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Failing to Adapt and Why: Military Leaders Continue to Block Organizational Change

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ABSTRACT

Strategy 2020 identifies the objectives that will direct the CF into the emerging global environment. CF leaders have the responsibility of leading the institution, influencing it, and exercising stewardship of the profession. Senior CF officers have identified these responsibilities; they have also admitted that weaknesses exist within the CF leadership that directly affect success.

CF leaders identified specific weaknesses in a study conducted by the Special Advisor to the CDS on Professional Development (SA/CDS/PD). The study identified leadership failures in stewardship of the profession, strategic planning, civil-military relations, and organizational learning. According to the SA/CDS/PD study, these failures are persistent flaws within the CF leadership culture.

Military ethos has been replaced by a culture of individualism that is based on business models. Strategic planning is bogged down by bureaucratic inflexibility and institutional bias. A lack of candor with the Canadian public has misled the citizenry. Neglect for knowledge capital and higher learning has left the CF accused of anti-intellectualism. These weaknesses will challenge strategic goal attainment.

The Canadian Forces (CF) *Strategy 2020* introduces four key factors[1] (*Unity*, *Continuity*, *Resolve*, and *Partnership*) that the success of strategy implementation hinges upon. This success will ultimately "produce a dynamic, relevant and operationally effective institution in which Canadians can all take pride."[2] *Strategy 2020* is the long-term guide for defence planning and investment; it provides strategic vision for the CF. *Strategy 2020* identifies imperatives and objectives that will direct a capable and operationally effective CF into the emerging global environment. While the strategy remains speculative about what the future will look like,[3] it recognizes the following emerging trends and patterns of behaviour:[4]

1. *Geo-political* – The United States will remain as the world's superpower, however ethnic unrest, religious extremism, and resource disputes will usurp hegemonic stability. Advanced military technology, including weapons of mass destruction, will have proliferated among states and non-state actors;
2. *Military* – Operations will require the "rapid co-ordination of political and military objectives and increasing dependence upon information."[5] Threats will be asymmetric, and will include cyber and bio-terrorism;
3. *Socio-economical* – Governments will continue to promote Canadian well-being in a free market economy. Innovation, knowledge, creativity, and productivity in a diverse social environment will be important; and
4. *Organizational* – Leadership will become more important than administration and management as technologies and practices evolve in a competitive climate where adaptable and innovative institutions will thrive.

To succeed in the emerging battlespace, defence planners recognize that the CF must become more innovative, flexible, proactive, and strategically focused.[6] *Strategy*

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[1] Department of National Defence, "A Vision for 2020 – Part II: Canadian Defence into the 21st Century," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k08_e.asp; Internet; accessed 12 October 2005.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Strategy 2020* considers three alternate futures: (1)a stable and benign environment, (2)continued regional instabilities, and(3)a malignant world with greater instability and rivalry. Department of National Defence, "A Vision for 2020 – Part I: Looking to the Future. Toward a Strategy," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k05_e.asp; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006.
[4] "A Vision for 2020 – Part I: Looking to the Future. Emerging Strategic Environment," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k04_e.asp; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] Department of National Defence, "A Vision for 2020 – Part I: Looking to the Future. Toward a Strategy," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k05_e.asp; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006.

2020 specifies "five strategic imperatives" that the CF must adhere to: maintaining a coherent strategy, nurturing pride in the institution, maximizing strategic partnerships, maintaining a relevant force structure, and improving resource stewardship.[7] Adherence to these imperatives will require long-term planning, high standards "in terms of ethos, values and professionalism,"[8] collaboration with other departments, and investments in people, infrastructure, and equipment. Writing on the challenges of *Strategy 2020*, Robin Highham and Gilles Paquet discuss the implications of these imperatives. The authors state that the strategic transformations will "have an impact on governance, accountabilities and leadership requirements of the CF,"[9] and specify three targets of change: (1)military culture, (2)officer training, and (3)the civil-military relationship.[10] They conclude that progress would require two virtues that are essential for wise policy making: compromise and patience.[11] This could present a challenge for CF leaders.

Large hierarchical organizations are bound by bureaucratic restraints, and their slow capacity to transform can become dysfunctional when the pace of change accelerates.[12] Innovation and proactivity require leadership and management practices that are uncharacteristic of a traditional military organization. Military structures are typically hierarchical and mechanistic; they are not as flexible as flatter organic structures and therefore more resistant to innovative changes.[13] The American National Defense Panel proposed in 1998 that "rigid and parochial military organizations … are unable to

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[7] *Ibid*.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Robin Highham and Gilles Paquet, "The Challenges of 2020: A Citizen's Perspective," in Canadian Forces College, "A Symposium for Brigadier Generals and Commodores" (A Selection of Reading Material, 2-6 October, 2000).
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] Gary Johns and Alan M. Saks, *Organizational Behaviour: Understanding and Managing Life at Work*, 6th Ed., (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2005), 462-3.

take full advantage of any potential [Revolution in Military Affairs] RMA."[14] Richard Szafranski adds to this argument and concludes that the US military is averse to change and may "dabble with new organizational reforms, but they are unlikely to revolutionize their combat power."[15] Canadian doctrine recognizes these restraints and the challenges they present. *Duty with Honour* states that far-reaching changes will "impose special burdens on leadership at all levels, but particularly on those senior leaders responsible for the stewardship of the profession."[16] Leaders must respond to these challenges; this is a complex task for senior Canadian military leaders who have the broader responsibility of leading the institution. To achieve requisite capability[17] and influence effectiveness, senior leaders have several responsibilities within the leader-system/institution-environment framework.[18] CF leadership doctrine identifies four such responsibilities:[19]

1. *adapting to the external environment* through strategic planning and strategic change;
2. *influencing the external environment* through partnerships and professional networks;
3. *achieving alignment across organizational systems and sub-systems* through policy, doctrine, and resource and performance management; and
4. *exercising stewardship of the profession* through the strengthening of professional capabilities and culture.

These responsibilities can be summarized as strategic planning, civil-military relations, organizational development (or learning), and stewardship of the profession. They are

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[14] Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 136-7.
[15] *Ibid*, 137.
[16] Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-001 *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003), 65.
[17] *Requisite capability* – The ability or means by the CF to achieve the Government's defence objectives across a range of changing circumstances. Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-004 *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 132.
[18] *The leader-system/institution-environment framework* – The relevant field of action for senior leaders consisting of: (1)the leader, (2)major systems of the CF including the whole organization, and (3)the external domestic and international environments. *Ibid*, 99.
[19] *Ibid*, 100.

consistent with the CDS's "Corporate Priorities for Defence 2004-2005" and other publications related to the responsibilities of senior CF leadership.[20]

In discussing responsibilities, General and Flag officers themselves identified specific weaknesses in a 2002 study conducted by the Special Advisor to the CDS on Professional Development (SA/CDS/PD). The weaknesses and related responsibilities are strikingly familiar:[21]

1. Stewardship of the Profession;
2. Strategic Planning;
3. Civil-Military Relations; and
4. Organizational Learning.

These four areas are directly aligned with the responsibilities presented in CF doctrine and the CDS's published priorities. They are critical to strategic success according to *Strategy 2020*, yet they may be in an area where senior CF leaders feel they are the weakest. Coincidentally, the SA/CDS/PD study was conducted as the overall professional development strategy for 2020 in an attempt to identify and describe the long-term requirements for officership in the 21st century. It revealed not only leadership challenges and weaknesses, but also confirmed the Auditor General's report for 2000 which described "difficulties in transforming the organizational culture along the lines of *Strategy 2020* and weaknesses in the co-ordination of strategic change."[22]

This paper will refer to the SA/CDS/PD study and the four areas of weakness identified by senior CF leaders; it will argue that these flaws are persistent within the CF

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[20] The CDS's corporate priorities include: (1)adapting to the evolving security environment and enhancing strategic relationships, (2)transforming and modernizing the CF, (3)developing and supporting a professional, effective and sustainable defence team, and (4)maximizing effectiveness in the management of resources. Department of National Defence, "About the CDS – Corporate Priorities for Defence 2004-2005," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/priorities_e.asp; Internet; accessed 12 October 2005.
[21] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: Canadian Forces Leadership Problems and Challenges Identified in Recent Reports and Studies," June 2002, 29-31, http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/cfli/engraph/research/pdf/73.pdf; Internet; accessed 26 September 2005.
[22] *Ibid*, 15.

leadership culture and will ultimately challenge successful strategic goal attainment. The essay will first provide some background that casts a shadow on the hope for success, it will then discuss each of the four areas of responsibility and weakness, and finally it will determine whether any hope exists for innovative change.

Background: No Hope for the Future?

Overcoming identified weaknesses will be required to achieve the vision as introduced in *Strategy 2020*, and to ultimately respond to emerging global trends. The rapidly emerging battlespace as identified in *Strategy 2020* will require *unity*, *continuity*, *resolve* and *partnership* that adhere to long-term planning, high public standards, collaboration in a civil-military network, and investments in human and equipment capital.[23] Senior CF leaders will be challenged to lead with compromise and patience as they attempt to transform a bureaucratic organization into an innovative and responsive one. A news release in June 2005 quoted the CDS as saying that "[t]his is the right time with the leadership, vision and funding in place to kick-start the [transformation] process; … [the effect should be] irreversible momentum."[24] This will be a great responsibility for CF leaders; there will be expectations for rapid success.

Regrettably there is a history of weakness and failure when it comes to the execution of these responsibilities. Karol W.J. Wenek (Project Director CF Leadership Doctrine) has detailed the findings of recent ministerial reports, inquiries, reviews, and project debriefs and has concluded that challenges exist within the CF leadership arena.[25]

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[23] Department of National Defence, "A Vision for 2020 – Part II: Canadian Defence into the 21st Century," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k08_e.asp; Internet; accessed 12 October 2005.
[24] Department of National Defence, "News Release: Canadian Forces begin Transformation," 28 June 2005, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/Newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1691; Internet; accessed 12 October 2005.
[25] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: Canadian Forces Leadership Problems and Challenges Identified in Recent Reports and Studies," June 2002, http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/cfli/engraph/research/pdf/73.pdf; Internet; accessed 26 September 2005.

Not only does she focus on face-to-face, direct leadership, but also the "leadership responsibilities linked to far-horizon preparation and planning and involving indirect leadership."[26] It is in this area of leading the institution that faults are most persistent amongst CF senior leaders. A 1995 *Military and Civilian Employee Feedback Survey* revealed that "only 17% of service members indicated confidence in the most senior levels of leadership to get the organization through a difficult period of change."[27] While this mood may have been attributed to the Somalia Inquiry,[28] it spawned closer investigations into CF accountability practices; all was not well.

Peter Kurasek, in a 1999 paper presented to the Air Force Officers' Advisory Group, identified three interconnected failures that may help to explain the CF organization's resistance to change: (1)failure to become a learning organization and make adaptive adjustments, (2)failure to carry out a meaningful dialogue with the Canadian public, and (3)the "Department was continuing to live beyond its means."[29] The same year, CF General/Flag officers indicated in a survey that CF change initiatives were persistently reactive. 60% of the respondents believed that the CF had failed at balancing obligations to the government with those to its members, and 67% did not believe the CF reciprocated the loyalty shown by its members.[30] The CF brass was not just blaming the institution; they were blaming themselves as leaders of the institution. David Bercuson links the institutional and leadership dysfunction to an organizational culture restrained by conservatism:

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[26] *Ibid*, 32.
[27] The Phillips Group, *Military and Civilian Employee Feedback Survey*, June 1995, *Ibid*, 14.
[28] The commission found CF leadership to be deficient in a number of areas of organizational functioning and responsibility. See Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 2-9 for a summary.
[29] The paper entitled "Is the Mouse Dead? Thoughts on Reforming the Department of National Defence," 12 April 1999 as quoted in Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 14.
[30] DHRRE, "Loyalty – Concepts, Definitions and Impressions: Survey Results of CF General, 1999, from Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 12.

> The Canadian military is trying to change in response to these trends, but it has had many failures in the past decade. One major job at hand for Canadian Forces general officers is, therefore, to wrestle with the traditional conservatism that has characterized most militaries, … to ensure that there is not too great a lag between change in the nation and change in the armed forces.[31]

Traditional conservatism is not the only restraint. CF values centered on careerism, bureaucratic decision-making processes, poor marketing to the citizenry, and neglect for knowledge capital have been recognized by senior CF leaders as significant roadblocks to strategic change.

Stewardship to Careerism

Academics define organizational culture as a "pattern of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions considered to be the appropriate way to think and act within an organization."[32] The Center for Strategic and International Studies describes the military culture as "an amalgam of values, customs, traditions … [that] has created a shared institutional ethos."[33] Military culture is tied directly to military ethos, and, according to Colonel M.D. Capstick, "[l]eaders … are the guardians of military culture."[34] *Duty with Honour* describes the military ethos as an embodiment of the "spirit that binds the profession together."[35] It further explains that the ethos acts as a unifying force in the officer/NCM relationship that represents a "strong, integrated team based on a common understanding of the primacy of operations and the shared beliefs, expectations and core

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[31] David J. Bercuson, "A Man (or Woman) for All Seasons: What the Canadian Public Expects from Canadian General Officers," in Canadian Forces College, "A Symposium for Brigadier Generals and Commodores" (A Selection of Reading Material, 2-6 October, 2000).
[32] P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, *Organizational Behaviour: Concepts, Controversies, Applications*, 3rd Ed., (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2003), 333.
[33] Center for Strategic and International Studies, "American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century," as quoted by Colonel M.D. Capstick, "Defining the Culture: The Canadian Army in the 21st Century," 3, in Canadian Forces College, "A Symposium for Brigadier Generals and Commodores" (A Selection of Reading Material, 2-6 October, 2000).
[34] Colonel M.D. Capstick, "Defining the Culture: …," 3.
[35] Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-001 *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003), 21.

values of military service."[36] Three fundamental components of the Canadian military ethos are introduced: beliefs and expectations about military service, Canadian values, and Canadian military values.[37] One common principle within the three components is that of professional duty and the professional precept of "Mission, own troops, self," in that order.[38] There is a departure from CF values, and the senior leadership plays a role.

All members of the CF share the responsibility of regulating their own conduct and influencing the conduct of others; this is how professional norms are maintained. In leading the institution, senior leaders have an obligation to preserve and maintain a professional military culture and its attributes: responsibility, expertise, identity, and ethos.[39] To fulfill these obligations to the service, subordinates, and society, senior leaders shape CF culture while preserving legitimacy and trust.[40] Embedding and reinforcing the Canadian military culture is described as "stewardship of the profession." This is a responsibility of the institutional leadership; it is crucial for military innovation according to military historian Williamson Murray.[41] It is also a difficult undertaking in a mature organization when significant cultural change is the goal.[42]

The SA/CDS/PD study revealed that most of the leaders surveyed believed that "professional responsibilities to the nation [were] not well understood and that the military value system [had] not been strongly articulated or consistently practiced."[43] Specifically, they felt that they had not done well at promoting an ethical voice, fostering

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[36] *Ibid*, 21.
[37] *Ibid*, 25.
[38] *Ibid*, 30.
[39] Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-004 *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 115.
[40] *Ibid*, 115.
[41] Colonel M.D. Capstick, "Defining the Culture: …," 3.
[42] Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-004 *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 116.
[43] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 29.

moral courage, or regulating peer conduct.[44] Admittedly, CF brass has been unable to "see the forest for the trees." Robert Near agrees that there has been an erosion of the military ethos and that CF higher headquarters has been unable to recognize the "root causes." He attributes this to an over-abundance of business management philosophies within the CF.[45] Near proposes that CF leaders are fixated on the bottom line and have mechanically treated the organic military culture as a thing to be restructured.[46] He adds that the business approach has "triumphed over military virtues" and that culture and ethos are in conflict. Near suggests that inducements to join the CF exacerbate the problem since an emphasis on benefits and pay attracts people who "see the CF more as a job than a career."[47] Service to the nation is no longer a high priority and it is affecting trust. A study by the NCM Professional Development Working Group found that NCMs felt that the officer corps was "more concerned with ticket punching than doing their job."[48] Senior officers are seen as being stewards to their own careers.

In a discussion concerning the criticism of the CF generalship, Lieutenant-General George E.C. MacDonald relates the Canadian case to that of the United States military. MacDonald cites a *Washington Times* critique that discusses careerism amongst senior leaders and how it prevails over professionalism.[49] Such criticism may be warranted. Major-General K.G. Penney, as National Defence Chief of Review Sevices, discussed several ethical issues concerning hypocrisy, undue entitlements, abuse of authority, and

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[44] *Ibid*, 29.
[45] Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 101.
[46] *Ibid*, 101.
[47] *Ibid*, 106-107.
[48] *Ibid*, 107.
[49] Lieutenant-General George E.C. MacDonald, "Leadership in an Era of Change and Complexity," in *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership*, ed. Brend Horn and Stephen J. Harris, 167-188 (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 171.

the falsification of claims in a recent paper.[50] While he claims that senior CF leaders have become increasingly cautious when assessing their conduct, he warns that "generalship carries its own liabilities[;]" self-assessment and self-discipline can become corrupted by ambition and egocentricity, especially at the highest levels where constraints are fewer.[51] Penney suggests that there is hope for the CF generalship; he strongly believes that self-regulation is the key to ethical conduct and that the CF leads the way by applying intervention tools such as selection processes, values-based case studies, and networking strategies.[52] Allan English comes to a different conclusion:

> Officers, particularly senior officers, are perceived as being more interested in their careers than in service to the nation. Coupled with downsizing and other personnel policies based on the occupational model, this careerism has transmitted the message throughout the CF that the armed services exist in Canada to provide jobs rather than a vocation or calling. . . . The result of these mixed messages has been confusion among members of the CF as to what values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour they should ascribe to.[53]

Despite control initiatives like self-regulation, CF senior leaders are perceived as being careerists and stewards of a "self before service" ethos; more significant though, is the fact that they know it.

Strategic Planning: Moving a Modern Bureaucratic Mountain

Some, however, credit the "great expansion of Western military" institutions to modern management techniques.[54] But Lieutenant-Colonel Bondy is quick to point out that the resultant "increased range and effectiveness of acculturation [in] armies" is offset

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[50] Major-General K.G. Penney, "A Matter of Trust: Ethics and Self-regulation Among Canadian Generals," in *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership*, ed. Brend Horn and Stephen J. Harris, 155-166 (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 158.
[51] *Ibid*, 161-162.
[52] *Ibid*, 162-163.
[53] Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: ...,* 109.
[54] Lieutenant-Colonel Harry J. Bondy, "New Regiments, New Specialists, and a New General Staff," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* Vol. 7, Issue 2 (Winter 2004): 2, http://www.jmss.org/2004/winter/articles/bondy.pdf; Internet; accessed 28 March 2006.

by the negative effects of bureaucratization. He states that the *modern bureaucracy* forces repetitive decision-making solutions, it is reactive, and it is tied to "narrow goals of cost reduction."[55] Military analysts support his argument and claim that military bureaucracies have difficulty supporting the professional ethos and inhibit innovation.[56] They refer to lack of trust and cooperation in modern Anglo-Western defence systems; unsustainable personnel tempo, politicized equipment acquisition, careerism, and reduced retention and commitment are some examples.[57] This is not a good climate for innovation and strategic planning, and senior CF leaders know it. They understand that strategic planning involves the "development of an adaptive organizational direction within a long-term time perspective" and that the environment is complex.[58] However, they also revealed in the SA/CDS/PD study that they seldom function at the strategic level. Reasons include a lack of understanding of the executive role, a failure to manage competing short-term demands, and inadequate competencies for leading change.[59] While the inflexible nature of a military bureaucracy is indeed worthy of blame, General and Flag officers have accurately fingered themselves as part of the problem. Characteristics of a bureaucracy will be discussed, followed by a look at these problems.

Kurt Lewin argues that once an organization has recognized the need for change, a successful outcome is reliant upon a specific change process.[60] Unfreezing the status quo of an organization, especially one with a strong organizational culture, requires a shift in

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[55] *Ibid*, 4.
[56] *Ibid*, 4.
[57] *Ibid*, 6.
[58] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 30.
[59] *Ibid*, 30.
[60] *Lewin's Three-Step Change* Model identifies unfreezing, moving, and refreezing as its steps. Stephen P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, *Organizational Behaviour: Concepts, Controversies, Applications*, 3rd Ed., (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2003), 542.

equilibrium where driving forces must overcome the resistance of restraining forces. This is a difficult task when an organization has a vertical, or bureaucratic structure.

A bureaucracy is characterized by:[61]

- Highly routine operating tasks achieved through specialization
- Formalized rules and regulations
- Tasks that are grouped into functional departments
- Centralized authority
- Narrow spans of control
- Decision-making that follows the chain of command

Standardized activities within a bureaucratic structure facilitate efficiency, consistency, and accountability, but weaknesses exist that inhibit innovation and subunit cooperation.[62] Bureaucratic institutions can become restrictive; entrepreneurial thrust is inhibited, rules are dogmatically followed, rigidity exists in the decision-making process, and issues are worked on at levels that are too low in the organization.[63] These characteristics are not conducive to change; neither is the CF.

Military organizations are typically mechanistic structures that are characterized by hierarchy, specialization, centralization, and formalization; they are therefore less flexible and slower to respond than the flatter organic structures.[64] Douglas Bland argues that the CF's resistance to change is rooted in the "deep-seated" minds of CF officers and a collective attitude that "a tri-service organization … is the preferred structure for the armed forces," and that it is "best for national defence."[65] He adds that senior leaders, driven by the "obvious benefits" to their own environments, "see their main responsibility

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[61] *Ibid*, 468.
[62] *Ibid*, 468-9.
[63] Elliot Jaques, *Requisite Organization: A Total System for Effective Managerial Organization and Managerial Leadership for the 21st Century*, 2nd Ed., (Arlington: Cason Hall & Co. Publishers, 1998), 34.
[64] Gary Johns and Alan M. Saks, *Organizational Behaviour: Understanding and Managing Life at Work*, 6th Ed., (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2005), 462-3.
[65] Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 104-105.

as protecting and enhancing their particular institutions."[66] Bland states that such a structure not only promotes wasteful redundancy in missions and institutions, it:

> . . . prevents the rational distribution of defence resources, and fuels inter-service rivalries that at times discredit the armed forces before politicians and senior public service leaders.[67]

However, the leaders themselves feel powerless to affect strategic change. They feel that they don't fully understand the executive role, and fail to manage competing short-term demands.[68] The Minister's Advisory Committee on Administrative Efficiency made similar findings in 2003. The committee found that senior CF leadership was too focused on managing short-term issues, and that the

> . . . resulting organization [was] complex, bureaucratic, and cumbersome when dealing with non-operational issues, longer-term management challenges, and strategic-level change.[69]

Governance structures and culture were found to inhibit institutional focus on strategic innovation. The findings[70] were well aligned with the SA/CDS/PD study results:

1. Decision-making processes were often consensus-based and transactional rather than strategic;
2. Risk tolerance was too low;
3. Strategic planning was based on 'bottom up' processes that placed unaffordable demands on resources; and
4. High turnover rates in senior appointments leaving "many General or Flag Officers who have too little time at the strategic level before retirement."[71]

From these findings it can be seen that the unhealthy, bureaucratic competition for resources within each environment is in fact reinforced. The findings also reveal that

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[66] *Ibid*, 105.
[67] Douglas Bland, "Canada's Officer Corps: New Times, New Ideas," (1999). Quoted in Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture* …, 105.
[68] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 30.
[69] Department of National Defence, Minister's Advisory Committee on Administrative Efficiency, *Achieving Administrative Efficiency: Report to the Minister of National Defence*, 21 August 2003, 5, http://www.forces.gc.ca-site-Focus-AE-AEReportFull_e.pdf; Internet; accessed 9 April 2006.
[70] *Ibid*, vii.
[71] *Ibid*, vii.

senior CF leaders are warranted in believing that they are ill-prepared for the executive role; turnover rates are too high. A lack of strategic level experience disallows CF brass "to contribute fully to institutional leadership at the most senior levels."[72]

The committee provided an assessment as to how well the CF was structured to transform itself; the answer was not positive:

> On the basis of its consultations, observations, and analysis, it is the Committee's view that neither the Department, nor the Forces, is well positioned … to meet the transformation challenges of the decade ahead. [T]he 'bottom-up', consensus driven culture that dominates Defence runs counter to what is required to drive strategic, transformational change.[73]

Marketing for Public Support: Civil-Military Relations

Transformation will require more than a 'bottom-up,' military-driven approach. It will require public support. Douglas Bland writes that the immediate challenge "is to establish . . . a set of ideas that will bring the officer corps into line with the way most Canadians think about national defence."[74] Bland believes that senior CF leaders must be harmonious with Canadian society. This relationship may be absent; senior leaders, according to the SA/CDS/PD study, believe that they have difficulty in their ability to "manage and influence the civilian-military interface."[75] This was identified as a "major weakness in the General/Flag officer community."[76]

The weakness is not prevalent in the "caring" aspect, but more in the "marketing" domain. Caring for troops in training before operations, supporting them during operations and professional development activities, and honouring them after

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[72] *Ibid*, vii.
[73] *Ibid*, 7.
[74] General (retired) Ramsey Withers, "Public Expectations of the General Officer Corps," in *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership*, ed. Brend Horn and Stephen J. Harris, 423-434, (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 429.
[75] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 30.
[76] *Ibid*, 30.

deployments is an expectation that is not comprehended in the civilian sector.[77] The lack of comprehension is not a case of general public misunderstanding, but rather a "case where people need to be informed so they understand [the] unique aspect of military leadership."[78] According to General Ramsey Withers, the public needs an explanation as to what their expectations should be, however "there seems to be a perception that the generals and admirals are primarily interested in looking after only themselves."[79] Bureaucratic tendencies within the CF organization and the individualistic ethos that is prevalent in the western society lend to this egocentricity. Withers adds that alliances such as NATO and NORAD are also origins of these self-centric trends. He proposes that military roots in Canadian society were lost when the Militia was absorbed as an essential element of limited mobilization during the Korean War in the 1950s. He adds that the "general officer corps became increasingly involved in the NATO and NORAD alliance command structures and far less involved in operations at home."[80] This loss of involvement at home translated into a loss of communication with the Canadian public. The result was a lack of candor with the Canadian public.

According to the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, this lack of candor has been costly to the CF: "One of the primary reasons that [the CF] are under-funded is that most Canadians do not understand how broad and important a role they play in protecting and improving our lives."[81] The committee recognized that the issue of military under-funding was tied to the "can-do" attitude from Canadian brass. When

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[77] General (retired) Ramsey Withers, "Public Expectations …," 430-431.
[78] *Ibid*, 431.
[79] *Ibid*, 431.
[80] *Ibid*, 432.
[81] The Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, "Wounded: Canada's Military and the Legacy of Neglect," September 2005, http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/defe-e/rep-e/repintsep05-e.htm; Internet; accessed 2 March 2006.

given the opportunity to provide "blunt testimony" regarding funding shortfalls, branch chiefs in all three services failed to provide an accurate picture of their resource woes: "[n]one of them spoke of the loud alarms they raised with the Chief of Defence Staff in [their] annual impact statement[s]" in 2005.[82] The committee found faults in three areas:

1. Bureaucratized military officers who go no further than "explaining" government policy;
2. Politicians who value votes more than representation; and
3. Parliamentarians for not questioning inconsistencies in policy.[83]

Naturally, CF leadership priorities that disagree with government policy will create tension; however, this should not affect transparency with the Canadian public. *Duty with Honour* emphasizes the importance of recognizing the legitimate differences in priorities when "the political, bureaucratic and military domains overlap and that a certain amount of professional tension is always inherent."[84] Mutual recognition and high degrees of transparency and communication must exist in order to maximize civil-military collaboration. Reciprocity with the public is the cornerstone of civil-military relations; defending democracy depends "upon military leaders telling politicians and the public the truth about any given situation … [and] politicians leveling with the public."[85]

Robin Highham and Gilles Paquet explain that there is a moral contract between the military and citizenry;[86] military leadership must be trusted with its duty of legitimate coercion, and the public's understanding of it must not be under-estimated. Public candor must replace bureaucratic "can-do."

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[82] *Ibid*.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-001 *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003), 73.
[85] The Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, "Wounded:…".
[86] Robin Highham and Gilles Paquet, "The Challenges of 2020: …".

Organizational Learning: A Slow Transfer of Knowledge

The Canadian public may have a general misunderstanding of its military; it does, however, lead the military in the fostering of knowledge capital. Knowledge capital is a primary driver for innovation and senior CF leaders agree that the Canadian military could do better. When it comes to strategic change within the military organization, Colonel John C. Studt claims that it is driven by civilian intellectuals and that the military has "never institutionalized a system that encourages innovative ideas or criticism from subordinates."[87] CF leaders recognize that they are not fostering institutional innovation; according to General Withers: Canadian society has become knowledge-based and

> . . . [t]o be in sync with it requires extended academic pursuit. Accordingly, the senior leadership will be expected to achieve the same level of post-graduate qualifications that are now so much the norm in civilian life.[88]

Strategy 2020 recognizes institutional learning as a strategic imperative. The document defines "resource stewardship" as a careful balance between investments in people, infrastructure and equipment.[89] The strategy emphasizes critical attributes such as modernization, pro-activity, and knowledge capital. It envisions an evolution from an organization that trains its personnel into a learning organization that empowers its members to make responsible decisions. According to the SA/CDS/PD study, CF Generals and Flag officers agree that

> . . . [o]rganizing and sharing collective and personal knowledge and experience [has] become more important in an increasingly interdependent and more complex world.[90]

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[87] David J. Bercuson, "A Man (or Woman) for All Seasons: …," 9.
[88] General (retired) Ramsey Withers, "Public Expectations …," 432-433.
[89] Department of National Defence, "A Vision for 2020 – Part I: Looking to the Future," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k04_e.asp; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006.
[90] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 30.

Major-General K.G. Penney recognizes the emerging strategic environment and ties CF values to knowledge capital. According to Penney, the 21st Century is an age of deployed operations and inter-operability where moment-by-moment moral decisions are made by front-line troops. Soldiers will be visible to the world via multi-media and their actions will not only be based on rules, but also on values.[91] This is the age of the strategic soldier and General Gordon Sullivan, a former chief of staff of the US Army, contends that "the information age is defined by less hierarchical learning organizations, with the network as the structure, not the pyramid, and knowledge, not equipment, as capital."[92] The CF must become a flatter organization that is less bureaucratic and more knowledge-based. Senior CF leaders know this, but recognize that they are not doing their share.

The SA/CDS/PD study results reveal that, as a community, the CF generalship is "slow to foster a learning culture and [had] not kept pace in their personal professional development."[93] Karol Wenek refers to a previous study conducted in 2001 that amplifies these findings.[94] One observation from the study was that future CF leaders would have to show more openness to experience. It was also observed that the "CF currently lacks several attributes of a learning culture and learning organization."[95] Wenek describes a resistance to the acknowledgement of failure and continuous improvement, a reluctance

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[91] Major-General K.G. Penney, "A Matter of Trust: Ethics and Self-regulation Among Canadian Generals," in *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership*, ed. Brend Horn and Stephen J. Harris, 155-166 (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 156-157.
[92] Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 137.
[93] Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 30-31.
[94] The study entitled *Canadian Officership in the 21st Century* is discussed in Karol W.J. Wenek, "Looking Back: …," 26-29.
[95] *Ibid*, 28.

to delegate responsibility and authority, and a presence of anti-intellectual tendencies amongst senior CF leaders.[96]

The mechanistic structure of military organizations, characterized by hierarchy, specialization, and chain of command,[97] is less flexible and slower to adapt and facilitate learning. Learning organizations typically have a flatter structure where there are processes for creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge in order to modify behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights.[98] In a paper on knowledge management, Lieutenant-Colonel John Girard deduces that the "new world order demands new ways to ensure we create and transfer our collective knowledge."[99] He states that the leaner force structure has limited redundancy and has therefore eroded corporate memory; these thinner structures may be more economical, but they are also "more brittle and less conducive to tacit knowledge sharing."[100] Interestingly, many non-military organizations are introducing person-to-person (tacit) knowledge sharing opportunities by creating social settings, while the CF has seen its culture become more individualistic and has downplayed the value of its traditional knowledge sharing setting: the messes.[101]

The "anti-intellectual tendencies" amongst senior military leaders deserves some attention. David J Bercuson writes that "[l]earning comes not by amassing information but through the process of thinking and evaluating."[102] He criticizes the traditional focus on science and engineering within the CF. In order to respond quickly to new ideas,

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[96] *Ibid*, 28.
[97] Gary Johns and Alan M. Saks, *Organizational Behaviour: . . .*, 462-463.
[98] *Ibid*, 520.
[99] Lieutenant-Colonel John Girard, "Defence Knowledge management: A Passing Fad?", *Canadian Military Journal* vol. 5, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 20.
[100] *Ibid*, 20.
[101] *Ibid*, 20.
[102] David J. Bercuson, "A Man (or Woman) for All Seasons: . . .," 6.

Bercuson believes that, by teaching process, liberal arts programs sharpen the mind by looking at old problems in new ways. Allan English shares this view. English contends that until Canada's Royal Military College shifts its focus from engineering to the profession of arms, "it cannot properly be described as the CF's professional school."[103] The resultant lack of expertise in abstract knowledge is referred to as the "well documented anti-intellectualism, which persists to this day in some quarters of the CF,"[104] according to English. Bercuson explains that liberal arts disciplines are vital to a modern general officer and that only an "inter-linked system of selection, education, and training … will allow general officers to emerge"[105] as warriors, leaders, intellectuals, and organizers.

The SA/CDS/PD study results have merit; Norman Dixon summarizes best how the inflexibility of the traditional military organization affects intellectualism:

> Since the principal function of … war colleges is to prepare senior officers for higher command, they 'genuinely strive to cultivate the greatest possible freedom of thought among their students.' But somehow the underlying dynamics of military organizations frustrate their good intentions.[106]

Is There New Hope for the Future?

Senior CF leaders recognize that a significant challenge lies ahead in transforming a bureaucratic organization into an innovative and proactive one in the emerging global environment. They also recognize that although the responsibility is theirs, persistent weaknesses have existed for some time within CF generalship. The SA/CDS/PD study

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[103] Allan English, "Professionalism and the Military – Past, Present, and Future: A Canadian Perspective," May 2002, 37, http://www.cda.forces.gc.ca/cfli/engraph/research/pdf/21.pdf; Internet; accessed 26 September 2005.
[104] *Ibid*, 37. Norman Dixon discusses *anti-intellectualism* within the military in his book *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*.
[105] David J. Bercuson, "A Man (or Woman) for All Seasons: . . .," 6.
[106] Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, (Chatham: Mackays of Chatham PLC, 1976), 299.

revealed four key areas of failure; however, the fact that most of the study data was drawn from input by the senior leadership shows promise. Senior leaders are cognizant of where improvement is needed and they are willing to show the compromise and patience required to lead organizational change. One concept to counter the modern military bureaucracy has been introduced by Lieutenant-Colonel Bondy. He introduces the concept of the "New General Staff," and proposes that:

> . . . [t]he New General Staff is a small cadre of officers responsible for strategy, civil-military relations, institution building and professionalism for the Army. It develops and implements policies to adapt technology, doctrine and culture to evolving security needs and societal change.[107]

Bondy's concept targets military ethos, strategic planning, civil-military relations, and organizational learning processes; this is a positive direction for future military leaders. Some, however, insist that failure is incorrigible. Colonel Howard Marsh does not foresee an improvement. He refers to the hierarchical command structure that has hardly changed in eighty years, and the entrenched traditions and bureaucratic interests that remain as the "most difficult hurdle to overcome" during organizational reform.[108] The bureaucratic CF structure and military culture has been the most recent target of strategic change; a legacy of weakness will have to be overcome to achieve success. The Advisory Committee on Administrative Efficiency recognized this and concluded that a pre-requisite for CF transformation and higher levels of efficiency was a transformation of CF management structures and decision-making processes.[109] A flatter, more responsive structure is envisioned by top CF leaders, but will they have the resolve to see

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[107] Lieutenant-Colonel Harry J. Bondy, "New Regiments, …," 16.
[108] Lieutenant(Navy) W.C. England, "In Search of Organizational Change within the Context of the Contemporary RMA," http://www.cda-cdai.ca/symposia/2003/england.htm; Internet; accessed 2 March 2006.
[109] Department of National Defence, Minister's Advisory Committee on Administrative Efficiency, *Achieving Administrative Efficiency: …,* 7.

it through? General R. Henault advised in his 2002-2003 Annual Report by the CDS that "we must transform the way we perceive and think[;] . . . if the defining feature of the industrial age was linear, vertical thinking, then the defining feature of the information age is lateral, horizontal thinking."[110] The torch has been passed to the current CDS, General Rick Hillier, and he has the drive to instill a warrior ethos with a flatter command structure, stronger civil-military relations, and advanced educational and mentoring opportunities. He is looking for "irreversible momentum;" however the momentum of the last eighty years may be difficult to overcome, the generalship said so in the SA/CDS/PD study.

Conclusion

Strategy 2020 identifies the objectives that will direct the CF into the emerging global environment. To succeed in the emerging battlespace, the CF must become more innovative and strategically focused. To accomplish this, CF leaders have the responsibility of adapting to the external environment, influencing it, achieving organizational alignment, and exercising stewardship of the profession. These responsibilities are consistent with the CDS's published priorities, and General and Flag officers have identified them in various studies. In the 2002 SA/CDS/PD study however, they also admitted that weaknesses existed within the CF leadership that directly affected these responsibilities, and ultimately affected strategic change.

The study identified leadership failures in stewardship of the profession, strategic planning, civil-military relations, and organizational learning. According to the

[110] From *A Time for Transformation*, as quoted in Lieutenant-Colonel John Girard, "Defence Knowledge management: A Passing Fad?", *Canadian Military Journal* vol. 5, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 20.

SA/CDS/PD study and numerous other sources, these failures were seen to be flaws that were persistent within the CF leadership culture.

A climate of "no hope" can be observed when high public and government expectations are met with a sense of little trust in senior CF leaders; traditional conservatism is seen as a restraint. A once collective military ethos has been slowly eroded and replaced by a culture of individualism and careerism that is based on a business model. Strategic planning and decision-making processes are bogged down by bureaucratic inflexibility, institutional bias, and high turnover rates. A lack of candor with the Canadian public has left the citizenry uninformed; the false comfort of a 'can-do' environment has misled the general public. The lack of appreciation for knowledge capital and the liberal arts has left the CF accused of anti-intellectualism. This is an eighty year old legacy that will be hard to break.

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