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RESOLVING SOF INEFFICIENCIES WITHIN 1 CAD

Maj L.H.J. Clifford

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AIM

1. The aim of this service paper is to investigate the benefits of establishing a dedicated Senior Staff Officer (SSO) position for Special Operations Forces (SOF) within 1 Canadian Air Division's (1 CAD) Directorate of Fleet Readiness (Dir Fleet Rdns). This position will aid in resolving staffing inefficiencies and communication breakdowns between the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) and 1 CAD while streamlining oversight of SOF employment of Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) aerospace assets.

INTRODUCTION

2. Since the establishment of the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command in 2006, the Royal Canadian Air Force has experienced a steady increase of requests for air effects from the SOF community and this trend is expected to increase in years to come.¹ CANSOFCOM's mission is to provide the Government of Canada (GC) with "agile, high-readiness SOF capable of conducting special operations across the spectrum of conflict at home and abroad."² Airpower is vital for the success of CANSOFCOM's mission; RCAF aerospace platforms are highly mobile and are able to respond on short notice, providing the reach, stealth, and firepower that enables SOF operations. The increase of CANSOFCOM's reliance on RCAF assets has increased the complexity of operations necessitating the establishment of a dedicated coordinating entity between CANSOFCOM HQ and 1 Canadian Air Divisions. This position should reside within the Directorate of Fleet Readiness in order to effectively coordinate SOF airpower requirements associated with residual responsibilities.

¹ Major Len Clifford, telephone conversation with LCol C. Morrison (SSO Tac Avn, 1 CAD), 1 Feb, 2016.

² Department of National Defence, A-GA-007-000/AF001, Air Force Vectors (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2014), 16.

3. This paper will examine the importance of centralizing RCAF aerospace readiness support to CANSOFCOM, detail the inefficiencies of the current 1 CAD structure, and provide recommendations that will rectify known inefficiencies within this joint operating environment.

DISCUSSION

Background

4. When the RCAF transfers Operational Command (OPCOM) of aerospace assets to a Force Employer (FE), the Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division retains the role of Senior Air Advisor to the force employment commander.³ As the Senior Air Advisor, the Commander of 1 CAD also retains the responsibilities for administrative and technical issues that are commonly referred to as residual authorities and/or responsibilities for all Canadian Forces (CF) aerospace assets.⁴

5. In 2005, anticipating that the newly formed SOF Command would require integral air support to meet its high readiness requirements, the Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) directed the Royal Canadian Air Force to transfer Operational Command (OPCOM) of 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron (THS) to the Commander of CANSOFCOM effective February 2006.

6. The Transfer of Command Authority (TOCA) of 427 THS to CANSOFCOM provided a baseline concept of what functions were to be absorbed by the gaining organization (CANSOFCOM) and the residual responsibilities that would remain with the Royal Canadian Air Force. The residual responsibilities retained by the RCAF include: approval authority for

³ Department of National Defence. B-GA-401-000/FP001, Canadian Force Aerospace Command Doctrine. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2012), 27.

⁴ Steve Lucas, Chief of the Air Staff, Transfer of Command Authority – 427 Squadron, (NDHQ Ottawa: file 3010-1(D Air SP), 27 January 2006), 2.

RCAF air doctrine; flight safety matters; operational airworthiness regarding operational procedures; aircrew training and standards; aircraft maintenance policy coupled with aircraft specific logistics; and finally personnel management of Air Force personnel.⁵ Over the past 10 years, some of these residual responsibilities have become contentious resulting in tension between CANSOFCOM and the RCAF. These issues need to be resolved in order to effectively operate at a joint level.

Areas of Concern

7. CANSOFCOM HQ has established a Joint Operations Air (J3 Air) staff position within its headquarters to coordinate air effects with the RCAF. When CANSOFCOM requires aerospace support involving residual responsibilities, the CANSOFCOM J3 Air coordinates with 1 Canadian Air Division through the respective fleet's Senior Staff Officer (Jet, Helicopter, or Transport). CANSOFCOM conducts domestic and expeditionary operations employing most RCAF platforms. Unfortunately, 1 CAD currently does not have a dedicated SSO SOF, and as a result requires the CANSOFCOM J3 Air staff to coordinate requirements with multiple entities within 1 Canadian Air Division.

8. When CANSOFCOM force employs \ air assets, it often incorporates technologies and procedures not previously employed by conventional forces. The Senior Staff Officers within the Directorate of Fleet Readiness are responsible to inform the 1 CAD Commander through the Director of Fleet Readiness of airworthiness concerns regarding new technology, training, or procedures for each SSOs assigned fleet. As a result, multiple sections heads within the Dir Fleet Rdns report on fleet specific airworthiness concerns involving SOF. This process effectively dilutes the 1 CAD Commanders awareness of the overall SOF employment of RCAF assets.

⁵ Ibid., Annex A, 5-6, 14-17.

With CANSOFCOM's frequent employment of multiple RCAF air assets, airworthiness concerns overlap across aircraft fleets, resulting in concerns being overlooked or even duplicated in some instances.⁶

9. CANSOFCOM's mandate requires it to deploy its forces on short notice with a high level of secrecy regarding its missions. As a result, there is often a lag in notification and information being provided to the Commander of 1 CAD; Therefore, at times, creating great confusion and frustration.⁷ As the Senior Air Advisor, the Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division retains all residual responsibilities and authorities over the air assets employed by CANSOFCOM. There is a requirement for reliable communication between CANSOFCOM and 1 CAD in order to address the residual responsibilities during deployed operations. The current staffing structure at 1 Canadian Air Division's Directorate of Fleet Readiness does not provide a consistent overview of CANSOFCOM's aviation requirements, fostering friction between the two organizations.

Areas of Contention

10. Doctrine. Senior Staff Officers at 1 Canadian Air Division currently coordinate fleet specific aerospace doctrine and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) with the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre (CFAWC) in Trenton, Ontario. Current doctrine stipulates that "RCAF doctrine and TTPs will need to keep pace with the evolving SOF employment concept."⁸ Under the current construct, RCAF doctrine and TTP development for SOF operations is not coordinated efficiently as it is fleet specific. For example, when SOF procures new equipment, the doctrine and TTP's should be updated across the entire RCAF prior to employment of the

⁶ Major Len Clifford, telephone conversation with LCol C. Morrison (SSO Tac Avn, 1 CAD), 1 Feb, 2016.

⁷ Major Len Clifford, telephone conversation with LCol C. Morrison (SSO Tac Avn, 1 CAD), 1 Feb, 2016.

⁸ Department of National Defence, A-GA-007-000/AF001, Air Force Vectors (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2014), 20.

new piece of equipment. In order to keep pace with SOF doctrine and TTPs, a dedicated representative from 1 CAD should ensure that SOF TTP requirements are coordinated across all RCAF fleets.

11 Flight Safety. The Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division is responsible for the flight safety of RCAF assets on behalf of the Commander of the RCAF. 1 CAD has a robust flight safety program that monitors flight safety incidents and advises the 1 CAD Commander on fleet specific incidents and trends. The problem with the current reporting process, is that flight safety incidents specific to SOF are not being tracked within 1 CAD, nor are they being collated in order to identify flight safety trends specific to SOF operations. In order to establish consistent reporting for SOF flight safety occurrences on RCAF assets, it is imperative that all flight safety incidents involving SOF employment be collated through a dedicated individual in order to provide both the Commanders of CANSOFCOM and 1 CAD with a detailed trend analysis of flight safety occurrences.

12. Capability Deficiencies. CANSOFCOM regularly reviews and pursues new capabilities to ensure technological overmatch in order to effectively conduct its mission.⁹ When technology advancements and procurement involves specific capabilities for RCAF aircraft, a Statement of Capability Deficiency (SOCD) is drafted by CANSOFCOM staff in conjunction with the specific fleets 1 CAD representative. Frequently, SSOs do not understand the significance of the deficiency being addressed when it comes to the prioritization of SOF SOCDs within their respective fleets. Appointing an individual responsible for the prioritization of SOF Capability

⁹ Defence Acquisition Guide, “Canadian Special Operations Forces Command Force Development 2015,” Last Accessed 2 February 2016, Available Here.

Deficiencies within 1 CAD would streamline the endorsement and procurement process, allowing for effective coordination of SOF projects within the RCAF.

13. Test and Evaluation Coordination. When a new piece of equipment is procured or a new procedure is required for SOF operations involving an RCAF aerospace asset, Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E) must be conducted. This type of testing can often require several RCAF fleets to be involved in order to thoroughly validate the device or procedure. These multi-fleet projects are often established and coordinated separately requiring multiple testing evolutions with an overall increase in cost associated with operational testing. The implementation of a central coordinating OT&E representative for multi-fleet SOF trials at 1 Canadian Air Division would significantly increase the speed at which OT&E can be conducted for multi-fleet projects, and decrease the overall cost for SOF Operational Test and Evaluation. This position and capability would also simplify the coordination that is required between CANSOFCOM, 1 CAD and the Air Force Test and Evaluation Coordination (AFTEC) organization in Ottawa Ontario.

14. Operational Risk. The RCAF provides airpower to SOF founded on a robust air-worthiness and safety framework.¹⁰ Senior Staff Officers within 1 Canadian Air Division frequently advise the Commanders of CANSOFCOM and 1 Canadian Air Division on the operational risks associated with conducting Special Operations Aviation (SOA) profiles on RCAF aerospace platforms. Current risk mitigation boards employ a myriad of aviation professionals who assess the potential operational risk. These boards should also include an individual from 1 CAD who represents the SOF element in order to bring an overall context to the mission set which is being assessed. The risks associated with SOA profiles are frequently

¹⁰ Department of National Defence, A-GA-007-000/AF001, Air Force Vectors (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2014), 44.

assessed at higher risk levels than they realistically should be.¹¹ This is a direct result of individual members of the board not fully understanding the SOA profiles or tasks being assessed.¹² Having a SOF aviation representative on the board, who understands the risk mitigation process, and is able to explain SOA manoeuvres in better context to the board members will enhance member's understanding and their ability to make recommendations. This initiative will deliver a detailed risk assessment for the Commanders of CANSOFCOM and 1 Canadian Air Division, increasing the overall accuracy and effectiveness of their decision making.

15. Training and Standards. The effective application of Special Operations Aviation demands specific training and the maintenance of high standards. Currently, pilot training and standards are managed by fleet specific Standard Manoeuvre Manuals (SMM) and Pilot Training Plans (PTP). As the RCAF increases the application of SOA, there is a requirement to ensure that SOF mission sets are monitored and coordinated through a single position within 1 CAD. This coordinating position will allow for effective oversight of specialized training between RCAF fleets and provide the Commander of 1 CAD an overall understanding of SOA training requirements.

16. Readiness. The Canadian Government's increased employment of SOF assets over the last decade has resulted in a surge in CANSOFCOM's requirement for air capabilities in order to meet high readiness needs.¹³ An increased demand for airpower has generated a requirement to coordinate the Yearly Flying Rates (YFR) allocated to CANSOFCOM. 427 Special Operation

¹¹ Major Len Clifford, telephone conversation with LCol C. Morrison (SSO Tac Avn, 1 CAD), 1 Feb, 2016.

¹² Major Len Clifford, telephone conversation with Major S. Riff (DCO 427 SOAS), 2 Feb, 2016.

¹³ Department of National Defence, A-GA-007-000/AF001, Air Force Vectors (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2014), 51.

Aviation Squadron (SOAS) has an allocated YFR, but 1 CAD does not have a dedicated YFR planner for CANSOFCOM aviation requirements. CANSOFCOM requests for effects are solely approved based on aircraft availability. When the yearly allocation of YFR is calculated, it consistently does not take into consideration SOF training requirements. In addition to the dedicated YFR allocated to 427 SOAS, there is a necessity to allocate fleet specific YFR to CANSOFCOM. This function can be coordinated through CANSOFCOM's J3 Air in conjunction with a dedicated SOF SSO at 1 CAD.

17. Command and Control. As previously discussed, from a command and control position, 427 SOAS is under OPCOM to CANSOFCOM. Notwithstanding this command relationship, 427 SOAS is required to report to 1 CAD through 1 Wing Headquarters located in Kingston, Ontario for all residual responsibilities retained by the 1 CAD Commander. This Command and Control (C2) relationship adds an additional level of bureaucracy between 427 SOAS and 1 Canadian Air Division. Centralizing the contentious SOF residual responsibilities through a dedicated SSO position within the Air Division, would allow for smoother and more expeditious flow of information between commands. The proposed C2 structural change would also lighten 1 Wing Headquarters involvement with SOF operations.

CONCLUSION

18. In order for CANSOFCOM to successfully conduct its assigned mission, it must be properly organized, equipped and trained. A large part of CANSOFCOM's readiness relies heavily on RCAF airpower, and this dependency will only continue to increase with time.

19. Since the formation of CANSOFCOM in 2006, the command relationship between CANSOFCOM, 427 SOAS, and 1 Canadian Air Division has been stressed. The complicated

command relationship between the RCAF and SOF combined with the RCAF residual authorities has resulted in inefficiencies and communication breakdowns between CANSOFCOM and 1 CAD.

20. CANSOFCOM HQ has established a Joint Operations Air (J3 Air) staff position within its headquarters that coordinates all air effects with the RCAF. However, the surge in CANSOFCOM's requirement for RCAF airpower cannot be managed effectively by the CANSOFCOM J3 Air alone.

21. A Senior Staff Officer position for SOF is required to be established within 1 Canadian Air Division's Dir Fleet Rdns. This position would provide the Commanders of 1 CAD and CANSOFCOM with greater situational awareness over air assets employed by CANSOFCOM while solving areas of inefficiency related to RCAF residual responsibilities and communication deficiencies within a joint operating environment.

RECOMMENDATION

22. It is recommended that 1 Canadian Air Division create a Senior Staff Officer position for Special Operations Forces in the Directorate of Fleet Readiness in order to improve the overall coordination between 1 Canadian Air Division and CANSOFCOM Headquarters.

23. It is recommended, that 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron be completely detached from 1 Wing Headquarters chain of command (minus personnel management) in order to assist 427 SOAS to effectively report residual responsibilities directly to the 1 CAD Senior Staff Officer for SOF operations.

24. It is recommended that the TOCA for 427 SOAS be reviewed annually by the Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division in consultation with the commander of CANSOFCOM and amended as necessary.

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