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## THE CANADIAN MECHANIZED BRIGADE GROUP TARGETING CYCLE

By Major D.J. Vincent

**JCSP 45**

**Service Paper**

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE/COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
JCSP 45/PCEMI 45  
15 October 2018

DS 545 Component Capabilities/ DS545 Capacités des composantes

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By Major D.J. Vincent  
Par le major D.J. Vincent

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Word Count: 2,202

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## THE CANADIAN MECHANIZED BRIGADE GROUP TARGETING CYCLE

### AIM

1. The aim of this service paper is to discuss and propose recommendations on the future use of targeting at the brigade level within the current Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (CMBG) construct. Currently targeting within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is taught and employed according to both Canadian and allied doctrine as currently demonstrated on Op IMPACT. Targeting at the CMBG level is used in the same manner, however due to the tactical space within which the CMBG operates and the collective training delivery model, the current targeting model does not allow the CMBG to fully participate in the deliberate targeting cycle.

### INTRODUCTION

2. The development of both joint and land targeting doctrine in the form of CFJP 3-9 *Targeting* and B-GL-352-000 *Land Targeting* respectively represent the institutionalization of targeting within the CAF. Additionally improvements to delivery of targeting training within the Canadian Army (CA) such as the Joint Tactical Targeting Course (JTTC) and the Collateral Damage Estimation Course (CDE) both delivered by the Canadian Army Command and Staff College (CACSC) demonstrate the significant investment made by the CA in ensuring that the targeting process be institutionalized<sup>1</sup>.

3. While targeting has been adopted as an important element in the conduct of operations within the CAF it has not been used properly or successfully at the brigade level within the CA for two specific reasons. First, there is incongruence between targeting and the Operational Planning Process (OPP). While the two can and often do work very well together, the targeting cycle does not currently align seamlessly with the OPP. The two processes operate at different stages and can often duplicate staff effort, such as the creation of the Effects Guidance Matrix (EGM), which can create confusion and wasted staff effort in a time constrained environment.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the current post-Afghanistan model for training CMBGs for high readiness, exercise series UNIFIED RESOLVE (UR) and MAPLE RESOLVE (MR), does not allow for the targeting cycle to be properly exercised to its full potential, resulting in the process falling by the wayside and the staff becoming disillusioned with its usefulness.

### DISCUSSION

4. Canadian doctrine currently uses OPP as the process by which problems are defined, risks are identified, and courses of action developed, and may be applied to any military situation not only full scale war.<sup>3</sup> OPP enables commanders to make decisions about how to solve a particular problem, and is enabled by key staff and advisors. Similarly, targeting is a process by which the commander selects targets within the battlespace which require effects, both kinetic

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Army Command and Staff College. *Briefing Note for Comd CADTC – Army Targeting*, 17 Oct 15

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Shine. “A way to execute the brigade targeting process”, *Fires*, (May-June) 2018: 64.

<sup>3</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. CFJP 5.0 Change 2. *The Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*. Ottawa: Joint Doctrine Branch, Canadian Warfare Center: 1-1.

and non-kinetic, assigns and prioritizes assets all in order to shape the battlespace and effectively create the conditions for success.<sup>4</sup> Both processes aim to solve a problem for the commander and create options to achieve mission success. However, the two often operate as separate processes and can come in conflict with each other if they create duplicate and redundant staff products.

5. Currently, CAF joint doctrine does not incorporate targeting as an integral part of the OPP.<sup>5</sup> While targeting is acknowledged as something that is absolutely required in the conduct of operations, it is not afforded its own standalone section or chapter within the preeminent joint publication on CAF operational planning; in fact the word ‘targeting’ is only mentioned twice in the entire Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 5.0 *Operational Planning Process*. Despite this, CAF targeting doctrine acknowledges that the targeting process is fundamental to planning at all levels.<sup>6</sup> However, both processes remain separate and distinct from each other rather than one unified process that is meant to be flexible and responsive to both operational and tactical considerations.

6. Within the CA, the OPP at the CMBG level exists as a process that operates in cooperation with the targeting process but not as an integral part of it; while targeting exists as iterative processes conducted during both the planning and conduct of an operation.<sup>7</sup> Targeting does not end once the commander delivers orders. Although the CA has acknowledged that targeting is a process that works best when operating in tandem with the OPP, it has not been fully adopted as a critical portion of the OPP and is not fully addressed within the OPP Handbook published by the CACSC.

7. Confusion is exemplified by supporting activities of the OPP that take place throughout planning, and although they are not labelled as such perform many of the same functions as targeting. The development of the EGM during Stage 3 – Course of Action (COA) Development is the comprehensive tool that provides guidance and recommendations on the prosecution of targets to the CMBG commander. The EGM is the end product of numerous other supporting processes such as the Intelligence Preparation of the Operating Environment (IPOE), Information Operations Working Group (IOWG), and Fires WG.<sup>8</sup> Targets that may be prosecuted by organic capabilities to the CMBG are then tasked to subordinate elements, while targets that lay outside the range band or capability band of organic units may be nominated higher for prosecution. Although the production of the EGM performs some of the same functions of targeting, it does not replace the targeting process, as it does not provide a fully developed collateral damage estimate or assessment of military necessity. It is these blurring of responsibilities between the two processes that creates this confusion. There is a requirement to retain the targeting process within CAF and CA doctrine, but it requires to be fully incorporated into OPP to become a truly supporting function of the planning process.

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<sup>4</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. CFJP 3-9, *Targeting*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Ottawa: Joint Doctrine Branch, Canadian Warfare Centre: 4-1.

<sup>5</sup> CFJP 5.0 Change 2. *The Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*.

<sup>6</sup> CFJP 3-9, *Targeting*. 4-1.

<sup>7</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *The Operational Planning Process Handbook*, Canadian Army Command and Staff College. Kingston: DND Canada, 2017: 69

<sup>8</sup> Ibid: 69.

8. In addition to the confusion on the doctrine, the current model for training CMBGs for high readiness (HR) does not support the conduct of deliberate targeting as it only allows for dynamic targeting, and perhaps only combat engagements, within the confines of a time constrained and tightly controlled training environment that attempts to replicate contemporary operations. In current operations it is quite normal for the majority of engagements at the tactical level (i.e. brigade and below) to be dynamic in nature if not an outright combat engagement, which is not targeting at all but rather is covered under the rules of engagement of any operational theatre.<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is perhaps unrealistic to expect a brigade to exercise a function that will not be realistically utilised on operations.

9. Recent operational experience has shown targeting to be labour and asset intensive, by far exceeding the current organic capabilities of a CMBG. Consider that the time required to fully develop one single target, including collection and analytical work, can be upwards of approximately 100 to 500 hours.<sup>10</sup> Not only are CMBGs not structured to conduct this rigorous work, the CT model would not support it as exercises such as UR and MR typically run anywhere from 6 to 14 days in length. The exercise would simply be over before the brigade would be able to truly run through a complete targeting cycle.

10. Throughout the conduct of both UR and MR the focus is placed on evaluating the CMBG on its ability to plan and execute tactical operations. The tempo from the issuing of higher orders to the start of simulation does not allow for a proper targeting cycle within the prescribed 96 hour window for coalition air operations. For example, the scenario on Ex UR 2018 placed both CMBGs within the theatre of operations for over 70 days by the time the simulation started.<sup>11</sup> If this had been an actual deployment the brigade staff would have used that time to work collaboratively with the both the National Command Element (NCE) as well as the Multinational Division (MND) to conduct a deliberate targeting cycle concurrent to the OPP in an effort to shape the battlespace prior to commencement of operations. The reality of the training environment was that the staff only had approximately four days to conduct all elements of planning and was therefore incapable of nominating targets to the coalition. The end result is that often the deliberate targeting cycle is relegated as a secondary effort to the OPP and the dynamic targeting cycle is the only targeting that the brigade is capable of truly exercising. Within the current construct of training CMBGs for HR dynamic targeting remains the most extensively used of the targeting processes.

11. Although targeting has been institutionalized within the CAF in recent years, it has failed to become a prominent aspect of brigade level training. For example a review of the last two Post Exercise Reports (PXR) for Ex UR from the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Center (CMTTC), reveal that targeting did not feature prominently in the exercise. In fact, due to time constraints the only training that was conducted prior to the execution of the exercise in 2018

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<sup>9</sup> David Holtz. "Joint Targeting and Targeting in Iraq: A Canadian Experience." *Canadian Army Journal*, vol 17, no 3 (2017): 50.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: 51.

<sup>11</sup> The author was a staff officer on Ex UR in 2017 in 1 Cdn Div J35 branch as well as in 2018 as the 2 CMBG G5 and observed firsthand the planning and execution of brigade level targeting boards.

was executive Target Engagement Authority (TEA) refresher training, and no further points were raised regarding targeting at the brigade level.<sup>12</sup>

12. Despite the frictions created on such training exercises, the dynamic targeting cycle is best practiced in this environment where time is of the essence and flexibility in planning is required. Although the dynamic targeting cycle is well practiced on such CT events, it represents a lost opportunity for brigade staff. On the last two iterations of UR (2017 and 2018) the NCE was replicated by either 1 Cdn Div or a separate division headquarters. The result was that the brigade conducting the high readiness training was not exercised as the national headquarters with the proper authorities to nominate targets to the coalition; anything requiring national level authorities would simply be passed higher to the theater level NCE which in the case highlighted above was once of the Cdn Divs.<sup>13</sup> This creates a false expectation of the brigade staff as it is very likely that a CMBG headquarters could be dual employed as a tactical in theatre headquarters as well as the national headquarters reporting to Ottawa. Therefore, there is a requirement for CMBG staff to be exercised as the national headquarters in theatre for the purposes of deliberate targeting.

## CONCLUSION

13. Current CAF doctrine has institutionalized targeting as core to the way in which a commander selects targets and prioritizes assets. However, while the OPP acknowledges targeting it has not incorporated targeting into the formal processes of operational planning. The OPP currently includes elements of what looks like targeting which result in products such as the EGM assisting the commander in the targeting process, however the full targeting process is not yet fully incorporated in OPP doctrine and exists as a standalone process which does compliment operational planning at all levels.

14. Confusion regarding targeting is further exacerbated by the current brigade high readiness training model, whereby the current series of exercises designed to test the CMBG on does not fully allow for targeting to occur due to the current design and demanding tempo. Not only does the exercise design not allow for proper attention to be paid to targeting, the exercise structures are not built to truly test the CMBG as a national level headquarters with the requisite authorities to submit targets to the coalition for prosecution by higher level assets, effectively cutting the CMBG out of the deliberate targeting cycle.

## RECOMMENDATION

16. Based on the discussion and conclusions above, two fundamental recommendations are being made. First that CAF and CA OPP doctrine fully include the targeting process rather than utilizing selected elements of the targeting cycle as a supporting process. As a case in point, the

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<sup>12</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *CMTC Post Exercise Report Exercise UNIFIED RESOLVE 17*, Canadian Manoeuvre Training Center. Wainwright: DND Canada, 9 March 2017; and, Canada. Department of National Defence. *CMTC Post Exercise Report Exercise UNIFIED RESOLVE 18*, Canadian Manoeuvre Training Center. Wainwright: DND Canada, 7 March 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *CMTC Post Exercise Report Exercise UNIFIED RESOLVE 18*, Canadian Manoeuvre Training Center. Wainwright: DND Canada, 7 March 2018.

EGM is recommended to not be the end product of target development within the OPP but rather part of the overall targeting process, which contributes and supports targeting at higher levels. The targeting process should be included in the OPP in its current form, retaining the commander's flexibility to adjust the process to suit the unique requirements of individual operations. It is not recommended that the OPP be significantly altered from its current form as it has proven time and again to be the premier operational planning tool fully interoperable with our allies. It is simply recommended that the targeting process be adopted as a modular portion of the OPP which can be used as an integral part of the OPP or independently as required.

17. Lastly, it is recommended that the current brigade high readiness training exercise series of UR and MR be utilized for dynamic targeting only as the current model does not allow for deliberate targeting to be exercised fully or properly. UR remains in particular the premier CA brigade CT venue. The incorporation of 1 Cdn Div as a higher headquarters as well as multiple flanking formations replicates as best as possible the current realities of coalition warfighting. In order to ensure that Canadian staff officers are fully capable of operating in a coalition environment within a US or multinational division it is recommended that deliberate targeting training be delivered to brigade staff during the lead up towards high readiness validation at a training event other than UR or MR. To properly deliver deliberate targeting training would require significant alterations to the training delivery model of UR and MR. As such, it is not recommended that UR or MR be altered in their current format other than to focus targeting training delivery solely on dynamic targeting. The more lengthy deliberate targeting process is far better suited to alternate training events whereby the brigade staff can focus on the process without any unnecessary distractions.

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