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EXERCISE/EXERCICE  
**Master of Defence Studies (MDS) Research Paper**

**Beyond JSS:  
Analyzing Canada's Amphibious Requirement**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that an amphibious capability would provide the optimum Canadian force package for conducting modern expeditionary operations. The security environment in which Canadian forces operate has altered greatly since the end of the Cold War. Unpredictable asymmetric threats now abound in the failed and failing nations of the world and threaten Canadians at home and abroad. The littoral regions of these unstable nations are particularly prone to modern trans-national threats. As such, Canada has a vested interest to remain committed abroad in a wide range of expeditionary roles. In fact, the Canadian government's Foreign and Defence policies require a military capability that can safely and effectively deal with the incredibly broad spectrum of potential operations. These operations range from Humanitarian Assistance to Peace Support and Major Combat Operations.

The demographics of today's population suggest that it is the littoral, or coastal, regions of the world that will require Canadian military intervention. Moreover, the incredible complexity and nature of today's operating environment demands a fast, flexible and responsive force in order to ensure relevant and effective actions. Since Canada no longer has any fixed military capability abroad, a maritime based power projection force is required as it alone contains the capabilities suited to match all of today's unpredictable threats.

The Joint Support Ship (JSS) and strategic airlift initiatives have a definite future role to play in Canadian expeditionary ventures. However, these capabilities have significant limits in capacity and operational staging that render them limited to benign, or low threat environments. The operational abilities, tempo and momentum of an

amphibious capability make it the only force structure that has global reach and complete relevance across the spectrum of operations.

The acquisition of an amphibious power projection capability has significant challenges and issues. First, it requires political support and endorsement. Second, it must inspire and be embraced by the military community. Third, allied approval and support is required in order to be fully accepted by Canada's coalition partners. In the end, however, Canada needs to fight through these challenges and expand its military capabilities in order to put together an amphibious force package, since it is the best means for achieving Canadian Foreign and Defence policy interests.

## INTRODUCTION

Recent initiatives in transformation have been focused on efforts to revitalize and tailor the Canadian Forces for renewed relevancy, responsiveness and efficiency. One of these initiatives centered on a maritime based power projection, or amphibious, capability. The ultimate goal of this worthwhile capability is to create a force that has international reach and contributes in a cost effective and meaningful way to global peace and collective security. This paper will show that in order to best achieve Canada's Foreign and Defence Policy interests and objectives, an amphibious or maritime based power projection capability is required.

Chapter one demonstrates why a maritime based power projection capability is required. In the 1960's, a similar initiative was proposed but was ultimately shelved as the Cold War environment was best conducted by maintaining fixed military capability overseas. Today's security environment has changed significantly. In the post Cold War era, nations find their interests and independence endangered with regional instability and trans-national threats such as terrorism and organized crime. At the same time, they are left to deal with these issues with outdated equipment and capabilities geared towards countering a symmetrical and stable threat. Meaningful contributions to collective security against trans-national threats means that productive and significant military operations are required if Canadian national interests are to be supported. The question remaining, though, is what force package can deliver the right mix of operational capability, given the security environment and our national objectives? An examination of the contemporary environment in which Canadian expeditionary forces will be

required to operate, coupled with a review of government policy objectives reveals that the advantages of a maritime based power projection capability are more than fitting, they are optimal.

This is not to say that traditional roles must be put aside. The military principles that underscore functions such as sea control and sea denial must continue to be upheld. The oceans still serve as a bridge between nations, and a source of natural resources. In fact, given the nature of the security environment, it is arguably more important to be able to control the seas. However, since the end of the Cold War, threats to sea control are no longer found in the blue water regions of the oceans. Today's security environment clearly shows that the brown water littorals are the regions from where great influence and stability ashore are delivered. In other words, to be decisive, a military power must go ashore: "actions against the enemy shore are the ultimate aim of any war at sea, while victory over the enemy fleet creates only one of the prerequisites to accomplish the final aims of war."<sup>1</sup> Given that Canada no longer has fixed capability abroad, and given our foreign policy objectives of contributing to global peace and stability, there remains a requirement to invest in expeditionary operations in such a manner as to enable the projection of our influence abroad and safeguard our interests in the face a volatile security environment.

The Canadian Forces must expand beyond its traditional roles. Chapter two will define what the power projection capability is that Canada requires. It will show that, while there are many facets to maritime power projection, only amphibious operations provide the complete mission sets and versatility required to meet the stated

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<sup>1</sup> Milan N. Vego, *Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), 185.



governmental objectives. Power projection is more than administrative mobility; it is a tactical military manoeuvre that requires an amphibious ship along with air and surface connector systems. As many of our Allies have recognized, only this tactical concept provides the type of robust and flexible force package that can quickly adapt to make a substantial contribution and meet the demands of the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) across the entire spectrum of conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Expanding roles and generating new military capabilities, however, have never been easy tasks. Chapter three explores the primary issues and challenges that stand in the way of development and institutionalizing an amphibious capability. There are three over-arching obstacles. The first and largest challenge lies in gathering the political will and endorsement. Without this, appropriate levels of funding will not occur. Secondly, there are many challenges towards developing an amphibious initiative within the military community. Issues such as capacity, opportunity-cost, training and even military culture must be overcome. Lastly, allied approval and endorsement is needed, particularly when it comes to leveraging amphibious expertise, mentorship and support.

Underlining the magnitude of the challenges facing an amphibious power projection capability is the recent announcement to put the Standing Contingency Force (SCF) on hold.<sup>3</sup> The Canadian military problems of an increasing training bill, coupled with “mounting pressures from the Afghanistan mission as well as its upcoming role in

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of Canada, every G8 nation and Australia and the Netherlands either has an amphibious capability, or is developing one.

<sup>3</sup> The SCF concept was introduced in the 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS). It is a Canadian rapid reaction joint force that was planned to be capable of amphibious delivery. The DPS states that the SCF was to be a high-readiness task force organized under a single integrated combat command structure. The SCF was envisioned to provide an initial Canadian Forces presence and either stabilize a situation or facilitate the deployment of larger, follow-on forces should circumstances require.

providing security for the 2010 Olympics”<sup>4</sup> have resulted in the sidelining of the amphibious initiative. Nonetheless, the project has not been cancelled and a full understanding of governmental requirements and amphibious capabilities leads to the conclusion that such an initiative is optimal, achievable and should be constructed.

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<sup>4</sup> David Pugliese, “Military Shelves Plans for Expansion,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 2007, 1.

# **CHAPTER ONE – THE NEED FOR A MARITIME BASED POWER PROJECTION CAPABILITY**

## **INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The end of the Cold War era in 1989 marked the end of a stable, consistent and predictable threat. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, western nations were hopeful and optimistic for a more peaceful and prosperous environment. Unfortunately, the demise of the Cold War has been followed with the rise of trans-national and asymmetric threats. Incredibly unpredictable, today's modern enemies thrive in failed and failing nations.

Canadian policies and scope for addressing national threats have been laid in government documentation. The 1963 "Report of the Adhoc Committee on Defence Policy" revealed a short-lived amphibious proposal that recommended the creation of a versatile power projection force to deal with the Cold War threat. The key pieces of literature examined for today's modern defence initiatives are the Defence Policy Statement (DPS) from 2005, and the Conservative "Canada First" policy and "Stand Up For Canada" election platform. These documents reflect the Canadian political will to remain expeditionary, and also show that renewed relevance and transformation are required in order to be responsive and significantly contribute to global peace and security.

General Edward Hanlon examines the nature and likelihood of operations in today's littoral environment in his paper "Taking the Long View: Littoral Warfare

Challenges.” This paper shows the importance of the world’s littorals to western nations, and also points out that these areas are extremely susceptible to asymmetric and trans-national threats. By extension, Canada also requires a robust littoral capability and needs to equip itself with a flexible and adaptable expeditionary force structure that can effectively deal with stabilizing international crises.

A joint, maritime based power projection force is the optimal capability for handling many littoral contingencies. Amphibious by nature, this capability is growing in popularity among many western nations. Cdr Greg Aikins examines some of the many advantages to an amphibious capability in his article “Beyond ALSC: We Need to get Amphibious and Joint to stay Relevant.” Moreover, Milan Vego points out in his book Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas that sea power is considerably diminished without substantial maritime power projection. It follows, therefore, that the best force package for relevant operations across the spectrum of conflict is an amphibious power projection force.

## **‘TRIPHIBIOUS’ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In developing an understanding of the attraction to the strategic advantages and aspects of maritime power projection in expeditionary operations, an examination of a historically similar situation is useful as it highlights key challenges to radical changes in Canadian defence policy. In the mid-1960s, the value and flexibility offered through the development of a joint expeditionary rapid reaction force was recognized. In 1963, Paul Hellyer became the Liberal Party’s Minister of National Defence and was dissatisfied

with the force structure of the Canadian Forces (CF). He set out to implement radical change with a newfound alacrity. To begin, he firmly believed that uniting the services would lead to greater stream lining and efficiency. As he put it in his biography, he desired a transformation to alleviate the “waste and extravagance resulting from duplication and triplication...the next logical step was a single service.”<sup>5</sup> As a result, he had an internal review conducted that was led by a defence scientist, Dr. R.J. Sutherland. The resultant report had a number of radical policy options. One of which focused on withdrawing Canada’s NATO force from Europe and having a Canadian based rapid reaction force instead.<sup>6</sup>

This radical proposal introduced a concept for a “triphibious” force, or Canadian Marine Corps.<sup>7</sup> This notion of adopting a Marine Corps structure was also supported by General Guy Simonds as one of his recommendations to the Special Committee on National Defence in the summer of 1963.<sup>8</sup> The “triphibious” force proposed by Dr Sutherland was a high readiness Joint Task Force that was comprised of three elements:

- An army element capable of carrying out operations on land;
- A tactical air element which could be established ashore; and
- A naval element which would provide the necessary sealift and logistic support and which would also be capable of its own defence.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Hellyer, *Damn the Torpedoes: My Fight to Unify Canada’s Armed Forces* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), 36.

<sup>6</sup> House of Commons, AdHoc Committee on Defence Policy, *Report of the AdHoc Committee on Defence Policy*, 30 September 1963, 118.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> House of Commons, Special Committee on Defence, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, no. 14, Thursday, October 17, 1963, 439. Specifically, General Simonds recommended a tri-service force structure “very much like the United States marine corps which is a highly mobile force complete with all its ancillaries and able to meet what are commonly called brushfire situations.”

<sup>9</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the AdHoc Committee on Defence Policy*...118.

The army component was envisioned to be a brigade group sized element. The tactical air element was to include 30 VSTOL aircraft operated from two light carriers, and the naval portion was to include units that would enable Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) defence, medium air defence and a limited surface to surface capability.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the force would be self supporting for up to 60 days and to be able to deploy quickly enough to be in a theatre of operations within 10 to 28 days, depending on the transit time from Canada.

The concept was new, innovative and not far removed from the characteristics of the Standing Contingency Force (SCF), as will be further discussed in Chapter 2. The usefulness in examining this historical proposal, though, stems from the fact that the utility of an amphibious or “triphibious” force transcends shifts in operating environments. What must be determined is not if such a force would be relevant to the current security environment, but whether it would be the optimal force package to deliver the desired political and military effects. The incredible flexibility of this force had many potential uses in the mid 1960s. Peter Haydon, a Senior Research Fellow at Dalhousie University, points out:

It would be available to the NATO flanks in Northern Norway and the Eastern Mediterranean. Alternatively, it could be used to let Canada support UN operations in ways not previously possible and with a great deal of operational flexibility. It also had potential for use in various parts of the world should Canada wish to join a non-UN multinational force.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the AdHoc Committee on Defence Policy*...121.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Haydon, “Canadian Amphibious Capabilities: Been there, Done it, Got the T-shirt!” *Maritime Affairs* (Winter 2001): 15.

Although the proposal did not proceed, the utility and value of a maritime based power projection capability were never in question (as remains the case today). There were three reasons that led to the abandonment of the ‘triphibious’ idea. First, the financial restraints were considerable, and estimated to be in the vicinity of two billion dollars in 1963.<sup>12</sup> Second, there was not enough political will to support such a radical shift in defence policy. Third, the nature of the Cold War security environment, as will be examined, was such that an amphibious task force was not the optimal force package and delivery method. Instead, it made more sense strategically and fiscally to retain the already established relevant capability abroad.

Notwithstanding the reasons for discarding this proposal, there were important lessons learned from this experience that have a bearing on current and future initiatives. First, in the analysis that followed, it was pointed out that contingency sea lift could not be assured if other operations were being conducted.<sup>13</sup> In other words, a force of this structure would require dedicated shipping in order to be fully prepared. Secondly, the importance of matching the foreign policy objectives to the defence structure should not be under estimated. Without marrying the two together, there is little likelihood in ensuring the requisite political will and consequently, making successful radical transformation.

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<sup>12</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the AdHoc Committee on Defence Policy*...121. Put into perspective, this equates to 13.8 billion Canadian dollars in 2007, as calculated from the Bank of Canada’s inflation calculator found at [http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation\\_calc.html](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html); Internet; accessed 13 April 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Haydon, “Canadian Amphibious Capabilities: Been there, Done it, Got the T-shirt!”, 18.

## VARYING SECURITY ENVIRONMENTS

There has been a lot written about the changes in our security environment since the end of the Cold War. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 marked the end of an era that can best be described as one of structured risk and stability. This bipolar period saw a predictable, albeit tense, military conflict between superpowers who were content with deterrence as the stabilizing force. In such a climate, regional conflicts were largely overshadowed with the adversaries aligning with opposite sides of the Cold War. In turn, these regional uprisings tended to stabilize as the deterring threat of global warfare in the nuclear arena loomed over their heads. In this Cold War security environment, where the two sides and their capabilities are well known, the corresponding defence policies revolved around fixed forces, fixed bases and fixed structures. This era was also characterized by the lengthy development of platforms and weaponry.

In contrast, the security environment today is best characterized as uncertain and unstable. Terrorism, organized crime, piracy and an increasing predominance of non-state actors have created a contemporary security environment of unpredictable risk. These are fundamentally different and unique challenges than those that have shaped Canadian defence traditions since the end of World War II. In theory, a major change in the security environment, like that discussed above, should lead to a change in defence policy and initiatives.

One last and extremely important characteristic of today's security environment is that regional crisis and conflicts are much more pliable and malleable than that of the Cold War. Uncertainty in failed and failing states translates into the need for agile,



adaptable and flexible forces as modern security threats are varied, regional and can arise quickly. In general, expeditionary forces today are being developed to respond quickly and be positively influential in an unstable circumstance that may not have been forecast. In today's security environment, military capability must be put together and employable in such a manner as to be as equally relevant as the threat is diverse.

## **CURRENT DEFENCE POLICY OBJECTIVES**

In April 2005, the Liberal party released their Defence Policy Statement (DPS) as a part of a broader International Policy Statement (IPS).<sup>14</sup> Of the new transformational initiatives contained therein, there were distinct requirements for military expansion and the development of a rapid reaction Joint expeditionary force. The Liberal government's intent was to bring innovative growth from customary roles to ones that best fit contemporary characteristics. Specifically, the Liberal DPS stated that the CF must:

Move beyond traditional thinking. Consequently, the operational transformation of the CF will focus on the establishment of new joint organizations and combat structures that can meet the Government's expectations for effectiveness, relevance and responsiveness.<sup>15</sup>

The Conservative party's ascension to power in early 2006 was not forecast to hinder transformational initiatives, despite the fact that they lacked their own comprehensive defence plan.

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<sup>14</sup> Department of National Defence. *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World* (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2005), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence*, (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2005), 12.

Notwithstanding the lack of a defence plan, the Conservative Party has declared a number of defence objectives through their Canada First strategy, and also in their election platform. Notably, the Canada First strategy stipulates that, “the roles and missions supported by the Conservative Party are first, sovereignty protection, domestic defence, and North American shared defence. Conservatives will also support international peace and security missions as well as humanitarian assistance.”<sup>16</sup> These basic principles have not changed since World War II.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Defence Minister Gordon O’Conner stated in a speech in Feb 2006 that “Canada must be able to fulfill its own responsibilities...beyond North America, Canada's defence is also tied to stability in the rest of the world. Canada must squarely address threats to our sovereignty and security before they reach our shores.”<sup>18</sup> These principles are consistent with the former Liberal government’s defence policy. It follows, therefore, that the Conservative’s policies in defence and foreign affairs are not substantially different from the 2005 IPS, especially when it comes to global security and desirable Canadian response. As a result, the principles from the IPS are relevant regardless of which party is in power. Hence, the expeditionary and transformational requirements remain unchanged.

The election platform also gives us additional insights into the national defence intentions of the current Conservative government. The clear overall defence objectives

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<sup>16</sup> Conservative Party of Canada. “Canada First Policy,” <http://www.conservative.ca/EN/2692/41687>; Internet; accessed 10 Jan 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Canada’s Defence strategy has consistently revolved around three strategic roles consisting of two strategic imperatives (the defence of Canada and the defence of the North American continent) and one strategic choice (a global contribution).

<sup>18</sup> Speaking Notes for the Honourable Gordon J. O’Connor, P.C., M.P. Minister of National Defence at the Conference of Defence Associations Institute Annual General Meeting February 23, 2006. [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=1860](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1860); Internet; accessed 15 March 2007.

are to first assuring national sovereignty, and then consider contribution on the global stage. The primary focus of the election platform policy is unmistakably to strengthen, reequip and reposition forces for domestic emergency, sovereignty and surveillance requirements by maritime, air and land forces.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, the platform lists nine initiatives. They are:

- Complete the transformation of military operations and defence administration;
- Recruit 13 000 additional regular forces and 10 000 additional reserve force personnel;
- Increase spending on the CF by \$5.3 billion over the next five years, beyond the currently projected levels of defence spending;
- Expand recruitment and training, reduce rank structure overhead, review civilian and military HQ functions and increase front-line personnel;
- Increase investment in Base infrastructure and housing for our forces;
- Acquire equipment needed to support a multi-role, combat-capable maritime, land and air force. Fundamental capability requirements are national surveillance and control, counter-terrorism, air and sea ‘deployability’ and logistics supportability;
- Increase the CF capacity to protect arctic security and sovereignty;
- Restore the regular army presence in BC; and,
- Treat Canada’s veterans with the respect and honour that they deserve, and ensure better responsiveness to veterans with a Veterans’ Bill of Rights and a Veterans’ Ombudsman.<sup>20</sup>

All but one of these initiatives dwells on domestic issues. In addition, the ‘deployability’ mentioned above is distinctly different from a power projection capability. As a result, it is safe to assume that the level of political will needed to make a radical, yet necessary, augmentation to our expeditionary capabilities is not fully realized.

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<sup>19</sup> Conservative Party of Canada, “Stand Up for Canada: Federal Election Platform 2006,” <http://www.conservative.ca/EN/2692/41687>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2007, 45.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

At first glance, this overarching strategy can be perceived as being rather introspective with such an increased emphasis on domestic operations. Expeditionary operations and initiatives are given a clear position at the bottom of the national security totem pole. Since the strategic imperatives are in the order of protecting Canada, contributing to continental defence and finally contributing to global peace and security, it follows that the Canada First policy is very much in line with a perspective that is traditionally safe in the political arena; consistent with conventional Canadian Defence policy, the Conservatives are intent at maintaining the status quo with their military priorities. While the wisdom of looking after your home territory first is unquestionable and will always be as such, the increased prominence of domestic operations is a steep challenge to cobbling together an amphibious power projection capability, such as the SCF. If not balanced carefully, domestic initiatives could be over emphasized and consume a disproportionate amount of the defence budget.

Leading up to Canadian Forces transformation, the Liberal government stated in the IPS that “the government is committed to enhancing Canada’s ability to contribute to international peace and security and, in particular, restore stability in failed and failing states.”<sup>21</sup> This statement stems from the fact that there are substantial political reasons for expanding expeditionary power projection capabilities. Today’s Conservative party agrees; when addressing the need to be committed to collective international security requirements, the “Canada First” policy states that:

The Conservative Party believes that Canada has a direct interest in a more stable and secure world. Our government must be positioned to

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<sup>21</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence...*, 26.

deal with complex international security issues in order to protect our citizens and contribute to the broader responsibility.<sup>22</sup>

The security investment of contributing to global stability is paired with the Foreign Affairs policies of adding to collective security and defence.<sup>23</sup> This, in turn, translates into a commitment to be proactively forward engaged. However, the key issue is how to best tailor Canadian Forces in order to be cost-effective, relevant and effective in the contemporary and future operating environments. In order to be consistent with Canadian Foreign Affairs and Defence policy, the CF must be packaged and enabled so as to contribute to furthering global stability and security while promoting the principles of democracy and human rights. This is a tall order for any medium power, and the inherent challenge to military leadership is to identify when a cultural shift is required to match evolving threats and remain effective. Moreover, in the case of the SCF initiative, they must also convince political policy makers that such innovative expansion is the best option, and obtain their unwavering endorsement.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS**

According to the US Marine Corps doctrinal publication on expeditionary operations, the term “expeditionary” refers to an operation conducted with a specific objective in a foreign country.<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding that the ‘Canada First’ strategy bolsters

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<sup>22</sup> Conservative Party of Canada. “Canada First Policy,” <http://www.conservative.ca/EN/2692/41687>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2007.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> United States, Department of Defence, MCDP 3, *U.S. Marine Corps: Expeditionary Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1998), 31. The defining characteristic of an expeditionary operation is the projection of force into a foreign setting. By extension, such operations

investment on domestic operations, the requirement for Canada to remain expeditionary and forward deployed remains unchanged. Moreover, Canada requires relevant expeditionary forces that are suitable to our Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) and are enabled to make meaningful contributions on the international stage. The characteristics of our COE, as will be discussed, are such that they demand an added emphasis on expeditionary capabilities. Any nation that has aspirations to be part of a global structure has to either establish strategic capability abroad, or have the inherent capacity to project their will from home. As the famous naval philosopher Sir Julian Corbett succinctly put it:

Since men live upon the land and not the sea, great issues between nations at war have always been decided—except in the rarest cases—either by what your army can do against your enemy’s territory and national life or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do.<sup>25</sup>

Canada now embraces the post Cold War view that “there is little point in building up garrisons in specific places because they probably will be nowhere near where they will be needed.”<sup>26</sup> It therefore follows that today’s ‘great issues’ either have to be accomplished through the slow and administrative build up of forces over seas (if possible), or by a rapidly mobile force able to take action quickly enough to stabilize a situation.

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involve the deployment and support of military forces to the scene of a crisis or conflict at a significant distance from their home bases.

<sup>25</sup> Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 16.

<sup>26</sup> Norman Friedman, “Transformation and Technology for Medium Navies,” *Canadian Naval Review* Vol 2, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 9.

Canada spent 1.1% of our GDP on National Defence in 2006.<sup>27</sup> If our current government's intention is to increase spending on domestic issues, as the policy suggests, then this will likely leave little money to increase capability in other areas. This line of reasoning makes sense in the political realm where homeland defence and the emergence of trans-national threats such as terrorism have come to the fore. In these circumstances, increasing investment in the 'home game' instead of the 'away game' has the benefit of being seen by the voting population as both appropriate and politically expedient. There are, however, inherent dangers related to underestimating the centrality of expeditionary operations. The "Canada First" policy, if taken too far, runs the risk of being perceived by our allies as overly reclusive, or as a "Canada Only" policy. This perception would run counter productive to being a contributor to multi-lateral partnerships, and could diminish Canadian soft power.

Expeditionary operations continue to be an important and valuable endeavour. Political end states, after all, are often partially achieved through the use of military force, and also inevitably require on-scene physical presence in order to assure resolution and compliance. The basic tenets for expeditionary operations for globalized nations remain consistent and are vital for several reasons, including:

- To assure that policy objectives pursued by other means have in fact been secured; for example, to ensure compliance with established diplomatic solutions such as the adherence to cease-fire arrangements or an agreement to hold free elections;
- To seize or control key physical objectives such as airports, ports, resource areas, or political centers in order to ensure their safe use by all groups, to deny their use

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<sup>27</sup> *Fiscal Reference Tables*, [http://www.fin.gc.ca/frt/2006/frt06\\_e.pdf](http://www.fin.gc.ca/frt/2006/frt06_e.pdf); Internet; accessed 27 March 2007. The Fiscal Reference Tables reveal that Canadian spending on National Defence has consistently been between .9% and 1.1% every year since 1996.

- to an enemy or disruptive element, or to facilitate future actions such as the introduction of follow-on forces;
- To control urban or other restrictive terrain;
  - To establish a close, physical, and highly visible presence in order to demonstrate political resolve, deter aggressive action, or compel desired behaviour;
  - To establish and maintain order in an area beset by chaos and disorder;
  - To protect or rescue national citizens or other civilians;
  - To separate warring groups from each other or from the population at large, especially when enemy or disruptive elements are embedded in the populations; and,
  - To provide physical relief and assistance in the event of disaster.<sup>28</sup>

These tenets stress the significance of expeditionary operations, and reinforce the fact that significant investment in expeditionary capability is required if the foreign policy objectives of contributing to global peace, security and stability are to be achieved.

## **LITTORAL TURMOIL**

There are many characteristics and definitions of the term ‘littoral’. *Leadmark*, Canada’s naval strategy defines it as “the region that encompasses the land-watermass interface from 100 kilometers ashore to 200 nautical miles at sea.”<sup>29</sup> In practical terms, this characterizes the littorals as the coastal sea and land area which is susceptible to influence or support from the sea. Milan Vego, a Professor of Joint Operations at the US

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<sup>28</sup> MCDP 3, *U.S. Marine Corps: Expeditionary Operations...*, 37.

<sup>29</sup> Canadian Navy, *Leadmark: The Navy’s Strategy for 2020*  
[http://www.navy.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index\\_e.asp](http://www.navy.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index_e.asp); Internet; accessed 15 January 2007.



Naval War College, offers that the littoral “is the area of the sea or ocean that must be controlled to support operations ashore.”<sup>30</sup> According to Vego’s notion, the littoral is not a fixed space, but is rather dictated by the scope of operations underway.<sup>31</sup> He also succinctly captures the importance of the littoral regions when he notes that:

70 per cent of the world’s population live within 200 miles of the coastline and some 80 per cent of the world’s capitals lie within 300 miles of the sea. Some 60 per cent of politically significant urban areas around the world are located within 25 miles of the coastline or 75 per cent of these areas are located within 150 miles.<sup>32</sup>

Based on this definition, it follows by pure demographics that the littoral regions are the areas that will demand the greatest concentration of future expeditionary intervention, military or otherwise. Owing to freedom of navigation in international waters, governments with amphibious forces have a unique strategic tool that can be brought to bear, at their own discretion, in the areas that contain the majority of the world's population.

Geographically, the littorals conjoin diverse cultures, many of which have regional disputes. This has led to the fragmentation of some nation states, which in turn contributes to global insecurity. This littoral instability can be seen clearly in Sub-Saharan Africa. In places such as Somalia, famine, organized crime and piracy have

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<sup>30</sup> Vego, *Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas...*, 184.

<sup>31</sup> This notion of the littoral regions falls inline with the Swedish Navy, who describes the littorals as “a coastal area that...during armed conflict is dominated by multiple threats in all dimensions of the battle space, especially in the subsurface environment. The threat level increases as one approaches the shore line. The battlespace, furthermore, allows for short reaction times for units engaged in war fighting in the areas...the unique conditions in this environment place special and high demands on equipment, tactics and personnel.” This is also very much consistent with the Israeli Navy which chooses to define this area as a threat gradient where “an increase in threat level [occurs] as you near the shore and become more affected by elements operating under its wing. The nearer a force operates to shore, the better and more reliable an enemy’s targeting, the more diverse the threats, and the higher the risk to friendly naval forces.”

<sup>32</sup> Vego, *Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas...*, 184.

become a way of life. While this proves beneficial to a scant few, the majority suffer tremendously. This, in turn, can lead to incredible increases with refugee problems. And, in the littoral environment where border crossing is made easy and accessible, the temptation to migrate translates into chaos from a failing nation spreading into nearby stable nations. This was the potential case in Algeria between 1992 and 1999. During this period Algeria, a nation formerly regarded as peaceful and stable, was subject to violent insurgency. This was brought on shortly after the first free election in the country's history. Algeria's leading Muslim Party, the Islamic Salvation Party, won a surprise victory, but the government, supported by the military, voided the results and installed its own president to stop the religious party from taking power. Islamic militants quickly created an unstable nation in which over 60,000 people died from assassinations, bombings and massacres. Amidst this political violence, refugees sought safe havens in neighbouring countries. Thus, nearby nations such as France, Spain and Italy have a vested interest to react and quell these regional problems. Not surprisingly, these countries are among those investing their defence funding on power projection forces that are capable of stabilization operations; they are adopting rapid reaction amphibious projection capabilities to handle littoral contingencies. As USMC Major General Hanlon puts it:

The governments devoting more and more of their shrinking defence budgets to expeditionary capabilities are doing so for a good reason. They are, in fact, making a rational response to one of the major international developments of our time, a phenomenon that can best be described as 'chaos in the littorals'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Edward Hanlon, "Taking the long View: Littoral Warfare Challenges," in *The Role of Naval Forces in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Operations*, ed. Richard H. Shultz and Robert Pfaltzgraff, 155-161 (Washington: Brassey's, 2000), 155.

Canada, however, does not have the same degree of susceptibility to refugee problems as do many nations. Simply owing to our geographical positioning, we are largely impervious to this particular littoral-enabled issue. This does not, however, absolve us from our Alliance responsibilities or from our obligations as a moral contributor to global peace. There is also much more than refugee issues arising from littoral turmoil; ‘chaos in the littorals’ can impact Canada directly and indirectly. Trade route interruptions, terrorism and piracy are trans-national problems. Since Canada is a trading nation which depends on sea lift to import approximately 4.1 million containers per year,<sup>34</sup> it is well within our national security interests to contribute to the stabilization of the littorals as best we can.

## **THE IMPACT OF LITTORAL INSTABILITY TO CANADA**

The increasing prevalence of littoral instability has greater implications on Canadian national interest than landlocked regional volatility. The reason is that remote regional conflicts are, by their very nature, contained. Coastal instability can threaten major trade routes and can become a global emergency with significant, far reaching consequences.

The littorals serve as both the originating points and terminus to the significant global trade routes. In other words, the littorals are the enablers of trade amongst the world’s metropolitan areas, including Canada’s. The oceans “account for 90 percent of

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<sup>34</sup> Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, March 2007, *An Update of Security Problems in Search of Solutions: Seaports*: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/rep-e/repvoll1part2-e>; Internet; accessed 13 April 2007, 29.

world trade (when measured by weight and volume).”<sup>35</sup> Put into the Canadian perspective:

(Canada’s) prosperity as a country is closely tied to (Canada’s) ability to ship (Canadian) goods and raw materials around the world and to receive other goods from (Canadian) trading partners. Indeed, Canadian seaborne trade is an important element of the overall global economy: 393 million tons of cargo passed through Canadian ports (in 2004), equaling 7% of all cargo shipped in the world.<sup>36</sup>

It follows that the safe and continuous functioning of the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) must be in our vested national interests. Sir Julian Corbett advocated that “passage and communication” are the fundamentally key tenets of national strategy.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the ability to stabilize the littoral regions of failed and failing nations is a mandatory capability for a global trading partner, such as Canada. By extension, this capability must be more than just sea control of strategic choke points such as the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez or Panama canals, or the Strait of Hormuz, to name just a few. It must also extend to effects beyond the sea, such as sea and air port facilities and their associated infrastructure, if there is to be any long term benefits.

Terrorism and piracy have come to the fore in recent years and serve to impact Canadian interests abroad and threaten us at home. In 2000, a small boat laden with explosives and driven by Al Qaeda terrorists came alongside the USS Cole and

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<sup>35</sup> Sam J. Tangredi, “Introduction,” in *Globalization and Maritime Power*, ed. Sam J. Tangredi, (Washington, DC: Institute for National Security Studies, National Defence University, 2002) <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/books/Books%5f2002/Globalization%5fand%5fMaritime%5fPower%5fDec%5f02/01%5ftoc.html>; Internet; accessed 15 Jan 2007.

<sup>36</sup> The Canadian Navy and the New Security Agenda. *Proceedings of the Maritime Security and Defence Seminar, Toronto, 26-27 April 2007* (Halifax, NS, 2004), 69.

<sup>37</sup> Barry M. Gough, “Maritime Strategy: The Legacies of Mahan and Corbett as Philosophers of Sea Power,” *RUSI Journal* 133, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 59.

detonated. In 2002, a similar attack on the French MV LIMBURG was committed off the coast of Yemen. Clearly, naval and merchant shipping of western civilizations are now targeted by terrorists. Moreover, it is well recognized that littoral instability from failed and failing nations can provide a safe haven for terrorists and terrorism to expand. Left unchecked, terrorists can eventually gain enough capability and momentum to be able to strike their ideological adversaries. 9/11 has certainly shown that inaction can culminate in massive homeland casualties and disasters.

In November 2002, Osama Bin Laden released a video tape that threatened American allies: “(Bin Laden’s) message in Arabic, warned that six countries, including Canada, are now considered to be targets of Al Qaeda because of their support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism.”<sup>38</sup> Since the release of Bin Laden’s ominous tape, Canada is the only remaining country left on the target list that has not suffered a direct attack. Recognizing that it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between national and international security, it is now widely accepted that “to leave the problem of international terrorism to fester in a far-off country is to increase the probability that it will eventually land on your doorstep.”<sup>39</sup> Canada would be ill-advised to adopt a reticent ‘wait and see’ attitude with such a direct threat looming. Obviously, this is a case where the best defence is a good offence. In other words, Canada’s national security is best safeguarded through active participation in the stabilization of failed and failing states,

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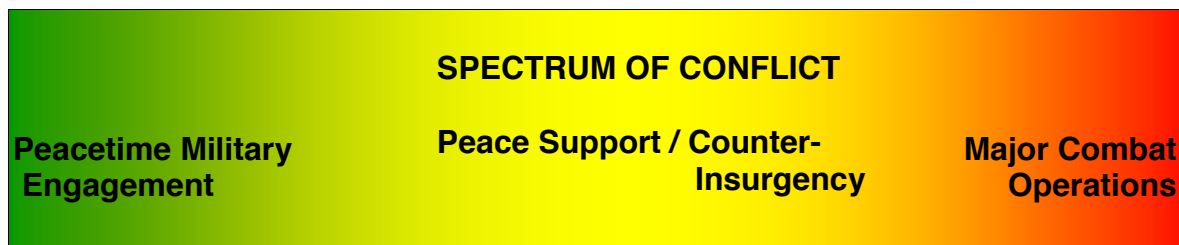
<sup>38</sup> CTV, “Canada Should Heed Bin Laden’s Warning: Experts,” [http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20021114/terror\\_canada\\_021113/](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20021114/terror_canada_021113/); Internet; accessed 10 Feb 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Elinor Sloan C, *The Revolution in Military Affairs* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 153.

since they are known to harbour terrorists. That, in turn, can only be assured with meaningful contributions to collective security and effective expeditionary capabilities.

## **POWER PROJECTION AND THE SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT**

Contemporary military action is much more complex than during the mass-against-mass Cold War. Today, Armed Forces face a broad spectrum of operations, as reflected in Figure 1.1, below:



**Figure 1.1 - The Spectrum of Conflict**

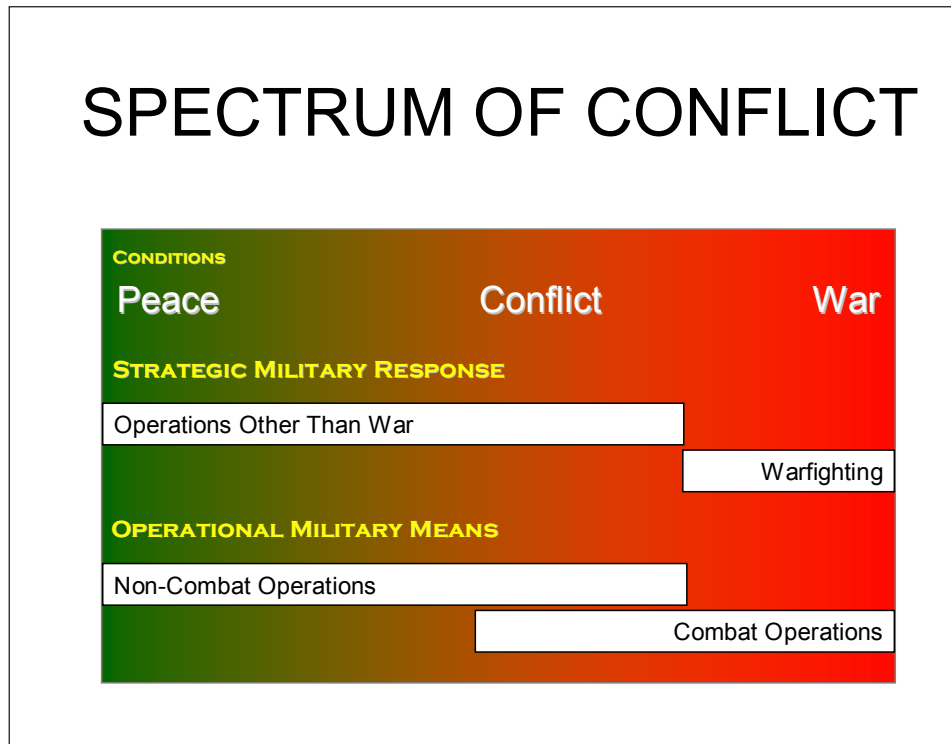
Source: Canadian Navy, “Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS,” <http://www.navy.dnd.ca/SCF/>; DWAN Internet; accessed 20 January 2007, 8.

Figure 1.1 shows that military operations range from Peacetime Military Engagements (PME) and Peace Support Operations (PSO), all the way to Major Combat Operations (MCO). As the Vision statement for the SCF points out, “while capable of participating in a MCO, the SCF is optimized for the centre of the spectrum of conflict...and would, as a matter of course, need to receive the support of a coalition for combat activities in a MCO.”<sup>40</sup> Additionally, it should be pointed that a military operation can involve simultaneous actions from different regions of the spectrum of conflict.<sup>41</sup> This shows that

<sup>40</sup> Canadian Navy, “Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS,” <http://www.navy.dnd.ca/SCF/>; DWAN Internet; accessed 20 January 2007, 8.

<sup>41</sup> General Charles Krulak, Commandant of the US Marine Corps, developed the phrase “3 Block War” which supports the notion of complexity and multiple operations. Specifically, General Krulak’s “3

modern military operations are complex and underscores the increased requirement for flexibility and capability. In other words, the range of military action has increased in the Contemporary Operating Environment.



**Figure 1.2 - The Spectrum of Conflict– Strategic and Operational Means**

Source: Canadian Forces College, “Introduction to Joint and Combined Operations” (Joint Command and Staff Program 33 C/DS-524/PLN/LE-1, 2006), 10/49.

Figure 1.2 above is a more in-depth look at the spectrum of conflict. This diagram shows that strategic military response during peacetime and conflict short of war are grouped together and termed ‘operations other than war’ (OOTW). This term reflects that Armed Forces are often used for political-military uses, and stresses the importance of

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Block War” was meant to illustrate that a modern expeditionary force need to be enabled to handle 3 major operations occurring simultaneously in an urban environment. The 3 operations include one humanitarian operation, one peace support operation and one combat operation. A complete description of each ‘block’ and their required tactical tasks was conducted by USMC Major Phillip Boggs and may be found in the Monograph: “Joint Task Force Commanders and the “Three Block War” – Setting the Conditions for Tactical Success” (Leavenworth: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2000).

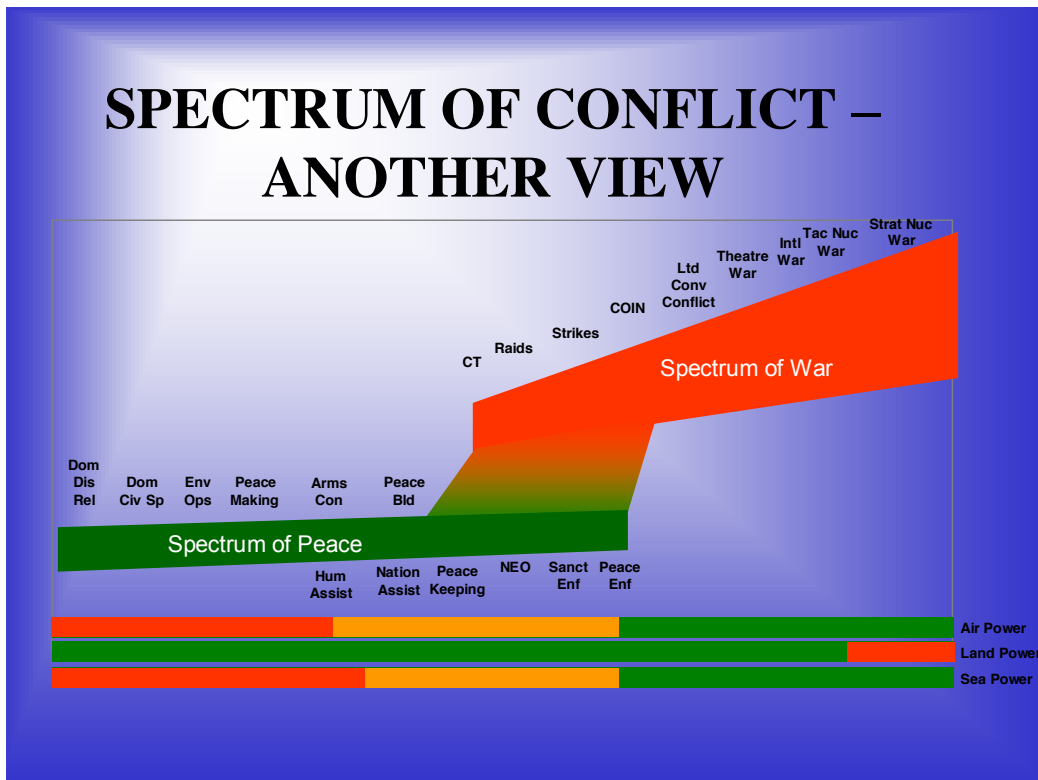
timely intervention leading to preventative diplomacy. This Figure suggests that there may be clear a demarcation between OOTW and war. Moreover, Figure 1.2 also shows that OOTW can involve combat operations, particularly in the mid to high end of the spectrum. Given our government's intention that "the Canadian Forces will continue to participate across the spectrum of international operations, with a focus on the complex and dangerous task of restoring order to failed and failing states,"<sup>42</sup> it follows that there is a requirement to have a robust operational capacity that delivers offensive punch, decisive effect and enables force protection; Canada requires military capabilities and warfighting options that are broad and applicable throughout the spectrum.

A more refined look at the spectrum of conflict is shown in Figure 1.3 below. This Figure helps to illustrate that air and sea power are the enablers to effective middle and high end operations. This spectrum of conflict is also superimposed upon a graphic showing the utility of air, land and sea powers in operations. This clearly shows that the lower end operations, termed the 'spectrum of peace' is best tailored to land power, and is ill-suited to air and sea power. That trend reverses as you ascend the spectrum. There are three conclusions that can be drawn from this Figure. First, having all environmental services available (a Joint force) ensures complete relevancy and capability across the board. Second, as the Y-axis represents conflict intensity, it is fair to conclude that Land power alone is insufficient when intensity increases to the high end. In order to be effective and prepared for rapid increases in operational intensity (as characterised by the 3 Block War) all environmental forces are required. Third, the effect on the ground is the

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<sup>42</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence...*, 26.





**Figure 1.3 - Spectrum of Conflict – Another View**

Source: Canadian Forces College, “Introduction to Joint and Combined Operations” (Joint Command and Staff Program 33 C/DS-524/PLN/LE-1, 2006), 11/49.

most prominently desired effect. As a result, a budget constrained middle power, such as Canada, would get the greatest operational return on investment from a force that is Joint and focused on achieving effects on the ground. This, in essence, is what defines a maritime based power projection force.

Recognizing this, there has been increased activity in creating Joint expeditionary forces in the CF. Current military initiatives, such as the Joint Support Ship (JSS), reflect the shift towards supporting forces ashore. However, as Greg Aikins, the former Commanding Officer of HMCS HALIFAX points out, “while combining naval support with an army support mission is certainly the right step, this capacity essentially limits

the capability to benign peacekeeping and humanitarian aid scenarios.”<sup>43</sup> It follows that the government’s goal for contributing to global stability and security requires additional tactical capabilities if it is to be actualized. In short, an amphibious capability is required for complete and comprehensive operational readiness.

## **MARITIME BASED POWER PROJECTION ADVANTAGES**

There are many reasons at the tactical and operational levels that support the acquisition of an amphibious, or maritime based power projection capability. As pointed out above, Joint support operations are sufficient for low end operations. However, a country that is committed to relevant global contributions must be thoroughly prepared for operations across the entire spectrum of conflict. Enabling the middle to high end operations in a timely, decisive and preventative posture requires a Joint effort that can only be assured through power projection from the maritime domain. Projecting power ashore essentially consists of the freedom of action to strike at an opponent at a time and place that is advantageous to the striking force and not expected by the opposition.<sup>44</sup> This, in turn, provides the versatility required in modern operations to successfully complete (or contribute significantly to) any operational scenario regardless of its complexity, intensity or threat level. Fully embracing this concept, the United States Navy believes that this capability “provides a potential warfighting tool to the Joint Task

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<sup>43</sup> Greg Aikins, “Beyond ALSC: We Need to get Amphibious and Joint to stay Relevant,” *Maritime Affairs*, (Winter 2001): 12.

<sup>44</sup> Vego, *Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas...*, 185.

Force Commander—a tool that is literally the key to success in many likely contingency scenarios.”<sup>45</sup> Defence analyst Elinor Sloan agrees, stating that “naval experts expect that most future contingencies will require the navy to project force ‘from the sea’ directly ashore, whether in the context of a regional war or a peacekeeping operation.”<sup>46</sup>

There are several tactical and operational level advantages that are provided by a maritime based power projection capability. First, this capability facilitates faster deployment and operations by: 1) having the option to proceed without the reliance on host nation support, 2) having units at a high level of notice to move and, 3) being pre-positioned close to another nation's coast in times of rising tensions, should the Canadian government require. Second, this capability enables efficient and timely evacuation operations and facilitates the deployment of humanitarian, diplomatic and disaster relief equipment and personnel. This is due to the fact that this capability provides options in countries contending with over-burdened, or lacking sufficient, port infrastructure.<sup>47</sup> Third, an amphibious capability permits more manoeuvre space and thus greater unpredictability in location. In essence, this supplies the commander with the greatest flexibility with respect to the time and placement of troop committal.<sup>48</sup> Fourth, it minimizes the footprint ashore. This, in turn, minimizes the force protection requirements.<sup>49</sup> Fifth, it increases uncertainty for an adversary and therefore increases

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<sup>45</sup> United States, Department of Defence, *From the Sea – Preparing the Naval Service for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington, DC: DoD United States, 1998), 11.

<sup>46</sup> Sloan, *The Revolution in Military Affairs...*, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Aikins, “Beyond ALSC: We Need to get Amphibious and Joint to stay Relevant,”..., 13.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

disruption to their strategy and operations. By extension, this enables faster stabilization or neutralization of adversarial forces. This occurs either because they weaken through dispersal to cover the wide area where forces could land (and thereby permit themselves to be defeated piecemeal by arriving ground forces) or because they try to concentrate against a landing force and thus become avoidable. Last, nations with an amphibious capability have increased interoperability with their Allies, particularly with those nations already possessing or developing the same capability.

These advantages stem from the logical development of several Principles of War, including surprise, flexibility, economy of effort and concentration of force.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, these principles are in concert with the operational requirements demanded by relevant forces, given the nature of the operating environment. Thus, maritime power projection can be seen as the best option for providing the government with a cost-effective tool that delivers the early, effective and decisive military intervention that is now a part of Canadian national strategy.

## **CHAPTER ONE - CONCLUSION**

Notwithstanding the recently increased emphasis on domestic operations, as laid out by the ‘Canada First’ policy, transformation and investment in expeditionary capabilities is of great importance. Canada cannot achieve its foreign and defence policy objectives by being overly introspective. This realization, of course, is nothing new.

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<sup>50</sup> A complete listing and modern analysis of the Principles of War may be found in the following article: Scott Ensminger, Mike Seitz, and Bob Fawcett, “Principles of War for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Information Age – Let the Debate Begin,” *A Common Perspective*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (October 2004): 33-37.

However, the contemporary operating environment is one that demands an extra emphasis on expeditionary operations and collective security. Since Canada desires to have meaningful impact across the spectrum of operations, and given the shift in threat, we must tailor expeditionary forces for a broad range of contingencies, and enable them to be employed without host nation support.

Since the threat has transformed into pliable regional instability, it is best countered by a rapidly delivered force that has the flexibility to handle contingencies of varying intensity across the entire spectrum of conflict. Canadian Cold War legacy systems are sluggish and ill-suited for this, almost surgical, type of effect. What is required is flexibility, speed, surprise and a tactically decisive concentration of force. This is best projected, from a manoeuvre perspective, from the sea. As Milan Vego states: “this (power projection) capability is the greatest asset a sea power can possess, and without it, the utility of sea power is considerably diminished.”<sup>51</sup> In today’s context, it more than sea power that is reduced, it is the overall force potential that is diminished.

The end result is that one would be hard pressed to find another operational military capability today that is available to a middle power and has the flexibility, range and speed to positively make a consequential effect. Only a Joint, amphibious capability can ensure relevancy across the entire spectrum of conflict. Arguing for enhancing Joint power projection capabilities, Elinor Sloan states:

new military organizations must have the flexibility to switch rapidly from one type of contingency to another...An armed force whose components are designed with a view toward synergy with one another is one that can best adapt to a given contingency, whether it be an intrastate ethnic

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<sup>51</sup> Vego, *Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas...*, 185.

conflict, a regional hegemonic threat, or a confrontation between great powers and their allies.<sup>52</sup>

A maritime based power projection concept also has the added benefit of steering one away from an administratively restrictive *supporting* role for the navy and air force, and drives one towards a more cohesive contemplation of how they can *enable* the army. In fact, today's operating environment has brought about a renewed relevancy for the transient effects of the navy and air force. Almost ironically, their integral enabling capability to the land effect can be taken to mean that their time for increased prominence (particularly when it comes to defence spending) has come, despite that the overarching goal is to achieve strategic effect on the ground.

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<sup>52</sup> Elinor Sloan, *The Revolution in Military Affairs...*, 16.

## **CHAPTER 2 – CANADIAN POWER PROJECTION REQUIREMENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

To achieve a number of Canadian foreign and defence policy objectives, the Canadian Forces must conduct a wide range of expeditionary operations. Given the threat that permeates and hampers today's security environment, the benefits of operating from a secure maritime domain are undeniable. Of issue, however, is the nature of the force structure and means of delivery. Simply put, an amphibious power projection capability offers the widest range of options, and the greatest possible operational versatility. Key literature in this chapter, such as Clayton Chun's *Aerospace Power in the Twenty-First Century: A Basic Primer* and the Joint Support Ship (JSS) Statement of Operational Requirements (SOR) Version 4.0 point out that there are operational limitations in current Canadian initiatives. As a result, new Canadian innovations need to be acquired. Other key literature, such as the USMC doctrine "Operational Manoeuvre From the Sea" and Major Rob Bradford's article "An Amphibious Task Group for the SCTF" point out that the operational and tactical advantages of an amphibious Task Group offers the capability required. In addition, the SCF Concept of Operations (CONOPs) Version 3 clearly stipulates how the construct and requirements for adequate Canadian maritime based power projection are achievable.

### **DEFINING MARITIME POWER PROJECTION**

In the broadest definition, maritime power projection is the delivery of power ashore. Specifically it involves the delivery of amphibious forces, organic aircraft, land

attack weapons and/or Special Forces from the maritime to the land domain. Of these, Canada is in possession of two of the four types of forces involved: organic aircraft and Special Forces. Land attack weapons, while not currently in our arsenal, are not foreign to Canadian capabilities either; until the early 1990's Naval gunfire support was a practiced Canadian maritime capability.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, it is an amphibious power projection capability that is required. Only this type of power projection is able to provide the government of Canada with decisive results across the entire spectrum of conflict. The remaining forms of maritime power projection are too limited in size, scope or duration in order to assure decisive results and be relevant, regardless of the operation.

While amphibious operations are required, it must be noted that these types of operations are very broad in nature and can include amphibious assaults, raids, demonstrations and withdrawals.<sup>54</sup> Of these types of amphibious operations, assault is equated to an opposed landing, and most western nations (including Canada) have either never embraced the amphibious assault concept or abandoned the idea of conducting this high-risk operation. Instead, modern amphibious capabilities use the sea as manoeuvre space to avoid high-risk forcible entry operations. This style of expeditionary warfare is commonly referred to as Trans-littoral manoeuvre. As Commodore Eric Lehre, a former Commander of Canada's Pacific Fleet points out: "with the exception of Canada, all of the G-8 states plus the Netherlands and Australia have embraced joint forces and wedded

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<sup>53</sup> There are current initiatives to create a limited marine based land attack capability, such as the acquisition of the Harpoon Block 2 which has a land attack capability.

<sup>54</sup> ATP 8 is the NATO doctrine manual for amphibious operations. Complete definitions of the types of amphibious operations maybe found therein.



them to an amphibious capability for overseas missions.”<sup>55</sup> Due to its versatility and effectiveness, Trans-littoral manoeuvre is the maritime based power projection capability of choice amongst modern nations.

Even nations with a long standing forcible entry capability, such as the UK and US, have embraced this operational concept as the backbone for their power projection operations. Both nations have a similar doctrine. The UK version is called Joint Littoral Manoeuvre (JLM). The American adaptation is referred to as Operational Manoeuvre From The Sea (OMFTS), and is intended to be a clear move away from traditional USMC forcible entry operations. One of the key implementing concepts in OMFTS is the adoption of Ship To Objective Manoeuvre (STOM). This concept, similar to Joint Littoral Manoeuvre, prescribes the rapid and uninterrupted manoeuvre of landing forces directly to the objective from the sea, and hence provides the decisive function required in today’s operating environment; this is the concept that Canada needs to embrace in its future expeditionary operations.

## **WHY NOT AIRLIFT?**

It should also be noted that it is indeed a maritime based function that is required. The only alternative is, of course, a strategic airlift capability. Speed of intra theatre delivery is the obvious advantage to strategic airlift. As such, it is certainly a desirable and required capability, particularly when time is of the essence (disaster relief

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<sup>55</sup> Eric Lehre, “Taking Joint Capability Seriously” *Canadian Naval Review* no. 2 (Summer 2005): 10.

operations, for example). Stemming from this advantageous characteristic, Canada has made recent contractual commitments in strategic airlift.<sup>56</sup> This capability, however, has several restrictions that limits its decisiveness, and hence effectiveness across the spectrum of conflict.

Clayton Chun argues that strategic airlift is limited by four factors: capacity, impermanence, ground support reliance and fragility.<sup>57</sup> First, with respect to capacity, one must bear in mind an aircraft simply cannot carry as much as a ship. An aircraft can transport only a limited amount of personnel, supplies and vehicles. The impact is that strategic airlift alone cannot guarantee the timely transport of sufficient combat mass to be effective in all conditions. Ninety percent of all sustainment for a USMC operation, for example, comes via sealift.<sup>58</sup> Second, impermanence refers to the fact that strategic airlift is incredibly transient. Unlike ground or sea forces, an aircraft cannot occupy any territory. As a result, the benefits of presence operations are not achieved. The third strategic airlift limitation factor is its reliance on ground support. Obviously, strategic lift aircraft must be stationed and serviced at a base. This translates into the need for an Air Port of Disembarkation (APOD). Once again, the issue of Host Nation Support becomes critical. In the event of disaster relief operations, APODs may also have been damaged thereby degrading or negating their functionality. Other options may be available such as an APOD in a neighbouring nation thus allowing land transport to complete the transfer into the theatre. This, however, is plagued with lengthy operational pauses, phasing and

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<sup>56</sup> The Minister of National Defence announced on 2 February 2007 that Boeing was awarded the Canadian contract for 4 C-17 Globemaster III aircraft, with deliveries beginning summer 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Clayton Chun, *Aerospace Power in the Twenty-First Century: A Basic Primer* (Colorado Springs: Air University Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>58</sup> Frank Murphy, "Littoral Warfare: Adapting to Brown-Water Operations"..., 72.

increased risk requiring robust force protection measures to be in place. The fourth limiting factor for strategic airlift is fragility. This refers to the fact that, due to their complexity and sophistication, aircraft are particularly susceptible to damage in mid to high intensity operations.

The above factors show that strategic airlift has operational boundaries and restrictions. This does not mean that there is no place in expeditionary operations for such a capability, far from it in fact. This type of force delivery is an exceptionally valuable tool in certain operations. Although, as Clayton Chun points out: “depending on the environment, condition of the force, and the political objective required, aerospace power might or might not contribute significantly to a conflict.”<sup>59</sup> As a result, a maritime based capability must be available to ensure complete responsiveness.

## **MANOEUVRE VERSUS MOBILITY**

Viewed from a broad perspective, Trans-Littoral manoeuvre is the seaward equivalent to land manoeuvre operations; it employs the concepts of manoeuvre warfare to a maritime operation. Major Rob Bradford, the Canadian Senior Staff Officer of Expeditionary and Amphibious Warfare, points out that the landward effect of the SCF is intended to adopt “joint littoral manoeuvre in order to fuse maritime, land and aviation elements into a force capable of exerting influence ashore.”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, that influence

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<sup>59</sup> Clayton Chun, *Aerospace Power in the Twenty-First Century: A Basic Primer...*, 14.

<sup>60</sup> Rob Bradford, “An Amphibious Task Group for the SCTF”, *Canadian Naval Review* Vol 2, No. 2 (Summer, 2006): 16.

ashore via joint littoral manoeuvre is delivered “directly to operations on land at the operational and tactical levels.”<sup>61</sup> In other words, forces arrive fully trained, and are able to move securely from the sea base to the objective in tactical formation. Being tactically ready enables the force to counter threats, while maintaining speed and surprise. Since modern forces will frequently operate in austere areas plagued with asymmetric threats, the operational preparedness offered by such a force is a must.

Mobility, in contrast, refers to the delivery of a land element ashore through normal or convenient terminals. In other words, mobile forces normally use a port but can also be somewhat effective at a beach or degraded port facility. In the littoral mobility category, forces are delivered in an administrative fashion; forces put ashore via mobility operations require intermediate staging of some degree in order to be tactically prepared prior to carrying out operations inland. This type of operation is commonly referred to as sea lift, and is frequently misinterpreted as an amphibious operation. The future Joint Support Ship (JSS) fits into this mobility category. While a key enabler in future expeditionary operations, a JSS adequately fulfills the much needed trans-littoral role only for a portion of the spectrum of operations in which the CF will operate, as will now be discussed.

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

## JSS CAPABILITIES

According to the Statement of Requirements (SOR), the JSS is required to provide three basic capabilities for the CF.<sup>62</sup> First, JSS is required to provide afloat logistics support to ships of the Naval Task Group. Second, to help address the CF surge sealift requirement, the JSS will provide a portion of the sealift capacity to aid in deploying a land element's equipment and supplies worldwide. Third, JSS will provide support to forces stationed ashore with its helicopter capability, hospital, and Limited Afloat Joint Task Force HQ (LAJTFHQ).

JSS can be viewed as a combination of two types of vessels. First and foremost, it is a replacement ship for the Navy's aging AOR fleet. Second, JSS enables Joint forces ashore through trans-littoral mobility. In the first instance, JSS will use the capability of the current PROTECTEUR Class of replenishment ships as the basis for its fleet support capability. It will be able to sustain a TG at sea for 30 days during combat operations; it will provide the fuel, ammunition, spare parts, fresh water and food for the TG in a multi-threat environment.<sup>63</sup>

In terms of its sea lift capacity, JSS will provide between 1000 and 1500 lane meters internally.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the ship will have a flexible internal cargo transfer system. This system adds to the versatility of the vessel, as its cargo does not have to be

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<sup>62</sup> Department of National Defence, *JSS Statement of Operational Requirements Version 4.0*. (Ottawa: Project Management Office Joint Support Ship, 2006), 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>64</sup> The SOR states that the minimum requirement is 1000 lane meters, but that it *should* provide up to 1500 lane meters. Previous versions of the SOR stated that an additional 1000 lane meters could be made available externally. These upper deck lane meters would make use of the flight deck which would, of course, negate any air operations.

combat loaded or extracted in any particular order. This is particularly useful since the ship can be re-assigned without having to come alongside a port in order to re-organize the internal cargo.

The JSS will also provide significant support to forces ashore. It will be able to provide the logistics and material support to deployed forces for up to 30 days. In terms of air operations, the JSS will be able to land and launch multiple army utility helicopters. As well, it is intended to house, operate and maintain a minimum of three, maximum of four new Maritime (CH-148 Cyclone) helicopters, each capable of lifting 5,800 Kg. Additionally, JSS will provide a scalable medical facility that can accommodate 30 patients.<sup>65</sup> A LAJTFHQ will be provided. This capability is enabled by provision of the working space, accommodation and facilities required by a staff to operate the HQ. Finally, JSS will be able to provide some rest and recuperation facilities for forces after operating ashore.

## **JSS LIMITATIONS**

As versatile as JSS will be, it is not an amphibious ship and while a portion of the CF surge sealift requirement can be accomplished with JSS, tactical trans-littoral manoeuvre doctrine cannot be executed from this platform. This stems from JSS not having a well deck and other connector systems associated with STOM. JSS is only capable of littoral *mobility* and will conduct Roll-On Roll-Off (RO-RO) and Lift-On Lift-

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<sup>65</sup> Department of National Defence, *Statement of Operational Requirements Version 4.0...*, 11. The medical facilities include the ability to conduct limited surgery, dental, diagnostic imaging and some laboratory functions.

Off (LO-LO) operations in order to disembark equipment and personnel. While these types of disembarkation methods are useful and certainly have their place in TG operations, they have distinct disadvantages which ultimately render this capability as limited in its scope of expeditionary employment. JSS cannot therefore be seen as enabling the required trans-littoral manoeuvre functions across the spectrum of operations.

The cargo delivery ashore provided by JSS is lengthy in duration and largely administrative. The off loading must be performed while alongside a port or while at anchor a short distance from shore. Moreover, the self-unload capability at anchor is limited to a meagre sea state one condition.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, the delivery of forces requires a low risk environment that cannot always be assured. Due to the added staging and required shake-out, an administrative delivery of this type must transpire in a known permissive setting. Since the forces are not postured to counter threats on arrival, they must be transported ashore in a benign and secure environment. While supporting forces ashore, JSS “would likely be assigned to operate at anchor or close inshore in a secured area where threat levels would be low.”<sup>67</sup> As illustrated in Chapter one, this safe littoral environment is becoming more and more difficult to ensure. The harder it is to find a safe haven to disembark, the fewer operational decisions are given to the JTF commander in his efforts towards achieving mission success. Echoing this, modern power projection philosophy maintains that “naval

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<sup>66</sup> Department of National Defence, *Statement of Operational Requirements Version 4.0...*, 12. There are 12 sea states according to the Beaufort scale. They start at a benign Force 0 and increase in magnitude up to Force 11. Force 1 (the second lowest) is characterized with a wind speed from 1-3 knots and has a corresponding wave height of only 0.1 m. Additional information on sea state conditions may be found at <http://www.geology.wmich.edu/Kominz/windwater.html>.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

forces must dispense with previous amphibious methods in which operational phases, pauses and reorganizations imposed delays and inefficiencies upon the momentum of the operation.”<sup>68</sup> In other words, the tempo and momentum of operations afforded by JSS will be insufficient and underwhelming to a credible threat in mid to high intensity conflicts.

Another limiting factor for JSS is the fact that a decisive landing force cannot be contained in one ship. JSS can embark less than 200 personnel in addition to the ship’s crew. It therefore follows that the troops required to make the desired effect on the ground must come from either other shipping or be air transported into the theatre. In the latter case, this adds greatly to the administrative complexity. An APOD is required, if at all possible to attain. Additionally, the pause prior to operational readiness is further increased as troops and equipment must be brought together and prepared for inland operations. Ultimately, JSS, even in conjunction with a strategic airlift capability, is incapable of delivering decisive power projection in the face a dynamic and highly changeable threat.

## **CANADIAN AMPHIBIOUS TASKS AND REQUIREMENTS**

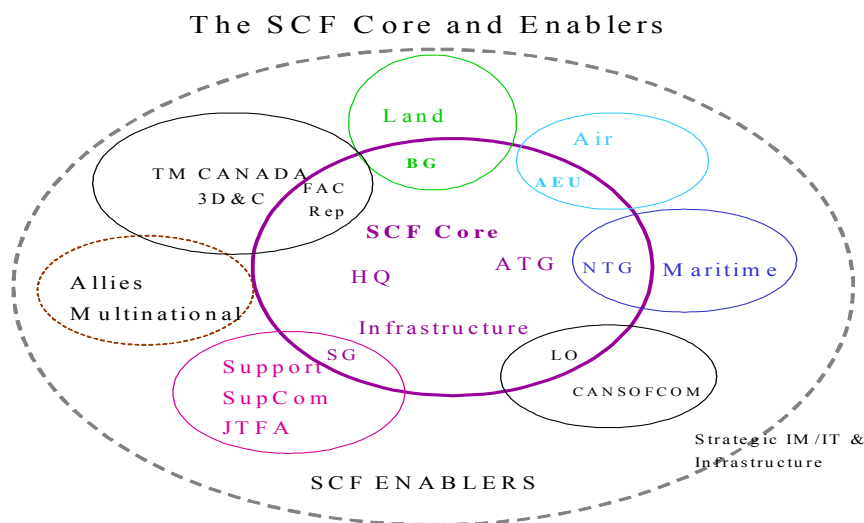
Since strategic sea lift and strategic airlift are limited in scope, there is only one type of power projection capability left that can deliver the fast, flexible and effective response demanded by the GOC across the spectrum of operations: Trans-Littoral Manoeuvre. This is an amphibious capability. It must be re-emphasized, however, that amphibious operations are wide in scope and Canada has no intentions of conducting

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<sup>68</sup> United States, Department of the Navy, *United States Marine Corps Emerging Operational Concepts: Ship To Objective Manoeuvre*, (Quantico: DoD, 1997), II-4.



amphibious assaults against a hostile shore. More specifically, the SCF was intended to provide a force that used the sea as manoeuvre space to “provide an initial Canadian Forces presence to...stabilize the situation or facilitate the deployment of larger, follow-on forces should circumstances warrant.”<sup>69</sup> This is quite different from other amphibious forces. Since national objectives vary in terms of desired effects and level of commitment, amphibious requirements and tasks are also greatly varied amongst nations.



**Figure 2.1 - SCF Force Structure**

Source: Canadian Navy, “Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS,” <http://www.navy.dnd.ca/SCF/>; DWAN Internet; accessed 20 January 2007, 14.

The Canadian SCF construct is shown in Figure 2.1 above. The central idea was to have a core which would house the Command and Control, Sea, Land, Air, Amphibious and Support capabilities as well as the main support base infrastructure. In other words, the core of the SCF was to be comprised of the force employed elements. The enablers surrounding the core are the force generators which were to be responsible to deliver their respective element. As a result of this construct, there were just three

<sup>69</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence...*, 13.

elements to the SCF project that did not already exist in the CF structure and required development: the headquarters, infrastructure and the Amphibious Task Group (ATG). The force generation responsibility for these elements would reside with the SCF.

The ATG was to be comprised of the Sea, Land and Air elements that make up the amphibious capability of the SCF.<sup>70</sup> An amphibious ship and its connector systems<sup>71</sup> form the critical elements. An amphibious ship combines the attributes of a tactical aviation capability, surface connector systems, integrated amphibious and land element command and control facilities for the required tactical operation, and a large internal volume for the transport of personnel and material. Moreover, an amphibious ship also adds enabling elements to an operation, such as: staff and support facilities, afloat training facilities, and the capability of supporting security partners in a variety of missions abroad.

Only an amphibious ship can provide the necessary trans-littoral manoeuvre required. Although the primary objectives are the same - tactically get the troops with their equipment and supplies ashore - there are different classes of amphibious ships, each designed to provide particular holding, landing and launching capabilities.<sup>72</sup> The

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<sup>70</sup> Canadian Navy, "Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS," <http://www.navy.dnd.ca/SCF/>; DWAN Internet; accessed 20 January 2007, 4.

<sup>71</sup> A Connector system is the term given to the specialist amphibious surface landing craft and medium-heavy lift aviation. It also includes the specialist personnel required for their operation (the maritime beach party, for example)

<sup>72</sup> Major Amphibious warships include several types. The most common classes include:  
 LHD – Landing Platform, Helicopter Dock - These vessels are multi-purpose amphibious ships (WASP and MISTRAL Class, for example), and are a follow-on to amphibious assault ships (LHAs such as the TARAWA Class). They are designed to embark, deploy and land a force through a combination of helicopters, landing craft (through a well deck), amphibious vehicles or a combination of these methods. Embarked aircraft can be mission dependent, and some LHDs may employ vertical and short takeoff and landing aircraft (V/STOL).

LPH - Landing Platform, Helicopter. This class of ship focuses on providing, primarily, trans-littoral movement from aviation. As a result, an LPH has a very large flight deck and can land/launch

decision as to which type of amphibious ship to acquire for the SCF was never reached. Nonetheless, some of the factors for determining an amphibious ship acquisition include the landing force composition, mission sets and other capabilities already residing in the TG; striking the right balance of helicopters and landing craft capabilities is essential for projecting the force.

In the SCF case, there were numerous tasks deemed necessary in order to deliver the desired effect on the ground. At sea in the littoral regions, these tasks included sea control, sea denial, strike, Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) and an MCM capability. Some of the land tasks included raids, offensive and defensive info ops, pursuit, exploitation, breakout, ambush, delay and a slew of stabilization tasks as well.<sup>73</sup> All of these tasks were deemed essential capabilities upon arrival in the littoral environment in order to rapidly stabilize a crisis or conflict in a potentially non-permissive environment.

To be effective, the land component was determined to be a hybrid Battle Group of battalion size. It was to be comprised of three infantry companies, combat support (specialized reconnaissance, engineer, artillery) and combat service support elements.<sup>74</sup> This translates into approximately 1,000 personnel with medium weight armoured

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several aircraft at a time. This class (HMS OCEAN, for example) does not have a well deck, but usually has a limited capability of landing troops by sea using small landing craft.

LPD - Landing Platform, Dock. These versatile ships incorporate a flight deck (smaller than that of an LPH or LHD) and a well deck to support amphibious landing craft. These ships are generally designed to transport troops and equipment primarily using landing craft, although invariably they will also have a modest airborne capability. (SAN ANTONIO and ROTTERDAM are examples)

<sup>73</sup> Canadian Navy, "*Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS*"..., 12.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

vehicles and light weight vehicles.<sup>75</sup> The shipping space for this vanguard Battle Group requires approximately 6,000 lane meters.<sup>76</sup> Needless to say this cannot fit into one JSS. All 3 JSS would be needed to transport just the vehicles and supplies. At a minimum the SCF land element would require a JSS plus a mid-sized amphibious ship (the French MISTRAL, for example). This lane meter shortage is not surprising since the JSS lift parameters were delineated in 2000, 5 years prior to any amphibious initiatives or requirements.

In order attain sufficient shipping capacity and projection capability, the SCF Amphibious Task Group (ATG) relied on two different ships (one JSS and one major amphibious vessel). As Major Rob Bradford points out, “this is unusual, as the overwhelming norm for an amphibious force with a battalion group-sized landing force is a minimum of three ships.”<sup>77</sup> The 2 ship SCF ATG construct, however, is capable of delivering the essential combination of operational capability and support. It is the synergy created by the 2 vessels working together that would enable the endurance and capability sets required for crisis control in failed and failing states. As Maj Bradford points out, there are 4 capability areas required: “(1) afloat command and control (2) primary aviation platform (3) primary surface projection platform (i.e., a well deck) and

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<sup>75</sup> There is no precise weight which distinguishes between a light or medium vehicle. Rather, vehicles are denoted as ‘light’ or ‘medium’ according to the force structure that employs them and the protection measures they provide. The Canadian Army uses medium and light forces. Medium forces use, for example, the Mobile Gun System (MGS), LAV TOW Under Armour (LAV TUA), and the Multi-Mission Effects Vehicle (MMEV). These vehicles are therefore designated as medium weight vehicles. Correspondingly, light weight vehicles are employed by light forces and include soft skinned vehicles such as trucks and jeeps. Additional information on Canadian medium and light weight forces, and their vehicles may be found in: Department of National Defence, *Purpose Defined – The Force Employment Concept for the Army* (Ottawa: DoD, 2004).

<sup>76</sup> Robert W. McKillip, “Not so Smart: Should Sealift and Afloat Logistic Support be Linked?” (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course New Horizons Paper, 1997), 8.

<sup>77</sup> Bradford, “An Amphibious Task Group for the SCTF” ..., 18.

(4) transport and cargo.”<sup>78</sup> Neither an amphibious ship nor JSS completely fill all these requirements. Both ships working together are required to fully enable the SCF.

There remains one other new construct required for the ATG and Joint Littoral Manoeuvre. An amphibious unit would be required in order to develop the specialist skill sets required for amphibious operations. In the SCF construct, the Maritime Amphibious Unit (MAU) was to be generated to house these skills.<sup>79</sup> More specifically, the MAU was to be divided into 2 separate divisions: a surface projection flotilla, and a tactical watercraft and amphibious diver flotilla.<sup>80</sup> The former would be responsible for the ship to shore movement by the landing craft. The latter flotilla is required to provide a variety of enhanced skills. These include “raid company insertion, amphibious reconnaissance insertion, general insertion (including special operating forces if required), and waterspace security (including escort and port security).”<sup>81</sup> All of these abilities are essential enablers for amphibious operations.

## **CHAPTER TWO – CONCLUSION**

While power projection can be conducted in many ways, not all are amenable to the variety of contingencies and crisis scenarios which are likely to arise in failed and failing states. Administrative projection revolves around the notion of transport; it is the

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<sup>78</sup> Bradford, “An Amphibious Task Group for the SCTF”..., 19.

<sup>79</sup> Canadian Navy, *Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS*..., 18.

<sup>80</sup> Bradford, “An Amphibious Task Group for the SCTF”..., 19.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

straight forward movement of personnel and cargo, and requires a benign environment. Recent Canadian initiatives such as the JSS and C-17 strategic airlift projects fit this category and will serve to enable only select expeditionary operations.

In order to have a complete range of capability, tactical manoeuvre (Joint Littoral Manoeuvre) is required. Distinctly amphibious, JLM is the tactical equivalent of land manoeuvre in the littoral regions. With an aim of rapidly making a credible effect ashore, it uses a force that is tactically inserted and supported from the sea. Operationally ready on arrival, the force safely completes its objectives with overwhelming tempo and momentum. On completion, the landing force returns to the Amphibious Task Group and is prepared for follow on operations. Embodying this principle, it follows that the SCF was a construct that was “optimized for the centre of the spectrum of conflict”<sup>82</sup> which marks a fundamental departure from the JSS and C-17 strategic airlift concepts.

The JSS does not, either in itself or even in conjunction with a Naval Task Group, have the capacity to be operationally decisive and responsive in all possible contingency and threat scenarios. Similarly, strategic airlift also has limitations such as capacity, fragility, impermanence and ground support. These hamper ability in delivering a decisive force in the complex littorals. Both of these ‘lifts’ are very much in line with mobility and, as such, are best suited to operations on the low end of the spectrum. Neither of them can be a permanent guarantee of entry into a country that requires assistance; neither of them practices the trans-littoral manoeuvre that is needed to ensure an appropriate response is always available for the Canadian government. Only an amphibious initiative, such as the SCF construct provides a comprehensive and complete power projection capability. An amphibious ship, along with its connector systems,

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<sup>82</sup> Canadian Navy, “*Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS*”..., 8.

associated infrastructure and staffing are needed to bridge the capability gap and meet the governmental objectives of speed, effectiveness and relevance.

## CHAPTER 3 – AMPHIBIOUS ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

As seen with the postponement of the SCF project, new initiatives suffer many challenges and setbacks. Without a direct and substantial threat to national security, it is extremely difficult to institute fundamental transformations in the manner in which Canadian expeditionary operations are conducted. To be effectively introduced and incorporated into the Canadian concept of operations, there are three overarching requirements for a radical advancement such as amphibious power projection. First, it must be understood and welcomed by Canadian political leaders and the Canadian populace at large. A key piece of literature in this chapter is Peter Haydon's paper: "Canada's New Defence and Naval Policies: Déjà Vu all over again?" In his paper Haydon points out why military innovation is frequently rejected, particularly by politicians. Overcoming this political obstacle is essential in order to get the mandate and funding approval required. The second challenge is that a new innovation must be embraced by and enthuse the men and women of the CF. Commodore Eric Lehre points out in his article "Taking Joint Capability Seriously" that military officials are hesitant to embrace expensive concepts that could offset or cancel initiatives already underway. In Norman Friedman's paper "Transformation and Technology for Medium Navies", he emphasizes that the changes that an amphibious capability would bring to each environmental service needs to be understood and accepted. The third and final challenge to a new initiative is that it needs to be approved, if not outright commended, by Canadian allies in order to ensure continued support, acceptance and interoperability.



## THE POLITICAL CHALLENGE

The first and foremost challenge to an amphibious capability lies in the political realm. Lacking comprehension and political approval, no capital project can gain approval. Overcoming this hurdle is of prime importance because without it there will be insufficient funding required to translate this new doctrine into reality. This is a particularly salient obstacle under the current political atmosphere. Current transformational initiatives, including the SCF, originated from the Liberal government's IPS demands. The new Conservative government, however, is likely to be selective in the transformational projects that they choose to support. At the very least, the Conservatives wish to build voter confidence and achieve a majority government. This, in turn, translates into a government that needs time to build voter assurance which means that they will be reluctant to depart from the status quo: "this would mean a return to a force structure... within a defence policy that places more emphasis on domestic and continental security than active internationalism."<sup>83</sup> In other words, there is less risk of losing popularity among Canadian voters if old military philosophies and force structures are maintained.

Additionally, from a historical point of view, "there is a consistency in Canadian defence policy in rejecting radical innovation, and this is the threat to transformation."<sup>84</sup> There are many examples of Canadian political rejection to military innovation; examples include Hellyer's attempt to form a joint expeditionary force in the 1960s and the nuclear

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<sup>83</sup> Peter Haydon, *Canada's New Defence and Naval Policies: Déjà vu all over again*, Report prepared for the Royal Australian Navy Sea Power Conference 2006 (Sydney: 2006), 17.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

submarine program of the 1980s. Additionally, naval aviation was unpopular and perished when the last carrier was decommissioned in 1970 and the current submarine program requires repeated defending. Traditionally, therefore, it is clear that political culture is unwilling to embrace large leaps in defence capability and innovation. Small alterations are easier since they require less money and less explanation to defence critics.

In some ways, the military is a victim of its own successes. After years of defence cuts, the Canadian military continues to effectively respond to government demands. Our current involvement in Afghanistan, in addition to a slew of past operations in the 1990's, show remarkable innovation and resourcefulness. Politicians are extremely reluctant to discard military equipment that remains even somewhat effective. Peter Haydon points out that "part of the problem is that politicians tend to focus on minimum military capability rather than asking, 'How much military capability is needed?' which is the military staff approach."<sup>85</sup> In other words, politicians are primarily concerned that operations are successfully completed; they are not overly concerned with how operations are best conducted.

In the end, an amphibious transformation of this magnitude requires unwavering commitment and a steadfast political buy in. This will occur only when senior military leadership convinces the government of several things. First they must convince the politicians that an amphibious power projection capability is achievable. Second, when looking for replacement systems for obsolete equipment, it must be shown to be not just affordable, but the best investment for a relevant and responsive capability; it must yield the greatest "bang for the buck" in terms of flexibility and operational capacity. Third,

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

government must be shown that such an undertaking does not negatively detract from current initiatives, capabilities or force structures.

Military leaders need to educate the voting populace on current requirements as well. Canadians must get away from the Cold War deterrence strategy and embrace the notions of forward presence and early stabilizing intervention as the basis of policy when it comes to dealing with asymmetric threats and failing nations. Norman Friedman makes the point that “the classic logic of realpolitik does not seem to apply to organizations like Al Qaeda. Thus the calculus of deterrence seems far less meaningful.”<sup>86</sup> The public must be made to grasp that the requirements for a meaningful force structure includes a modest and affordable amphibious projection capability.

## **THE MILITARY CHALLENGE**

Simultaneous to the political challenges, an amphibious capability faces the difficult challenge of being accepted by the fighting men and women of the CF. The military itself needs to embrace and be inspired by amphibious capability and the doctrinal and cultural change it brings. Historically, this has proven difficult to achieve and can result in failure. The ‘Triphibious Force’ proposal in the 1960’s, for example, failed to become policy partly because:

The army was unwilling to make the necessary changes which would have come at the expense of traditional NATO mechanized capabilities and the Navy proved to the Minister that the cost of his dream force was outrageously high and that the concept of operation was completely impractical.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Norman Friedman, “Transformation and Technology for Medium Navies”, *Canadian Naval Review* Vol 2, No. 2 (Summer 2006): 6.

<sup>87</sup> Haydon, *Canada’s New Defence and Naval Policies: Déjà vu all over again...*, 5.

Obviously, new initiatives require acceptance and military support in order to sustain the momentum required to see them come to fruition.

As noted in the above quote, cost is a major factor when it comes to the military's willingness to embrace new concepts. The environmental services are well aware that additional funding is very difficult to attain. The result is that environmental projects may very well have to be sidelined in order to bring about the SCF transformation and affordability. This leads to a natural reluctance to back such an initiative. Commodore Lehre notes that the SCF amphibious vision calls for "most of the current CF inventory and then adds substantially to it. Yet the most recent budget, in addition to being back-end loaded, has not provided the funding needed to replace current equipment and acquire an amphibious capability."<sup>88</sup>

There is also a common military perception that this capability will come at the expense of flexibility. This is particularly true for the Navy whose traditional flexibility remained useful since the end of the Cold War.<sup>89</sup> Peter Haydon points out that Naval skeptics "argue that going the amphibious route will require that the Navy make the task its primary mission and, as the nuclear submarine program of the 1980s would have done, the task can only be maintained at the expense of other naval capabilities."<sup>90</sup> In turn, this can be mistakenly viewed as a limitation to flexibility and operational capacity. However,

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<sup>88</sup> Lehre, "Taking Joint Capability Seriously"..., 13.

<sup>89</sup> The Navy has made wide ranging diplomatic, constabulatory and military contributions to a variety of operations in the past 15 years. Some of which include operations adjacent to failed and failing states such as Haiti, East Timor, and in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman to name a few.

<sup>90</sup> Haydon, *Canada's New Defence and Naval Policies: Déjà vu all over again...*, 15.

as shown in Chapter 2, the SCF project does not have any intention to diminish or negate the use of a Naval Task Group.

The issue of flexibility is also challenged by the fact that the SCF project was intended to have only one major amphibious vessel. This brings out concerns about required maintenance periods and out-of-action times. Moreover, another logical question stems from requiring the same vessel to be in more than one theatre of operations at the same time. However, it must be recalled that the SCF program was very much in its infancy and intended to be a phased project. The Full Operating Capability (FOC) was not going to be achieved for some 15 years, and the idea to have one amphibious ship was that it was to be subjectively used as a discretionary tool for crisis or conflict contingency intervention.<sup>91</sup> Pre-positioning would greatly negate the transit times and location problems, and if proven effective, more amphibious vessels could conceivably be acquired in the long term.

The real challenge is one of numbers and not one of adaptation or loss of flexibility. In the case of each service, an amphibious capability is in addition to current platform numbers and personnel. While the CF is expanding in personnel, the bulk of this is intended for the Army.<sup>92</sup> Hence, capacity becomes a tremendous challenge for the two remaining services.

The Army, even with additional troops, would be hard pressed to generate sufficient forces for the SCF. This stems from another challenge to the military acceptance of amphibious operations: training. Not just any force can be placed on an

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<sup>91</sup> Canadian Navy, “*Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS*”..., 8.

<sup>92</sup> According to the “Canada First” policy, the Conservative government intends to expand the Regular force strength to at least 75,000 personnel. Additional information pertaining to the expansion of the CF may be found at <http://www.conservative.ca/EN/2692/41691>.

amphibious ship and tactically projected ashore. The training bill is huge and skills are unique and perishable. In fact, it is likely to require 3 Battle Groups in a continuous training cycle in order to always have one at the 10 days notice to move requirement.<sup>93</sup> This obviously, is an opportunity cost to other operations and as Haydon points out, it is difficult to conceive “the Army having the ability to undertake the training for a new amphibious task while meeting all the established commitments.”<sup>94</sup> The Navy, as well, has a tremendous amount of training requirements. Naval “transformation of this nature calls up not just new capabilities but entire new generations of ships and equipment as well as a host of new training requirements.”<sup>95</sup> Amphibious projection ashore is extremely demanding and encompasses all the specialist skills housed in the Maritime Amphibious Unit and LPX requirements.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, additional warfare skills are required just to have the sea control in the littorals that is needed to ensure adequate force protection.

In order to overcome these obstacles, a military change in culture is required. Without modifying our current culture, it is very difficult to encourage the service men and women of the CF to fully embrace amphibious operations. Education of today’s operating environment, coupled with a firm understanding of relevant and responsive force employment is needed. Norman Friedman makes the case that “one problem in the [transformation] process...has been a lack of articulated reasoning explaining what is or

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<sup>93</sup> Canadian Navy, “*Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS*”..., 8.

<sup>94</sup> Haydon, *Canada’s New Defence and Naval Policies: Déjà vu all over again...*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>96</sup> LPX is a generic term used for an amphibious ship. Since the type of ship was never determined and could have been an LPD or LPH (for example), the acronym LPX serves to denote that a type of ship was never specified.

was needed, and why.”<sup>97</sup> There is a need to clearly articulate the uniqueness about today’s threat. This will lead to a culture that is open to innovation:

effectiveness has to be valued over procedure; combat readiness over administrative proficiency...experiments in new ship deployment patterns, leaner battle groups, small unit tactics, creative weapon employment, simplified reporting methods, and adaptive training methods must be encouraged, and the people driving them given the time, resources, and responsibility to see them through.<sup>98</sup>

This openness and acceptance to cultural reform, however, is a formidable challenge that must be led and embraced from senior military leaders. Cultural reform also needs to reinforce the notion of true joint operations. For the Air Force and Navy, a prevailing cultural attitude exists today that “the new model army (is) the centerpiece of the transformed Canadian Forces (which) requires that the Navy and the Air Force become dedicated support services to provide strategic sea and air lift...”<sup>99</sup> This narrow interpretation of joint operations greatly marginalizes the enabling roles of the Navy and Air Force, and stands as a tremendous hurdle for joint initiatives. In other words, the Navy and Air Force must be seen as more than just administrative support; they must be culturally embraced and physically equipped to be true joint enablers.

Another prevalent counter argument to adopting a radical capability, particularly an ambitious one such as amphibious operations, is that other coalition forces would simply supply and perform the functions required. While Canada frequently operates within coalitions, this line of reasoning is flawed given that it is inconsistent with current political visioning of a whole of government response. Commonly referred to as ‘Team

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<sup>97</sup> Friedman, “Transformation and Technology for Medium Navies”..., 6.

<sup>98</sup> Neil Golightly, “Correcting Three Strategic Mistakes,” *Proceedings* (April 1990): 38.

<sup>99</sup> Haydon, *Canada’s New Defence and Naval Policies: Déjà vu all over again...*15.

Canada', the political will and mandate now exists for Canada to be able to react to global crises with or without a coalition. As a result, Canada cannot merely rely upon other like-minded states to bring capabilities needed to make strategic effect; the SCF was planned to be "able to operate as a single entity," except for only Major Combat Operations.<sup>100</sup> There are many benefits of an all Canadian (Team Canada) approach. First, being able to mount an all Canadian joint effort allows simpler command and control arrangements. Second, it leads to faster reaction times (unilateral over multilateral decision making) and recognizes the deteriorating state of multi-lateral relations, particularly amongst medium powers, which leads to indecision and lag. Lastly, it is safer, and more effective since interoperability and ROE issues are greatly diminished with a joint force that has trained and prepared together. This results in increased coordination, sophistication and efficiency in operations.

## **ALLIED SUPPORT**

The last overarching requirement for adopting radical military innovation is that it must be accepted, if not outright commended by our allies. Given our level of commitment to UN, NATO and NORAD initiatives, it is only fitting that Canada develop capabilities that are in line with those of like-minded nations. Amphibious capabilities are fully accepted and embraced by all the remaining G8 nations. It stands to reason that a Canadian amphibious force would increase interoperability; the SCF would be able to

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<sup>100</sup> Canadian Navy, "*Standing Contingency Force: CONOPS*"..., 6.



take over, lead or join in an operation already underway and requiring maritime power projection.

In terms of the SCF, allied acceptance and encouragement was clearly the case. The Integrated Tactical Effects Experiment (ITEEX) in November 2006 was supported by the USS GUNSTEN HALL, an American amphibious ship. Additionally, previous SCF wargames were greatly enhanced with Royal Marine Commando mentoring. Both the US and UK had made expeditionary and amphibious coursing also available to Canadian participants, further amplifying the level of allied support and encouragement for developing an amphibious capability.

Without allied support, a radical innovation for the conduct of operations would have to be conceived, designed and built completely in Canada. Not only would this not be cost effective, different doctrinal practices would hamper coalition effectiveness. In contrast, the development of an accepted and desirable capability leverages allied support through their emphasis to Canadian political leaders that committed investment is worthwhile and increases the cooperation and participation of multi-national partnerships.

### **CHAPTER THREE - CONCLUSION**

There are a tremendous number of challenges and issues surrounding a departure of the status quo when it comes to the manner in which military operations are conducted. Indeed, a force structural transformation that includes the force generation of an amphibious task force is a radical change to the normal conduct of Canadian military affairs. Notwithstanding that the SCF's power projection capability was completely inline with matching ability to the broad spectrum of possible contingency operations, there are

many obstacles preventing implementation. The greatest challenge is to ascertain the support and backing from the politicians and voting populace. The funding required will not be supplied without the corresponding political will. To do this, politicians must be shown that Canadian amphibious aspirations are affordable and provide the best operational tools and abilities for the future security environment. Additionally, our allies and our own service men and women must welcome, support and be inspired by Canadian amphibious capabilities. The encouragement and willingness to transform, as well as the readiness to adopt a new cultural mindset must be prevalent in order to maintain the momentum needed to bring about the required innovative changes.

## CONCLUSION

Canadian Foreign Affairs and Defence policies have not dramatically changed since transformational initiatives commenced in 2005. Despite a change of government, Canadian interests abroad have revolved around collective security, and a desire to remain committed to contributing to global peace, security and stability. In addition, the security environment since the collapse of the Cold War has changed and yielded threats that are asymmetric, unpredictable and thrive in failed and failing nations. There are many ways to respond to these new threats; a nation can bolster domestic defences, enhance expeditionary capabilities or make a balanced transformation to both. The Conservative “Canada First” policy clearly shows that expeditionary transformational initiatives are not high priorities. Nonetheless, Canada remains committed to conducting expeditionary operations. Moreover, there is a renewed interest to expand and tailor the CF to be as efficient, relevant and responsive as possible. Canada desires expeditionary capabilities that enable operations across the entire spectrum of conflict: from Humanitarian Assistance to Peace Support to Major Combat Operations. At the same time, Canada needs a force that is flexible and quick to react in both permissive and non-permissive environments. This capability does not currently exist; a new tool is needed in the toolbox. The only capability that offers the versatility, speed and decisiveness across the spectrum of conflict is a maritime based power projection force. In other words, an amphibious capability is needed.

The littoral regions of the failed and failing nations house the majority of their populations and also provide access to those nations that wish to influence or stabilize an emerging crisis. JSS and strategic airlift are not enough. These types of lift assets enable

mobility, but require benign conditions that cannot be assured in every instance. A Canadian expeditionary force that relies solely on C17 strategic airlift and JSS for sealift would be limited to operations on the low end of the spectrum of conflict. Trans-littoral manoeuvre, on the other hand, is enabled through amphibious operations and yields the operational capacity to be applicable, reactive and effective at every level of conflict. Stated differently, an amphibious power projection capability is the optimum force package for achieving Canadian Foreign and Defence policy objectives. However, there are many challenges to overcome. The SCF is currently postponed and political endorsement must be achieved. Moreover, the military community needs to culturally adapt and embrace this radical innovation. The men and women of the CF need to understand, as every other G8 nation does, that a joint amphibious capability is the most efficient and applicable force in today's contemporary operating environment.

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