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“ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY’S CORE CAPABILITIES”

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“ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY’S CORE CAPABILITIES”

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'The essence of navies is their military character. Actual or latent violence is their currency. It is a navy's ability to threaten and use force which gives meaning to its other modes of action'.

– Ken Booth, *Navies and Foreign Policy*, 1977.

AIM

1. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate what are the core capabilities that a middle-power navy such as the Royal Canadian Navy¹ has to retain to be general-purpose and combat-effective, and how those capabilities can be justified.²

INTRODUCTION

2. Canada is a maritime country. Despite the fact that it has one of the largest coastlines, its existence among three oceans, its maritime tradition, its commitments to international security, its legal maritime endows from UNCLOS³ that gives a vast Economic Exclusive Zone and a potentially-claimed sea bed over its continental shelf; 'Canada is a maritime nation because it trades'⁴, i.e. how dependant Canada is from whatever occurs on the ocean directly or indirectly. Impacts on Canadian's life due to events at sea are immediate. This fact makes reasonably obvious the need of a navy.
3. Threats and challenges for maritime environment are rapidly changing, and to face them there's a need of an up-dated, capable and credible navy, able to compel its mission. Of course, resources are always limited and the need to justify maintenance and capability renewal is a hard and standing task for Navy Staff.

DISCUSSION

General-purpose navy

4. What is a general-purpose navy? Experts in maritime strategy had classified navies according to their potential, capabilities and mission statements, et al. Probably the two most cited are Eric Grove's and Michael Lindberg's ones. Both classifies based mainly on reach, missions and size⁵. Todd and Lindberg classification system⁶ also includes a line between

¹ Further RCN.

² Due to the particularities of each country and its navy, this work cannot be endorsed to other middle-power navy, but offers some arguments that could help further analysis.

³ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

⁴ Royal Canadian Navy, *Canada in a New Maritime World. Leadmark 2050* (RCN, 2017) 2.

⁵ Categories like: major global force projection complete, limited global-reach power-projection, medium global force projection, medium regional force projection and constabulary navies, are some of those.

blue and non-blue water navies. These categories help to understand that navies have different capabilities that give them the ability to fulfil certain roles. Former RCN Officer Peter Haydon established the need of incorporating political dimension in order to enhance what's the relative importance that a country gives to its navy⁷.

5. Till used Canadian Navy as an example to define 'balanced fleet' explaining that having wide capacities, allows navies to fit like blocks with others when required⁸. RCN defines balanced as: 'with an appropriate mix of ships, submarines, aircrafts and unmanned vehicles in sufficient numbers to meet commitments at home and abroad, while retaining a naval task group at high readiness'⁹. Additionally, argues that a general-purpose fleet is the one able to fulfil three main lines of operations: to sustain security and defense commitments in their three oceans, to sustain forward-deployed continental and international operations, and to hold a naval task group at readiness against contingencies.
6. Then, by general-purpose navy we will understand a blue-water navy¹⁰, balanced size, capable to fulfil most of navy roles' spectrum at home and abroad, without any particular specialization, and able to fit with others to operate internationally.

Roles

7. Which roles or which part of the spectrum should that general-purpose navy be able to fulfil? Most of western navies define their roles according to what Ken Booth argued on late 70's. The RN¹¹ argues that this trinity has evolved to war fighting, maritime security and defense engagement¹². Booth concepts were used by RCN^{13 14}. Today's doctrine¹⁵ uses three main roles: protecting Canada, preventing conflict and projecting national power, aligned with their defense policy¹⁶. All RCN documents make great emphasis on international operations, focused on securing the global trade system, giving high importance to global maritime environment and some to domestic one; Leadmark 2050 enhance a bit more constabulary roles with an explicit focus on being an Arctic capable navy. RCN statement is 'to defend the global system at sea and from the sea, both at home and abroad'¹⁷.

⁶ Ghermandi, Davide, *Asian and European Middle Powers: A Comparative Analysis on Energy Security and Naval Forces* (International Studies Association's International Conference, Hong Kong, 2017), last accessed 13.Octobre 2018. <http://web.isanet.org/Web/Conferences/HKU2017-s/Archive/944e6a16-1b97-484a-ac32-d57ce9bc6c82.pdf>

⁷ Corbett Centre for Maritime Studies Series, *Small Navies. Strategy and Policy for Small Navies in War and Peace* (Routledge 2016, edited by Michael Mulqueen, Deborah, Sanders and Ian Speller) e-book, chapter 3, table 3.1, 22%.

⁸ Till, Geoffrey, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (Frank Cass Publishers, 2004) 119-120.

⁹ Ibid.4. 57.

¹⁰ Ibid.4. 57. RCN defines itself as blue-water navy.

¹¹ Royal Navy.

¹² Ministry of Defense, Joint Doctrine Publication 0-10 UK Maritime Power (Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 5th Edition, October 2017) 51.

¹³ Royal Canadian Navy, *Securing Canada's Ocean Frontiers. Charting the Course from Leadmark*. (RCN, 2005). 18.

¹⁴Royal Canadian Navy, *Leadmark: the Navy's strategy for 2020*. (RCN, 2001). 31. It is interesting to realize that most of the concepts of this work are completely valid today, even challenges and potential threats descriptions. The only absent ones are hybrid warfare and nowadays cheap high-tech affecting all environments.

¹⁵ Ibid., 4. 13-31.

¹⁶ Minister of National Defense, *Strong Secure Engaged, Canada's Defense Policy* (Canadian Armed Forces, 2017).

¹⁷ Ibid., 4. 11.

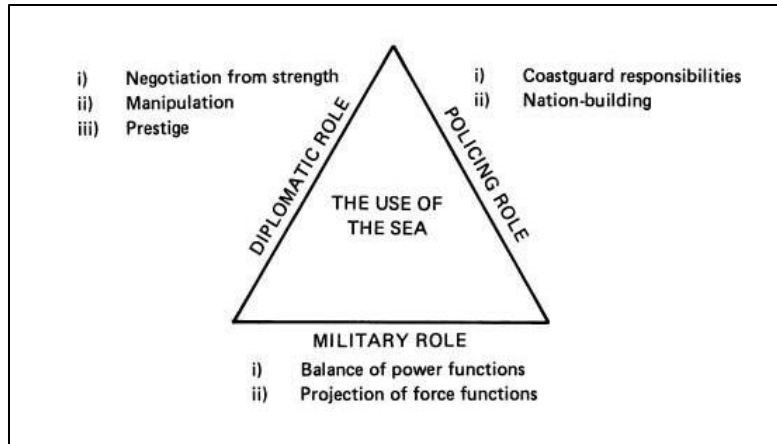


Figure 1. Functions of navies¹⁸.

8. From Booth's trinity we would like to highlight the policing role, particularly the nation-building one, what in Booth's terms is the contribution to internal stability and development; navies that has this role as part of their mission, it's every day's business, more than the military or diplomatic ones. We will back to this fact afterwards.
9. Analyzing previous arguments, we can say that RCN roles are mainly the same used by most navies, with a special focus on the international scenario.

RCN Role	Identified function	Identified task	Booth relation¹⁹	Strategic concept
Protecting Canada	Exercising sovereignty in home waters	Support federal partners	M & C	Security
		Awareness, presence and control (Arctic emphasis due to climate change)	C	
		Search and rescue	C	Security
		Defend home waters	M	Defense
	Contributing to Maritime Peace and Good Order Abroad	Maritime security operations ²⁰ .	M, D & C	Security

¹⁸ Booth, Ken, *Navies and Foreign Policy* (Routledge Revivals, 1977) e-book, Chapter 1, pos.132 (34%)

¹⁹ Caveat: nor M, C or D role is isolated from the others. Most of the times there's a diffuse boundary between all.

²⁰ According to US Government, *Naval Doctrine Publication 1 Naval Warfare* (US Navy, 2010), e-book, Glossary, MSO are those operations to protect maritime sovereignty and resources and to counter maritime-related terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration.

Preventing Conflict	Strengthening relationships	Global engage with Allies and Partners (typically NATO & 5 eyes exercises and regular deployments).	M & D	Deterrence	
	Promoting global stability	Peace support operations.	M & D	Presence	
		HA/DR	C & D		
	Deterring and containing conflict	Forward presence deployments	Peace keeping	D & M	Deterrence
			Peace Enforcement	M & D	
Projecting national Power	Maritime and Joint 'Act' ²¹ .	Engaging in war-type deployments (actions at and from the sea)	D & M	Power projection	

Table 1. 'Royal Canadian Navy Roles'²²

10. One can argue that the emphasis is on military instead diplomatic; however, the analysis of RCN document suggests that all three roles have a diplomatic component, even protecting Canada. What is between lines is the fact that to fulfil those roles there's a need of real and credible combat capabilities which justify further investments.

Core capabilities

11. What do core means? While some navies names attributes in their doctrines (e.g. mobility, reach, access, flexibility, lift, et al.²³), US Navy don't and used 'core capabilities' instead: 'The capabilities of US naval forces are linked to the policies and strategies espoused at the national level and support the execution of the maritime strategy'²⁴: forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security and HA/DR²⁵. That's the way US Navy puts tenets of maritime strategy into practice.
12. What we would like to highlight that almost all functions and tasks described in Table 1 are related to a Military role. Additionally, full-spectrum military capabilities as we know them

²¹ This term is referred to CAF operational function.

²² Elaboration of the author.

²³ Speller, Ian, and other 5 authors, *Understanding Modern Warfare* (Cambridge University Press, Second Ed., 2016) 162-163.

²⁴ US Government, *Naval Doctrine Publication 1 Naval Warfare* (US Navy, 2010), e-book, Chapter 3, pos 655 (44%).

²⁵ Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (some sources uses relief instead response). On US Navy 2015 strategy, they don't use the term 'core capabilities' anymore, adding all domain access and including HA/DR within power projection concept.

today, allows navies to fulfil a broad range of other tasks as required; this is what is known as multipurpose (without any particular specialization).

13. What is so unique about a navy that only they can do? To answer this question we will use two statements. a) Taking attributes of naval forces²⁶ and the environment they operate, navies has the exclusive ability to produce effects at sea and from the sea in order to influence events on land (paraphrasing Wayne Hughes, ultimate mission is always on land²⁷); and b) ‘To defend the global system at sea and from the sea, both at home and abroad’²⁸.
14. Cambridge Dictionary defines core as ‘the basic and most important part of something’²⁹. With, US Navy approach, we could argue that core capabilities are those which allow to compel the mission, but, is any Navy called to fulfil every role at the same time? In this paper, we will understand by core capabilities as the essence of the role’s spectrum, i.e. what cannot be fulfilled by any other organization both at home and abroad. Other approaches could be offered (e.g. political or economical) but we will focus on the navy one (military).
15. To answer core capabilities question, we need to look into the ‘identified functions and task’ columns in order to have a concrete sense of what we’re looking for. Then, RCN is the only Canadian organization commanded to and with the exclusive ability to fulfil:

Identified function	Identified task	Explanation
Exercising sovereignty in home waters	Support federal partners	Not exclusive (other Gov’t organizations could do it).
	Awareness, presence and control	RCN is commanded to do it. It’s its responsibility
	Search and rescue	1. Only organization with this ability and commanded to do it.
	Defend home waters (from a broad range of threats)	Idem. 1.
Contributing to Maritime Peace and Good Order Abroad	Maritime security operations	Tis task contributes to keep threats away from Canada’s waters.
Strengthening relationships	Global engage with Allies and Partners.	With other CAF services produce deterrence. Military forces are commanded to do it.

²⁶ Ibid, 23.

²⁷ Hughes, Wayne, *Fleet Tactics and Costal Combat* (Naval Institute Press, 2nd Edition, 2000)

²⁸ Ibid., 14

²⁹ Cambridge University on line Dictionary. Last accessed 13 October 2018.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/core>

Promoting global stability	Peace support operations.	2. Not exclusive (Army, Air Force and other Gov't organizations could do it).
	HA/DR	Idem. 2.
Deterring and containing conflict	Forward presence deployments	This one allows Canada to have forces deployed ready to attend intl. issues. Additionally, produces deterring.
	Peace keeping	Idem. 2.
	Peace Enforcement	Idem. 2.
Maritime and Joint 'Act' ³⁰ .	Engaging in war-type deployments	The core of the core of a Navy, acting jointly with other services, partners and allies.

Table 2. Royal Canadian Navy's core roles.

16. Thus, the core capabilities of the RCN are the ones that allow to fulfil the tasks and functions listed above, by threatening or using force, producing effects at sea or from the sea in order to influence events on land, with the final purpose of defending global (trade) system, at home or abroad. To do so, military (combat) capabilities are essential.

Combat-effective

17. Using broadly known concepts, effective is the ability to accomplish a mission, without taking care on requiring resources. On the other hand, combat is related to fight against an enemy³¹, usually at the most demanding part of conflict's spectrum. Then, combat capability is the ability to fight (usually assigned by law to military forces).

18. The RN Doctrine explains: 'Fighting power is at the core of every military Service as it defines the ability to conduct successful operations'³². This fighting (or combat) capability has a conceptual, moral and physical component, i.e. a justification to be engaged in a fight, actual motivation to fight (people) and proper means to do so. The ability to fight has its purpose in shaping, protecting, engaging and exploiting certain effects over an enemy or the maritime environment in order to influence events on land. Till argues that combat effectiveness is related to professional skill of a navy's people, readiness, supply and infrastructure, and balance³³.

³⁰ This term is referred to CAF operational function.

³¹ Cambridge University on line Dictionary. Last accessed 13 October 2018. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/combat>

³² Ibid., 9. 29

³³ Ibid., 7. 117-120.

19. With these ingredients in mind, we now have an idea of what does combat-effective means. The ability to achieve a combat mission/goal effectively depends not solely on means, but also people, motivation, readiness, training and political (legal) reason.

Justifying

20. How can those capabilities be justified? Today's scenario is rapidly changing forms, challenges and threats...US-China trade war, Russian growing influence, China building maritime polar capabilities, global warming potentially opening an Arctic passage, high demand for sea natural resources on near future, extreme postures rising (some of them religious), hard nationalism raising as trend around the world, world's US-monopoly turning into multipolar, etc. Countries like Canada that are 'engaged'³⁴ in world's security cannot have the luxury of taking too much time to decide what to do in mid-term future. The picture looks hard, and there is no evidence that suggests it is going to change for good.
21. RCN main commitment is with Canada itself, then, the ability to secure its own waters is crucial. In this sense, we need to find an approach that calls peoples' attention and approval on this media-world: supporting people, delivering aid, supporting Arctic research, exercising Arctic presence, among others. So every single chance to show those tasks to justify why Canada's has a navy and why that navy needs to be properly equipped, are to be used.
22. The Arctic; it is an inhospitable tremendous mass of land with undiscovered resource potential; it needs to be watched, researched and defended. The more interest shown on last decade by Russia, China and US on it warns about how important should be on Canada's priorities. Global trade will be taken care by many navies, but only one can take care about his part of the arctic. Canada is engaged in giving RCN more Arctic capabilities through AOPS De Wolf class project, however, the ability to operate sustainably an eventually engage with enforcement tasks is out of today's and projected capabilities. An Arctic enforcement scenario will demand capable Submarine Service as the main mean in the list with the potential of operating below the ice shelf (last generation of diesel-electric with AIP).
23. RCN has no research ship capable, meaning a ship conceived exclusively for that purpose and able to provide data to Canada for its own benefit, and not only for military purposes, there will be a huge queue of national and international companies waiting for engaging in Arctic research supported by the RCN. On the other side of the planet, the Antarctica, navies are the ones that support domestic and international research. This is exactly a 'nation-building' example³⁵.
24. Canada faces three oceans; since the Arctic is open only few times over a year period, is absolutely compulsory that RCN have standing means on both coasts. The size of a navy is

³⁴ Ibid., 13. 61.

³⁵ See Figure 1.

relative to the area to cover or the range of missions assigned at the same time. Canada has the 10th GDP in the worlds list, with one of the largest coastlines in the world and a tremendous sea area to cover both territorial and non territorial (e.g. SAR area assigned by IMO³⁶).

25. RCN is lack of sea lift capability and it is something that needs to be explored in near future. Examples like Falklands and Gulf wars gives enough evidence about how crucial is that capability to sustain operations abroad, and it is an inherently joint one. In this same sense, CAF has no expeditionary capability, also inherently joint one that provides strength to forces when the most demanding part of conflict's spectrum arrives.

CONCLUSION

26. On previous discussion, we pass through some concepts and facts that allow us to answer the question. Then, we are looking for a general-purpose combat-effective RCN, means: a blue-water navy, balanced size, without any particular specialization, with the ability to achieve effectively its core roles by gathering people, training and combat means that follows a political will, in order to produce effects at and from the sea, at home or with others (abroad), to influence events on land.

27. The Core capabilities that RCN requires are:

- a. Navy crew motivated and properly trained.
- b. Blue-water surface combatants and submarine means. Due to their flexibility and multipurpose concept are capable to fulfil effectively all core roles.
- c. Two fleets, one on each coast (size is to be defined in following papers).
- d. Arctic capable means (eventually combat ones too).
- e. Supply means, able to sustain Surface Combatants abroad (both coasts).
- f. Oceanic-Arctic Research capability.

28. Our approach to justify those are:

- a. Today's scenario forces to act quickly leaving little room for improvisation.
- b. Canada has a tremendous responsibility over its Arctic territory that needs to be watched, properly populated and defended (sovereignty).
- c. Canadas maritime responsibility at home and beyond (includes Arctic) requires the ability to patrol, secure and exploit the sea for its own purposes.
- d. All RCN today's and tomorrow's capabilities will ensure safety and security to Canadians and provide enough potential to aid others abroad when required.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Further exploration on sealift and expeditionary capabilities are highly recommended in order to enhance the navy as the most important joint enabler on the support and reach-sustainably side.

³⁶ International Maritime Organization, depending of United Nations.

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