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Breaking Trail – Towards Relevant Canadian Parachute Forces

by/par

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Abstract

Canadian parachute forces currently exist in an archaic state. Strategically ignored even before the disbandment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1995, the Canadian Army's residual parachute companies employ anachronistic doctrine and equipment. Despite its ostensive strategic neglect, the parachute arm continues to attract some of the most physically fit, motivated and determined soldiers in the Canadian Forces.

Examined superficially, parachute forces simply represent light forces with a specialized method of delivery. However, the act of parachuting produces unique characteristics in airborne forces including self-reliance, determination and group cohesion. In contrast to these benefits, airborne operations tend to incur heavier casualties preventing their contemporary execution. Although many nations advocate the use of airborne forces as a method of power projection and justify their employment in their national security architecture, only the United States has executed an airborne operation since 1990. Many other countries, however, use their parachute forces during war and complex peace support operations not for their method of delivery but to take advantage of the excellent light soldiers found there.

Post-Cold War parachute forces operations have demonstrated the contemporary benefit of this capability. With this in mind, the Canadian Army should recognize the parachute capability as an outstanding force generation model for light forces. Nonetheless, this arm's re-generation should only take place based on a quantifiable need with consideration to its recent history and the current military situation.

Breaking Trail – Towards Relevant Canadian Parachute Forces

Section One - Introduction

Parachute forces exist in Canada as the product of an incomplete political and military decision. As the legacy of the disbandment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1995, there remains three individual parachute companies within the Canadian Army's Light Infantry Battalions scattered across the country. Lacking a clear strategic vision or future, these residual parachute sub-units employ doctrine and equipment considered antiquated over a decade ago when the Canadian government disbanded their unit in disgrace. For this strategic reason or due to its tactical impact, the Canadian Forces have not employed the parachute companies in their practiced role but rather allocated them as light infantry to peace support and other operational deployments.

Yet despite the dilapidated state of this ignored capability, these airborne forces still attract some of the fittest, toughest and most motivated soldiers in the Canadian Army. Such a dichotomy results in great military inefficiency both due to the underemployment of such high quality individuals as well as the wasting of scarce resources on an unused capability. Lacking a clear and defined role for its parachute forces and cognizant of its anachronistic, inefficacious state, clearly the Canadian Forces need to bring an end to this error.

Is the decision on Canada's parachute capability this straightforward, however? Should Canada base its divestment of its airborne forces on past decisions or is there contradictory contemporary justification for their continued existence? Do other nations continue to employ a parachute capability that could, by extension, warrant a continued or revitalized Canadian force? More broadly, do other nations exploit the exceptional soldiers found in their parachute forces for current operations in the Contemporary Operating Environment? The truth to this last statement will be demonstrated through a detailed examination of the current state of the parachute capabilities of several countries.

Initially, this study will attempt to identify the fundamental characteristics of airborne forces. By defining and characterizing this capability, we will understand if parachute forces constitute simply a specialized light force or if they represent more than a method of delivery. Of even greater importance, we will explore the nature of parachuting forces to discover the intangible benefits and hazards of this capability on both historic and contemporary operations.

With this background knowledge in hand, this investigation will advance to examine the airborne forces of other countries. In particular, a study of the national strategic cultures and security policies of other nations will expose their justification for this unique arm. Through this study of the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia and Canada itself, we will discover which countries can truly justify their parachute forces through their national security architecture.

Understanding how nations declare they will employ their airborne capability, the subsequent section will examine whether any of these countries has actually maintained and employed parachute forces in the post-Cold War period from the first Gulf War to the present. In this manner the military actions of the United States, Great Britain, France

and Australia will act as a counterpoint to Canada's use of its forces. Are these forces employed for their method of deployment or do these countries consider the quality of soldier found in these units more important? Equally, this section will introduce the shortcomings of contemporary parachute forces.

A sensible recommendation on the future path of a Canadian parachute capability cannot take place uniquely from the perspective of international airborne forces. Against this context we must examine factors specific to Canada due to its history, geography and against the greater perspective of the Canadian Forces. Also prior to reaching a conclusion on the best way ahead for Canada's parachute arm, we must look at the options available to Canada. This section will lead us to discover that, in addition to disbanding Canada's legacy parachute forces or maintaining a status quo, there exist substantive future options for this capability based on technology and modernization.

This study will demonstrate the true paradox of parachute forces. Having discovered the high quality soldiers present in the world's airborne forces, we will equally come to understand the great reticence to employ them in their true role. By identifying the extensive justification for this forcible entry capability in some countries, this paper will also show that most nations do not employ their parachute forces in this role. Rather, despite the additional training and resources required to develop airborne forces, many of the subject countries prefer to exploit the excellent light forces soldiers found therein. Indeed, with this realization and the perspective of the many practical future options for Canada's forces, this paper will demonstrate that Canada should modernize its parachute forces to give them greater combat power and take advantage of the high quality soldiers the airborne capability attracts and breeds.

Section Two – The Nature of Airborne/Parachute Operations

"What manner of men are these who wear the maroon beret?"[1] This question, first asked by Field Marshal Montgomery in his tribute to parachute forces at the end of World War Two, is as applicable today as it was then. Since their creation, the intangible sentiment surrounding parachute or airborne forces has demonstrated that they are not like other elements of the military. Yet what is there in the nature of these forces that makes them different than any other part of a nation's army or armed forces? This question will be answered by first examining the Canadian definitions of parachute and airborne capabilities. Subsequently, this section will explore the operational and strategic characteristics of parachute forces: a joint, rapidly deployable force with operational level impact that is burdened with a tendency towards heavy casualties and that is limited by its light scales of equipment. Further the non-quantifiable aspects, those based on emotion and attitudes, will be discussed through an investigation of the benefits born of parachuting: confidence and determination, leadership, physical fitness and team cohesion. This section will conclude by examining the negative characteristics of parachuting including its exclusionary attitude and the resultant resistance from conventional forces.

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[1] LCol B. Horn, *Bastard Sons: An Examination of Canada's Airborne Experience 1942-1995* (St. Catherines, ON: Vanwell Publishing, 2001), vii.

Definitions

The *Canadian Forces Parachute Capability Study Report* published in 2000 defines a parachute capability as "the ability to deploy personnel, equipment and/or material by parachute into permissive and limited non-permissive environments." In comparison, the report labels an airborne capability as "the ability to conduct combat operations once deployed by parachute".[2] These definitions are further used in the Canadian Army's more contemporary *Chief of Land Staff (CLS) Capability Development Planning Guidance – Light Forces* published in 2004.[3] The differentiation between these two concepts is of fundamental importance. By the Canadian Army definition, a parachute capability corresponds to only the most limited forms of combat. In contrast, an airborne capability is more akin to the opposed airborne assaults of World War Two. Most strictly speaking, a parachute capability is a method of delivery whereas an airborne capability is a combat operation.[4] Nevertheless, these terms will be employed interchangeably throughout the paper as they both represent military forces that deploy by parachute – this study's critical focus.

Characteristics of Parachute/Airborne Operations

The forces that employ parachutes to deploy soldiers, whether in a parachute or an airborne operation, have many unique characteristics. Although Canadian parachute doctrine recognizes many factors that are tactical in nature, those characteristics of parachuting that are operational and strategic will be focused on, namely, the following: joint operations, highly deployable, their operational or strategic effect, the ubiquity of casualties and their light nature.

A military parachuting organization, by the nature of its component forces, is involved in a joint operation. Although contemporary operations, due to the synergistic effect of Army, Navy, Air Force and Special Forces working together, are increasingly joint, deployment by parachute requires the active engagement of both an airplane and soldiers. Unlike a mechanized military formation that may operate without another environment component, parachute forces and the Air Force must operate together. The benefits of such low-level joint operations to training and indeed the tendency to conduct such training in a combined context is recognized by the Canadian Forces:

> Parachuting remains an excellent training tool for young soldiers and officers in the CF. It also provides a certain amount of interoperability for both the Land Force and Air Force with foreign forces that can not

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[2] Canadian Forces, *The CF Parachute Capability Study Report* (Land Staff Headquarters: 1901-1 (DLFS 2-4)), 18 May 00, 2.

[3] Canadian Forces, *CLS Capability Development Planning Guidance – Light Forces* (Land Staff Headquarters: 3189-1 (CLS)) Jul 04), 1.

[4] Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-002/FP-000 *Land Force Tactical Doctrine, Volume 2* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1997), 1-2 and 7-1. Within the context of the Spectrum of Conflict, a parachute capability would be restricted to Peace and potentially some forms of Conflict whereas the Canadian Army could equally employ an airborne capability during War. The Canadian Army defines airborne operations as a Unique Operation similar to airmobile, amphibious or operations by encircled forces.

> be discounted. The inherent joint nature of parachute operations provides inter-service training opportunities and co-operation that are otherwise not available on a continuing basis.[5]

Parachute forces therefore enjoy all the benefits and suffer all the frustrations of joint operations with another military environment.[6]

Further, parachute forces, normally transported by operational or strategic air assets, are by their nature highly deployable. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the military body Canada follows for doctrine terminology, defines deployment as "[t]he relocation of forces and materiel to desired operational areas."[7] Therefore deployability demonstrates ability for forces and material to relocate. The rather dated Canadian Forces publication *Airborne Operations* (1990) refers to this characteristic as Air Mobility and suggests that,

> Airborne forces are specifically adapted to move by air. Their radius of action is in fact that of the transport aircraft; they can be moved within theatres, across theatres, and over nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) and ground obstacles at relatively fast speeds.[8]

The range of the aircraft in which they embark and the parachute forces' own endurance limit deployability. The aforementioned publication equally expresses the high readiness of parachuting forces due to their possession of light scales of equipment and training. Parachute forces therefore possess the potential to deploy globally on very short notice; aircraft range and degree of force readiness represent the biggest limitations on this capability.

This ability to deploy parachute forces within a theatre of operations or between theatres makes them a potential operational or strategic weapon. Although ostensibly a relatively small sized and lightly armed organization to have operational results, parachute forces' ability to rapidly bypass front line forces, over-fly obstacles and seize objectives in-depth makes them an ideal operational or strategic tool. During warfighting, airborne forces are an important element in operational level Deep

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5 *The CF Parachute Capability Study Report*, 46.

6 Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-300/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa, DND Canada, 2005), 1-6. This keystone Canadian Forces publication proves the joint nature of airborne operations in stating "when elements of two or more environments of the CF are required to co-operate, they will do so under a joint structure …" And further "Certain CF operations are enhanced when environmental components operate in concert. Forced entry operations provide good examples: airborne operations require land and air forces to be employed together ..."

7 NATO, AAP-6(2006) *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)* (Brussels, BE: NATO Standardization Agency, 2006), 2-D-4. United States doctrine expands this definition to state: "Deployment encompasses all activities from origin or home station through destination, specifically including intra-continental United States, intertheater, and intratheater movement legs, staging, and holding areas." See United States Department of Defence, JP 1-02 *Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms – Amended* (Washington: DOD USA, 2006), 156.

8 Department of National Defence, B-GL-310-001/FT-001 *Airborne Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1990), 2-1.

Operations as described in the *Canadian Land Forces Tactical Doctrine* "[Airborne forces] can be a tool of deep operations, potentially capable of striking at an enemy's centre of gravity."[9]

Although parachuting forces may have operational and strategic effects on the battlefield out of proportion to their size, these forces are equally highly vulnerable. Foremost, due to their dependence on air transport, parachute operations require a permissive air environment or the establishment of air superiority via aggressive air combat patrols and Suppression of Enemy Air Defences (SEAD).[10] Equally, enemy forces can cause heavy casualties to parachute forces due to their virtual helplessness during descent and landing.[11] This threat, combined with the danger of inclement weather[12], produces an important truism: heavy casualties characterize parachute operations. Indeed, during World War Two, American airborne forces lost 30 per cent of their number as casualties in comparison to 10 per cent for the regular infantry formations.[13] It is important to consider that even in permissive environments, parachute forces will incur casualties due to the method of delivery.

This propensity towards casualties is further complicated by the limitations inherent in light combat organizations such as parachute forces.[14] As antecedently

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[9] *Land Force Tactical Doctrine*, 7-3. *Operational Level Doctrine for the Canadian Forces* goes on to state "deep penetrations into the operational depth of an enemy, even by small military forces, may cause dislocation of elements of the force by attacking reserves, lines of communications and command and control networks". Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-001/FP-000 *Conduct of Land Operations – Operational Level Doctrine for the Canadian Army* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1998), 18. Despite this potential for operational significance, parachute forces' quality as a light fighting force at times encourages their tactical employment. Indeed *Airborne Operations* suggests that parachute forces "[e]mployed properly and with audacity … can create a shock effect out of all proportion to their size, fire-power ad [sic] number." *Airborne Operations*, 2-1. This combined with the generally above average skill and aggression of such forces encourages their use as shock troops at the tactical level. Historically this concern appears consistently when airborne formations were employed for tactical benefit. Major-General Gavin, Commanding General 82nd Airborne Division, questioned the use of the US 17th Airborne Division on Op Varsity, the crossing of the Rhine in March 1945. Gen J.M. Gavin, *On To Berlin: Battles of an Airborne Commander 1943-46* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1978), 278.

[10] *Airborne Operations*, 2-1 and 2-2. This publication describes this limitation as "a need for overall or, as a minimum, local air superiority" with its mitigation through "the destruction, neutralization or suppression of enemy air defences and the enemy's electronic warfare (EW) capability."

[11] *Ibid*.,2-2. Necessitating "heavy preparatory fire support, including close air support, immediately before landing and continued tactical air support during the landing and ground tactical stages".

[12] *Ibid*., 2-1. Achieving mobility via airplane or while under canopy, parachute forces have "a need for favourable weather, especially winds, since ground wind speeds over 13 knots may cause high landing-casualties." Indeed, as paratroopers may incur heavy casualties deploying in high winds, inclement weather may restrict both their initial deployment and/or resupply.

[13] K. Gabel, *The Making of a Paratrooper* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990), 268 quoted in B. Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 280.

[14] The Canadian Army Council defined light as: "a force optimized for military operations in complex environments, rapidly deployable through a variety of means, yet not tied to any one platform." See Canadian Forces, CDR 04006 *Capability Development Record – Light Forces* (Kingston, ON: Director General Land Combat Development, 2006), 41.

recognized, light forces are inherently highly deployable and may maintain high readiness. In the contemporary operating environment, however, parachute forces do not possess the armoured vehicles required to reduce their vulnerability to sporadic attack via gunfire, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and land mines.[15] Although possessing great flexibility during land operations as they are not tied to equipment like heavier, mechanized forces,[16] parachute forces' increased vulnerability correlates poorly with the Western world's contemporary sensitivity to casualties.[17] Only in reducing these forces' vulnerability do they become operationally employable. This fundamentally changes parachute forces and places in question both their quantifiable and non-tangible benefits.

The non-quantifiable benefits of parachuting

To the tangible characteristics of parachuting - naturally joint, highly deployable, operational level-impact, vulnerability and light nature - must be added the non-quantifiable. Although all military forces attempt to build confidence, physical toughness and determination in their soldiers, parachute forces accomplish this by the act of parachuting itself. In parachuting or jumping, individuals develop many of these beneficial qualities as suggested by Gideon Aran:

> Jumping encourages self-confidence, determination, self-reliance, masterful activity, aggression, courage, and other items symptomatic of the phallic-narcissistic type, all of which are very important in a military setting, especially in paratroop commando units, that rely heavily on individual action and are aggressive in nature.[18]

Militaries highly seek in units and in soldiers self-confidence, determination, aggression and courage. Such characteristics enable militaries to succeed against challenges and opponents.[19] Indeed American Major-General A.S. Newman identifies the garnered benefits of parachuting more plainly in stating that,

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[15] Anecdotal proof of this may be found in the Canadian deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan as part of Operation ATHENA with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from August 2003 to February 2004. The Canadian Battalion Group, based on a Light Infantry Battalion, suffered three soldiers killed and approximately six wounded to an IED and replanted mine attack. Both incidents took place in Iltis light jeeps tasked to the battalion that had no integral patrolling vehicles.

[16] *Airborne Operations* describes this flexibility in stating: "Airborne forces, like all light infantry, have more flexibility in tactical employment then most other troops. They can be used effectively in specific areas where conventional forces are restricted: urban areas, the jungle, the mountains and in the North." *Airborne Operations*, 2-1.

[17] For a discussion of Western casualty aversion see J. Record, "Collapsed Countries, Casualty Dread, and the New American Way of War," *Parameters*, vol. XXXII, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 10.

[18] G. Aran, "Parachuting," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 80, no. 1 (July 1974): 147, quoted in Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 278.

[19] As Bass states in *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, "with confidence a soldier willingly faces the enemy and withstands deprivations, minor setbacks, and extreme stress, knowing he and his unit are capable of succeeding." B.M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (New

> Parachute jumping tests and hardens a soldier under stress in a way nothing short of battle can do. You never know about others. But paratroopers will fight. You can bet on that. They repeatedly face danger while jumping and develop self-discipline that conquers fear.[20]

This development of self-reliance and aggression in parachute forces gives birth to a further non-tangible benefit. A parachuting soldier who "… had won a very important victory over himself"[21] and developed self-assurance, equally garnered important leadership skills. Whether from the aggressive, determined soldiers parachuting creates, from the requirements of being alone under canopy with only oneself for direction or from the dispersed nature of the drop zone, airborne operations encourage leadership skills in its practitioners.[22] The commander of the American 82nd Airborne in World War Two, Major-General James Gavin, echoes this point: "It is taken for granted in airborne troops that each trooper is a potential leader himself. Every trooper does carry a baton in his knapsack."[23] Parachute forces, replete with self-confidence and aggressive soldiers, are indeed development grounds for leaders.

These non-quantifiable benefits are not limited to what parachuting develops in soldiers. The *CF Parachute Study* recognizes the benefit of parachuting as it tests and therefore filters soldiers who are unable to cope with the mental and physical demands of the act of jumping from an airplane:

> [Parachuting] is an effective tool for testing courage, stress management, endurance, as well as mental and physical stamina in a controlled environment. It provides a challenge for those individuals who strive to achieve a higher level of physical soldiering than that offered by more conventional units …[24]

York: New York Free Press, 1985): 69, quoted in B. Horn and M. Wyczynski, *Hook-up! The Canadian Airborne Compendium* (St. Catherines, ON: Vanwell Publishing, 2003), 19.

[20] Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 269.

[21] Stated by General Sir John Hackett of Operation Market Garden fame. R.A. Beaumont, "Airborne: Life Cycle of a Military Subculture," *Military Review*, vol. 51, no. 6, (June 1971): 53 quoted in Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 278. Indeed Airborne literature is replete with descriptions of both the confidence soldiers derived jumping from airplanes and their dependence on only themselves when they landed, isolated on a dark drop zone. General Gavin suggests this on describing the paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne following their assault of Sicily: "From here on out the troopers of the 82d [sic] Airborne knew what it meant to leap from the door of a plane into the inky black night. They knew full well that whether they lived or died depended entirely upon their mental and physical resources and what they carried out the door with them. Only God came along with you was the feeling after Sicily." Major-General J.M. Gavin, *Airborne Warfare* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1947), 18.

[22] When arriving on a Drop Zone, airborne formations are usually very dispersed, disorganized and often have already taken casualties. Soldiers must quickly get their bearings and rapidly move to an objective or a Rendez-Vous point. With the resultant disruption to the normal chain of command from dispersion and casualties, every soldier must be ready to take command of those around him and pursue the immediate mission.

[23] Gavin, *Airborne Warfare*, 61.

[24] *The CF Parachute Capability Study Report*, 14.

In making this statement, the study recognizes the challenges that parachuting presents to soldiers. A prospective parachuting soldier must raise his level of physical fitness to endure the demands of this method of delivery. Clay Blair, an American military historian, recognizes this intangible benefit of parachuting in stating that, "the aspiring paratrooper had to be in superb physical condition in order to withstand the shock of the jump and the hard landing."[25] In presenting this challenge, not only does parachuting create psychologically admiral characteristics, it equally filters and develops soldiers who are physically exemplary.

The act of overcoming physical and mental hardship and developing great confidence engenders group cohesion and spirit in parachuting organizations. The use of the parachute to deploy is exceptional in military organizations in that officers and men must share common challenges during training and operations. Unlike certain military groups in which the tasks and hardships of each team member are very different, parachuting officers and soldiers deploy to battle in the same way. One American officer explained this in saying that, "There's a close bond between the airborne soldier and his officer, because each knows the other has passed the jump test. And they continue to do so together. Each believes the other will be a good man to have around when things get sweaty."[26] This state of mutual confidence through shared hardship creates an unusually strong *esprit d'équipe* within parachute organizations – a key contributor to success in battle.[27]

However, the spirit, cohesion and confidence of the parachute force are not all positive. Authors and military commanders alike have recognized that these intangible benefits may equally create arrogance and dismissal of those not sharing the attributes. The special pay, distinctive insignia and uniforms airborne soldiers receive to emphasize their uniqueness further aggravate this tendency.[28] This negative aspect of parachuting is best explained by Professor Bernd Horn:

> … the same camaraderie, esprit de corps, and tight bond, forged through demanding and dangerous training, which provides the strength of airborne units is also their Achilles heel. The airborne's inward focus creates an aloofness which embraces fellow members … yet

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[25] C. Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers. The American Airborne in World War II* (New York: The Dial Press, 1985), 27 quoted in Horn and Wyczynski, *Hook-up*, 12-13.

[26] Major-General A.S. Newman, *What Are Generals Made Of?* (Navato, CA: Presidio, 1987), 193 quoted in Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 279. This mutual admiration is born of the shared experience of overcoming hurdles. It equally minimizes the separation between leadership and followers created by military hierarchy. As all members of the team must carry the same burden and overcome the same fear in parachuting, one Commanding Officer of the Canadian Airborne Regiment said simply "it is impossible to hide weakness in the Airborne." Horn and Wyczynski, *Hook-up!*, 16.

[27] *Ibid*., 16.

[28] *Ibid*., 15. Professor Horn recognizes this is also true in Canada where, despite emphatic denials, special consideration was give to Canada's airborne forces.

> dismisses, even shuns others, and an often contrived self-indulgent false sense of elitism which invites the antagonism and disdain of others.[29]

The dark side of the airborne capability is not merely a tactical problem. In times of peace with armed forces engaged in peacekeeping or low intensity operations, parachute forces have limited opportunity to demonstrate their apparent fighting superiority. Commanders and conventional forces therefore receive exposure to the negative intangible aspects of parachuting without opportunity to witness its positive attributes or its beneficial impact on the battlefield.

The negative attitude parachute forces may hold towards their more conventional brothers in arms is returned in kind. Conventional forces, already resistant to the creation of special units, become even more antagonistic. General William Slim reflected this idea during the Burma Campaign in World War Two when he stated that special forces,

> were usually formed by attracting the best men from normal units by better conditions, promises of excitement and not a little propaganda … The result of these methods was undoubtedly to lower the quality of the rest of the Army, especially of the infantry, not only by skimming the cream off it, but by encouraging the idea that certain of the normal operations of war were so difficult that only specially equipped corps d'élite could be expected to undertake them.[30]

Gilles Perrault equally reflected this negative attitude towards parachute forces due to their negative impact on their conventional brethren in *Les parachutistes*: "Car les hommes les plus vifs et les plus hardis choisiront de servir dans les unités d'élite, qui grouperont bientôt tous les éléments dynamiques, alors que ces éléments s'ils étaient dispersés dans l'armée, pourraient animer la masse par leur allant."[31] Such an attitude of open opposition to parachute forces is a final, negative characteristic. Not merely a tactical, behavioural problem, this perspective may have dramatic impact on strategic employment or on the political attitude towards parachuting forces.

Conclusion

Parachute forces represent a military paradox. A group that is naturally joint and highly deployable, airborne units are capable of operational level impact disproportionate to their tactical capability. Such demanding tasks both attract and breed the confident, determined and physically fit soldiers found in parachute forces. Further, this exigent role and the paratroopers who dare to fulfil it create a highly cohesive team environment that is a breeding ground for tactical leadership.

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29 *Ibid*., 17.

30 Field Marshall Sir W. Slim, *Defeat Into Victory* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1956), 547 quoted in Colonel B. Horn, "The Dark Side to Elites: Elitism as a Catalyst for Disobedience," *Canadian Military Journal*, vol. 8, no.4 (Winter 2005), 72. This paper has avoided the more tangential discussion as to the definition of Special Forces. The term special forces is employed with respect to distinctive forces who have a special or unique task such as parachute forces.

31 G. Perrault, *Les parachutistes* (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1961), 58-59.

However, the very strengths of parachute forces give birth to a number of operational and less-tangible shortcomings. Although militarily attractive due to their ability to create rapid, decisive impact on operations, their lightness and method of delivery that makes this possible virtually guarantees casualties. This is politically disfavourable with the Western world's present sensitivity to casualties. In this manner, airborne forces' inherent advantages either precludes their operational employment or forces such a radical transformation that these benefits are lost. Not only politically unpalatable, parachute forces equally engender a negative sense of exclusivity and elitism that repels conventional brethren already resistant to their presence. And so countries generate highly capable forces made up some of their best soldiers and yet refuse to employ them in their actual role.

Section Three – Defence Policies Supporting Airborne/Parachute Operations

A function of history, geography, foreign policy and domestic politics, a nation's defence policy reflects its power and will on the international stage. National governments, and their military bureaucracies, dictate their national military goals and the means to accomplish them through national security statements, defence policy documents and military component papers. These policies should form an undeviating line of logic and justification from the keystone government policy to the detailed environmental component document.

Is such consistency in national defence policy true in the case of the parachute and airborne capability? Do nations demonstrate congruous defence policy by dictating goals of international engagement and global intervention by means of power projecting capabilities such as airborne forces? This question will be answered by examining the justification for parachute forces in the defence and military policies of the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia and Canada. Through an investigation of each country's national strategic culture, defence policy architecture and military statements, this section will demonstrate which of the subject nations adequately and consistently justify their airborne capability.[32]

United States of America

The United States is the world's remaining superpower; the head of a unipolar international system, it currently has no peer rival. Possessing global interests, it requires global capabilities to protect these interests. America defends these interests by projecting force around the world through a variety of means including the military. The United States can project force militarily through such means as aircraft carrier battle groups, strategic bombers, amphibious capabilities and airborne forces.

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[32] Alastair Iain Johnston defines strategic culture as "as integrated system of symbols (e.g., augmentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem unique realistic and efficacious." A.I. Johnston, "Thinking about strategic culture," *International Security,* vol. 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995): 46, quoted in K.R. Nossal, "Defending the 'realm': Canadian strategic culture revisited," *International Journal* 3, vol. 59 (Summer 2004), 510.

Government documents from national security policy to military doctrine articulate the American *raison d'être* for parachute forces. *The National Security Strategy of the United States* caps American national security policy architecture. This periodically released document describes American national interests, goals, objectives, and threats and opportunities for the United States. Further, in this document, the White House dictates the use of diplomacy, military power, economics and covert action to fulfil its goals.[33] The American Department of Defence takes the guidance from the President's strategy and describes how the military will achieve its assigned tasks in the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR). This document, appropriately released every four years, expands the description of military threats against the United States and assigns tasks and resources to its military components, namely the Army, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations and Nuclear Forces in addition to the Reserves.[34] The QDR is at times supplemented with material from the Joint Chiefs of Staff such as the *National Military Strategy*. Home of parachute forces, the United States Army deciphers this guidance from The Pentagon and proscribes how it will fulfil its tasks in the routinely produced *United States Army Posture Statement* and in various doctrine manuals such as *FM 3-0 Operations*.

The National Security Strategies of the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium reflect the United States' commitment to a global presence. Perhaps most articulately described in *A National Security Strategy for a New Century – December 1999*, the document quotes one of America's greatest presidents in explaining the need for the United States' presence in the world:

> Nearly 55 years ago, in his final inaugural address, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt reflected on the lessons of the first half of the 20th Century. "We have learned," he said, "that we cannot live alone at peace. We have learned that our own well being is dependent on the well being of other nations far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community."[35]

To answer these threats that "have no respect for boundaries", documents such as the 1996 strategy statement, *Engagement and Enlargement*, clearly dictate a need for global leadership and an ability to operate beyond America's borders.[36]

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[33] G.P. Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, Future*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006), 28-31.

[34] *Ibid*., 347. The QDR process began in 1997 following the passage of Congressional legislation requiring a defense review every four years. Before this time the Department of Defense laid-out its strategy in such documents as the *Bottom-Up Review* of October 1993.

[35] Federation of American Scientists – Military Analysis Network, *A National Security Strategy for A New Century – December 1999*, http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nssr-98.pdf; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007, iii.

[36] Federation of American Scientists – Military Analysis Network, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement - February 1996," http://www.fas.org/spp/military/docops/national/1996stra.htm; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007.

To satisfy this national policy of global reach, the national strategies consistently direct the United States military to produce and maintain global power projection through strategic mobility and rapid deployment capabilities. *A National Security Strategy for A New Century – October 1998* exemplifies this guidance in stating the following:

> Due to our alliance commitments and other vital interests overseas, we must have a force structure and deployment posture that enable us to successfully conduct military operations across the spectrum of conflict, often in theaters distant from the United States.[37]

This requirement for global reach is a very consistent theme in the President of the United States' direction to his military. Despite the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s and the apparent strategic paradigm shift succeeding the terrorist attack on the United States on 11 September 2001, national security strategies uniformly justify global power projection.[38] Nevertheless, the American national security strategies of this era do not uniquely answer Washington's need for world presence with military global power projection. Gaining prominence in the late 1990s and in the first strategy of the new millennium, these documents equally recognize forward basing as a growing necessity.[39]

The Department of Defense converts the national security strategy's emphasis on global power projection to guidance for its components. As deals with airborne operations, the QDRs give particular attention to the United States Army and Air Force to produce parachute forces and strategic lift respectively. Typically justifying military resources via the military's ability to wage Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs), the *Bottom-Up Review – October 1993* sees a need for globally deployable forces in the first phase of a MRC where, "[i]n the event of a short-warning attack, more U.S. forces would need to deploy rapidly to the theater and enter the battle as quickly as possible."[40] Further, this document, produced shortly after the end of the Cold War, dictates the specific need for one air assault or airborne division to conduct Peace Enforcement and Intervention Operations.[41] The May 1997 QDR produced under Secretary of Defense

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[37] Federation of American Scientists – Military Analysis Network, "A National Security Strategy for A New Century – October 1998," http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nssr-98.pdf; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007.

[38] See The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America – September 2002*, http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007. However, 1991's "National Security Strategy of the United States – August 1991" is uniquely descriptive of the exact nature of the United States' militaries' global projection forces stating: "Contingency Forces will include the Army's light and airborne units, Marine expeditionary brigades, special operations forces and selected air and naval assets. They will be largely based in the United States and -- since they must be able to respond to spontaneous and unpredictable crises …". Federation of American Scientists – Military Analysis Network, "National Security Strategy of the United States - August 1991," http://www.fas.org/man/docs/918015-nss.htm; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007.

[39] Forward Basing refers to the permanent stationing of military forces at military installations adjacent to potential hot spots.

[40] The Defence Strategy Review Page, "Report on the Bottom Up Review – October 1993," http://www.fas.org/man/docs/bur/index.html; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007.

[41] The Defence Strategy Review Page, "Bottom Up Review – 1993,".

William S. Cohen, in contrast, is far less specific on a need for parachute forces. Although again delivering the message that global power and global interests need rapidly deployable power-projection forces, the document contains no specifics beyond the need to modernize the United States' strategic airlift fleet.[42] The September 2001 QDR demonstrates general consistencies with the erstwhile documents. Justifying airborne forces through the need for, " … rapidly deployable, highly lethal and sustainable forces that may come from outside a theater of operations", the QDR recognizes a global ability may be achieved via both forward stationed forces and forcible entry forces.[43]

The National Military Strategies of the mid and late 1990s echo America's continued requirement for power projection forces following the end of the Cold War. Stating the three components of the United States' strategy, peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention, and fighting and winning the nation's wars, the *National Military Strategy of the United States of America – 1995* particularly emphasizes the complementary nature of overseas presence and power projection.[44] Published by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili, this National Military Strategy places great emphasis on increased power projection and a regeneration of strategic mobility due to the decrease in forces stationed overseas.[45] As concerns airborne capability, the Joint Chiefs of Staff document recognizes that to achieve rapid power projection, "[l]and forces must be capable of deplaoying [sic] rapidly and, if necessary, executing forcible entry [to] seize the initiative and close with and destroy enemy forces …"[46] Generally a non-specific, strategic document, the *National Military Strategy, 1997* is the only product of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that dictates the specific parachute forces the United States must possess to achieve such a forcible entry capability.[47]

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[42] The Defence Strategy Review Page, "Quadrennial Defense Review - May 1997," http://www.fas.org/man/docs/qdr/; Internet; accessed 17 Jan 2007. Of course the American strategic airlift fleet, including the C17 Globemaster III, has far more numerous tasks than airborne operations.

[43] The Defence Strategy Review Page, *Quadrennial Defense Review – September 2001*, http://www.fas.org/man/docs/qdr/; Internet; accessed 18 Jan 2007, 25. JP 1-02 *Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines Forcible Entry as: "Seizing and holding of a military lodgment in the face of armed opposition." United States Department of Defence, JP 1-02 *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 213.

[44] Joint Electronic Library, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America – 1995*, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/research_publications.htm; Internet; accessed 16 Jan 2007, 1.

[45] *Ibid*., 2 and 3. This document recognizes strategic mobility via airlift, sealift, and prepositioning.

[46] *Ibid*., 14.

[47] The Defence Strategy Review Page, "National Military Strategy, 1997," http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nms/; Internet; accessed 18 Jan 2007. This publication states the United States Army must maintain four active corps with ten active divisions: six heavy, two light infantry, one *airborne*, and one air assault (emphasis added).

The Department of the Army responds to the requirement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to produce power projection forces. As concerns the need for rapid deployment forces and parachute forces in particular, *A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army Fiscal Year 1997* directs, "[t]he Army's light forces - airborne, air assault, and light infantry - provide the nation a versatile, strategic force projection and forcible entry capability."[48] Later Posture Statements describe the army's exact need for forcible entry capabilities via parachute forces in asserting, "Airborne Forces are capable of responding to a crisis within hours to show U.S. resolve or stabilize a volatile situation. They provide the nation extremely versatile strategic force projection and forcible entry capabilities."[49]

These Posture Statements, although being descriptions of how the United States Army will achieve the president's orders to produce power projection forces, are nevertheless very general in nature with only the *Army Posture Statement FY 00* labelling a formation by name.[50] The Posture Statement of 2001 rejects discussion of forcible entry forces in favour of a new and more important army force projection capability: Objective Force.[51] In a similar fashion, the 2002 Posture Statement, unlike its predecessors, ignores the requirement for power projection due to its emphasis on the topical global war on terrorism.[52]

United States military doctrine similarly demonstrates its commitment to force projection, the military component of power projection.[53] *FM 3-0 Operations* in particular describes the need for forcible entry operations to "capitalize on strategic and operational mobility to surprise the enemy, seize a lodgment, and gain the initiative."[54] More specifically, the keystone document for the United States Army states that the three

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48 United States Army, "A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army Fiscal Year 1997," http://www.army.mil/aps/97/DEFAULT.HTM; Internet; accessed 22 Jan 2007.

49 *Ibid*.

50 United States Army, "Army Posture Statement FY00," http://www.army.mil/aps/00/aps00.htm; Internet; accessed 22 Jan 2007. This Army Posture Statement declares, "[t]he 82d Airborne Division is the Army's only division that retains the capability to conduct large scale parachute assaults."

51 With Objective Force the Army intends to deploy a medium weight combat capable brigade anywhere in the world in 96 hours, a division in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days. United States Army, "United States Army Posture Statement 2001," http://www.army.mil/aps/01/start.htm; Internet; accessed 22 Jan 2007. Army Posture Statement 2002 declares Objective Force will give divisions the fighting power of heavy divisions but the deployability of light divisions. United States Army, "A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army 2002," http://www.army.mil/aps/02/index.html; Internet; accessed 22 Jan 2007.

52 United States Army, "Posture Statement 2002,". This document's emphasis on deployability is largely limited to the idea that, "[t]he global war on terrorism reinforces the need for a transformed Army that is more strategically responsive, deployable, lethal, agile, versatile, survivable, and sustainable than current forces."

53 Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-0 Operations* (Washington: DOD USA, 2001), 3-12.

54 *Ibid*., 3-16.

forms of forcible entry operations are air assault, parachute assault and amphibious assault with the army specializing in the former two.[55] The United States military's sheer number of doctrine manuals that describe parachute assault operations demonstrates its importance. These include *JP Joint Doctrine for Forcible Entry Operations*, *FM 90-26, Airborne Operations* and *FM 100-27/AFM 2-50-USA/USAF Doctrine for Joint Airborne and Tactical Airlift Operations*.

In summary, the United States possesses a comprehensive and robust security and defence policy architecture that reflects the scale and scope of American interests throughout the world. As the remaining global superpower, United States defence documents from the president's *National Security Statement* to the army's *Posture Statement* justify force projection in fulfilment of American global interests. Indeed, various statements make specific reference to the employment of parachute forces via forcible entry operations. The United States is clearly a nation with the national interest and the documentary justification for the use of airborne forces.

Great Britain

Britain bases its strategic defence policy on geopolitical, historical and domestic political factors. No longer a superpower itself, Britain deeply values its strategic relationship with the United States and recognizes the peace the American presence has brought to Europe. Understanding the United States' global security role, Great Britain equally regards its own defence very soberly having neglected the military to its detriment prior to World War Two.[56] Despite this solemn, practical view of defence issues, Britain's status as the former head of a world empire has left a legacy of numerous international security ties and assets disproportionate to its national power. Perhaps because it does not possess all the tools of global power that it requires, the British Government seeks to cooperate militarily with other countries.[57] Such cooperation is not possible with its domestic security, however, because Britain has historically faced a chronic counterinsurgency campaign in Northern Ireland that has necessitated a considerable allocation of military forces.[58]

With medium power status, Britain employs a relatively simple defence policy architecture. Her Majesty's Government sets national defence policy via periodic *Defence White Papers*. The Secretary of State for Defence publishes these documents when appropriate to respond to international strategic shifts, changes in government or amendments to government policy as exemplified by the end of the Cold War and the international strategic shock of 11 September 2001. As such broad, strategic statements require regular adjustment, the British Government produces an annual *Statement on the Defence Estimates* to report defence performance and policy modifications. In

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55 *Ibid*., 3-17.

56 T. Taylor, "British Defence Policy," in *Reshaping European Defence*, ed. T. Taylor, 76-100 (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994), 79.

57 *Ibid*., 77-82.

58 *Ibid*., 91. Further, Taylor suggests the British Ministry of Defence justifies and requires substantial light forces for deployment to security operations in Northern Ireland.

consequence to this new defence policy direction, the British Army normally produces its own strategic direction.

British post-Cold War national defence policies reflect the realities of Britain's imperial legacy and medium power status. Articulated most simply in the *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996* in its laconic pronouncement, "[t]he United Kingdom has interests and responsibilities across the globe"[59], the *1992 Defence White Paper* more fully described the country's defence objectives as protection of Britain and its dependencies, defence against major external threats to Britain and its allies, and the promotion of wider security interests through the maintenance of international peace and stability.[60] The British Government's subsequent strategic document, *Defending Our Future: Statement on the Defence Estimates 1993*, equally reflected these exact goals.[61] This internationalism was singularly important for British defence capabilities in that they necessitate British power projection. *The Strategic Defence Review – Modern Forces for the Modern World – 1998* demonstrates this in stating,

> The British are, by instinct, an internationalist people. We believe that as well as defending our rights, we should discharge our responsibilities in the world. We do not want to stand idly by and watch humanitarian disasters or the aggression of dictators go unchecked.[62]

British defence policy placed even greater emphasis on the country's global interest and power projection following the paradigm shift of the September 2001 attacks against New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. As stated by Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon in *Delivering Security in a Changing World - Defence White Paper - 2003*, British forces must be ready, "to face the challenges of the increasingly complex security environment which followed the ending of the Cold War and the emergence of uncertainty and instability in many areas of the world."[63] He continued in stating that this demonstrated, "[t]he need for modern and effective armed forces equipped and supported for rapid and sustainable deployment on expeditionary

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[59] Ministry of Defence, *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996* (London: HMSO, 1996), 3. Andrew Dorman describes Britain's global focus in stating, "[h]istorically, Britain has not viewed itself as a European power and its preferred option has been to focus on its world interests." A. Dorman, "Reconciling Britain to Europe in the Next Millennium: The Evolution of British Defense Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," *Defense Analysis*, vol. 17, no 2 (August 2001): 187.

[60] Ministry of Defence, *Statement on the Defence Estimates* 1992, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1992): 9 quoted in T. Taylor, "British Defence Policy," 83.

[61] Ministry of Defence, *Defending Our Future: Statement on the Defence Estimates 1993* (London: HMSO, 1993), 7.

[62] Ministry of Defence, "Strategic Defence Review – Modern Forces for the Modern World – 1998," http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/65F3D7AC-4340-4119-93A2-20825848E50E/0/sdr1998_complete.pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2007.

[63] Ministry of Defence, *Delivering Security in a Changing World - Defence White Paper - December 2003*, http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/051AF365-0A97-4550-99C0-4D87D7C95DED/0/cm6041I_whitepaper2003.pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2007, 2.

operations, usually as part of a coalition."[64] Such forces would be prepared to counter the increased threat of international terrorism overseas either unilaterally or as members of the NATO's out of area operations.[65]

In addition to requiring the capability to project power, British defence policy in the 1990s and in the early millennium increasingly articulated the need for high readiness and indeed light forces. First announced in the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review* in stating initial forces, "will always be held at very high readiness for 'early entry operations' - for example to secure a landing point - and to provide an initial military capability"[66], defence statements following the terrorist attacks in America expanded these requirements. Hence the 2002 *Strategic Defence Review* reflected the change in organizational emphasis necessitated by the contemporary operating environment in stating, " … some theatres and scenarios, like Afghanistan, may point towards the use of rapidly deployable light forces rather than armoured or mechanised forces and artillery …"[67] The expression of importance of high readiness forces in British defence policy continued in the updated *Delivering Security in a Changing World - Defence White Paper – 2003*.[68] Thus this document stated, "[c]ounterterrorism and counter proliferation operations in particular will require rapidly deployable forces able to respond swiftly to intelligence and achieve precise effects in a range of environments across the world."[69]

British defence policy statements, in contrast to those of some nations, give great detail as concerns fighting formations including parachute forces. This is reflected in Great Britain's first post-Cold War strategic statement, *Statement on the Defence Estimates: Britain's Defence for the 90s, Volume 1, 1991*, which, although failing to make changes to British parachute forces, announced the placement of the airborne brigade within the NATO Rapid Reaction Corps.[70] Although this organizational stasis continued under the *1994 Defence Review - Options for Change*[71], subsequent defence

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64 *Ibid*., 2.

65 *Ibid*., 2.

66 Ministry of Defence, "Strategic Defence Review – 1998,". This policy statement labeled such first echelon, very high readiness forces "Spearhead Forces". Dorman suggests the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review* is remarkable in the sense that it emphasizes unilateral military force projection giving the UK strategic flexibility to respond to multiple expeditionary crisis. Dorman, "Reconciling Britain to Europe in the Next Millennium," 197.

67 Ministry of Defence, "The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter – 2002," http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/79542E9C-1104-4AFA-9A4D-8520F35C5C93/0/sdr_a_new_chapter_cm5566_vol1.pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2007.

68 Ministry of Defence, *Defence White Paper - 2003*, 7.

69 *Ibid*., 7.

70 Ministry of Defence, *Statement on the Defence Estimates: Britain's Defence for the 90s, Volume 1, 1991* (London: HMSO, 1991), 47. At this time the United Kingdom maintained its parachute capability within 5 Airborne Brigade (5 Abn Bde).

71 Trevor Taylor, "British Defence Policy," 89.

policy began to dictate specific and clear changes to British parachute forces. First announced in the *1994 Front Line First* study[72], the *1998 White Paper* centralized all British parachute forces in 16 Air Assault Brigade in stating,

> we do not see a need for parachute operations at bigger than battalion level. We therefore propose to convert the present airborne brigade into a mechanised brigade. The parachute role will be transferred to the airmobile brigade which will become a highly mobile air-manoeuvre brigade when the attack helicopter enters service.[73]

British Army policy, when produced, amplified the White Paper and other defence policy statements on parachute forces. Such is the case of the principle post-Cold War British Army document *Britain's Army for the 90s*. Produced following the end of the Soviet threat, the 1991 Army statement reflected government pressures on the military to downsize and yet remain internationally pertinent:

> Outside Europe, we must continue to defend our dependent territories, assist friendly Governments, and be able to respond if our interests – or those of our allies – are threatened … Our forces can be smaller than now, but they must be flexible and mobile, and well-equipped to deal with a range of military capabilities, including the most sophisticated, both inside and outside Europe.[74]

More specifically, analogous to post-Cold War defence policy, Whitehall left its parachute forces unchanged with 5 Airborne Brigade centralized in the United Kingdom-based formation, 3rd (UK) Division.[75] Although defence policy statements subsequently dictated substantial organizational changes to parachute forces, the British Army appears to have promulgated its own direction through internal documents.

Although not a global superpower like the United States, Great Britain possesses robust national interests justifying its involvement in crises around the world. Ministry of Defence and British Army statements therefore provide the tools to British military forces to enable rapid deployment on expeditionary operations. Airborne forces, as specifically articulated in many British defence documents, form an important aspect of the global reach Her Majesty's Government's desires.

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72 *Ibid*., 92.

73 Ministry of Defence, "Strategic Defence Review – 1998,". First announced as the Joint Rapid Deployment Force in *the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996*, this formation was to include elements from 5 Abn Bde and 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines. Ministry of Defence, *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996*, 21. Subsequently, however, British parachute forces: 1 PARA, 2 PARA, 3 PARA and the 7 Parachute Regiment Royal Artillery, were centralized with other elements including 24 Airmobile Brigade to form 16 Air Assault Brigade in Colchester, England without an airborne formation headquarters.

74 Ministry of Defence, *Britain's Army for the 90s* (London: HMSO, 1991), 1.

75 Ministry of Defence, *Britain's Army for the 90s*, 2. Demonstrated in Annex B to include only two parachute battalions and a parachute artillery regiment in active role. See page 11. Whitehall is of course the road in London where many British government ministries, including the Ministry of Defence, are located.

France

The strategic culture of France has some similarities with Britain in that both countries possess waning global influence and empires. Notwithstanding, France has a very different defence policy from the United Kingdom due to the effects of geopolitics, history and indeed its domestic political culture. Foremost for its geopolitical position, France is not uniquely a European continental power. With coasts on both the English Channel and the Mediterranean Sea, France's location forces it to engage with its neighbours and beyond.[76] Similarly, the past leads France to a more global focus. Indeed, France's history of territorial invasion and its former empire have left the country both with a profound cultural sense of the importance of its military and a legacy of global interests.[77] This worldview is heightened by France's Gallic spirit that encourages the maintenance of military forces commensurate with France's important international focus. Shaun Gregory suggests this in stating, "[f]or France the idea of global interests is intimately linked to those of French *rang* [rank] and *grandeur* [greatness] and to the notion, with deep historical roots, that global interests enhance French power and influence in Europe."[78] Finally, domestic politics have a substantial effect on French defence policy. With a fractious political culture, Paris has experienced multiple changes of government and periods of political co-habitation in the 1990s that affected the country's ability to produce a consensus-based defence policy.[79]

Contemporary French defence policy structure naturally reflects the antecedent factors, particularly that of domestic political culture. Paris lays-out French governmental defence policy in White Papers or *Livre Blanc sur la Défense*. The *Ministère de la défense* produces these documents infrequently at best with the 1994 *Livre Blanc* being the first in 22 years.[80] To supplement this strategic policy statement, the ministry publishes military planning acts in the form of the *Loi de Programmation Militaire*. Such legislation is further complemented by annual defence budgets. Finally, the French President, who is ultimately responsible for the defence of France, produces

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[76] S. Gregory, *French Defence Policy into the Twenty-First Century* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 7.

[77] *Ibid*., 9-10. Gregory suggests this culture is responsible for France maintaining the military draft so late following the end of the Cold War and not enjoying the Peace Dividend shared by much of the West in the 1990s. Further, Paris's historical sense of perfidious allies leads France to maintain strong military forces as, "at the moment of truth a nation has no friends."

[78] *Ibid*., 10.

[79] S. Gregory, "Vers Une Défense Nouvelle: Defence Policy Planning and Review in France," *The Acronym Institute*, no. 29 (August-September 1998) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.acronym.org.uk/29french.htm; Internet; accessed 23 Jan 2007. Gregory further suggests this defence consensus is based on historical and geographic factors.

[80] Gregory, however, suggests the importance of these keystone documents is limited: "In France Livre Blanc are far from from [sic] crucial to either defence policy planning or implementation, a point underlined by the fact that only two have appeared in forty years and neither has been a strategically important document." *Ibid*.

individual initiatives as exemplified by *Une Défense Nouvelle 1997-2015* unveiled in 1997.[81]

Emerging several years after the end of the Soviet threat against NATO and France in Europe, the 1994 *Livre Blanc sur la Défense* demonstrated France's continued commitment to its global interests. The then French Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, explained France's need for a forward defence in the document's preface by stating the following:

> The defence of France no longer takes place on its immediate borders. It depends on the preservation of international stability, on the prevention of crises, within and without Europe, which, by degenerating, would imperil our interests and our security. We must hence develop the aptitude specific to our classical powers to anticipate, to warn, and to act, often far from the national territory.[82]

Subsequently, the *Livre Blanc* emphasized the importance of France's historic legacy and current national interests in projecting military forces around the world:

> France must be able to ensure its protection and the defence of its interests in the world. It has the ambitions of a power that is present in numerous parts of the world outside Europe, a legacy of its history and its geography, as well as the results of its economic development. The primary objective of its defence policy is the defence of its interests.[83]

As such, French defence policy clearly articulates a need for power projecting forces such as parachute forces. Indeed the statement subsequently names force projection via rapid deployment land forces and strategic mobility through air transport as high priority capabilities.[84]

France maintained this emphasis on power projection well into the post-Cold War era. Demonstrating the importance of France's global interests to national defence policy, Paris published the *Loi de programmation militaire 1997-2002* a year after a change of national government in 1995. Reinforcing the effect of France's geopolitical position and global trade, this *loi* stated,

> Nos intérêts stratégiques, qui résident prioritairement dans le maintien de la paix sur le continent européen et les zones qui le bordent,

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81 *Ibid*.

82 Ministère de la défense, *Livre Blanc sur la Défense – 1994* (Paris: SIRPA, 1994), i.

83 *Ibid*., 21.

84 *Ibid*., 71. Gregory states that the French military, configured primarily for limited force projection never intervened with more than 3500 troops in Africa between 1962 and 1995. France's great difficulty in participating in Gulf War I in 1991, "underscored the gap between France's global rhetoric and the country's lift, logistical and force projection capabilities." P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War: Continuity, Change and Implications for the United States, Report No P-4229A* (RAND, 1992), 36 quoted in Gregory, *French Defence Policy*, 49-50.

> notamment la Méditerranée, ainsi que dans la préservation des espaces essentiels à notre activité économique et à la liberté de nos échanges.[85]

Accordingly, within this defence act, the French Government labeled force projection as one of the four *grandes fonctions opérationnelles*.[86] The new government of Jacques Chirac further codified this concept with the release of *Une Défense Nouvelle 1997-2015* in 1997 labeling projection as, "the priority for [French] conventional forces."[87] France's partial withdrawal of its garrisons from its African strategic zones of influence in the late 1990s reinforced this increased necessity for forces for *projection*.[88]

France's defence policy equally provided exact direction on force organization including the existence of parachute forces. Produced before the release of the 1994 *Livre Blanc*, the *Loi de programmation militaire 1990-1993* described the organization and general role of France's parachute forces. Listing *la 11e division parachutiste* as part of the *Force d'Action Rapide* (FAR), this *programmation militaire* enumerated the FAR's role,

> … d'être en mesure d'intervenir partout dans le monde, soit en exécution d'accord de défense signés avec des pays amis dont elle peut être amenée à garantir ou à rétablir la souveraineté nationale en cas de conflit. Elle peut aussi intervenir au titre de la participation à des forces multilatérales d'observation, d'interposition ou de sécurité, ou pour protéger des ressortissants français menacés ou assurer la sécurité de nos approvisionnements.[89]

French defence policy possesses similarities with that of Britain in that both justify the use of power projecting forces to support global interests that are the remnants of their respective empires. France is perhaps different in that its *Livres blancs* forthrightly state that these interests include economic markets and resources if not cultural protection. By directing the French military to provide projection forces in pursuance of a forward defence and to protect its national interests, France provides

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85 Ministère de la défense, *Projet de loi de programmation militaire 1997-2002* (Paris: SIRPA, 1996), 1.3.

86 *Ibid*., 1.2.1. *Grandes fonctions opérationnelles* would translate as Broad Operational Functions or Capabilities.

87 Ministère de la défense, *Une Défense Nouvelle* (Paris: SIRPA/Ministère de la Défense, 1996), 24 quoted in Gregory, *French Defence Policy*, 97. Projection was one of four strategies of this document the others being *dissuasion* (deterrence), *prévention* and *protection*.

88 Gregory describes in detail the causes for France's partial withdrawal of garrisoned troops in Africa including budgetary restraints and its strategic miscalculations in both Rwanda in 1994 and Zaire in 1997. These reductions, consistent with both *Une Défense Nouvelle* and the 1997-2002 *Loi-Militaire*, saw the closure of some bases and a drop from 8000 to 5500 French soldiers in Africa. Nevertheless, an upgrade of certain remaining overseas bases demonstrated "the long term determination of France to retain its global possessions by strengthening its capacity to reinforce and project forces in the respective regions of interest." Gregory, *French Defence Policy into the Twenty-First Century*, 160 and 181.

89 J-M Boucheron, *Programmation militaire 1990-1993* (Paris: Economica, 1989), 388.

justification for expeditionary forces. The literature examined, however, although making specific reference to French parachute forces, possesses no apparent defence for such a forcible entry capability.

Australia

Australia, much like Canada, is a vast, remote country that has struggled to adequately define its national security. Historically a Western ally, the island continent emerged from the Cold War freed of its greatest threat: global war between the superpowers.[90] National security concerns, however, did not end for the country in 1991. Australia, although relatively isolated, found itself in a region containing both militarily and economically powerful nations and weak and unstable countries. Although distant from the remainder of the West, Australia has maintained close ties with the United States and other Western nations via both bilateral agreement and multinational alliance. Australia, since the end of the Cold War, has therefore struggled to appropriately defend itself against potential, although indistinct, threats and maintain its global engagement through participation in multilateral security arrangements.

Australia possesses a relatively simple, yet broad, national defence policy architecture. The Government of Australia, in conformity with members of the British Commonwealth, describes its defence policy in routinely published defence white papers. These documents are written in response to major changes in strategic course or due to domestic political factors. Canberra equally packages defence policy reform in different wrapping such as defence policy statements and defence reviews; *Defence 2000*, a product of a national public consultation, exemplifies this approach. Dissecting this ministerial direction, the Australian Army subsequently produces Land defence policy and Land doctrine. The 1997 *Restructuring the Australian Army* and *Land Warfare Doctrine 1* are respective examples of such documents.

The Australian Ministry of Defence first articulated its post-Cold War defence policy in the 1994 *Defending Australia: Defence White Paper*. Although pre-dated by a number of defence policy statements including the 1993 *Strategic Review*, this White Paper was the most comprehensive defence review since 1987.[91] Acknowledging the shift in the regional strategic environment, *Defending Australia* recognized the country's need to defend itself against unlikely, but potential invasion, and equally fulfil its broader interests by undertaking global security operations. Most germane, for parachute forces, this document dictated a capability to respond to isolated terrestrial invasions of Australia's North by stating,

> While our sparsely populated north provides greater strategic depth, an adversary may seek to exploit the vast distances and dispersed

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[90] Commonwealth of Australia, *Defending Australia: Defence White Paper 1994* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), iii.

[91] *Ibid*. The White Paper's precursor, the *1993 Strategic Review*, place great emphasis on developing a self-reliant defence capacity, developing strategic regional engagement in Australia's Northern approaches and constructive contact with the major Asian powers such as Japan and China. S. Woodman, "Strategies and concepts," in *Australia's Security in the 21st Century*, ed. J.M. Malik, (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1999), 47.

> population to mount small attacks at isolated locations. Those challenges mean that our forces must be highly mobile to allow rapid deployment into areas of contention …[92]

Although making other pronouncements on mobile land forces and describing the existence of the Sydney-based parachute battalion, this White Paper contained no ostensible justification for Australian airborne forces.[93] Indeed, a summarizing list of the Australian Army's assets following the document's conclusion was remarkable for its failure to differentiate the parachute battalion from other infantry forces.[94]

Continued strategic justification for power projecting forces took place as Australia updated its security and defence policy three years later with the publication of *Australia's Strategic Policy*. In the document's preface, Minister for Defence Ian McLachlan reaffirmed Australia's wide-ranging national security policy by declaring that,

> … Australia needs an approach which explicitly reflects the full breadth of our security interests. Australia's strategic interests do not begin and end at our shoreline. The interests of future generations of Australians will not be served by encouraging an isolationist mentality at a time when international inter-dependencies are increasing.[95]

For the Australian military, this internationalist focus resulted in the majority of its operational tasks responding to threats outside the country: defeating attacks on Australia, defending regional interests and supporting global interests.[96] Indeed, the document marked a more aggressive, pro-active and forward defence approach particularly to the defence of the country.[97] Appropriate to the strategic nature of the publication, *Australia's Strategic Policy* did not dictate tactical capabilities, such as parachute forces, for any defence task. Nevertheless, this defence planning direction for Australia in the 21st Century illustrated the need for highly mobile forces in defence of the country's vast northern territory.

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92 Commonwealth of Australia, *Defence White Paper 1994*, 21.

93 In discussing the Joint response to a dispersed land-based invasion of Australia's North, the White Paper suggests, "[m]obile units deployed from forward bases by fixed and rotary wing aircraft or ground transport vehicles would combine with aviation and other components of the land force as well as air assets to provider the necessary response." *Ibid*., 48.

94 *Ibid*., 164.

95 Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's Strategic Policy* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1997), iii.

96 *Ibid*., 29 and 39. This is reiterated later in the document in stating, "[t]hus, we judge that, at the present time, the involvement of the ADF in demanding military operations is more likely to flow from a global or regional security situation than from any attack directly on Australia."

97 Woodman, "Strategies and concepts," 50.

Despite this strategic statement three years previous, Australia redefined its strategic defence policy in June 2000 with the publication of the public discussion paper *Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force* and its progeny, the Australian defence policy of the same name. The former document, designed to focus debate on Australia's defence, very interestingly admitted the country could not possess all forms of military capability. In direct relation to power projection, the document related,

> [a] force the size of the [Australian Defence Force] cannot cover all possible military capabilities. For example, we have no marine corps designed for offensive over-the-beach operations because successive Australian governments have thought that this was not a high-priority mission.[98]

Equally prophetic, the discussion paper's only statement on parachute forces emerged in a simple description of the Australian Army's parachute battalion group based in Sydney.[99]

The product of the public defence discourse, *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*, affirmed a role for the Australian Defence Force within the region and beyond.[100] Continuing Canberra's strategy of engagement in both South-East Asia and the international security environment, *Our Future Defence Force* placed four of the country's five strategic objective's beyond its coasts. Reflecting these expeditionary goals, there are repeated statements of the Australian Defence Force's need for mobility. Indeed, even the objective of Australian territorial security demanded high deployability as reflected in the declaration,

> … Australia will maintain land forces – including the air and naval assets needed to deploy and protect them – that can operate as part of a joint force to control the approaches to Australia and respond effectively to any armed incursion on to Australian territory.[101]

Despite the prominence of foreign deployment and the demonstrated need for mobility to respond to domestic invasion, the defence statement does not justify a requirement for any form of forcible entry via either parachute or amphibious forces. Although dictating a need for amphibious lift capability, discussion of parachute delivery is absent. Revealingly, Australia's capstone defence direction for the new millennium simply repeats that one of its infantry forces is a parachute battalion.[102]

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98 Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force – A Public Discussion Paper* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2000), 27.

99 *Ibid*., 71.

100 Department of Defence, *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2000), viii.

101 *Ibid*., 54.

102 *Ibid*., 80.

An Australian defence document reflecting the world's changed strategic security paradigm after September 2001 and terrorism's threat to Australia following October 2002 did not appear until the publication of *Australia's National Security: A Defence Update 2003*.[103] Senator Robert Hill, Minister for Defence, while recognizing this new menace necessitated changes to immigration, intelligence and airline security, equally grasped mobility and readiness as required enhancements for the Australian Defence Force.[104] Representing a reconfirmation of the strategic defence assumptions and conclusions of *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*, the *Defence Update* reiterated the Australian military's role in international engagement and particularly its assistance to troubled regimes in the South East Asian region including Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji.[105] The tragic events of the new millennium, however, advocated greater emphasis on the Australian Defence Force's role in fighting global terrorism and participation in the Global War on Terrorism.[106] Despite this manifest increased need for expedition-capable force, the strategy-focused Defence Update made no mention of forcible entry forces or indeed a parachute capability.

The absence of justification for parachute forces in Australian defence policy continued in Australian Land Force policy statements. In 1996 the Australian Army produced the pamphlet *An Australian Army for the 21st Century*. The product of the Army Structure Review, it described the tasks for the Australian Army in the new century and the capabilities it would need to execute them. In accordance with the defence direction of the time, the policy statement advocates deployability, mobility and reach as future goals. Again, however, there was no discussion or emphasis on any parachute capability or indeed any form of forcible entry operation. Even in this tactically more specific work, the only mention of this capability was a description of Australia's legacy parachute battalion.[107]

The Australian Army continued to ignore its parachute forces in the 1997 publication *Restructuring the Australian Army*. A product of the Army in the 21st Century (A21) Review, directed in the 1994 *Defence White Paper*, the document attempted to organizationally reorient the Australian Army for post-Cold War threats.[108] At the time of this review, the Australian Land Force recognized four broad tasks:

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[103] October 2002 of course refers to the suicide bombing attack that caused the deaths of 202 people including 89 Australians in Kuta, Bali, Indonesia on 12 October 2002. Australian Federal Police, "Bali Bombings 2002," http://afp.gov.au/international/operations/previous_operations/bali_bombings_2002.htm; Internet; accessed 04 Feb 2007.

[104] Government of Australia, *Australia's National Security: A Defence Update 2003*, http://www.defence.gov.au/ans2003/Report.pdf; Internet; accessed 04 February 2007, 5-6.

[105] *Ibid*., 18-22.

[106] *Ibid*., 13-14.

[107] Commonwealth of Australia, *An Australian Army for the 21st Century* (Canberra: Green Advertising, 1996), 22.

[108] Department of Defence, *Restructuring the Australian Army* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 1997), 9.

surveillance, land defence, Special Forces operations offshore and Special recovery.[109] The later two capabilities provided the greatest potential justification for a land parachute capability. Nonetheless, despite Special Forces requiring insertion and extraction, ostensibly by parachute, *Restructuring the Australian Army* prescribed almost no role for an Australian parachute force.[110] Importantly for Australia's justification of power projection, the document discussed Amphibious Lift, rather than opposed Amphibious Landing capability, and made only descriptive remarks of the legacy Bushranger parachute forces.[111] The Australian Land Force's failure to place any importance on a parachute capability is perhaps best seen in its keystone doctrine publication *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*. Representing how the Australian Army thinks and prepares for conflict and war, this publication makes no mention of parachuting.[112]

Australia emerged from the 1990s with a more global view of its domestic security and responsibilities. Although ostensibly able to justify parachute forces with the defence of its vast Northern region,[113] the country's new focus on regional and global engagement could have equally warranted their existence. This was not the case, however. Despite discussing the need for power projection, high mobility and readiness, Australian defence and Land Forces policy did not seek or truly discuss an airborne capability. Indeed, these statements so thoroughly ignored the capability that it places in question the reason for the existent parachute forces.

Canada

Canada is a vast northern country geographically situated in North America but with a strong historic legacy and national interests linking it with Europe. Having taken a substantial role in World War Two, Canada subsequently tied its security to both Europe and the United States with its membership in NATO. Equally, Canada embraced the United Nations in the post-Second World War period and so commenced an almost axiomatic commitment to peace support and peacekeeping operations throughout the Cold War and beyond. Despite these collective security relationships, Canada's geographic proximity to the American superpower intimately connected its security

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109 *Ibid*., 14. The document describes Special recovery as, "operations undertaken by Special Forces to rescue personnel or equipment from enemy control to return them to safe areas."

110 *Ibid*., 43.

111 *Ibid*., 48, 90 and 91. Amphibious Lift is to opposed Amphibious Landing as a parachute capability is to an airborne operation as discussed in the previous section. Amphibious Lift is a method of delivery whereas opposed Amphibious Landing is a combat operation.

112 Commonwealth of Australia, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Warfare* (Canberra: Doctrine Wing CADTC, 1998), i.

113 S. Woodman, "Capacity and operational planning," in *Australia's Security in the 21st Century*, ed. J.M. Malik, (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1999), 200. As part of a defence-in-depth of approaches in the Australian North, rapid deployment forces, such as airborne soldiers would deny vital population centres and military infrastructure as they sought the invader's defeat.

concerns to its southern neighbour. Thus with global historic links and multilateral relationships, Canada entered the 1990s with engagements and interests at a global level.

The Government of Canada, via the Defence White Paper, sets the policy of the Canadian Forces. These keystone documents represent the pinnacle of civilian control of the Canadian military and set the course for the Department of National Defence. Equally, the government provides direction to its military via Defence Policy and International Policy statements. At times, the Canadian Forces, through its head the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), augments this direction via internal Defence Strategy documents. Finally, the Canadian Forces' components, such as the Canadian Army, articulate their own strategy based on CDS direction or on internal studies and initiatives.

Canadian Minister of National Defence, Marcel Masse, published the *Canadian Defence Policy 1992* in response to the Cold War's end and to describe the impact of that year's federal budget.[114] Expressing Canada's place in the international security environment, the 1992 policy statement reconfirmed the country's continued will to remain involved in NATO:

> … Canada continues to view NATO as an engine of peaceful change towards a new order of stability in Europe. Our willingness to make forces available to NATO, in the event of a crisis or war, underscores our intention to remain closely engaged in European security issues.[115]

Of equal importance for expeditionary-style missions, the minister reconfirmed Canadian involvement in United Nations operations and indeed prophesized an increase frequency of such commitments.[116] Although both the aforementioned organizations had a great impact on Canadian military operations, domestic concerns in the form of a large reduction of the defence budget had an even greater impact.[117] Despite this decline of resources, the *Defence Policy* dictated no reduction of capabilities or commitments. Lacking justifications for parachute capabilities such as deployability or high readiness, the document nevertheless dictated an airborne capability to protect Canada's North in stating simply, "National Defence … will retain an airborne battalion capable of reacting to short notice emergencies in remote areas."[118] Finally, the Canadian Government continued this justification for its parachute forces as a presumably high readiness force for peacekeeping missions by declaring, "… the Canadian Airborne Regiment, a principle element of the Special Service Force, has the primary task of reaction to

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[114] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Defence Policy 1992* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1992), 1.

[115] *Ibid*., 3.

[116] *Ibid*., 4.

[117] *Ibid*., 14. The policy announced a $2.2 billion (Cdn) reduction in funds over the subsequent five years in addition to the previous budget's cut of $3.4 billion.

[118] *Ibid*., 18. The document was nevertheless silent on specifics of whether "short notice emergencies" were threats to Canadian security in the north or a more likely Major Air Disaster (MAJAID) scenario.

emergencies or other operational requirements in Northern Region and is on standby for UN operations."[119]

Within two years of the *Canadian Defence Policy 1992*, the new Minister of National Defence, David Collenette, produced the *1994 Defence White Paper*.[120] Published in a period of continued fiscal restraint, the *White Paper* attempted to harmonize the conflicting goals of maintaining general-purpose combat forces and transforming the Canadian military to a constabulary, peacekeeping role.[121] Despite these budgetary restrictions, this defence policy articulated the importance of Canada, and the Canadian Forces, in the world:

> As a nation that throughout its history has done much within the context of international alliances to defend freedom and democracy, Canada continues to have a vital interest in doing its part to ensure global security, especially since Canada's economic future depends on its ability to trade freely with other nations.[122]

Emphasizing Canadian interests in the world, the minister explained Canada's obligation to act even when lacking overt concerns:

> Even where Canada's interests are not directly engaged, the values of Canadian society lead Canadians to expect their government to respond when modern communication technologies make us real-time witnesses to violence, suffering and even genocide in many parts of the world. Thus, Canada continues to have an important stake in a peaceful and stable international system.[123]

Despite this robust justification for Canadian military global engagement, the *White Paper* nevertheless fell short in providing capabilities to achieve this lofty goal. With Canadians expecting quick action in response to media coverage of brutal intra-state violence, this policy statement only demanded the placement of a full contingency force within three months.[124] Further, with the dissolution of any military threat to Canada, including its Northern region, the need for deployable military forces all but disappeared. Indeed, with a demand for only low-readiness forces and the loss of Canada's Arctic security as justification, the Department of National Defence of the mid-1990s no longer envisioned a role for parachute forces.

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119 *Ibid*., 23.

120 In fact this was the first Federal Liberal Party Defence White Paper since 1971. D.L. Bland, *Canada's National Defence: Volume 1 Defence Policy* (Kingston, ON: School of Policy Studies, 1997), 281.

121 *Ibid*., 282.

122 Department of National Defence, *1994 Defence White Paper* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994), 3.

123 *Ibid*., 6.

124 *Ibid*., 39. Even this force was limited to a low-threat environment.

Despite the high tempo of the Canadian Forces in the interim, another Canadian defence policy statement did not appear until 2005 with the introduction of *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence*. Introduced well after the Western strategic realignment caused by the events of September 2001, the defence statement represented a reaffirmation of Canada's and the Canadian Forces' role in global security:

> The Government recognizes that the Canadian Forces are a vital instrument of Canada's foreign policy, especially in today's unstable world. Our new defence policy will give the Canadian Forces the guidance they need to help Canada convey its distinct values and particular approach to conflict resolution around the world.[125]

Acknowledging the threat of global terrorism, this policy placed increased emphasis on expeditionary capabilities to allow forces to reach and operate against the root causes of terrorism in failed and failing states.[126] Of equal significance for parachute forces, responsiveness was emphasized so that the Canadian Forces could react and move quickly to a crisis anywhere in the world.[127]

Directing a strategic policy shift due to the increased threat of global terrorism, the *International Policy Statement - Defence* equally made some organizational changes to increase the Canadian Forces' deployability and readiness. Foremost, it directed the creation of a high-readiness Standing Contingency Task Force to deploy forces amphibiously to world hotspots.[128] Equally identifying operational and strategic airlift as a current shortcoming, the policy directed the acquisition of increased in-theatre and global airlift.[129] Despite a policy and an organizational reorientation that would ostensibly support a renaissance for parachute operations in Canada, the document made no mention of this capability. Indeed, this departmental document gave renewed emphasis on a medium-weight land force and even failed to revive the erstwhile role for an airborne capability in Canada's Arctic.[130]

Perhaps due to the extreme financial stress placed on the Canadian Forces after the Cold War, the Canadian Army did not publish a strategic policy statement until 2000. Preoccupied with a very high tempo of operations, the Canadian Army produced *Advancing with Purpose – The Army Strategy* under the then CLS, Lieutenant-General

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125 Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2005), i.

126 *Ibid*., 2.

127 *Ibid*., 11.

128 *Ibid*., 13. Now labeled the Standing Contingency Force (SCF), high-readiness for this force consists of departure in 10 days to a crisis.

129 *Ibid*., 14.

130 *Ibid*., 15 and 20. Medium-weight refers to Light Armoured Vehicles such as the LAV3 rather than the parachute-related light forces discussed in Section Two.

Mike Jeffery, after a decade of strategic and organizational uncertainty. Although making few specific statements on capability or reorganization, *Advancing with Purpose* did echo contemporary departmental statements in confirming the army's global focus:

> Canada's foreign policy has expressed a strong vision of its place in the global community of nations, and the Army, as the ground force component of the CF, has played a major role in projecting that vision and Canadian values in an increasingly unstable and volatile world.[131]

Equally, the Army Commander reflected the Canadian Forces' vision of the future from the document *Defence Strategy 2020* in placing renewed emphasis on global deployability, enhanced combat preparedness and sustainability.[132] In correlation with the most recent Department of National Defence direction at that time, *the 1994 Defence White Paper*, *Advancing with Purpose* made no remarks on a parachute capability in the Canadian Forces.

A relatively short time after this Army policy statement, the new CLS, Lieutenant-General Rick Hillier, released a less broad but more operationally specific document. Entitled *Purpose Defined: The Force Employment Concept for the Army,* the Army Commander's new direction again reinforced the will of Canada to employ its military internationally: "[w]ithout question, the Government will continue to use the military as a key foreign policy tool … Global stability will remain a vital national interest to Canada both economically and politically."[133] Further, the *Force Employment Concept* declared the Canadian Army's role in achieving this global impact:

> … the Army must be prepared for domestic and expeditionary missions and be capable of selected tasks across the spectrum of conflict and continuum of operations. To achieve strategic relevance, the Army must be sustainable, strategically mobile, tactically decisive and able to operate in joint, interagency and multinational environments.[134]

Organizationally, however, the Army Commander's direction diverged with previous and subsequent Department of National Defence direction in advocating both medium and light forces. This acknowledgement of light forces was of particular significance in that it equally recognized one of their roles as airborne operations:

> Medium and light forces will each have their own distinct roles, with some overlap. Light forces will not be expected to convert to mechanized operations, and, conversely, medium forces will not be

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131 Department of National Defence, *Advancing With Purpose - The Army Strategy* (Ottawa: Land Force Command, 2002), 4.

132 *Ibid*., 10. *Defence Strategy 2020* represents an attempt at long range strategic planning by the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces in the face of continued financial pressures and asymmetric threats against Canada.

133 Department of National Defence, *Purpose Defined: The Force Employment Concept for the Army* (Ottawa: Land Forces Command, 2004), 5.

134 *Ibid*., 6.

> expected to train for, or conduct, specialized tasks normally conducted by light forces such as jungle, airmobile or airborne operations.[135]

The *Force Employment Concept* went even further in discussing light forces. Indeed, in recognizing their ability to deploy rapidly this Army policy statement suggested a new role for highly transportable parachute forces:

> In an expeditionary framework, these same agile, flexible and rapidly transportable forces will provide a valuable contribution to our allies. Light forces optimized for complex terrain and unique operations such as airborne, airmobile, amphibious and support to special operations will enhance any national task force or coalition by providing a wide range of generic as well as specialty capabilities.[136]

Although organizationally divergent from the previous Departmental policy in *the 1994 Defence White Paper* and in the subsequent *International Policy Statement - Defence*, the *Force Employment Concept*'s emphasis on a rapid expeditionary capability, including parachute forces, seemingly fulfilled the rhetoric of previous policy statements on the necessity of quickly extinguishing global conflicts.

Canada's defence policy is strangely disjointed in its justification of a parachute capability. Consistently explaining Canada's global view and strategic interests, Ottawa was seemingly prepared to react and deploy rapidly to international crises in accordance with its commitments to the United Nations and NATO. However, the failure of national defence policy to advocate rapid power projection capabilities, such as an airborne or amphibious capability, suggests immediate deployment to a global hotspot was not Canada's true goal. This inconsistency becomes all the more glaring with the publication of a Canadian Army document that very clearly advocates the development of force projection such as found in a parachute capability.

Conclusion

Ostensibly only countries with great resources, global interests and aggressive military policy need an airborne capability. Of the countries studied, this is only true for the United States and to a lesser extent Britain. America, a global military superpower with international interests, possesses interventionist strategic doctrine that justifies rapid, global power projection against hostile regimes and non-state actors. Similarly Britain, with the military resources of a medium power and national interests partially based on its residual empire, has national defence policy justifying the expeditionary imposition of military forces against hostile regimes and humanitarian crises. France, although an equal power to Great Britain with similar global interests, has not clearly articulated its need for a forcible entry capability within its defence policy architecture.

The justification of parachute forces for lesser powers such as Australia and Canada is more difficult. Both relatively powerful countries with modern militaries, each country uniformly justifies an internationalist defence policy in its governmental statements. Neither nation, however, articulates an interventionist defence policy

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135 *Ibid*., 27.

136 *Ibid*., 38.

advocating hostile invasion of another country. Although both are clearly willing and capable of projecting expeditionary military forces, neither can substantiate forcible entry nor their existent airborne forces.

Section Four – Post-Cold War Use of Airborne/Parachute Forces: 1990 – 2006

Parachute forces, dependent on specialized training and a specific method of deployment, are more expensive to train and maintain than normal light forces. Equally, their use in airborne operations is contingent on the national security environment, strategic vision and the courage to employ these forces appropriately. Countries heavily tied to peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance possess few opportunities to employ parachute forces in aggressive, forcible entry operations. In contrast, states with global national interests are more likely to require and make use of such a rapidly deployable expeditionary arm.

Is the use of parachute forces this straightforward, however? Do nations employ this capability strictly due to their method of delivery or are the less-tangible advantages of airborne forces of greater importance? These questions will be answered by examining the airborne capability and use of parachute forces in the United States, Britain, France, Australia and Canada from 1990 to 2006. Through this examination, this section will determine why nations employ their airborne forces.

The United States of America

The United States Army has employed or created four principle parachuting formations since the Cold War's end. Foremost, the 82nd Airborne Division has existed as the primary parachuting force in the United States Army's arsenal since August 1942. Consisting of four airborne Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and an aviation brigade,[137] the "All Americans" are based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and conduct forcible entry parachute operations within 18 hours of notification.[138] A smaller but more specialized force is the 75th Ranger Regiment. Organized as an element of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the Ranger Regiment includes the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Ranger Battalions based at Fort Stewart, Georgia; Fort Lewis, Washington; and Fort Benning, Georgia, respectively.[139] Although a parachute capable formation tasked as a raiding force, the Rangers equally execute all forms of special missions in support of SOCOM.[140] Further,

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137 The 82nd Airborne Division, "The 82nd Airborne Division Units," http://www.bragg.army.mil/82dv/82nd%20Units.html; Internet; accessed 06 March 2007. The United States Army reactivated BCT 4, "Fury from the Sky", only recently.

138 The 82nd Airborne Division, "The 82nd Airborne Division Mission," http://www.bragg.army.mil/82dv/.htm; Internet; accessed 23 February 2007.

139 The 75th Ranger Regiment, "History of the 75th Ranger Regiment," https://www.infantry.army.mil/75thranger/content/history.htm; Internet; accessed 23 February 2007.

140 The 75th Ranger Regiment, "Mission," https://www.infantry.army.mil/75thranger/content/history.htm; Internet; accessed 23 February 2007. In July 2006 the 75th Ranger Regiment stood-up Regimental Special Troops Battalion (P) to conduct communications, sustainment, intelligence, reconnaissance and maintenance missions in support of combat operations. The United States military made this change to transform the Ranger Force from a unit designed for short term "contingency missions" to continuous combat operations.

the 173rd Airborne BCT forms part of the United States European Command (EURCOM). Reactivated in June 2000, this parachuting formation is based in Vicenza, Italy and acts as the conventional airborne strategic response force for the United States in Europe.[141] Finally, the United States Army activated the 4th BCT (Airborne) of the 25th Infantry Division at Fort Richardson, Alaska in January 2005.[142]

From the beginning of the period of study, the American Army deployed the 82nd Airborne Division as an important element of the United States XVIII Airborne Corps in the defence and liberation of Kuwait. Initially securing key airfields with the SOCOM Rangers in August 1990, the 82nd Airborne subsequently deployed along the Saudi Arabia-Iraq border to defend against potential Iraqi incursions during Operation Desert Shield.[143] Although not deploying to this operation by parachute, the speed of the 82nd Airborne Division's initial deployment demonstrated America's will to protect its Middle East ally and to some vindicated the value of airborne forces.[144]

As these forces transitioned from defence to offence during Operation Desert Storm, the 82nd Airborne formed part of XVII Airborne Corps' western sweep around the Saddam Line. To augment the light corps' combat power, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander Central Command (CENTCOM), assigned the 24th Mechanized Division, the 1st Cavalry Division and the French Division Daguet in addition to the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. Conducting a deep envelopment to cut-off the escape of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the 82nd Airborne attached a brigade to the French division and helped secure the western-most flank during the so-called Hail Mary manoeuvre. Although not conducting an airborne assault, the soldiers of the 82nd Airborne demonstrated their competence as infantrymen in clearing and destroying the Iraqi 45th Division at As Salman.[145] In a more minor role, elements of the 75th Ranger Regiment principally functioned as an airborne raiding force executing quick reaction force tasks and participating in raids while deployed to Saudi Arabia from February to April 1991.[146]

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141 173rd Airborne Brigade, "Mission … ," http://www.173abnbde.setaf.army.mil/.htm; Internet; accessed 23 February 2007.

142 25th Infantry Division, "4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division," http://www.usarak.army.mil/4bde25th/.htm; Internet; accessed 23 February 2007.

143 Maj. J. Blackwell, *Thunder in the Desert: The Strategy and Tactics of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 99.

144 B. Quarrie, *Airborne Assault: Parachute Forces in Action, 1940-91* (Sparkford, Somerset: Patrick Stephens, 1991), 8.

145 Blackwell, *Thunder in the Desert*, 196.

146 One source states the Rangers raids conducted an airborne assault on Ali Al Salem airfield near Kuwait City. See US Army Ranger Association, "US Army Rangers: History: The Persian Gulf," http://www.ranger.org/rangerHistoryDesertStorm.html; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

The Rangers' capacity for high readiness brought about their further deployment outside of their parachute role in response to the humanitarian situation in Somalia in 1993. Sent to Mogadishu in August 1993, the head of American forces, retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, tasked the Rangers to hunt down and capture outlaw Somali warlord Mohammed Fahra Aidid. In the now famous Black Hawk Down incident, 18 American servicemen, including Rangers, lost their lives in an ill-fated attempt to capture the Somali warlord. Although suffering a tactical defeat, the Rangers' deployment demonstrated their excellent light forces capability when paired with members of Delta Force in this highly complex, urban battlefield.[147]

Stepping away from peace support operations, America prepared to launch its first airborne assault in several years as Haiti descended into chaos in the mid-1990s. In September 1994, the 82nd Airborne Division formed part of Joint Task Force 180 in Operation Uphold Democracy with other elements of XVIII Airborne Corps and the United States SOCOM. Initially planned and mounted as a forcible entry operation to remove the Haitian military from political control in Port-au-Prince, the last minute intervention of a political team including former President Jimmy Carter and retired General Colin Powell changed the situation to enable a permissive entry.[148] With the recall of American airborne forces including elements of the Ranger Regiment, Joint Task Force 190 including 10 Mountain Division and Special Forces A-Teams deployed to Haiti instead in an aggressive peace support role.[149] American and multinational forces, having reinstated democratically elected Haitian president Bertrand Aristide, helped to rehabilitate the Haitian military and security forces, prepared the country for new elections and curtailed Haitian emigration, handed over the mission to a United Nations contingent in March 1995.[150] Although not actually deployed on the operation, the threat of XVIII Airborne Corps' arrival, including the 82nd Airborne, forced the Haitian regime to capitulate: "The mere threat of a pending airborne invasion by the 82nd Airborne Division brought about the final collapse of General Raoul Cedras' regime."[151]

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147 See M. Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Penguin, 1999). Delta Force refers to 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment – Delta.

148 B. Shacochis, *The Immaculate Invasion* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 76. Several sources state that 3900 paratroopers were actually airborne and inbound for Haiti when the American President directed the permissive entry option. See Global Security. org, "Operation Uphold Democracy," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/uphold_democracy.htm; Internet; accessed 26 February 2007.

149 Global Security. org, "Planning for "Intervasion": The Strategic and Operational Setting for Uphold Democracy," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1998/kretchik-chapter2.htm; Internet; accessed 26 February 2007. American planners originally labeled the forcible entry option under Joint Task Force 180 as OPLAN 2370 with the permissive entry option under Joint Task Force 190 as OPLAN 2380. Forces ultimately entered Haiti as part of OPLAN 2380 Plus indicating the ambiguous security situation.

150 Global Security. org, "Operation Uphold Democracy,".

151 Col. G. Fonenot, Lt.Col E.J. Degen and Lt.Col. D. Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 12. As stated by Shacochis with some bravado: " … when Colin Powell, speaking soldier-to-soldier, general-to-general, asked the Haitians to imagine the one true and lasting alternative to Jimmy Carter's pained benevolence: If you don't abdicate

With few tasks during the remainder of the 1990s, American parachute forces quickly became involved in military operations following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Demonstrating the United States' ability to project forces rapidly into a remote, landlocked country, approximately 200 Rangers conducted an airborne raid against an abandoned airfield and the residence of Mullah Mohammed Omar in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on 18 October 2001.[152] Although unsuccessful in the capture of the Taliban leader, this parachute assault demonstrated the Rangers' bravery and determination in deploying into the Taliban heartland.[153] Subsequently employed by SOCOM for their excellent light infantry skills rather than within their airborne role, the Rangers performed admirably while acting as a quick reaction force during the infamous Operation Anaconda in Shahikot, Afghanistan.[154] While further light, airborne forces arrived later in Afghanistan, most decisive operations had been completed by this time.[155]

The tempo of operations continued to accelerate for America's airborne forces as the United States invaded Iraq in March 2003. Initially prepared to conduct forcible entry operations, formations such as the 82nd Airborne Division found themselves heavily involved in the ground campaign because of their quality light forces rather than their airborne role. Commencing Operation Iraqi Freedom with a BCT and part of its division headquarters deployed in Afghanistan,[156] the 82nd Airborne was initially envisioned to capture Baghdad International Airport by airborne assault. The division, however, received a new mission due to the speed of the American advance and the imminent capture of the Iraqi capital:

> A brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division … served as backup to the 101st [Airborne Division], providing security to bases and supply routes. Battalion-sized units of the 82nd were also used in combination with Abrams tanks and Bradleys to form task forces to deal with Iraqi fighters in towns and cities on the road to Baghdad.[157]

Attempting to secure tenuous ground lines of communication for the rapidly advancing 3rd Infantry Division, the American Third Army commander reassigned the 82nd Airborne to capture the bypassed city of As Samawah. In so doing, American commanders

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your power, Powell told the Haitian generals, we're coming in here and we're going to kill you all." Shacochis, *The Immaculate Invasion*, 76. Suggesting the Haitian security forces had no way of effectively resisting the impending threat of an American forcible entry operation.

152 Horn and Wyczynski, *Hook-up!, 218*.

153 *Ibid*. Indeed, due to Mullah Omar's absence the Rangers were quickly withdrawn.

154 S. Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Berkley Books, 2005), 121.

155 Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point*, 25. This included the 10th Mountain Division, 101st Airborne Division and the 82nd Airborne Division.

156 *Ibid*., 79.

157 W. Murray and R.H. Scales, Jr., *The Iraq War* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2003), 64.

seemingly took advantage of the division's high quality light infantry and equally its self-professed specialty in urban combat.[158] Nevertheless, Lieutenant-General William Wallace, 1 Marine Expeditionary Force Commander, reinforced the relatively lightly armed 3rd BCT of the 82nd Airborne with a mechanized infantry battalion to increase its combat power and specifically its lack of armoured fire power.[159]

Despite this recognition of the quality light forces of this formation and understanding its combat power limitations, the presence of the 82nd Airborne nonetheless served as a potential deep attack threat to Iraqi commanders. Aware of its presence in the theatre, Iraqi defences focused on a possible vertical envelopment, dislocating some of Baghdad's plans. As suggested by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor,

> In the wake of the battle in Nasiriyah, here was more evidence of how much regard the Iraqis had for the 82nd and 101st Airborne. CENTCOM had made elaborate efforts to persuade the Iraqis that it planned to drop the 82nd Airborne north of Baghdad and use the 101st Airborne to attack north of Basra, but the Iraqis were concerned that a paratrooper division might also be deployed south of Najaf, and had prepared accordingly.[160]

As related in *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, such use of parachute forces even for deception purposes demonstrated both their tactical psychological impact as well as the Iraqi operational reaction:

> [Combined Forces Land Component Commander] kept pressure on Baghdad and Saddam's regime directly by keeping the 2nd BCT of the 82nd Airborne Division, the theater reserve, available to employ deep in Iraq – specifically Baghdad. The 82nd could jump or fly into Baghdad to restore order and demonstrate a coalition presence if Saddam's government fled or imploded. In the meantime its presence in the theater gave Saddam another problem to contemplate.[161]

Certainly, the use of airborne forces as a strategic tool was precisely how American planners envisioned the use of other airborne formations. The 173rd Airborne Brigade conducted an airborne assault or combat drop onto the Bashur Airfield in northern Iraq.[162] Initially planned to secure the area for the 4th Infantry Division

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158 K. Zinsmeister, *Boots on the Ground: A Month with the 82nd Airborne in the Battle for Iraq* (New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2003), 74 and 120.

159 Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point*, 212-213. This mechanized infantry battalion was Task Force 1-41 Infantry originally from 1st Armored Division.

160 M.R. Gordon and Gen. B.E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 266. This idea is echoed Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point*, 162.

161 Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point*, 145-146.

162 The American Army considered this airborne assault of 965 paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade the 44th combat jump in United States history. See *Ibid*., 222.

advancing out of Turkey, CENTCOM employed the brigade as both a deception plan for the war's northern front and to reinforce Special Forces teams working with the Kurdish Peshmerga militia.[163] Although ostensibly an airborne assault, Kurdish militiamen, Central Intelligence Agency operatives and Special Forces soldiers secured the drop zone.[164] This move into northern Iraq combined with an intensified air campaign and Peshmerga attacks had a profound effect on the Iraqi command which abandoned some areas in the north.[165] Throughout March and April 2003, the 173rd conducted operations with Special Forces and Kurdish Forces in northern Iraq.[166]

Elements of the Ranger Regiment, like the 173rd Airborne Brigade, also conducted an airborne assault during the Iraq War. Participating in the campaign to control the western Iraqi desert as part of United States SOCOM, the Rangers and other Special Forces required a battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division to increase its ability to conduct deep strike into Iraq.[167] Demonstrating their role as a premier airborne raiding force, several companies of Rangers conducted an airborne assault on the H-1 airfield near Qadisiyah in Western Iraq on 27 March 2003. Although again unopposed, the assault allowed for the rapid seizure of an airstrip and set the conditions for the subsequent capture of the Haditha Dam.[168] Similar to the situation for the 82nd Airborne BCT that seized As Samawah, the Rangers required the attachment of an armoured company to increase its fire power during subsequent desert operations.[169]

In summary, the United States Army possesses large and very credible airborne forces. The activation of three new airborne BCTs as a component of the United States Army's Transformation has made this even more true.[170] The confidence the American military leadership possesses in its parachute capability is not demonstrated solely by this organizational increase. Indeed, its employment and threat of use demonstrates a deep

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163 Gen T. Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 500-501. Further the 74th Long-Range Surveillance detachment and an Air Force tactical air controller arrived via MC-130 Combat Talon (Special Forces air transport) on Bashur Airfield the day prior. See Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point,* 225.

164 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 340. Commanders believed a parachute deployment into a permissive environment made sense as the airfield ramp could not rapidly handle an aircraft unloading soldiers on the ground and the brigade could achieve combat readiness far more quickly by jumping than conducting a Tactical Air Landing Operation (TALO). See Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point*, 228.

165 *Ibid*., 341. Gordon and Trainor further suggest these moves cemented the mutual confidence between the Kurds and Americans in the north.

166 Col. G. Fonenot, *On Point*, 250. This included attacks against Iraqi 4th, 2nd, 8th and 38th Infantry Divisions and the terrorist group *Ansar al Islam*.

167 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 327.

168 *Ibid*., 333. CENTCOM portrayed the seizure of the Haditha Dam as strategically important to prevent the flooding of the western approaches to Baghdad and the Karbala Gap.

169 *Ibid*., 253. This was C Company, 2-70 Armored Regiment originally with 3rd Infantry Division.

170 United States Army, "Posture Statement 2005," http://www.army.mil/aps/05/providing.html; Internet; accessed 06 March 2007.

understanding of these forces' strategic impact on foreign governments and on the battlefield. Although rarely executing airborne forcible entry operations, the parachute forces' employment in urban combat and raiding tasks represents an acknowledgement of their value as high quality light forces. This being said, the frequent attachment of armoured and mechanized assets during these missions identifies a clear shortfall in airborne combat power due to its insufficient organic fire power.

Britain

British parachute forces currently consist of two infantry battalions and an artillery regiment. Britain lost its airborne brigade headquarters in the late 1990s when the Ministry of Defence consolidated all British rapid reaction forces in 16 Air Assault Brigade. At that time, the brigade included the three British parachute battalions, 1 PARA, 2 PARA and 3 PARA, as well as various parachute-capable supporting arms. This changed in April 2006 when 1 PARA achieved Initial Operational Capability as the Joint Special Forces Support Group (JSFSG).[171] This unit thus became the British equivalent of the American Rangers providing support to Tier one anti-terrorist forces such as the Special Air Service (SAS). Despite the recent loss of one third of their parachute battalions, British airborne forces demonstrated excellent performance in a number of highly challenging operations.

Notwithstanding the availability of these British airborne forces in 1990 and 1991, Britain limited its ground force contribution in the Gulf War to 1 (UK) Armoured Division and special operations forces. Although missing this major military campaign, British parachute forces faced a high tempo of operations as the post-Cold War world faced a new threat to international peace.[172] As British forces continued to deploy to domestic operations in Northern Ireland, the collapse of Yugoslavia focused London on a new threat to international security.[173] British forces, including the various parachute battalions, quickly found themselves conducting regular peace support operations in the Balkans. While, maintaining a military presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1992

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171 Ministry of Defence, "Special Forces Support Group forms in Wales," http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/SpecialForcesSupportGroupFormsInWales.htm; Internet; accessed 15 March 2007.

172 There is considerable intellectual discussion on the nature of intra-state, post-Cold War conflict. Ulriksen focuses on the location of present and future conflict stating land warfare will take place in the contested zones: urban, mountains, jungles and littorals. Which, as seen in the antecedent definition of light forces (pg 9), are the complex environments for which these forces are optimized. Further, Ulriksen suggests post-conflict, stabilization operations require military forces that, "need to include a large percentage of infantry, and the troops must be capable of showing restraint and engaging the general population constructively." S. Ulriksen, "Requirements for Future European Military Strategies and Force Structures," *International Peacekeeping* 3, vol. 11 (Autumn 2004), 462 and 468.

173 BBC News, "Where are British Troops and Why?," http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4094818.stm#bosnia; Internet; accessed 05 March 2007. Northern Ireland continues to represent a considerable drain on British military resources with over 8000 soldiers in the region in 2007.

and 2007, the British forces suffered 55 British servicemen killed.[174] This form of robust peacekeeping continued in the Balkans in June 1999 as British land forces took part in Operation Joint Guardian as part of the NATO Kosovo Force. Upon the Serb agreement to peace terms following the strategic bombing of Serbia, 1 PARA, reinforced by 3 PARA as well as 7th (Parachute) Regiment Royal Artillery, deployed to the war-torn province.[175] Although conducted as a peace support operation, initial operational planning saw British and NATO parachute forces executing an airborne and heliborne operation into Kosovo to begin the land campaign.[176] Although not conducted in this manner, such planning demonstrated these parachute forces' flexibility to conduct either a forcible entry or peace support operation.

British parachute forces continued to require this operational flexibility as the security situation in a former colony of Africa began to spiral further out of control. Beginning on 7 May 2000, 1 PARA conducted a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) entitled Operation Palliser into Sierra Leone. Responding to the aggressive advance of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) towards Freetown, the battalion demonstrated the deployability and responsiveness of British parachute forces in moving from Britain to Sierra Leone in 64 hours.[177] Further demonstrating the flexibility inherent in a parachute capability and their quality as light forces, 1 PARA and attachments evacuated 353 Entitled Persons and handed-over the operation to 42 Commando Royal Marines on 25 May 2000.[178]

In addition to the Royal Marines, a British Army Training Team (BATT) remained in Sierra Leone to train its nascent army. On 25 August 2000, a rebel group known as the West Side Boys, under Brigadier Foday Kallay, captured and held hostage one of these training groups while it was travelling outside of Freetown. Unable to secure the release of all members of the Royal Irish Regiment-based BATT, the British government ordered the execution of Operation Barras to forcefully free its soldiers. In the early morning of 10 September, the British SAS, supported by a company of 1 PARA and an armed Mark 7 Lynx attack helicopter, successfully freed the remaining British servicemen and destroyed the West Side Boys' strongholds of Gberi Bana and Magbeni.

The operation, although somewhat criticized by the British Special Forces community which would have preferred a more silent covert operation, demonstrated the

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174 Guardian Unlimited, "British Troops to Leave Bosnia," http://www.guardian.co.uk/military/story/0,,2024364,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=11; Internet; accessed 05 March 2007.

175 Armed Forces of the World, "British Army Parachute Regiment," http://afwweb.orcon.net.nz/para.html; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

176 B. Rostker, "Transformation and the Unfinished Business of Jointness: Lessons for the Army from the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, and Afghanistan," in *The U.S. Army and the New National Security Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), 154.

177 W. Fowler, *Operation Barras: The SAS Rescue Mission, Sierra Leone 2000* (London: Weidenfled & Nicolson, 2004), 84.

178 *Ibid.*, 88.

willingness of British Forces to confront and defeat irregular forces such as the West Side Boys man to man on their own ground. If the British goal was also psychological defeat of their enemy, this could be stated as a further success of this operation.[179] Importantly, this style of operation is highly illustrative of the British employment of their parachute forces. Considered almost elite light infantry, the toughness and determination of these forces see their employment on the most challenging missions.

For undoubtedly this reason and the forces' high readiness, London picked its parachute forces to stabilize Kabul, Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime. Deploying to the Kabul-based International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under Operation Fingal in January 2002, British forces, including 16 Air Assault Brigade with 40 Commando, Royal Marines, secured Bagram airbase as 2 PARA began security patrols in Kabul.[180] As Britain handed over command of ISAF later in the same year, it concurrently drew down its commitment in Afghanistan, leaving only a security contingent in Kabul and a Provincial Reconstruction Team to Mazar-e Sharif.[181] This changed in May 2006 with the deployment of 3300 soldiers including 3 PARA and a battery from 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery to Helmand Province.[182] As the deployments to both Kabul and Helmand Province demonstrated, British parachute forces featured prominently for early entry and challenging missions.

This occurred again as British parachute forces participated in the 2003 war in Iraq. Forming part of the ground manoeuvre element of 16 Air Assault Brigade, 1 and 3 PARA of the Parachute Regiment deployed to Iraq as part of the hastily improvised 1st

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179 *Ibid*., 149 and 157. Fowler and other sources suggest this operation had a dramatic psychological impact both tactically and strategically. Tactically, the SAS/1 PARA assault demonstrated British resolve, determination and willingness to fight the West Side Boys toe to toe rather than destroy them by aerial bombardment. Military commanders planned this focused violence to be intimate proof of the bravery and warrior prowess of the British soldier in Sierra Leone. Equally, as one observer stated, "If we had lost this one then there would be repercussions for all our operations worldwide. We would be seen to be fallible, we would be reluctant to risk troops on peacekeeping operations because we would not be sure we could extract them from trouble, we would in turn lose confidence in ourselves and would be less effective …" In short the fighting skills of the SAS and the parachute forces demonstrated that the British were not to be messed with.

180 Ministry of Defence, "International Security Assistance Force for Kabul," http://www.operations.mod.uk/afghanistan/newsItem_id=1298.htm; Internet; accessed 05 March 2007.

181 Ministry of Defence, "Afghanistan: Provincial Reconstruction Teams," http://www.operations.mod.uk/afghanistan/newsItem_id=2398.htm; Internet; accessed 05 March 2007.

182 Ministry of Defence, "John Reid: "British Task Force has a vital job to do in southern Afghanistan," http://www.mod.uk/Defenceinternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/JohnReidbritishTaskForceHasAVitalJobToDoInSouthernAfghanistan.htm; Internet; accessed 05 March 2007. This is in addition to other forces in Kabul with the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps for a total of 4700 soldiers including Commander ISAF. Subsequently, with Britain reaching 50 casualties in Afghanistan by March 2007, Whitehall increased it military deployment in the province to 7700 soldiers by the summer of 2007. See Ministry of Defence, "Operations in Afghanistan: British Casualties," http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FactSheets/OperationsFactsheets/OperationsInAfghanistanBritishFatalities.htm; Internet; accessed 05 March 2007 and BBC News, "Where are British Troops and Why?".

(UK) Armoured Division.[183] Taking advantage of the Parachute Regiment's extensive experience in counterinsurgency operations, 1 and 3 PARA formed part of 16 Air Assault Brigade and assisted in the seizure and stabilization of the Muslim Shi'ite-dominated city of Basra and other regions of southern Iraq.[184] Also, soldiers of the Parachute Regiment provided security to supply columns reaching into Southern Iraq. Although not conducting airborne operations nor indeed extensive combat operations, the parachute forces' high quality infantry and indeed their experience in peace support operations considerably benefited the security situation in southern Iraq.[185] British forces remained in southern Iraq after the initial invasion with 7100 troops stationed in the Middle East country in 2007.[186]

Britain faithfully maintained its parachute forces in the post-Cold War period despite not employing them in their airborne role. Ostensibly valuing its parachute forces for the high readiness, rapid deployment, quality light infantry they produce, Whitehall employed these battalions as initial entry forces into the highly challenging complex environments of the contemporary battlefield. Indeed, the transformation of 1 PARA to the JSFSG in support of such units as the SAS is perhaps illustrative of the tremendous confidence the British Army possesses in its parachute forces. While not justifying the existence of its parachute forces by their employment in airborne operations, the British military clearly considers the parachute model as one that produces outstanding light infantrymen optimized for current operations.

France

The current principle French airborne force is the *11e Brigade parachutiste*. Born in 1999 from the restructured *11e Division parachutiste*, this formation constitutes an important element of the French FAR.[187] The 11e Brigade includes

two *Régiments Parachutiste d'Infanterie de Marine* (RPIMa), the *1er Régiment de chasseurs parachutiste* (RCP), the *2e Régiment étranger parachutiste* (REP), the *1er*

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183 1 (UK) Armoured Division included 7 Armoured Brigade (The Desert Rats), 3 Commando Brigade (The Royal Marines), 16 Air Assault Brigade and 102 Logistics Brigade. See T. Collins, *Rules of Engagement: A Life in Conflict* (London: Headline Book, 2005), 479.

184 J. Keegan, *The Iraq War* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2004), 175. Keegan suggests the British Army's extensive experience in the urban environment of Northern Ireland against the Irish Republican Army has given it mastery of the low-intensity urban warfare faced in Southern Iraq: "What had worked in Belfast could be made to work also in Basra …"

185 Ulriksen reflects upon this skill and maturity comparing British Forces' performance with that of the US Army's in Fallujah where an aggressive overreaction led to the death and injury of 50 civilians and developing the city into a centre of Iraqi resistance. In contrast, the British Army lowered tensions and maintained Iraqi hearts and minds despite the killing of six British Military Police in Majar Al Kabir outside of Basra in June 2003. J. Wilson, "British Troops Stick to "Softly, softly" Tactics Despite Killings," *The Guardian*, 25 August 25 2003, quoted in Ulriksen, "Requirements for Future European Military Strategies and Force Structures," 467.

186 BBC News, "Where are British Troops and Why?".

187 Quarrie, *Airborne Assault*, 171. Other elements of the FAR include the 4e Division Aermobile, the 6e Division Légère Blindée, the 9e Division d'Infanterie Marine and the 27e Division Alpine.

Régiment de hussards parachutistes (RHP), *35e Régiment d'artillerie parachutistes* (RAP), the *17e Régiment de genie parachutiste* and the *Régiment de train parachutistes*.[188] With a four-hour response time, the formation is strategically placed in the south of France to respond to crises threatening French interests. A second parachute formation makes-up part of the *Commandement des opérations spéciales* which includes the 1er RPIMa and the *13e Régiment de Dragoons Parachutistes* (13e RDP).[189]

The French government included extensive elements of these parachute forces in the improvised 6th Light Armoured Division (Daguet) in the 1990-91 war with Iraq thereby demonstrating great confidence in their adaptability and readiness. Commanded by General Roquejeoffre, the division included the 1er RHP, elements from the 35e RAP and multiple teams of the *Commando de Recherche y Action au Profondeur*.[190] Forming the western-most arm of the Allied flanking movement during Operation Desert Storm, the Division Daguet rapidly swept into Iraq with the American 82nd Airborne and 101st Airborne Divisions. As part of XVIII Airborne Corps, the division destroyed the Iraqi 45th Infantry Division, seized a number of objectives and allowed its parent corps to penetrate in depth.[191]

The French continued to show this faith in their parachute forces as civil war touched Europe. Quickly becoming involved in the war and subsequent humanitarian crisis in the Balkans in the 1990s, French airborne forces participated in the international efforts in Yugoslavia under the auspices of the United Nations Protection Force as early as 1992. Enduring the tragedy of Sarajevo, providing humanitarian assistance and conducting observation tasks, French parachute forces including 9e RCP, 2e REP, and elements of 1e RHP and 17e RGP attempted to create stability and provide humanitarian comfort in the war-torn country. Although not participating in parachute operations or indeed large-scale combat, the violent and chaotic nature of Bosnia and Sarajevo saw these French forces under frequent fire from the civil war's belligerents.[192] Later, French parachute forces continued their heavy involvement in peace support operations in

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188 11e Brigade parachutiste, "11e Brigade parachutiste," http://www.troupesdemarine.org/actuel/unites/11dp.htm; Internet; accessed 25 February 2007.

189 Ministère de la Défense, "the 1er Régiment Parachutiste d'Infanterie de Marine," http://www.rpima1.terre.defense.gouv.fr/decouverte/historique/quiose/index.html; Internet; accessed 07 March 2007.

190 Gén R. Gaget, *La Saga des Paras: Etre Para C'est un Etat d'esprit* (Paris: Jacques Grancher, 1998), 552. The Commando de Recherche y Action au Profondeur (with the unfortunate acronym of CRAP in English) are essentially long range surveillance and reconnaissance units.

191 Blackwell, *Thunder in the Desert*, 195-197.

192 Gaget, *La Saga des Paras*, 560. Tasks for this French parachute contingent included protection of the UN Headquarters, Close Protection, security for civilian engineers and general duty tasks.

Europe and further displayed their high readiness and abilities by deploying as part of the almost 8000 French soldiers to Operation Allied Force in Kosovo and in Macedonia.[193]

While heavily involved in military operations in Europe, France repeatedly deployed its military and particularly parachute forces into its extra-regional areas of interest and specifically its colonies in Africa. Rapidly responding to security crises throughout the 1990s and indeed up to 2006, French parachute forces such as the 2e REP, 8e RIPMa, 1e RCP and the 35e RAP deployed to Somalia, Djibouti, Senegal, the Central African Republic, Niger, Gabon, The Congo, le Côte d'Ivoire and Chad.[194] Specifically in 1994, French parachute forces from both the *11e Brigade parachutiste* and the *Commandement des opérations spéciales* executed Operation Turquoise in Rwanda in response to the widespread violence in the country. Further reacting to French interests in Africa, 8e RIPMa conducted a NEO into Brazzaville, Zaire in May 1997 under Operation Pelican 1 and rescued some 5900 foreigners from the inter-tribal violence in the region.[195] Each of these violent clashes saw France rapidly deploy its regular parachute forces to preserve French lives or to protect French interests.

Although frequently employed in Africa as France's fire brigade against bush-fire wars, elements of the *11e Brigade parachutiste* also regularly deployed in support of French interests and United Nations operations elsewhere in the world. This has resulted in French power projection into Haiti, Cambodia, Kurdistan and Guyana.[196] As the Global War on Terror began, France deployed its military, including parachute elements such as 1e RCP, into Afghanistan against the Taliban regime.[197] Indeed in 2001, some 5700 French soldiers formed part of the international force in Kabul and other areas of the central Asian country.[198]

France possesses considerable parachute forces both as part of the French Army and as an important aspect of its Special Forces command. With widespread existent and ex-colonies, the French parachute forces are ideally located in the south of the country to

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[193] J.B. Jones, "French Forces in the 21st Century," *Jane's Forces Quarterly* (Summer 2000) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/0825.pdf; Internet; accessed 06 March 2007.

[194] Ministère de la défense, "11e Brigade parachutiste,". The military action in Cote d'ivoire formed part of Operation Licorne in September 2002. In 2001 the total number of French soldiers in Africa reached 5000. See L'Humanité, "Les soldats français dans la monde," http://www.humanite.presse.fr/journal/2001-12-27/2001-12-27-255727; Internet; accessed 07 March 2007.

[195] 2e Régiment étrangere parachutiste, "Campagnes OPEX," http://www.2rep.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=51; Internet; accessed 07 March 2007.

[196] Ministère de la défense, "11e Brigade parachutiste,". Operations in Cambodia included disarming the Khmer Rouge in 1992.

[197] Ministère de la défense, "1er régiments de chasseurs parachutistes," http://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/decouverte/presentation/composantes/infanterie/infanterie; Internet; accessed 07 March 2007.

[198] L'Humanité, "Les soldats français dans la monde,".

respond rapidly to incidents jeopardizing the interests of Paris. Although clearly employed regularly, as rapidly deployable light forces, there is no indication in the limited literature of any form of recent parachute or airborne operation. It seems likely that France, much like Britain, prizes and maintains these forces as ideal high quality and high readiness light forces for the current operating environment rather than desiring the specific parachute capability.[199]

Australia

The Australian Defence Force stood-up 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), on 21 October 1983 as the Army's parachute infantry battalion. Maintaining this capability throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium, 3 RAR remained a rapidly deployable parachute battalion capable of protecting Australia's northern region or intervening in regional crises. Although employing 3 RAR on several occasions as light infantry, the history of the Australian Army's parachute unit came to an end on 15 December 2005 with the announcement of the Hardened and Networked Army (HNA). With a goal of enhancing protection, mobility, firepower and communications for the Army, the Chief of the Army directed that 3 RAR would become a mechanized battalion and transferred from Sydney to Adelaide by 2011.[200] It is perhaps due to Australian parachute forces' limited operational past as a parachute force that its airborne capability's future appears so bleak.

The Australian Defence Force began the 1990s by participating in only a very limited fashion in the 1991 Gulf War. Responding to the direct request by American President George Bush, Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke dispatched a naval task group with two guided missile frigates and a replenishment ship, surgical teams and an air defence and intelligence detachments.[201] Although highly active in the Persian Gulf, neither the Australian Army or indeed parachute forces took part in the Coalition's campaign against Saddam Hussein's military.

Although rejecting a land combat role early in the decade, Australian land forces readily deployed to a robust peace support mission in Somalia in 1992. In response to the growing world outcry over the crisis in the Horn of Africa, Canberra ordered an infantry-heavy battalion group to Baidoa in south Somalia. Participating in humanitarian relief and security efforts, the 1 RAR Battle Group acted as a member of United Task Force

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[199] Indeed Ulriksen reflects the importance of high readiness forces in contemporary peace support operations in stating: "Kosovo and Afghanistan have shown how importance it is to enter the contested zone in failing states rapidly, both to provide relief on the ground and to influence the composition of local actors at the post-combat negotiation table." He further suggests that more lightly armed forces are appropriate when deploying to failed states where the level of armament is low. Ulriksen, "Requirements for Future European Military Strategies and Force Structures," 468.

[200] The Hardened and Networked Army, "Order of the Day: The Hardened and Networked Army," http://www.defence.gov.au/army/HNA/docs/Order%20of%20the%20Day%20-%20The%20Hardened%20and%20Networked%20Army.pdf; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007. Further the Chief of the Army stated: "My aim is to provide as many soldiers as possible - whether from the combat arms or the support elements - with a seat in an armoured protected vehicle."

[201] J. Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 260-261.

(UNITAF) from January to April 1993.[202] Avoiding the allegations of abuse of Somalis that plagued several Western nations, the soldiers of 1 RAR proved their mettle as peacekeepers in the harsh environment of the Horn of Africa.[203]

Not encountering potential combat or parachute operations during most of the 1990s, Australian land forces again demonstrated their skills in the murky world of peace enforcement operations in 1999. Deploying to East Timor on 20 September 1999, 3 RAR formed part of Australia's participation in Operation Warden in the troubled region. Rapidly deploying by ship rather than parachute, Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Jervis Bay and HMAS Tobruk transported the battalion to Dili to provide security to the capital.[204] Although 3 RAR largely returned to Australia in early 2000, subsequent forces took their place in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor and later the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor between 2000 and 2005 as operations evolved in the country.[205] Australian forces returned to Dili again in 2006 in response to further unrest in the troubled capital city.

The Australian Defence Forces' recent history of peacekeeping operations changed in 2001 with Australia's participation in Afghanistan as part of the American Operation Enduring Freedom. Entitled Operation Slipper, the Australian Defence Force initially confined its activities in Afghanistan to a Special Operations Task Force based on the Australian SAS and 4 RAR (Commando). Later reconstruction efforts, however, included regular army units as security contingents. This shift to combat related roles continued in 2003 as Australian land forces participated in a limited fashion in the invasion of Iraq under Operation Falconer. Subsequently designated Operation Catalyst,[206] Canberra largely limited its land fighting component to special forces although elements of 2 RAR and the 2nd Cavalry Regiment subsequently deployed to Iraq.[207] With such limited participation of Australian land forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq, parachute forces such as 3 RAR received no opportunity to conduct airborne operations.

Australia's participation in military operations in the Solomon Islands in 2003 saw a return to the Australian tradition of peace support. In July 2003, the Australian Defence Force deployed to the Solomon Islands at the request of Sir Allan Kemakeza,

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202 *Ibid*., 263.

203 *Ibid*., 263.

204 Digger History, "3 RAR," http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-army-today/rar-sasr/3_rar.htm; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

205 Department of Veterans' Affairs, "Australian Peacekeeping Operations," http://www.dva.gov.au/commem/commac/studies/anzacsk/res1.htm; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

206 Operation Falconer ended and Catalyst began on 16 July 2003 with the end of major combat operations. See Government of Australia, *The War in Iraq: ADF Operations in the Middle East in 2003*, http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/lessons.pdf; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

207 Australian War Memorial, "Australians in Iraq 2003 – Special Forces Group," http://www.awm.gov.au/iraq/special.asp; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, as part of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).[208] Deploying some 1500 members of the Australian Defence Force to Operation Anode, the military personnel of the RAMSI included soldiers from Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.[209] With numerous members of the Australian Defence Force deployed to the Solomon Islands, including elements of 1 and 2 RAR, the support for the government of the Solomon Islands was a further demonstration of Australian peace support operations and did not involve combat or parachute operations.

The story of Australian airborne forces is indeed an interesting one. Created in the 1980s as a parachute capable warfighting unit, 3 RAR and much of the rest of the Australian Land Force have been almost exclusively involved in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. Apparently never having conducted a parachute assault, the battalion nevertheless participated in numerous peacekeeping operations that employed its high quality infantry. Interestingly in the new century, just as Australia has increasingly directed its forces to operations in support of the Global War on Terror, Canberra has dissolved the military's parachute capability in favour of a better protected, mechanized force.

Canada

Current Canadian parachute forces are extremely limited in size and capability. Following the disbandment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1995, the Canadian Forces scattered the component parachute companies to their parent regiments.[210] Although initially retaining a parachute capable battalion headquarters, in April 1999 the Canadian Army discarded the airborne unit capability having consolidated the remaining companies in the three light infantry battalions.[211] Canada's airborne legacy and corporate knowledge, therefore, largely rests in these three lone sub-units.

The early 1990s were a period of frustration for Canadian airborne forces. Despite its status as the Canadian Forces United Nations stand-by force, the Canadian Airborne Regiment remained in Canada as limited naval, air and land forces deployed to the Gulf War in 1991. Similarly, although initially designated and trained to participate

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208 Australian Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Regional Assistance Mission to Soloman Islands – Operation Helpem Fren," http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/solomon_islands/helpemfren/index.html; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007. The term Helpem Fren is pigeon English for "Helping Friend".

209 Ministry of Defence, "Media Release: Operation Anode: ADF Contribution to Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands," http://www.defence.gov.au/minister/Hilltpl.cfm?CurrentId=2984; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

210 Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 255.

211 *Ibid*., 257. Established in the late 1990s, light battalions provided more infantry units to Canada to deploy on the extremely frequent peacekeeping operations. Therefore, the parachute companies found new homes in 3rd Battalion, Princes Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment and 3e bataillon, Le Royal 22ieme Régiment.

in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara or Operation Python, the Canadian Airborne Regiment stood down from this task in February 1992.[212]

After a considerable period of operational inaction, the Canadian Airborne Regiment deployed to Somalia in December 1992 as part of the United States led UNITAF.[213] Initially setting-up a base at an abandoned airstrip just outside the village of Belet Huen, the Canadian parachute unit formed an important part of the larger United Nations force. Entitled Operation Deliverance by Canada, the mission saw Canadian soldiers help disarm and suppress Somali warlords and deliver humanitarian aid in a so-called United Nations Charter Chapter VII peace-enforcement mission.[214] Despite the Canadian Airborne Regiment's great success in bringing security and humanitarian assistance to the Belt Huen Humanitarian Relief Sector, a number of questionable deaths including the covered-up torture of a Somali youth brought great shame on the unit.[215] Following an intense scandal that focused on the parachute unit's negative activities in Somalia and during hazing rituals both prior to and following the deployment, the then Minister of National Defence, David Collenette, ordered the unit's disbandment on 23 January 1995.[216]

Although dissolved as a unit, the various parachute companies remained in limbo until their inclusion in the various regimental light battalions in April 1996. Due to the Canadian military's very high tempo of operations, these new units with their parachute companies deployed repeatedly on United Nations and NATO missions. In this manner during the late 1990s and into the new millennium 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment deployed on Operation Palladium from January 1998 to January 1999 and again from April to October 2001. Similarly 3rd Battalion, Princes Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) conducted NATO operations in Bosnia from August 1998 to January 1999 and again from February to September 2000. The activities of 3e bataillon, Le Royal 22e Régiment (3 R22eR) equally demonstrated the high tempo of operations felt throughout the Canadian Army. 3 R22eR participated in the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti starting in April 1997, its parachute company served under the United Nations Transition Administration in East Timor starting in September 1999

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212 *Ibid*., 186. Missing these two operations only further heightened the frustration of a unit that did not deploy to a Canadian internal security operation in 1990 in Oka, Quebec.

213 The Canadian mission was initially labeled Operation Cordon as part of the United Nations Mission in Somalia.

214 D. Bercuson, *Significant Incident: Canada's Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia* (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1996), 228-229.

215 Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 198-199. Professor Horn describes at great length the praise the Canadian Airborne Regiment received from local and international representatives.

216 See Bercuson, *Significant Incident*, 240-241 for a limited explanation of the post-deployment scandal surrounding the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

and it later took part in Operation Palladium in Bosnia from October 2001 to April 2002.[217]

This operational pace carried on as Canada began sending military forces to Afghanistan following 11 September 2001. Participating in combat operations as part of Task Force Rakkasan, the 101st Airborne Regiment during the American Operation Enduring Freedom, 3 PPCLI conducted light infantry tasks in and around Kandahar, Afghanistan in a non-parachute role.[218] Following an operational pause by the Canadian Army, both 3 RCR and 3 R22eR deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan as part of ISAF from August 2003 to August 2004.[219] This participation in operations in both Kabul and Kandahar has continued for Canadian parachute and light infantry forces as part of the deployment cycle with the rest of the Canadian Army.

Despite these continuous deployments, the remaining Canadian parachute forces have not conducted an airborne operation. Largely participating in peace support or peace enforcement operations, these parachute companies have not conducted an airborne operation nor has there truly been an opportunity to do so. Nonetheless, these sub-units have struggled to maintain a minimal airborne operational capability due to shortfalls in doctrine, training and equipment and to retain their parachute skills despite the lack of demand for this aptitude on operations.

Conclusion

Frequent employment forms a consistent theme among the parachute forces of the majority of countries examined. Indeed, the United States, Britain and France look to their airborne elements to deploy regularly and rapidly throughout the world to respond to challenges to their global interests. Yet despite their ubiquitous employment and the numerous military actions investigated, only America has executed actual parachute or airborne operations. Superficially this conclusion suggests that the employment of this capability is now the exclusive realm of the superpower whether due to the size of force or the military transport required. However, the conduct of several minor airborne operations by small groups of United States Rangers in Afghanistan and Iraq rejects this thesis. While all three nations display the capacity to conduct minor airborne assaults of this nature, conspicuously only America possesses the will or opportunity to do so.

With parachute forces employed frequently, although seldom exploited for their airborne capability, Washington, London and Paris ostensibly understand parachuting represents far more than a method of delivery. These countries, in their method of

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[217] For further information on Light Battalion and parachute company tours in Bosnia see Horn and Wyczynski, *Hook-up!*.

[218] It was during this operation that 3 PPCLI lost four soldiers killed and injuring eight from its parachute company when a United States Airforce F-16 dropped a 225kg bomb during a live-fire range at Tarnak Farm in Kandahar, Afghanistan. See CBC.ca, "Friendly-fire case: the legal saga," http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/friendlyfire/; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

[219] As discussed in Section Two, the 3 RCR Bn Gp suffered three killed and six wounded in two incidents during this six month tour. See CBC.ca, "In the Line of Duty: Canada's Casualties," http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/afghanistan/casualties/total.html; Internet; accessed 04 March 2007.

employment of their airborne forces, recognize and exploit the high readiness, deployability and high quality soldiers inherent within these organizations. Indeed in some cases, parachute formations and units seemingly form shock forces for their nations. Ideal light troops in the complex environments of mountains, jungles, some urban settings and the littorals, parachute forces represent an ideal first entry force for the contemporary battlefield of the failed state. Airborne units, however, are not a panacea for every challenge of today's operations: the conventional reinforcement of American parachute forces in Al Samawah and the Western Iraqi desert is highly illustrative of their insufficient combat power in some conditions.

The employment of parachute formations and units as elite light forces appears, therefore, restricted to countries with global interests and legacies. Australia, currently disbanding its parachute capability, and Canada, virtually without one, clearly do not share this enthusiasm for their employment. Despite their current global security and humanitarian interests, Canberra and Ottawa apparently neither recognize a need for rapid power projection or the high quality forces born of the capability's less-tangible benefits.

Section Five – Canadian Factors and Options

The recent past for Canadian parachute forces has been one of marginalization and neglect. Not employed within their role, the residual airborne sub-units have struggled against antiquation and impertinence. With a bleak present, this capabilities' future depends on a dispassionate evaluation and recommendation based on the experiences of allies and a complete understanding of specific factors within the Canadian context. Just as Canada possesses unique interests and characteristics that define its foreign and defence policy, the Canadian military and its parachute forces have attributes particular to their history, tasks and indeed organizational character. Similarly, endorsement of a specific future path for airborne forces in Canada is contingent on a proper examination of available options. Therefore this section will investigate specific factors which leaders must consider in evaluating Canadian parachute forces' future, namely Somalia, the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR), the Canadian Arctic, the Canadian Forces Integrated Managed Readiness System (CFIMRS) and Recruiting. Finally, the paper will examine future options for these forces' including the removal of the current capability, status quo and modernization.

Canadian Factors - Somalia

The actions of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia still cast a shadow across any discussion of parachute forces in Canada. Public thought and opinion on the term "airborne" is deeply coloured by the perception of events in Somalia and the Regiment's subsequent disbandment in disgrace. Although this is not ostensibly the opinion of the current government[220], the unpardonable and barbaric actions of a small minority of soldiers in Somalia dominates the Canadian collective conscience and weighs heavily on discussion of the value and importance of a contemporary parachute capability. The mindset of the Canadian Forces at least somewhat reflects this attitude

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[220] CBC.ca, "Tories would bring back airborne regiment," http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2005/12/13/elxn-harper-military.html; Internet; accessed 10 March 2007.

precluding logical, dispassionate discussion on the value of airborne forces. The ghosts of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia inextricably haunt and cloud existing perceptions.

CSOR

This spectre of Somalia still preoccupied the Canadian Forces as the Department of National Defence created a new unit with potential parachute capabilities. As part of Canadian Forces Transformation, the CDS, General Rick Hillier, announced the creation of the CSOR in October 2005.[221] An element of the newly created Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM), the CSOR stood-up to Initial Operational Capability on 1 September 2006 at CFB Petawawa.[222] Although destined to possess a parachute capability, among many methods of deployment, CANSOFCOM did not view airborne operations as the unit's specific *raison d'être*.[223] Nevertheless, there exists the potential for redundancy between a unit that can parachute and one that trains specifically to do so. Designed to attract among the best the Canadian military has to offer, the creation of the CSOR puts in question the ability of the Canadian Forces' personnel base to support both a special operations and an airborne unit. Indeed, a parachute battalion, like the CSOR and Joint Task Force (JTF) 2, would become yet another unit attempting to attract the Canadian Forces', and more likely the Canadian Army's, best soldiers from across a limited population.

The Canadian Arctic

Unlike the newly created CSOR, the defence of Canada's security and sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic is a task with considerable historic baggage for Canadian parachute forces. Antecedently a politically driven task for the Canadian military,[224] the contemporary concern with global warming has nonetheless brought about a renaissance of thought and concern on the Canadian North.[225] The present government reflected this anxiety during the 2005 election campaign when the then Conservative Defence Critic, Gordon O'Connor, announced the creation of a new

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221 Defence News.com, "New Regiment Would be Canada's Green Berets," http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=1446739&C=landwar; Internet; accessed 10 March 2007.

222 Ottawa Citizen.com, "Creating Canada's new Commandos," http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=43f1becd-1cfe-452d-982f-53e29ca0d7d5; Internet; accessed 10 March 2007. At that time the CSOR consisted of just under 300 soldiers including a single Direct Action Company. CFB Petawawa was also the home base of the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

223 The Montreal Gazette, "Canada to get own Green Berets," http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=01e9681f-4e29-470e-81e6-90afdf3cd502; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

224 Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 265. Professor Horn discusses at length the cyclical political emphasis on Canadian Arctic security and more importantly sovereignty largely driven by the fears of American incursion.

225 See Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement,* 17.

parachute battalion for Arctic operations as part of his party's defence platform.[226] The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence echoed and condoned this approach to maintaining Canadian sovereignty in its October 2006 report *Managing Turmoil: The Need to Upgrade Canadian Foreign Aid and Military Strength to Deal with Massive Change*.[227]

Although ostensibly a topical and concrete task for a new parachute unit, the Department of National Defence has made no further pronouncements on this initiative. A reborn Arctic security and sovereignty threat may represent a genuine task for a future Canadian airborne force, yet such a mission requires adequate resources and consistent policy articulation from strategic threat to low level tactics, techniques and procedures. In considering a future parachute capability, politicians and senior commanders alike must remain cognizant of the history of the Canadian Airborne Regiment's role in northern security and indeed the crippling effect of assigning tasks that satisfy political and diplomatic ends rather than concrete military ones.[228]

CFIMRS

Although a new Canadian parachute unit may have some linkage to operations in the north, it must equally possess a tangible and operationally relevant role in the contemporary Canadian Forces. In the name of military efficiency, personnel management and unit morale, both the leadership of the Canadian Forces and future paratroopers should and will demand regular participation in Canadian deployments throughout the world. As such, a new parachute unit must mesh with the CFIMRS and, by extension, the Canadian Army Managed Readiness System, so as to provide relevant Task Force headquarters and sub-units for operations.[229] Such a role equally requires the institutional flexibility and adaptability to contribute airborne, light or other forces; clearly a parachute battalion must be capable of taking part in expeditionary missions in the Contemporary Operating Environment. A parachute unit's need for unusual

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226 Defence News.com, "New Regiment Would be Canada's Green Berets,".

227 Canadian Government, "Managing Turmoil: The Need to Upgrade Canadian Foreign Aid and Military Strength to Deal with Massive Change: An Interim Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence," http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/defe-e/rep-e/RepOct06-e.pdf; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

228 Professor Horn explains the political expediency of tasking the Canadian Airborne Regiment with the tactically unlikely mission of the protection of the Canadian Arctic. This political-military bifurcation placed in question the parachute forces' relevance and raison d'être making an internal training focus difficult. See Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 165.

229 For the Canadian Forces Integrated Managed Readiness System see Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement*, 13. For greater detail see Chief of Defence Staff, "Executive Summary of CDS Advisory Team Report 2," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/cft-tfc/00native/CAT%202%20Exec%20Sum%20Eng.doc; Internet; accessed 13 March 2007. For the Canadian Army Managed Readiness System see Canadian Army, "Managed Readiness," http://www.armee.forces.gc.ca/Land_Force/English/5_4_2_2.asp?FlashEnabled=1&; Internet; accessed 13 March 2007.

retraining or redistribution of equipment in order to deploy in an operationally pertinent fashion will quickly render it organizationally extraneous.[230]

Recruiting

Like the CFIMRS, recruiting for the Canadian Forces is an issue far above the tactical level of a unit. Nevertheless, just as parachuting attracts those seeking greater challenge from across armies, so too can the potential for danger, adventure and excitement recruit new soldiers. Indeed with the Sky Hawks Canadian Forces Parachute Team as one of the Canadian military's most visible recruiting tools, anecdotal evidence suggests the effectiveness of parachute in attracting new soldiers. Although current operations in Afghanistan, Transformation and the recently initiated "Fight with the Canadian Forces" ad campaign have maintained the Canadian Forces in the public's eye and greatly benefited recruiting, this situation cannot last.[231] Parachuting and a renewed emphasis on a parachute unit could attract attention and recruits in the future just as it entices those craving challenge within the military today.

Options for Canada

Having considered factors unique to Canadian parachute forces, it is equally germane to examine options for the future of this capability. Removing the parachute capability from the Canadian Army or maintaining the current situation represent the two most straightforward and administratively simple options for the Canadian Forces in deciding the future of its parachute forces. Modernizing airborne forces remains a much more difficult and costly choice that equally has the potential to produce organizationally flexible and tactically relevant airborne forces for a wide variety of future Canadian operational missions.

Remove current capability

Lacking a fitting role for parachute forces in Canada, the Canadian Forces could remove this capability. In addition to providing cost savings in eliminating allowances and removing certain infrastructure, a retirement of parachuting in the Canadian military would end an additional burden on the Air Force's air transport fleet.[232] Although the existing parachute companies would quickly re-role as regular light infantry, the loss of

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230 The words of Brigadier-General G.S. Thomson give an interesting historical context to this issue when he stated, "In this time of financial and fiscal restraint, this headquarters can not support the concept of an infantry battalion being specifically equipped for one role. The Airborne Battalion should receive similar equipment and be cable of performing the general purpose combat role." Somalia Commission, "Concept of Employment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment," 28 May 1992, Document Book 7 quoted in Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 188. The necessity to fundamentally re-role the Canadian Airborne Regiment prior to the ill-fated missions in the Western Sahara and Somalia demonstrates further precedence.

231 B. Bergen, "Baby boomers and their kids drive Canadian Forces recruitment," http://cdfai.org/bergenarticles/Mar.22.2006%20Baby%20boomers%20and%20Canadian%20Forces%20recruitment.pdf; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

232 Although Parachute Allowance represents a relatively modest financial savings, halting the instruction of Basic Parachute Courses at the Canadian Forces Land Advanced Warfare Centre (formerly the Canadian Parachute Centre) would be more substantial.

this intermediate step to special forces could reduce the pool of potential candidates to both JTF 2 and the CSOR.[233]

Providing some immediate financial gain, an end to parachuting would most certainly reopen the enduring emotional wounds from the disbandment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment and result in the loss of some serving paratroopers as well as create a minor backlash from dwindling veterans groups.[234] The negative impact of such a move would not be strictly short term, however. This capability's loss, although not irrevocable, would take years and considerable assistance from allies to restore if required in the future. The contemplated elimination of the Canadian Army's Light Infantry Battalions only to have every unit deploy to Afghanistan early in the new millennium represents a sober warning to those contemplating such a capability divestment.[235]

Status Quo

Not wishing to disband the Canadian Forces' legacy airborne capability, the Canadian Army could equally opt to maintain the status quo. Unfortunately, the current situation whereby single parachute companies exist nested within their parent Light Infantry Battalions, although a functional force generation and employment model for light infantry, is inappropriate for an airborne capability. Although some authors see it as an improper use of a parachute capability, these forces have performed well with their parent units and have equally successfully deployed as light infantry on numerous Task Forces.[236] Notwithstanding these successes, the presence of these unique sub-units creates considerable friction within their parent Light Infantry Battalions. As reflects the mystic of the airborne role, these individual companies with distinctive dress, additional allowances and, at times, an elitist attitude, create a divisive atmosphere within battalions that commanders must carefully manage. Equally, the parachute company's attraction of some of the most motivated, determined and physically fit members of the Light Infantry Battalion's remaining companies foments considerable resentment and frequent personnel redistribution.

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233 As a point of comparison, approximately 60 per cent of the members of the British SAS originate from the Parachute Regiment. See The Parachute Regiment, "The Parachute Regiment," http://www.army.mod.uk/para/; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007. Further, as partially quoted in Section Two: "[Parachuting] provides a challenge for those individuals who strive to achieve a higher level of physical soldiering than that offered by more conventional units and provides an intermediary step towards the high-end soldiering of JTF 2." Canadian Forces, *The CF Parachute Capability Study Report*, 2.

234 With 70-100 soldiers serving in each of the three parachute companies at any time, the elimination of the airborne capability and re-roling of these sub-units to light infantry would undoubtedly result in the loss of a small, but vocal number of serving and ex-paratroopers.

235 The Canadian Army reflected on this cost-cutting measure prior to the 3 PPCLI deployment to Kandahar in 2002 and the deployment of 3 RCR and 3 R22eR Battalion Groups to Kabul in 2003 and 2004. These units largely deployed in their light role. See Section Four for further details of these operations.

236 J.N. Rickard, Capt, "The Employment of Airborne (Parachute) Forces in Modern Asymmetric Warfare," *Canadian Army Journal*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Winter 2004): 113.

Just as the presence of a parachute company causes problems for its parent unit, this model functions poorly for both airborne force generation and employment. The deployment of a contemporary parachute company in even a semi-permissive operational environment is tactical fantasy. Further, lacking airborne Battle Task Standards and due to the difficulty of parachute companies to independently force generate, relevant training becomes a function of the will and experience of the battalion commanding officer rather than a standard to achieve.[237] The parachuting technology employed by these companies magnifies their tactical irrelevance. Using unguided parachutes in mass drop deployments onto large, open Drop Zones from low altitude, slow flying air transports, these sub-units employ technology and techniques that have not changed significantly since World War Two. Indeed, one can hardly imagine tolerating such a military anachronism in any operational theatre. Thus the present situation with individual parachute companies forming integral sub-units of Light Infantry Battalions, although a functional force generation model for light infantry, represents a poor organizational design for the force generation and employment of a parachute capability.[238]

Modernize

Lacking tactical relevance and inappropriately organized and equipped to perform in the airborne role, these parachute companies' specific method of delivery and the intangible benefits it develops in its soldiers is largely ignored during operational deployment and poorly practiced while in Canada.[239] Should the Canadian Army wish to maintain parachute forces and achieve relevance through modernization, there exist three non-exclusive options. Although none of these options presupposes the re-creation of a capability above company level, the ability of a sub-unit to achieve decisive combat power in any option is questionable. Alternatives for a modernized Canadian parachute force include organizing the capability to form part of a larger alliance team, equipping them with modern technology and moving towards precision parachuting.

The Canadian Forces could contribute a parachute force to a larger allied parachute formation. Admitting that a Canadian parachute force would likely not operate independently, Canada could redesign its airborne capability to mesh seamlessly with a larger NATO or American force. Such an approach would require some effort in adapting to allied doctrine, communications, parachute equipment and resupply to enable complete tactical integration. Although current Canadian parachute forces possess informal contacts with many allied countries and conduct infrequent exchanges, they do not have the formal links or command relationships. To achieve this degree of integration, the Canadian Army would need to direct a formal association that would

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237 There are no Battle Task Standards specifically for airborne or parachute operations.

238 For further details on the present state of the Canadian parachute companies see Canadian Forces, *Service Paper – A Recommendation for the Future of Parachute Companies* (2 CMBG document: 3185-1 (OC M)), January 05.

239 Studies equally recognize the current shortcomings of American parachute forces have precluded their employment in true airborne operations. See RAND Arroyo Center, *The U.S. Army and the New National Security Strategy*, ed. L.E. Davis and J. Shapiro (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), 176.

enable the conduct of combined international if not forcible entry operations when politically palatable.

Recent Canadian operations contain precedence for such an action. The 3 PPCLI Battle Group operated as part of an American Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division forming Task Force Rakkasan in 2002 in Kandahar, Afghanistan.[240] Similarly, the Canadian Navy regularly attaches ships to operate as part of American or NATO naval task groups. Indeed, perhaps NATO's recent efforts in creating a rapid reaction, expeditionary force supports such a concept for Canadian parachute forces.[241] This initiative requires investment in hardware to ensure sufficient compatibility and cohesion but more importantly behooves considerable mutual training. More critical than the military effort to achieve this integration, the Canadian Government must be comfortable with the integration if not the subordination of Canadian soldiers on possibly risky operations.

Just as Canadian parachute forces may increase their combat power by their integration with a larger allied unit or formation, technology can equally succour the current irrelevance. The American military has similarly recognized the gap between the rapid deployment, low combat power of light forces and the slow deployment, high combat power of armoured forces.[242] With a view to creating rapid deployability with sufficient combat power, the RAND Corporation has examined three paths to fashioning airborne and light forces with sufficient firepower and protection. Involving both evolutionary and revolutionary changes in organization and design, militaries could enhance parachute forces to more effectively draw upon higher level fires, transform them into special forces or harness technology to employ light but lethal vehicles.

First, in a more evolutionary design, the Canadian Forces could enhance its current light forces to improve their Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RSTA) as well as their command and communications abilities. Employing these new capabilities, parachute forces could detect targets and defeat them by reaching back to higher level indirect fires.[243] Although greatly augmenting the integral firepower of an airborne force, this concept would not resolve its lack of protection. In a more revolutionary concept, the Canadian military could make its light forces even lighter, more dispersed and more specialized. Employing precision parachutes, these forces would deploy to dispersed locations, employ RSTA assets and destroy targets with long range fires. Again augmenting the firepower of parachute forces, such a transformation into special forces would equally remove their ability to hold terrain.[244] Finally, Canadian

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240 Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 59.

241 RAND Arroyo Center, *The U.S. Army and the New National Security Strategy*, 115.

242 See E. Peltz, J.M. Halliday and A. Bower, *Speed and Power: Toward an Expeditionary Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), 21.

243 J. Matsumura, *et al*, *Lightening over Water: Sharpening Light Forces for Rapid Reaction Missions* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000), 9. Also see Chapter Three.

244 *Ibid*., 9. Also see Chapter Four. With the Canadian Forces current emphasis on counterinsurgency operations, the diminishing of boots on the ground would not favour such a fundamental change. This

parachute forces could receive light manoeuvre vehicles deployed by military transport to eliminate their shortfalls in combat power. Such a concept, although compelling, relies upon technologies not yet developed.[245]

Not exclusive to a technology-driven transformation of Canadian parachute forces, the airborne capability could achieve greater relevance by deploying with precision parachutes from higher altitudes. In an age of brilliant weapons and the Global Positioning System, the current deployment of highly trained light infantrymen by mass dropped, unguided parachute represents a clear anachronism. Technology exists to transform the Canadian airborne capability into a precision force that protects its military transports from opposition air defence by jumping at much higher altitudes.[246] RAND studies have equally identified that the United States military could resolve current airborne force deficiencies by the deployment of soldiers, equipment and vehicles through precision means.[247] Clearly not a panacea for all the shortcomings of parachute forces, an evolution to precision deployment could enhance the survivability and strategic significance of this arm.

Conclusion

Decisions on the future of Canadian parachute forces cannot take place in a vacuum. The legacy of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, its actions and historic tasks still haunt any contemporary decision. This is not to say the Canadian political and military context has not changed since this unit's disbandment. The Canadian Arctic has won new importance as a potential task for parachute forces at the same time the CFIMRS demands their availability for deployment and the CSOR suggests their redundancy.

Clearly current Canadian parachute sub-units are inappropriate as an airborne force. Their antiquation encourages their final dissolution in the most straightforward future for these forces. The status quo, although outwardly the most administratively simple solution, ignores the financial and force generation inefficiencies present in the contemporary Canadian airborne model. Most certainly, modernization of the Canadian Forces' parachute capability reflects the most difficult and costly alternative, however, this path could equally achieve the greatest gains in combat power, protection and relevance.

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could equally pose a problem for American forces due to their current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Indeed, this option jeopardizes some of the intangible benefits of airborne forces. Bernard Rostker argues that "as Afghanistan shows, light units as they are currently configured are an appropriate part of the future Army order of battle." RAND Arroyo Center, *The U.S. Army and the New National Security Strategy*, 298.

[245] J. Matsumura, *Lightening over Water*, 9. Also see Chapter Five. Further the deployment of military transports to the enemy's depth would require extensive SEAD. Such a concept is equally discussed in the "medium-light" early entry concept. See B. Nichiporuk, *Alternative Futures and Army Force Planning* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), 81.

[246] For one example of current parachute technology see Mobility Lab Inc., *Leaders in Advanced Parachute Technologies* [CD-ROM] (Arnprior, ON: Mobility Lab Inc.).

[247] See RAND Arroyo Center, *The U.S. Army and the New National Security Strategy*, 177.

Section Six - Conclusion

The creation of a military capability should be a relatively straightforward process involving, somewhat simplistically, a vision and the application of resources and manpower. Equivalently, divestment should result from an impartial examination of a capability, a rational decision for its discontinuation and the removal of resources and manpower. The history, symbolism and allegiance attached to regiments, ships and squadrons renders the management of military capabilities far more emotional and complicated, however. Just as a country creates military units to great fanfare enabling soldiers, sailors and airmen to risk their lives for this new idea, the sacrifice of blood and treasure to these same organizations attaches great emotion during disbandment.

The spirit, group cohesion and collective confidence bred of shared danger found in airborne units accentuate this idea. Indeed, as suggested by Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski, these intangible factors overrule the rational: "Emotion rather than objectivity becomes the driving force behind the thinking process of airborne supporters, as well as their detractors. Predictably, decision are often taken for the wrong reason with detrimental consequences."[248] Notwithstanding the traumatic recent history of parachute forces in Canada, this study has attempted to rise above the passion attached to this capability in general and the residual legacy of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in particular.

Removed from this sentiment and reduced to its most basic function, the parachute capability fundamentally provides highly deployable forces that have the potential to achieve operational impact for the countries that employ them. Delivering highly capable soldiers to a decisive point deep in the battlespace, airborne forces represent rapid expeditionary power projection. Nevertheless, though the national security architectures of many nations speak of global interest and engagement, power projection and even extended continental defence, few nations possess the political will or military resources to conduct and sustain aggressive forcible entry operations.

In the post-Cold War period only the global superpower has threatened or executed any form of true airborne assault. Through such operations as Uphold Democracy in Haiti and Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the United States visibly demonstrated its will to employ airborne forces, or their threat, for deep strategic attack achieving an operational impact disproportionate to their true tactical capability. Although Britain, France, Australia and even Canada discuss global interests requiring expeditionary power projection, none have demonstrated the will or ability to conduct this form of forcible entry. In the case of Canada particularly, despite Ottawa's increased emphasis on global leadership, some have suggested that it does not possess a political culture that embraces rapid, expeditionary operations:

> … speed of action or deployment has rarely been demanded by Canadian governments. For them the time required to ready one's forces is an excellent means to allow an ill-defined but potentially

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248 Horn and Wyczynski, *Hook-up!*, 17.

> explosive situation to crystallize, if not dissipate. Furthermore, it takes fewer resources to follow a beaten path than it does to break trail.[249]

With this resistance to strategically aggressive operations, many countries ostensibly embrace a more tactical advantage of parachute forces: the attraction and very important production of high quality soldiers. Drawn to the added physical and mental challenges of parachute operations, airborne forces are internationally renown for the tough and determined soldiers they possess.

Despite this putative respect for airborne soldiers, some countries have diverged in their treatment of these specialize forces. Whether America has renewed its interest in its parachute capability due to the strategic realignment of Army Transformation or its perceived usefulness in the Global War on Terrorism, the standup of three new airborne BCTs since 2000 represents a tacit recognition of the value of these forces. In strong contrast, Australia, more concerned with these forces' vulnerability, has re-roled its parachute unit to a mechanized force under its HNA initiative. Somewhere between the two, Canadian parachute forces hang in the organizational limbo of partial disbandment.

As discussed previously, the United States has recently employed its parachute forces in forcible entry operations. With only one combat jump by a United States Army formation and several more minor assaults by Rangers, these limited operations by one country, pale in comparison to airborne forces' more frequent employment as exceptional soldiers and more specifically outstanding light infantry. Whether in the case of 1 PARA in Sierra Leone in September 2000, the American 82nd Airborne in Al Samawah, Iraq in 2003 or elements of Ranger Regiment in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2001, these countries recognize the quality of these forces by sending them into their country's tough dismounted fights.

Equally, perhaps Washington, London and Paris understand that these high readiness, specialized dismounted forces are ideal for the complex environments of modern peace support operations. Trained and capable of operating in mountains, jungles, cities and littoral battlefields like other light units, parachute forces have furthermore demonstrated the courage, toughness and determination required during the intra-state wars of the 1990s and the Global War on Terror of the new millennium. This willingness to take the fight to their nations' opponents is of no small importance on today's front line where determined warriors are admired, respected and, if necessary, feared.

Admittedly, despite the benefit and necessity of pursuing this dismounted fight, parachute forces suffer from limited integral firepower and protection. Due to the present threat of mines and IEDs in operational theatres such as Afghanistan and Iraq, adequate protection against this menace is not simply a necessity but rather a commander's obligation. Indeed, Australia's re-roling of its parachute battalion under the HNA program represents a strong counterpoint to the *modi operandi* of the British and American forces. Equally, the occasional attachment of armour to American airborne forces strongly evidences these light units' current shortfall in heavier fires.

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[249] Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 15.

Nevertheless, the efficacy parachute forces demonstrate in bringing the close fight to the enemy in complex environments proves their continued relevance on the post-Cold War battlefield. Doing this safely and decisively by providing adequate protection and increased firepower is a force development challenge for future parachute forces.

Thus the employment of airborne forces by our allies has demonstrated the benefit of this capability not for its method of delivery but for the soldiers they contain. In this respect, the intangible benefits of parachuting and the quality of soldier they produce represent a more realistic *raison d'être* for airborne forces in Canada than does their little-employed expeditionary power projection. In this respect, airborne forces embody an ideal model for the force generation of high quality light forces. This recommendation, however, rests fundamentally on the Canadian Forces' requirement for increased numbers of high quality light forces. Such an outstanding force generation model is useless if the lack of a requirement precludes this initiative. Should the Canadian Forces deem the CSOR an adequate light, although special force, this would preclude the regeneration of a parachute force.

Indeed employability is critical for such a new force. As recent Canadian airborne history has taught, these forces must be deployable and not an idea attached solely to a politically popular but tactically irrelevant role. Therefore, if Canadian airborne forces are to participate in future conflicts or peace support operations, the Canadian Forces must pursue adequate firepower and protection for these light forces. Whether a new technology or better familiarization and integration with the current family of Canadian Forces armoured vehicles, this evolution must not estrange paratroopers from the method of delivery that is their strength. However the shortfalls of the Canadian airborne capability are reinforced, the Canadian Forces must fundamentally examine a new parachute force through the lens of a future vision rather than against past glories.

This vision must include a very careful management of the spirit and sense of elitism often created within parachute forces. Although these intangible traits possess great benefits for the cohesion and fighting ability of airborne units, only through careful leadership can commanders engender a spirit of elitism that precludes exclusivity. Very clearly, a warrior spirit built on anything other than quiet professionalism is largely unacceptable to the majority of the Canadian Forces, the Canadian Government and to the majority of Canadians themselves. Any return to the negative elitism attributed to some elements of the Canadian Airborne Regiment will quickly draw negative comparisons to this discredited unit.

There are excellent reasons to reform a Canadian parachute capability, few of which are directly related to its method of delivery. Clearly, the Canadian Forces must demonstrate the courage to make what will very likely be a tough decision on the future of Canadian parachute forces. Emotion and organizational inertia have no place in deciding the future of this potentially valuable force. Just as a potential new airborne force should start afresh ingrained with a deep appreciation and respect for its past; at times of great decision we may look to history for guidance:

> The Greek rhetorician Gorgias spoke of the great challenge of choosing when the choosing is most difficult, "to speak or not to speak, to do or

leave undone," and to do so with "the indispensable virtues - prudence and firmness - one for choosing a course, the other for pursuing it." [250]

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