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Cdr R.P. Briggs

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Exercise Solo Flight

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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INTRODUCTION

The Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS) as released by the present Government of Canada (GoC), promised to “produce a first-class, modern military that is well trained, well equipped and ready to take on the challenges of the 21st century”. The Prime Minister stated that it followed “an extensive and rigorous analysis of the risks and threats facing Canada and Canadians in the years to come” in order to identify “the military capabilities required to meet these objectives”. To do so, the GoC promised “stable and predictable defence funding”. The CAF roles were confirmed in prioritized order as: Defending Canada, Defending North America, and Contributing to international Peace and Security. The CAF was to undertake these roles by performing six separate missions while balancing their capability across four pillars: Personnel, Equipment, Readiness and Infrastructure¹. As we now know, the global recession and economic slow-down, which quickly followed the unveiling of the CFDS, forced the federal government into debt as it implemented a number of economic stimulus measures. Balancing the budget by this year, which was imposed by a GoC intent on delivering on a promise to do so in time for the next election, has required the GoC to deliver significant defence cuts over the past several years and over several tranches. The CFDS originally intended for DND’s budget to increase by 0.6% annually, after factoring for inflation. In fact, after a brief period of growth, DND’s fiscal allocation has sunk below 2007 levels². Cumulatively, the dramatic reductions in funding have significantly eroded the

¹ *The Canada First Defence Strategy.*

² Perry, David. *The Growing Gap Between Defense Ends, and Means: The Disconnect between the Canada First Defense Strategy and the Current Defense Budget.* CDA Institute: Vimy Paper 19. June 2014. 4.

equipment and infrastructure pillars outlined above. Vote 1 funds allocated for equipment maintenance have been drastically reduced leading to a decline in operational readiness “as ships are tied up, vehicles parked and flying hours cut”³. Overall, funding allocated to fulfilling the CFDS until 2027/2028 has dropped from \$490 to \$452 billion. This is significant, even without factoring in the tremendous drop in purchasing power which has and will continue to occur between 2008 and 2028. The CAF capability, as envisioned by the GoC and outlined in the 2008 CFDS, is now no longer fundable by 2028.

The government will need to decide whether it still wishes to attain the capabilities determined in the CFDS by 2028. If so, funding will need to dramatically increase. If not, the CAF will no longer be able to complete all the roles or missions initially intended. If neither course of action is supported by the GoC, as most observers expect, then a renewed options analysis will be required to investigate innovative and cheaper alternatives. However, divestment of some capabilities is not negotiable. In addition to the CFDS (as it now stands), Canada has obligations to contribute to NATO and to the security of North America as part of NORAD. Despite Canada’s historical approach as an “easy rider” in these collective defence organizations, Canada has “embraced an expeditionary approach” when it comes to defence policy, which is not an inexpensive approach⁴. As the U. S. and other key NATO allies undergo even more extreme funding reductions, Canada’s “Walmart Spending Model⁵” is unlikely to be tolerated if it is perceived to be at the expense of other NATO members. However, it does represent the most pragmatic way of ensuring best value for defence dollars spent

³ Ibid. 10.

⁴ Leuprecht, Christian and Sokolsky, Joel. Defense Policy “Walmart Style”: Canadian Lessons in “not-so-grand” Grand Strategy. *Armed Forces & Society*. March, 2015. 5.

⁵ Ibid. 1.

(“realism Canadian style”)⁶. This essay will explain the current fiscal reality faced by the CAF when attempting to balance these priorities, tasks and missions. Furthermore, it will explore ways in which the CAF can continue to play a multi-purpose role in a fiscally prudent manner while meeting the minimal commitments expected of the GoC as well as our closest allies. Given the prevailing anti-interventionist (at least with *boots on the ground*) mood prevalent within most Western nations, this approach is well-advised.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

A series of measures spanning three budgets resulted in massive cuts to DND and resulted in 25% of the cost savings that the GoC utilized to balance the budget by 2015⁷. Measures taken to re-profile \$6.68 billion in funding for capital procurements in budgets 2012 and 2014, means these expenditures cannot occur until after 2016/2017. It is not clear whether or not these funds will ever be added back to DND’s budget as the timeframe exceeds the Finance Department’s five year planning horizon⁸. Operating budget freezes, dating back to the 2010 budget, have required funds originally earmarked for other priorities to be used to pay for previously determined wage increases for public servants and uniformed members (\$236 million annually). These reductions are expected to cost DND \$9.2 billion going forward to 2027/2028⁹. Over the past decade, DND has been unable to spend billions of dollars in Vote 5 funds due to procurement delays and difficulty utilizing funds earmarked for infrastructure. Not all the fault lies with DND,

⁶ Ibid. 1, 4.

⁷ Perry, David. *The Growing Gap Between Defence Ends, and Means: The Disconnect between the Canada First Defence Strategy and the Current Defence Budget*. CDA Institute: Vimy Paper 19. June 2014. 1.

⁸ Perry, David. *The Growing Gap Between Defence Ends, and Means: The Disconnect between the Canada First Defence Strategy and the Current Defence Budget*. CDA Institute: Vimy Paper 19. June 2014. 3.

⁹ Ibid. 2.

however. Some delays have been due to industry's inability to develop equipment on time (Maritime Helicopter Project); in addition ADM (Mat) staff has been disproportionately targeted for cost reductions by GoC efforts. More alarming have been allegations that the central agencies have put up further cost-saving barriers preventing DND spending by instituting overly bureaucratic processes and failing to approve DND's three-year Investment Plan since 2009. This places significant limitations on the department's ability to spend funds included within its fiscal framework and which were previously authorized by Parliament¹⁰. As a result, capital spending has sunk to 14 percent of the defence program; this is a level not seen since the late 1970s¹¹. Though 2014/15 is the last year of actual budget cuts, the current operating budget freeze will continue until 2016/17¹². Cumulatively, the result is that Canada's Defence budget receded from a high water mark of 1.5% in 2011 (still well below the NATO target and CFDS goal of 2% GDP) to 1.08% by 2015¹³.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Currently, personnel costs comprise over 50% of the DND budget. These expenses are non-discretionary and include predetermined wage increases and rapidly growing costs such as the provision of healthcare for CAF members. In the past, during times of deficit reduction, CAF and DND personnel cutbacks have been relied upon to trim government costs. However, the CAF has never reduced personnel numbers in order to reinvest in Capital or Operations and Maintenance (O & M). Furthermore, the GoC has publicly promised to keep 68,000 full-time military members and 27,000 reservists in

¹⁰ Ibid. 7,8.

¹¹ Ibid. 5, 6.

¹² Ibid. 10.

¹³ Leuprecht, Christian and Sokolsky, Joel. *Defense Policy "Walmart Style": Canadian Lessons in "not-so-grand" Grand Strategy*. Armed Forces & Society. March, 2015. 14.

uniform. Thus, it is generally believed that any cost savings must be realized from the remaining 49% of DND's budget, comprised primarily of the O & M and Capital (new equipment purchases) expenditures. The high personnel costs faced by DND together with advances in technology and challenges recruiting from a smaller demographic pool¹⁴, have caused knowledgeable observers such as Gen (Ret.) Hillier to recommend a reduction in personnel numbers amongst the Regular Force to 50,000. The following paragraphs will explore opportunities to reduce Regular Force numbers, while largely maintaining capabilities. If the GoC is so inclined (a big if), this could free up funds for DND to invest in other areas, thus ensuring badly needed equipment could be purchased.

Today's combat team, comprised of an infantry company and its enablers, possesses an enormous amount of fire power, agility and flexibility. With new projects such as the Integrated Soldier System, Small Arms Replacement Project and the acquisition of micro and tactical UAVs, smaller numbers of personnel on the battlefield will have the potential for even greater lethality. With respect to the RCN, USN Zumwalt Class destroyers, which have three times the displacement of a Canadian Patrol Frigate (CPF), are manned by less than 60% of the CPF's personnel. This is done by utilizing improved automation. The Canadian Surface Combatants, which will eventually replace the CPFs and the Tribal Class Destroyers, could be manned by less than 100 personnel each; this would be significantly advantageous to the recruitment-challenged RCN. The Joint Uninhabited Surveillance and Target Acquisition System (JUSTAS) is expected to provide enhanced capabilities to observe our borders. This capability will be augmented by the evolution of the Polar Epsilon-Radarsat Constellation Project. Both are expected to

¹⁴ Fetterly, Ross. (2009). Budgeting within Defense: Who gets What? In Craig Stone (Ed.) *The Public Management of Defense in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Inta D. Erwin.60.

reduce the requirement for manned surveillance system and potentially airframes (Maritime Patrol Aircraft) too. It is becoming increasingly feasible for the CAF to leverage technology to maintain firepower and effect while decreasing personnel requirements.

Careful scrutiny of all uniformed positions should be undertaken to determine which positions must absolutely be uniformed and which could be performed by public servants or contractors. Since the end of the Cold War, significant support capabilities have been devolved to non-uniformed sources. This was particularly true in Afghanistan. As a case in point, civilian medical and dental specialists routinely worked in the Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit (R3MMU) performing surgery and other services to allied ill and injured. These clinicians tended to be highly experienced and capable; they performed admirable work there. The CAF must remain expeditionary, but the risk entailed by delivering support behind the wire differs from that provided outside the wire. In optimizing a WoG approach to future deployments and devolving more roles to public servants (where absolutely necessary) and contractors, DND could save significant funds. This is made more palatable in utilizing supplementary estimates to cover the incremental costs of deployments¹⁵. The advantage to be gained in stability and experience, while maximizing effect at the sharp end, is worthy of consideration. No doubt, such a move would be met with significant internal resistance as well as external lobbying.

Reservists continue to be under-utilized within the CAF. Class A Reservists are tremendously loyal and dedicated; they offer alternative experiences and innovative

¹⁵ Fetterly, Ross. (2009). Budgeting within Defense: Who gets What? In Craig Stone (Ed.) *The Public Management of Defense in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Inta D. Erwin.79.

ideas. They are also very cost-effective. The budget for my 100-person unit, 15 Field Ambulance, is approximately \$860,000 annually. In return, I am able to Force Generate some of the best Medical Technicians, Nurses and Physicians within the CAF. These are Paramedics, Emergency Medicine Physicians and Intensive Care Unit Nurses who work in high stress, high acuity medical environments with very sick patients every day. The Regular Force cannot Force Generate this capability in the same numbers; the vast majority of Regular Force clinicians provide primary care or are completing mundane support tasks on a daily basis. Comfort and proficiency in handling trauma must be fostered on a routine basis in acute care hospitals in order to maintain proficiency. The same is true of other highly technical trades. The primary role of the Army and the RCN Reserve is Homeland Defence and Disaster Response (Territorial Battalion Groups). Reservists are often utilized to augment Regular Force personnel on deployment. In Afghanistan, more than 20% of each rotation was comprised of Reservists. However, there are CAF capabilities, which have been completely devolved to Reservists (Coastal Defence, Mine Countermeasures, Port Inspections, Information Operations (formerly CIMIC). Is there a compelling reason that Reservists couldn't man the Arctic/Offshore Patrol Vessels as they currently man the Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels? If there was a political will by the GoC to considerably decrease Regular Force numbers, more roles could be devolved to the Primary Reserve Force. The Reservists would embrace the challenge and rise to the occasion as they have before. However, this would require a comprehensive, objective and transparent occupational analysis process, which appropriately considered the current and future realities¹⁶. This analysis would need to be

¹⁶ Okros, Alan. (2009). Budgeting within Defense: Who gets What? In Craig Stone (Ed.) *The Public Management of Defense in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Inta D. Erwin. 153, 154.

considered under a Joint, Interagency (Whole of Government-[WoG]), Multinational and Public construct. In this way efficiencies could be optimally realized. The Military Occupational Structure Analysis, Redesign and Tailoring (MOSART) Project was originally intended to improve the functioning of the 50 year old CAF HR Management System to increase flexibility and efficiency¹⁷. However, some project drift occurred as the environments were not equally sold on its ultimate practicality. It also wasn't conducted in view of a JIMP paradigm.

At the same time, Regular Force personnel undergo numerous postings at great cost to the organization. One could argue that all personnel need to be tactically proficient. Likewise enough experience and observation is necessary to allow appropriate succession planning and advancement in responsibility and rank. Once individuals have demonstrated an aptitude and a desire to be potential *streamers*, they should continue to be groomed for positions of increased authority and responsibility. This requires new experiences and postings. The remainder of a slimmed down Regular Force could be allowed to maintain tactical proficiency or be used to fill staff or technical roles of importance to the greater organization. Improved stability translates to greater job knowledge and skill. This benefits the CAF and is more attractive to families. For millennials, this may be popular for lifestyle-conscious individuals who self-select out of the *command stream*¹⁸. If processes were developed to allow for more seamless component transfer from Regular Force to Primary Reserve and back, this also might appeal to this generation, which appreciates greater workplace flexibility. It surprises me

¹⁷ Wang, Wenbi. *The development of a modelling solution to address manpower and personnel issues using the IPME*. Defense R&D Canada Toronto. Technical Report. . November, 2010.

¹⁸ Ng, Eddy and Gossett, Charles. *Career Choice in Canadian Public service: An Exploration of Fit With the Millennial Generation*. In *Public Personnel Management*. 42 (3). 337.

that more effort isn't made to retain retiring Regular Force members with the Primary Reserve after so many DND resources have been expended training them. In certain geographic locations, Class B Reservists can be utilized to fill staff positions where they are available to meet the need. This worked extremely well during the Afghanistan conflict. Unfortunately, many of the most able Class B Reservists were allowed to leave the CAF after the post-conflict reductions in Class B contracts.

Similarly, as part of Public Service reform, the GoC should continue to press the issue with unions that CAF retirees preferentially be hired by DND and other OGDs which work closely with the CAF. This would enhance interoperability and retain knowledge and experience within the GoC. More static HQ postings and increased military experience in some parts of the public service would decrease the traditional civilian/military friction points and foster improved WoG approaches to the wicked problems faced by the government. In many provinces, Emergency Management Agencies have preferentially hired retired military personnel; this has greatly facilitating CAF-Provincial cooperation and effectiveness in mobilizing responses to natural disasters and other domestic emergencies.

Finally, consideration should be made to increasing the CRA for Colonels, General and Flag Officers (at the CDS' continued pleasure). These individuals need the experience and skill to effectively navigate strategic and government processes. Ottawa like Washington is a town based on connections, networking and personal credibility. This capital takes years to foster; unlike the uniformed environment they are familiar with where respect is automatic, civilians and politicians maintain a "this too shall pass" approach to strong military personalities, especially those intent on *changing the system*.

There should be no implied contract with qualified young officers that they rapidly move from stepping stone to stepping stone to senior positions. The integrity and good function of the organization should remain paramount to maintain the best service to crown and country. It would but unimaginable in other large corporations for the CEOs of the organization to continually be in their early 50s. As a mentor of mine once remarked “it takes 10 years to get 10 years’ experience”. At the risk of rapid advancement of other members, this would ensure the CDS was groomed for success in the position and that his/her successors were optimally prepared for the job. A CRA of 60 for Colonels and 65 for GO/FOs would ensure that they remain terminal employees of the CAF. They would not be looking elsewhere for soft landings as lobbyists and captains of defence industry following their careers in the CAF.

PROCUREMENT

The current procurement system is largely seen by the Canadian public and the GoC as being broken by the. DND has habitually fallen short of spending its annual funding envelope by hundreds of millions of dollars. This has been more recently hindered by mass layoffs of personnel within ADM (Mat) who were involved in procurement. The Treasury Board Secretariat has been accused of aligning with the GoC deficit reduction pressures by failing to approve DND’s Investment Plan for several years, which curtailed its authority to spend allocated funds¹⁹. In other cases, project delivery has been hampered by industry’s inability to deliver capabilities as promised.

¹⁹ Perry, David. *The Growing Gap Between Defence Ends, and Means: The Disconnect between the Canada First Defence Strategy and the Current Defence Budget*. CDA Institute: Vimy Paper 19. June 2014. 7, 8.

Regardless, delays in procurement cause significant erosion in purchasing power. The Joint Support Ship Project (replacement for AORs on each coast), initially scheduled for delivery in 2012, serves as a cautionary tale. Three JSS' could not be purchased to determined specifications within the GoC authorized 2.9 \$billion funding envelope, in 2009. Since that time, the capability of the JSS has been significantly curtailed and the requirement decreased to two ships. The Canadian Dollar has significantly dropped relative to the U. S. currency during the intervening years. Steel for these platforms is not expected to be cut until 2016/2017 at the earliest. The JSS are not expected to reach full operational capability until 10 years after initially intended. In the meantime, the RCN is scurrying to determine the most economical interim replacement since the JSS' predecessors were retired last year. Unless the GoC is willing to increase the funding caps for individual projects and for the entire \$ 33 billion National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS), the 6-8 A/OPS will become 3-4 ships and the 12-15 intended Canadian Surface Combatants will decrease to 7-8 platforms.

Historically, the federal government of the day has relied on Industrial Regional Benefits (IRB) to curry favour (with mixed success) amongst voters across Canada. In fact, procurement involves a complicated but poorly choreographed dance between multiple departments (DND, Treasury Board Secretariat, PWGSC and Industry Canada) that does not have a history of recent success²⁰. Despite the political imperative that IRB be used to score cheap political points, the actual efficacy of the policy is very much open

²⁰ Solomon, Binyam. (2009). The Defense Industrial Base in Canada. In Craig Stone (Ed.) *The Public Management of Defense in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Inta D. Erwin.120.

to debate²¹. In addition, there is a significant premium to be paid in building these ships in Canada. The nascent shipbuilding industry has not delivered any ships of this complexity since the early 1990s. Experienced technicians, architects and maritime engineers have long since left the country for greener pastures. Badly needed infrastructure and equipment must be acquired and built. Even the RN is beginning to build ships abroad in order to realize a cost savings. In 2012, the RN announced the signing of a \$1 billion contract with a South Korean yard to build four AORs. Superficially at least, this would seem to indicate much greater value for money than the JSS contract. Of course, this domestic and inflationary erosion in funding is borne by DND.

Since the current Conservative Party's early days in power when Gen (Ret.) Hillier was a persuasive influence, the GoC has "reasserted the traditional inequality in the civilian-military dynamic with respect to decision-making"²². Nowhere has this been more pronounced than in the realm of defence acquisition. There is a pervasive feeling amongst politicians and the public alike that the CAF has an eye for shiny, expensive Cadillac purchases, and will fudge numbers to make their acquisitions more palatable. This has been confirmed by the parliamentary Budget Officer on several occasions, most notably with the proposed F-35 purchase. In the past two years, the DM and the Associate MND have been given increased responsibility to oversee departmental procurement activities. Last year, the government's new Defence Procurement Strategy (DPS) dictated a Secretariat be stood up within PWGSC to improve coordination,

²¹ Solomon, Binyam. (2009). The Defense Industrial Base in Canada. In Craig Stone (Ed.) *The Public Management of Defense in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Inta D. Erwin. 122.

²² Leuprecht, Christian and Sokolsky, Joel. Defense Policy "Walmart Style": Canadian Lessons in "not-so-grand" Grand Strategy. *Armed Forces & Society*. March, 2015. 14.

decision-making and performance measurement for capital acquisitions beyond a given dollar amount. This week, at the annual CANSEC Conference, the MND announced a third party independent panel would be created to perform a challenge function regarding DND-determined procurement requirements at an early stage in the process. It is clear that the CAF has lost the trust of the government in this area.

Now that reinvestment in the shipbuilding yards is in progress, and the budget has been balanced, the GoC must move quickly to demonstrate results. It must find ways, despite measures to increase DND oversight, to shorten the procurement process. It must be prepared to set realistic funding envelopes to pay the premium price demanded by Canadian industry. It must pressure the Treasury Board Secretariat to approve DND's investment plan²³. It must allow DND some flexibility in converting unspent Vote 5 funds to Vote 1 funds to allow for acquisition delays beyond its control. Finally, the GoA must allow the carry-over of unspent funds to ensure delayed projects do not interfere with the progress of projects which are on track.

CONCLUSION

Due to Canada's geography and proximity to the United States, the reality is that even with no military, we would not fear attack by other nations²⁴. As a result, the 1971 White Paper concluded "there is no optimal investment in DND for the GoC"; in fact doing so comes at the cost of investment in Canada's social safety net²⁵. In previous bids

²³ Perry, David. *The Growing Gap Between Defence Ends, and Means: The Disconnect between the Canada First Defence Strategy and the Current Defence Budget*. CDA Institute: Vimy Paper 19. June 2014. 9.

²⁴ Leuprecht, Christian and Sokolsky, Joel. *Defense Policy "Walmart Style": Canadian Lessons in "not-so-grand" Grand Strategy*. Armed Forces & Society. March, 2015. 2, 3, 7.

²⁵ Fetterly, Ross. (2009). Budgeting within Defense: Who gets What? In Craig Stone (Ed.) *The Public Management of Defense in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Inta D. Erwin.53.

to realize fiscal expediency, “the careful trade-off between costs and benefits”, the GoC has turned to unification (mid-1960s), supporting UN (1970s-1990s) operations and a movement to allied interoperability (early 1990s-mid 2000s)²⁶. However, Canada has always been an easy rider not a free rider or a joy rider²⁷. The GoC has always understood that Canada had to be counted on by its close allies to contribute enough that it had “a seat at the table”²⁸. However, the next few years will be a pivotal time for the CAF. Will the current GoC reinvest in the military as part of CFDS 2.0, or has it realized there are not many votes to be gained by increased funding? Will it help articulate a compelling Operating Concept for the CAF, which can be used to generate a Capability Based Planning process within a WoG and JIMP construct? Will the NDP or Liberals come to power with a more left leaning agenda? Will Canada’s close allies pressure it to do more? Regardless, if funding does not significantly increase, Canada will be forced to examine the merits of moving to greater specialization. The exception would be core capabilities required to meet other mandated activities (NORAD, Search and Rescue etc.). In this paper I have argued that there are alternatives to the status quo, if there is a political will to do so. There are innovative approaches to maintain capability by leveraging technology, operating smarter and performing more efficiently. Irrespective of our domestic and continental obligations, we should be operating like a “U. S.-style expeditionary Marine Corps”²⁹. We should also be coordinating more seamlessly with

²⁶ Leuprecht, Christian and Sokolsky, Joel. *Defense Policy “Walmart Style”*: Canadian Lessons in “not-so-grand” Grand Strategy. Armed Forces & Society. March, 2015. 6, 8, 10.

²⁷Ibid. 16, 17.

²⁸ Ibid. 5.

²⁹ Leuprecht, Christian and Sokolsky, Joel. *Defense Policy “Walmart Style”*: Canadian Lessons in “not-so-grand” Grand Strategy. Armed Forces & Society. March, 2015. 9.

OGDs and other stakeholders to avoid duplication and best leverage expertise. It is possible for the CAF to do more with the current funding envelope.

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