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## REMAINING CREDIBLE: THE CANADIAN NAVAL TASK GROUP

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# **REMAINING CREDIBLE: THE CANADIAN NAVAL TASK GROUP**

## **REFERENCES**

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- B. Canada First Defence Strategy
- C. 1994 White Paper on Defence
- D. The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces: Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, 2015.
- E. CFCD 129: Royal Canadian Navy Readiness and Sustainment Policy – Version 2
- F. DGNFD RCN Concept for Naval Task Group (Draft 2017)
- G. DRDC Future Maritime Operating Environment and the Role of Naval Power.
- H. President Trump's New National Security Strategy
- I. United Kingdom: Fact Sheet 4 – The National Security Tasks

## **AIM**

1. The aim of this paper is to provide Director General Naval Force Development (DGNFD) with an analysis of the expected core naval capabilities that must be developed or maintained to ensure the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) will be general-purpose and combat capable of supporting the strategic imperatives of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Government of Canada (GC) while remaining fiscally responsible.

## **INTRODUCTION**

2. In the conduct of this analysis, primarily this paper will use previous Canadian Government policy mandating that the Canadian Armed Forces maintain a minimum capability. Secondly, this paper will use comparative defence policies from allied nations to equate the needs of Canada to those nation's analysis of priorities. Finally, this paper will expand upon the

general and strategic-level language of the earlier defence policies and relate specific operational capabilities to GC's priorities.

3. In developing the background for this discussion References A through C represent the current and previous major defence policy documents for the CAF with specific GC direction on the purpose for of force generating a general-purpose navy.

4. In 1999, the former Chief of the Defence Staff, General Baril, uses a phrase that has echoed through defence policy and statements since the 1990's, that part of the "core" mandate of the Canadian Armed Forces is to be "modern, task-tailored, and globally deployable combat-capable forces that can respond quickly at home and abroad, and in a wide variety of operations."<sup>1</sup> General Baril defines how such forces are in demand as they a multi-purpose force results in a smaller force that can be prepared to respond to a "wide variety of situations."<sup>2</sup> Additionally, he includes how these multi-purpose forces allow for a balance between capability and investment "to maintain current operations...and prepare for emerging risks and challenges."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Baril, Maurice. "About the Canadian Forces." Last updated 14 October, 1999.  
<http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=about-the-canadian-forces/hnlhlxcz>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## DISCUSSION

5. The Chrétien Liberal government released reference C which prescribed that the Canadian Armed Forces would, “maintain multi-purpose, combat capable forces,” which would facilitate a force that is, “effective, realistic and affordable...”<sup>4</sup>

6. Reference A highlights the, “core capabilities of the Royal Canadian Navy [as] responsive and agile means to respond across a wide spectrum of maritime situations” and for those forces to be able to, “...operate in some of the most extreme ocean conditions<sup>5</sup> [and]... project power responsively and effectively far from Canada’s shores.<sup>6</sup> Key to the RCN’s ability to remain relevant is for it to possess, ‘flexibility to enable the Canadian Armed Forces to operate across the spectrum of conflict, enable interoperability with Canada’s allies, and maintain an operational advantage over the threats of today and tomorrow.’<sup>7</sup>

7. As General Baril stated in 1999 during a public appearance, a key imperative for the CAF is to ensure to build or maintain those military relationships, which include strategic partnerships, with allied forces to, “[ensure] that our forces remain interoperable with [those allies].” It is highly unlikely that the CAF would deploy in 1999 on a major operation without the assistance or in conjunction with an ally, and this concept remains true through 2018 as CAF

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<sup>4</sup> Canada. *1994 White Paper on Defence*. Last accessed 3 February, 2018. <https://newatlas.com/royal-navy-type-31-e-frigate/51233/>. Highlights, point 4.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada. *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada’s Defence Policy*. Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 33

operations are planned and conducted almost exclusively with allied nations.<sup>8</sup> The 1994 White Paper on Defence clearly outlined the idea where there are considerable strategic risks if Canada does not maintain its international partnership and membership in organizations such as NATO or NORAD, where Canada would lose significant global credibility, respect and influence.<sup>9</sup> It is important that the RCN has, should continue to, and enhance its capabilities to remain interoperable with US and NATO allies while maintaining a modern, flexible, task-tailored force generation ability to remain relevant and protect Canada's interests domestically and internationally.

8. The Naval Task Group (NTG) concept was defined in the reference C on Defence as, “a naval task group, comprised of up to four combatants (destroyers, frigates or submarines) and a support ship, with appropriate maritime air support.” CFCD 129 (Reference D) expanded upon this definition in 2015 to define the Canadian Navy's NTG as, “A group of Naval Force Elements, comprised of up to four combatants (destroyers, frigates or submarines) and a support ship, with appropriate maritime air support.”<sup>10</sup> The Canadian NTG is a standing high readiness force package ...[and] is the quintessential [force package] that the RCN generates for the most complex missions and tasks assigned to the RCN.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Baril, Maurice. “About the Canadian Forces.” Last updated 14 October, 1999. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=about-the-canadian-forces/hnlhxcz>

<sup>9</sup> Canada. *1994 White Paper on Defence*. Last accessed 3 February, 2018. <https://newatlas.com/royal-navy-type-31-e-frigate/51233/>. Chapter 3

<sup>10</sup> Royal Canadian Navy. CFCD 129 Royal Canadian Navy Readiness and Sustainment Policy – Version 2. RCN: Halifax. 2015. O-4/7

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-1/7

9. The RCN uses the NTG concept as the most capable multi-purpose and combat capable unit force elements to meet all of the complex missions of the RCN. Due to its conceptual nature, it would be generated in such a way to allow for maximum flexibility and adaptability. Thus allowing a deployed NTG to be re-tasked to meet a multitude of missions without needing to return to home port or undergo additional readiness assessments.<sup>12</sup>

10. For the NTG to remain the relevant model for RCN force projection for Canada, it too must remain modern to meet the demands of the security environment, including threats of state and non-state actors, peer adversaries and asymmetric threats to Canada and international peace and security. Outside of a combat environment the RCN must remain capable of supporting the GC through operations other than war, where naval assets may be assigned in conjunction with other CAF elements to participate in a broad spectrum of non-combat operations.

11. To remain interoperable with allies, it is importance to understand the priorities of those allied nations. Using the US and UK as two major influences in Canada's international defence partnerships, it is important to compare their priorities.

12. These US strategies of protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life; we will promote American prosperity; preserve peace through strength; and advance

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3/7

American influence.<sup>13</sup> can be generally aligned with the Canadian views, but with differing intent. “Protect the American People, homeland and American way of life” can loosely align with the RCN mandate to defend Canada’s domestic interests, while “promote American prosperity,” is the Canadian version of how the RCN projects Canada’s interests abroad through Global Engagement and international partnerships. “Preserve peace through strength” is clearly the US exerting its strength as the superpower nation, which is not a Canadian goal, yet Canada’s ability to “punch above its weight,” could be viewed as Canadian methods to remain a strong maritime nation.<sup>14</sup>

13. Reviewing the United Kingdom’s Defence Ministry “Fact Sheet 4: The National Security Tasks,” it is apparent the British approach and Canadian approach are very like-minded. Reference A is comparable using, “Anticipate, Adapt, Act,”<sup>15</sup> where the RCN must anticipate and adapt to threats and maintain a navy that is capable and relevant in technological advancements to identify and monitor risks that are a threat to the navy, or Canada and its partners. To tackle causes of instability, and exert Canadian influence worldwide, Canada must continue to remain engaged with allied nations to preserve peace and security in addition to Canada’s efforts to combat narcotics and human trafficking that directly impact domestic security.

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<sup>13</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. President Trump's New National Security Strategy. CSIS: Center for Strategic and International Studies. December 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick James, Nelson Michaud, Marc J. O'Reilly. Handbook on Canadian International Policy. p. 266-267 Lexington Books: Lanham, MD. 2006. 266-267

<sup>15</sup> Government of Canada. *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017. 63



14. Of the eight SSE core missions, three are specifically non-combat missions which the RCN must be prepared to perform: Engage in capacity building, provide assistance in responding to international and domestic disasters or major emergencies, and conduct Search and Rescue. These missions require that the RCN be internationally deployable, self-sustainable, ability to embark mission-specific personnel or equipment (such as disaster relief supplies) and the ability to transport those personnel and items ashore. Additionally, such operations require the general-purpose abilities to communicate with other units, units ashore in theatre as well as report nationally to Canada. From this, it can be concluded that the RCN must maintain or improve its abilities in capabilities that support operations other than war including, small boat operations to transfer personnel or materials, helicopter transport of personnel and equipment, and a robust communications system(s) to enable unclassified and unclassified communications nationally and internationally.

15. When using multi-purpose to define core RCN capabilities, a key is the ability to transition from operations other than war into a combat role. This is why it is key for the elements of a NTG to be prepared and equipped for all available missions and tasks when deployed, as the GC can reassign those assets to higher-priority missions at any moment with little time for the RCN to prepare or equip. The importance of flexibility was fundamental in 2008 when HMCS Ville De Quebec was reassigned from a NATO mission to support the World Food Program, and again in 2011 when HMCS Charlottetown was deployed on Operation

Mobile where the mission changed from, “a limited non-combat evacuation operation (NEO)... ‘to directly assisting the air campaign and Mistran forces.’”<sup>16</sup>

16. Charlottetown’s mission also highlighted that the RCN is once again needs to be prepared to support forces ashore. In humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations as well as combat operations, the RCN can expect to operate in greater frequency in the littorals and be expected to support forces ashore through the delivery of personnel and supplies or in the application of kinetic weapons or surveillance.<sup>17</sup> Canada should envision utilizing new platforms that have greater flexibility to embark mission loads and stores of items that can be easily embarked and offloaded ashore, similar to the “mission bay” designed in the Type 26 Global Combat Ship.<sup>18</sup>

17. As RCN operational deployments continue and expand globally, it is imperative that the force elements remain relevant in a modern combat environment. Using the general concepts of *Float, Move Fight*, the RCN must remain mobile, and self-sustaining (float and move) through versatile engineering and maintenance systems and protocols with sustainable serviceability and maintenance. For brevity purposes, only the ‘Fight’ aspect will be discussed further.

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<sup>16</sup> NATO. The Combined Joint Task Forces Concept. Last accessed 3 February 2018  
<https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/1999/9904-wsh/pres-eng/16cjtf.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Ben Lombardi. *The Future Maritime Operating Environment and the Role of Naval Power*. DRDC – Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. 2016. 72

<sup>18</sup> BAE Systems. “Type 26 Global Combat Ship.” Last accessed 3 February, 2018.  
<https://www.baesystems.com/en/product/global-combat-ship>

18. Focussing on the combat capability, it is vital that that RCN ensure that it modernizes those force elements and individual systems that permit combat functions in the following areas:

a. Self-defence in threat environments. This includes active and passive protection against subsurface threats of torpedoes and mines, air defence against missiles and aircraft, and the critical ability to detect threats at an increased range to permit the necessary systems to be made available. Detection systems must allow for off-board extension of sensors and weapons through any helicopters, unmanned aerial and subsurface systems, and space-based systems.

b. Defeat armed adversaries.<sup>19</sup> This can include the application of force in any surface, air and subsurface threat environments. Both state and non-state actors have or can acquire systems that can threaten a NTG in the subsurface and air realms. Sea-mines, conventional submarines and anti-ship or anti-air missile systems are readily available to Canada's enemies and could be used against naval assets if conflict erupts. Many of these threats are compounded in the littoral environment as a result of limited depth of water and ability to manoeuvre for ships and submarines. As allied nations increase operations in the littoral, these factors must be considered a priority to remain combat-capable.

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<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada. *International Operations*. National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. Last accessed 3 February 2018. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-how/international-operations.page>

c. Ability to support forces ashore.<sup>20</sup> A key purpose for a nation to have an internationally deployable naval force is to support armed forces ashore. These forces may be national or allied forces, which in itself, necessitates several capabilities.

(1) Naval Gunfire Support (NGS) and Naval Fires. As Canada continues to maintain one of the most capable special forces components amongst its allies, it is important to be able to provide support to those forces, and the follow-on forces through the application of weapons and sensors to threats. The RCN must acquire and maintain surveillance systems, naval guns and strike weapon systems that permit the location or destruction of threats to friendly forces.

(2) Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR). Critical in each component of naval operations and warfare, C4ISR is the enabler to allow the integration of intelligence, combat forces, and command to ensure the direct and accurate application of force to be effective. Without a robust network of voice, data, and Tactical Data Link (such as Link 16), the integration of joint and coalition forces is impossible and severely restricts mission capability and significantly increases the risk of mission failure and unit survivability.

(3) Submarines. With the increasing number of operations in and envisioned to take place in the littoral waters, it is imperative that the RCN continue to maintain a modern submarine capability as their versatility in is transferrable to the littoral environment. Submarines have the ability to stealthily deliver forces

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

and kinetic effects ashore while providing a force-multiplying intelligence and warning capability, even inside a nation's maritime boundaries. Canada must enhance its present submarine service to allow for naval fires ashore to support the other capabilities it already possesses.

- d. Submarines. NATO once explained how submarines are, “Arguably the most efficient fighting [force element] that have ever been developed [as they are] covert, mobile...[with] the potential for overwhelming lethality...across the spectrum of peace, crisis and war.”<sup>21</sup> However capable the Victoria-class is, Canada must look to improve the capability of the class, or incorporate capabilities into the next class that allow for extended global deployments. These deployment must include extended operations in the arctic; the ability to transport unmanned underwater systems, for mine warfare and special forces support; and the ability to employ naval fires in the littoral areas.
- e. Cyber. The UK states that, “Cyber security is one of the Government's top national security priorities.”<sup>22</sup> This priority is no different in Canada. SSE explains how, “potential adversaries, including state proxies and non-state actors, are rapidly developing cyber means to exploit the vulnerabilities inherent in the C4ISR systems.” Critical to Canada's maintenance of an interoperable force in full-spectrum combat, it is important to remain on the forefront of cyber development for military forces.

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<sup>21</sup> Ben Lombardi. *The Future Maritime Operating Environment and the Role of Naval Power*. DRDC – Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. 2016. 74

<sup>22</sup> House of Lords House of Commons. Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy: *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*. 2016. 26.

## CONCLUSION

19. The RCN must endeavour to enhance its interoperability in the Joint and coalition environment through the continued development and enhancement of a versatile high-readiness Naval Task Group. Only through a multi-purpose NTG comprised of ships, submarines, aircraft and support vessels can the RCN provide a general-purpose ability which can operate in any environment, up to and including full-spectrum combat. A fully equipped and modern NTG with a functional support and maintenance program provides the necessary flexibility for the greatest cost as the resulting affect is greater than the sum of the parts. A fully-operable combat ready NTG allows for sustained operations in operations other than war, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and counter-narcotics patrols, and the transition to integrated combat operations with a national Task Force or a combined operation with allies. “Frugality is a must. But safety is never free.”<sup>23</sup>

20. Reference C reaffirms “the need to maintain multi-purpose, combat-capable sea, land and air forces that will protect Canadians and project their interests and values abroad.” In a modern age of fiscal restraint and rapidly evolving capabilities the RCN must study its, “traditional roles [to] evolve in a way that is consistent with today's strategic and fiscal realities.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> George Robertson, "International Security and Law Enforcement - A Look Ahead," Last accessed 3 February, 2018. <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s010619a.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Canada. *1994 White Paper on Defence*. Last accessed 3 February 2018. <https://newatlas.com/royal-navy-type-31-e-frigate/51233/>. Conclusion

## RECOMMENDATION

21. It is recommended that the Royal Canadian Navy be modernized and enhanced to incorporate modern technology that will enable the force generation and force employment of a multi-ship task group that will meet the expectations of the Government of Canada and Canada's allies. This should be achieved through the use of internationally deployable surface ships, conventional submarines, support ships, organic aircraft, as well as unmanned systems in each air, surface, and subsurface realm. It is only through modern, flexible, combat-proven technology that the Royal Canadian can continue to remain general-purpose, and combat capable, conducting worldwide operations and activities on behalf of Canada.

**Annex(es):** A. Strong Secure Engaged, Canada's Defence Policy – Eight Core missions.  
B. Bibliography

**Annex A:**  
**REMAINING CREDIBLE: A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY  
IN THE GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

**Strong Secure Engaged, Canada's Defence Policy – Eight Core Missions:**

The following list of 'core missions' from Canada's Defence Policy, "Strong Secure Engaged"

1. SSE provides eight core missions which are:<sup>25</sup>
  - a. Detect, deter and defend against threats to or attacks on Canada;
  - b. Detect, deter and defend against threats to or attacks on North America in partnership with the United States, including through NORAD;
  - c. Lead and/or contribute forces to NATO and coalition efforts to deter and defeat adversaries, including terrorists, to support global stability;

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<sup>25</sup> SSE p. 82

- d. Lead and/or contribute to international peace operations and stabilization missions with the United Nations, NATO and other multilateral partners;
- e. Engage in capacity building to support the security of other nations and their ability to contribute to security abroad;
- f. Provide assistance to civil authorities and law enforcement, including counter-terrorism, in support of national security and the security of Canadians abroad;
- g. Provide assistance to civil authorities and non- governmental partners in responding to international and domestic disasters or major emergencies; and,
- h. Conduct search and rescue operations.



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