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DEFINING DIVERSITY AND BILINGUALISM AS AN OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

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DEFINING DIVERSITY AND BILINGUALISM AS AN OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

AIM

1. This paper will define the importance of diversity and bilingualism as an operational concept for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in order to effectively face future military engagements. Although both diversity and bilingualism are often considered political and social objectives, there are clear operational requirements that should motivate the CAF to embrace and promote diversity and bilingualism.

INTRODUCTION

2. When defining a military conceptual approach to operations, we tend to focus on contemporary doctrine applicable across the spectrum of conflicts. But other factors are essential in the definition of the approach to operations. As stated by Murray and Millett, “It also includes and is influenced by tangible and intangible factors such as national, cultural, and social considerations that affect how a military might be used in the protection and furtherance of national interest”¹. Although it is impossible to predict with great accuracy the socio-cultural environment of future CAF operations, historical context and future trends can help narrow the range of possibilities. By doing so, this paper will argue that diversity and bilingualism will increase the CAF’s ability to face future global engagements. Diversity and bilingualism should not be motivated simply by political obligations, but rather by a clear operational necessity.

¹ Allan Reed Millett and Williamson Murray, *Military Effectiveness* (New [2nd] ed. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

3. To highlight the importance of diversity and bilingualism in the CAF, this paper will first discuss future global security environment trends and the impact that Failed States will have on that security environment. This analysis will highlight the key role that Canada could play internationally to support and influence states through its involvement with international organisations such as the International Organisation of la Francophonie (IOF). In light of this analysis, we will discuss the current state of diversity and bilingualism in the CAF. This will offer a better understanding of the importance and benefits of having a more diverse and bilingual force to tackle future engagements. Finally, recommendations will be offered to increase diversity and bilingualism in the CAF through Force Development (FD) and to take advantages of opportunities to reinforce Canada's global influence.

DISCUSSION

4. Future global security environment. Since the end of the Cold War, we have been witnessing a drastic change in military engagements. From the bi-polar environment that generated proxy-wars and indirect engagements, we have moved to a multi-polar arrangement characterised by a very dynamic and unpredictable global environment. To face upcoming challenges, many studies have developed foresight analysis tools to provide a better understanding of our future security environment and to facilitate the posture of current and future forces. In every case, the analysis of the future security environment highlights the importance that state competition will play. As defined in Strong Secure Engage (SSE), "The re-emergence of major power competition has reminded Canada and its allies of the importance of

deterrence”². Nonetheless, the influence of fragile and failed states is not negligible and will have an important impact on Canada and CAF operations. As these states may not be able to handle the important challenges that they may be facing, “military responses to weak states are likely to include humanitarian, containment and stabilization operations”³. In most cases, this would involve boots on the ground.

5. To that end, Canada should consider itself as a key global player, being actively involved in reaching out and providing support to those in need. As stated in SSE: “Canada, by virtue of our geography, our history, our diversity and our natural wealth, is called to leadership. We have the capacity to help those who live under the threat of violence, or have been consigned to protracted refugee status”⁴. While striving to promote stability in the world, it will be important for Canada to take advantages of its attributes in order to be as influential as possible. With limited resources to face the important range of possible future engagements, the ability to use our capacity where it is the most effective is essential. Therefore, the support to weak states is directly in line with Canada’s commitment to peace and stability and provides opportunity to play an influential international role.

6. When analysing current trends and defining the future security environment, the use of the Fragile States Index is one tool that can provide a good idea of possible future hot spots. It is

² Dept. of National Defence and Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2017), 50.

³ Dept. of National Defence. *The Future Security Environment 2013-2040* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2014), 27.

⁴ Dept. of National Defence and Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2017), 49.

interesting to note that as of 2017, 19 of the top 25 states on the Fragile States Index are African countries⁵. Unfortunately, the weakness of these states has allowed organized crime and terrorism to fill the void left by the absence of strong governance. “In a changing regional context, facing multifaceted risks, West Africa has become one of the centers of the global organized crime”⁶. It is not surprising that Canada has been active in assessing opportunities to intervene and provide assistance to these states. While the complexity of these conflicts doesn’t always offer the conditions that would allow a CAF engagement to be of added value to the United Nations operation, it is only a question of time before the CAF is called to provide assistance in this region.

7. While the current commitment made by the Trudeau government on 15 Nov 2017 towards support to peacekeeping operations is limited in nature, there is much speculation regarding possible future areas of operation. Specifically, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and South Sudan are continually being referred as likely theaters of operation⁷. With the exception of South Sudan, all other locations are French speaking countries. The choice of these countries is indeed not surprising, as Canada is one of the few industrialized countries that can offer military assistance in French, which can be quite valuable in these very complex environments. Indeed, to face these complex challenges, history has taught us that a high level of cultural intelligence is necessary. In the case of stabilization operations, “failure to understand the members’ beliefs, values and attitudes, and

⁵Fund For Peace. "Fragile States Index, " accessed 1 February 2018. <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/data/>

⁶Michel Luntumbue. « Criminalité transfrontalière en Afrique de l’Ouest : Cadre et limites des stratégies régionales de lutte ». *Note d’Analyse du GRIP; Bruxelles* (2012), 1.

⁷Tonda MacCharles, “Canada to spread its peacekeeping efforts around,” *The Star*, 15 Nov 2017.

how they view the world, is tantamount to mission failure”⁸. Understanding local cultures and developing the ability to engage with and influence humans on the ground is fundamental to achieve mission success. The ability to communicate in the same language is therefore an important asset.

8. Cultural and linguistic opportunities. As defined by SSE, the very first implication of the changing security environment is the necessity for Canada to “help promote peace and stability abroad in order to maintain security at home”⁹. To achieve this goal, Canada will need to work in close collaboration with state and non-state actors with different culture, language and religion. As these differences can easily generate a high level of friction, the CAF should develop its capacity to limit any negative impact. To this end, a strength that the CAF can take advantage of is diversity and bilingualism. In the case of bilingualism, the ability to sharing a common language can offer the capacity to live, act and think alike. It can unite us beyond cultural differences¹⁰. In this sense, the Francophonie community offers Canada a great opportunity to increase its influence and promote peace and stability more effectively. To better understand these implications, we will highlight some of the key elements that define La Francophonie:

a. La Francophonie. The IOF was created in 1970 to promote the French language and cultural diversity, but also to promote peace, democracy and human rights.

Ultimately, it has become the organisation that promotes cooperation amongst all French

⁸Emily Spencer, "Brains and Brawn: Cultural Intelligence as the 'Tool of Choice' in the Contemporary Operating Environment." *Canadian Military Journal* 11 (1): 15 (2010), 16.

⁹Dept. of National Defence and Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2017), 57.

¹⁰Michaëlle Jean, « La Francophonie au cœur de toutes les urgences du monde » *Géoéconomie*, 80(3), 8. (2016), 11.

speaking countries. While French is the official language of 29 countries, the IOF regroups 54 members located across five different continents. As of 2014, it was assessed that the language is shared by a total of 274 millions of people¹¹. While 58% of IOF members are African states, West Africa holds the majority of the French speaking population, a population that is in constant increase due to high birth rates;

b. Growth of the French language. Between 2010 and 2014, the population that speaks French increased by 20%, making French the sixth most spoken language in the world after Mandarin, English, Spanish, Arabic and Hindi¹². As a result of population growth mainly in the African region, it is estimated that “French speakers will rise to over 700 million by 2050, 80% of whom will be located in Africa”¹³. The proportion of French speakers compared to the world population would therefore increase from 3% to 8%;

c. Opportunity. The possibility to communicate in the same language can be extremely valuable and puts Canada in a favorable position to collaborate with other French speaking countries. Amongst the members of the IOF, Canada comes second only behind France for the strength of its economy¹⁴. This enviable position offers Canada the opportunity to play a lead role amongst a French speaking community that is in constant expansion, which would increase its influence worldwide; and

¹¹ Organisation Internationale de la francophonie. « La Langue Française dans le monde, » *Editions Nathan : Paris* (2014), 137.

¹² Organisation Internationale de la francophonie. « Données et statistiques sur la langue française, » accessed 1 February 2018. <https://www.francophonie.org/-donnees-et-statistiques-langue-francaise-.html>

¹³ France Diplomatie. “The status of French in the world,” accessed 1 February 2018. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/francophony-and-the-french-language/the-status-of-french-in-the-world/>

¹⁴ International Monetary Fund. “World Economic Outlook Database,” 24 October 2017.

d. Finally, Canada can enjoy an enviable reputation¹⁵ that allows the country to be perceived in a more positive light. Quebec is even recognized as a better ambassador of the French language than France herself¹⁶. Additionally, Canada is not constrained by a dark colonial past that can greatly impact its ability to intervene effectively. Not constrained by the same past, Canada has an opportunity to provide assistance while being perceived more positively.

9. Diversity and bilingualism in the CAF. Encouraging diversity and bilingualism is generally being perceived as a political and social requirement. “As Canadian society becomes increasingly diverse, the CAF may fail to reflect Canadian cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, thereby calling into question institutional credibility”¹⁷. This quote reflects fairly well CAF’s attitude regarding diversity and bilingualism. Diversity is important to protect the legitimacy and credibility of the institution, but is rarely encouraged beyond that point. In light of the future security environment and the opportunities described previously, diversity and bilingualism should be viewed very differently. It should be perceived as an important capability that would enable the CAF to become more effective in operating in culturally challenging environments.

¹⁵Karsten Strauss. “The World’s Most Reputable Countries In 2017: The U.S. Feels the Trump Effect, ” *Forbes*, 30 June 2017.

¹⁶Michel Guillou, *Francophonie-Puissance* (Paris: Ellipses, 2005), 117.

¹⁷Dept. of National Defence. *The Future Security Environment 2013-2040* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2014), 54.

10. It has been argued in the past that cultural differences amongst military members can lead to inefficiencies and a more homogenous force would offer a more cohesive environment. But in light of the global security environment in which we will be operating, diversity will offer important upsets. As learned in Afghanistan, “Diversity can enhance group solidarity or cohesion because soldiers are valued for their differential contributions to mission success and to the social functioning of the unit”¹⁸. Furthermore, the complexity of future stability-type operations will “require a population-centric approach to achieve long term mission success”¹⁹. Continuously promoting diversity amongst the CAF would help prepare us to tackle these challenges and become more effective in the future.

11. The importance of cultural understanding of regional conditions is also highlighted in our own joint doctrine²⁰ and reaffirms the importance of cultural awareness. Diversity should therefore be motivated not simply because of a desire to protect the legitimacy of the institution, but also due to a clear operational requirement. Although subtle in nature, this change in our institutional perspective would increase the commitment of the CAF in encouraging diversity and bilingualism. It would allow the reprioritization of resources and the review of policies in order to support effectively this operational requirement. Ultimately, it would better align operational requirements and force generation priorities.

¹⁸Anne Irwin, "Diversity in the Canadian Forces: Lessons from Afghanistan." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, 4 (2009), 504.

¹⁹Dept. of National Defence. *The Future Security Environment 2013-2040* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2014), 96.

²⁰Dept. of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication 3.0 Operations* (Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence, 2011), 8-2.

12. There are a variety of initiatives that have already been implemented in order to improve the cultural mindset of the CAF and to actively promote diversity and bilingualism. Many recruitment targets have been set to encourage recruitment based on gender and minority. In recent years, initiatives such as Gender Based Analysis+ (GBA+) have also helped promote diversity and equity, which should improve retention. That said, the CAF doctrine doesn't clearly identify the necessity to promote diversity and bilingualism in order to improve our ability to operate more effectively. Establishing this link would encourage an environment where diversity and bilingualism is not perceived as a chore, but an opportunity for Canada to operate more effectively abroad.

CONCLUSION

13. The analysis of the future security environment in which Canada will operate highlights the importance of a military force that demonstrates a high level of cultural intelligence. Lessons learned from past engagements (Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan) have demonstrated the importance of being culturally aware and the challenges that this represents. Although Theater Mission Specific Training (TMST) is a good tool to prepare military forces for a specific theater of operation, having a high predisposition to welcome and understand diversity is fundamental. In that sense, the CAF is in a very enviable position.

14. For the foreseeable future, Canada will continue to rely on immigration to ensure the steady growth of its population. This will provide the CAF with a significant pool of cultural and

ethnic diversity to which it can take advantage of. But more than just attracting minorities, it should make every effort to encourage diversity and bilingualism in order to facilitate retention. Although often perceived as a constraint, diversity and bilingualism should be seen as an opportunity to increase our influence internationally. In the case of bilingualism, the ability to take a lead role amongst French nations, a community in constant expansion, is not to be overlooked and could easily increase Canada's influence on the international stage.

15. In many cases, encouraging diversity and bilingualism in the CAF doesn't necessitate additional resources. It can be generated by adjusting priorities, adapting/reinforcing policies or by diverging resources. But to facilitate this institutional cultural change, it must be understood that the benefits go well beyond simple political and social requirement. It should be considered as an operational necessity that will generate new opportunities and allow Canada to project its influence more effectively.

RECOMMENDATION

16. The CAF doctrine, specifically Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 3.0, highlights the requirement for the CAF to have a "deep and detailed context and culture-specific understanding of local regional conditions"²¹. Unfortunately, it falls short to highlight the importance of diversity to facilitate the understanding of cultural-specific environment and the opportunity to connect with a host-nation at a more personal level.

²¹ CFJD 3.0 8.2

17. Therefore, it is recommended to define diversity and bilingualism as an operational requirement through the Canadian military doctrine. This addition will promote the generation of a military force more capable to face the complexity of future theater of operations.

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