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HOW WILL THE CF DELIVER EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN LIGHT OF A SHELVED STANDING CONTINGENCY FORCE CONCEPT?

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ABSTRACT

The plan to create a Standing Contingency Force (SCF) was announced in the April 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS), where it was described as a "high-readiness task-force made up of existing, designated maritime, land, air and special operations elements, organized under a single integrated combat command structure." However, an article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, 07 March 2007, provides one of the few public announcements on the scaling back of Canadian military expansion plans, including at least a three-year delay in the development of the SCF. In the aftermath of this decision, two key statements emerge from the DPS: "task-force made up of *existing*, designated maritime, land, air and special operations elements" and "rapid deployment" capability. Neither of these requirements necessarily demands amphibious capability. The CF requires multi-mission capable forces and the lift capacity to get them to the locations at which they are needed in a timely manner. In the case of the SCF however, it would appear that enthusiasm for a golden or optimum solution to the stated desire for rapidly deployable military forces created an admirable but unsustainable desire for amphibiousity.

INTRODUCTION

Upon commencement of writing this paper in December 2006, the Canadian Standing Contingency Force (SCF) concept was not only one of the top priorities in transformation as envisioned by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Rick Hillier, but was also being widely reported on in several military publications and news outlets. The plan to create an SCF was announced in the April 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS), where it was described as a "high-readiness task-force made up of existing, designated maritime, land, air and special operations elements, organized under a single integrated combat command structure."[1] In the Standing Contingency Task Force (original name before being reduced to SCF) draft Concept of Operations, the SCF was referred to as "the flagship of CF transformation."[2]

However, in the months that have passed, the concept has been shelved due to a variety of reasons that include fiscal and manpower pressures resulting from the current Afghanistan mission and upcoming commitments to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. An article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, 07 March 2007, provides one of the few public announcements on the scaling back of Canadian military expansion plans, including at least a three-year delay in the development of the SCF.[3] There has certainly

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[1] Defence Policy Statement 2005, available from http://www.dnd.ca/site/reports/dps/main/04_e.asp; Internet, accessed 12 December 2006.

[2] Standing Contingency Task Force Concept of Operations (Draft) Version 3, CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation October 2005. 10.

[3] David Pugliese, Military shelves plans for expansion, *Ottawa Citizen*, available from http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=0f5cdc2f-32c5-4522-98cd-a745a; Internet, accessed 03 April 2007.

been less fanfare with regard to the indefinite delay in the implementation of this key tenant of transformation than there was with regard to the original announcement.

This scaling back in the development of the SCF is in stark contrast to the enthusiasm expressed by CMDRE Maddison, Commander SCF, when asked about the future of the SCF concept for Canada in the fall of 2006. A *Jane's Navy International* article on the Canadian venture into expeditionary warfare is fulsome in its report:

> Cmdre Maddison also notes that his staff of 50 (of which only 30 are permanently assigned to the SCF) will need to be at least doubled in size and he expects the staff to be increased 'significantly' in mid-2007, when he moves headquarters from Ottawa to Halifax.[4]

The subsequent reassignment of the SCF staff to other commands and the appointment of CMDRE Maddison to Assistant Chief of Military Personnel at NDHQ in Ottawa without a replacement SCF Commander being named demonstrates this vision has certainly not unfolded as predicted in the article.

However, it is interesting to note that even CMDRE Maddison expressed some trepidation on the future of SCF, as reported by Sharon Hobson in the *Jane's* article:

> He [Maddison] expands that externally, the advice he is getting from Canada's allies is that 'if Canada chooses to go forward with this, we need to find a way to generate a standing littoral optimized battle group or landing force.'[5]

The key portion of this quote in regard to Maddison's trepidation is "if Canada chooses to go forward." It is now evident the decision, at least in the near term, has been made regarding the (non-)continuation of this concept.

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[4] Sharon Hobson, Canada takes expeditionary force to task, *Jane's Navy International*, available from http://jni.janes.com/public/jni/analysis.shtml; Internet, accessed 01 January 2007.

[5] Ibid.

So, what does this mean for the Canadian Forces and how will the capabilities so clearly articulated in the most recent Canadian Defence Policy statement be delivered? The dilemma is perhaps best articulated by Peter Haydon, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, when he states in his 2004 paper, "…this is one of those instances where foreign policy must lead defence policy. Again, we need to answer a strategic question, 'How are Canada's interests best served?'"[6]

From the DPS, two key statements emerge: "task-force made up of *existing*, designated maritime, land, air and special operations elements" (emphasis added) and "rapid deployment" capability. Neither of these requirements necessarily demands amphibious capability. The CF requires multi-mission capable forces and the lift capacity to get them to the locations at which they are needed in a timely manner. This paper examines the challenge ahead for the CF in expeditionary warfare by determining what the SCF was intended to be, and then providing what the author considers to be a more realistic view for capability delivery.

DEFINING THE STANDING CONTINGENCY FORCE

It is useful at this point to reiterate what the 2005 Defence Policy Statement says about the SCF, and further to describe what the SCF was intended to be. From this point of common understanding, the determination of desired capabilities can be discussed.

The 2005 Defence Policy Statement specifies particular tasks as assigned to various elements under the heading, *Future Tasks of the Canadian Forces*. These tasks are:

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[6] Peter T. Haydon, Canadian Naval Future: A Necessary Long-Term Planning Framework, IRPP Working Paper Series no. 2004-12, November 2004, Institute for Research on Public Policy, available from http://www.irpp.org/wp/archive/wp2004-12.pdf; Internet, accessed 03 April 2007. 11.

(1) With respect to *national assets*, the Canadian Forces will be able to:

> sustain for up to six months the command element of the Standing Contingency Task Force, either land- or sea-based, capable of multinational lead-nation status in peace support operations.

(2) With respect to *special operations forces*, the Canadian Forces will:

> provide special operations expertise to the Special Operations Group, the Standing Contingency Task Force or other Mission-Specific Task Forces in domestic emergencies.

(3) The *Maritime Forces* (Regular and Reserve) will:

> provide one task group designated for operations as the maritime contribution to the Standing Contingency Task Force, and the other available to deploy as part of a Mission-Specific Task Force.

(4) The *Air Forces* (Regular and Reserve) will:

> provide airlift anywhere in Canada for the deployment of the land and command elements of the Special Operations Group, the Standing Contingency Task Force, or one of the Mission-Specific Task Forces; and
> provide maritime and transport helicopters as the air contribution to the Standing Contingency Task Force or the Mission-Specific Task Forces.

(5) The *Land Forces* (Regular and Reserve) will:

> provide forces to the Standing Contingency Task Force to respond to domestic emergencies.[7]

The overall SCF concept, then, was interpreted by the CF leadership to be a small and flexible expeditionary force based on an amphibious naval task group. The original vision included land combat and support elements embarked in a large amphibious capable ship, with the remaining expeditionary enablers such as Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I), medium lift helicopter support, waterborne ship to shore transport, joint fires support, material sustainment and surface,

[7] Defence Policy Statement 2005, available from http://www.dnd.ca/site/reports/dps/main/04_e.asp; Internet, accessed 12 December 2006.

air and sub-surface defence of the force provided by a Naval Task Group comprised of a Destroyer (DDG), two or more Frigates (FFH), a Victoria Class Submarine (SSK) and a Joint Support Ship (JSS). Where possible, CP140 Aurora Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) would provide littoral area Intelligence, Search and Reconnaissance (ISR). The *Jane's Navy International* article describes the CDS vision of the SCF as follows:

> Chief of the Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he envisages a naval task force of three to five ships, including an amphibious ship; air assets, including four to six heavy-lift helicopters and CP-140 Aurora surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft; and a land component built around a light task force of approximately 800 to 900 soldiers.[8]

This is a complete list and helpful in a surface analysis. However, a more detailed description of the SCF components is required in order to accurately and with insight assess the capabilities intended for this force.

In accordance with the Draft SCTF CONOPS, the major components of the SCF were intended to be:

- A dedicated Commander and staff – capable of deploying with the Force anywhere in the global littoral to translate Government desires into viable plans and meaningful actions to assist failed or failing states. This will be achieved by the integration of both military and GoC [Government of Canada] personnel into a cohesive staff;
- A Naval Task Group – an existing construct that includes up to four combatant warships and a supporting ship;
- An Amphibious Task Group – a new component, comprising of a dedicated amphibious ship and a Maritime Amphibious Unit that will operate the surface connector systems and look after landing areas;
- A Landing Force – a tailored Battle Group based on existing forces including integral support services, that can be transported by SCTF helicopters and surface connectors along with its organic fighting vehicles and equipment, to deliberately effect the conditions ashore;
- An Air Expeditionary Unit – consisting of an integrated group of multi-role, medium-lift marinised helicopters and Long Range Patrol Aircraft, aircrew and

[8] Sharon Hobson, Canada takes expeditionary force to task, *Jane's Navy International*, available from http://jni.janes.com/public/jni/analysis.shtml; Internet, accessed 01 January 2007.

maintainers, trained and equipped to support the broad range of naval, land and special operations that the SCTF may be called upon to undertake;
- A Support Group – based on emerging support concepts to provide the link between Canada and the Force and to ensure all aspects of Military Engineering, Logistics (Supply, Food Services, Transport, Postal, Human Resources Management and Movements), Maintenance, Health Services Support and Military Police are available to the Force; and
- The necessary infrastructure required to house, train and support this new capability.[9]

Headquarters and Staff

The staff construct of the SCF was intended to be completely joint in composition and capable of operating at operational and tactical levels simultaneously. The 50-member staff used during the Integrated Tactical Effects Experiment (ITEE), which took place between 6 and 18 November 2006, was assessed by CMDRE Maddison to be only half the strength required to fulfill the requirements stated in the draft CONOP. SCF staff members were intended to be capable of conducting "two complex and multi-phase operations at the tactical level while planning for a third."[10] The additional staff suggested is certainly appropriate given this full and ambitious set of expectations.

Naval Task Group

The Naval Task Group (NTG) was to have been based on the present naval task group composition of one Destroyer, two or more Frigates, an SSK when available and a Logistics Support Ship (currently the Preserver Class AOR, but this ship was/is intended to be replaced by the JSS). The Iroquois Class Destroyer would have provided NTG

[9] Standing Contingency Task Force Concept of Operations (Draft) Version 3 Abstract, CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation, October 2005. 3.

[10] Standing Contingency Task Force Concept of Operations (Draft) Version 3, CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation, October 2005. 17.

Command and Control (C2), Area Air Defence (over water only), Surface and Sub-surface Defence, limited Naval Gunfire Support, and up to two CH124-A Helicopters for SSC and ASW (very limited troop and logistics capability).

The Halifax Class Frigates would have provided alternate NTG C2, Close (point) Air Defence, Surface and Sub-surface Defence and CH124-A or B Support (one Helicopter each).

The Preserver Class AOR would have provided all logistic sustainment requirements for the NTG but is extremely limited in capability to support the Land Force element of the SCF. The AOR would have provided, then, second line maintenance for the Expeditionary Air Unit and carried up to three Sea King Helicopters in either A or B configuration.

The actual configuration, and therefore capabilities, of the JSS has not been completed to date. However, the Statement of Requirements (SOR) specifies the JSS is required to provide afloat logistics support to ships of the NTG, a portion of the sealift capacity to aid in deploying a land element's equipment and supplies worldwide, and support to forces stationed ashore with its helicopter capability, hospital, and Limited Afloat Joint Task Force Headquarters (LAJTFHQ).[11]

The Victoria Class SSK would have provided a very versatile platform ideally suited to operations in the littoral. It is adept at covert ISR, Special Forces or Pathfinder insertion/extraction, and Sea Denial and Sea Control tasks. As a diesel-electric submarine, it is best suited to the short transit requirements (once in theatre) of the littoral environment in conducting its largely covert missions. The *Defense News* ran an article

[11] Canada. Department of National Defence. *Statement of Operational Requirements Version 4.0*. Ottawa: Project Management Office Joint Support Ship, 16 May 2006. 3.

announcing, "Canada's Navy is developing tactics and doctrine to allow its Victoria-class diesel-electric submarines to support special operations, amphibious and counterterrorism missions."[12] This capability is not completely new to the CF, but due to the operational gap between the retirement of the Oberon Class Submarines and the certification of the Victoria Class for operations, this capability has not been exercised in several years.

Amphibious Task Group

For the purposes of the ITEE, the amphibious portion of the exercise was conducted with a borrowed USN amphibious assault ship (the USS Gunston Hall, Whidbey Island Class LSD) and two USN Landing Craft Utility (LCU) as the shore connectors. As the Land Force Element for this experiment was a mere "company-sized battle group with 34 vehicles - a mix of LAV 3s, Bison armoured personnel carriers, medium-lift trucks and G-wagons,"[13] the LSD provided sufficient capacity. However, if addressing the requirements for the actual SCF concept, one very large or multiple medium-sized amphibious ships would be required. Retired Colonel Gary Rice provides some generic calculations for the SCF in his 2006 article, "Making Canadian Forces Amphibiosity a Reality." He concludes:

> Based on these assumptions it was determined that the ALR for the SCTF Battle Group Headquarters and Battle Group is:
> **Accommodation** aboard the principal amphibious ship is required for 777 officers and other ranks.
> The **vehicle space** required aboard the principal amphibious ship for the BG's vehicles and guns
> is 28,353 square feet.
> The **cargo space** required aboard the principal amphibious ship for the BG's ammunition, stores

[12] David, Pugliese, A New Role for Victorias**:** Canada Creates Sub-Borne Special Operations Doctrine, *Defense News*, available from http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=2374153&C=navwar; Internet, accessed 01 April 2007.

[13] Hobson, Canada takes expeditionary force to task…

> and equipment is 59, 911.48 cubic feet.
> Four **CH-47 helicopter** spots are required aboard the principal amphibious ship.
> Well-deck space to accommodate six LCM 8 [shore connector vessels] is required aboard the principal amphibious ship.[14]

To put this into context, only the US Wasp Class Landing Helicopter Dock or Tarawa Class Landing Helicopter Assault Ships[15] are large enough to accommodate the entire SCF Battle Group in a single ship. There are, though, many other amphibious ship types available throughout the world's navies such as the Dutch Navy Rotterdam Class Landing Platform/Ship Dock (LPD/LSD), the Royal Navy Ocean Class Landing Helicopter Assault Ship (LHA/D), and the USN San Antonio Class LPD.[16] However, each of these ships has limitations with regard to troop, cargo, helicopter or well deck capacity that would necessitate the use of at least two ships in order to accommodate the SCF Amphibious Task Group (ATG) as specified.

Landing Force

From a Canadian land element perspective, an expeditionary land force (LF) should number approximately 1000 personnel in order to sustain an acceptable tempo. The combat arms component of this force would typically be three infantry companies (either light or wheeled mechanized), an artillery gun/mortar battery, surveillance and reconnaissance capability, direct fire capability (guns and missiles), engineers and other specialists such as snipers, numbering approximately 750 personnel. However, the

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[14] Colonel (Ret'd) Gary Harold Rice, Making Canadian Forces Amphibiosity a Reality, available from http://www.cda-cdai.ca/pdf/SCTFALR.pdf; Internet, accessed 01 April 2007.

[15] Janes Fighting Ships, available from http://janes.mil.ca/browse/yb/jfs/jfs2003/jfsnonf.htm; Canadian Defence Wide Area Network (DWAN) Access Site, accessed 29 March 2007.

[16] Ibid.

overall concept is based upon the complement being tailored to the particular operation or campaign. The National Command/Support Element would comprise the remaining 250 personnel.[17]

Air Expeditionary Unit

The Air Expeditionary Unit (AEU) would have comprised medium lift helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and non-organic Maritime Patrol Aircraft (CP-140 Aurora). As demonstrated during the ITEE, the only helicopter capability available to the SCF at present is provided by elderly CH124-B Sea Kings (with their ASW equipment removed, 14 troop seats added, and a new ARC-210 radio fitted).

It was intended that a combination of CH-148 Cyclone (Sea King replacement) and CH-47 Chinook helicopters would fulfill the multitude of lift, ISR, ASW, escort and medical evacuation missions. However, as the Chinook is not designed for over water operations and the sea environment, either extensive modifications would be required or the Cyclone would be the only type of helicopter employed.

In addition, UAVs of various tailored capabilities were to have been added depending upon the requirements of the operation. These UAV detachments could have operated from any of the SCF ships but would most likely have been accommodated in the JSS or amphibious ship(s).

Finally, as specified in the SCTF CONOPS, the AEU was to possess the capability to generate the required planning for "air operations independently or to

[17] Chief of Land Staff, A Soldiers Guide to Army Transformation. (Ottawa: DWAN Site http://armyonline.kingston.mil.ca/CLS/D143000440035707.asp, 2005).

integrate coalition assets."[18] This essentially means the personnel and planning space required for an organic Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) operations cell to apportion air resources and de-conflict their employment through the generation of operational messages such as Air Tasking Orders (ATO). Again, this cell would most likely be co-located in an amphibious ship with the SCF HQ element.

Support Group

The concept of "Seabasing" was intended for the sustainment of the SCF. Simply put, the immediate logistics requirements for all components of the SCF, with the exception of the CP-140 Auroras, was intended to be accommodated by the NTG Logistics Support Ship (AOR or JSS) and the amphibious ship(s). This sea borne sustainment was to be sufficient "for a period of not greater than 30 days."[19]

The Support Group was intended to be a truly joint component of the SCF in that it would be comprised of the NTG, Landing Force and AEU support elements dispersed throughout the force. General Support and Close Support were to have been provided by the combined Support Group, while Integral Support functions were to have been addressed by the elemental components of the Support Group (NTG, LF and AEU).

In spite of ambitious expectations, the ITEE was the only proof-of-concept live exercise conducted before the shelving of any further SCF development. As Hobson writes, the experiment was conducted with "a borrowed USN amphibious assault ship, 40-year-old helicopters, and a company-size landing force, but it was sufficient to prove

[18] Standing Contingency Task Force Concept of Operations (Draft) Version 3, CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation, October 2005. 19.

[19] Ibid., 20.

that the concept was viable."[20] However, many of the intended capabilities for the SCF were not therein demonstrated due to time and scope constraints.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

So what is it that Canada really needs in terms of an Expeditionary Force? While the SCF has been described as a pillar of CF Transformation, is it really what Canada needs and, as important, is it a capability the country can afford? Haydon accurately observes:

> …even if such a capability was created and made operational, which would take around fifteen years, there is the political question of where, when, and how it would be used. As presented at first, it was an armed intervention capability which, besides being very expensive to put in place, required a major shift in Canadian defence and foreign policies.[21]

At the danger of sounding like the mantra for Effects Based Operations (EBO) that may or may not be appropriate here, it is important to determine the effect or effects Canada desires to achieve with its military and then determine how they are best implemented.

Nic Boisvert, who writes on behalf of the Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century, is author of an interesting 2003 article that addresses this issue. He is critical of the move toward amphibious capabilities not because he disregards the validity of this warfare capability but rather because the Canadian government's Foreign Policy Imperative did not at the time nor indeed does today demand that the CF possess such capabilities. He succinctly summarizes the issue as follows:

> That is not to say the CF should ignore world trends toward "amphibiosity". But there is a big difference between being able to operate "from the sea" in support of coalition operations ashore, and actualsr of asity". But Aresfs a]TJType /Pr auof a/P /MCID 7 BDC

> CF structure (with a modest infusion of capital and personnel, and a willingness to participate with allies), while the latter requires a fundamental and costly restructuring of our military. What should be done depends on how broken one sees the present CF.[22]

It can be argued that the 2005 DPS implies the requirement for amphibious capability but it is "Defence Policy" and not necessarily reflective of the language contained in the 2005 International Policy Statement (IPS) from which it is derived.

Specifically, the IPS states Canada will make a contribution to the prevention/restoration of failed and failing states by promoting "stabilization through rapid deployment of our military."[23] The military requirements contained within the IPS are further displayed in a highlighted section as follows:

> PRIORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
>
> Maintain combat-capable Canadian Forces, focused on the challenge of restoring peace and stability to failed and fragile states.
>
> Key Initiatives
>
> - Focus on integrated operations to get the best mix of forces to the right place, at the right time, and to the right effect.
> - Increase the size of the Regular Forces by 5,000, effectively doubling the army's ability to deploy and sustain operations overseas.
> - Equip the Canadian Forces to carry out missions abroad, through initiatives such as the Joint Support Ships, the Mobile Gun System and guaranteed access to airlift.
> - Continuously review and modernize the Canadian Forces' capabilities.[24]

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[22] Nic Boisvert , Connecting the Dots: The Carrier Option, The Chretien Doctrine, and Transformation of the Canadian Forces, Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century; available fromhttp://www.ccs21.org/articles/boisvert/2003/documents/boisvert_connect-dots_sept03.pdf; Internet, accessed 01 April 2007.

[23] Canada's International Policy Statement 2005, available from http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/ips/ips-overview5-en.asp; Internet, accessed 19 March 2007.

[24] Ibid.

While liberal interpretation can be made with regard to "the best mix of forces to the right place, at the right time and to the right effect," nowhere in the document is any reference made to amphibious capability. As pointed out by Boisvert, the validity of amphibious capability is not in question, but the actual stated requirement for an "over the beach" capability in Canada's Foreign Policy Statement is not present.

Indeed, as outlined in the introduction of this paper, the actual stated effects demanded by the Canadian government are the capability for "rapid deployment" from "existing elements." This capability is further defined as "expeditionary" in the introduction to the DPS but this does not have to mean amphibious. According to an online dictionary, the term, "expeditionary," is defined as "(used of military forces) designed for military operations abroad,"[25] and therefore can include amphibious capability but is not compelled to do so. The CF has been participating in expeditionary missions since the Boer War in 1899.

In fact, only in the Land Forces portion of the DPS *Future Tasks of the Canadian Forces*, is any implied reference to amphibiousity made; this comes with the phrase, "provide the land component of the Standing Contingency Task Force, capable of embarking and operating from a maritime platform."[26] It is only in the SCF CONOPS that direct reference to amphibious capability is outlined.

Lift Requirements

[25] Dictionary.com. *WordNet® 3.0*. Princeton University, available from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expeditionary; Internet, accessed 14 April 2007.

[26] Defence Policy Statement 2005, available from http://www.dnd.ca/site/reports/dps/main/04_e.asp; Internet, accessed 12 December 2006.

There is more than one way to deliver expeditionary capability and, in fact, it is US military doctrine that recommends using multiple methods when possible. In Joint Pub 4-01.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Sealift Support to Joint Operations, presence of the strategic mobility triad of Airlift, Sealift and Pre-positioning and their usage are stated as the essential capabilities for response to strategic contingencies. Clearly, Canada cannot afford to pre-position large amounts of expeditionary equipment in leased bases around the world or, as is done by the USMC, in Maritime Pre-position Ships (MPS).

However, Airlift and Sealift are without question the methods of choice for contingency response. As stated in Joint Pub 4-01.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Sealift Support to Joint Operations:

> Successful response to regional contingencies depends upon sufficient strategic mobility assets to deploy combat forces rapidly and sustain them in a theater of operations as long as necessary.[27]

The imminent delivery of four C-17 Globemaster aircraft[28] and three JSS[29] will provide a modest organic lift capability, with the remainder of the required capacity contracted to commercial carriers (air and sea). The CF has been deploying the majority of personnel and equipment through the use of commercial carriers for many years.

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[27] Joint Pub 4-01.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Sealift Support to Joint Operations, 9 October 1996, available from http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/ship/docs/jp4_01_2.pdf; Internet, accessed 31 March 2007. vii.

[28] Backgrounder: "Canada First" Defence Procurement - Contract Awarding for Strategic Airlift. Canadian Department of National Defence Website, available from http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/Newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=2192; Internet, accessed 13 January 2007.

[29] Backgrounder: The Joint Support Ship Project. Canadian Department of National Defence Website, available from http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/Newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1346; Internet, accessed 13 January 2007.

This approach avoids the problem of "all our eggs in one basket" that was potentially looming with the so-called "Big Honking Ship" concept espoused by General Hillier. The desire for a single ship to carry all elements of an expeditionary force engenders a serious strain on ship design, overall size and continuous availability. Further, it presents a significant risk in terms of ship maintenance, and what would happen as a result of severe weather, sea mine strike, enemy action, accidental collision or grounding. Mission failure is assured based on the loss or delay of a single platform that carries all aspects of an expeditionary force.

The idea of leasing an amphibious ship or ships from an allied nation when required, as was practiced during the ITEE, has very little merit either. Even a navy as large as the one possessed by the United States retains no extra or additional amphibious ships that become available during times of crisis. Only in the remotely likely circumstance wherein Canada responds to an international crisis but the US does not would the availability of amphibious shipping "for hire" be a reality.

Thus, Canada is left with the options of contracting commercial lift ships or using commercial standards for a new ship design in order to maximize expeditionary lift. The commercial approach, both contract and design, limits the offload to a suitable port location, and thus limits options for where to disembark forces, but is the most realistic approach given funding and manpower constraints. Commercial standard ships that are dedicated to the support of the CF worldwide but would also be used by all other agencies of "Team Canada" in foreign missions presents an alternative to military crewed amphibious ships.

As stated above, Canada has been contracting both airlift and sealift to move military personnel, assets and sustainment resources for many years. The difficulties with this approach lie mainly in the limitation of suitable Air Ports of Disembarkation (APODS) and Sea Ports of Disembarkation (SPODS) being available where forces are required. In addition, the unpredictability of reliance upon commercial carriers, particularly when advance notice of lift requirements is not available, can seriously inhibit the CF's ability to meet the "rapidly deployable" constraint.

The reliance upon commercial carriers brings with it, too, the vulnerability to market demand for such lift. All other nations that deploy forces also use varying degrees of commercial lift. The competition for a finite number of lift resources used to facilitate the build-up of allied forces in a troubled region provides the possibility of undesirable delay in CF lift intentions.

Due to the incredible financial burden that would be incurred, the reality of a dedicated fleet of strategic airlift aircraft and heavy lift ships is very remote. The combination of military operated C-17 aircraft used in conjunction with commercial carriers would seem to strike the appropriate balance in airlift.

The dilemma of how sealift could be handled is less simplistic to solve. JSS represents a quantum improvement in sealift sustainment capability over the Preserver Class AOR but is still very modest in overall capacity. Just from an availability aspect, the building of only three JSS[30] will induce significant constraints on lift capacity to a foreign theatre due to fleet dispersion (East and West), maintenance and training cycle requirements and finally the simultaneous NTG support requirements.

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[30] Ibid.

Therefore, not only would additional JSS units be required to provide reliable sealift, but prudent as well would be investment in commercial ships to support all Canadian agency sealift requirements. These ships could be Canadian built and civilian (government employee) crewed, with a mandate to support all types of Canadian missions worldwide. This concept would require other government department capital investment and a significant shift in departmental cooperation, but it does provide great potential for Canada to be able to more effectively respond to crises at home and abroad.

However attractive amphibious warfare may be to the Canadian military leadership, over the beach capability presents a bridge too far for the CF at this juncture. Force size and resource limitations present significant obstacles for full development in this capability area. Not only would major equipment purchases be required to replace current capabilities, but the proposed new amphibious ship(s) and the associated enablers such as ship to shore delivery, marinized medium lift helicopters and land combat vehicles that can withstand the sea environment are expensive in terms of procurement capital, training time for operators and delivery of the vehicles themselves.

The CF and in particular the concept of the SCF cannot be all things to all parties. Even the DPS reads:

> While demand for our military to participate in international operations will undoubtedly remain high, the Government will be selective and strategic when considering such deployments.[31]

The feasibility and affordability of capabilities must be factored into any discussion on future directions for the CF.

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[31] Defence Policy Statement 2005, available from http://www.dnd.ca/site/reports/dps/main/04_e.asp; Internet, accessed 12 December 2006.

What then is feasible and affordable, and what is not? To begin, an amphibious capability is not a niche enabler that can be ignored for the most part and employed when required. As Commodore Chris Parry, the Royal Navy's Commander Amphibious Task Group (COMATG), says of amphibious capability, "No matter what some people might think, this is not a part time activity, as history and recent operations have shown."[32] It is a very versatile but expensive capability to maintain, not to mention the long and difficult path to acquiring and becoming proficient, as pointed out by Haydon. In order to field a credible amphibious force, the CF would have to fundamentally restructure to make amphibious capability the cornerstone of CF structure, one from which to build and to which all other components must contribute. There is clearly no impetus within the three environmental staffs, CMS, CLS, CAS, to commit to this concept while the mission in Afghanistan continues and another large scale near future domestic operation in the form of support to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver looms.

CONCLUSION

The announcement of the SCF concept as a pillar of transformation represented an innovative and optimistic approach to future joint operations. The ITEE that was conducted in the fall of 2006 further proved that many of the operating concepts of the SCF were viable. Unfortunately, requirement for a new amphibious capability as the centrepiece of the concept, coupled with the projected enormous fiscal and manpower drains from present and near future operations, put at least a three-year hold on further development of the concept. It is understandable the press was less than eager to report

[32] Commodore Chris Parry, Amphibiosity: The Centre Of Gravity, interviewed by Iain Ballantyne, *Warships International Fleet Review*, available from http://www.warshipsifr.com/amphibiosity.html; Internet, accessed 01 April 2007.

the disappointment of the shelving of such an exciting venture for the country. There has been much broad support for many of the transformational initiatives first outlined in the 2005 DPS. Particularly appealing to most defence analysts was the quantification of the IPS, from which the DPS was then created. This is a fundamental process for any government to follow in order that the military can best determine how to fulfill the desired capabilities.

In the case of the SCF however, it would appear that enthusiasm for a golden or optimum solution to the stated desire for rapidly deployable military forces created an admirable but unsustainable desire for amphibiousity. General Hillier is quoted as saying, "I've had to take a bit of an appetite suppressant,"[33] by Pugliese in the rather lonely article announcing the shelving of the SCF concept.

The good news portion of recent purchase announcements for equipment such as JSS, medium lift helicopters and C-17 is that solutions to deploying military forces inter- and intra-theatre are being addressed. While these projects are not the panacea to the entire spectrum of deploying forces to failed or failing states, they do represent improvements in this core function area that will permit the CF to meet the mandate of the DPS, provided functioning and secure Air and/or Sea Ports are available.

No matter how undesirable it may be to national prestige if Canada has to refuse the lead role in a potential mission due to unsuitable APODS and SPODS in the affected region, this is the reality of a resource constrained military. The Canadian government has carefully outlined the requirement for military forces that are rapidly deployable, but

[33] David Pugliese, Military shelves plans for expansion, Ottawa Citizen, available from http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=0f5cdc2f-32c5-4522-98cd-a745a; Internet, accessed 03 April 2007.

has not specified that these forces must be capable of insertion in great numbers under all conditions.

For at least the next three years, the CF will continue to field joint expeditionary forces in an ad hoc manner, with some known improvements in lift capability but with no increase in the types of conditions in which those forces can be delivered. Unfortunately for such champions of transformation as General Hillier, pragmatism must be exercised over enthusiasm.

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