



LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD: STRIVING FOR COHERENCE IN EMPLOYING PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPABILITY ACROSS ALL LEVELS

Major Douglas Keirstead

JCSP 50

Service Paper

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of National Defence, 2024.

PCEMI n° 50

Étude militaire

Avertissement

Les opinions exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

© Sa Majesté le Roi du chef du Canada, représenté par le ministre de la Défense nationale, 2024.

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 50 - PCEMI n° 50
2023 - 2024

Service Paper – Étude militaire

**LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD: STRIVING FOR COHERENCE IN EMPLOYING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPABILITY ACROSS ALL LEVELS**

Major Douglas Keirstead

“This paper was written by a candidate attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied, except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.”

« La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale. »

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD: STRIVING FOR COHERENCE IN EMPLOYING PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPABILITY ACROSS ALL LEVELS

AIM

1. Public Affairs (PA) is an Information-Related Capability (IRC) that plays a vital role in Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) operations.¹ In general, the PA function supports commanders at all levels through the provision of comprehensive and operationally-relevant PA advice, while enabling open and honest communication with audiences as it relates to CAF operations.² Amid the backdrop of an uncertain world, this paper aims to highlight key issues that affect the ability of the institution's PA apparatus to fulfil its operational mandate, and make recommendations to enable ongoing efforts to modernize PA doctrine, and advance the impending implementation of the Occupational Analysis (OA) of PA Branch occupations.³

INTRODUCTION

2. Throughout its history, the PA Branch has evolved considerably, and its members have proven their ability to enable military operations across the full spectrum of conflict by truthfully informing Canadians of CAF activities.⁴ However, and much like the historical evolution of the broader CAF, the road has not always been smooth, and recent history has presented a number of challenges, particularly as it relates to the relationship between PA and other IRCs, including Information Operations (IO), Influence Activities (IA), and Psychological Operations (PsyOps), which are rightly focused on adversaries and not on Canadians, in line with legal and moral imperatives.⁵ However, to be clear, this paper is concerned with CAF PA effects in line with extant direction, policy and doctrine and, more specifically, factors that impact the effectiveness of PA, and its mandate to truthfully inform audiences of CAF activities during operations.

3. In 2023, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Wayne Eyre, promulgated the Pan-domain Force Employment Concept (PFEC), to bring strategic focus to the myriad of efforts underway across the CAF to prepare the institution and its people to meet the challenges of an increasingly volatile world situation.⁶ Generally, this means that all CAF components and capabilities must continue to evolve and synchronize; practitioners within them must consider the implications of the nascent reality, and the

¹ Jonathan Vance and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Planning Guidance – Enhancing Operational and Institutional Communications: Resetting Information-Related Capability Initiatives* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2020), 9-11.

² CF Joint Doctrine Branch, *B-GJ-005-361/FP-000 - Joint Public Affairs* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2007), 1-1-1-2.

³ Public Affairs Branch, *Public Affairs Branch Notes – December 2022* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2022), 2

⁴ Public Affairs Branch. *PA Branch Directive 6-1: History of Public Affairs in the Canadian Forces and National Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016), 2.

⁵ Wayne Eyre and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Directive – Response to Reviews of Information Operations and Influence Activities* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2021), 7.

⁶ Canadian Joint Operations Command, *Pan-domain Force Employment Concept* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2023), 5.

associated linkages across the pan-domain operating environment. This includes PA; indeed, the PFEC highlights the important role that information plays in modern operations, noting, “Every CAF action or inaction sends a message, intended or not, to our allies, our partners, our adversaries, to the Canadian population, and to the members of the CAF itself.”⁷ PA has an important role to play, and this paper considers the modern context, Department of National Defence (DND) policy and CAF doctrine, as well as key issues that inhibit the ability of PA to deliver on its operational mandate. Ultimately, the PFEC describes the broader imperative well in noting, “We must ensure that our activities send messages that are deliberate, coherent, and aligned with strategic objectives . . . we must carefully tailor our actions to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation.”⁸

DISCUSSION

Context

4. In situating this discussion, it is useful to briefly look back at the modern history of PA, beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Faced with post-Cold War downsizing, DND/CAF policy and PA functions were merged to form the Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy and Communications) (ADM(Pol & Comm)) organization in 1991.⁹ In an April 1996 paper, Lieutenant-Colonel J.Y. Bastien argued that this had a degradative effect on the CAF’s ability to execute PA, specifically media relations, suggesting that this function should be “transferred to the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS), thus placing this important function in the sphere of operational command rather than in the domain of policy where it now resides.”¹⁰ One Public Affairs Officer (PAO) quoted in Bastien’s paper went as far as to say the solution was to “Bulldoze the place to the ground and start from scratch.”¹¹ As it happened, significant change was on the horizon and, in 1997, the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia issued their damning report into the shocking events that occurred during, and following, the CAF’s involvement in the UN Peacekeeping mission in Somalia in the early 90s.¹² The Commission uncovered serious accountability issues within the DND/CAF,¹³ and

⁷ Canadian Joint Operations Command, *Pan-domain Force Employment Concept* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2023), 18.

⁸ *Idem*.

⁹ Public Affairs Branch. *PA Branch Directive 6-1: History of Public Affairs in the Canadian Forces and National Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016), 36.

¹⁰ J.Y. Bastien, “Canadian Forces Media Relations: The Case for Operational Control” (Paper, Canadian Forces College, 1996), 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹² Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, “Executive Summary,” In *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997), ES-2, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32-66-1997-eng.pdf.

¹³ Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, “Volume 5,” In *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997), 1199-1255, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32-65-1997-5-eng.pdf.

recommended that the DND/CAF “ensure that public affairs policies and practices reflect the principles of openness, responsiveness, transparency and accountability.”¹⁴ This was followed in 1997 by the interim stand-up of a Chief of PA organization, during efforts to reform DND/CAF PA, which led to the promulgation of a revamped PA policy in 1998, in line with the Commission’s recommendations.¹⁵ That policy, rooted in the principles of “openness and transparency,”¹⁶ and nested in the Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAOD) 2008 series, remains largely unchanged from its original 1998 version.¹⁷ In 1999, Chief of PA became Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs) (ADM(PA)),¹⁸ and the ADM(PA) remains Functional Authority (FA) for PA to this day.¹⁹

5. The world changed on September 11, 2001, with the 9/11 attacks giving rise to more than a decade of CAF operations in Afghanistan.²⁰ At their beginning, mission communications were tightly controlled by the Privy Council Office (PCO),²¹ owing in part to Government mistrust of the DND/CAF in the wake of the Somalia Affair.²² As a result, the DND/CAF bore the brunt of the impact in the narrative space, as a correspondent for *Jane’s Defence Weekly* noted in a paper some years later:²³

. . . the media turned its attention to the military, and in the absence of any official response to its questions, turned to outside experts for an opinion.

¹⁴ Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, “Volume 5,” *In Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997), 1246, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32-65-1997-5-eng.pdf.

¹⁵ Public Affairs Branch, “Annex K: Significant Dates in the History of Public Affairs,” In *PA Branch Directive 6-1: History of Public Affairs in the Canadian Forces and National Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016), 2.

¹⁶ Department of National Defence, “DAOD 2008-0 – Public Affairs Policy,” last modified April 19, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-0-public-affairs-policy.html>.

¹⁷ Department of National Defence, “DAOD 2008 - Table of Contents,” last modified September 18, 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008.html>.

¹⁸ Public Affairs Branch, “Annex K: Significant Dates in the History of Public Affairs,” In *PA Branch Directive 6-1: History of Public Affairs in the Canadian Forces and National Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016), 2.

¹⁹ Jonathan Vance and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Planning Guidance – Enhancing Operational and Institutional Communications: Resetting Information-Related Capability Initiatives* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2020), 21.

²⁰ Veterans Affairs Canada, *Canada Remembers: The Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan* (Ottawa: Veterans Affairs Canada, 2011), 1-3, <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/cr/pi-sheets/afghanistan-eng.pdf>.

²¹ Sharon Hobson, *The Information Gap: Why the Canadian Public Doesn’t Know More about its Military* (Calgary, Alta: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007), 5, <https://canadacommons-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/artifacts/1214488/the-information-gap/1767588/>.

²² Kevin Foster, *Don’t Mention the War: The Australian Defence Force, the Media and the Afghan Conflict*, 1st ed. (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2013), 50, <https://publishing.monash.edu/product/dont-mention-the-war/>

²³ Sharon Hobson, *The Information Gap: Why the Canadian Public Doesn’t Know More about its Military* (Calgary, Alta: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007), 5, <https://canadacommons-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/artifacts/1214488/the-information-gap/1767588/>.

The consensus was that the CF was undermanned and ill-equipped to fight a war.²⁴

6. However, the tide turned, and the DND/CAF established a comprehensive media embedding program, among other PA initiatives.²⁵ PA at all levels became a tremendous enabler for the mission, and former CDS, General Rick Hillier, describes these efforts and their impact in *A Soldier First: Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War*, praising the then ADM(PA), noting that he “understood strategic communication better than anybody I’ve ever met. He was superb at laying out a way to tell the Canadian public that there were folks out there trying to kill us and here is what we must do about it.”²⁶ In the late 2000s, the tide turned yet again, with the winds of politics seeing several experienced, now battle-hardened PAOs release in the wake of what a *Postmedia News* reporter characterized as “excessive controls on information brought in by the Harper government.”²⁷

7. In the years following, as retired Major-General Richard Blanchette noted in a 2016 report, PA came to live a reality where “Civil servants and military personnel alike have been accustomed to the decade long previous government’s much controlled communications modus operandi.”²⁸ Blanchette’s report followed intent articulated by then CDS General Jonathan Vance to “operationalize the public affairs branch.”²⁹ This was met with criticism, and saw Vance concede that his intent could be misread, clarifying to an *Ottawa Citizen* reporter his desire to improve the PA Branch, enabling it to be more effective, stating, “I was detecting our inability to answer questions in a timely manner and to be able to respond and deal effectively in a very dynamic and very fast paced information environment.”³⁰ What followed were several years of effort, ultimately culminating with development of the Military PA (Mil PA) initiative, which aimed to “enhance the formal range of duties of Public Affairs Officers,”³¹ alongside broader CAF efforts in the Information Environment (IE).³² This initiative ceased in 2020, alongside a series of mistakes involving other IRCs that brought the CAF’s integrity into question.

²⁴ Sharon Hobson, *The Information Gap: Why the Canadian Public Doesn't Know More about its Military* (Calgary, Alta: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007), 5, <https://canadacommons-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/artifacts/1214488/the-information-gap/1767588/>.

²⁵ Kevin Foster, *Don't Mention the War: The Australian Defence Force, the Media and the Afghan Conflict*, 1st ed. (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2013), 48-55, <https://publishing.monash.edu/product/dont-mention-the-war/>

²⁶ Rick Hillier, *A Soldier First: Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2009), 441-446. <https://cfc.overdrive.com/media/1152700>.

²⁷ David Pugliese, “Veteran DND public affairs staff quitting over interference: report,” *Postmedia News*, September 25, 2011, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/veteran-dnd-public-affairs-staff-quitting-over-interference-report>.

²⁸ Richard V. Blanchette, “Where’s my PAO?”: *Towards An Improved Public Affairs Capability In The Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016), 11.

²⁹ David Pugliese, “Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Jon Vance and the weaponization of public affairs,” *Ottawa Citizen*, September 21, 2015, <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/chief-of-the-defence-staff-gen-jon-vance-and-the-weaponization-of-public-affairs>.

³⁰ *Idem*.

³¹ Laurie-Anne Kempton, “Changes in ADM (PA)/Changements au sein du groupe SMA (AP),” e-mail, November 5, 2020.

³² *Idem*.

According to the CDS and Deputy Minister (DM) at the time, these disparate initiatives suffered from lack of strategic direction, synchronization, terminology coherence, and other related issues, despite “best intentions.”³³ CAF PAOs and Imagery Technicians (Image Techs) working on the Mil PA initiative were subsequently reassigned within ADM(PA), which has been characterized as return to “corporate PA,”³⁴ in line with CDS/DM intent for PA as a “joint military-civilian practitioner effort.”³⁵ However, and with this context considered, there is more that can be done to fully achieve this intent, while at the same time better positioning the PA function to support CAF operations across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as this discussion will establish.

Doctrine and Policy

8. Much has been written about the critical importance of PA in enabling operations at all levels. For example, a U.S. Naval War College paper by Lieutenant-Commander John F. Kirby argues that “PA should be considered an operational function,”³⁶ noting:³⁷

. . . Unlike some other operational functions, public affairs is relevant across the spectrum of conflict. It can be employed aggressively during peacetime to deter hostilities and during conflict to help leaders communicate intent and foster domestic support.³⁸

9. This is not meant to suggest that Canada should adopt Kirby’s approach, but rather to underscore the critical significance of PA in the context of operations, which suggests that PA as an IRC is highly relevant across the levels of conflict that are outlined in CAF Operations doctrine – strategic, operational and tactical – employment of which is made even more complex recognizing that doctrine characterizes “a blurring between the levels.”³⁹ In the case of Afghanistan, as noted at paragraph 5, and rightly considering Canada’s Civil-Military Relations dynamic, which clearly establishes the subordination of the CAF to the duly-elected national Government,⁴⁰ political factors relating to PA and CAF operations can reverberate rapidly from the strategic to the tactical level, presenting challenges at all levels and making PA a complex undertaking. As a result, PA must

³³ Jonathan Vance and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Planning Guidance – Enhancing Operational and Institutional Communications: Resetting Information-Related Capability Initiatives* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2020), 2-5.

³⁴ Jill Lawrence, “A Strategic Chorus: Integrating Public Affairs and Other Information Enablers” (Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2021), 1, <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/23/192/Lawrence.pdf>.

³⁵ Wayne Eyre and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Directive – Response to Reviews of Information Operations and Influence Activities* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2021), 7.

³⁶ John F. Kirby, “Helping Shape Today’s Battlefield: Public Affairs as an Operational Function” (Paper, U.S. Naval War College, 2000), 88-89, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=448159>.

³⁷ *Idem*.

³⁸ *Idem*.

³⁹ CF Joint Doctrine Branch, *B-GJ-005-300-FP-001 – CFJP 3.0: Operations* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2011), 1-1-1-2.

⁴⁰ Department of National Defence, “Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve,” last modified June 10, 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/canadian-armed-forces-ethos-trusted-to-serve/introduction.html>.

remain capable and coherently employed across all levels to account for this reality, with PA doctrine similarly aligned.

10. With this considered, current CAF PA doctrine, which is more than 15 years old, focuses largely on tactical execution during CAF operations. Although there is reference to multi-level planning efforts, there is little clarity to more broadly align PA activities with the interconnected realities that exist across the three levels of conflict articulated in CAF Operations doctrine.⁴¹ Moreover, extant DND/CAF PA policy, DAOD 2008-4, *Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations*, which is more than 25 years old, unfortunately does not offer the degree of substantive clarity required to effectively align PA and Operations doctrine; although, it does elude to the employment of PA in support of operations at all levels:⁴²

. . . The challenge for public affairs (PA) is to inform Canadians of both the national and operational dimensions of CF operation [*sic*] in a manner that is accurate, complete, timely and respectful of the principles of openness, transparency and operational security. This requires the effective integration of PA into all aspects of military operations, from doctrine to the execution and coordination of PA in theatre during operations.⁴³

11. With this considered, the 1997 version of U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 46-1 offers a very coherent breakdown of PA roles in enabling operations across all levels, while also making direct connections with other key aspects of broader operational doctrine, noting among other considerations:⁴⁴

. . . At all levels . . . public affairs operations are critical to the ability of the Army to accomplish the mission. This is especially true because the global information environment has compressed the strategic, operational and tactical levels. By bridging the gap between the soldier on the ground and the American public, elements of the global information environment may influence the direction, range, duration and conduct of operations. Live coverage of tactical events influence soldier morale, unit cohesion, public opinion, affect strategic goals, impact operational objectives and have a bearing on tactical execution.⁴⁵

⁴¹ CF Joint Doctrine Branch, *B-GJ-005-361/FP-000 - Joint Public Affairs* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2007), 3-1-3-6.

⁴² Department of National Defence, “DAOD 2008-4, Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations,” last modified April 19, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-4-public-affairs-military-doctrine-canadian-forces-operations.html>.

⁴³ Department of National Defence, “DAOD 2008-4, Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations,” last modified April 19, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-4-public-affairs-military-doctrine-canadian-forces-operations.html>.

⁴⁴ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 46-1: Public Affairs Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1997), 29-31, https://cdn.preterhuman.net/texts/wars_and_weapons/military/fm-46-1_public_affairs_operations.pdf.

⁴⁵ *Idem*.

12. Although current U.S. Army PA doctrine, FM 36-1, does not provide the same level of clarity across all levels, it is much more current and does contextualize the necessity of the full extent of PA capabilities within today's reality.⁴⁶ Extant U.S. Air Force doctrine similarly links to the importance of PA across the strategic, operational and tactical levels,⁴⁷ as does the U.S. Joint PA doctrine, with emphasis on the necessity of synchronization of effort within PA and with other IRCs.⁴⁸ Similarly, U.K. doctrine also recognizes the critical role that PA practitioners at all levels play in enabling operations:⁴⁹

. . . Defence communications staffs at all levels are essential to the process of getting messages and images promulgated in a world of 24-hour news cycles, citizen journalists and social media. Senior military officers and officials need to get their messages across to the news media in an unambiguous and attractive way that engenders uptake.⁵⁰

13. Ultimately, Canadian PA policy and doctrine, would benefit from revision to reflect the contemporary reality, include greater alignment with operations doctrine, and incorporate greater clarity around the necessity of PA activity across all levels. Certainly, culturally, CAF PA in support of operations is often looked at as a matter reserved for the tactical level and, to some extent, the operational level. In other words, if a PAO is not currently deployed, or working in a Force Employment Headquarters, they are not generally thought to be supporting operations.⁵¹ Therefore, evolving CAF PA culture to account for the complexities of the current reality, with consideration for coherent and synchronized PA effort across all levels, would be of considerable benefit for the CAF.

Employment, Coordination, Synchronization and Readiness

14. There is similar incoherence in the employment of PAOs, particularly above the operational level and namely within ADM(PA), where the majority of PAOs, not assigned to training or imagery-related roles, are employed under the Director of Operational Communications (DOC), notably the Strategic Joint Staff (SJS) / Command Liaison (CL)

⁴⁶ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-61: Communications Strategy and Public Affairs Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2022), 1-2-1-5,

https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN34864-FM_3-61-000-WEB-1.pdf.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-61, Public Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 2020), 2,

https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP_3-61/3-61-AFDP-PUBLIC-AFFAIRS.pdf.

⁴⁸ U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Publication 3-61: Public Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2016), I-1-I-14, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_61.pdf.

⁴⁹ Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, *Joint Doctrine Note 2/19: Defence Strategic Communication: An Approach to Formulating and Executing Strategy* (Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire, UK: UK Ministry of Defense: 2019), 39-40,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ce7fc2fe5274a4873de09e5/20190523-dcdc_doctrine_uk_Defence_Strategic_Communication_jdn_2_19.pdf.

⁵⁰ *Idem*.

⁵¹ Author's observation as a Senior PAO in NDHQ from 2014 to present, noting that practitioners are often not immediately cognizant of the full breadth and depth of PA support required to support operations across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

PA section in an operational context. Additionally, PAOs are noticeably absent from other essential PA enabling functions above the operational level, including media relations, social media, and internal communications, all of which play an important part in operations.⁵² In some cases, a limited number of positions exist in these areas within the ADM(PA) organization and establishment, although they remain unfilled, a missed opportunity to further integrate civilian and military practitioners.⁵³

15. This reality is particularly interesting, noting the stated DM/CDS intent for a joint military-civilian PA capability,⁵⁴ the obvious benefits brought by the expertise of civilian communicators coupled with the military experience brought by CAF PAOs,⁵⁵ and an IE with a high degree of inter-connectedness across traditional media, social media, and internal discourse.⁵⁶ Indeed, journalists report on DND/CAF-related issues, including operations, every day,⁵⁷ that reporting is shared online, and then discussion follows amongst CAF members in digital public spaces, often anonymously and very much unfavourably, through popular online platforms such as Reddit. Dr. Felix Odartey-Wellington, Associate Professor of Communication at Cape Breton University, studied this dynamic in a recent paper, and his conclusions underscore the criticality of effective internal communications amid this reality:⁵⁸

. . . Proactive strategies must be developed to eliminate systemic internal communication barriers and create genuine opportunities for members to express concerns without the security and institutional risks posed by doing so in the social media space; and leadership must demonstrate genuine listening.⁵⁹

16. Within this reality of interconnected media, online and internal discourse, coordination and synchronization of PA effort across all levels remains a challenge,⁶⁰

⁵² Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs), *ADM(PA) Org Chart version 20* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2023).

⁵³ Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs), *ADM(PA) Org Chart version 20* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2023).

⁵⁴ Wayne Eyre and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Directive – Response to Reviews of Information Operations and Influence Activities* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2021), 7.

⁵⁵ Author's observation as a Senior PAO in NDHQ from 2013-present. No aspect of this paper is meant to suggest anything other than PA should be employed as a joint military-civilian effort, in line with CDS/DM intent, and to ensure that CAF PAOs are fully involved in all PA aspects across all levels that relate to CAF operations.

⁵⁶ Felix Odartey-Wellington, "Canadian Forces as a Free Place for Underlife in the Canadian Military Total Institution," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 21, no. 2 (2021): 163-166, <https://jmss.org/article/view/73067/55612>.

⁵⁷ Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs), *DND and CAF Public Affairs Strategy 2018-2020* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2018), 3.

⁵⁸ Felix Odartey-Wellington, "Canadian Forces as a Free Place for Underlife in the Canadian Military Total Institution," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 21, no. 2 (2021): 163-166, <https://jmss.org/article/view/73067/55612>.

⁵⁹ *Idem*.

⁶⁰ Author's observation as a Senior PAO in NDHQ from 2014-present. In the author's experience, coordination and synchronization of PA effort is a constant challenge, as noted in various aspects of the context included in this paper.

particularly recognizing the critical role of ADM(PA) above the operational level, and the de-centralized PA footprint across the operational level and below.⁶¹ The DND/CAF would benefit from greater coordination across PA, and more broadly with other IRCs. In the U.S., the Joint Staff PA Proponent performs this function, on behalf of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS),⁶² and such a role is worthy of further exploration by the DND/CAF in support of the ADM(PA)'s role as FA.

17. Finally, in recent years, PA has faced readiness challenges,⁶³ owing to limitations in PAO career management and experience across all levels, impacting the capacity to appropriately support CAF operations.⁶⁴ Efforts are ongoing to address these gaps,⁶⁵ and the PA Branch occupations are currently the subject of a comprehensive OA, as noted earlier, which has confirmed a stark reality:⁶⁶

. . . PAOs and Image Techs face substantial capability/capacity challenges throughout CAF environmental formations/units. This results from sub-optimal/legacy MES and C2 structure. It contributes to coordination/task inefficiency, a scope of work/expertise that is too broad, leadership development gaps, reduced FG/FE/PD opportunities, increased stress load, and retention issues.⁶⁷

18. Once the OA is complete, ADM(PA) will lead implementation of the OA outcomes, which aims to ensure improved training and employment of PAOs and Image Techs across the CAF.⁶⁸ As demonstrated in this paper, it will be essential that this implementation consider the employment of PA Branch members across all levels, and not just the tactical and operational levels, to ensure that CAF operations are supported with greater coherence, across a joint military-civilian PA practitioner community, and in line with the CDS and DM continued intent.⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

19. Ultimately, the considerations discussed in this paper demonstrate that PA, as an IRC, has faced a series of challenges in both modern and contemporary history, alongside successes that demonstrate its continued relevance to CAF operations at all levels.

⁶¹ Richard V. Blanchette, “Where’s my PAO?”: *Towards An Improved Public Affairs Capability In The Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016), 38-40.

⁶² Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5400.01- Joint Public Affairs Proponent* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2022), <https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Library/Instructions/CJCSI%205400.01.pdf>.

⁶³ Andrew Hennessy, “Deployment Staffing,” e-mail, February 15, 2024.

⁶⁴ Defence Public Affairs Learning Centre, “Pre-deployment workshop for Public Affairs teams,” Powerpoint presentation, Ottawa, February 2024.

⁶⁵ *Idem*.

⁶⁶ Travis Smyth, “PA Branch Occupations Analysis Update,” Powerpoint presentation, Ottawa, February 1, 2024.

⁶⁷ *Idem*.

⁶⁸ *Idem*.

⁶⁹ Wayne Eyre and Jody Thomas, *CDS/DM Directive – Response to Reviews of Information Operations and Influence Activities* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2021), 7.

20. Recognizing that PA still has a tremendous part to play in enabling CAF operations, and will need to continue to do so, the CAF must revisit PA doctrine and policy with consideration to the role that PA plays across all levels, achieve greater synchronization of effort, and leverage the impending OA implementation to ensure greater coherence in the execution of PA as an IRC, and employment of PA Branch members alongside civilian practitioners in this effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS

21. Accordingly, the following actions are recommended:

- a. Review, modernize, and synchronize CAF PA doctrine, and the DAOD 2008 series, alongside broader CAF operational doctrine, to ensure greater alignment of PA effort across the strategic, tactical, and operational levels;
- b. Ensure OA implementation considers the necessity of PAO and Image Tech employment, alongside civilian counterparts, across all levels and functions that involve CAF operations;
- c. Evolve training, mentoring and career management to ensure that, throughout the full spectrum of their careers, PAOs and Image Techs more consistently and equitably develop the necessary experience and expertise required to support operations, in both HQs at all levels and on operational deployments; and
- d. Examine and enhance coordination and synchronization within PA and with other IRCs, as appropriate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs). *ADM(PA) Org Chart version 20*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2023.

Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs). *DND and CAF Public Affairs Strategy 2018-2020*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2018.

Bastien, J.Y. “Canadian Forces Media Relations: The Case for Operational Control.” Paper, Canadian Forces College, 1996.

Blanchette, Richard V. “*Where’s my PAO ?*”: *Towards An Improved Public Affairs Capability In The Canadian Armed Forces*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Pan-Domain Force Employment Concept*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2023.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *B-GJ-005-300-FP-001 – CFJP 3.0: Operations*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2011.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *B-GJ-005-361/FP-000 - Joint Public Affairs*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2007.

Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia. “Executive Summary.” In *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32-66-1997-eng.pdf.

Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia. “Volume 5.” In *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32-65-1997-5-eng.pdf.

Defence Public Affairs Learning Centre. “Pre-deployment workshop for Public Affairs teams.” PowerPoint presentation, Ottawa, February 2024.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “DAOD 2008 - Table of Contents.” Last modified September 18, 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008.html>.

- Canada. Department of National Defence. “DAOD 2008-0 – Public Affairs Policy.” Last modified April 19, 2017. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-0-public-affairs-policy.html>.
- Canada. Department of National Defence. “DAOD 2008-4, Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations.” Last modified April 19, 2017. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-4-public-affairs-military-doctrine-canadian-forces-operations.html>.
- Canada. Department of National Defence. “Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve.” Last modified June 10, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/canadian-armed-forces-ethos-trusted-to-serve/introduction.html>.
- Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre. *Joint Doctrine Note 2/19: Defence Strategic Communication: An Approach to Formulating and Executing Strategy*. Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire, UK: UK Ministry of Defense: 2019. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ce7fc2fe5274a4873de09e5/20190523-dcdc_doctrine_uk_Defence_Stratategic_Communication_jdn_2_19.pdf.
- Eyre, Wayne and Jody Thomas. *CDS/DM Directive – Response to Reviews of Information Operations and Influence Activities*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2021.
- Foster, Kevin. *Don't Mention the War: The Australian Defence Force, the Media and the Afghan Conflict*. 1st ed. Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2013. <https://publishing.monash.edu/product/dont-mention-the-war/>
- Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army. *FM 3-61: Communications Strategy and Public Affairs Operations*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2022. https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN34864-FM_3-61-000-WEB-1.pdf.
- Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army. *FM 46-1: Public Affairs Operations*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1997. https://cdn.preterhuman.net/texts/wars_and_weapons/military/fm-46-1_public_affairs_operations.pdf.
- Hennessy, Andrew. “Deployment Staffing.” E-mail, February 15, 2024.
- Hillier, Rick. *A Soldier First: Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2009. <https://cfc.overdrive.com/media/1152700>.

- Hobson, Sharon. *The Information Gap: Why the Canadian Public Doesn't Know More about its Military*. Calgary, Alta: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007. <https://canadacommons-ca.cfc.idm.oclc.org/artifacts/1214488/the-information-gap/1767588/>.
- Kempton, Laurie-Anne. "Changes in ADM (PA)/Changements au sein du groupe SMA (AP)." E-mail, November 5, 2020.
- Kirby, John F. "Helping Shape Today's Battlefield: Public Affairs as an Operational Function." Paper, U.S. Naval War College, 2000. <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=448159>.
- Lawrence, Jill. "A Strategic Chorus: Integrating Public Affairs and Other Information Enablers." Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2021. <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/23/192/Lawrence.pdf>.
- Odartey-Wellington, Felix. "Canadian Forces as a Free Place for Underlife in the Canadian Military Total Institution." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 21, no. 2 (2021): 153-179. <https://jmss.org/article/view/73067/55612>.
- Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5400.01- Joint Public Affairs Proponent*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2022. <https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Library/Instructions/CJCSI%205400.01.pdf>.
- Public Affairs Branch. *PA Branch Directive 6-1: History of Public Affairs in the Canadian Forces and National Defence*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016.
- Public Affairs Branch. "Annex K: Significant Dates in the History of Public Affairs." In *PA Branch Directive 6-1: History of Public Affairs in the Canadian Forces and National Defence*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2016.
- Public Affairs Branch. *Public Affairs Branch Notes – December 2022*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2022.
- Pugliese, David. "Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Jon Vance and the weaponization of public affairs." *Ottawa Citizen*, September 21, 2015. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/chief-of-the-defence-staff-gen-jon-vance-and-the-weaponization-of-public-affairs>.
- Pugliese, David. "Veteran DND public affairs staff quitting over interference: report." *Postmedia News*, September 25, 2011. <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/veteran-dnd-public-affairs-staff-quitting-over-interference-report>.

Smyth, Travis. "PA Branch Occupations Analysis Update." PowerPoint presentation, Ottawa, February 1, 2024.

U.S. Department of the Air Force. *Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-61, Public Affairs*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 2020.
https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP_3-61/3-61-AFDP-PUBLIC-AFFAIRS.pdf.

U.S. Joint Staff. *Joint Publication 3-61: Public Affairs*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2016.
https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_61.pdf.

Vance, Jonathan and Jody Thomas. *CDS/DM Planning Guidance – Enhancing Operational and Institutional Communications: Resetting Information-Related Capability Initiatives*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2020.

Veterans Affairs Canada. *Canada Remembers: The Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan*. Ottawa: Veterans Affairs Canada, 2011.
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/cr/pi-sheets/afghanistan-eng.pdf>.