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“...Though we cannot direct how the global security environment will evolve, we can ensure that we posture ourselves to meet these uncertain challenges. Clearly, our navy, army, air force and special operations forces must reinforce each other to bring the full spectrum of military resources to bear...”¹

General Tom J. Lawson, Chief of the Defence Staff Canadian Armed Forces, from October 2012 to July 2015.

AIM

1. In this essay will be demonstrated the importance of the Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF) to contribute in operations carried out in a complex environment in other countries and in domestic operations, having as a starting point the events September 11, 2001 (9/11) in United States, taking into consideration the advances in military technology and requirements of modern warfare. Emphasizing the high level military training and development technological to get specific objectives in missions that are given to these units, in the context of strategic and operational levels.

INTRODUCTION

2. It will be demonstrated that special operations represent a fundamental factor in modern warfare, taking advantage of the technological advances such as aircraft, weapons, special combat equipment, vehicles and communication devices for use in world conflicts. An important unit of Special Forces in Canada is Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2) which was created in 1993. The

¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. CANSOFCOM's Strategic Plan. Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, June 2015, pag. 5.

events of 9/11 were decisive for taking actions against the risks of aggression by foreign terrorist groups, this unit committed itself to the international coalition of Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Afghanistan. This deployment was the first time that JTF 2 was used in an important combat role outside of Canada.² After 9/11, CANSOF became the force of choice, their inherent responsiveness, small footprint cultural and regional awareness and impressive suite of capabilities made them a force multiplier with an impact on operations far in excess of the numbers actually employed.³ This unit played a critical role in coalition SOF and earned the respect of Canada's allies for its professionalism.

3. The information will be presented with antecedents of the CANSOF, its participation and impact at operational and strategic level, the importance of this type of operations in Canada and worldwide, considering as a fundamental factor having military personnel of special forces with a high level of training and that is able to support combined or joint task forces of countries such as the United States, taking into account the continuous participation of the Canadian Armed Forces in the international environments, as well as the CANSOF's projection in the future.

² National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, <https://www.canada.ca/en/special-operations-forces-command/corporate/organizational-structure/joint-task-force-2.html>. Date modified: 2017-12-15.

³ Horn, Bernd. *"Casting light on the shadows, Canadian perspectives on Special Operations Forces"*, University of Toronto Press, 2007, p 13.

DISCUSSION

4. Canadians served with distinction in several types of Allied Special Forces units during the Second World War. One such unit was the legendary U.S. and Canadian combined 1st Special Service Force or, as it was commonly known, "the Devil's Brigade." It achieved a sterling combat record despite overwhelming odds. While tactics, weapons and technology have changed, today's JTF 2 soldiers are perpetuating the basic qualities that define such units.⁴ The events of the military history of Canada and the participation of its armed forces where are including the special forces, make necessary that military personnel of these forces to remain permanently trained and prepared to act in military operations in the different areas, the most important those that guarantee global security.

5. In accordance to the third and sixth core Canada First Defence Strategy missions: "Respond to a major terrorist attack" and "Deploy forces in response to crises elsewhere in the world for a shorter period", the CANSOF, is capable of rapidly deploying task-tailored Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) and / or small teams capable of fulfilling a wide range of SOF functions that allow the Government of Canada (GoC) accurate timely situational awareness, as well as the widest possible number of response options.⁵ For this reason is important requires that the units of SOF pay attention to the lessons that they had been learned throughout their experiences.

⁴ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-special-forces/jtf2.page>, date modified: 2018-01-26.

⁵ Day, D. Michael, and Bernd Horn. "Canadian Special Operations Command: The Maturation of a National Capability." Canadian Military Journal 10, no. 4 (Autumn 2010), p 73-74.

6. Some examples of these conflicts experiences are in Afghanistan after 9/11 and 2011 as well as in Syria and Iraq in Operation Impact against terrorist groups, where the special forces of Canada got knowledge through the lessons learned in complex environments of operations, experiences that are considered to create new military doctrine and improve the results in future operations.

7. The Canadian experience in SOF is a combination of what American doctrine calls “unconventional warfare” (the clandestine conduct of paramilitary and military operations in enemy held, controlled, or politically sensitive territory), counterterrorism to conventional operations in pursuit of an operational or strategic aim.⁶ However, the Canadian doctrine has been adapted to the threats faced by Canadians, both at home and abroad, which have increased dramatically in recent years, so has the need for solid CANSOF, agile and responsive that give the Government of Canada the widest spectrum possible options to combat these dangers.

8. The evolution of wars and threats to global security has forced the Canadian armed Forces to be prepared with trained military personnel. Although Canadian Forces transformation has been underway for years, it received dramatic impetus from General Rick Hillier upon his appointment as chief of the defence staff (CDS) in 2004. An integral part of that transformation was the creation of a Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM)⁷ which is a high readiness organization, ready to deploy Special Operations Forces on very short notice.

⁶ Horn, Bernd. *“Casting light on the shadows, Canadian perspectives on Special Operations Forces”*, University of Toronto Press, 2007, p 182.

⁷ Ibid, p 20.

9. The CANSOFCOM's purpose is to force develop, generate and where required, employ Special Operations Task Forces (SOTF) capable of achieving tactical, operational and strategic effects required by the Government of Canada (GoC).⁸ The CANSOFCOM is organized into a headquarters element and five units: Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2); the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR); 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (SOAS); the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit – Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CJIRU-CBRN); and the Canadian Special Operations Training Centre (CSOTC).

10. For that reason, as the global security environment continues to grow in ambiguity, complexity, chaos, and uncertainty, so also will CANSOFCOM adapt and evolve to provide the government and the people of Canada with dedicated, highly trained and skilled SOF capable of providing the wide spectrum of special operations options to deter, disrupt, dislocate, and, when necessary, to destroy those that would do harm to Canadians, our allies and friends, or our national interests.⁹ However, commanders at all levels of special forces units must always keep in mind that the main factor of these units is military personnel as individual, so they must put into practice their leadership and good relations with his subordinate staff as well as always act with values, honesty, justice and have personal contact with his subordinates to know their level of moral and motivation to get successful missions.

⁸ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-org-structure/canadian-special-operations-forces-command.page>. Date modified: 2014-02-06.

⁹ Day, D. Michael, and Bernd Horn. "Canadian Special Operations Command: The Maturation of a National Capability." Canadian Military Journal 10, no. 4 (Autumn 2010), p 74.

11. Referring specific operations counter-terrorism where CANSOF had successful performance, the following can be mentioned:

a. Kandahar, Afghanistan recounts to specific operation conducted by elements of special operations task force (SOTF) and members from the Canadian special operations regiment (CSOR), they acted as mentors for the afghan provincial response company - Kandahar, conducted a very difficult operation that highlighted their professionalism, collective leadership, operational knowledge, tactical prowess and warrior spirit.¹⁰ With these operations the CANSOF showed their high level of training and operational capabilities for acting in an ever complex and chaotic security environment.

b. Operation Impact, where CANSOF played an important role in Iraq alongside its partners. The CANSOF's efforts in support of the Global Coalition who was formed in September 2014 and is unique in its membership, scope and commitment. Together, the Global Coalition is committed to degrading and ultimately defeating "Daesh" who is a terrorist group formed in Iraq in October 2004, it has also been known as: the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).¹¹ These efforts helped Iraq to achieve long-term success in keeping its territory and people secure as well as gave capacity to Iraq's forces to face terrorism.

¹⁰ Horn, Bernd. *"Chaos in Kandahar: The battle for building 4"*, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, Ontario 2013, p 1.

¹¹ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad-current/op-impact.page>, date modified: 2018-01-29.

The threat of terrorism comes from an elusive, sophisticated and determined enemy. In order to maintain an edge in this operational environment, it is necessary that CANSOF continuously develop new capabilities, technologies, and tactics and have the capabilities to continue facing these types of threats.

12. SOF's important role in the global security environment.

a. For the end of the Cold War loosened, in unstable parts of the world, long suppressed grievances coupled with ambitions for power, national takeovers and regional influence. Most of these social rashes have resulted in cycles of "unconventional violence" in locations such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Sudan (Dartur), the Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka, elsewhere in Asia and Africa, several being manifestations requiring the intelligence-gathering, counter-insurgency, anti-terrorism and stability activities that SOF units have been trained to deliver successfully.¹² It is necessary that the personnel that integrate units of Special Forces deployed in the conflict areas take into consideration the culture, customs, traditions and values of the societies, and avoid not respecting the human rights of the population.

b. The Special Forces units have assigned important missions in the context of the armed forces of each country, they are main factors which integrate military personnel with preparation, training and capabilities to get successful missions that the regular

¹² Leibstone, Marvin. "Special Operations Forces & 21 Century Warfare." *Military Technology* 33, no. Special Issue (2009), p 30.

forces can not achieve. These considerations are fundamental to the earned acceptance of the mainstream military and political decision makers and continue to employ SOF to accomplish special missions and getting objectives that represent the main threats to global security.

c. The capabilities of the CANSOF are of a high level, the personnel of Special Forces obtain their skills and knowledge through military exercises in other countries combined with the Special Forces of allied nations, as well as provide training to Special Forces of countries affected by the terrorism threats as Iraq and countries of Africa Training. One example of these activities is “Exercises Flintlock” that were coordinated by the U.S. Africa Command, in Senegal Africa in February 2016, where Canadian special forces took participation. Is important highlight that Special Forces from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States have taken part in previous Flintlock exercises.¹³ This type of military exercises are useful to unify knowledge and skills of special forces, sharing updated military doctrine and teach this knowledge in the participating countries through a multiplying effect of teaching.

d. While terrorism was viewed historically as a criminal threat, since the 9/11 attacks it has become the primary focus of the American national security efforts and

¹³ Canadian Special Forces complete exercise flintlock in Africa,
<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/canadian-special-operations-forces-complete-exercise-flintlock-in-africa>, date modified: 2016-03-26.

those of its partners. Terrorists are viewed as a serious and persistent threat to all nations.¹⁴ So, global organizations took action to address these threats, integrating forces to combat these dangers.

13. CANSOF's challenges and perspective.

a. It is clear today that the post-9/11 expansion of SOF targeted the growth of terrorism around the world but it also focused on other growing 21st Century threats, namely insurgencies affecting the West's allies and possible enemy utilization of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).¹⁵ Terrorism has been one of the subversive activities that most affect and impact in the social, economic and political fields of the countries, being a permanent concern of the world organizations with respect to guarantee global security, for this reason special forces are the units that can to face these threats, as long as they have the technological, equipment and weapon support to complete success missions.

b. In other words, it is necessary to take into consideration the need and acceptance of SOF operations planning, which has been a set of important variables, among them (a). The Information Technology (IT) revolution and related data retrieval plus analysis technologies that today make SOF activities a lot more feasible, that is, less risk-laden

¹⁴ B. Taillon, J. Paul. "Coalition Special Operation Forces." *Military Technology* 33, Special Issue (2009), p 12.

¹⁵ Leibstone, Marvin. "Special Operations Forces & 21 Century Warfare." *Military Technology* 33, no. Special Issue (2009), p 30.

with higher potential for orderly mission achievements; (b) Newly developed air and seagoing platforms allowing faster covert ingress and egress, and (c) The fact that SOF can complete several missions that political, logistical and financial limitations now prevent conventional forces from accomplishing,¹⁶ factors that are necessary to develop effective special operations against special objectives.

c. The CANSOFCOM must be ready to meet the challenges and opportunities on the horizon. It must prepare itself for the foreseeable while organizing in such a manner that it retains flexibility, adaptability, agility, and resiliency when the forecasts are wrong. Across the range of foreseeable futures and even amongst some wildcard shocks, CANSOFCOM's requirements are clear. The organization must remain at the forefront of technological innovation. Not only does this mean fielding some of the most advanced weapon systems, but also it requires the organization to adopt and retain a culture and spirit of innovation, developing novel procedures and using traditional technologies in new ways.¹⁷ The CANSOF's success missions depends on the level of training, motivation, moral as well as physical and psychological conditions of the personnel of these important elite units, in addition the commanders' command actions for getting these conditions on their subordinates.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Canada Department of National Defence, "*Future Operating Environment Handbook*". Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, August 2017, P. 28

CONCLUSIONS

14. Based on the participation of the Canadian armed forces in the different world conflicts from the First World War to nowadays, as well as the interventions of the CANSOF to contribute to global security in complex and dangerous environments, all these actions demonstrate the importance of these forces worldwide, as well as the results and positive effects of the CANSOF in the operations in which they have participated.

15. The intensive training, intellectual and technological capabilities of the personnel that is part of the CANSOF are aspects which all levels of command must verify for the efficient performance of these forces in the operations to contribute in global security.

16. Terrorism is a permanent threat that affects the global security environment, but it is not the only one, the technological and informational advances which are the bases to be new dangers against world security, constrain the armed forces to keep updated. For this reason the military personnel that integrate the CANSOF must maintain their high level of training and physical, moral, psychological and technological characteristics to continue participating successfully in their tasks. What represents for the world community and Canadian population admire and recognize these functions.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That CANSOF continue carry out military exercises in combination with special forces of the United States and the allies nations that regularly participate in operations to guarantee security of the global environment like in Iraq and African countries; with the purpose of maintaining their high level of training, employing training missions with different situations of current threats such as terrorism, detection of weapons of mass destruction, capture or destruction of targets, as well as rescue of prisoners, to be prepared and continue participating to face main threats as well as the threats that technological advances and information have in the global security environment.

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