Research Essay

HAIL TO THE CHIEF: STRATEGIC COMMAND OF THE CANADIAN FORCES

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"...what is required is not three separate and more or less independent Service policies, but a single concentric policy of National Defence...."[1]

In 1964 Defence Minister Paul Hellyer took the bold step of unifying Canada's three armed services into a single service, the Canadian Armed Forces. While no other country has completely followed Canada's example, many have established a single military officer, whether called Chief of the Defence Staff, Chief of Defence Forces, or simply Chief of Defence, as the head of their armed services.[2] In Canada, as in many other countries, this officer exercises strategic command of the nation's military forces.

In another controversial consolidation, the headquarters of Canada's Department of National Defence was amalgamated in 1972 with Canadian Forces Headquarters to create a civil-military structure called National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ). Here as well there is a similarity among nations. Many countries with similar values and perspectives to Canada have also brought defence department (civilian) staff together with the military chief and his staff. However, the degree of their integration varies among countries.[3]

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[1] Colonel Maurice Pope, "Memorandum on a Canadian Organization for the Higher Direction of National Defence." 8 March 1937. Canada's National Defence, Volume 2: Defence Organization, ed. Douglas L. Bland. (Kingston: Queen's University, 1998) 9. Colonel Pope reached the rank of Lieutenant-General during the Second World War, and later served abroad as an ambassador.

[2] The Honourable M. Douglas Young, Report to the Prime Minister: A Comparative Study of Authority and Accountability in Six Democracies, (Canada, March 25, 1997) 10-42. The countries examined are: Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, and The Netherlands. All six utilize a position approximating that of the Canadian Chief of the Defence Staff.

[3] See A Comparative Study of Authority and Accountability in Six Democracies, 23-29. Also The Honourable M. Douglas Young, Report to the Prime Minister: A Benchmark Study of the Armed Forces of Australia, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Canada (Canada: March 25, 1997) 27-32.

These two radical departures from military tradition continue to have their critics, both inside and outside the Canadian Forces. Their merits and weaknesses have been discussed in great detar anill not b(e)Tj12 0 0 128.290.7578 653.75999 Tm(e)Tj12 0 0 333.61594578 653.75

consensus in the committee, since he had no overriding vote or authority over the service chiefs.[6] Shortly thereafter, unification took place and a single officer, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), became responsible for military advice to government and for "control and administration" of the armed services. While his authority to command obedience of the troops has never been challenged openly, events and studies throughout the seventies and eighties have caused many to question how effective the national command and direction of the Canadian Forces really was.

Although strategic command of Canadian Forces operations has improved significantly as a result of recent operations, I will argue that further work must be done. To maximize the CDS' ability to command effectively, government must give clear guidance as to what it expects of the Forces, and must permit prudent contingency planning to take place as a crisis builds. Particularly if we are to be prepared for that most demanding mission, defence of the nation and its vital interests in war, the CDS needs the assistance of a capable joint headquarters for overseas command of large operations. Lastly, improvements in national level doctrine, requirements and training are required.

After placing the position of the CDS and the application of the term strategic command in the Canadian context, I will describe how strategic command is effected at present. This discussion will limit itself to the command of planned or current operations, even though I am aware that the CDS has many vital long-term tasks as part of his command responsibility. In some aspects of the current Canadian process, I will present alternatives that work well for the forces of other nations. In other areas, I will

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[6] Haydon, 89-90.

propose adjustments that commend themselves, based on my own observations or experience.[7]

The Chief of the Defence Staff as a Strategic Commander

As in most things, there is a uniquely Canadian perspective to any discussion of strategy or things military. Canada is most fortunate because, unlike almost every other country in the world, it has rarely had to be concerned with its own defence. This happy circumstance has produced a succession of governments that have been able to concentrate on economic and social issues, with little sense of obligation for looking to the defence of the country.

However, when it has developed an explicit national security strategy, the government has consistently chosen a multi-lateral approach, and has contributed significantly to the creation of such security organs as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations. Geography has often elicited a bi-lateral approach with the United States of America, to wit the creation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, the Canada-United States Military Cooperation Committee, and the North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) structure. Accordingly, it is extremely unlikely that Canada would act alone in any foreign military operation. Her forces would be members of an alliance or a UN operation, would join a coalition of like-minded nations to respond to a crisis, or would be the junior partner in an operation with American forces. Only in carrying out domestic operations or in very limited foreign actions such as the extraction of Canadian citizens from danger would the Canadian Forces act alone.

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[7] The author has served in command and staff positions in the land force, and in the Plans, Doctrine and Operations staffs of NDHQ

This situation significantly reduces the breadth and depth of strategic command capability normally needed in the Canadian Forces. Yet, even for a national force that will almost never operate independently, strategic command is defined by two requirements. Firstly, the government is owed professional advice on how military forces might be employed to further the nation's interests. Secondly, those forces must be directed and sustained in accord with government policy and direction. At all times, the government must be kept informed of how its defence forces are being employed

The CDS receives his authority from the National Defence Act, which tells him that he shall, "…subject to the regulations and under the direction of the minister, be charged with the *control and administration* of the Canadian Forces."[8] (my italics) Much ink has been spilled on conjecture as to why the word "command" was not included in this terms of reference, that being the formal military authority of those who are empowered to issue orders and demand obedience. One author surmises that it would produce a constitutional complication (and Canadians need no more of those) because it might infringe on the authority of the Governor General, who is in law the Commander in Chief of the Canadian Forces, in the name of the Queen. [9] This change in wording was recommended in a 1988 study, which also proposed to re-name the appointment to Chief of Defence (CHOD). These recommendations were not implemented.[10] Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that on DND's website, the CDS' responsibilities are listed as to "*command*, control and administer the Canadian Forces." (my italics)[11] As well, in a 1997

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[8] Government of Canada, National Defence Act, Section 18(1) 1985.

[9] Douglas L. Bland, National Defence Headquarters: Centre for Decision (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada-Publishing, 1997) 24.

[10] Bland, Canada's National Defence 501. The Little/Hunter Study was struck by the CDS and DM (General Manson and Mr Dewar) to determine how NDHQ could most effectively be organized to serve its function in both peace and war.

[11] www.dnd.ca/menu/infokit/1_3_e.HTM viewed on 19 March, 1999.

report to the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence described the CDS' duties as including all three functions.[12]

Despite the lack of this helpful military word in the National Defence Act, it is clear that the CDS is in fact in full command of the Canadian Forces. This point is made clear in Section 18(2) of the Act, which specifies that all orders and instructions to the Canadian Forces from the government must be issued by or through the CDS. [13] Thus, the CDS is the sole channel of discourse between the government, including the Minister of National Defence, and the remainder of the members of the Canadian Forces. This allows him to choose the best method by which to effect government direction, keeping always in mind that, should he lose the confidence of the government, he could hardly remain as CDS.

Similarly, the CDS is responsible for the provision of military advice to the Minister and Cabinet. In one vital aspect of this responsibility, he must accurately convey to government the readiness of the Forces to undertake any mission that is being contemplated, the risks involved, and any other relevant factors. While his advice is military in nature and apolitical, he should take into account obvious non-military issues that may influence the government decision. In this he receives advice from the Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy) in NDHQ, as well as other government officials as appropriate.

By virtue of the fact that the CDS operates at the military-government interface, he is at the strategic level of command. Through him the government maintains its authority over and responsibility for its citizens in uniform: in other words, its national

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[12] The Honourable Douglas M. Young, Authority, Responsibility and Accountability (Canada, March 25, 1997) 7 and 9.

command responsibility as the government of a sovereign country. This responsibility remains even when Canadian service personnel are under operational orders of a foreign military commander, and thus the CDS' role in maintaining the national command link is vital. He gives military meaning and context to government direction- a daunting task given the Canadian Government's lack of focus on defence matters. He then transmits this interpreted direction as orders to his military subordinates: the three environmental chiefs of staff, as well as NDHQ Group Principals such as the Vice Chief of Defence Staff, the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, and Assistant Deputy Minister Human Resources (Military). In addition, the CDS gives direction on matters concerning the Canadian Forces to civilian Assistant Deputy Ministers such as Assistant Deputy Minister (Materiel), the DND Chief Information Officer, and the DND Chief of Public Affairs.[14]

For routine matters, the CDS uses the Daily Executive Meeting to initiate discussion and the staffing of issues. However, major items requiring formal study will be presented to the monthly Armed Forces Council- the CDS and all his direct military subordinates- if it is a Canadian Forces matter. Issues that are departmental in scope will be dealt with at the monthly Defence Management Committee, co-chaired by DM and CDS, and comprising all their direct subordinates. Frequently Armed Forces Council direction will be sought first on an issue, and following refinement there, it will be

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[13] Government of Canada, National Defence Act, Section 18(2), 1985

[14] Each morning the CDS and Deputy Minister(DM) co-chair a Daily Executive Meeting (DEM) with all of their direct subordinates, known collectively as the Level One Advisors. The DEM is primarily for information exchange, but direction may be given. The DEM has no formal agenda, but has a two-part structure: first, chaired by the CDS, is discussion of CF issues, introduced by the DCDS giving a resume of significant events concerning deployed or deploying forces. ADM (Policy) may advise members about an expected request from NATO or the UN for Canadian contribution to an operation. Secondly, chaired by the DM, come Departmental matters. The DM may advise of an upcoming government activity, or an extra-departmental item, such as an upcoming Treasury Board edict.

briefed again to Defence Management Committee. This process is used to develop policy and direction for long-term, important but routine matters. It is far too slow for matters affecting ongoing or planned operations.

How, around all these routine meetings (and dozens more), does the CDS effect his command responsibilities for operations, especially when more than one operation is occurring at the same time? Let us look first at how information about an impending mission comes to him, and then how he develops military advice to the government while making preparations to deploy forces if so ordered. After this, we will consider his command of Canadian troops while they are deployed, and how he ensures that appropriate lessons are learned, in particular those indicating a need for remedial action.

Warning of a Possible Operation

> *"…it was necessary to rely on diplomats and spies. The two were often indistinguishable, and still are."*[15]

The first intimation of a new operation may appear in one of six ways. First, in the classic, but least frequent manner, the government might direct the CDS to advise on whether or how the Forces might contribute to an operation. This method was used in August 1990 when the Prime Minister phoned the CDS and asked what support the Forces could provide in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.[16]

Secondly, departmental links through Canadian permanent representatives at NATO, the UN, or in Canadian embassies around the world may informally apprise the CDS, most frequently via ADM (Policy) but sometimes directly, of a potential request for

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[15] Martin van Creveld, Command in War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 19.

[16] Major Jean H. Morin and Lieutenant-Commander Richard H. Gimblett, Operation Friction: The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997) 19. Acting CDS, Admiral Thomas, was at the helm when the call came.

Canadian participation. This serves as a warning only, and does not permit extensive staffing.

Thirdly, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) may receive an informal request through its normal diplomatic channels. If DFAIT is inclined to consider the request, it will ask DND to contribute to the reply. A Canadian Forces Liaison Officer at DFAIT effects much of the liaison between the two departments, but there are many other contacts, mainly in the ADM (Policy) staff. This is the normal method used by the UN to find contributors for military operations. If a country declines an informal request, no formal request will be made. In this way, no diplomatic feelings are bruised, and a country that didn't want to participate can pretend that it was never asked.

In Canada, these niceties can produce two problems. First, to avoid giving the impression that the military is leading government policy, NDHQ staff are severely constrained in how thoroughly they can research capability options in response to an informal request. This may mean that talking to staff outside NDHQ is prohibited- a restriction that may reduce the accuracy of the staff response, and that will certainly prevent any precautionary preparations from being taken in the potentially affected units. As well, there is frequently a reluctance to say no, especially to the UN. In the worst possible chain of events, Canada in January 1998 was asked informally if she would contribute the force communications unit for a new UN mission planned for the Central African Republic. Although there was reluctance to take part (a strong Somalia chill was in the air), no reply, positive or negative, was given to the UN. In late March it was learned that the Prime Minister favoured making a contribution, and a Cabinet meeting

was called to consider whether Canada should participate. On only a few days' notice a DFAIT-DND team was pulled together to reconnoitre the theatre so that the CDS could confidently give his military advice to cabinet.[17]

The fourth way in which warning of an impending mission may reach the CDS is through his own staff. Policy, intelligence, or operations staff might raise an observation on a developing situation, and recommend preliminary planning. Such an event happened in 1996. Throughout the late summer, a humanitarian tragedy of immense proportions was seen to be unfolding in eastern Zaire, and was briefed regularly by intelligence staff at the DCDS' daily brief. When asked by operations staff in September whether some contingency planning should take place, the DCDS forbade any work to be done on the issue. The subsequent government direction to launch a relief effort came without any preliminary staffing having been done.[18]

The fifth method of warning is through subordinate headquarters. Most commonly this would be a request by municipal or provincial authorities for assistance from their normal military point of contact, an operational-level headquarters. In early January 1998, Headquarters of both Land Force Central Area and Secteur Quebec Force Terrestre advised NDHQ that they had received requests for help from their respective province in dealing with the effects of the ice storm.[19] When the scale of the requests grew beyond their resources, the CDS became involved and took control of the operation.

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[17] Various oral reports by ADM (Policy) representatives at the DCDS' daily pre-DEM briefings, January to March, 1998. The author was the team leader of the reconnaissance.

[18] The conversation with the DCDS took place in the National Defence Operations Centre (now re-named National Defence Command Centre) in early September, 1996. No reason was given for the prohibition on planning.

[19] Various telephone conversations to National Defence Operations Centre, Domestic Operations Desk, from Central Area and Secteur Quebec on 4,5 and 6 January, 1998.

The sixth method derives from the legislated requirement of the CDS to respond to a provincial request for Aid of the Civil Power. Having given up their own militia forces when Canada was formed, the provincial premiers can call on the Canadian Forces to restore public order when their police forces cannot uphold the rule of law.
In this situation the CDS is not getting merely information, but instead a demand, or requisition, for armed troops to restore legal authority. He must respond, although he uses his professional judgement to determine the nature and scale of response.[20] The most recent example of this type of mission was the native blockade in Oka, Quebec in 1990.

Once the CDS is aware of an impending mission through one of the above means, he is able to actively gather more information. The Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS), who is the J3 or operations officer for the Forces, will task the J2 to utilize applicable intelligence channels, and Chief of Staff J3 to commence looking at options. ADM (Policy), the main channel for external communications-other departments, or other countries- will also be acquiring additional information.

Unfortunately, as was mentioned in some examples above, too often a fear of being seen to be in front of the government decision-making process has prevented the timely acquisition of information that is so fundamental to a proper military assessment of the situation. This can seriously jeopardize the ability of the CDS to properly advise government on the merits of Canadian Forces' involvement in a situation.

If national security strategy or political considerations indicate a commitment may be desirable, he must first answer the question-do we have the capability to make a useful contribution at an acceptable risk? If the CDS answers a tentative yes, then he

will next be expected to answer: what sort of contribution would be appropriate and sustainable, at what cost, in resources and risk?

To answer even the first question, some discussion with those developing the situation is essential, best done by a reconnaissance and liaison visit to the theatre or at least to the site of the lead organization, such as NATO or UN Headquarters. Such a reconnaissance and liaison team should contain operations, intelligence and logistics representatives, and should include a Foreign Affairs officer. To answer the second question with any authority, contingency planning must be permitted, including necessary staff checks at headquarters other than NDHQ.

Our political and military leaders must come to understand that such steps are not a commitment to action, but simply a prudent m

en5re it is ready to respond if called. The Somalia Commission criticized both the CDS and the DCDS for not clearly establishing the mission requirements of the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group before deploying it.[21]

The British Forces provide a useful example. Their recently established Permanent Joint Headquarters, whic ely with the Ministry of Defence when a military commitment is being considered, has a standing task to deploy a reconnaissance party to theatre. Once in contact with London, this party can provide useful information in arriving at a go/no go decision. If the decision is yes, the reconnaissance party is well placed to commence more detailed reconnaissance for further planning and deployment.[22]

[20] Canada, National Defence Act, 1985, Part XI.

[21] Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997) Recommendation 24.6, page 873.

[22] Briefing given at Permanent Joint Headquarters, UK, on 26 June 1997. See also Great Britain, Ministry of Defence, British Defence Doctrine: Joint Warfare Publication 0-01 (British Crown Copyright, 1997) Chapters 5 and 7.

Once the likelihood of a tasking to the Forces rises, the CDS will initiate the CF Operations Planning Process[23], which will help him provide the answer to the government's second question: what contribution, at what cost and at what risk? One vital service that the CDS can provide to his planners at this stage is to obtain as detailed information as possible from government as to what are the political objectives, priorities and limitations. The political considerations in contemplating a defence mission are crucial factors for military planners, if time is not to be wasted on options that would clearly be outside the range of possible government consideration.

Preparation of a Task Force

The DCDS supervises the planning process through its six steps: initiation; orientation; course of action development; decision; plan development; and plan review. Chief of Staff J3 coordinates the work of the Joint Staff Action Team, which comprises members from almost every branch of NDHQ, including the Environmental Chiefs of Staff.[24] The CDS, having received government direction, will provide the staff planning guidance, including the military end-state, and any planning constraints or assumptions they should use.[25] The staff's initial focus is to confirm all possible details of the mission requirement, and build viable force package options that would satisfy it. J2 staff will analyze and report on the threat, J1 will prepare to task individuals needed to augment the main force generator, J4 Finance will cost all options, and J5 Public Affairs will develop a communications plan.

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[23] This process will not be described in detail in this paper. See Canada, Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Force Employment Manual, http://bbs.cfc.dnd.ca/Curriculum/jointdocs/cdnpubs/fempman/femtc.html which describes it fully.

[24] JSAT meets weekly on a routine basis, and daily or as needed when a contingency is being staffed. For its membership and other information, see Draft J Staff SOP Vol 2 Part 1 Planning 20 Jan 99, SOP 0100. Unfortunately, Director General Stategic Planning (Force Development, long range planning, performance measurement, etc) is not represented on JSAT.

The CDS will review several possible courses of action, and subsequently will choose the preferred one. By this time a task force commander will be warned, and he and his headquarters will be refining the plan with NDHQ staffs. Once the CDS has selected a course of action, i.e. a force structure, the J4 Logistics and Movements staffs can prepare the strategic logistic and movement plans.

The CDS can now brief the Minister or Cabinet on a recommended force package, and the concept of operations under development. In a deliberate and complex scenario, such as the preparations for the Y2K contingency, it could take months from initiation to selection of course of action. For a more urgent and simple mission, course selection might happen within days, and instead of writing a plan, the staff starts immediately on preparing an operation order.

Intermittently throughout the planning process, the CDS will participate directly: in issuing the Operation Order, Ministerial Organization Order (for the new entity being created), Terms of Reference for the Task Force Commander, Administrative Order and Movement Order.

The CDS has another key responsibility in preparing the task force for its mission. He must personally approve the Rules of Engagement, which provide the task force commander the authority and limitations for the use of force on the mission. The DCDS' J3 Plans staff, supported by J5 Legal, do the drafting of ROE. As a result of the Somalia experience this document receives careful attention. Its preparation, and everyone's

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[25] See Draft J Staff SOP Vol 2 Part 1, SOP 0300.

knowledge of conventions governing the use of force, is greatly enhanced by the recent production of a comprehensive handbook.[26]

A formation commander of the parent command will supervise the task force's preparations and declare to the CDS when it is operationally ready for its mission. This step also has been formalized since the Somalia mission.[27] The force is now ready to deploy to the mission area. It will be detached from its parent command, and its commander will come directly under command of the CDS for the duration of the mission. Only for small, routine operations does an environmental chief of staff retain command of one of his units on operations. In all other cases, he is a force generator who prepares the force, then passes its command to the CDS.[28] Although the difference in scale can make any comparison misleading, this policy parallels that in use in the United States' Armed Forces, in which the Chief of Staff of a Service is required to train and detach to a unified combatant commander whatever units he has been tasked to provide.[29]

Deployment

The force will deploy to theatre in accordance with the deployment order, possibly over several days and by a variety of means. Commencing on departure from Canada, the task force commander will report to and receive his direction from the CDS. Once the task force is consolidated in theatre and ready for operations, the CDS will sign

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[26] Canada, Department of National Defence, Use of Force in Canadian Forces Operations (1997). The Somalia Commission enjoined the CDS to develop better tools for preparing and ensuring familiarity with ROE. See Somalia Commission, recommendations 22.1- 22.7, pages 747 and 748.

[27] See Somalia Commission, recommendations 23.1-23.10, pages 787-789

[28] See Canada, Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Operations: B-GG-005-004/AF-000 (DND Canada, 1996) 7-2. Maritime support to Department of Fisheries and Oceans patrols is an example of a routine operation, the command of which rests with Chief of Maritime Staff. Ibid 1-7.

[29] United States, Unified Action Armed Forces: Joint Publication 0-2 (United States Government Printing Office, 1995) vii to ix.

a Transfer of Command Authority message, defining the degree of control the CDS is giving the Coalition Commander over deployed Canadian forces.[30]

Employment

Normally the CDS will transfer operational control[31] to the international commander (In an alliance he might choose operational command). This allows that person to direct the Canadian task force in the accomplishment of its agreed mission, but not to give it new tasks, or to detach any elements from within it, without Canadian consent. By this means the Canadian Government can be confident that its forces are being employed in the manner to which it has agreed. Frequently on missions such as NATO's Stabilization Force in Bosnia, the Canadian task force commander has relayed requests to NDHQ for unforeseen taskings of Canadian units out of their normal operational area: in most cases these requests have been granted.

The Canadian Task Force Commander may fill a coalition or UN staff function in addition to his national duties. Whether or not this is the case, he will exercise operational command[32] of Canadian Forces members on the mission. He thus assists the CDS in his strategic responsibilities: monitoring the employment of the Canadians, ensuring compliance with Canadian Rules of Engagement, enforcing Canadian Forces discipline (members remain subject to Canadian law), and providing a command link with the multi-national commander and staff on any issue that touches the Canadian element. Lastly, in another critical component of strategic command, he supervises the provision of the necessary Canadian Forces logistic and administrative support to all

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30 For a description of the transfer process, see DND, Canadian Forces Operations, 2-7 and 2-8.

31 For the definition of this and other command and control terms, see Canadian Forces Operations, 2-2.

32 DND Canadian Forces Operations, 2-1.

members serving on the mission.[33] All of these aspects incorporate the notion of "national command" of forces, in which an unbroken chain of Canadian Forces officers is responsible through the CDS to the government for the "control and administration" of deployed Canadians, even though they may be receiving operational direction of a non-Canadian officer.

Clearly, on domestic operations or in a unilateral Canadian expedition, the CDS will remain more closely engaged in an operation, and will issue strategic direction to deployed commanders as required. During the 1998 operation to assist Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick authorities in dealing with the effects of the ice storm, he provided clear direction to the joint staff and spoke frequently to the deployed commanders.

Re-deployment and Follow-up

On the completion of a mission the CDS will authorize return to Canada, and will dispatch logistics and movement teams to theatre to assist preparations for departure. His first responsibility thereafter is to ensure restoration of readiness of personnel and equipment in the shortest reasonable time. This was most graphically illustrated when the Disaster Assistance Response Team returned from hurricane relief work in Honduras on 19 December 1998, after several weeks in hot and primitive conditions. Despite acknowledging that they deserved a good Christmas break, General Baril ordered that equipment and stocks be refurbished immediately so that response to another crisis would be possible within the advertised seven days.[34] The capability to provide a disaster assistance response was restored by 29 December, with minor limitations.

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[33] Duties of the Task Force Commander will have been spelled out in the Terms of Reference he was given by the CDS. For a general description of his responsibilities in a coalition, see DND Canadian Forces Operations, 8-1 and 8-2.

[34] Oral direction in CDS' office, 12 December, 1998.

Finally, the CDS is responsible to government for the operational effectiveness of the Forces. To improve effectiveness continuously, he directs the gathering and analysis of lessons that have been learned on each operation. After this analysis comes the most important and most difficult step: instituting changes that have been indicated in the review. A results-oriented Lessons Learned process has only been in place at the strategic level since 1996, and was first employed for the aborted refugee relief operation in eastern Zaire. Only two staff officers are dedicated to this important process, and its effectiveness has not yet been confirmed, although useful lessons have been published. Only if the CDS publicly endorses the process, and validates it by directing change as a result of reports, will it truly become effective.

This paper addresses only that part of the CDS' responsibility that involves imminent or current operations. However, three areas repeatedly provoke cries for action in the nascent Lessons Learned process at NDHQ. Their frequent mention is evidence of a deficiency that only CDS action can resolve: the matter of staff priority.

First, in the matter of doctrine, the entire national-level joint staff capability is two officers (who are frequently seconded to other duties, such as augmenting operations staff). By contrast, strong teams of over ten officers write doctrine for each of the three environments. Considering Canada's military situation it makes perfect sense for more writing to be completed at the tactical, and therefore environmental level. However, the lack of overarching doctrine from the top has hindered the development of the forward-looking innovative skills that our military history, our small size and our unified structure should give us.

The second deficiency is very closely related to doctrine, and is another instance of the same problem. The CDS' joint staff has only a minuscule and fragmented capability to staff requirements for joint Canadian Forces capital projects. Each of the environments, by contrast, maintains a pool of 20-60 officers whose sole function is to procure equipment needed by that environment. The acquisition of national joint needs, such as command and control systems, theatre logistics, or strategic deployment items, receives low priority in funding and senior support because there is no one to staff the proposals, and because the environments have no reason to champion them.

The third shortcoming follows from the first two. It concerns the need for training- not for the lower-level troops in the field, but for the very highest end, including the CDS, members of Defence Management Committee, the Minister of National Defence, and selected members of DFAIT. Each year a small number of NDHQ staff participates in strategic-level exercises conducted by NORAD and NATO, with little participation by senior leaders. In 1997, apparently for the first time in at least a decade, a planning exercise in NDHQ allowed the CDS and his immediate subordinates to walk through their essential tasks in the mounting of a major military operation.[35] It is important that senior leaders and key officials learn and practise their operational responsibilities. As much as the CDS is involved in several aspects of every operation, even he would benefit from the occasional, deliberate examination of his duties in a larger, more demanding exercise scenario.

All three of the above deficiencies hinder the Forces' potential as a unified professional expeditionary force, and indicate a weakness in the current structure of

NDHQ. If the CDS is to be supported in his task of maximizing operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces, he must form a robust and pro-active doctrine staff that works towards the future, laying out a strategic and operational-level unified Canadian Forces framework within which environmental tactical doctrine must fit. The lessons learned staff must be given clear support, and the mandate to pursue answers and corrective action aggressively throughout the chain of command, taking care to stay out of tactical issues. Joint requirements must be consolidated and given the staffing and funding priority they need, working from the doctrine and lessons learned products mentioned above. Lastly, strategic-level training must occur regularly, to allow the CDS and his team to be better prepared for the next contingency.

War Readiness

Will the above procedures and structures enable the CDS to command effectively in war, or in a unilateral Canadian mission? If the criticisms made in this paper were addressed, my answer would be yes, with two important qualifications. The ability of NDHQ to support the CDS' command has been limited for much of its existence not only by internal problems, but also by the situation above and below it.

By "above", I refer to government in the general sense: both parliamentarians, and the machinery of government as represented by other departments and central agencies. The elected officials of this country need to play a more active role in the supervision of their armed forces. This concern was clearly stated in the conclusions of

[35] Exercise STRATEGIC STAR, October, 1997. The exercise was not repeated in 1998. Reluctance of senior NDHQ leaders to submit to training in their operational tasks was noted a decade earlier by the authors of the Little/Hunter Study. See Bland, Canada's National Defence, 410.

the Somalia Commission.[36] A well thought out and clearly expressed national security policy, which fully supported the nation's foreign policy, would be an important step. Pragmatic consideration of new defence tasks, and the issue of a clear statement of the political objective(s) in assigning those tasks, would greatly help the CDS research and propose viable and useful military solutions. As well, government must realize that thorough staffing, including inter-departmental reconnaissance, is a fundamental part of being prepared for a contingency: the CDS must be free to work with DFAIT and other headquarters and other countries as he strives to craft the best possible military advice.

By "below" I do not mean the environmental chiefs of staff. Their primary function as force generators is clear, and their recent move to NDHQ has made their advice to the CDS and the joint staff immediately available. More importantly, co-location has finally started to create a sense of shared purpose among the environments that has resisted thirty years of unification. Instead, what the CDS needs below him to effect his command during times of major military missions is a headquarters that can truly focus on the operational level of that operation. This would allow the CDS and his staff to maintain the strategic focus and overview, ensuring military action is in accord with government direction in the selection, preparation and employment of military forces for operations.

A partial step in this direction was taken after the war in the Persian Gulf, due to problems with the ad hoc task force headquarters supporting the national commander of

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[36] Canada, Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, Executive Summary (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997) ES 46-ES 47.

all Canadian elements in theatre.[37] In 1994, 1st Canadian Division, a formation of the Land Force, was assigned a secondary role: to be prepared to act as a joint task force headquarters for operations in Canada or abroad.[38] Although it conducted contingency planning for two operations, and has deployed as a joint headquarters on three missions, the headquarters remains primarily an army formation.

On 1 December1998 Armed Forces Council acknowledged that a permanent operational joint headquarters is required, and issued direction that it be put in place in the year 2000. This headquarters will contribute to contingency planning and strategic reconnaissance to potential mission areas, and will serve a Joint Task Force Commander nominated to command deployed Canadian Forces elements.[39] Once established, this headquarters will considerably enhance the CDS' ability to effect command of significant military operations. While the three environments would be focussed primarily on preparing their unique contribution for deployment to the operation, the joint headquarters would be establishing and coordinating the national command structure in theatre, as well as the concept of operations and of national logistic support. In coalition operations there is so much coordination and planning required to conduct these three functions that only a dedicated commander and staff, who need not be concerned with strategic and force generation issues, can provide the necessary focus and attention to detail.

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[37] See Morin and Gimblett, Operation Friction, 113-126 for some idea of the difficulties in throwing this capability together. Being an official history, this book is very diplomatic about some of the difficulties that were experienced in the headquarters.

[38] Department of National Defence, NDHQ Directive 12/94 and 3/96.

[39] Interview with Commander Carl Doucette, J3 Doctrine, Requirements and Standardization, NDHQ, 1 April, 1999.

Conclusion

Strategic command of the Canadian Forces on operations has improved with the creation of the office of CDS, and even further as a result of lessons learned in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. The CDS has full command of the Canadian Forces, whether they are at home or deployed on operations. He is supported by a unified staff, which includes representatives of his navy, army and air force subordinates, and he has easy access to policy, materiel, financial, legal and public affairs advice through the integrated NDHQ matrix.

The ability of the CDS to give effective military advice to government is sometimes hampered by unclear government direction or priorities, and by an overly zealous restriction on prudent staffing, such as reconnaissance and consultation, by which he should inform himself before formulating that advice. As well, closer supervision by parliament to developments in the Canadian Forces would greatly ease the CDS' burden of priority setting and new initiatives.

In his task of executing government direction the CDS is the sole conduit for orders to the Canadian Forces. In recent years the formalization of many procedures and instructions has facilitated his ability to issue timely and unambiguous orders to commanders. As well, the co-location of environmental commanders at NDHQ has greatly improved the unity of purpose and clarity of focus during the mounting of operations. If he is to constantly improve the Canadian Forces' military capability, however, the CDS should raise the profile of the strategic-level lessons learned process, and take measures to improve the national doctrine, requirements and training capability so that a truly unified Canadian Forces can be created. To better permit his strategic

command during major operations, he requires the establishment of an operational-level headquarters, which is now under development.

The Canadian Forces, through the trials of the past decade, is now belatedly ready to realize the true potential of unification thirty years after the fact. With a common, mission-oriented purpose, and a single officer advising government and issuing military orders, the Canadian Government can be confident that it has a responsive and responsible armed force at its disposal.

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