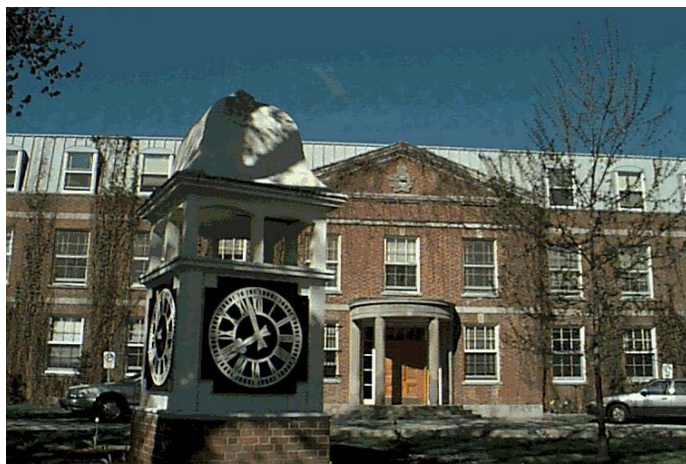


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RETHINKING THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL FOR THE CAF

WHERE DOES CJOC FIT?

Major V.G. Kirstein

JCSP 40

Exercice Solo Flight

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RETHINKING THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL FOR THE CAF

WHERE DOES CJOC FIT?

By Major V.G. Kirstein
Par le major V.G. Kirstein

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The roots of unsuccessful military outcomes can lie less in the planning methodologies used and more in the nature of the strategies they seek to execute.

- Adam Elkus and Crispin Burke, Operational Design: Promise and Problems

In 2004 LCol J.H. Vance, while a student at the Canadian Forces College, wrote on the impracticability of applying operational art to Canadian expeditionary operations, given the size of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the types of operations in which Canada gets involved.¹ Ten years and four promotions later, now LGen Vance will take command of CJOC, Canada's operational level headquarters.² The question then becomes, to steal a line that every Canadian soldier is taught to ask themselves from their basic training onwards, 'has the situation changed?' Does Canada need to continue working at the operational level, or was LGen Vance correct ten years ago?

In order to determine the answer to these questions, there are two areas that must be examined. Firstly, understanding what the operational level is and of what it is composed will allow for the determination of what exactly the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is trying to fit itself into. Secondly, exploring how the CAF takes strategic guidance and translates it into action will identify where the operational level fits into the CAF structure, with respect to domestic as well as expeditionary operations.

Examining these two topics will show that attempts by the CAF to adopt the operational level as a concept, and the subsequent work to implement campaign planning and the operational art are irrelevant and create confusion and redundant staff effort.

¹ LCol J. H. Vance, "Canada's Departure from the Classic Doctrine of Operational Art" (Advanced Military Studies Course, Canadian Forces College), 2.

² Government of Canada, "National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: Canadian Joint Operations Command," <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-org-structure/canadian-joint-operations-command.page> (accessed 04/23, 2014).

Canada's position as a 'middle' power precludes it from practicing operational art and efforts to work at the operational level take valuable resources away from what CJOC's primary role should be, specifically joint, interagency, and international integration into coalition, alliance and domestic operations at the tactical level.

THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

The operational level is a fairly recently created term, growing from the manoeuvre warfare movement in the United States following their failures in Vietnam, when they conducted an overhaul of their doctrine, looking back to historical successes and experience.³ The concept was inspired by historical examples of huge armies, that when they took the field required an idea larger than tactics to achieve state goals.⁴ There is no exact, agreed upon definition of what constitutes the operational level, but in the most simple of explanations, it is the grey area that falls between strategic guidance and objectives and tactical action, the element in the hierarchy falling below national policy and military strategy and above tactics. "This sequencing permit[s] an orderly and methodical transformation of strategic objectives to attainable and measurable tactical goals."⁵ In his paper, Vance divided the operational level into two separate, yet linked components: "operational art, consisting of campaign design and execution; and, the interfacing between the strategic and tactical levels."⁶ This division allows for the

³ Allan D. English and Canada. Department of National Defence, *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives : Context and Concepts* (Winnipeg: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2005), 33.

⁴ Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, "Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy," *Strategic Studies Institute*, September (2009), 11-13.

⁵ English and Canada. Department of National Defence, *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives : Context and Concepts*, 75.

⁶ Vance, *Canada's Departure from the Classic Doctrine of Operational Art*, 4.

examination of the two facets independently, and will later facilitate the identification of why neither component is applicable to the CAF.

Operational Art

The first element of operational level doctrine is operational art. Strategists and academics alike have studied operational art for centuries. Clausewitz, though never referring to the operational level, discussed the importance of using intellect or genius to see the bigger picture, and believed that high level commanders required this vision to be successful.⁷ This vision, the ability to organize tactical level battles or engagements into coherent campaigns, is the first element of operational level doctrine. “Practitioners of the operational art use theory and doctrine to dissect complex military problems and to develop and sequence campaigns.”⁸ The building, sequencing and executing of a campaign is the role of the operational level commander. Using that campaign to achieve strategic goals by linking together tactical operations is the second element of operational level doctrine.

Linking the Strategic and Tactical Levels

Operational doctrine refers to the requirement for operational level commanders to provide the link between the strategic and tactical levels. Canadian Forces Joint Publication 3.0: Operations states: “Plans and direction at this level link tactics with military strategy by establishing joint operational-level objectives that are necessary to

⁷ Antulio Joseph Echevarria, *Clausewitz and Contemporary War* (Oxford England ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 109.

⁸ English and Canada. Department of National Defence, *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives : Context and Concepts*, 78.

achieve strategic-level objectives.”⁹ This link stems from pre-WWI when “the need to coordinate multiple blows distributed across time and space but supporting a single unifying idea broadened the understanding of the campaign . . . and created the special meaning of operation that we retain today.”¹⁰ Here the concept of campaigning took shape and the operational level fell neatly between the art of the battle at the tactical level, and the art of war at the strategic level.¹¹ There are many differing viewpoints as to the applicability of this link, ranging from it being obvious and required, to having outlived its usefulness,¹² to it being a flawed concept entirely¹³.

The building, sequencing and conduct of campaigns and then using these campaigns to link tactical battles to strategic ends are the two separate elements of operational level doctrine. The next section will examine how the operational level, constructed of these two elements, is not applicable to the CAF and why.

THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN THE CAF

Based on the discussion above, there is no agreement in military or academic circles on the validity of the operational level. The CAF has chosen to adopt the process, so for the purpose of this argument, the validity of the concept is irrelevant, the important question is, is the operational level actually applicable to the CAF? LGen Vance put it very succinctly when he stated, “Canada has no chance of exercising pure operational

⁹ Department of National Defence, *B-GL-005-300/FP-001 CFJP 3.0 Operations*, 2010), 1-2.

¹⁰ Kelly and Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy*, 20.

¹¹ B. J. C. McKercher and Michael A. Hennessy, *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), 7.

¹² English and Canada. Department of National Defence, *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives : Context and Concepts*, 78.

¹³ Kelly and Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy*, 86.

level action external to the country.”¹⁴ Additionally, “Canada’s military has never been deployed on expeditionary action without operating as part of an alliance or coalition.”¹⁵ This has always been the case, and will continue to be so without a massive increase in the size and capability of the CAF and major changes to Canadian foreign policy, two very unlikely propositions.

Dividing the operational level into its two elements, campaign design and linking the strategic and tactical levels allows for a clearer identification of why the CAF’s attempt to operate at the operational level is pointless at best, and often counterproductive.

Arguments in Support of a Standing Operational Level Headquarters

Advocates of a standing operational level headquarters within the CAF point to three critical tasks or missions that they feel are enhanced or enabled by such a headquarters. These are: the more effective conduct of operations¹⁶, specifically with our allies; the capacity to command expeditionary operations¹⁷, both unilaterally and as part of a coalition; and, the ability to effectively conduct domestic operations.¹⁸ Each of these will be addressed individually in the following sections, highlighting how having an operational level headquarters is either not required for some and can be detrimental for others.

¹⁴ Vance, *Canada's Departure from the Classic Doctrine of Operational Art*, 6.

¹⁵ Katie Domansky, Rebecca Jensen and Rachael Bryson, "Canada and the Libya Coalition," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14, no. 3 & 4 (2012), 13.

¹⁶ MGen Daniel Gosselin, "Hellyer's Ghosts: Unification of the Canadian Forces is 40 Years Old - Part One," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009), 12.

¹⁷ Colonel Chris L. Little, "Mason Crabbe - Worth another Look?" (Advanced Military Studies Course, Canadian Forces College), 29.

¹⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel C. F. Wohlgemuth, "An Analysis of Domestic Operations: Is it Time for a Single National Joint Task Force Headquarters?" (Advanced Military Studies Course, Canadian Forces College), 2.

Operational Art in the CAF

Above, operational art was defined as the ability to organize tactical level battles or engagements into coherent campaigns. The CAF devotes significant resources to training officers on how to conduct operational planning, with the Canadian Army Command and Staff College training captains on the Army Operations Course in the process, and the Canadian Forces College devoting a significant portion of the Joint Command and Staff Program to training majors and naval lieutenant commanders to conduct campaign planning at the operational level. In recent memory the CAF have had numerous officers who have distinguished themselves as outstanding operational level commanders. These include MGen Gauthier in Yugoslavia, BGen Gagnon in Haiti, LGen Hillier in Afghanistan¹⁹, and most recently LGen Bouchard in Libya. All these generals performed admirably at the operational level, however there are two key points to note as they refer to the requirement for a standing operational level headquarters for the CAF. Firstly, they were tasked as commanders for these operations, rather than coming as an already formed standing operational level headquarters. Secondly, as will be discussed further below, they were not translating national strategy into tactical action, but rather working under the strategic command of an international alliance, organization or coalition. These two factors call into question the validity of having a standing operational level headquarters, dedicated to doing tasks that the CAF does not require it to do.

¹⁹ LCol J. F. Riffou, "Cultivating Operational Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Arumentation for Filling the Doctrinal Vacuum" (Advanced Military Studies Course, Canadian Forces College), 4.

Linking the Strategic and Tactical Levels

Operational level doctrine is based on the requirement to link the tactical operations of a campaign to national goals and desired ends. For the CAF, this would involve designing a campaign to link the tactical operations in the theatre of operations to meet the goals of the government of Canada. Based on the current CAF organization, strategic goals or policies are passed to CJOC via the Strategic Joint Staff, where a campaign plan for the operation to be conducted is designed, along with the accompanying troop and resource requirements for the operation. Then the tactical level forces are assembled and deployed, with the deployed commander under the command of CJOC. It is here where the problems with applying the operational level within the CAF arise. Canadian operations in Kandahar are an excellent example of how conflicts and confusion can occur by the CAF producing its own campaign plan and trying to execute it as part of a multi-national operation.

Canada in Kandahar

Dr. Howard Coombs and LGen Gauthier explain that operations in Kandahar “gave Canada’s military a unique opportunity to practice operational art to a degree not previously seen in its military history.”²⁰ They explain that the Canadian government provided clear strategic direction and oversight to the forces in Kandahar, with clear measures of effectiveness to be achieved. The newly created Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM), as the operational level headquarters for the CAF, was responsible for taking the direction provided from the weekly cabinet meetings and

²⁰ Emily Spencer and Bernd Horn, *No Easy Task: Fighting in Afghanistan* (Toronto, ON: Dundurn, 2012), 106.

converting it into tactical action on the ground. CEFCOM's campaign plan for Afghanistan was designed to achieve "a series of operational objectives flowing from Canada's overarching strategic objectives for the mission."²¹ While this may have appeared to work well from a Canadian perspective, the problem with aligning the Canadian campaign plan with Canadian strategic goals is the lack of alignment with the overall theatre strategy. When General McChrystal took over command of ISAF, as the theatre operational commander he was forced to try to align the efforts of all the various troop contributing nations with the ISAF campaign.²² "Inconsistency in strategy at the international and national (Canadian) levels, such as strategies for the rule of law sector, impeded progress in security, governance, reconstruction and development."²³ In essence, McChrystal's subordinate commanders were following national campaigns, rather than a unified ISAF effort. This results from Canada and other nations trying to apply national strategy through a national operational headquarters in a coalition operation. In the example of Afghanistan, the campaign planning of the CAF operational level headquarters, CEFCOM at this time, was detrimental to the mission, rather than beneficial.

Disconnected Campaigns – The British in Basra

Another example of how having a national level operational headquarters can negatively affect theatre campaigns was the British experience in Basra, Iraq. Following

²¹ Ibid., 113.

²² Rudra Chaudhuri and Theo Farrell, "Campaign Disconnect: Operational Progress and Strategic Obstacles in Afghanistan, 2009-2011," *International Affairs* 87, no. 2 (2011), 275.

²³ Kimberly Unterganschnigg, "Canada's Whole of Government Mission in Afghanistan - Lessons Learned," *Canadian Military Journal* 13, no. 2 (2013), 10.

the extremely successful invasion of Iraq in 2003, the British forces were hampered by their operational level headquarters, the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), with conflicting direction from PJHQ and the Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I) Headquarters in Baghdad. In terms of strategic planning, the Americans developed the initial plan and expected the British would follow it.²⁴ Thus, the Americans did not concern themselves with the British operations, “the assumption was they would manage and fund their own region.”²⁵ The problem became that PJHQ was not clearly representing the tactical situation on the ground to the strategic commanders and government in Britain, and the resources required were not provided due to this lack of understanding of the situation on the ground.²⁶ The units at the tactical level did not follow MNF-I guidelines, and had difficulty achieving missions, often due to resource constraints.²⁷ In Basra, the failure of the British to curtail the rise of the Shi’a gangs²⁸ due to a lack of manpower and pressure from Britain to hand over the security of Basra to the Iraqi forces prevented success on the ground²⁹ and “at the end of 2007 they pulled out of Basra completely – just as General Petraeus was doing the opposite in Baghdad.”³⁰ The influence on British operations in Iraq by PJHQ created a divergence from the MNF-I direction, with the negative result being a disjointed campaign and ultimately resulting in Operation Charge of the Knights (CotK) being executed to retake the city of Basra.

²⁴ James K. Wither, "Basra's Not Belfast: The British Army, 'Small Wars' and Iraq," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 20, no. 3-4 (2009), 612.

²⁵ David H. Ucko, "Lessons from Basra: The Future of British Counter-Insurgency," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 52, no. 4 (2010), 136.

²⁶ Daniel Marston, "Adaptation in the Field: The British Army's Difficult Campaign in Iraq," *Security Challenges* 6, no. 1 (2010), 73.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 73-76.

²⁸ Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 32-34.

²⁹ Wither, *Basra's Not Belfast: The British Army, 'Small Wars' and Iraq*, 624.

³⁰ Stephen Grey, "Retreat from Basra - Learning the Lessons," <http://www.stephengrey.com/2009/09/retreat-from-basra-learning-the-lessons/> (accessed 5/2, 2014).

“The decisions taken in Whitehall in 2006 and 2007 promoting Provincial Iraqi Control and handover . . . were not linked to the eventual success of the CotK; . . . In some significant ways, they were two different campaigns.”³¹ The British were guilty of committing the same mistake that Canada and others made in Afghanistan, allowing a national operational level headquarters to create a campaign plan that diverged from the one in theatre, leading to a disjointed theatre campaign. Had the British, as the junior partner in the operation, allowed the US to design and execute the campaign for the entire region, or participated in a joint operational headquarters, the campaign would have been much clearer and easier to execute at the tactical level.

Contribution Warfare

In his paper, Gen Vance coined the phrase ‘contribution warfare’, where the act of contributing forces to an operation is the strategic end state. “In over one hundred years of ‘contribution warfare,’ *shared* strategic objectives must have been coincidentally so close to Canada’s own self interests that the mere presence of Canadian tactical forces . . . is all it took to meet Canada’s strategic objectives.”³² Thus, with simply contributing forces, Canada’s strategic goals have been met, and there is no requirement for a Canadian operational level headquarters to link the strategic to the tactical level, the tactics will be coordinated by the theatre operational level. Any attempt by a national operational headquarters to influence tactical operations can cause confusion at the other levels.

³¹ Marston, *Adaptation in the Field: The British Army's Difficult Campaign in Iraq*, 81.

³² Vance, *Canada's Departure from the Classic Doctrine of Operational Art*, 18.

Success in Contribution Warfare – Australia in Iraq

An excellent example of how contribution warfare can be successfully conducted was the Australia participation in the 2003 Iraq War. Australia, often compared to Canada, with Australia having a smaller population but a similar economy, and slightly higher military spending “has always gone to war as a member of a coalition, and then always as a junior partner.”³³ And, much like Canada, Australia relies on the United States to ensure their overall defence.³⁴ Australia had no specific strategic goals with respect to Iraq, their strategic end had everything to do with maintaining and strengthening their relationship with the United States.³⁵ With their strategic goals being met by their contribution of forces and operational command being provided by the coalition, there was no requirement for Australia to provide campaign design or link strategic goals to tactical action.

In this example, Australian strategic ends were different from the US goals in Iraq. In his article in the *Infinity Journal*, Albert Palazzo outlines several key ways that a junior coalition partner can achieve strategic ends that differ from that of the senior partner. Key among them are the compatibility of the strategic objectives between the two partners, and the understanding of both sides of these goals. Also important to note, Palazzo highlights that the “forces a junior partner provides to a coalition must be capable of performing their assigned task. This is more important than the size of the contribution.”³⁶ In order to maintain public support at home, the Australian government

³³ Albert Palazzo, "The Making of Strategy and the Junior Coalition Partner: Australia and the 2003 Iraq War," *Infinity Journal* Volume 2, no. Issue No. 4, Fall 2012 (2012), 27.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

imposed one strategic constraint, the requirement to minimize casualties. With both the US and Australian governments understanding the strategic goals, they both were able to achieve them. This success in ‘contribution warfare’ demonstrates how it can be effective, and highlights the lack of the requirement for a standing national operational headquarters for the junior partner.

Canadian Command in Libya

The Canadian Government understands how strategic goals can be achieved simply by providing forces to a coalition. A perfect example is the Canadian participation in operations during the intervention in Libya in 2011. Canada had no real strategic goals in Libya, and though the mission was explained to Canadians as a humanitarian mission, it was clear “that ‘alliance tending’ was a motivational factor for Canada’s early involvement”³⁷ in the campaign. The element of the Libya mission that applies the most to the operational level as it pertains to Canada is the fact that a Canadian commanded the mission. LGen Charles Bouchard was the operational level commander and responsible for the design of the campaign. Those who support maintaining an operational level headquarters in Canada will argue that it is clear that this justifies the requirement to have such a headquarters in order to maintain Canada’s ability to command such operations. There are several reasons this is not the case. Firstly, Canada’s strategic goals were achieved simply by contributing to the coalition; there was no requirement to link tactical actions on the ground through a Canadian campaign, because there was no Canadian campaign, as this was a NATO mission. Secondly, this

³⁷ Domansky, Jensen and Bryson, *Canada and the Libya Coalition*, 23.

argument would gain validity if LGen Bouchard had come from CJOC, or even 1 Canadian Division, and brought the CAF operational headquarters with him to design the campaign. However, this was not the case. LGen Bouchard came from the already established Allied Joint Force Command Naples, a NATO operational level headquarters which reports to NATO and Supreme Allied Commander Europe.³⁸ Thus, even with a permanent Canadian operational level headquarters, when a Canadian takes command of a campaign there is no operational level planning that occurs within the CAF.

Canadian Contributions in Ukraine

The situation in the Ukraine which is continuing to develop is another example which supports the idea of contribution warfare. As of 4 May 2014, Canada had contributed six CF-18s and HMCS Regina to an as yet undefined mission. The commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, LGen Yvan Blondin, stated to CBC News: “There is a lot of uncertainty about what we're going to be doing over there . . . We're not sure how long we're going to be staying, but we'll be staying until the government tells us it's time to come back.”³⁹ This statement demonstrates that the contribution to the effort in the Ukraine is not based on a Canadian campaign under Canadian operational command, but based on the Canadian strategic goal of supporting alliances and thus does not require a Canadian campaign plan or a CAF operational level headquarters to design one. The strategic goal has been achieved simply by the deployment; the campaign will be designed by someone else, NATO in this case.

³⁸ CTV News Staff, "Canadian to Command NATO Mission in Libya," <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canadian-to-command-nato-mission-in-libya-1.623209> (accessed 02/05, 2014).

³⁹ Hannah Thibedeau, "CF-18s Head to Romania Amid 'Uncertainty' about NATO Mission," CBC News, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/cf-18s-head-to-romania-amid-uncertainty-about-nato-mission-1.2625727> (accessed 05/04, 2014).

Domestic Operations

The examples provided up to this point have demonstrated that the CAF has no requirement for a permanent operational level headquarters to conduct expeditionary operations. In Gen Vance's paper, he referred exclusively to expeditionary operations, stating that "Canada has no chance of exercising pure operational level action external to the country"⁴⁰, never discussing domestic operations. The dynamic for domestic operations is completely different from expeditionary missions. There are no coalitions or alliances to control the operational level campaign planning for the CAF at home, and within Canada there is clearly a greater strategic interest than there is for external operations.

Four of the six missions assigned to the CAF in the Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS) are focused on domestic operations. These are to conduct daily sovereignty operations in Canada and throughout North America, in the Arctic and with NORAD; support major events in Canada; respond to major terrorist attacks; and support other government agencies during crisis in Canada.⁴¹ However, much like in international operations where the CAF deploys as a member of an alliance or a coalition as the junior partner, in the domestic operations listed in the CFDS, the CAF is a supporting partner rather than the lead. In expeditionary operations, this is based on the capability of the CAF and the policies of the organizations and alliances that Canada is a member of. "In domestic operations, DND and the CF play a supporting role to, and only at the request of, federal, provincial/territorial or municipal lead civil authorities, with the exception of

⁴⁰ Vance, *Canada's Departure from the Classic Doctrine of Operational Art*, 6.

⁴¹ Government of Canada, "Canada First Defence Strategy," <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about/canada-first-defence-strategy.page> (accessed 05/04, 2014).

the defence of Canada role.”⁴² Thus, for any of these operations, less defending Canada, another government agency will design the campaign plan and the DND and CAF will provide tactical level support, again precluding the requirement for the CAF to maintain an operational level headquarters. An example of the detrimental impact caused by imposing an operational level headquarters into or on top of a command and control structure occurred during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. While the operation was considered a resounding success based on the overall results, the post-operation lessons learned report identified issues that resulted from imposing Canada Command, the domestic operational level headquarters at that time, into the command and control structure. The report highlighted confusion in the reporting and approval chain, as well as a “lack of ‘Strategic Consistency’ between Canada Command and NORAD.”⁴³ These issues were caused by the imposition of a CAF operational level headquarters who, simply based on the structure of the CAF, confused the chain of command by their presence. While Canada Command has now been absorbed into CJOC, the principle remains valid.

The only campaign that would realistically require a standing CAF operational level headquarters to conduct is the defence of Canada, a mission that is only indirectly referred to in the CFDS⁴⁴, and then caveated with the requirement to be an effective

⁴² Department of National Defence, *B-GL-005-300/FP-001 CFJP 3.0 Operations*, 7-1.

⁴³ Canada. Department of National Defence, Canada Command, *Canadian Special Security Event (CSSEO Lessons Learned Staff Action Directive)*(Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2011), A-5-6.

⁴⁴ Government of Canada, *Canada First Defence Strategy*

partner with the United States as part of the defence of North America as Canada cannot realistically defend itself unilaterally.⁴⁵

Does Canada Need an Operational Level Headquarters?

In the 1990s the CAF arbitrarily adopted the concept of operational art from the United States.⁴⁶ As the examples above indicate, although campaigns must be planned and strategic goals be attained, for Canada this is not achieved by a standing operational level headquarters, and in fact, such an organization can be detrimental to the success of operations. This must not be a case of ‘our allies have an operational level headquarters, so we need one too’ for the CAF. As Canada invests in alliances such as NATO to reduce the burden they must bear for defence, the CAF can do the same with operational level headquarters. The CAF can create as much or more influence on campaign design by ensuring that they are represented in the operational level headquarters of Canada’s allies and the alliances, organizations that Canada is a member of, with a more coherent final product. This is reflected in current CAF doctrine, when referring to joint operations states “military success is best achieved through a coordinated approach under a unified command structure.”⁴⁷ Imposing an additional level of command which is outside the ‘unified command structure’, whether for expeditionary or domestic operations, impedes that success. Thus, there is no requirement for the CAF to have an operational level headquarters. “The challenge . . . is not to focus on developing better operational level functionality, but to perfect (and accept) the strategic link to Canadian

⁴⁵ Richard N. H. Dickson, "Operational Art in a Middle-Power Context: A Canadian Perspective" (Advanced Military Studies, United States Army and General Staff College), 36.

⁴⁶ English and Canada. Department of National Defence, *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives : Context and Concepts*, 31.

⁴⁷ Department of National Defence, *B-GL-005-300/FP-001 CFJP 3.0 Operations*, 1-3.

tactical forces such that the operational level function ceases to be an impediment in the Canadian context.”⁴⁸ Eliminating the operational level functions of CJOC and investing in more appropriate operational level headquarters, internationally and domestically would be the most effective way of achieving this.

What Should CJOC do if it isn't the CAF's Operational Level Headquarters?

When LGen Vance takes over CJOC this summer, he will be facing a number of challenges. The end of the mission in Afghanistan and integrating the lessons learned from it will require a significant amount of joint integration. The current fiscal environment and the expected cuts to government departments, including DND, will need to be navigated, and the uncertainty of the global security situation must be understood and prepared for. Taking into account that the majority of future conflicts will occur in failed or failing states with the assortment of driving factors that motivate them, there will rarely be a solely military solution to these expeditionary crisis.⁴⁹ When there is a threat of larger scale, more conventional war, such as the 2014 Ukraine crisis, there are alliances to react. If, as explained, CJOC has no requirement to try to function at the operational level, what then should they focus on? While fully developing the role of CJOC is certainly outside the scope of this paper, a quick glance will help focus further study.

CJOC's current mission statement states that it “anticipates, prepares for and conducts operations – to defend Canada, to assist in the defence of North America, and,

⁴⁸ Vance, *Canada's Departure from the Classic Doctrine of Operational Art*, 26.

⁴⁹ Peter Gizewski and Michael Rostek, "Toward a JIMP-Capable Land Force," *Canadian Army Journal* 10, no. 1 (2007), 55.

as directed, to promote peace and security abroad.”⁵⁰ Based on the facts presented previously, CJOC does none of these things, at least not directly in the way they are presented. The anticipation function is a strategic level task, where the Canadian government determines where the CAF will deploy⁵¹. The Ukraine crisis is a perfect example of how the CAF reacts to government commitments to expeditionary operations. For domestic operations, it is other government departments responsible for anticipating operations, with the exception of a crisis, natural or manmade, which is beyond the scope of anyone to anticipate, and the response will be reactionary. CJOC can prepare for operations, but as already explained in detail, this preparation is not in the planning of a campaign, but rather in the preparation of resources to deploy or utilize. Finally, CJOC should not directly conduct operations. The CAF will provide soldiers to a coalition or organization for expeditionary operations, which may or may not be commanded by a Canadian, but CJOC should not directly control them in order to avoid the confusion seen in Kandahar or Basra. The same is true for domestic operations where a joint task force commander will be supporting another government department.

A more realistic and effective mission statement could be ‘CJOC coordinates, integrates and supports CAF operations’. As illustrated in each expeditionary example presented, coordination with allies is critical to ensure that a common understanding of the mission is achieved. CJOC should be responsible for ensuring that our allies and alliances understand the capabilities and limitations of the element of the CAF deployed, as well as any strategic restrictions with which they deploy. Similarly, during domestic

⁵⁰ Government of Canada, *National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: Canadian Joint Operations Command*

⁵¹ Hugh Segal and Jessica Y. McLean, "Exigencies of Future Deployments: What Canada must Exact from its Military Partners," *Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute* (2013), 4.

operations, coordinating with other government departments to ensure common understanding of the same elements is critical.

Command and control of joint operations within the CAF, that is operations which require the participation of two or more of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, has historically been difficult, based on culture and the nature of the operations conducted by each.⁵² Integrating the services, both for operations and on a day to day basis, should be one of CJOCs critical tasks.

Supporting operations, including the deployment and redeployment, is the third key function that CJOC should conduct. This will be based on the coordination with the operational commander, be it domestic or expeditionary, and then the integration of the services to ensure that the strategic and tactical lift is coordinated in a logical fashion. Prior to operations, it is critical that the forces deployed are suitable and capable of achieving their assigned tasks. Given the nature of ‘contribution warfare’, “since the forces are not actually expected to accomplish anything, it makes no sense to provide them with anything but the bare minimum of resources, or to maintain them at anything but the lowest level of capability.”⁵³ This is quite contradictory to Palazzo’s assertions that quality is more important than quantity.⁵⁴ It falls to CJOC to ensure that deployed forces have the capabilities required, through the integration of the force and coordination with the lead organization or nation, likely with the Canadian officers in these operational level headquarters. During operations, providing the national level logistical support to

⁵² Allan D. English and Canadian Defence Academy, *The Operational Art : Canadian Perspectives : Leadership and Command* (Kingston ; Winnipeg: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2006), 1-3.

⁵³ Dickson, *Operational Art in a Middle-Power Context: A Canadian Perspective*, 37-38.

⁵⁴ Palazzo, *The Making of Strategy and the Junior Coalition Partner: Australia and the 2003 Iraq War*, 28.

CAF elements from a centralized headquarters ensures that appropriate equipment and supplies are available when they are needed.

CONCLUSION

So, to answer the originally posed question, ‘has the situation changed?’, the answer is no, it hasn’t changed, in fact, it has never changed. Someone else, both during domestic and expeditionary operations, plans and controls the campaigns that Canada participates in. This is the case even when a Canadian is the operational level commander on an expeditionary operation. Attempting to have a standing operational level headquarters in the CAF results in a lack of coordination and an unclear command and control structure for operations. Canada needs to accept the reality that they will be a ‘junior partner’ or the ‘supporting force’ for operations. “A nation such as Canada has never gone to war in its own national interests”.⁵⁵ It is critical that both Canada and its partners understand the Canadian strategic goals, and that the CAF provides capable forces to achieve the tactical missions they are assigned. In order to ensure that Canada achieves its strategic ends, it needs to ensure that it has officers that understand the operational level and embed them into these operational level headquarters that will plan the campaigns. Participation in UN, NATO and allied headquarters is the means to achieve this and eliminates the confusion caused and redundancy created by trying to maintain an operational level headquarters internal to the CAF.

Not having an operational level headquarters does not preclude Canada from commanding international operations, as seen in Libya, Afghanistan, and Haiti. Each of

⁵⁵ J. L. Granatstein, "Can Canada have a Grand Strategy?" *Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute* (2011), 2.

these missions, and the others which the CAF have participated in the past century have been as part of a NATO, UN or other coalition operation, and the operational level headquarters for these operations belonged to that organization. Canada's participation in the headquarters of our allies, specifically the US, as well as NATO and UN headquarters provide the CAF a much more effective forum to ensure that Canada's strategic goals are met with the successful employment of soldiers, sailors and airmen and women domestically and internationally.

Having an operational level headquarters has no impact on the achievement of the strategic aims of Canada when they are met with the deployment of our soldiers, the process of 'contribution warfare'. In reality, such a headquarters limits the effectiveness of Canadian forces and undermines the coherence of the operations they conduct. If CJOCC were to focus on the coordination, integration and support of the CAF while on operations, the effectiveness of the operations would be increased.

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