Figure 2.1: A Possible Organization for Canada’s SCTF

Source: Rice, Colonel (Ret’d), *Making Canadian Forces Amphibiosity a Reality*, 13

It is evident from this conceptual Canadian model that all joint capabilities are being considered within the context of the SCTF. These joint assets include SOF as well as the integration of other government departments (OGDs) such as the Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC). As the organization and capabilities of a MAGTF and MEU-SOC are examined in further detail in the next Chapters, it will become readily apparent just how applicable their design is to the SCTF.

¹¹ Colonel Gary Harold Rice (Ret’d), *Making Canadian Forces Amphibiosity a Reality* (Conference of Defence Associations, 2006), 13

CHAPTER 3: MAGTF AND MEU-SOC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

While the formalization of a Canadian expeditionary capability is just beginning, the USMC has been in existence since 1775.¹² Initially designed as a counter-piracy and naval landing force for use in early naval-land operations¹³, it has evolved into a potent joint force, capable of projecting significant combat power ashore. The cornerstone of the USMC capability is the MAGTF – a sea-based, joint force capable of deploying anywhere in the world on short notice.¹⁴ Given the large size of the USMC, it has the capability to deploy MAGTFs of various sizes, from unit-size MEU-SOCs to Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) consisting of one or more divisions.¹⁵ Clearly, with an overall military strength of approximately 60,000 and a modest annual budget in the vicinity of \$14 Billion¹⁶, the CF has neither the personnel nor the funding to create additional units of such a large size. As directed in the DPS, it does, however, have the need to establish a MAGTF such as the MEU-SOC – a joint amphibious unit most likely based around an infantry battalion group.

The MEU-SOC has a variety of capabilities, many of which the CF seeks to establish through the creation of the SCTF. These include, but are not limited to providing immediate national response in support of humanitarian and relief operations, moving forces rapidly into a crisis area to support diplomatic resolution or provide an initial military response, projecting focused combat power ashore, supporting the in-flow of follow-on forces, and withdrawing quickly from the crisis area should it be in the best

¹² Tom Clancy, *Marine...*, xiii

¹³ *Ibid.*, xiii

¹⁴ Headquarters United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Concepts 2004* (Official US Marine Corps Website, 2004), 241

¹⁵ Department of the Navy, *United States Marine Corps Strategy 21* (Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 2000), 3

¹⁶ Conference of Defence Associations, *Budget 2005: CDA Analysis 2005* (Conference of Defence Associations), 1

interest of the government.^{17 18} These capabilities and roles will be discussed further in Chapter 5 to demonstrate the link between MEU-SOC capabilities and potential SCTF tasks.

Key to the creation of the SCTF is making sure the force structure requirements to establish the organization are realistic for Canada and the CF. While the current shortcomings in force and equipment availability are being addressed at the highest levels of the Department of National Defence (DND), the MEU-SOC organization provides a sensible solution to this problem. As seen in Figure 3.1, the generic MAGTF organizational structure is similar in nature to Col Rice's model for the SCTF. More relevant to the expected size and scope of the SCTF, Figure 3.2 depicts the organization of a MEU-SOC. It is based on a battalion-size land element capable of operating from a maritime platform, but consists of all joint assets required to project and sustain the force ashore.

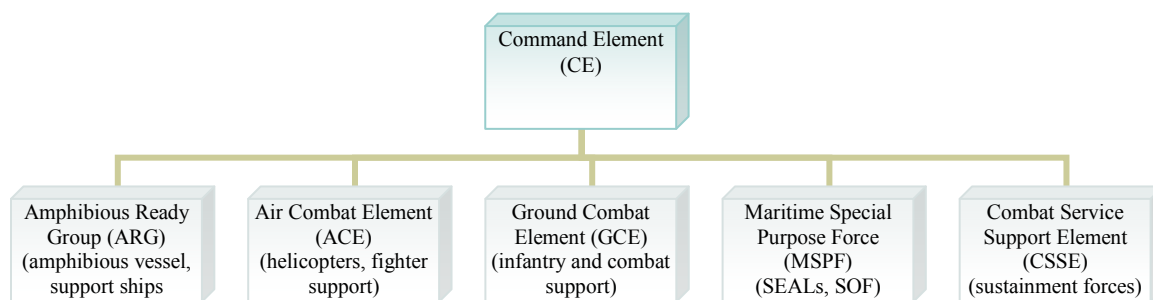


Figure 3.1: Generic Organization of a MAGTF

Source: Clancy, *Marine.*, 214-217

¹⁷ Headquarters United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Concepts 2004* (Official US Marine Corps Website, 2004), 241

¹⁸ Government of Canada, Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence..., 13

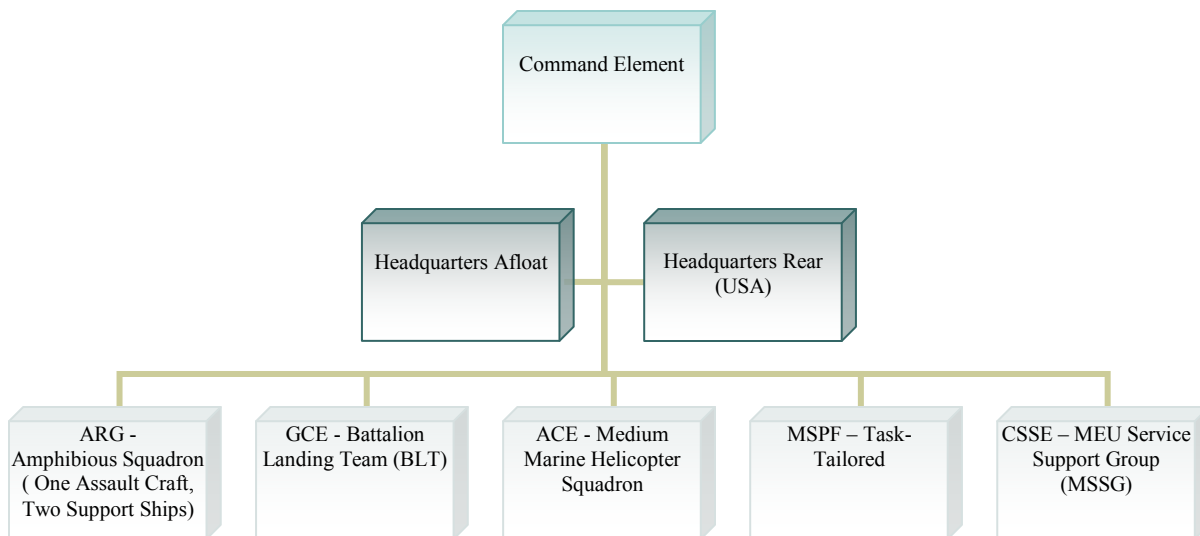


Figure 3.2: Organization of a MEU-SOC

Source: Clancy, Marine., 214-230

In addition to resembling a structure that the CF could realistically achieve, provided the planned acquisition of a suitable maritime platform and helicopters is successful, the MEU-SOC is also capable of conducting all the expeditionary tasks directed in the DPS. Again, these will be further investigated in Chapter 5 to show the applicability to the revised Canadian government and CF objectives. Meanwhile, however, it is worth discussing how the CF could reasonably fill out the force structure of the SCTF. The MEU-SOC is designed around a reinforced infantry battalion that is expressly assigned to the organization. While that would be the ideal solution, the CF has yet to announce whether a new land unit will be formed for the SCTF, or an existing unit will be re-rolled for that purpose. Another idea is to rotate existing infantry battalions through the task. This latter idea may not be workable in a Canadian context due to the high level of specialized training and the basing requirements necessary to maintain the unit at a constant ten-day state of readiness. That leaves the first two options as

potentially viable. With the future expansion of the CF by 5000 personnel as indicated in the International Policy Statement (IPS)¹⁹, it is within the realm of possibility, at least in the long term, that a separate SCTF land component could be established. If the achievement of a deployable SCTF is expected in the near term, however, it is more likely that an existing Army unit will need to be re-roled for the task.

A significant obstacle to floating an operational SCTF is the current lack of a suitable ship in the Canadian Navy's inventory. Not surprisingly, funding is a major constraint. It is possible that the CF and government would consider the acquisition of a large commercial vessel capable of taking on the role as an interim measure until a purpose-built amphibious military ship could be procured. The cost of a purpose-built vessel similar in nature to the ones employed as part of a MEU-SOC is significant. Regardless, a ship capable of projecting a land unit ashore anywhere in the world is a requirement for achieving the government's objectives for the SCTF. A commercial vessel, should it be acquired, would likely serve reasonably well as the interim capability for the SCTF. A specialized ship, however, is the best solution to guarantee the full and long-term operational capability of the SCTF.

The final area to be considered with regard to equipping the SCTF is the availability of medium or heavy lift helicopters. The requirement has been clearly stated in the DPS²⁰, but procurement has yet to occur. The replacement of the Sea King helicopter as a Maritime aviation platform will certainly provide limited support to the SCTF, but additional helicopters, capable of deploying from a sea-based vessel will be a

¹⁹ Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Overview* (Ottawa, ON: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2005), 14

²⁰ Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence...*, 30

necessity. In the short-term, however, this is not likely to be a critical obstacle to the establishment of the SCTF.

Clearly, the CF has some complications to overcome in terms of equipping and manning the SCTF. Despite current critical shortfalls, basing the SCTF design on the MEU-SOC organization seems to fit with government and CF objectives and future requirements. Moreover, the size of a MEU-SOC seems reasonable when placed in the context of the CF and provides a useful guide to determine what assets are necessary in seeing the SCTF become a reality. The SCTF will become a viable unit if formed around an existing re-roled Army unit, equipped with a purpose-built ship and provided with the requisite medium-lift helicopters.

CHAPTER 4: A JOINT EXPEDITIONARY CULTURE FOR THE CF

As stated in the opening chapter, Canada is no stranger to international operations. Thus, an argument could be made that the CF already possesses an expeditionary culture. However, one aspect of the CF that has remained true to this day, notwithstanding the 1968 unification into a merged Canadian Forces is that each service maintains significant independence in relation to its missions, roles, tasks, capabilities and culture. The Navy has traditionally been a blue-water, high seas Navy, employed separately from other CF assets. The Air Force, while providing limited tactical support to the Army and Navy, has tended to focus a high priority on traditional control-of-the-skies missions. The Army has been deployed around the world by and large on its own, conducting peace support and combat missions in relative isolation from the Navy and Air Force. It is apparent that the Army has recognized that this segregation of services no longer meet the needs of Canada, because it acknowledges that it can only reach its full potential when acting in conjunction with air and naval power.²¹ Certainly, the Air Force and Navy also recognize this imperative. This is echoed in the DPS, giving recognition to the requirement for the joint fight. An obvious question is whether the CF can achieve true jointness and extend that mindset across all services. By studying the USMC professional culture it becomes apparent that the CF already possesses a remarkably similar culture.

The USMC deploys only as a joint force, maintaining this structure regardless of deployed location. The MEU-SOC is based on a land element for force projection ashore, but that land force always operates in conjunction with the full spectrum of joint

²¹ Department of National Defence, *Purpose Defined: The Force Employment Concept for the Army* (Ottawa, ON: Chief of the Land Staff, 2004), 40

capabilities.²² Investigating how the USMC instills and maintains this joint, operational mindset throughout its rank structure and doctrine can provide assistance to the CF's endeavour to enhance its joint expeditionary culture. In fact, the CDS has stated as one of six principles that an updated CF culture must be cultivated, one that will lead to the primacy of operational readiness within the CF.²³

The USMC Strategy 21 explains that the expeditionary culture of the Corps means that:

Marines are prepared to deploy into diverse, austere, and chaotic environments on short notice and accomplish assigned missions using unique command, control, and logistics capabilities to operate independently of existing infrastructure. These unique capabilities allow Marine units to enable joint, allied, coalition operations, and interagency coordination.²⁴

The DPS clearly articulates the same desires for the CF in international operations. The similarity in requirements is one testament to the applicability of the Marine Corps model for the CF. In addition, Marines fight as combined-arms teams under a single commander²⁵, also a stated necessity for the SCTF²⁶. Can the CF instill this culture to enhance the viability and effectiveness of the SCTF? A comparison of modern CF leadership models to the USMC methodology clearly shows that it can, and in fact, is already very similar to the USMC in the areas of leadership, command, training, and culture.

²² Department of the Navy, *United States Marine Corps Strategy 21* (Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 2000), 5

²³ General R.J. Hillier, *CDS Transformation SITREP 02/05*

²⁴ Department of the Navy, *United States Marine Corps Strategy 21* (Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 2000), 2

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2

²⁶ Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence...*, 11-12

For the Marine Corps, their culture is what gives them the edge²⁷ over their adversaries and even makes them stand out from the other services. The USMC exists for one reason – that is to fight.²⁸ The CF, although regularly employed in low-intensity operations, also ultimately exists to fight for Canada and the Canadian way of life. That is another area of common ground. Furthermore, the USMC identifies numerous characteristics that make up its foundation as a formidable fighting force. A comparison of these to CF expectations for its leaders and soldiers shows that the two organizations are compatible with regards to a professional culture. It is this similarity that supports the USMC model as a suitable basis for the establishment of a CF expeditionary capability such as the SCTF. Table 4.1 outlines these similarities. Particularly compatible qualities are emphasized in italics.

Table 4.1 - Comparison of USMC and CF Qualities and Expectations

Cultural/Leadership Quality	USMC Cultural/Leadership Expectations ²⁹	CF Cultural/Leadership Expectations ³⁰ (required for SCTF capability)
<i>Quality and Competence –</i>	<i>All Marines and Marine units will be individually and collectively expert at all tasks</i>	<i>Achieve high levels of proficiency in performance in core functions; enhance professional expertise and competence at every opportunity</i>
Discipline	Discipline is essential to combat effectiveness	Maintain order and discipline; disciplined, obedient, law-abiding military forces are a mark of civilization
Valour	Will be a common virtue amongst all Marines	Motivate by persuasion; enable performance through the conspicuous sharing of hardship and risk
<i>Esprit de Corps</i>	<i>All Marines are intensely proud of being in the Corps</i>	<i>High level of teamwork and cohesion; enhances performance</i>
Pride, Loyalty and Faithfulness	Pride in the Corps and country; motto “Semper Fidelis” meaning “Always Faithful”; selflessness	Enhanced service commitment through care and fairness to all personnel
<i>The Individual</i>	<i>Individualism is important and</i>	<i>Show trust and confidence in all</i>

²⁷ Tom Clancy, *Marine...*, 2

²⁸ Kenneth W. Estes, *The Marine Officer's Guide* (6th Ed, Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute Press, 1996), 2

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-4

³⁰ Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces – Doctrine* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy), 10-13, 19, 28-32, 39

	<i>cherished within the greater good of the Corps</i>	<i>personnel, acknowledging varying expertise and skills</i>
<i>The Volunteer</i>	<i>The Corps relies on those “who want to be Marines”; all volunteer</i>	<i>All CF personnel are volunteers, intent on serving Canada to the best of their ability</i>
<i>The Infantry</i>	<i>All personnel are trained as riflemen first; all officers must be prepared to function as infantry officers</i>	<i>Core competencies essential; all personnel will have basic combat and field skills</i>
<i>Traditions</i>	<i>Respect for the history of the Corps</i>	<i>Respect and upholding of CF history</i>
<i>Professionalism</i>	<i>Professionals ready to fight, unconditionally, on the will of the government</i>	<i>Professional competence and willingness to deploy by all personnel essential to success</i>
<i>Readiness</i>	<i>Marines are always prepared mentally and physically for rapid employment in any crisis</i>	<i>All personnel should be capable of deploying, under varying degrees of readiness</i>

Source: 1. Estes, *The Marine Officer's Guide*, 2.

2. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces – Doctrine*, 10-39

This table demonstrates definite similarities in the ways of thinking by the USMC and the CF. Certainly there are some variances due the nature of the two nations' policies and military needs, but in large part the qualities of the USMC are mirrored by the CF. While the terminology used in CF leadership doctrine may differ, the expectations and requirements are closely connected. Furthermore, while the CF doctrine referred to above speaks to the CF as a whole, it is particularly applicable to the SCTF, as the future high-readiness, first-to-fight conventional unit in the CF arsenal. Above all, pertinent to the establishment of the SCTF are the qualities of technical competence, esprit de corps, professionalism, and readiness. Interestingly, it is in these four areas that we see the most similarity between the two forces. The SCTF will require a great degree of all of them to make it effective. Fortunately, the CF already possesses these attributes and they have been demonstrated time and again throughout history. When speaking in 1981 of Marines in operations, General Robert W. Barrow, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated “success in battle is not a function of how many show up, but who they

are”.³¹ Given the limited size and resources of the CF, this statement holds a certain soundness in a Canadian context. The CF has always managed to achieve success out of proportion with its actual commitment. Just like the USMC. There is no reason to believe that the SCTF could not do the same.

³¹ Department of the Navy, *Leading Marines, MCWP 6-11 Publication* (Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 1995), 11

CHAPTER 5: MEU-SOC VS SCTF DOCTRINE, TASKS AND MISSIONS

Notwithstanding that the defence of Canada remains a top defence policy priority for the Canadian government³², the future of CF operational doctrine lies in deployed international missions. In the post 9/11 era, the USMC has implemented the concept of “Expeditionary Manoeuvre Warfare”. This concept envisions enhanced strategic ability, increased operational reach, and tactical flexibility.³³ A read of the DPS and CDS Vision indicates that the Canadian government expects the same from the CF in the new security environment. The name of the newly formed Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM) certainly implies that the CF will be engaged in significant international deployments. Recent CF commitments to Afghanistan further support that notion. The SCTF will be a key enabler with which to accomplish future missions. For the MEU-SOC, Expeditionary Manoeuvre Warfare has become the underlying concept for all that it does. It focuses on the projection and synchronization of the joint and combined fight anywhere in the world, while ensuring the sustainability of that fight.³⁴ The capabilities that this concept brings to bear through its combination of deployed units are significant. To relate these to the Canadian SCTF concept, the capabilities, tasks, and missions associated with the MEU-SOC will be examined to show that they mirror the requirements desired for the SCTF.

In very broad terms, the MEU-SOC is capable of conducting full spectrum operations, with rapid deployability and full self-sustainability. It is capable of operating

³² Government of Canada, Canada’s International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence..., 16-20

³³ Department of National Defence, *Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities* (Kingston, ON: Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts, 2003), 49

³⁴ Department of the Navy, *Marine Corps Operations, MCDP 1-0 Publication* (Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 2001), 2-14

in the following capacities: a landing force of an amphibious task organization, sustained land operations ashore, inland operations other than war (OOTW), and as a forward deployed deterrence force in a crisis area.³⁵ As outlined in the DPS, those same general tasks will be expected of the SCTF. Table 5.1 shows a more detailed comparison of MEU-SOC tasks to the future tasks expected of the SCTF. The similarities are considerable.

Table 5.1 - Comparison of MEU-SOC vs SCTF Tasks and Roles

MEU-SOC	SCTF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move forces into crisis areas without revealing destination or intention • Provide a continuous presence from secure sea bases • Provide immediate national response to humanitarian and disaster relief • Provide credible non-provocative combat power “over the horizon” for rapid deployment as initial response to crisis • Support diplomatic processes through presence • Project power ashore in any conditions • Provide the sequential introduction of additional forces into theatre • Operate independently of land-based infrastructure • Enable deployment of follow-on joint and/or combined forces • Operate in rural, urban and CBRN environments • Withdraw rapidly at the cessation of hostilities • Remain long term to assist in post-hostilities stability • Plan and execute missions on minimal notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and deploy the SCTF on 10 days notice • Provisions of ships to support and pre-position the SCTF • Naval support to land operations, to include sea-basing, deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), and supporting fires ashore • Provide a sea-based national or multi-national command capability • Project land combat power ashore • Enable special operations at sea and ashore • Enhance the mobility of light forces to better contribute to rapid deployment • Provision (after acquisition) of medium to heavy lift helicopters, deployable from maritime platforms • Air-to-air refuelling capability to support long range air support to forces abroad • Provide an initial presence to stabilize a crisis, in conjunction with allied partners • Sustain the force for up to six months • Support the deployment of follow-on forces, Canadian or multi-national

Source: 1. Headquarters United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Concepts 2004*, 241
 2. Government of Canada, Canada’s International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence, 13-14

³⁵ Ibid., 3-11

As already stated, the SCTF is in its infancy, but it is clear that the establishment of the above capabilities within the CF and in particular the SCTF will lead us to possess a capability similar to the MEU-SOC. Moreover, the CDS has clearly stated in his vision that the SCTF will be capable of limited amphibious operations from a strategic sealift vessel with land force projection ashore. This will include all the enablers required for the joint fight. These enablers would also include the provision of yet to be procured joint support ships (JSS) to ensure supplies and logistical requirements are ready to sail as part of the SCTF.³⁶ This transition will be a slow process, relying heavily on procurement and reorganization. Once established, however, the capabilities will be in line with the MEU-SOC concept, providing a rapid and robust “boots on the ground” capability to deal with crises associated with failed and failing states. When fully developed, this capability would theoretically be able to conduct operations across the full spectrum of conflict.

A final area that warrants investigation in the comparison of the MEU-SOC concept to the SCTF is to look at recent operations conducted by the USMC to confirm that this concept could work for Canada. We have already identified similarities in potential tasks and desired capabilities, but to look at the missions in which the USMC has recently partaken might well be the true test. Do their recent operations hold any parallels to the likely tasks for the SCTF? Although the CF has traditionally been seen primarily as a peacekeeping military, it has become clear that in the post 9/11 security environment, Canada will more than likely commit forces to mid to high intensity operations abroad. The 2002 operation and the current mission in Afghanistan are proof.

³⁶ David McDonough, *The Defence Policy Statement and its Vision of Expeditionary Capabilities* (Toronto, ON: Royal Canadian Military Institute, 2005)

Understanding this, three recent USMC operations will be briefly examined to show a likeness to past and future CF operations relevant to the SCTF concept. Parallels exist between the missions and tasks assigned to the Marines during these operations and those expected of CF units in the same or similar missions.

- The Balkans (Kosovo & Macedonia) – 1999 -2001. In 1999, the 24th MEU was to be deployed into Kosovo as a peacekeeping force to facilitate the deployment of follow-on multi-national forces. The plan was to ensure that upon a peace agreement between the Serbian government and ethnic-Albanians, there would be a “foot on the ground”, ensuring rapid in-flow of a European-led multi-national force.³⁷ Canada deployed to Kosovo as well, but a more significant comparison can be drawn between the 24th MEU’s role in Kosovo and the CF deployment into Macedonia in 2001. The CF deployed an initial force package to Macedonia as a lead-in to Operation FORAGE, which eventually swelled to 3500 NATO troops.³⁸ Although deployed from forces already committed in Bosnia, this type of task, preparing the ground for follow-on forces, is similar to that articulated in the doctrine of the USMC and a specified future task for the SCTF.
- Afghanistan 2001 – 2006. The 15th and 26th MEUs were the first conventional units into Afghanistan after the events of 9/11 to defeat the al Qaeda and the Taliban regimes. Since then, Marine units have continued to conduct

³⁷ Dana Priest, *U.S. Plans to Deploy Marines to Kosovo for Peacekeeping* (Washington, DC: Washington Post, Vol. 119, No. 4, 1999)

³⁸ Department of National Defence, *Operation FORAGE August 2001 – September 2002*, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/forage_e.asp

operations in theatre on a rotational basis.³⁹ Like the Marines, Canada's first conventional forces commitment to the "war on terror" was in the form of a light infantry battle group, similar to what the CF might employ as the land component of the SCTF. It conducted comparable types of operations and Canada's commitment to Afghanistan has continued to this day.

- Iraq 2003. Although Canada did not commit forces to the invasion of Iraq, the employment of the Marines in the early days of the battle resembles a potential SCTF task. A highly mobile, light force, capable of operating in both open areas and complex terrain was required to pave the way for heavier US and coalition follow-on forces. The Marines were tasked to be a part of that initial force package. Should Canada become involved in a similar conflict in the future, this could very well be a likely scenario for SCTF employment.

While not identical in nature, the missions described show a practical association to the SCTF concept. The new unit can expect to conduct similar tasks in the future.

³⁹ Wikipedia. *United States Marine Corps*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Marines

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The creation of the SCTF poses a unique, but interesting challenge for the CF – how to form a substantial joint sea-deployable combat formation, while lacking much of the critical, and very costly equipment to build the unit. Fortunately, the government appears committed to funding these capital requirements and eventually the CF should have them in inventory. Just as importantly or perhaps even more so, is the need to determine on what organizational and doctrinal basis this new unit should be formed. The DPS clearly identifies the requirement, and the CDS is more than just supportive of the concept, but this is largely uncharted territory for the CF. The USMC MAGTF based on the MEU-SOC as the backbone unit, provides a suitable foundation for the formation of the SCTF. The new unit requires a solid organizational and doctrinal foundation that will work in the Canadian context. The MEU-SOC organizational structure would work for the CF provided the requisite capital investment becomes a reality. Furthermore, the CF already possesses the necessary professional expeditionary culture to make a permanent, formed expeditionary unit viable. In fact, the CF has essentially been expeditionary for at least the last 100 years. Moreover, every member of the CF who has served in the last 15 years knows firsthand what expeditionary means. Many have served on multiple international operations. Finally, the capabilities that are expected from the SCTF are much in line with those of a MEU-SOC. Many of the missions that the CF has engaged in recently run parallel to the types of operations to which the United States has committed MEUs and larger MAGTFs. In the current security environment, the SCTF could very well be expected to conduct those same types of operations on behalf of the Government of Canada. Considering these factors, a viable solution for the establishment

of the SCTF is the creation of a unit based on the organizational structure and basic doctrine of USMC MEU-SOC concept.

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