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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES CONTRIBUTION TO NATO'S CONCEPT OF MODERN DETERRENCE

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MODERN DETERRENCE**

By / Par le Major Rene Laporte

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AIM

1. The aim of this service paper is to outline how the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) can best support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and our allies through the adoption of the concept of 'modern deterrence'. This will be presented in the context of NATO deterrence operations and Canada's contribution, OP REASSURANCE.

INTRODUCTION

2. On deployed operations, the CAF is constantly and regularly operating within a combined environment, and usually part of a coalition force. On the international stage, it is always challenging to determine Canada's place in a military operation. This is particularly true when it pertains to peer-on-peer operations and when alliances are involved. As Canada's allegiance to NATO is unwavering, it is important to assess the motivations, goals and objectives of NATO for any operation in which Canada plays a part. Following the Russian Federation (RF) seizing of Crimea in 2014 and their subsequent military intervention in Ukraine, the relationship between the RF and NATO continued to deteriorate, and Canadian involvement in this relationship became inevitable.¹

3. As a result, Canadian participation in deterrence operations would need to mirror whatever NATO would adopt as a paradigm. The NATO paradigm of 'modern deterrence' will be investigated, and CAF participation will be assessed. This will be accomplished in three sections:

- a. A brief background on the initial NATO responses to the RF;
- b. An outline of traditional deterrence techniques and those that have been adopted by NATO; and
- c. Contribution by each Canadian domain to overall 'modern deterrence' practices.

DISCUSSION

NATO Reaction to the RF

4. The initial NATO response was discussed at the Wales Summit in 2014 as a doctrinal shift towards collective defense and deterrence. While there were countless responses, the two most significant will be discussed, the enhancement of the NATO Response Force (NRF) and deployment of battalions to Eastern European countries. One of the most significant implementations of the NRF was the creation of a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), able to deploy anywhere within two to three days.² The VJTF was established and

¹ Nossal, K.R. "Promises Made, Promises Kept? A Mid-Term Trudeau Foreign Policy Report Card," *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy: Canada Among Nations 2017* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.38

² NATO. *Warsaw Summit Communiqué*, last modified 29 March 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

certified by 2015 and put on standby. The intention was that NATO allies would be able to decrease the military reaction time and counter any military aggression against any members.

5. It was, however, the Warsaw Summit in 2016 that attempted to operationalize this shift and implement concrete action by NATO as the second significant response.³ NATO Allies agreed that battalions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland would be enhanced as one of the top priorities moving forward. The concept would be that these would be, “robust and multinational, demonstrating the strength of the transatlantic bond and making clear that an attack on one Ally will be met by forces from across the Alliance.”⁴ This was clearly an act of deterrence on the part of NATO.

Deterrence

General Deterrence vs Immediate Deterrence

6. The most significant difference between employing general deterrence versus immediate deterrence is the timeframe in which it is employed. General deterrence is the “ongoing, persistent effort to prevent unwanted actions over the long term and in noncrisis situations,” while immediate deterrence, “represents more short-term, urgent attempts to prevent a specific, imminent attack, most typically during a crisis.”⁵ When NATO shifted from assurance operations to deterrence operations after the annexation of Crimea, that shift represented a movement toward immediate deterrence. NATO anticipated that the RF could look to expand influence westward into the Baltic states and the intent was to prevent a potential imminent annexation. This is even more apparent with the bolstering of the NATO Response Force (NRF), increasing the amount of troops from 13,000 to 40,000 that could be quickly deployed.

Deterrence by Punishment vs Deterrence by Denial

7. These two concepts differ through either being an example of deterrence with military force (denial) or through threats of punishment if there were a military attack. Those punishments could come in the form of economic sanctions, threat of military force elsewhere or even nuclear action. To put it simply, the deterrence by denial, “is the equivalent of building a wall so high [in the Baltics] that Russia would be discouraged from climbing it.”⁶ Deterrence by punishment is a more flexible option, giving more options if military action were to break out. Based on the current deployment of forces in the Baltic states and the bolstering of the NRF - more specifically the creation of the VJTF – it appears as though NATO has shifted toward the use of deterrence by denial, but has not attributed enough resources to be effective. That being said, NATO could also use sanctions and has partners with a nuclear threat for deterrence by punishment.

³ Friis, K. “NATO after the Warsaw Summit,” *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century: An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*. (New York: Routledge, 2017) p.1

⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *Warsaw Summit Key Decisions February 2017*, last accessed 11 October 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_02/20170206_1702-factsheet-warsaw-summit-key-en.pdf

⁵ Mazarr, M.J. *Understanding Deterrence*, last accessed 12 October 2018, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf.

⁶ Ringsmose, J. & S. Rynning. “Can NATO’s new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force deter?” *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century: An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*, (New York: Routledge, 2017) p.18.

NATO and Modern Deterrence

8. Currently, NATO is trending between general and immediate deterrence as well as trending between deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. There are not enough forces pre-positioned for a quick reaction sufficient to fend off the RF if they chose to attack, nor are there enough powers of punishment from NATO if an attack were to take place, as they have neither defined nor developed a real punishment option.⁷ Despite the actions of the Wales and Warsaw summits and the shift toward one type of deterrence over another, NATO deterrence resides outside of the regular paradigm of deterrence. It is in this reality that NATO envisioned a new concept – ‘modern deterrence.’

9. ‘Modern deterrence’ is a relatively new concept and was designed and implemented by NATO as a response specifically to RF actions. Even though the conception or implementation is not fully formed, as defined by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg ‘modern deterrence’ is, “this combination of forward presence and ability to reinforce.”⁸ More specifically, “about making its defences credible without resorting to a major build-up of forces to counter the existing and future capabilities of Russia or other potential opponents.”⁹ It is within this new paradigm of ‘modern deterrence’ that Canada can contribute most effectively within each domain.

CAF Contribution

CAF Land Contribution to Deterrence

10. The CAF land contribution in 2014 was a task force to Central and Eastern Europe based in Poland. A second land force was implemented following the Warsaw Summit in 2016. Canada was charged with leading a NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group in Latvia. The entire battalion is not manned by the CAF, only the “headquarters staff, an infantry company with light armoured vehicles, military police and logistical and communications support”,¹⁰ making up 450 people.

11. ‘Modern deterrence’ is the only viable option for the Canadian Army (CA) to participate in when it comes to operating within NATO and coalition forces. Ringsmose and Rynning (2017) believe that in a peer-to-peer land battle with the RF, there are two major problems. First, if Russia determined that they wanted to take the Baltic States by military force, they would probably not be dissuaded by losses. Second, NATO would not be willing to forward deploy enough force to truly deter.¹¹ A study published by Rand Corporation in 2016 determined that it would require a force of, “seven brigades, including three heavy armoured brigades – adequately supported by air power, land-based fires...could suffice to prevent the rapid overrun of the Baltic

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Stoltenberg, J. *Doorstep*, last accessed 12 October 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_127825.htm.

⁹ Kulesa, L. & T. Frear. *NATO's Evolving Modern Deterrence Posture: Challenges and Risks*, last accessed 12 October 2018, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/NATOs-Evolving-Deterrence-Posture-ELN.pdf>.

¹⁰ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, “Operation REASSURANCE,” last modified on 26 September 2018, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad/nato-ee.page>.

¹¹ Ibid, p.19

states.”¹² Even with the might of the entire CA deployed to that one section of the world, they would not be able to prevent a Russian invasion. Therefore, fitting into the paradigm of ‘modern deterrence’ is the most viable option, and this is what the CA is successfully doing now.

*CAF Air Contribution to Deterrence*¹³

12. The main RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force) contribution to Op REASSURANCE is an Air Task Force (ATF) deployed Constanta, Romania. This consists of five CF-188 Hornets, participating in NATO enhanced Air Policing.¹⁴ The RCAF is contributing specifically to the NATO Readiness Action Plan (RAP) with an on-site air patrol capability on behalf of NATO for protection of Alliance airspace. However, according to Allers (2017), in order to achieve a truly ‘modern deterrence’, there must be, “a posture that goes far beyond the deployment of NATO forces to the eastern flank...advanced ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capabilities.”¹⁵ In 2016, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also identified a gap in NATO capability, air surveillance.¹⁶

13. The contribution to NATO from the RCAF is a good example of how a country like Canada can contribute to a collective ‘modern deterrence’ paradigm. The ATF fits into the RAP by filling a mission of air power, however, it is clear that there are other needs that can be addressed (ISR). The CP-140 Aurora is a highly valuable ISR asset and this capability can be used throughout the world, no matter the mission as a force multiplier. The CF-188 only fit into a small niche of needs, mostly covering peer-on-peer missions. With no replacement in sight, the Super Hornet is not the platform the RCAF should look to contribute. Even though the Op REASSURANCE lens looks at the RF as the adversary, in the future, contributing an ISR platform could allow more flexibility in ‘modern deterrence’ operations. This is the most effective way to support our allies moving forward.

CAF Maritime Contribution to Deterrence

14. In the context of Op REASSURANCE, Canada has one frigate which is dedicated to be a part of NATO operations and has employed seven ships since deterrence operations began in

¹² Shlapak, D.A. & M.W. Johnson. *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO’s Eastern Flank: Wargaming the defense of the Baltics*, last accessed 12 October 2018, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html.

¹³ While the air and space domains are combined in NATO, they do not currently have a policy on space. “The NATO command structures have not issued any military strategy or policy for space operations. The only published document so far is the Allied Joint Doctrine for Air and Space Operations which provides general guidance on conducting operations in the outer space environment. The document does not outline offensive and defensive space capabilities, tactics, or research and development. Rather, it simply introduced guidance for the role of space support in operational planning. The doctrine stated clearly that aim of the Alliance operations in space is to protect and preserve friendly space capabilities, withstand or suppress enemy attack, and to restore/recover from it. The second document, NATO Space Handbook was released to support commanders and staff in their work on space matters, providing an explanation of space fundamentals.” Fleischer, P. “Above the Moon: NATO Space Policy,” last modified on 9 September 2016, <http://future nato.org/articles/above-the-moon-nato-space-policy/>.

¹⁴ National Defence, 26 September 2018.

¹⁵ Allers, R. “Modern Deterrence? NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence on the Eastern Flank.” *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century: An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*, (New York: Routledge, 2017): 31.

¹⁶ Stoltenberg, J. *Doorstep*, last accessed 14 October 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_127825.htm.

2014.¹⁷ Generally, the ships are part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG 1) or Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG 2), depending on where Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) allocates tasking. Operations and Exercises have taken place between the Baltic and Mediterranean Sea, incorporating a multitude of nations within NATO and allies of NATO. These operations and exercises by SNMG 1/2, as well as the Allied Mine Countermeasures Groups have intensified as part of the NATO RAP.

15. The action by NATO in the maritime domain was done with the intention of convincing the RF that Allied nations are committed to challenging aggression at sea.¹⁸ This action is not wasteful, as “Any disruptive campaign at sea in the Baltic is likely to use conventional naval forces in ways that are analogous to the background role that ground forces played during the Crimea invasion and the eastern Ukraine intervention.”¹⁹ These actions are also part of the adaption of the RAP, “ensuring the Alliance can respond swiftly, firmly and fully to security,”²⁰ which is the basis of the ‘modern deterrence’ paradigm that NATO has adopted and the CAF currently supports in the maritime domain. Consequently, based on the timelines for the major capital acquisition programs of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) coming in the next decade, the current participation both supports where the RCN can contribute, especially in ‘modern deterrence’.

CAF Special Operations Contribution to Deterrence

16. Nationally, special operations forces can be extremely valuable as a strategic and political asset, and within NATO this is no exception as they are most useful in countering irregular or hybrid warfare. As a result, NATO integrated special forces into the expanded NRF and the VJTF. This was especially important since the likelihood of Russian use of irregular warfare is much higher than the likelihood of conventional warfare.²¹ This quick reaction force could be called upon to act as required or requested in the response from any irregular threat.

17. The CAF has not officially provided any special operations forces contribution to Op REASSURANCE. However, based on the size of the current force and the progression of the Canadian Special Forces Operations Command (CANSOFCOM) toward FOC, it would not be recommended to provide a force that contributes to the NRF and overt deterrent operations. However, given the importance and specialization of CANSOFCOM in Phase Zero operations, this is the domain within special forces that can provide the most impactful contribution toward NATO’s concept of ‘modern deterrence.’²²

¹⁷ National Defence, 26 September 2018.

¹⁸ Murphy, M. & G. Schaub Jr. “‘Sea of Peace’ or Sea of War,” *Naval War College Review* Vol 71, Iss 2 (Spring 2018): 143

¹⁹ Murphy & Schaub., 146.

²⁰ Oguz, S. “The New NATO: Prepared for Russian Hybrid Warfare?” *Insight Turkey*, Vol 18, No 4 (Fall 2016): 166. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1868135271/fulltextPDF/B6F6D7FD7A364375PQ/1?accountid=9867>.

²¹ Oguz., 175.

²² “Shape (Phase 0). Joint and multinational operations—inclusive of normal and routine military activities—and various interagency activities are performed to dissuade or **deter** potential adversaries and to assure or solidify relationships with friends and allies.” Department of Defence. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Operation Planning, JP 5-0. Vol. 1. (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), III-42.

CAF Cyber Contribution to Deterrence

18. The CAF cyber domain is a relatively new capability that is being grown. While there are low expectations that cyber will be able to contribute in the near future to an allied deterrent operation, the outlook suggests that it will be realized. The most recent white paper, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* outlines the need to increase the cyber capability of the CAF, emphasizing the need to both protect military networks and equipment against cyber attacks and conduct offensive cyber operations against adversaries.²³ In concert with the seriousness of the cyber domain, NATO has concluded that a cyber attack could constitute an Article 5 response, and that cyber deterrence operations are critical to the defence of allies and partners through exchanging knowledge, intelligence and training.²⁴

19. Canadian contribution to deterrence operations in the cyber domain relates specifically to participation in the newly created NATO Cyber Operations Center. The intent of the center is to integrate cyber operations into the command structure and decision making, and, “strengthen our cyber defences, and help integrate cyber into NATO planning and operations at all levels...also agreed that we will be able to integrate Allies’ national cyber capabilities into NATO missions and operations.”²⁵ The growth of the CAF and NATO cyber capabilities parallel each other in time and space, especially with the creation of the new Cyber Operator trade in the CAF. In order to contribute to a new age of cyber deterrence, the CAF should leverage this parallel growth to integrate and contribute as much as possible into the center, creating positions for the center under the umbrella of Op REASSURANCE. This would allow the CAF to learn how cyber can and will be used by allies with a more robust capability. This contribution also supports NATO’s attempt to operationalize the concept of ‘modern deterrence,’ providing a small force with the ability to react if required.

CONCLUSION

20. In order to effectively operate in a coalition environment, it is important that Canada understands the objective of the operation. Op REASSURANCE is Canada’s contribution to deterrence operations, however the term “deterrence” can have many meanings and goals. With the case of deterrence operations and the RF, NATO has created and adopted the paradigm of ‘modern deterrence’, of which Canada can participate effectively across multiple domains.

RECOMMENDATION

21. The new concept of ‘modern deterrence’ created and adopted by NATO should be embraced by the CAF moving forward as a member of a coalition.

²³ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Government of Canada, 2017. p.73.

²⁴ Stoltenberg, J. “Why cyberspace matters as much to NATO as land, sea and air defence,” *Financial Times*, 12 July 2018.

²⁵ NATO. *Press Conference*, 08 November 2017, last modified 08 November 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_148417.htm.

- a. The CA effectively contributes to the paradigm of 'modern deterrence' with current contributions, and the status quo would position it well for future coalition operations.
- b. The RCAF contributes successfully in an air policing role, covering a need. However, it should focus on ISR capabilities, as they are more flexible across a multitude of missions.
- c. The RCN currently contributes successfully to the VJTF and all of the concepts of 'modern deterrence', with persistence and quick reaction in theatre.
- d. CANSOFCOM can contribute more toward Phase Zero operations to enable 'modern deterrence' operation, and continue to embed into allied SOF teams.
- e. All efforts should be made to embed the CAF in the newly developing cyber capability of NATO, specifically the Cyber Operations Center.

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