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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
CSC 33 / CCEM 33

EXERCISE NEW HORIZONS

**STANDING CONTINGENCY FORCE: THE CHALLENGE OF MEETING CANADA'S
COMMITMENT TO THE NATO RESPONSE FORCE**

By / par

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian Government has identified the need to develop an amphibious capability within the Canadian Forces (CF). The CF has begun to develop this concept through the creation of a Standing Contingency Force (SCF). This SCF is to be a flexible, responsive and interoperable unit capable of a wide range of missions. It is also believed to be the answer to NATO demands for future Canadian troop contributions to its Response Force (NRF), as well as the domestic defence of Canada. The CF is currently not capable of developing the SCF and this paper identifies that while in theory the SCF is the future, it is not obtainable at this time.

INTRODUCTION

Canada's demands and expectations of its military forces have often been misunderstood. While the message from the Government of Canada and the Defence Minister has been one of "Canada First", the focus of Canadian Forces (CF) has been on meeting commitments to alliances, especially NATO, with operations generally directed overseas.¹ In accordance with this concept of operations, Canada has therefore commenced a transformation. However, this transformation was directed towards a reorganization of the command structure, while little work was done to change the force composition or methodology of force generation. However, in an attempt to rectify this deficiency, one possible solution is the standing-up of a new capability known as the Standing Contingency Force (SCF), which has recently become a transformational pillar in Canadian defence policy.²

In exploring this concept, this research paper will argue that, while the SCF, as presently envisioned, would theoretically meet the requirements of our national and international commitments, it can not meet Canada's contribution to NATO under its current planned employment and organization. This paper will therefore explore the SCF concept as Canada's attempt to form a new joint force unit that is highly flexible, deployable, and interoperable and that could contribute to the NATO Response Force (NRF). In doing this, it will highlight why the SCF will not adequately meet its theoretical requirements without some adjustment.

¹Canada, Canadian Forces, "A Role of Pride and Influence in the World, Defence", Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Ottawa, 2005, 1.

²Canada, Canadian Forces, "A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Overview", Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Ottawa, 2005, 14. Articulated the need for an expeditionary capability for the CF.

In order to understand the reasoning behind this assertion, it is necessary to first look at what the drivers for implementing an SCF were and how this unit would mesh with what our NATO allies envisioned.

WHERE IS NATO GOING

As stated in its transformation document of 2005, NATO was formed in 1949 when the Soviet Union was deemed the biggest threat to Western Europe, and no western government could ignore the possibility of another conflict arising so soon after the end of WWII.³ During the Cold War, the Alliance maintained sufficient capabilities to act as a deterrent force in Europe and be capable of defending the West against Soviet aggression. However, with the end of the Cold War, NATO realized it must adapt to meet the new world security environment, including terrorism and the consequences of failed or failing states.

NATO's transformation during the past 10 years has been extensive. Some of the initiatives involved in the transformation include the Partnership for Peace Program (PFP), better relations with Russia and Ukraine, a membership action plan to assist countries in meeting the standards required for admission into NATO, and increased cooperation with the European Union (EU). While these initiatives were mostly political or organizational, NATO also made some significant capability changes. After the Prague Summit of 2002, three major initiatives were launched: the reform of the NATO command structure; the Prague Capabilities Commitment, which addresses shortfalls in member countries capabilities; and the formation of the NRF. While the threat of

³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO TRANSFORMED", Brussels, BE: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2004, internet <http://www.nato.int/docu/nato-trans/nato-trans-eng.pdf> accessed 01 April 2007, 4.

immediate war in Europe has all but disappeared, NATO foresaw the need to transpose its military capabilities to counter the growing security threats facing its nations, including global terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The NRF was to be the new capability ready to assist in not only military conflicts, but all circumstances related to the alliances intent of mutual assistance.

CANADIAN NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

“CF that is strategically relevant, operationally responsive and tactically decisive, supported by an effective and adaptable defence institution; capable of operating within a dynamic and evolving security spectrum.”⁴

In order for the Canadian Forces to meet the Government of Canada’s foreign policy, political direction was required. The 2005 Liberal Government provided this direction in the form of an International Policy Statement (IPS) and a National Security Policy. Within these policy documents was an overview of the expected role of the CF, highlighting that the Forces were the critical element in responding to threats and other emergencies both at home and abroad. As stated in the IPS, Canada must possess a military that is well adapted to the evolving security environment and ready to respond to the country’s requirements.⁵

This evolving security environment led to three broad roles for the CF: protecting Canadians, defending North America in cooperation with the United States, and

⁴ Gen R.J. Hillier, “CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation.” National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: file: 1950-9 (CT), 10 November, 2005, 2.

⁵ Canada, Canadian Forces, “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence.” Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Ottawa, 2005, 2.

contributing to international peace and security.⁶ The Minister of National Defence indicated in his direction to the CF, that to meet these roles the CF must be effective, relevant and responsive, and remain capable of carrying out a range of operations, including combat. Highlighted in the policy statement was the requirement for change to meet the new uncertain world. As stated in the introduction, the government recognized the importance of meeting the threats to our security sometimes far away from our borders, and that security begins with stability abroad. To achieve this, it was envisioned that the best approach would be to contribute to the NRF.⁷

This need to provide Canadian security abroad was the foundation for the stand-up of the SCF as it ultimately led to the government and CF's requirement to produce expeditionary forces capable of operating within a wide spectrum of capabilities on international missions. As NATO is one of our primary allies, this paper will now examine how Canada best fits into the new NATO, and the NRF, as well as provide an insight into the capabilities and changes occurring within the CF, thus allowing for a comparison of NRF requirements versus SCF perceived capabilities.

WHAT IS THE NATO RESPONSE FORCE?

If the NATO response Force (NRF) is the cornerstone of NATO transformation, then what exactly is it? The definition provided by NATO is that it is," a multination

⁶ Canada, Canadian Forces, "A Role of Pride and Influence in the World, Defence", Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Ottawa, 2005, 3.

⁷ Ibid, 5.

force package that is intended to be deployable, interoperable, and sustainable.”⁸ This force would be tailored to meet the requirements of an identified mission and would provide a robust and credible joint force, capable of deploying in five days to anywhere it is required.⁹ It is composed of forces from Alliance nations, which will rotate through periods of training followed by certification as a joint force on stand-by for six months. These forces are on call to deploy for any incident that NATO deems appropriate. As mentioned, NRF is capable of performing a variety of missions including: non-combatant evacuation, crisis response, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, embargo and counter-terrorism operations, and respond to biological, chemical, radiological and nuclear incidents.¹⁰ NRF also has the capability as an initial entry force in order to facilitate the arrival of follow-on units or as part of the larger force in a multinational coalition.

NRF is composed of land, air, and maritime forces, as well as Special Forces comprising 25,000 troops at high readiness with the capability to be self-sustaining for 30 days.¹¹ While the intent is to have the capability to tailor the forces to an operation, the number of troops that would actually deploy is determined by the particulars of the mission. NRF forces are selected at least one year in advance through the force generation conferences conducted by Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Briefing, Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, “The NATO Response Force: At the Center of Transformation”, Brussels, BE: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, September, 2006. internet HQ ARRC, 1.

⁹ Including operations outside of the previous European area of influence. Exercised during Operation Steadfast Jaguar, off the coast of Cape Verde (Africa) in June 2006.

¹⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Questions and Answers”, SHAPE Information, Brussels, BE: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, internet http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape_nrf/nrf_q_a.htm, March, 2006, 1.

¹¹ Ibid, 2.

CANADIAN TRANSFORMATION

“The threat of operational irrelevance looms large, and as might be expected, there has been considerable debate as to the nature of the future”¹²

Canada is currently transforming to meet the “nature of the security environment which poses a myriad of complex challenges for Canada”¹³ Similarly, to NATO, Canada has understood the need to meet the changing environment of post Cold War. In fact, the end state of transformation for the CF is very similar to the outcomes of NATO transformation.

To meet the requirements of the changing focus on defence, the CF began a major overhaul of its command structure. This new structure evolved to focus on expeditionary operations outside of Canada, as well domestically to meet the new policy of Canada First. The Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) stood up as a unified command responsible for all CF international operations, with the exception of special operations, which would fall under Special Force Command. Canada Command (CANADACOM) unified operational command for all domestic operations, and was divided into four joint task force regions: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, West and Pacific.

Within the goal of CF transformation is embedded the formation of a Standing Contingency Force. The SCF was conceived of as a means to meet the Chief of Defence

¹²Paul Mitchell, “A transformation Agenda for the Canadian Forces” Canadian Military Journal, (winter 2003-2004), 56.

¹³ Gen R.J. Hillier, “CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation.” National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: file: 1950-9 (CT), 10 November, 2005, 2.

Staffs vision of the CF, which was to be “more responsive by enhancing its ability to act quickly in the event of crises”¹⁴

SCF: CANADA’S REACTION FORCE

According to the *Standing Contingency Task Force Commander’s Intent*, the SCTF is to be established to respond to emerging crises. The Force will comprise existing, designated maritime, land, air and special operations elements, under a single integrated command structure. It is the intention that this Force will be able to deploy in 10 days, which may be based on the existing maritime capability of deploying a high readiness ship on 10 days notice to sail for international operations.¹⁵ The concept of operations for the SCF is that;

“The SCTF will be capable of rapid deployment for crisis stabilization operations in the global littorals. It will provide the Government of Canada with a high readiness, rapidly deployable Sea/Air/Land force providing an integrated, expeditionary amphibious combat capability for full spectrum operations in an interagency multinational environment. While able to operate as a single entity, there will more often be situations when the SCTF will operate as part of a fully enabled coalition”¹⁶

The concept of the SCF is based on a strategic sealift capability, centered on what the Chief of Defence Staff has identified as a large ship capable of transporting a significant force augmented with a medium airlift capability.¹⁷ Returning to the DPS, it is

¹⁴ Ibid, 3.

¹⁵ Canadian Naval Task Group sailed with 4 days notice to move for OP UNISON, Hurricane Katrina relief.

¹⁶ Canada, Canadian Forces, “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World, Defence”, Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Ottawa, 2005, 9.

evident that the SCF was in the forefront of Canadian intentions and capabilities to face the threats of failed or failing states or other medium intensity operations. The SCF is unlikely to operate alone in any future missions involving combat. As our previous recent combat operations have shown us, our contribution in conflicts such as the Gulf War, Balkans, Cyprus and Somalia, have all been in concert with our allies. Therefore, this new SCF is conceived to be a fully interoperable force that is capable of operating at various levels of conflict.¹⁸

The SCF perceived missions are very similar to the ones assigned to the NRF; in fact they almost mirror the concept of the NRF in every manner. The SCF's amphibious transport ship, along with its naval escort or Joint Support Ship (JSS), will form a task force that will be capable of meeting the following missions: noncombatant evacuation operation, emerging crisis, combat operations in light-medium intensity situations, peace support operations, humanitarian operations, littoral Sea control (MIO), operational-level coalition functional command, as well as provide a national command capability. In the same vein as the NRF, it is also expected to be self sufficient ashore for 30 days. A direct comparison back to the NRF missions will highlight the considerable similarities between the two and the intended missions and employment. Acknowledging the similarity in concept of employment and in missions, the reasons the SCF will not likely meet the NRF's requirements will be explored.

¹⁷ McDonough, David, The Defence Policy Statement and its Vision of Expeditionary Capabilities, "Commentary", *Royal Canadian Military Institute*, May 2005, available from http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/cms_strat/strat-issues_e.asp?category=23&id=307, internet; accessed 04 April 2007, 2.

¹⁸ David, McDonough The Defence Policy Statement and its Vision of Expeditionary Capabilities, "Commentary", *Royal Canadian Military Institute*, May 2005, available from http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/cms_strat/strat-issues_e.asp?category=23&id=307, internet; accessed 04 April, 2007, 3.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING SCF

With the SCF concept well developed why it is simply not a matter of building the permanent capability within the CF. The answer is complex and has roots in many areas, including manning, procurement, training, doctrine and even history. Several of these areas will be discussed as they represent the biggest hurdles to success under the current SCF construct. However, the naval concerns of whether there are sufficient personnel to man an amphibious ship as well as the new joint support ships will not be discussed, but are also factors affecting the success of the SCF implementation.

Manning

The key to the successful SCF establishment is assuring the proper force structure is implemented. The CF is not a large organization and the formation of a new mobile unit with an estimated 1,000 soldiers is a significant undertaking.¹⁹ The current concept identified in the 2005 DPS is to utilize existing Army units to fulfill the needs of the SCF. As these will not be permanently assigned to the SCF, and will come from existing units, is the concurrent use of existing units really creating a “new military tool for rapid reaction?”²⁰ The CF has in the past attempted to “double hat” units vice utilizing a formed unit due to the limited numbers of personnel. A prime example of this was the 1st Canadian Division, which was formed from various positions across Canada that when required, would come together to train or deploy for a mission. This force came from all services and all geographical locations, and when put to the test during COP COBRA

¹⁹ Colonel (Ret'd) Howie Marsh, Conference of Defence Associations, An Analysis of Canada's International Policy Statement, April 2005 internet <http://www.cda-cdai.ca/presentations/marsh29apr05.htm>, 1. Approx 19,000 all ranks and trades in the Army.

²⁰ Hillier, Gen R.J. “Standing Contingency Task Force, Commanders Intent”, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, 11 May, 2005, 2.

(the contingency plan for withdrawing Canadian forces from the Former Yugoslavia), was found to be lacking cohesion and comprised a vast amount of differences in experience levels and capabilities. The fear that the SCF could become another 1st Canadian Division is a possibility, as long as the theory of rotating units is employed as the force generation method for the SCF.

What would be lacking in a unit utilizing a rotational manning situation would be the experience, training and cohesion of a formed unit who are dedicated stakeholders. Due to the Army regimental system, few transfers of personnel could occur between rotating units. In many cases, lessons would be relearned and experience would be lost. Commodore Paul Maddison, was the Commanding Officer for the SCF proof of concept exercise in November 2006 and stated that the advice he was getting from Canada's allies is that "if Canada chooses to go forward with this, [concept] we need to find a way to generate a standing littoral optimized battle group or landing force."²¹ If the CF is to seriously consider an SCF, then a change in culture must occur that produces a new breed of CF soldiers who will be essentially amphibious forces.

Clearly assigning standard infantry battalions on an ad hoc basis will not suffice according to Maddison, who articulated that currently "we are not building a culture of a standing, high readiness, sea-based, sea borne force... in terms of personnel, collective training and equipment."²² In this, he implies that a new unit with a new Canadian Forces Organization Order (CFOO) should be established in order to ensure that Army regimental training as well as domestic and international deployment cycles would not

²¹ Wentzell, B.K. Colonel (Ret'd), Reflections on the Canadian Amphibious Task Force, *Canadian Naval Review*, Vol 2, no. 4, (winter 2007), 36.

²² Ibid, 36.

affect the mandated flexible amphibious capability. This would ensure the capability could be ready to deploy as a formed and trained unit on the prescribed 10 days notice to move. This unit should also be located in vicinity of the point of disembarkation, currently identified as Shearwater, Nova Scotia.²³ Whether a regular force existing Army unit (2 Royal Canadian Regiment), currently located in the Maritimes under Joint Task Force Atlantic's Canada Command, becomes amphibious or whether a completely new unit is stood up in Gagetown or Shearwater as a solid cohesive unit, will be a requirement if the SCF concept is to be effective.

It should be noted that this review of manning issues was developed with the assumption that troops would be available despite our existing commitments in Afghanistan. Currently CEFCOM has a mandate to administratively sustain a continuous deployment of up to 5,000 military personnel around the world, and is at its maximum capacity as a result of the Army's military presence in Afghanistan and therefore it is understood that little additional capability could be maintained or generated for international operations or an SCF under the newly transformed command.

Budgetary Considerations and Procurement

“With the new resources provided in Budget 2005, the largest increase in the defence budget in a generation, the Canadian Forces are well positioned to recruit new personnel, replace outdated equipment and make other key improvements”²⁴

²³ CF Air base in Halifax Harbor, current base of operations for the Navy's Sea King helicopters. It has the ability to expand its infrastructure due to a significant amount of available space.

²⁴ Minister of National Defence, Defence Policy Statement, “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence.” Ottawa: Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Ottawa, 2005, 1.

Amphibious ships are very expensive, as is the creation of a new capability. The San Antonio Class Landing Platform Dock (LPD) is estimated to cost approx \$1.2 billion each over a nine-ship order.²⁵ While this is the high-end cost of a very capable ship, the HMS Ocean Class British amphibious ship, a smaller but equally capable ship has a projected cost of \$1.5 billion Canadian for two.²⁶ While these vessels are considerably cheaper, they are still very expensive for a cash strapped military with a yearly military expenditure budget of \$15 billion. While this cost may seem high, it is still only the cost of the ship to transport the SCF let alone the cost of the landing craft required to transport troops and equipment ashore. Landing Craft Air cushioned (LCAC) and Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) are two of the vessels used by the US Navy, and these landing craft, are not inexpensive barges. In 1990, the US military requested \$219.3 million for the purchase of nine LCAC's.²⁷ Add in the cost of medium to heavy lift helicopters (probably CH 47 Chinook) for ship to shore rapid deployment at an estimated \$5 billion for 16 platforms that are not even maritized and do not have folding rotors, (the standard for ship borne operations), and the price keeps rising.²⁸

Weapon systems, personal equipment, and equipment conversions, to combat the effects of maritime weather, are all considerations when calculating the significant cost of mounting an amphibious force. Canada's first amphibious training exercise in November

²⁵ Defense Industry Daily, "Surface Ships Other", Watershed publishing, 2007. http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/surface_ships_other/index.php, internet accessed 14 April 2007.

²⁶ Defense news.com, "Canada reviews support, Transport Ship Programs", <http://dfn.dnmediagroup.com/story.php?f=1716744&C=navwar>, internet accessed 14 April 2007.

²⁷ Global Security.org, "Landing Craft, Air Cushion", July 17, 2006. available from, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/lcac.htm>

²⁸ Maritizing; Preparations to counter salt spray and other conditions of maritime operations.

2006, off the Coast of North Carolina, topped the \$19 million dollar mark, and was only successfully conducted through the use of significant American resources and support.²⁹ All of these costs come at a time when the navy is struggling with the submarine project, the Joint Support Ship Program, frigate modernization and the replacement of the Iroquois Class (area air defence) ships. While heavy price tags often eliminate the acquisition of new military technology, if the government is behind the SCF capability, then it is must be made clear that its standup will bring DND budget reductions elsewhere.

When the question was asked of the Chief of Land staff in 2004, Lieutenant-General Marc Caron on the Army's involvement with sealift, he stated "the army just wanted the "best way to get there that the CF can provide us"³⁰, clearly the Army is not looking to decrease their operations budget in order to gain strategic sealift. If the CF is willing to adjust its structure and operations to meet the demands of the increased spending on this new capability then the money will be available, but if the three services cannot come to an agreement on the future of an expeditionary force, then it will never come to fruition. While many issues could be addressed in the long term, there is certainly one immediate procurement concern, and that is the time required to build a new amphibious ship. With an estimated build time of 10 years, Canada must make a decision as to the future of amphibious operations in order to provide the lead-time to have the arrival of the ship meet the created capability. Leasing an available ship from

²⁹ Murray, Brewster, "Canada to storm Carolina", *The Chronicle Herald*, The Canadian Press November 9, 2006

³⁰ Sharon Hobson, "Plain Talk", *Canadian Naval Review*, Vol 1, Number 4 (winter 2006), 29.

the U.S. may be an option but one that is not likely a long-term solution based on the practice of Canadian warship construction.³¹

Cultural Impediments (Training and Doctrine)

The requirement for an amphibious capability is evident in the government's policy statement, but without a clear concept of amphibious operations, can the CF or the Government of Canada look to establish an amphibious capability? The need to identify the size and type of units based on doctrine and training is a necessity. There are significantly different requirements for sealift, to move 800 light infantrymen then there is to move a wheeled or tracked brigade of 1,000 personnel.

Collective training, was previously mentioned as a requirement, but with every new capability or role comes the need for the development of specialized tactics and doctrine and the need to exercise and improve this capability.

While these foundations are not something that would stop the creation of the SCF they are important tools in the effective deployment of the force, and are certainly some of the first steps in acquiring the capability. Currently Canada has no marine or amphibious doctrine, or amphibious capability, and while U.S. Marine Corp doctrine and procedures are a starting point for Canadian amphibious operations, the difference in sheer numbers of men, equipment and tactics require extensive modification to meet Canadian requirements.

³¹ Col (Ret'd) B.K. Wentzell, Reflections of the Canadian Amphibious Task Force, Canadian Naval Review, Volume 2 no. 4 (winter 2007), 15. 10 years is an average construction time unless used units were made available by an ally. All warships of the past 50 years have been built in Canadian yards except the submarines purchased from the British.

Command and Control

A critical issue at the root of a successful creation of an amphibious capability is the need for an integrated command, control and communications structure. The CF faces a significant learning and development curve due to the minimal existing interaction between Canadian naval and land forces in a joint environment. The complexities of amphibious operations were articulated within the SCF Concept of operations, and later in the proof of concept exercise off North Carolina where the concept of command structure was determined to require further development.³² There is no less than six subordinate element Task Group Commanders identified for the SCF organization and each Commander is supported by personal staff whose elements, size and complexity, including the possibility of detachment from the task group will, according to the SCF concept of Ops, “be determined as the concept evolves.”³³

Obviously, this lack of experience and doctrine development will lead to a trial and error method of command and control, again not an impediment to the standing up of the SCF, but an area that will require significant training and maturity in order to develop into an effective command structure. One factor that is often overlooked is the incompatibility of our legacy communications equipment. While Canada has strived towards interoperability with our American or NATO alliance partners, we have had little focus on our own inter-service interoperability. Simple items such as radios have minimal capabilities for interaction between naval and ground forces. While the Navy has moved ahead in conjunction with the U.S. Navy communications developments, the

³² Canada, Canadian Forces, “Standing Contingency Task Force”: Concept of Operations, Version 3, October, 2005, 9.

³³ Ibid, 17.

Canadian Army has moved towards interoperability with our NATO Allies.³⁴ Again this is not something that could not be overcome with equipment procurement and training, but is simply another hurdle in the development of the stand up of the SCF concept.

STANDING CONTINGENCY FORCE ON HOLD

During the research of this paper it became apparent the high level of future capabilities and flexibility available to the CF with the stand-up of an SCF. What also became apparent were the heavy financial and organizational requirements and demands placed on the CF in order to establish and maintain such a force. Just how difficult it would be became apparent on 05 April 2007, with the release of a message from the Chief of the Defence staff on the future of the SCF, entitled *Integrated Sea-Land –Air effects Concept Development and Experimentation*. While this message did not go into detail as to the difficulties and concerns with the establishment of the SCF, it articulated, “operational and fiscal pressures on the CF now make it difficult to sustain such an

concluded the message with the direction that the CF “remains poised to seize the opportunity to transform concepts into new capabilities once the necessary balance of resources with priorities is achieved.”³⁶

The SCF was placed on indefinite hold and while there is no detailed explanation of the exact issues affecting the cessation of work on the SCF, it is likely that the issues identified in this paper, were major factors. In an interview with the *Ottawa Citizen*, the CDS explained, that mounting pressures from the Afghanistan mission, as well as the upcoming role in providing security for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, requires the military to scale back some of its ambitious equipment and expansion plans.³⁷

CONCLUSION

NATO and Canada have taken similar paths to meet the changing threat to world and national security in the post Cold War, and while Canada is a member of NATO our ability to contribute to the NRF thus far has been limited to a one year Command of the Standing NATO Maritime Group One, which involved a rotation of Flagship duties between two Canadian destroyers for the six month training phase and the six month standby phase in Europe. Canada has yet to contribute land troops to the NRF force, and future contributions remain in question. With the announcement of the SCF, it was the author’s belief that this future capability would be the force identified to provide the future Canadian contribution to the NATO NRF, as well as enable a greater flexibility to domestic defence requirements.

³⁶ Hillier, Gen R.J. “Integrated Sea-Land-Air Effects Concept Development and Experimentation”, CANFORGEN 059/07 CDS 013/07 051855Z APR 2007.

³⁷ David Pugliese, “Military Shelves Plan for Expansion”, *The Ottawa Citizen*, 07 March, 2007.

Having reviewed the missions of the two organizations and explored the similar paths that were taken through transformation to arrive at this force, it is clear that in theory, the SCF would be ideally suited to meet the Canadian contribution to the NATO NRF.

The recent history of the Canadian requirement for an amphibious type of force has been extensive and has often caused the CF to provide an ad hoc response. Contingency NEO operations like COBRA in 1994-95, the actual logistics over the shore operations in Somalia in 1992, Hurricane Andrew assistance in 1994 and more recent OPERATION UNISON, support to Hurricane Katrina victims in 2006, highlight the type of operations requiring amphibious capabilities that were initiated using existing ad hoc high readiness resources. These capabilities and roles are ones at the forefront of missions identified for the SCF as well as the NATO Response Force.

Whether the Canadian Government has the political will to direct the CF and provide the assets to progress with this new amphibious role, is still an unknown. For the CF personnel involved, amphibious operations are a significant change in culture, doctrine and structure, including changes to our current command and control hierarchy. While the cost is currently prohibitive, a significant influx of funds, and a change in government priority would develop the SCF and transform the CF into an expeditionary amphibious force. It is evident that the CF does not have the military and financial capability to develop an SCF or contribute land forces to a NATO response force, as long as we are heavily committed in Afghanistan.

While this means we cannot establish the force today, it should not deter the CF from continuing to progress to this future capability in order to meet the needs of the post

Cold War threats. The SCF would enable us to provide a valuable contribution to world security through a flexible, deployable and interoperable force that could amalgamate with our allies or future coalitions in particular the NRF. Due to the factors expressed in this paper, it is just not within reach at this time.

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