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AMPHIBIOUS CAPABILITY FOR THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES: SOME EXPERIENCES FROM THE BRAZILIAN NAVY

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AMPHIBIOUS CAPABILITY FOR THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES: SOME EXPERIENCES FROM THE BRAZILIAN NAVY

AIM

1. This paper discusses the importance of an amphibious capability for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Therefore, it presents the 2014 update to the Brazilian Navy's amphibious operations doctrine, how it has been developed in that country and lessons that can be brought to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and the other two services to design the 'Next Navy' and the 'Navy After Next', as well as the others.

INTRODUCTION

2. Before 2014, the Brazilian Navy (BN) was preparing its naval amphibious forces and marines to the basic employment in the traditional Amphibious Operations: Assault; Raids; Feints and Demonstrations; and Withdrawal. These operations assumed that the littoral was hostile to friendly forces. In the 21st century, a new set of possibilities of deploying from the sea started to be used in littoral warfare, where the coast is not necessarily hostile anymore, the littoral belongs to a failed state or the operation happens on its own domestic waters, such as in the case of a disaster relief operation in remote areas. Therefore, in 2014, the Brazilian Navy updated its basic doctrine, adding a fifth type of Amphibious Operations, called 'Amphibious Projection'. This new category has brought more flexibility for the employment of the Armed Forces in this new environment, where the three roles of the navies – military, diplomatic and constabulary - are overlapping more than never.

3. This paper will show this new approach of the Amphibious Operations, its importance and how the RCN should, as a Medium Global Force Projection Navy, jointly with the Canadian Army (CA) and the Royal Canadian Force (RCAF), have a minimum of amphibious capability to

respond to crisis when it is accessible by the sea. For this purpose, it will be divided in four parts: first, it will present the current CAF doctrine. Second, it will present the update to the Brazilian Navy doctrine. Third, it discusses how this update can be applied to the CAF, and lastly, it will suggest how the CAF can manage to get an amphibious capability.

DISCUSSION

4. The Canadian Naval Doctrine defines ‘Naval Power Projection’ as “... the use of sea power directly to influence events on land. It exploits sea control to reach and deliver power ashore in the forms of amphibious forces, ...”¹. This naval power projection concept is broad and related to littoral warfare, where a country’s navy can affect the operations conducted ashore from the sea. This same doctrine demonstrates how naval power projection can be employed in scenarios that vary from peace, through crisis to war:

A naval power projection force can provide the lead elements for an intervention operation or a seaborne evacuation of non-combatants, and provide a mobile base for humanitarian or peace operations. Power projection forces are the naval component of a national expeditionary capability.²

5. The naval doctrine describes just four types of amphibious operations: assault; raid; feints and demonstrations; and withdrawal.³ Moreover, the Canadian Army’s doctrine also defines these same four types of operations, where the only difference is the definition of ‘Amphibious Demonstration’, that encompasses ‘Feint’ and ‘Demonstration’, but not asserting that in this type

¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. Canadian Forces College, *MCP 1 Naval Doctrine Manual* (Toronto, ON: Canadian Forces College, 2006), C-2/12.

² *Ibid*, C-3/12.

³ *Ibid*, C-7/12 - C-8/12.

of operation there is no actual landing of troops.⁴ These four amphibious operations are the traditional ones against a hostile coast. Many other navies, including the Brazilian Navy, have already realized that the employment of naval forces in the post-Cold War era have changed in a different way from the traditional warfare. The enemy is usually not a sovereign state and this amphibious capability can be employed in peace time situations or during crisis, such as humanitarian assistance, peace support operations or non-combatant evacuation operations. The RCN has been developed to fulfill its three naval roles as stated by Ken Booth: military, diplomatic and constabulary roles.⁵ Therefore, it will be ready to deploy and act in any situation that occurs across the broad spectrum of conflict, from peacetime, through conflict up to war. Conversely, it still lacks an amphibious capability, which would enhance the RCN's ability to conduct many functions presented in the annex of this paper, such as Peace Support Operations, in the Diplomatic Role, Disaster Relief, in the Constabulary Role, or Maritime Power Projection, in the Military Role. While on the one hand, one of the principles of a Canadian Naval Strategy is to be a "Joint Enabler", where the RCN, as a medium global force projection navy, must be able to integrate effectively in combined operations as part of a coalition in expeditionary operations⁶, on the other hand, the broad spectrum of operations in which the CAF can be involved requires a minimum of amphibious capability to deploy in a combined operation or alone, in a domestic situation, as presented by the RCN in 2005 as a naval strategy: "Expand the fleet capability required for joint expeditionary operations with special regard for the future

⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence, *B-GL-300-001/FP-001, Land Operations* (Kingston, ON: Army Publishing Office, 2008), 8-9.

⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020* (Ottawa, ON: Chief of the Maritime Staff, 2001), 30.

⁶ *Ibid*, 104-105.

security environment, capable of conducting Sea Control and projecting power ashore in support of the joint battle.”⁷

6. Before addressing the Brazilian Navy’s doctrine in terms of amphibious operations and its capabilities, it is important to demonstrate first that the Brazilian Navy can be ranked similarly to the RCN as a Medium Global Force Projection Navy.⁸ Although the Brazilian Armed Forces’ mission is related to the defence of the country⁹, Brazil is committed to the world’s peace and stability, deploying forces under the United Nations (UN) mandate or in multinational exercises worldwide. An example of this commitment to the UN is that Brazil is leading the Maritime Task Force (MTF) in the UN Peace Operation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) since 2011, with a Brazilian Admiral, his staff, and a frigate constantly deployed off the coast of Lebanon. The BN also deploys forces worldwide in combined exercises, such as the presence, in 2016, of a Brazilian Navy Ship (BNS) off the coast of India, operating with the Indian and South African Navies in an operation called IBSAMAR. These two examples are useful to classify the BN as ‘Rank 3’ or ‘Medium Global Force Projection Navy’, the same rank of the RCN. This classification is important for this paper, as this author’s intent is to compare these two navies and bring some experience from the BN to the RCN.

7. The Brazilian Navy, aligned with the international geopolitical situation and trying to bring a broader meaning and employment of its own amphibious forces and the Marine Corps, updated, in 2014, the definition of Amphibious Operations, including a fifth type called

⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Securing Canada’s Ocean Frontiers: Charting the Course from Leadmark* (Ottawa, ON: Chief of Maritime Staff, 2005), 50.

⁸ “These are navies that may not possess the full range of capabilities, but have a credible capacity in certain of them and consistently demonstrate a determination to exercise them at some distance from home waters, in cooperation with other Force Projection Navies.” Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadmark: The Navy’s Strategy for 2020...*, 44.

⁹ Brazil, *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988* (Brasília, DF: 1988), art 142.

‘Amphibious Projection’. This is broadly defined as the deployment of amphibious assets in an area of interest, from the sea, to execute a diversity of tasks in support to naval warfare operations or related to other contingencies, like conflict prevention. These assets can also be employed in other situations, such as non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO), environmental disaster relief operation and humanitarian assistance.¹⁰ This update is important as the capabilities of a navy must reflect its doctrine and functions.

8. In order to have platforms that reflect its doctrine, the BN intends to renew its amphibious force with multipurpose amphibious assault ships, which bring many different capabilities to a navy other than amphibious, such as command and control at sea, humanitarian assistance to other countries or in its own homeland, aid to the civil power, assistance to other government departments and agencies (OGDA), or even function as hospital ships, in case of disasters. Brazil currently has three Landing Ships and one Dock Landing Ship¹¹, and in 2015 this country bought a Landing Platform Dock (LPD) from France (ex-LPD *Siroco*), being incorporated to the Brazilian Navy as a Multipurpose Amphibious Vessel.¹² The amphibious capability depends on other assets other than ships: helicopters, landing crafts and trained troops equipped with proper vehicles and weapons. The Brazilian Defense White Paper demonstrates that, although the defence budget is constrained by problems with the country’s economy, Brazil does not abstain from equipping its navy with assets to project power and be able to conduct amphibious operations (including amphibious projection) whenever and wherever it deems

¹⁰ Brazil. Ministry of Defence. Navy Command, *EMA-305. Doutrina Básica da Marinha*, rev. 2 (Brasília, DF: Estado-Maior da Armada, 2014), 3-6.

¹¹ Brazil. Ministry of Defence, *Defence White Paper: Livro Branco de Defesa Nacional* (Brasília, DF: 2012), 86.

¹² Navy Recognition. "Naval Forces News - Brazil, France." Accessed February 1, 2016. <http://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/news/defence-news/year-2015-news/september-2015-navy-naval-forces-defense-industry-technology-maritime-security-global-news/3088-confirmed-brazilian-navy-have-purchased-former-french-navy-foudre-class-lpd-siroco.html>.

necessary.¹³ The Brazilian Navy has already employed its amphibious force and the Marine Corps in exercises that represent amphibious projection operations, as this fifth type of operations is a more realistic situation to the near future employment of the navy's capabilities.

9. Once the CAF doctrine has been discussed and the new Brazilian Navy doctrine has been presented, this paper will then show the importance of the changes of the BN doctrine to the CAF, and how Canada can apply this to its Forces. First, an update to the 'Naval Doctrine Manual' and 'Land Operations Manual' should include amphibious projection as a new type of amphibious operation. For that, this paper recommends that the CAF study this topic with the Brazilian Navy. Although it can be argued that the CAF work closely with the US Armed Forces and prepare themselves to integrate effectively in combined operations, the Brazilian Navy can bring a type 3 navy experience to the table in balancing budget constraints versus the need of a minimum equipped amphibious force. For broader operations, such as an amphibious assault, the Brazilian Armed Forces would as well need to be integrated in a coalition just as the CAF. Second, the RCN would need to get new vessels and landing crafts to project national power ashore. The Future Security Environment 2013-2040 states that "[t]he ability ... to **project national power ashore** [emphasis added], in order to help ensure economic prosperity and to contribute to international peace and security, will continue to be the defining requirements of modern maritime power."¹⁴ Third, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force must ensure they have prepared troops, transport helicopters and air support, as the amphibious operation is mainly a joint one. This mix of acquisition of materiel plus training will enable the CAF to execute these types of missions.

¹³ Brazil. Ministry of Defence, *Defence White Paper: Livro Branco de Defesa Nacional* (Brasília, DF: 2012), 85-98.

¹⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence. Chief of Force Development, *The Future Security Environment, 2013-2040* (Ottawa, ON: 17 Wing Winnipeg Publishing Office, 2014), 112.

10. This topic is not new in the CAF. In 2005, in the ‘Canada’s Policy Statement’, the government described the CAF transforming to have capabilities to deploy ships that would support land operations and provide a sea-based command capability, and land forces that would be capable of embarking and operating from a maritime platform. Moreover, the RCAF would provide an Air Expeditionary Unit to this task force (TF).¹⁵ This TF was then called the ‘Standing Contingency Task Force’, able to respond rapidly to emerging crisis and made up of maritime, land and air elements organized under a single command structure.¹⁶ Despite not being called an amphibious task force, this paper argues that this TF would be ready to respond to crisis around the globe where an ‘amphibious projection’ operation, as defined in the Brazilian doctrine, would be required. Therefore, while on the one hand this ‘amphibious projection’ definition does not exist in the current CAF doctrine, on the other hand this topic is not new, just not have being labeled as such.

11. The objective of this paper is not to recommend the procurement of specific vessels, aircraft and Army equipment to the CAF, but to discuss how the CAF can get an amphibious capability and how the Brazilian Navy would help the CAF in this process. Getting this capability and consequently being able to deploy in ‘amphibious projection’ operations, the CAF will be ready to fully conduct the six core missions envisioned in Canada First Defence Strategy.¹⁷ This paper would divide this capability acquisition in two timeframes. First, what the RCN calls ‘The Next Navy’, in a window of 5 to 15 years (horizon 2), a good starting point would be the acquisition of platforms and equipment already available in the international

¹⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement* (Ottawa, ON: 2005), 14, 29-31.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (Ottawa, ON: National Defence, 2008), 3.

market at lower costs, just like what the Brazilian Navy did when buying the ex-LPD *Sirocco* from the French Navy in 2015. A couple of Amphibious ships with command and control capabilities and able to execute a variety of missions, plus some landing crafts and helicopters able to transport the Army troops and their equipment ashore would be the core of this ‘Standing Contingency task Force’. As the CAF do not have a Marine Corps, the Army would be responsible of having at least one battalion ready, with personnel and materiel, with amphibious capabilities, to deploy with this TF. This next Navy, or better, this Amphibious CAF, would be able to train with the Brazilian Navy and its Marine Corps to learn how a medium size Navy (or Rank 3 Navy) is able to keep this capability as a core mission. This training would be developed initially in separate and parallel core capacities, when the RCN, CA and RCAF would train with the Brazilian Navy’s Amphibious Force, the Marine Corps and the Naval Air Force, respectively. Once this basic training was completed, the CAF and the BN would start to train in combined joint exercises designed to enhance the CAF amphibious capability in amphibious projection operations.

12. The second timeframe would be the horizon 3, from 10 to 30 years, when the CAF would develop the ‘Navy After Next’ with the development of the CA and RCAF in parallel, to enhance the amphibious capability in the Forces. For that, the CAF would invest across the four pillars upon which the military capabilities are built: personnel, equipment, readiness and infrastructure. Canadian industry participation would be paramount to produce amphibious ships, landing crafts, helicopters and army equipment that would enhance the CAF amphibious capabilities, while at the same time enabling national industry to develop technology and opportunities for further national and international contracts. This partnership between the CAF and the Canadian industry would follow the guidelines from the Canada First Defence Strategy,

with long-term investments in Canada and the creation of high-tech, high-valuable jobs in the country, plus the investment in the Canadian Research and Development capacity. During this timeframe, the CAF would build up on their relationship with the Brazilian Navy, increasing their partnership in amphibious operations and training.

CONCLUSION

13. This paper discusses the CAF doctrine related to amphibious operations, and how an amphibious capability would boost the RCN, with support of the CA and RCAF, to conduct its three roles and their functions. It then presents an update to the Brazilian amphibious operations doctrine, where a fifth type of amphibious operation, called amphibious projection, was added in order to represent the reality the navies are facing in this post-cold war geopolitical environment. It then shows how this update in the Canadian doctrine would be important and recommends the CAF to start the process of getting amphibious capability by buying platforms and equipment already available in the international market while a long-term process would be the involvement of the Canadian industry in building this capacity in the country, developing the national industry and bringing new technologies to Canada. This process of getting an amphibious capability could be supported by the Brazilian Navy, a type 3 navy with some experience in this capability.

14. This paper does not intend to recommend specific platforms and assets to the CAF, but to discuss how the CAF can get an amphibious capability to face the new realities of the 21st century and how the Brazilian Navy could be part of this process with combined training and exercises. Its aim is to show that the CAF, mainly the RCN, need to have an amphibious capability in order to accomplish their assigned roles and functions. Moreover, the three forces must commit themselves to a state of readiness to deploy jointly whenever necessary, as this

amphibious capability is only fully exercised when the three forces are ready and operating together.

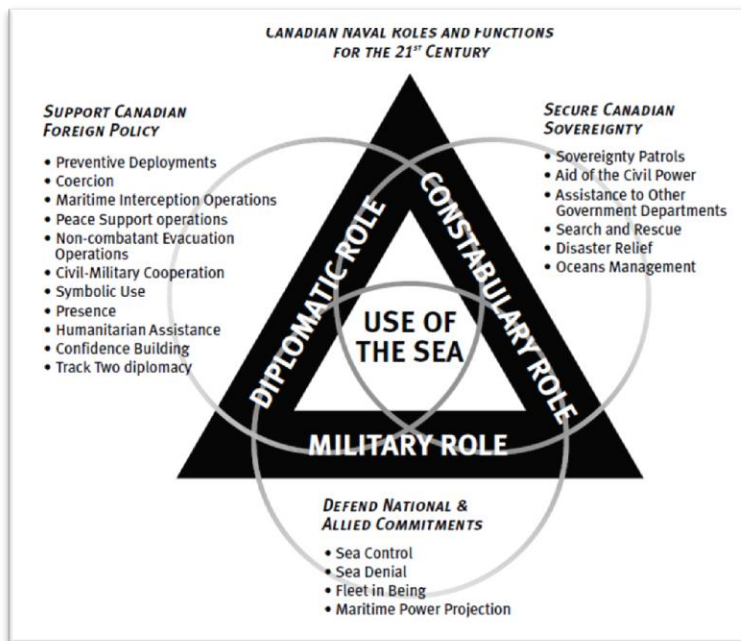
Annex: Canadian Naval Roles and Functions for the 21st Century.

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ANNEX



Canadian Naval Roles and Functions for the 21st Century
Source: Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020, 99.