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## **Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Armed Forces With a 'Do More With Less' Mentality**

**Major Dana Sliwinski**

### **JCSP 48**

#### **Exercise Solo Flight**

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With a ‘Do More With Less’ Mentality**

**Major Dana Sliwinski**

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## INTRODUCTION

*[Y]ou can't craft a worthwhile strategy if you don't at the same time make sure that your organization has or can get what's required to execute it...*

- Bossidy et al., *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*

Canada's defence policy has always been the cornerstone on which the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has based its priorities and planning for capabilities. These policies are laid out by civilian government officials. Depending on the majority government, defence priorities will vary but the CAF is responsible to meet all the demands placed on them by the government. Each subsequent government can and will likely build on the defence policy of the predecessor, adding additional tasks as the security environment changes. While the "federal government is responsible for setting the broad defence policy objectives,"<sup>1</sup> they are also responsible to "provide the resources necessary to staff, train and equip [the CAF]."<sup>2</sup> Any mismatches between what the government is asking the CAF to perform and the resources being assigned to accomplish these tasks results in a capability gap to meet commitments.

This gap, "between Canada's declared defence policy objectives and the resources devoted to support them"<sup>3</sup> has been the subject of government debate since the 1980s.

Previously, the:

*1994 White Paper on Defence* had promised to close this gap by matching reduced means with reduced commitments; in other words, do less with less. Instead, the Chrétien government demanded the CF [*sic*] do more with less, committing Canadian soldiers to serial peacekeeping and peacemaking operations – often without clear mandates, adequate training or equipment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy and Planning, 1993-2004," *Canadian Public Administration* 53, no. 3 (2010): 325, <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1754-7121.2010.00139.x>.

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

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

The challenges continue still, with demands exceeding the capabilities provided through current funding and recruiting programmes. Despite successive defence policies promising to provide the CAF with the tools to “meet Canada’s defence needs at home and abroad,”<sup>5</sup> successive governments have failed to provide the necessary resources, resulting in an armed force that is repeatedly being asked to ‘do more with less’.

This paper will argue that the ‘do more with less’ mindset established over the past decades has resulted in a CAF that cannot effectively meet the priorities of the government, resulting in a less operationally effective military. It will first establish that government demands for CAF involvement have increased over the past 15 years, requiring the CAF to do more. It will then demonstrate that funding for CAF programmes has been slow to increase, that equipment and procurement are inappropriate to meet the demands and that personnel issues continue to create gaps in capability. Finally, this paper will elaborate on the impacts to the CAF’s operational effectiveness caused by these gaps.

#### DOING MORE...

*Canada First Defence Strategy* (CFDS), published by the Harper government in 2008, outlined the main responsibilities and tasks that would be expected of the CAF. It noted that the policy would “enable the Forces to ... address the full range of defence and security challenges facing Canada now and into the future.”<sup>6</sup> To accomplish this, CFDS established a list of six core missions that the CAF must maintain the ability to perform. These core missions included very

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<sup>5</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada’s Defence Policy* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017), 11, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/canada-defence-policy.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008), 4, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/canada-first-defence-strategy-complete-document.html>.

specific mission sets, for example “[s]upport a major international event in Canada, such as the 2010 Olympics,”<sup>7</sup> as well as slightly more vague direction like “[r]espond to a major terrorist attack.”<sup>8</sup> The overall direction in CFDS was summarized in three overarching roles for the CAF – defend Canada, defend North America and contribute to international peace and security.<sup>9</sup>

In 2017, the Trudeau Liberal government released their new defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (SSE). This policy increased the number of core missions for the CAF from six to eight. The wording used in SSE is also broader, offering a wider range of possible mission sets within each of the core tasks. For example, ‘respond to a major terrorist attack’ became “[l]ead and/or contribute forces to NATO and coalition efforts to deter and defeat adversaries, including terrorists, to support global stability.”<sup>10</sup> While perhaps subtle, the difference is important. ‘Respond’ can indicate any level of participation; the contribution of an Army battalion could suffice. However, ‘lead’ indicates the involvement of an entire Command and Control (C2) structure; ‘deter and defeat’ necessitates the use of Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) assets and the threat and use of force; ‘adversaries’ can include an endless list of foes that might require CAF engagement. To achieve a core mission in SSE would necessarily involve more CAF assets and personnel than would its equivalent in CFDS. The same reasoning can be applied to all eight core missions within SSE. The change in defence strategy between 2008 and 2017 both increased the number of core mission sets and broadened the roles that could fall under each of those core missions, thus increasing the demands expected of the CAF.

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<sup>7</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 82.

In addition to expanding the scope of CAF core missions, SSE also implemented 111 new initiatives to ensure the CAF was able to meet the expectations of the government. Several of these initiatives are non-operational but critical to remain effective, and add significant demands on the members of the CAF. To name a few, SSE directs the CAF to “implement a recruitment campaign to promote the ...CAF” and to “increase the capacity of the Canadian Armed Forces Leadership and Recruit School [CFLRS] to accommodate the increased number of recruits.”<sup>11</sup> It calls for the establishment of a “Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group that...will be approximately 1,200 personnel strong,”<sup>12</sup> and directs the appointment of “a Diversity Champion who will oversee the implementation of all aspects of the Diversity Strategy and Action Plan including instituting mandatory diversity training.”<sup>13</sup> Each of these initiatives requires additional personnel and man-hours to effect, removing members from operations and expanding to the responsibilities of the CAF.

Additionally, new emphasis on the requirement to change the culture of the CAF is becoming a priority for government officials. As outlined in the Prime Minister’s Mandate Letter to the Minister of National Defence (MND), the:

...*immediate priority* [emphasis added] is to take concrete steps to build an inclusive and diverse Defence Team, characterized by a healthy workplace free from harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct and violence. This includes bringing forward the necessary reforms on a priority basis to create the foundation for meaningful and lasting change in the Canadian Armed Forces.<sup>14</sup>

Culture change and the efforts required to accomplish this monumental task were not even addressed in SSE; however, it has now become a top priority for the government. This results in

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter*, 16 December 2021, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-national-defence-mandate-letter>.

the allocation of additional resources to effect this key tasking. It also creates confusion over the hierarchy of priorities among initiatives within SSE, and where CAF efforts should be focused.

Operational demands were also increased through SSE's initiatives. Most notably is the implementation of space and cyber requirements. While CFDS does briefly allude to space and cyber capabilities, they are glossed over with no indication of a requirement to implement these capabilities. SSE, however, places significant emphasis on the generation and maintenance of substantial space and cyber initiatives. It directs the CAF to develop its space capabilities, including tasking the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) with the "increasingly important role [of] coordinating and overseeing the defence space program."<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the CAF is tasked with "assuming a more assertive posture in the cyber domain,"<sup>16</sup> including to "develop active cyber capabilities and employ them against potential adversaries"<sup>17</sup> and to grow and develop a cyber force with the generation of a new occupation, the CAF Cyber Operator.<sup>18</sup> Naturally, as technologies evolve and adversaries become more creative, the nature of the demands placed on the CAF will evolve as well. However, the implementation of new domains increases the demand for resources. These tasks did not exist a decade prior but have become a high priority for the government, generating new work for CAF members.

Along with novel domains, the demands in traditional domains are increasing as well. Canada's Arctic region, which is showing increased activity due to climate change-induced sea ice melt, is a major contributor to the increasing demands on the CAF. Climate change is hardly referenced in CFDS, mentioned solely as "changing weather patterns [which] are altering the

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<sup>15</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 38.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

environment.”<sup>19</sup> It is more thoroughly addressed in SSE, identifying the need to “[e]nhance the mobility, reach and footprint of the [CAF] in Canada’s North to support operations, exercises, and the [CAF’s] ability to project force into the region.”<sup>20</sup> One of the initiatives set out in SSE is to “align the Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone (CADIZ) with our sovereign airspace”<sup>21</sup> in order to protect this expanding region. This expansion, which occurred in 2018, seemed initially rather simple, as it “was a mere line on a map, aligning Canadian airspace with the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ),”<sup>22</sup> and was deemed to be a mandatory requirement to align with direction to “improve surveillance and monitoring of northern and maritime approaches.”<sup>23</sup> However, the expansion added approximately 2.7 million square kilometers of area, requiring surveillance with land-, air- and sea-based assets. Unfortunately, the expansion was “accompanied with no increased capability to sense, or to control the full extent of the Arctic Archipelago.”<sup>24</sup> As the sea ice continues to recede with climate change, the area requiring patrol will increase, creating additional demands.

Unfortunately, the opening of the Arctic region is not the only impact related to climate change. Op LENTUS, CAF’s response to natural disasters domestically, has experienced a dramatic climb in the frequency of activation, increasing twelvefold between 2010 and 2020.<sup>25</sup> Importantly:

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<sup>19</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 6.

<sup>20</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 80.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Wood, "Canada, the Freeloader, Rather than Vested Defence Partner in NORAD and the Defence of North America," *Canadian Military Journal (Ottawa)* 21, no. 2 (April 2021): 11, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol21/no2/page5-eng.asp>.

<sup>23</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter*, 16 December 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Wood, "Canada, the Freeloader Rather than Vested Partner ...", 11.

<sup>25</sup> Wilfrid Greaves, "Climate Change and Security in Canada," *International Journal (Toronto)* 76 no. 2 (July 2021): 194, [https://journals-sagepub-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1177/00207020211019325?utm\\_source=summon&utm\\_medium=discovery-provider](https://journals-sagepub-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1177/00207020211019325?utm_source=summon&utm_medium=discovery-provider).



[t]he scale of these operations, while often modest, can be significant. For instance, when the CAF deployed following major flooding in 2013, at the height of the operation, over 2,300 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and airwomen were deployed to Southern Alberta, creating one of the largest domestic military operations in Canadian history.<sup>26</sup>

Along with increased natural disasters, climate stress has been implicated in international instability necessitating the use of multilateral military interventions; “[n]otable examples include the civil wars in Syria and Mali, which were catalyzed, in part, by climate-related social unrest.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, civil unrest over climate change-related energy policies in Canada has demanded the use of military force. Anti-natural gas protests in New Brunswick in 2013 and British Columbia in 2020 resulted in blockades, raising tensions between indigenous peoples and the government and requiring the use of “the CAF to monitor, contain, and disrupt resistance movements.”<sup>28</sup> It was impossible for the government to predict the extent of climate-related issues that could arise and require assistance or resolution by the CAF, and yet the government expects the CAF to respond during these events. This merely serves to increase the demand on CAF members.

Equipment procurement is another factor that has contributed to increased work for the CAF. Following the Cold War, the CAF experienced a decade of decreased defence spending which saw the delay or cancellation of nearly all new equipment acquisitions within the CAF.<sup>29</sup> In 2007, estimates from Treasury Board indicated that:

... of the 25 major platforms (ships, tanks, planes, and trucks) in all three services, 12 were past their designated lifespan and seven had less than half of their service

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>29</sup> Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ..., 327.

life left. Most of the procurement processes for this equipment take between five and 10 years. By 2017, 19 out of the 25 would be beyond their life span.<sup>30</sup>

CFDS stated that the “the Government has committed to renewing the Forces’ core equipment platforms,”<sup>31</sup> including the purchase of new ships, maritime patrol and search and rescue aircraft, new generation fighter jets and land combat vehicles.<sup>32</sup> By the time the Trudeau government took over, the list of major weapons systems that needed replacing had only grown.<sup>33</sup> SSE recommitted to the procurement of all these platforms, along with new weapons systems to cover off emerging threats, such as Arctic patrol vessels, cyber technologies, space-based defences and augmenting the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) capabilities.<sup>34</sup> Delaying procurement in previous decades has resulted in more simultaneous procurement projects, demanding greater personnel resources to manage, and further adding to the list of tasks from the government.

Contrary to the belief that demands on the CAF would decrease following the end of the Cold War, the demand for Canadian forces, similar to those of other NATO member states, actually increased in the 1990s.<sup>35</sup> In fact, between 1990 and 2000, the CAF was involved in no less than 70 international missions, whereas they had only been involved in 25 missions in the previous four decades.<sup>36</sup> The trend seems to continue today, and it has become “clear that one of the major strategic assumptions in the *1994 White Paper on Defence* – that the CF [*sic*] will ‘do less’ – was, in the words of a three-star admiral, ‘fundamentally wrong’.”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the

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<sup>30</sup> Alexander Moens, "Afghanistan and the Revolution in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal* (Toronto) 63, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 574, <https://www-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/220858162?pq-origsite=summon>.

<sup>31</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 16.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ...", 329.

<sup>34</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 33 – 34.

<sup>35</sup> Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ...", 327-238.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

CAF should be able to adapt to the increasing demands, provided it receives the requisite resources to do so. The following section will examine what resource pool the CAF has been able to pull from in order to ‘do more’.

...WITH LESS.

Since the early 1990s, the CAF has struggled to maintain its relevance to the Canadian public. The end of the Cold War brought with it funding decreases and force reduction plans that drastically decreased the size of the CAF. “At the end of the Cold War, the Canadian Forces had a total strength of approximately 89,000 Regular Force personnel”<sup>38</sup> but this number drastically reduced to below 60,000 in the years that followed. This reduction was aided by the government, through the implementation of the Force Reduction Program (FRP). “FRP was designed to encourage members to take an early release or retire in an attempt to reduce the overall size of the Forces. Between the years 1992 – 1996, approximately 14,000 military personnel took advantage of this opportunity.”<sup>39</sup> Additionally, “the budget cuts of the 1990s gutted Canada’s defence from about two percent of GDP in 1989 down to 1.1 percent of GDP in 1999.”<sup>40</sup> Nearly all of these reductions were precipitated by the belief that the CAF would be asked to do less. However, the operational tempo of the CAF actually increased considerably, placing increased stress on the CAF personnel who remained and increased use of aging equipment.<sup>41</sup>

The release of CFDS was the government’s first attempt to correct the situation. The government recognized that in order to meet Canada’s defence needs, sufficient funding to

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<sup>38</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 15.

<sup>39</sup> M.A.J. Belanger, “Moving Toward an International Standard for Canadian Armed Forces Recruiting Practices,” (Joint Command and Staff Programme Master of Defence Studies Course Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2016), 2, <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/318/286/belanger.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> Moens, "Afghanistan and the Revolution in Canadian Foreign Policy...", 572.

<sup>41</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 15.

support the requisite numbers of personnel was required. In 2006, the federal budget allotted sufficient funds to support increasing the Regular Force (RegF) and the Reserve Force (ResF) to 68,000 and 26,000, respectively. These numbers were further increased to 70,000 RegF and 30,000 ResF members by 2008.<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to note that this increase in manning was authorized a short eight years after the FRP. When SSE was released, the government approved funding for an additional 3,500 RegF personnel (up to 71,500) and directed that “the Reserve Force will be increased by 1,500 to 30,000.”<sup>43</sup> Both the Harper and Trudeau governments failed to reach the manning targets they decided were necessary to meet the government’s mandates. Current CAF manning levels are roughly 65,000 RegF and 27,000 ResF, approximately 10,000 personnel below what was deemed necessary to meet the current operational tempo.<sup>44,45</sup>

Correcting this shortage is not as simple as merely increasing recruiting. In order to be effective, personnel must be hired, trained and available in the necessary trades to be able to conduct operations. Indeed, in 2016, the Auditor General of Canada reported that “having enough staff available and trained in each occupation – *not just the right overall number of members* [emphasis added] – is important...”<sup>46</sup> to mission success. Recruiting campaigns that are focused on solely bringing in personnel will not provide a solution; the right people in the right trades are required to fill the knowledge gap established in the 1990s. Furthermore, the CAF is facing critical barriers in efforts to increase recruiting. Since 2008, the Canadian Forces

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 16.

<sup>44</sup> Department of National Defence, “March 2020 – Canadian Armed Forces 101,” last accessed 13 April 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/transition-materials/defence-101/2020/03/defence-101/caf-101.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Ashley Burke, “Canadian Military Reports Sagging Recruitment as NATO Ramps Up Deployment in Eastern Europe,” *CBC News*, 23 March 2022, last accessed 19 Apr 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canadian-armed-forces-staff-shortfall-1.6395131>.

<sup>46</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence,” *Fall Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada*, 2016, [https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201611\\_05\\_e\\_41834.html](https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html).

Recruiting Group (CFRG), which “is responsible for attracting, processing, selecting, and enrolling all Regular Force recruits, ... has been reduced by about 180 positions, and has closed 13 recruiting locations.”<sup>47</sup> A 2002 report noted that “depending on recruiting success, it could take up to 30 years before the military population profile is such that the right numbers are available with the skills and experience to match demand.”<sup>48</sup> These trends indicate that the CAF will remain undermanned and undertrained for the immediate future, resulting in fewer bodies to execute the ever-increasing list of missions.

In addition to chronic shortages in personnel, the CAF is lacking in equipment and the necessary funding to acquire new equipment. As discussed earlier, the 1990s saw “defence spending decreased by thirty per cent in real terms ... and the acquisition of new equipment was delayed or cancelled.”<sup>49</sup> This left an ever-growing list of obsolete and rusted out military equipment that cost more each year to operate. CFDS partially succeeded at correcting the issue, by investing in new urgently needed equipment, including “four C-17 Globemaster strategic lift aircraft, ... 17 new C-130J Hercules tactical lift aircraft and ... announc[ing] plans to acquire 16 CH-47F Chinook helicopters, three replenishment ships, 2,300 trucks, up to 100 Leopard tanks and 6-8 Arctic/off-shore patrol ships.”<sup>50</sup> It also budgeted to replace other core equipment fleets, including destroyers and frigates, several aircraft and vehicles.<sup>51</sup> Based on the government’s assessment, this equipment was critical to meet the demands. However, within the nine years between the release of CFDS and SSE, the government managed to acquire only a portion of this equipment. Indeed, SSE reaffirmed the acquisition of much of the same equipment. The majority

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ...", 330.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>50</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

of these weapons systems have yet to be received by the CAF. Interestingly, the delays in purchase of Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) ships, promised in both CFDS and SSE, has left the RCN with fewer ships overall; the last of the IROQUOIS destroyer class and the PROTECTEUR class replenishment ships were decommissioned in 2017.<sup>52</sup> By delaying the procurement of these necessary weapons systems, the members of the CAF are being asked to meet increasing mission demands with antiquated equipment or the lack of the requisite tools to do so.

A major contributing factor to the lack of procurement is funding provided by the government. In 2008, the Harper government proposed a 20 year plan that was “expected to expand the defence budget from approximately \$18 billion to over \$30 billion by 2027 – 28.”<sup>53</sup> According to CFDS, by the year 2016 – 2017, the estimated defence budget should have been \$23.5 billion.<sup>54</sup> However, when SSE was published, the government stated they planned to “grow defence spending over the next 10 years from \$18.9 billion in 2016 – 17 to \$32.7 billion in 2026 – 27,”<sup>55</sup> indicating that in eight years, the government had only actually increased defence spending by \$900 million, significantly less than what was deemed necessary. Remarkably, the government has only just reached the 2016 – 17 budget goal within the last year. A recent promise of an additional \$8 billion is “expected to bring Canada’s defence budget to 1.5 per cent of GDP and [is] intended to demonstrate ‘a real effort’ toward hitting the long established two per cent target – a goal to which all 30 countries in [NATO] have committed.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> To date, only one contracted replenishment ship is in service (MV ASTERIX); the RCN replenishment ships are not currently in service and the first is expected to be delivered in 2023. Currently, only two Joint Support Ships (JSS) are expected to be commissioned. Only two of the Arctic/off-shore patrol ships have been commissioned to date.

<sup>53</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 12.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 11.

<sup>56</sup> Murray Brewster, “Defence getting billions of dollars in new money from Thursday’s budget: source,” *CBC*, 6 April 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/defence-department-military-canada-norad-ukraine-nato-1.6410530>.

However, the length of time it has taken for the government to noticeably increase defence spending speaks to the fact that military equipment funding is not high on the government's list of priorities.

The lack of funding is exacerbated by unwise spending. A series of poor procurement decisions and projects has resulted in billions of wasted dollars, leaving the CAF reeling with old equipment that is taking decades to replace. A Federal Budget report from 2021 pointedly noted that Ottawa is not fiscally moving forward with the purchase of new RCN ships, "which now comes with an estimated price tag of \$77 billion, more than five times [the] initial estimate of \$14 billion."<sup>57</sup> This indicates that not only is the CAF being left with capability gaps through poor procurement, critical funds that might have been used to ameliorate the funding gaps are being carelessly wasted through bad management. The RCN ships are not the only equipment that have seen wasteful spending by the past governments. The next generation fighter capability has already spent US\$613 million dollars since 1997 to 'stay at the table' for the F-35 project,<sup>58</sup> despite Trudeau promising not to buy F-35s in 2015; the decision was recently made to purchase 88 jets at the cost of another \$19 billion. To bridge the capability gap until 2032, the government spent additional funds to purchase old Australian F-18 jets. Despite telling the public the cost of the interim fighter programme was just under \$900 million, recent reports have indicated actual costs are closer to \$1.15 billion.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the costs for the acquisition of the CH-148 Cyclone maritime helicopters have more than tripled since 2000, ballooning to \$6.2 billion. This includes

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<sup>57</sup> J. Massie and C. Raymond, "Federal Budget 2021: Defence and Security," last accessed 13 Apr 2022, <https://opencanada.org/federal-budget-2021-defence-and-security/>.

<sup>58</sup> Lee Berthiaume, "Canada pays another US\$71M for F-35 development," *Wings Magazine*, 21 July 2021, last accessed 19 April 2022, <https://www.wingsmagazine.com/canada-pays-another-us71m-for-f-35-development/>.

<sup>59</sup> David Pugliese, "Budget office says used Australian fighter jets will cost Canada over \$1 billion – far more than DND claimed," *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 Feb 2019, last accessed 19 Apr 2022, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/budget-officer-says-used-australian-fighter-jets-will-cost-canada-over-1-billion-far-more-than-dnd-claimed>.

the costs of keeping the CH-124 Sea King operating significantly past its useful life due to the lengthy 15-year procurement project.<sup>60</sup> While each of these projects resulted in the eventual purchase of necessary equipment for the CAF, the additional costs of lengthy procurement processes, poor funds management and required end-of-life extensions for expiring equipment could have more effectively been spent elsewhere.

SSE promised to enable the CAF to “meet Canada’s defence needs at home and abroad.”<sup>61</sup> And yet, when likened to other nations, Canada routinely comes up short in both size and funding. Notably:

[w]hen compared to other countries’ ratio of military-to-general population, [Canada is] well beneath the vast majority of our NATO partners and many other friendly non-NATO countries. No country in the G7 has an Armed Forces as small as ours. When the relative ‘firepower’ (kinetic impact) of our Armed Forces is compared to other countries, we rank 21<sup>st</sup> from the top. Many smaller countries rank much higher.<sup>62</sup>

Even when compared to countries with similar total populations, Canada ranks lowest in total military spending. Predictably, Canada ranks in last place among G7 countries in terms of total spending on defence, and fifth for spending as a percentage of GDP.<sup>63,64</sup> Notwithstanding, the government continues to participate in international operations on an ongoing basis as though it is able to compete with the ‘big boys’. The PM Mandate Letter to the MND in December 2021 did not seem to recognize that the military is lacking in both personnel and funding, as it:

...did not call on [Minister Anand] to seriously expand our Armed Forces numbers. That is neither her fault nor the fault of the uniformed women and men

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<sup>60</sup> Defence Industry Daily, “Canada’s CH-148 Cyclones: 4<sup>th</sup> Time Lucky?,” last accessed 19 Apr 2022, <https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/canadas-ch-148-cyclones-better-late-than-never-05223/>.

<sup>61</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* ..., 11.

<sup>62</sup> Hugh Segal and Bianca Mugenyi, “The Saturday Debate: Are Canada’s Armed Forces Too Small?,” *Toronto Star*, 29 January 2022.

<sup>63</sup> World Population Review, “Military Spending by Country,” last accessed 14 Apr 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/military-spending-by-country>.

<sup>64</sup> World Bank, “Military Expenditures (% of GDP),” last accessed 14 April 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2020&start=2020&view=map>.



who serve the defence of Canada. But it is the fault of a government that has not given expansion of our Armed Forces serious consideration since being elected in 2015.<sup>65</sup>

The lack of funding and personnel, outdated equipment and growing list of priority taskings demonstrates a strong alignment with the ‘do more with less’ mentality. The following section will examine the impact this mindset takes on the operational effectiveness of the CAF.

## OPERATIONAL IMPACT OF ‘DOING MORE WITH LESS’

In a recent statement when questioned about the war in Ukraine, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly stated Canada is “not a military power, we’re a middle-sized power, and what we’re good at is convening, and making sure that diplomacy is happening, and meanwhile convincing other countries to do more.”<sup>66</sup> While this speaks largely in contrast to the initiatives outlined in SSE, it does lend credibility to the government recognizing that they have neglected the military, and need to resort to other mechanisms of maintaining security. Critics of Minister Joly’s statement point out that her rationalization “that other countries should ‘do more’ after Canada has failed for decades to beef up military capacity [exhibits] a level of arrogance that will hinder Canada’s ability to be a credible partner at any negotiating table.”<sup>67</sup> While diplomacy and economic approaches to conflict are indeed important, the country must also maintain the ability to effectively carry out all whole of government (WoG) operations, which includes a military capability. Minister Joly’s understanding of Canada’s military capability is likely due to years of ‘doing more with less’, which has severely impacted the CAF’s operational

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<sup>65</sup> Hugh Segal and Bianca Mugenyi, “The Saturday Debate: Are Canada’s Armed Forces Too Small?,” *Toronto Star*, 29 January 2022, <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/the-saturday-debate/2022/01/29/the-saturday-debate-are-canadas-armed-forces-too-small.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Michelle R. Garner, “In TV Interview, Joly Admits that Canada’s Military is Impotent,” *iPolitics*, 16 March 2022, last accessed 17 Apr 2022, <https://www.ipolitics.ca/opinions/in-tv-interview-joly-admits-that-canadas-military-is-impotent>.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

effectiveness on the world stage. Personnel and funding shortages have impacted the CAF's ability to both contribute to Canada's own defence, as well as to effectively participate in coalition forces. This section will outline several instances where the CAF's attempts to 'do more with less' has hindered its operational effectiveness.

Defence of Canada is arguably the most important role of the CAF. The lack of prioritization among SSE initiatives leaves the CAF in the difficult position of employing resources effectively to ensure this mission is carried out. While Canada continues to commit to North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), "a lack of political willingness, a diverted focus in favour of overseas operations, and a failure to invest in the capabilities required to maintain NORAD as a credible defence"<sup>68</sup> have resulted in Canada looking more like a "freeloader"<sup>69</sup> in the defence of North America, relying too heavily on American support. Indeed, "Canada continues to prioritize Europe and the Middle East (through NATO)"<sup>70</sup>, taking away critical resources from NORAD. The "short term political vision of Canadian politics, the unwillingness to commit the required funds to re-balance the capability relationship, and the belief that the U.S. will ultimately guarantee Canada's security,"<sup>71</sup> has resulted in ineffective protection of Canada's sovereign territory. As stated in CFDS, "[g]iven our common defence and security requirements, it is in Canada's strategic interest to remain a reliable partner in the defence of the continent,"<sup>72</sup> but the lack of commitment to NORAD is damaging the relationship with our most critical ally. An over commitment to international operations, lack of prioritization

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<sup>68</sup> Wood, "Canada, the Freeloader, Rather than Vested Defence Partner ...", 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Massie and Raymond, "Federal Budget 2021".

<sup>71</sup> Wood, "Canada, the Freeloader, Rather than Vested Defence Partner ...", 5.

<sup>72</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 8.

of continental defence, and an ever-widening gap in the capabilities provided to NORAD<sup>73</sup> has negatively impacted Canada's contribution to the defence of North America.

The changing security environment in the Arctic is another area where Canada is struggling in defence. SSE addresses climate change as a defining aspect of future mission sets; however, the:

...growing number of global actors who consider the Arctic to be important to their interests is likely to undermine Canada, which has vast Arctic territory but limited capabilities with which to enforce its sovereignty or effective control. The rise of competitive behaviour is problematic for Canada's ability to defend its Arctic interests.<sup>74</sup>

Exceedingly long procurement processes for the equipment required to defend the Arctic has left the CAF ineffective in this critical mission. The procurement of the Arctic and Off-shore Patrol Ships (AOPS) that were promised in CFDS<sup>75</sup> has been a lengthy process, with the first AOPS being commissioned only in July 2020. Acquisition of new maritime patrol aircraft, fighter aircraft and air-to-air refuelers has also been slow. Without the proper resources to be "effective in such difficult and diverse environments"<sup>76</sup> like the Arctic, Canada will continue to be improperly prepared to defend its territory.

Improper investment in equipment has a noticeable impact on operational effectiveness, but improper investment in personnel has an equally, if not more, damaging effect. "The human body is not a machine,"<sup>77</sup> and ever-increasing demands with insufficient personnel to carry out those demands will necessarily lead to burn-out and illness. In fact, studies have demonstrated a

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<sup>73</sup> Wood, "Canada, the Freeloader, Rather than Vested Defence Partner ...", 5.

<sup>74</sup> Greaves, "Climate Change and Security in Canada ...", 193.

<sup>75</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* ..., 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Karlene Kerfoot, "Beyond Busyness: Creating Slack in the Organization," *Dermatology Nursing* 19, no. 1 (2007): 107, <https://web-p-ebshost-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=63929ea3-94c7-45f6-bf84-e605a22c1785%40redis>.

direct correlation of overwork to impacts in mental health.<sup>78</sup> Continued focus on ‘getting the job done’ with minimal personnel will result in:

... overlook[ing] the long-term damage taking place. Issues such as increased medical issues, alcoholism, poor leadership, decreased morale and lack of motivation will fall to the sidelines. Long-term, these issues will decrease the [CAF]’s effective strength and erode the overall effectiveness of the force.<sup>79</sup>

Unfortunately, the problem is compounding. Fewer personnel available to meet the demands results in faster injury and illness, and accelerates the burn-out of remaining members. A 2016 Auditor General’s report noted that “the gap between the required and actual numbers of fully trained and effective members for the Regular Force had increased to about 4,200 members from about 2,300”<sup>80</sup> in five years. This gap is substantial, and will likely continue to increase. Long term damage to undermanned teams, along with low recruiting, places the CAF in a position where it is no longer able to conduct all required operations.

A substantial example of the impact of personnel shortages on operational effectiveness can be seen through the supply chain. Supply chain management is a critical function to facilitate successful operations. In order to “trigger extra efforts to ensure that the materiel is delivered on time,”<sup>81</sup> materiel requests submitted through the supply chain are labelled high priority when required to satisfy critical operational requirements. A 2020 Auditor General’s report noted that this extra effort was frequently not met, stating:

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<sup>78</sup> Sachiko Kuroda and Isamu Yamamoto, "Why do People Overwork at the Risk of Impairing Mental Health?" *Journal of Happiness Studies* 20, no. 5 (June 2019): 1519-1538, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2071966195?parentSessionId=It11GrF8G8f9vPct095yqQ33HHjLK%2F59G%2FLZGV4q%2FH4%3D&pq-origsite=summon&accountid=9867>.

<sup>79</sup> Dana Sliwinski, “‘Just Do It’ – An Assessment of the Impacts to RCAF Culture and Morale in a ‘Do More with Less’ Culture,” (Joint Command and Staff Programme Course Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2022), 1-2.

<sup>80</sup> Auditor General of Canada, “Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention ... .

<sup>81</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “Report 3 – Supplying the Canada Armed Forces – National Defence.” *Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada*, 2020, 6, [https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_202007\\_03\\_e\\_43574.html](https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_202007_03_e_43574.html).

[d]uring the period covered by our audit, approximately 1 million materiel requests were submitted and fulfilled to transfer materiel between locations. Of those requests, about 86,000 (or 8%) were deemed high priority. We found that 50% of all materiel requested during the period covered by our audit was received after the required date of delivery. Among the late deliveries, 50% were at least 15 days late [and] 25% were at least 40 days late.

Among the high-priority requests, we found that 60% arrived after the required delivery date. Of these, 50% were at least 6 days late [while] 25% were at least 20 days late.

We also found that at the time of our audit, National Defence had a backlog of about 162,000 requests that were more than 1 year late, stalled at some stage in the process.<sup>82</sup>

Delays in the acquisition of critical operational materiel often forces CAF operations to cease while waiting for parts. In addition, stock shortages placed additional demands on supply depot personnel. Due to shortages, essential parts were being removed from one piece of equipment to resupply another, creating both a new supply priority request in the system as well as creating “extra labour of specialized expertise to remove and replace the parts.”<sup>83</sup> This example demonstrates how personnel shortages both inhibit effective operations as well as create additional work, which further reduces effectiveness.

The impacts to operations due to maintaining a ‘do more with less’ mentality have been evident for years. “In 2002, ... the Senate defence committee recommended that Canada and the DND bring home its armed forces for a complete organizational overhauling.”<sup>84</sup> The recommendation also included a suspension on international operations for 30 months, allowing time for the CAF to rest, increase training and refurbish outdated equipment.<sup>85</sup> In 2004, “the chief of defence staff was forced to declare an ‘operational pause’... - a clear sign that the CF

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 9

<sup>84</sup> P.L. Dessureault-Beaulieu, “Decade of Darkness 2.0? Or Failed Attempts at Learning Lessons from the Past: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to the CAF Challenges of the Post-Afghanistan Conflict,” (Joint Command and Staff Programme Course Paper, 2022), 3.

<sup>85</sup> Hartfiel, “Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ...”, 330-331.

[sic] had been overextended.”<sup>86</sup> In 2016, an audit of the CAF’s recruiting and retention policies identified that the processing capacities of the CFRG and the CFLRS were insufficient to meet the uptake of members identified by Military Personnel Command.<sup>87</sup> Despite all this, SSE introduced 111 new initiatives in 2017 and while “[i]ncreasing the capacities of the recruiting group and of the school was considered, [it was] determined to be too costly a fix.”<sup>88</sup> The shortage of personnel and increasing operational demands has resulted in a CAF that is not “able to generate military forces larger than army brigade groups or naval and air force equivalents.”<sup>89</sup> This has forced the government to modify how it commits forces to international operations. While the government suggests that Canada be a “leading contributor to NATO operations,”<sup>90</sup> having less capability leaves Canada only able to contribute forces “to campaigns led by others.”<sup>91</sup> Former Chief of Defense Staff, General Jonathan Vance termed this approach ‘contribution warfare’.<sup>92</sup>

In contribution warfare, the application of force is not necessarily directed to a political aim, but to participation.<sup>93</sup> Canada has maintained a history of contribution warfare, and while:

...continued contribution does not directly secure the country from external threats, it generates recognition of Canada as a valuable global partner. In return, Canada reaps security advantages from its membership in multiple organizations

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Auditor General of Canada, “Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention ...

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> P. Johnston et al, “A Canadian Approach to Command at the Operational Level.” *Canadian Military Journal* (Ottawa) 14, no. 4 (2014): 10, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol14/no4/PDF/CMJ144Ep6.pdf>.

<sup>90</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter*, 16 December 2021.

<sup>91</sup> Johnston et al, “A Canadian Approach to Command ...”, 10.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Jan Ångström, “Contribution Warfare: Sweden’s Lessons from the War in Afghanistan,” *The US Army War College Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 70, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2688&context=parameters>.

without fully investing in the military capabilities needed for unilateral operations.<sup>94</sup>

As of January 2022, the “Canadian forces are ... participating in some two dozen international missions.”<sup>95</sup> The contribution to each of these missions is minimal; for example, Op CARIBBE has one AOPS deployed; Op PRESENCE involves one CC130J aircraft; Op PROJECTION occasionally has one frigate. If the goal of contribution warfare is to “seek to acquire a reputation as a good ally to gain advantage from the dominating coalition partner in other areas,”<sup>96</sup> then small forces dispersed over many operational theaters and coalitions is of benefit to the government. As Canada’s military equipment continues to age and the personnel numbers remain low, the government will need to rely more heavily on allies for defence. Therefore, the government’s belief that “to *deploy* forces is more important than to *employ* forces [emphasis added],”<sup>97</sup> leaves the CAF in a position of being used more as a strategic chess piece than an actual fighting force.

To participate in a military deployment “requires not only an outlay of human, financial and materiel resources, but also an acceptance of the risk that those same resources will be lost or destroyed.”<sup>98</sup> By maintaining a combat-capable force, the CAF is required to distribute its limited funds and personnel across dozens of weapons systems and hundreds of trades, limiting its redundancy. The government is likely hesitant to commit to operations in a larger capacity because the risk of losing any of these capabilities is too high to accept. By decreasing the

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<sup>94</sup> J.M. Cox, “Canadian Forces Transformation and Canada’s Way of War in the Twenty-First Century,” (School of Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2019), 5, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=832769>.

<sup>95</sup> Segal and Mugenyi, “The Saturday Debate: Are Canada’s Armed Forces Too Small? ...

<sup>96</sup> Ångström, “Contribution Warfare: Sweden’s Lessons from the War in Afghanistan ...”, 65.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>98</sup> G.M. Mundy, “Talking Past Each Other: The Strategic Utility of Leadership Roles in Contribution Warfare,” (Joint Command and Staff Programme Master of Defence Studies Course Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2017), 4, <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/402/286/mundy.pdf>.

capabilities offered by the CAF and taking a ‘niche’ approach, available funds and personnel would be focused on fewer capabilities. “There is nothing inherently wrong with maintaining a defence force with limited capabilities, but ... ‘if you get the wrong niche you are irrelevant’.”<sup>99</sup> This is important due to the unknown nature of future warfare; the risk of selecting an incorrect niche that becomes inappropriate in the future runs the risk of rendering Canada as an ineffective ally. Since the government elects to maintain the CAF as a combat-capable armed force, resources are more thinly spread, redundancy is lost and capabilities are safe-guarded, resulting in less effectiveness operationally.

Canada’s lack of commitment to generate sufficient forces is impacting its operational effectiveness. The government’s inability to provide significant personnel and equipment to international coalitions has both political and operational implications. Canada’s “limited military capabilities mean that the Canadian Forces can be deployed overseas only for limited periods of time... Extended commitments push the CAF to its limits and require periods of inactivity for regeneration.”<sup>100</sup> As such, the government commits forces to each operation for limited duration, but continues to provide CAF support to multiple operations to improve political standing. This cycle increases demands on limited resources and leads to exhaustion of both personnel and materiel. The bypassing of any periods of reconstitution also results in a less effective CAF that has increased difficulty meeting the demands of the government. In turn, the government loses its ability to maintain a positive stance with allies, thus defeating its strategic goals. “Withdrawing from an operation while allies soldier on runs contrary to Canada’s interest

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<sup>99</sup> Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ...", 330.

<sup>100</sup> Aaron Ettinger and Jeffrey Rice, “Hell is Other People’s Schedules: Canada’s Limited-term Military Commitments, 2001-2015,” *International Journal* 71, no. 3 (2016): 374, [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0020702016662797?casa\\_token=A2\\_zP4bmF8sAAAAA:Jep8BaUwmYQKn68TtEMwbqjouvwylwjZ1Wj\\_RWAcUJDY1-NLe3E5DRUPtm0mFQvOVM9NQ1OZTS30e4](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0020702016662797?casa_token=A2_zP4bmF8sAAAAA:Jep8BaUwmYQKn68TtEMwbqjouvwylwjZ1Wj_RWAcUJDY1-NLe3E5DRUPtm0mFQvOVM9NQ1OZTS30e4).



in maintain good standing amongst its allies,”<sup>101</sup> but has become the norm for most international operations in recent decades. Canada’s persistent mentality of ‘doing more with less’ has become a burden to both the operational and political effectiveness of Canada on the world stage.

## CONCLUSION

The future of the international world order is nearly impossible to predict. It is also “impossible for the military to be trained and equipped for every possible contingency.”<sup>102</sup> The government defence policy guidance must be prioritized in order to manage the forces, allowing the CAF to assign resources to the most effective objectives. It also remains critical that those objectives “be carefully selected, clearly articulated and supported with the necessary resources.”<sup>103</sup> By adding new demands as novel threats arise, but failing to provide the necessary personnel and funding to meet those demands, the government loses in both its ability to defend Canada and the benefit gained by the government amongst its allies. A new approach to defence spending, recruiting and organization is required in order to ensure the CAF remains able to defend Canada’s interests both at home and abroad. Currently, the perpetual cycle of ‘doing more with less’ results in an ineffective force that leaves Canada lacking as a reliable partner in the defence of world peace and security.

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>102</sup> Hartfiel, "Planning without Guidance: Canadian Defence Policy ...", 326.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

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