National Defence Défense nationale

Canadian Forces College

Collège des Forces Canadiennes

Transformation 2005
Where did it all go wrong?

Lieutenant-Commander Ramona Burke

JCSP 40

Exercise *Solo Flight*

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

PCEMI 40

Exercice *Solo Flight*

Avertissement

Les opinons exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

Canada

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 40 – PCEMI 40
2013 – 2014

Ex Solo Flight

Transformation 2005
Where did it all go wrong?

By Lieutenant-Commander Ramona Burke

Word Count: 5414

Compte de mots: 5414

In the late 1990s, the Canadian Forces underwent a series of internal examinations. Deep budget cuts and a loss of public confidence following the Somalia Inquiry forced the military to conduct some self-reflection to become a more professional and efficient organization. The Management Command and Control Re-engineering Team (MCCRT), Force Reduction Program (FRP) and a number of other initiatives aimed at financial savings and improved business practices reduced the CF to a leaner force, but in the eyes of many a less effective force that had become more a reflection of its public service brethren than a fighting force. By the time the planes flew into the Twin Towers it was apparent the CF needed a make-over. Now at war, the Chretien Liberals gave way to the Martin Liberals and the search for a new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to replace General Henault began in earnest. The man chosen was General Rick Hillier. Hillier had a vision to transform the Canadian Forces and upon being appointed as CDS he embarked on one of the most ambitious transformations of Canada's military since Unification in the late 1960s.

Now, nine years later, many of the initiatives General Hillier began have yet to be realized. Furthermore, some of the threads have begun to unravel on some of the changes he did manage to accomplish. Whether or not Hillier's transformation was a success is debatable. This essay seeks to explore Hillier's change vision, and objectives to illustrate why he did not accomplish all he set out to. To do so, this essay will first explain Transformation as envisioned by General Hillier, noting its progression and accomplishments, and secondly, using Kotter's Eight-Step change management theory,

identify areas where General Hillier may have undermined his own change initiative by not following accepted guidelines towards successful transformation.

Kotter's Change Model

The framework used to analyze and assess General Hillier's transformation effort is Dr. John Kotter's Model for Leading Change. Kotter, a Harvard professor, author, and change consultant is considered one of the leading authorities on leadership and change.[1] During the time of CF Transformation, Kotter's 8-Step Change Model was the key reference in change management; it was well known and accepted within the business community.[2]

1. Establish a sense of urgency;
2. Form a powerful guiding coalition;
3. Develop a vision and strategy for change;
4. Communicate the change vision;
5. Empower broad-based action (remove obstacles);
6. Plan for and create short-term wins;
7. Build on the change; and,
8. Anchor the changes in corporate culture.

Dr. Kotter emphasizes that all eight steps must be followed, in sequence, in order for change to be successful.

---

[1] Michael Rostek, "Managing Change within DND," in *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, edited by Craig Stone, (Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009), 216.
[2] In fact, the model is still employed within the CF for the current bound of Transformation as Kotter International was contracted by the Royal Canadian Navy in 2011 to assist with its internal restructuring.

Notwithstanding its immense popularity, there are criticisms of Kotter's model. First of all Kotter's book *Leading Change* was published without any footnotes or bibliography, and it lacks empirical support on how the steps might specifically support change success. Though Kotter purportedly studied change initiatives in over 100 different companies, he has not shared his data which has led to scepticism to his theory's veracity. Kotter's approach is also seen as inflexible. Kotter insists that the eight steps must be followed and his approach leaves little room for course correction while the transformation is underway. Moreover, his model does not appear to take into account external factors that might disrupt or directly impact the change initiative. Finally, many of the steps in the model involve not only organizational change, but also cultural and social change. These variables are difficult to quantify and the ability to measure the depth and breadth of progression and success in these areas would be very difficult. There are also those who do not subscribe to the application of private business practices to public organizations,[3] but that debate remains outside the scope of this essay.

Having noted many of its shortcomings, it merits stating that Kotter's model was, and continues to be, used in transformation efforts in both private and public organizations. Frankly, many of these limitations are common in the field of change management and his eight steps do not deviate greatly from many of the other change management theories.[4] Theories and approaches to change management are often contradictory, many lack empirical evidence and few are supported by scientific rigour.

---

[3] Michael Rostek, "Managing Change within DND," in *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, edited by Craig Stone, (Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009), 217.

[4] For the purposes of this essay, the author read a number of change management publications and though there were differences from Kotter's method, many change authors have similar steps or guides to achieving successful organizational change. Important components such as leadership, urgency, vision, and culture figured prominently in most of the literature.

The Kotter model is simply not immune from this common failing, but despite its shortcomings it remains one of the most accepted models for generating change in large organizations and, at the time of Transformation, the CF preferred it.[5]

Background

Change within large organizations is an immense undertaking and the rates of success are poor. "In a telling statistic, leading practitioners of radical corporate reengineering report that success rates in *Fortune* 1,000 companies are well below 50%; some say they are as low as 20%."[6] So why even try? Many organizations (both public and private) are under intense pressure to become more efficient, more productive, and more competitive. "Globalization and rapid scientific and technological innovation are by far the most significant trends driving change".[7] However, resource scarcity, weak and failed states and the changing nature of conflict can have a dramatic impact on military structures in particular.[8] In the case of the Canadian Forces (CF), a case could be made that these trends have caused continuous change since the 1960s.[9] As it happens, these trends also played a role in Hillier's Transformation of the CF in 2005.

The conditions for change were set when General Hillier took over as CDS. The 1990s had been a difficult decade for the CF, Prime Minister Chretien had not been friendly towards the CF and scandal from operations in Somalia and Bosnia had caused

---

[5] Michael K. Jeffery, "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No. 2, (2010), 12.

[6] Harvard Business Review, *HBR's 10 Must Reads On Change Management*, (Boston: Harvard Business Review, 2011), 46.
[7] Michael Rostek, "Managing Change within DND," in *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, edited by Craig Stone, (Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009), 213.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] *Ibid*.

the CF's reputation to plummet.[10] There was an expectation that the end of the Cold War would result in a peace dividend and the Defence budget was subsequently cut by a quarter.[11] The CF lost much of its political clout and was under intense scrutiny by its political masters. "The CF were demoralized, and searching for a means to redeem themselves and reinvigorate the military as an institution."[12] In addition, military influence on CF operational matters had "eroded, resulting in a degradation of operational priorities in the headquarters"[13] something senior military officers had begun to resent and something Hillier was determined to change.

In 2003, Paul Martin took over as Prime Minister with a more positive view of defence and an intention to increase defence funding. Martin was in search of a new foreign and defence policy that would be distinct from his predecessor's.[14]

> Hillier came to his interview with a clear vision that fit the government's needs, based on the "three-block war" model developed by US Marine Commandant Gen. Charles Krulak: that peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and combat would from now on be comingled missions existing side by side, block to urban block, in the new threat environment of failed states.[15]

Hillier was promoted into the CDS position and he immediately set up action teams to explore and analyze options for the transformation of the CF. He also played a pivotal role in developing the government's 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS) which signaled a turning point for Canada's armed forces. The statement recognized the

---

[10] Kimberly Marten, "From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, No. 2, (June 2010), 216.
[11] Hartfiel, Robert M. "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy and Planning, 1993-2004." *Canadian Public Administration* 53, (2010), 323.

[12] Kimberly Marten, "From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, No. 2, (June 2010), 216.
[13] Daniel Gosselin, "Hellyer's Ghosts: Unification of the Canadian Forces is 40 Years Old – Part One," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, No. 2, 2009, 12.
[14] Kimberly Marten, "From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, No. 2, (June 2010), 218.
[15] *Ibid*.

increased operational tempo during the conflict in Afghanistan and committed to a vision of transforming the Canadian Forces into a "more effective, relevant and responsive"[16] military force at home and abroad. The wheels of transformation were set in motion, General Hillier now had all the top cover he needed to push his change agenda to restructure the military for more rapid operational decisiveness.

Hillier's Transformation

General Hillier stood up four CDS Action Teams (CATs) when he became CDS. The action teams were to assist in developing a plan and strategy to transform the CF. Each CAT had an area to analyze:

a. CAT 1 – command and control;

b. CAT 2 – force development and force generation;

c. CAT 3 – operational capabilities; and,

d. CAT 4 – institutional alignment.

In addition to the CATs, General Hillier held a General/Flag Officer (GO/FO) seminar very soon after assuming command. It was at this meeting that he first communicated his vision to the senior leadership. The GO/FO seminar was followed soon after by his first Armed Forces Council (AFC) meeting in March. At AFC General Hillier began promoting CF Transformation to the Environmental Chiefs of Staff (ECS). In June the CATs reported their progress at a second GO/FO seminar. The recommendations and divergence in approach taken by each CAT was evident, as was the reservations in those present as they realized the magnitude of the changes Hillier wanted.[17] "The "push back"

[16] Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement, Defence: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, (Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2005), 11.

that the CDS received from his subordinates was clear, unmistakable, and a sharp contrast to the positive reception at the previous February G/FO Seminar. It was a strong indication that the transformation road would not be as smooth as envisaged."[18] The CATs delivered their final reports and the CF Transformation Team (CFTT) under Major-General Walter Natynczyk was created to take over transformation on Hillier's behalf.

"The central element of Hillier's 2005 Transformation was operational primacy, and this included placing greater emphasis on operational matters in all decision-making at NDHQ."[19] To achieve this, General Hillier laid out four phases to his transformation:

a. Phase One – Development of a Vision.
b. Phase Two – Restructure the CF Operational Command and Control (C2) architecture.
c. Phase Three – Institutional Alignment, and
d. Phase Four – Force Generation.[20]

Phase One was to develop a unified CF vision created in tandem with the 2005 DPS. Hillier wanted an integrated CF that was more effective, relevant, and responsive; respected by allies and partners; with an ability to provide leadership at home and abroad.[21] As part of this phase, Hillier envisioned several new capabilities: a Standing Contingency Task Force (SCTF), Special Operations Group (SOG), and a Mission

---

[17] Michael K.Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 25.
[18] *Ibid*, 26.

[19] Daniel Gosselin, "Hellyer's Ghosts: Unification of the Canadian Forces is 40 Years Old – Part One," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, No. 2, 2009, 12.
[20] Michael K.Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 21.
[21] Department of National Defence, *CDS Planning Guidance CF Transformation*, (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 10 November 2005), 5.

Specific Task Force (MSTF). In particular, General Hillier regarded the development of a new SCTF as central to his plans for the future CF. Phase Two was focused on the implementation of a new CF strategic and operational C2 structure. In addition, Hillier intended on dissolving the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) organization in favour of a new Strategic Joint Staff (SJS) that would assume control of the overarching strategic function of the CF; providing a political interface to assist the CDS in commanding the CF. Phase Three would integrate DND/CF components and enablers into a single and cohesive operational construct. This would include the integration of Reserves, intelligence support and the creation of an Integrated Managed Readiness System (IMRS). Phase Four would result in an improved force development (capability based planning) process leading to better force generation.

Hillier also laid out six key principles that were intended to guide commanders and staffs as they executed transformation activities:[22]

1. Canadian Forces Identity: First loyalty is to Canada and all service personnel identify with the CF beyond individual environments;
2. Command Centric Imperative: Line and staff functions are clearly delineated, with a distinct and unambiguous chain of command;
3. Authorities, Responsibilities and Accountabilities: Commanders are provided with a clear articulation of their assigned authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities;
4. Operational Focus: Operations and operational support take primacy over all other activities and considerations;
5. Mission Command: Mission command articulates the dynamic and decentralized execution of operations guided throughout by a clear articulation and understanding of the overriding commander's intent; and
6. Integrated Regular, Reserve and Civilian Personnel: All personnel are closely integrated to ensure the best utilization of skills and experience.

---

[22] Department of National Defence, *CDS TRANSFORMATION SITREP 02/05*, (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 16 September 2005), Annex A.

By 2010, Phases One and Two were mostly complete (the overall success will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent paragraphs). However, Phases Three and Four were still in progress.[23] In 2014, Phase Two has continued to evolve as the operational CF command and control structure now has the four commands Hiller created amalgamated into two: Commander Joint Operations Command (CJOC) is made up of the former Canadian Expeditionary Command (CEFCOM), Canada Command (Canada COM), and the Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM); and Canadian Special Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) remains, with a mandate for expansion. Phase Three continues to progress with the creation of an Intelligence Command, however the IMRS has yet to be realized. Phase Four resulted in a centralized Chief of Force Development (CFD) that has embraced the CBP model, however, CFD continues to struggle with the environments over prioritization of joint capability. Though much change is evident, there are still a large number of legacy Transformation initiatives that remain unfinished.

Nine years later, the overall success of General Hillier's Transformation remains the subject of debate. The literature points towards Hillier's success in renewing Canada's faith in its military; however, there is doubt as to his success in transforming the CF.[24] Philippe Lagassé referred to Hillier's legacy as "mixed"[25] there are some tangible successes, but also a few failures even though the stars appeared to have been aligned. This essay takes the view that Hillier's transformation was ultimately unsuccessful. Though he did succeed in creating an operational command structure, most of his other

---

[23] Michael Jeffery, "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No. 2, (2010), 12.

[24] Devon Conley and Eric Ouellet, "The Canadian Forces and Military Transformation: An Elusive Quest for Efficiency," *Canadian Army Journal* 14, No. 1, (Spring 2012), 71.

[25] Philippe Lagassé, "A Mixed Legacy: General Hillier and Canadian Defence, 2005-2008," paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference at Carleton University, 27 May 2009.

objectives have not been realized. Using Kotter's Eight Steps this essay will now explore where it may have gone wrong.

Step One: Establish a Sense of Urgency

In step one the organization must be made aware of the requirement for change. According to Dr. Kotter, the "single biggest error" people make when trying to change an organization is not creating "a high enough sense of urgency among enough people to set the stage for making a challenging leap into some new direction."[26] It is vital that the change leader develop a sense of urgency around the need for change and ignite the initial spark to motivate the whole organization towards the change. It takes a significant amount of initiative, cooperation and sacrifice for an organization to undergo significant change. Establishing a sense of urgency is critical to gaining this cooperation and overcoming the complacency that is inherent in most transformation initiatives.[27] "People will find a thousand ingenious ways to withhold cooperation from a process that they sincerely think is unnecessary or wrongheaded."[28]

General Hillier was acutely aware of the risk of complacency. He had been through a number of re-engineering attempts in the department and he wished to avoid the same pitfall. He believed "that speed was vital in creating the conditions for change."[29] Immediately after being appointed CDS he stood up his CATs and began a process to preparing the CF for change. Much like the German *Blitzkrieg*, Hillier sought to break

---

[26] John P. Kotter, *A Sense of Urgency*, (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2008), viii.

[27] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*,(Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 36.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] Michael K. Jeffery, "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation," Canadian Military Journal 10, No. 2, (2010), 14.

through and create chaos, standing up the new structure in record time so that it would be nigh impossible to revert to the old status quo.[30] Canada COM was stood up a mere four months following the official announcement on Transformation.[31] General Hillier also moved quickly to announce the creation of CEFCOM, CANSOFCOM, and the SJS. He was convinced that he needed to move aggressively in order to generate high momentum to get people energized and passionate about this particular Transformation and to make people aware of the opportunity it offered.[32]

However, regardless of the amount of energy and urgency he generated, in his urgency he failed to ensure he had a solid base of support and he failed to pay attention to detail. The staffs setting up the new commands were left without a detailed blueprint and the resource bill became much larger than expected, and, some argued, too large for such a small military.[33] The rise and fall of the "dotcoms" (as they were called) is an interesting topic on its own; however, the point remains that Hillier had such a great sense of urgency in implementing his initial structure change that he did not adequately plan for it.

Step Two: Create a Guiding Coalition

In step two, the change leader must convince key people that the change is necessary and recruit other change leaders within the organization. This "guiding

---

[30] *Ibid*, 15.
[31] Michael Rostek, "Managing Change within DND," in *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, edited by Craig Stone, (Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009), 229.
[32] Daniel Gosselin and Craig Stone, "From Minister Hellyer to General Hillier: Understanding the Fundamental Differences Between the Unification of the Canadian Forces and its Present Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal*, (Winter 2005-2006), 12.

[33] Michael Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 86.

coalition" must represent all levels of the organization and should not necessarily follow the traditional chain of command; this is so that all points can be considered and that any change activities reflect the best likelihood of success. This does not mean that change efforts are run based on consensus, but that appropriate personnel are required to help formulate and implement desired change. Ideally, a guiding coalition contains members with position power; expertise; credibility; and, leadership.[34]

Perhaps one of Hillier's biggest failures in achieving CF Transformation was his selection of members to his guiding coalition. General Hillier surrounded himself with like-minded army officers that shared his vision on how the CF should be structured for future operations and this approach alienated the ECS that he would need to help promote and implement his vision. Hillier

> relied largely on a small staff and some trusted advisors to shape the way ahead. For whatever reason, he did not take the ECS into his confidence for some time and they, for all practical purposes, did not play a major role in shaping the vision. As a consequence, the leadership did not come together early enough in the process and this created a sense that the ECS were not trusted.[35]

This was also evident in his choice for Chief of Transformation; Hillier chose his long-time friend and regimental colleague, Major-General Walter Natynczyk. Hillier also sought to change the merit system at the executive level and to shape the GO/FOs to suit his vision. [36] "This was further complicated by the promotion and appointment of a number of army generals into key positions that raised the spectre of nepotism."[37]

---

[34] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*,(Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 57.

[35] Michael Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 101.
[36] Devon Conley and Eric Ouellet, "The Canadian Forces and Military Transformation: An Elusive Quest for Efficiency," *Canadian Army Journal* 14, No. 1, (Spring 2012), 80.
[37] Michael Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 105.

Hillier's guiding coalition lacked depth, diversity and credibility. He did not have sufficient membership from the other environments and was, therefore, missing the expertise and position power of the leadership of over half the CF. In addition, the CF is only one half of the Department of National Defence (DND) and Hillier's coalition lacked membership from the corporate side of defence. He pushed his vision at GOFO seminars and AFCs, but he failed to understand how severely his structure changes would impact the departmental side of the CF. There are inherent interdependences in the DND/CF "any attempts to change one part of the structure could have a potentially adverse and unpredictable impact somewhere else."[38] To be fair, Hillier did acknowledge that his new command structure would necessitate a realignment of the corporate side of defence. CAT 4 had been stood up to report on institutional alignment. And in October 2005, the Office of the Chief Defence Institutional Alignment (CDIA) was stood up under the direction of Mr. Ken Ready, a very experienced public servant.[39] CDIA remained until 31 January 2007;[40] its main purpose had been to evaluate the effect of Transformation on the institution but it languished without ever producing a plan or strategy.[41]

Hillier's coalition was incomplete which would make the job of selling his vision all the more difficult.

---

[38] Department of National Defence, *Report on Transformation 2011*, (Ottawa: Chief of Transformation, 2011), xi.

[39] Department of National Defence, *CDS TRANSFORMATION SITREP 03/05*, (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff), December 2005, 2.

[40] Department of National Defence, *Headquarters Rationalization Report 2010*, (Ottawa: Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, 2010), E -4/8.

[41] Department of National Defence, *Report on the Impact of Canadian Forces Transformation on Defence Strategic Enablers*, (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 5 September, 2007), iv.

Step Three: Develop a Vision and a Strategy

In this step the change leader must develop a clear vision that everyone will understand and will help guide people towards achievement. "*Vision* refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future."[42] The development of a vision and a strategy helps provide unity of effort and purpose to bring everyone together. In addition, the vision must be inclusive, easy to communicate and its intent must be widely understood. And, most importantly, the vision must also be feasible.

One of Hillier's obstacles was the fact that his vision and strategy was not clear to everyone. Hiller was unable to achieve the level of unity or consensus he desired. Further, when confronted by resistance, he did not invest the requisite time and effort to build a greater understanding and he was not open to compromise in order to achieve a shared vision. "The vision was captivating, but never fully understood, and it certainly was not shared by all of the leadership."[43] Hiller was comfortable with his vision being debated, but he did not participate in the debate. It was as if he expected his vision to be embraced without question and that once he made his decision, the debate was over. This attitude ran counter to the consensus culture that was common in headquarters.[44]

To add to the confusion, General Hillier's vision "was not one coherent vision, but really a series of evolving, and sometimes competing, visions that made it virtually impossible for outsiders to understand what the ramifications of these visions would be

---

[42]John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*,(Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 68.

[43] Michael K. Jeffery, "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No. 2, (2010), 15.

[44]Michael Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 104.

for the CF, during and after Transformation."[45] The senior leadership of the CF, especially the ECS, were seriously concerned over the potential consequences of the changes planned.[46]

A noticeable deficiency in Hillier's vision was that it favoured a land-centric approach to future CF operations. It was based on the assumption that conventional warfare was a thing of the past and that future warfare would be focused on failed and failing states with major operations expected to be on land. [47] This was made obvious by his intention to grow the Special Forces, and to purchase amphibious ships and medium-to-heavy lift helicopters; sea and air platforms that were specifically meant to support land operations.[48] The vision was not inclusive of the other services, except as an enabler to land operations and, therefore, the air force and navy had trouble seeing embracing Hillier's vision.

While the vision was the focus, there was no clear strategy for getting there and, as already mentioned, no strategic document was ever written. "While clearly understanding the need for such a strategy, he saw detailed planning as being wasteful of time, and potentially, as jeopardizing attainment of his objective."[49] Hillier "eschewed detailed plans in favour of a dynamic, command-led strategy."[50] This lack of detailed planning would come back to haunt him as it made it exceeding difficult for his

---

[45] Allan English, "Outside CF Transformation Looking In," *Canadian Military Journal* 11, No. 2, (2011), 13.
[46] Michael Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 104.
[47] Allan English, "Outside CF Transformation Looking In," *Canadian Military Journal* 11, No. 2, (2011), 14.

[48] Daniel Gosselin,"Hellyer's Ghosts: Unification of the Canadian Forces is 40 Years Old – Part One," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, No. 2, (2009),10.
[49] Michael K. Jeffery, "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No. 2, (2010), 14.
[50] *Ibid.*

subordinates and staff officers to implement his vision. As mentioned previously, that lack of a clear blueprint indirectly led to an increased resource bill for his new structure. Hillier believed he needed to create "irreversible momentum"[51] there was no need to wait for a comprehensive plan; once he had about 75-85% percent of it figured out he could push forward, the rest could be resolved on the move.[52]

Perhaps the most significant issue with Hillier's vision was that is simply was not feasible and he was forced to change it over time. Hillier's vision of "Big Honking Ships" with centralized force employment conducted by several operational headquarters was simply too big for such a small military. Simply put, "the force structure Hillier devised may not have been well thought out, or indeed realistic or wise, in the first place."[53] The feasibility question would be put to rest when the Liberals were defeated by the Conservatives in 2006.

> The new government's objectives for defence were to some degree at a variance with General Hillier's vision and, unquestionably, the total level of ambition was beyond the resources or capacity of the CF. Thus began what can only be termed a battle of visions.[54]

Hillier's vision was regarded as overly ambitious and his original vision would not survive the new government. In particular, the suspension of the SCTF under the Conservatives dealt a serious blow to the credibility of Hillier's Transformation.[55]

---

[51] Department of National Defence. *CDS TRANSFORMATION SITREP 01/05*. (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 6 July 2005), 1.
[52] Michael Rostek, "Managing Change within DND," in *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, edited by Craig Stone, (Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009), 229.

[53] Philippe Lagassé, "A Mixed Legacy: General Hillier and Canadian Defence, 2005-2008," paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference at Carleton University, (27 May 2009), 9.
[54] Michael K. Jeffery, "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No. 2, (2010), 33.
[55] *Ibid*, 34.

Step Four: Communicate the Change Vision

The need for strong communication skills between all levels of an organization permeates the eight stages described by Kotter, indicating its importance throughout the entire change process. Once a vision and strategy has been developed, it must be communicated frequently and powerfully throughout the organization to achieve buy-in from all levels; "the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have a common understanding of its goals and direction."[56] Good communication of the change vision will reduce uncertainty and allow people to respond positively. Insufficient and inconsistent communication of the vision can lead to a loss of momentum.

The magnitude of transformation can be unnerving. The guiding coalition, when developing the vision and strategy, spend a large amount of time discussing, debating, and becoming accustomed to the future vision and the way ahead. When the coalition communicates the vision to the rest of the organization there is sometimes insufficient time given for subordinates to absorb the new vision and make it their own.

General Hillier was a great public speaker and a very energetic leader. He used every opportunity to communicate his new vision for the CF. In many cases, he communicated it personally through town halls, the media and public engagements. He did not, however, write much of it down which left room for interpretation and inconsistency in implementation. "The lack of a published roadmap, campaign plan or

[56] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*,(Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 85.

"master implementation plan", even as a document to guide internal activities, had serious consequences for not only the senior leadership but the institution."[57]

To exacerbate the communication issue, General Hillier's vision, though captivating, was not shared by a majority of the leadership due to concerns about achievability and inclusiveness.[58] For instance, as part of his vision, General Hillier wished to down-rank the ECS to two-star advisors and give the Commander of Canada Command the responsibility for Force Generation; this was regarded as a serious step backward and caused great concern amongst the environments.[59] And, as already noted, Hillier's vision was already seen as very Army-centric and telling sailors, airmen and airwomen that they were "soldiers first" alienated a large portion of the CF.

Hillier's vision was also under communicated after Transformation was begun. Over the years of Transformation there were only five situation reports (SITREPs). The final one was released in 2007 and there were no more after even though Transformation had barely started its third phase. General Hillier was passionate and enthusiastic at the launch of his change initiative, but he failed to continue that level of engagement throughout implementation. This deficiency had been recognized, and in early 2007 it was recommended that Hillier refocus and re-engage in the process. This was to be the intent of the Hillier's May 2007 GOFO Seminar; however, it appears no such refocusing occurred.[60]

---

[57] Michael Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 108.
[58] *Ibid*, 99.
[59] *Ibid*, 104.

[60] *Ibid*, 36.

Step Five: Empower Employees for Broad-based Action

By step five the change leader should have built sufficient buy-in and communicated his or her vision from all levels of the organization. "Major internal transformation rarely happens unless many people assist…The purpose of stage 5 is to empower a broad base of people to take action by removing as many barriers to the implementation of the change vision as possible".[61] The removal of obstacles empowers people to execute the vision and strategy, and to move the change forward. Kotter mentions a number of barriers to empowerment, but the most relevant to this initiative is the barrier of a formal structure that makes it difficult to act.[62]

One major obstacle to Hillier's vision was the organizational structure of the CF. The CF had been through a number of change initiatives in the previous decades that had attempted to make it more efficient, but had compromised the operational effectiveness of the institution. Hillier believed that in order for the CF to achieve greater operational effect it would need to assume a more integrated and unified approach to operations which could only be achieved through a major transformation of the existing command structure.[63] Phase Two of Hillier's Transformation was the dissolution of the DCDS organization in favour of four operational commands enabled by a Strategic Joint Staff (SJS). As noted previously, Hillier successfully stood up these commands and he

---

[61] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*,(Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 102.
[62] *Ibid*.

[63] Daniel Gosselin and Craig Stone, "From Minister Hellyer to General Hillier: Understanding the Fundamental Differences Between the Unification of the Canadian Forces and its Present Transformation," *Canadian Military Journal* , (Winter 2005-2006), 10.

achieved the command-centric operational focus he had envisioned; however, within a year of their stand up had created wasteful duplication and other inefficiencies.[64] [65]

Step Six: Generate Short-Term Wins

The change leader should acknowledge and celebrate short-term wins early in the change process. Visible results assist in silencing the critics and motivating the rest to continue on the road towards the end state. Major change takes time; placing sufficient emphasis on short-term results helps build credibility to sustain efforts over the long haul.

> Zealous believers will often stay the course no matter what happens. Most of the rest of us expect to see convincing evidence that all the effort is paying off. Nonbelievers have even higher standards of proof. They want to see clear data indicating that the changes are working.[66]

Hillier acknowledged few short-term wins. He had numerous early successes in the rapid creation of the operational headquarters and the SJS but he did not market them as such. By not doing so, early failures like the SCTF dominated the discourse. The results of Transformation were not adequately communicated and the performance measures not clearly delineated. Frankly, Hillier did not plan for results and because of this he was unable to harness short-term wins to continue Transformation momentum.

Step Seven: Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change

Dr. Kotter argues that many change initiatives are unsuccessful because victory is declared prematurely. Short-term wins are only the beginning; in order to achieve long-

---

[64] Department of National Defence, A Report on the Validation of the Transformed Canadian Forces Command Structure, (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 31 January 2007).
[65] Philippe Lagassé, "A Mixed Legacy: General Hillier and Canadian Defence, 2005-2008," paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference at Carleton University, (27 May 2009), 16.
[66] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 119.

term change the change leader must keep looking for improvements. Though short-term wins need to be acknowledged, it is vital that they not be celebrated too overtly; the change leader must not give the impression that all the hard work is done. The change leader does not want to lose momentum or cause regression.[67] The concept is that once gains are consolidated they can form part of future norms (which will be discussed in more detail in the nest stage). Kotter notes that one of the causes of regression is "interconnections that make it difficult to change anything without changing everything."[68]

Hillier achieved positive results from his structural change. He managed to separate the command of operations from the staff functions in NDHQ. These changes in the C2 were lauded as a success and used to try to bolster support for the remaining phases of Transformation. Regardless, the operational tempo and the increasing pressures of the war in Afghanistan caused Transformation progress to slow.

Hillier had success in changing the structure of the CF to embody his vision of operational primacy, but he was unable to consolidate those gains to achieve more success. Also, as indicated earlier, in an integrated organization like the Department of National Defence there was a requirement to align the departmental side. It has already been noted that institutional alignment efforts had been largely neglected. While it is beyond the scope of this paper it is worthy of noting that in creating a command-centric CF, Hillier also broke links with non-military defence organizations in Ottawa (Industry,

---

[67] *Ibid*, 133.
[68] *Ibid*.

TB, Dept of Finance etc). In doing so, Hillier caused an erosion of the CF's political capital in Ottawa; something that many believe could take more than a decade to fix.

Step Eight: Anchor New Approaches in the Culture

Finally, in order to make the change 'stick', the change leader must ensure that it becomes part of the core culture of the organization. Culture refers to the set of beliefs, values, norms and ground rules that define and influence how the organization operates.[69] Superficial changes will be short-lived, in order to achieve long-term, deep rooted change the culture and values of the organization must reflect the new vision and embrace it in everyday operations. Kotter notes that this is essential if the changes are to take hold in the organization. [70]If the proper attention is not exerted at this stage, all of the previous efforts will have been for nought as the organization is in danger of sliding backwards from any gains that may have been made through earlier efforts.

Culture change is vital to the success of a transformation effort. Attitude and behaviour change typically begin early in the transformation process, but only at the end of the change cycle does most of it become anchored in the culture.[71] To anchor change in culture, the change leader needs to demonstrate that new approaches are superior to old ones; to continue to communicate and support new practices; promote people who

---

[69] Richard Beckhard and Reuben Harris, *Organizational Transitions: Managing Complex Change*, Second Edition, (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1987), 7.
[70] John Kotter "Leading Change - Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review*, (January 2007), 8.

[71] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 157.

embrace the new culture; and, succession plan so that the change remains even if the change leader is removed.[72]

Historically DND is particularly poor at seeing this stage through to completion, partly due to the transitory nature of our senior leadership and governments, and partly due to the strong service culture that continues to pervade the CF. General Hillier's first principle of Transformation was Canadian Forces Identity - First loyalty is to Canada and all service personnel identify with the CF beyond individual environments. However, his Army-centric vision undermined this principle. "Opposition to Transformation's culture change agenda became more vocal as it became clear that the new "integrated culture"…was to be a 'jarmy' culture".[73] This top-down approach to culture, an attempt to change culture by telling the organization where its loyalties should lie, was ill-suited to a parochial organization like the CF. Such parochialism was not adequately dealt with during Hillier's Transformation and it caused a clear and present fault line in the Transformation process.[74]

However, one area where Hillier was successful in his Transformation effort was in influencing the selection of his successor. His Chief of Transformation, Walter Natynczyk, was appointed CDS after him, thereby ensuring that his transformation vision would carry on at least for a few more years.

---

[72] *Ibid*.
[73] Allan English, "Outside CF Transformation Looking In." *Canadian Military Journal* 11, No. 2, (2011), 16.

[74] Department of National Defence, *A Report on the Validation of the Transformed Canadian Forces Command Structure*, (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 31 January 2007), 59.

Conclusion

Implementing change poses a significant challenge in any large organization. One might assume a military organization like the CF that emphasizes planning and leadership would easily handle orders to implement change from its senior leadership. However, evidence has shown that the CF is prone to the same resistance to change that can be easily observed in other organizations. General Hillier was trying to create an organization that was both command-centric and operationally relevant. Unfortunately he made a number of errors that made it difficult for him to succeed. He may have started off with the required sense of urgency, but was unable to maintain that ethusiasm throughout implementation. His inability to build a large guiding coalition was due in large part to his reluctance to create an inclusive vision, an error that alienated a large part of the organization. He also under-sold his vision to those he needed to buy in, and he did not capitalize on his short-term wins to gain credibility and momentum. Furthermore, he was unable to foresee many of the side effects his restructuring would cause. He had a narrow window of opportunity and he wanted to get through it, but in his haste he failed to conduct the detailed planning and to create an open dialogue with those who disagreed, but whom he needed to succeed. Regardless of Nine years later, the change has not stuck

General Hillier's Transformation was not a complete failure. He was quite successful in reigniting support and confidence in the CF, and in creating an operational command and control structure separate from NDHQ. However, he did not follow Kotter's eight steps to successful change and his failure to do so may have led to Transformation's partial success. Only time will tell if the changes he did make will endure

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beckhard, Richard and Reuben Harris. *Organizational Transitions: Managing Complex Change*. Second Edition. Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1987.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Report on Transformation 2011*. Ottawa: Chief of Transformation, 2011.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Headquarters Rationalization Report 2010*. Ottawa: Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, 2010.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Report on the Impact of Canadian Forces Transformation on Defence Strategic Enablers*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 5 September, 2007.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *A Report on the Validation of the Transformed Canadian Forces Command Structure*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 31 January 2007.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *CDS CF TRANSFORMATION SITREP 4*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 19 May 2006.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *CDS TRANSFORMATION SITREP 03/05*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, December 2005.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Concept of Operations: CF Strategic Command*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 14 November 2005.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *CDS Planning Guidance CF Transformation*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 10 November 2005.

Canada. Department of National Defence. 1950-9 (CT) *CDS Planning Guidance CF Transformation*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 18 October 2005.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *CDS TRANSFORMATION SITREP 02/05*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 16 September 2005.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *CDS TRANSFORMATION SITREP 01/05*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 6 July 2005.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Enabling Transformation: CDS Action Team 4 Report. Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Alignment*. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 6 July, 2005.

Canada. Government of Canada. *Canada's International Policy Statement, Defence: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*. Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2005.

Conley, Devon and Eric Ouellet. "The Canadian Forces and Military Transformation: An Elusive Quest for Efficiency." *Canadian Army Journal* 14, No. 1, Spring 2012.

English, Allan. "Outside CF Transformation Looking In." *Canadian Military Journal* 11, No. 2, 2011.

Gosselin, Daniel. "Hellyer's Ghosts: Unification of the Canadian Forces is 40 Years Old – Part One." *Canadian Military Journal* 9, No. 2, 2009.

Gosselin, Daniel. "Hellyer's Ghosts: Unification of the Canadian Forces is 40 Years Old – Part Two." *Canadian Military Journal* 9, No. 3, 2009.

Gosselin, Daniel and Craig Stone. "From Minister Hellyer to General Hillier: Understanding the Fundamental Differences Between the Unification of the Canadian Forces and its Present Transformation." *Canadian Military Journal* , Winter 2005-2006.

Hartfiel, Robert M. "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy and Planning, 1993-2004." *Canadian Public Administration* 53, 2010, 323-349.

Harvard Business Review. *HBR's 10 Must Reads On Change Management*. Boston: Harvard Business Review, 2011.

Hillier, Rick. *A Soldier First*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 2009.

Jeffery, Michael K. "Inside Canadian Forces Transformation." *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No. 2, 2010, 9-18.

Jeffery, Michael K. *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change*. Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009.

Kotter, John P. *A Sense of Urgency*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2008.

Kotter, John P. "Leading Change - Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Lagassé, Philippe. "A Mixed Legacy: General Hillier and Canadian Defence, 2005-2008." Paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference at Carleton University, 27 May 2009. http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2009/Lagass%C3%A9.pdf

Marten, Kimberly. “From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change.” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, No. 2, June 2010, 214-236.

Rostek, Michael. “Managing Change within DND.” In *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, edited by Craig Stone, 213-236. Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009.

Tushman, Michael L. and Charles A. O’Reilly. *Winning Through Innovation: A Practical Guide to Leading Organizational Change and Renewal*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1997.