

Archived Content

Information identified as archived on the Web is for reference, research or record-keeping purposes. It has not been altered or updated after the date of archiving. Web pages that are archived on the Web are not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards.

As per the [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#), you can request alternate formats on the "[Contact Us](#)" page.

Information archivée dans le Web

Information archivée dans le Web à des fins de consultation, de recherche ou de tenue de documents. Cette dernière n'a aucunement été modifiée ni mise à jour depuis sa date de mise en archive. Les pages archivées dans le Web ne sont pas assujetties aux normes qui s'appliquent aux sites Web du gouvernement du Canada.

Conformément à la [Politique de communication du gouvernement du Canada](#), vous pouvez demander de recevoir cette information dans tout autre format de rechange à la page « [Contactez-nous](#) ».

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE /COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES COURSE 2

22 June 2000

CANADIAN FORCES

EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING:

A DELIBERATE, CAREER-LONG PROCESS

By/par Commodore Jacques J. Gauvin
Canadian Navy

This paper was written by a student attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfillment of one of the communication skill 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.

CANADIAN FORCES

EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING:

A DELIBERATE, CAREER-LONG PROCESS

“The development of our successors and future leaders is a responsibility to which I attach utmost importance. I require the same from each and every one of you.”¹

VAdm G.R. Maddison

“From now on, choosing my successor is the most important decision I’ll make. It occupies a considerable amount of thought almost every day.”²

Jack Welch, CEO, GE

Introduction

When one thinks of Defence, one is often tempted to think of tanks, aircraft and ships. Yet people represent approximately 45% of the 2000 Defence budget,³ and thus 45% of the country’s investment in capability and security. Clearly, our people represent one of our major strengths. Our workforce is highly committed, highly skilled, relatively well educated and structured to deliver. People and their intellectual capital are Defence’s ‘value added’. They are our future. It is therefore important that we identify, attract, recruit, develop and retain talented people for service at all levels and ranks of the Canadian Forces (CF). The right people with the right skills in the right job at the right time. It is equally vital that the senior/executive leadership

¹ VAdm G.R. Maddison, *The Responsibilities of Naval Leaders in Junior Officer Development*, (NDHQ, MARC: 5000-1 (DGNP), 1 February 1999).

² Jack Welch, CEO, General Electric. Quote from 1991 speech.

³ DND website. http://www.dnd.ca/menu/budget/bkgfacts_e.htm

of the CF also comprise the ‘right person with the right skills at the right time’ if the enormous potential and capabilities of the CF are to be properly focussed and brought to bear in the execution of its defence mandate. But is this always the case?

Budget (capitalization) issues aside, it is my belief that the most significant organizational issue facing the CF relates to leadership. Justified or not, Defence’s military leadership has come under heavy and constant scrutiny and criticism since the Somalia incident of 1993. Criticism of senior/executive leadership has focussed on a variety of issues from unofficial sanctioning (through inaction) of hazing/initiation rituals and sexual harassment to senior officer misconduct, to allegations of cover up activity surrounding the Somalia affair and personnel health and leadership issues in Croatia. The post Cold War senior/executive leadership has been further accused of lacking vision and coherence, as failing to accept responsibility, and being overly reactive. Far too often, it seems that wherever one sits in the hierarchy, all the problems besetting the organization in terms of its management and leadership comes from higher up the ladder. Is this so? Do we have the right people in the senior/executive positions of the CF and more importantly, have they been adequately prepared to provide the necessary vision, guidance and leadership in these clearly different times?

While this perspective may be overly critical and unfair, it is nevertheless a perspective put forth by the media and is therefore unfortunately accepted as true by a proportion of the public at large and a number of military subordinates as well. It is not my intent to prove or disprove the adequacy of the senior/executive leadership of the CF. I do however believe that tomorrow’s strategic level leaders must be better prepared for their duties within the very challenging and demanding confines that is National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) and the nation’s capital in a broader, government-wide context. This paper therefore proposes that a more comprehensive and structured career development plan for senior officers supported by adequate succession management and planning, will enhance the overall quality of senior/executive leadership in the CF.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Challenges of Succession

Succession refers to the process within an organization associated with the required movement of personnel to replace departing personnel. These departures can be either due to planned or unplanned events. An “important aspect of human resource planning and development is the preparation of a succession design for the key positions in an organization.”⁴ Succession planning therefore, is a dynamic, on-going process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing leadership talent for future strategic requirements.

The maintenance of personnel stability, particularly in key positions, is generally desired throughout the upper management levels of government and industry. Such stability allows for the development of, and movement towards, long-term objectives by a leadership/management team in a cohesive and structured manner. Ideally, they will have participated in the formulation of the long-term vision, and will stay in place to provide the strategic leadership and direction necessary to see the vision/objectives/etc through to fruition. Assuming the right people with the right skill sets are in place, personnel stability, particularly at the highest levels, is generally a desired objective.

Such stability however, is generally not possible within the CF. Short tenure, rapid turnover and relatively early retirement typify military careers and add unique challenges to a succession process that in contrast, seeks longer term stability, more development opportunities and career broadening experiences with which to prepare the senior/executive leadership of the CF. This situation has been further exacerbated within the CF as the depth of the selection pool for the highest positions of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Level 1 managers, the Vice CDS (VCDS), Deputy CDS (DCDS), and the Army, Navy & Air Force Environmental Chiefs of Staff (ECS's), is very limited. A General/Flag officer cadre of 124 in 1988 has shrunk to 66 in 1998 (47% reduction) as a result of post-Cold War reductions in effective strength and

⁴ Kalburgi M. Srinivas, *Human Resource Management: Contemporary Perspectives in Canada* (Toronto, Ont: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1984), p. 584.

reorganization efforts. Similarly, the Colonel/Captain(N) effective strength was reduced from 362 to 255 (30% reduction) over the same period.⁵ While succession planning is not unique to the military, military succession planning is very different than its industry counterpart.

While planned departures and successions are clearly preferred; there must nevertheless be sufficient depth and breadth of experience at all organizational levels if the negative impacts of succession are to be minimized. These impacts will vary but will almost always result in a degree of lost productivity, (due to in-briefing and back-briefing requirements) the extent of which will depend on the successor's background, experience and familiarity with his/her new responsibilities. Furthermore, short to medium term productivity can be seriously affected if a change in leadership is also accompanied with a change in direction, focus or major review initiated or requested by the successor. Finally, succession can have tremendously negative impacts if the successor is not the "right person with the right skills for the time".

Succession does not of course only have negative attributes. On the positive side, succession has the potential to provide an infusion of fresh talent, vigor and ideas into a potentially stale or stagnant leadership cadre. Likewise, succession provides strong motivational, and therefore performance incentives to the subordinate hierarchy under the executive levels who aspire to the senior executive/leadership positions within the CF. The aim is to have a succession process in place that will maximize the benefits of succession while mitigating any negative impacts.

The Role of Succession Planning in Strategic Human Resource Management

As previously stated, downsizing and early retirements encouraged in the post-Cold War Force Reduction Programmes (FRP) of the early 90's, HQ reorganizations, and subsequent lean hierarchies have depleted the once deep pool of senior officers traditionally nurtured to produce the next generation of senior/executive leaders. With a shallower pool of senior officers from whom to select the successive cadre of senior/executive leaders, the importance of a succession

⁵ ADM HR (MIL)/DSA homepage. http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dsa/engraph/EFFSTRENGTH_e.asp

process to maximize the preparation and suitability of a maximum number of these officers, becomes paramount. “Modern organizations must develop pools of highly talented people from which they can choose candidates for specific leadership positions.”⁶

In his article *Grooming Next Millennium Leaders*, William Byham argues the difference between succession planning and succession management. He states that ‘succession planning’ is a fairly dated concept that focussed on defining and identifying successors for a specific job. He believes this was a useful approach when jobs were static and people moved through them on relatively well defined career paths. Arguably, this is still the approach used in the CF. He further states that in today’s world, organizational structures are more dynamic and flatter than in the past and therefore more lateral movement occurs. In such an environment, organizations should focus on developing pools of highly talented people from which candidates for specific positions can be chosen. This process he labels as ‘succession management’, the process that focuses on creating and stocking pools of candidates with high leadership potential. He emphasizes that succession management must go beyond the act of identifying potential successors, it must ensure that planned training and development occurs in order to provide a pool of qualified candidates, ... in essence, build pools, not queues.

In his article *Hallmarks of Effective Succession Planning*, Randall Cheloha tends to agree with Byham by making the point that his two succession-related processes are not the same either. It his belief that ‘succession planning’ is about preparing an individual to assume the preeminent position within an organization, while ‘management development’ is about developing leadership capability broadly across an organization. “Effective succession planning is the culmination of effective management development.”⁷ Although Cheloha’s article is written in a strictly business context, it is clear that he believes that succession at the highest level is about leadership. It is apparent therefore that regardless of the different nuances between

⁶ William C. Byham, *Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders*, (Human Resources Magazine, February 1999), p. 2 of 7. <http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299byham.htm>

⁷ Randall S. Cheloha, *Hallmarks of Effective Succession Planning*, (MMC Viewpoint Magazine, Number 2, 1999), p.3 of 5. <http://www.mmc.com/views/99fall.cheloha.shtml>

these authors, there is consensus in that ‘succession planning’, ‘succession management’ and ‘management development’, all recognize the importance of organizational leadership capability.

Strategic Level Leadership

Fundamental to successful succession planning therefore is the articulation of the type of strategic leadership desired for the organization. In the CF context it is clear that to succeed at the strategic level, one would previously have demonstrated tactical and operational level leadership capability. However, in addition to possessing these qualities, today’s strategic level leader must be able to flourish in an environment that is defined through downsizing, reengineering, decimated organizational and staff levels and broadened spans of control.⁸ The strategic level leader must “provide vision, develop strategic direction, monitor results, and adjust as necessary. He/she must have functional expertise, core values, high ethical values, and must operate as a coach, mentor or facilitator as required. He/she will have to understand the intricacies of governance, international relations and the roles of different actors (international, governmental, non-governmental).”⁹ Strategic level leadership qualities include positive responses to the following questions. Can this individual shoulder more broad and senior responsibilities? Does this individual have the impact and presence this organization needs? Does this individual have the intellectual capacity to deal with the complexity of the challenges the organization faces? Can he/she work collaboratively at the ADM and Deputy Minister level and garnish the requisite commitment and focused effort of the Level 1 managers?

It is important to emphasize that command and leadership success at the tactical or operational level does not automatically translate into strategic level command success. Experience and understanding in the mechanisms of government and how it works are vital to success at the strategic level and in particular for the CDS. In order to develop the expertise to succeed in this environment, potential CDS candidates need developmental positions at multiple

⁸ Robert J. Grossman, *Heirs Unapparent*. (Human Resources Magazine, February 1999), p.5 of 8.
<http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299cov.htm>

⁹ Captain(N) A. Okros, *Into the 21st Century: Strategic HR Issues*, p. 11 of 17.
<http://www.vcds.dnd.ca/vcds/dgsp/analysis/hr%5Fe.asp>

levels within NDHQ. Future CDS's therefore must move from tactical and operational level command tours into the NDHQ environment at every opportunity. This was also identified in recommendation 30 of the *Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change*, which stated, "Provide officers with the potential for promotion to senior ranks with appropriate exposure to the integrated national headquarters early in their careers."¹⁰ For future strategic level leaders, NDHQ experience in resource management and policy development in particular will be most useful.

The Succession Process

Top management must be involved with and support the succession planning process. Succession planning must be owned by line management and guided by Human Resource (HR) specialists – not owned by HR. In the CF context, human resource management/succession planning is the joint responsibility of line managers (CDS & ECS's) and human resource specialists (ADM HR Mil/Civ). "For the human dimension to be taken into consideration on a consistent and continual basis in the organization's strategic and operational decisions, effective communication linkage must be present at the various levels and between levels in the organization. This is particularly important between line managers and human resource specialists."¹¹

The readings on this topic offer a selection of opinions on the components to a successful succession process. The following three provide variations on a similar theme. Cheloha's article is the least developed. He suggests that the process is limited to:¹²

- defining the desired leadership capability;

¹⁰ The Honourable John A. Fraser, *Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces: Final Report - 1999*. (Report to the Minister of National Defence. Ottawa, ON: December 1999), p. 68.

¹¹ Kalburgi M. Srinivas, *Human Resource Management: Contemporary Perspectives in Canada* (Toronto, Ont: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1984), p 60.

¹² Randall S. Cheloha, *Hallmarks of Effective Succession Planning*, (MMC Viewpoint Magazine, Number 2, 1999), p.3-4 of 5. <http://www.mmc.com/views/99fall.cheloha.shtml>

- assessing potential successors as leaders; and
- producing development plans for successor candidates that highlight strengths and work on weaknesses.

Amanda Kaufmann, in her article *Good Planning Smooths the Way* provides a modest improvement on Cheloha. She suggests that the process involves:¹³

- outlining employees' predominant skill sets;
- providing the mechanisms to develop skill sets that are lacking;
- forecasting the succession needs of the organization; and
- communicating to all the skills that are required.

In contrast, Byham's proposal for succession management is more detailed than the previous two and therefore more useful. It recommends:¹⁴

- determining the extent of an organization's pending leadership shortage;
- identifying needed executive competencies based on the organization's future needs, values and strategies;
- identifying high-potential individuals for possible inclusion in a pool;
- assessing these individuals to identify strengths and skills gaps and to determine who will be in the high potential pool;
- establishing an individually tailored development program for each high-potential candidate that includes training, job rotation, special assignments and mentoring by older senior executives;
- selecting and placing people into senior jobs based on their job performance, their experience and assessment of their potential for a specific job; and
- continuous monitoring of the system and top management support.

¹³ Amanda J.S. Kaufmann, *Good Planning Smooths the Way*, (InfoWorld Magazine: March 16, 1998), p. 1-2 of 4. <http://www.inquiry.com/pubs/infoworld/1998/issue11/Z02-11.html>

¹⁴ William C. Byham, *Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders*, (Human Resources Magazine, February 1999), p. 2 of 7. <http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299byham.htm>

SUCCESSION PLANNING – WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Review of the Senior/Executive Succession Process in the CF

Prior to 1997, senior/executive level succession planning in the CF consisted of a yearly round table discussion chaired by the CDS and an ad hoc group of officers to discuss and consider the merits of subordinates for promotion and/or postings as necessary to satisfy the summer posting/retirement requirements. This was a very closed, limited-visibility, good-old-boy network, activity.¹⁵ A more structured succession planning process commenced to take shape in 1997 when the first General/Flag officer Merit Boards were convened to establish merit lists within the respective senior/executive ranks. The Director Senior Appointments (DSA) within Assistant Deputy Minister Human Resources – Military (ADM HR (Mil)) is a central coordination figure in the career management of Col/Capt(N)'s and above. DSA maintains tracking matrix's and qualification tables on all senior officers. Amongst other things, these tools are used to identify retirement age, language proficiency levels, education levels and professional development training. This information plus the individual officer's Personnel Evaluation Report (PER) file will be reviewed during the respective Merit Boards in order to create a merit list for promotion purposes. As secretary to the General/Flag officer merit boards and in coordination with ECS representatives, DSA will propose a senior officer "plot" for consideration by the ECS's and the CDS that will attempt to look two postings into the future for each officer. Proposed promotions/postings are subsequently submitted by the CDS to the Minister of National Defence (MND) for approval in the form of a yearly Promotions and Senior Appointments plot.

Prior to the recent (post-Somalia) spate of negative CF discipline and leadership related incidents; the Minister largely accepted the recommendations of the CDS without much Ministerial review. A succession of post-Cold War incidents however that cast a negative shadow on the senior/executive leadership of the CF has invited more and more scrutiny and active participation by the Minister's office into the CDS's proposed succession plans. Indeed,

¹⁵ Discussion with Director Senior Appointments, 2 June 1999.

one could conclude that the Minister may have lost confidence in the present senior/executive officers' ability to plan their own succession. Unlike in the business community, the CDS (as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the CF)¹⁶ appears to have a reduced influence in the succession planning process. The CF authority, when it comes to succession decisions (even at levels well below the CDS), is now clearly the MND and not the CDS. The CDS's role is limited to nominating suitable succession candidates for the Minister's approval. Clearly the importance of political acceptance and correctness has become an increasingly important succession factor at the senior/executive level.

Aside from the CDS's apparent lack of direct control on succession planning, the present succession planning system contains two further major weaknesses.¹⁷ Firstly, the limited depth and scope of the senior officer pool results in 'plot turmoil' with every unexpected departure. Such departures result in a daisy chain of movement within a very small cadre of officers. The result often is a very limited period of time in important developmental positions. Remarkably, two years is now widely accepted as a 'lengthy' tour of duty.

Secondly, from a dialogue perspective, the succession process is a strictly one-way street. Input from senior officers on career aspirations, family considerations and personal desires are neither sought nor apparently welcome. The result is increasing frustration throughout the senior/executive leadership ranks resulting in an increasing number of unexpected and unplanned early retirements, thereby exacerbating the first weakness mentioned above.

Professional Development for Senior Officers

The importance of formalized officer professional development for senior officers is not new. Major-General Rowley first proposed the conduct of a Canadian National Security Course

¹⁶ Randall S. Cheloha, *Hallmarks of Effective Succession Planning*. (MMC Viewpoint, Number 2, 1999), p.2. <http://www.mmc.com/views/99fall.cheloha.shtml>

¹⁷ Discussion with Director Senior Appointments, 2 June 1999.

in his *Report of the Officer Development Board*¹⁸ in 1969. The report identified a need to prepare senior officers, public servants and representatives of other sectors of Canadian society, for higher levels of national responsibility through the study of national security problems. Similarly, in 1988 Lieutenant-General Evraire's report *General and Senior Officer Professional Development in the Canadian Forces*¹⁹ recommended the creation of a Centre for National Security Studies to contain all aspects of National Security Studies at the General and Senior Officer levels. A formal course for senior officers was again proposed in Lieutenant-General Morton's *Officer Development Review Board Report*²⁰ of 1995. Common throughout these reports was "the need for formal senior officer education in the principles of command, the application of doctrine and the interface between the political and military spheres of interest."²¹ Subsequent to these reports, the Officer General Specifications (OGS) were amended to better define the education and professional development requirements called for in the reports. This eventually led to the creation of the present Advanced Military Studies Course (AMSC) and the National Security Studies Course (NSSC) of the Canadian Forces College.

The AMSC and NSSC together comprise the last formal professional development opportunity for senior officers. Conducted at the operational level, the focus of the AMSC is on the study of war and operations other than war with additional emphasis on intellectual and professional development in related areas. Its aim is to prepare Col/Capt(N)'s for senior leadership and staff roles in combined coalition operations.²² Conducted at the strategic level, the focus of the NSSC is on national security and strategic management issues and development,

¹⁸ MGen R. Rowley, *Report of the Officer Development Board*. (NDHQ, Ottawa. March 1969), p.98.

¹⁹ LGen R.J. Evraire, *General and Senior Officer Professional Development in the Canadian Forces*. (Queens University, Kingston, Ont. 1988), p. 103.

²⁰ LGen (Ret'd) R.W. Morton, *Final Report of the Officer Development Review Board*. (NDHQ Ottawa, Ont. 1995) p. 158.

²¹ National Security Studies Course website. <http://bravo.cfc.dnd.ca/DP4/NSSC/NSSC2/Syllabus/>

²² Canadian Forces College website. <http://www.cfc.dnd.ca/DP4/dp4.en.html>

and the management and implementation of defence and security policy. Its aim is to prepare Col/Capt(N)'s and General/Flag officers for duties at the strategic level within NDHQ.²³

The Public Service Commission Model

The Public Service Commission (PSC) of Canada has developed a completely different and very comprehensive approach to succession planning which is best summarized as an enhanced version of the familiar PSC competition process. The PSC is entering into the third year of its Accelerated Executive Development Program (AEXDP).²⁴ The AEXDP is designed for high potential senior personnel within the PSC who are at a point in their career where further advancement is both in the interests of the individual and the PSC. Developed in partnership with the Canadian Center for Management Development (CCMD),²⁵ the programme objectives are to identify a representative group of executives at the EX-1 to EX-3 level (4 stripe - 2 star equivalents) who have demonstrated the potential to become Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) (3 star equivalents) and to accelerate their development and career advancement. In a rather novel approach to executive development, the PSC requires candidates to self-identify themselves thereby maximizing programme buy-in, high motivational levels and personal ambition (already desirable executive level qualities).

As a programme applicant, executive leadership capability is assessed through a variety of tools that focus on the key competencies of cognitive capability, creativity, behavioral flexibility, interpersonal relations, personality, self-confidence and ethics and values. In addition, the Assessment Phase will include an assessment of future potential based on a review of applicants' demonstrated ability to learn, work experience and past performance. This Assessment Phase consists of: an applicant file review, a Track Record Interview (to review past accomplishments), reference checks (references required from current Deputy Minister (DM) or

²³ DSA website. http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dsa/engraph/NSSC_e.asp

²⁴ Public Service Commission of Canada AEXDP website. <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/aexdp/axhome.htm>

²⁵ Canadian Centre for Management Development AEXDP website. <http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/programs/special/aexdp/index.html>

Associate DM, the current ADM, supervisor, past supervisor, three peers and three subordinates), and an interview by a Board of senior officials.

The pool of applicants who are recommended for the programme from the Assessment Phase above are screened a further three times. The Integration Committee consists of representatives from each of the Interview Boards in the Assessment Phase, and they ensure consistency across the Assessment Phase. The Committee of Senior Officials next ensures overall corporate needs and priorities are satisfied by the proposed candidates. And finally, the names are submitted to the PSC for final review and approval.

An important part of the PSC AEXDP selection process is feedback. A senior PSC representative serves as a contact point throughout the process, providing detailed feedback on the results of the selection process, including career recommendations at the end of the process to unsuccessful candidates in order to meet future career and development needs.

If selected into the AEXDP, a successful candidate will become a member of the PSC, will be assigned an individual Executive Advisor from the PSC, and serve for a period of one and a half to four years in key developmental assignments. These assignments are formulated by departments and are designed to strengthen experience in the six executive level core functions of the PSC, namely, line operations, policy development, central agency, regional operations, central/corporate services, and exposure to the political level. In addition, the participant has access to coaches (assigned for specific tasks), mentors (for personal guidance and professional support), action learning groups (regular meetings of 5-6 programme participants with a facilitator to discuss work-related challenges), collective learning events (executive seminars) and an electronic support network (<http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/programs/special/aexdp/index.html>).

During the course of the above assignments, participants are assessed against assignment performance goals and personal objectives. The programme is completed with either an appointment to a position in a department or central agency; or an appointment to the ADM level through a selection process or a competition.

ASSESSMENT OF WHERE THE CF SHOULD BE GOING WITH SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession Planning as a Career-Long Development Mechanism

This year's 27% turnover (18 of 66) of General and Flag officers²⁶ is remarkable in the CF and has clearly created a unique short-term succession planning challenge. Specifically, the experience level in the senior/executive pool is very shallow as 35% of the General/Flag officers in the CF have less than one year's experience as a General or Flag officer. Equally important is the fact that 11 of this year's 18 General/Flag officer departures were unplanned or unpredicted.²⁷ The belief that General/Flag officers would willingly serve full careers at the behest of the CF has been replaced by a reality that is now common throughout society. That is, that individuals will make career decisions in their own best interests (not the best interests of the service) when faced with perceived unacceptable alternatives. The "unacceptable" options leading to early retirements are at times surprising as they include the refusal of Command appointments and promotions. If the timing of such appointments is not right, they can generate excessive family turbulence or personal disharmony. The CF leadership must recognize the challenges that this unique situation creates and therefore, the importance of two-way dialogue with the targeted successors.

"The traditional belief that every employee would jump at the chance for promotion, that competent people would somehow emerge within the organization to fill vacancies, ... are no longer true. Lifestyles are changing, as are the different needs and aspirations of employees... If managers are to be assured that they will have competent and motivated people to fill the organizations' future needs, they must become concerned with matching the career needs of employees with the requirements of the organization."²⁸

This belief is further re-enforced by Srinivas. "The increasing pressures experienced by those at the top, along with the dearth of feasible solution options, are likely to make the senior

²⁶ NDHQ Ottawa, CANFORGEN 052/00 CDS 028 012130Z May 00

²⁷ Discussion with Director Senior Appointments, 5 June 2000.

²⁸ Andrew J. Templer *et al*, *Human Resource Management* (Toronto, Ont: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996), p 283.

positions less attractive to potential successors as they weigh the costs versus the gains. Considerations for a balanced life may frequently mitigate against individuals advancing beyond what they view as their already comfortable niche in the organization. The instrumental view of work ... may reign over ambition.”²⁹ All these facts and observations argue for the importance of succession planning as a career-long process.

The reality of service in the Canadian Forces today is that broader demands are being placed upon both the professional and intellectual capacities of our people. Senior officers now require a working second language profile, a university degree and, normally, attendance at the Advanced Military Studies Course/National Security Studies Course or equivalent, for progression to General/Flag rank. These issues notwithstanding, the officer corps should continue to place emphasis on balance and versatility in order to produce the leadership that is required at every level in the Canadian Forces. Although the demands on CF officers are many, we should continue to develop our own leadership skills together with those of our successors. Effective leadership is not something that can be learned by study alone. The principles can be taught, but leadership is a living art and must be refined by practical application, role models and mentoring.

Furthermore, present and future demands on the size of the officer corps plus the continuing transition to a more “joint” force will dictate that the boundaries between military occupations (MOCs) become less defined. Those at the Cdr/LCol and Capt(N)/Col ranks should be ready to take on non-traditional roles both within and outside their specific service (army/navy/air force). This joint experience is a particularly valuable tool in developing cross-service competency for potential senior/executive officers and prospective CDS’s. Indeed within the US Armed Forces, the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 has decreed that joint training and service is a necessity for promotion to General/Flag rank³⁰. Undoubtedly, joint experience will be to the betterment of the CF and provide a wider range of opportunities

²⁹ Kalburgi M. Srinivas, *Human Resource Management: Contemporary Perspectives in Canada* (Toronto, Ont: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1984), p. 584-585.

³⁰ <http://www.senate.gov/~rpc/rva/992/99293.htm>.

and challenges for senior officers. In addition, cross service and joint experience will significantly add to the credibility and legitimacy of future Level 1 leaders and the CDS most specifically.

While it is my belief that command of combat units at all levels, should be the domain of the combat MOCs; all Level 1 and CDS positions can be filled by any MOC provided sufficient non-MOC specific training and development has occurred to establish the senior/executive leaders' credibility and legitimacy in these positions. For the proven combat MOC leader, such credibility and legitimacy would have to include demonstrated competency within NDHQ. I believe that the core career path for all officers destined to the highest positions in the CF, should continue to be through command positions. This should be done through clearly defined MOC career paths. Naturally, various line and staff postings will be assumed along this route, but at no time should anyone forget that demonstrated performance in command at all levels will be key in determining their selection for future senior appointments. For those who demonstrate the ability, the possibility of a rapid route to command must be available in order to maximize availability for further professional development, education and joint operations experience.

Proposing a Methodology

It is a fundamental responsibility for each generation of professional military officers to ensure the training and preparation of its successor generation. By applying Byham's model of succession management (previously outlined) and elements of the PSC AEXDP to the CF context, the following key building blocks are offered as a proposal for an enhanced senior/executive succession planning process in the CF. The process would include: (✓ = in existence)

- a. determining the succession needs of the organization (*done by DSA & ECS's through compulsory retirement date tracking matrix's*); ✓
- b. identification of the desired executive competencies to satisfy the future needs of the CF (*done within new CF Performance Appraisal System (CFPAS) for DND Executives/CF Senior Officers*); ✓

- c. identification of high-potential individuals (*done through merit board process*); ✓
- d. the early identification of particularly “gifted” leaders (*not done in any structured way*);
- e. dialogue with target group to identify career aspirations and willingness to participate in senior/executive development programme (*done in limited fashion at unit level – rarely at senior officer level*);
- f. assessing high-potential performers leaders for executive leadership competencies (cognitive capability, creativity, visioning, etc) (*done in new CFPAS PER*); ✓
- g. establishing an individually tailored development program for each high-potential candidate that includes training, job rotation, and special assignments (*done in a limited fashion during posting plot development – could be enhanced to include elements of AEXDP*);
- h. regular use of self-development tools such as the Strategic Leader Development Inventory (SLDI) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (*presently a limited application*);
- i. active mentoring at all levels by Commanding Officers and General/Flag officers (*done in a limited fashion at the unit level for young “gifted” leaders*);
- j. selecting and placing people into senior jobs based on their job performance, their experience and assessment of their potential for a specific job (*done during posting plot development process*); ✓
- k. healthy promotion rates (*limited control through careful monitoring of age patterns in senior ranks*); ✓
- l. clear career policies including milestone targets (*done in a limited fashion in some MOCs, normally at a low level (up to unit level Command)*);
- m. a well defined command qualification process (*uneven application across CF*);
- n. post-grad educational opportunities (*programme presently limited to 2 senior officers per year*); and
- o. broadened career opportunities outside of CF (*programme presently limited to 1 senior officer per year*).

Addressing Above Methodology Deficiencies

Suggested improvements in the deficient areas of the proposed methodology above are:

d. Early Identification of Gifted Leaders. Selection for advanced training and promotion has, and always will be, based on merit. Merit must continue to be determined by a fair and accurate assessment of personnel performance assessment, and by potential for further advancement. For those who demonstrate exceptional ability early in their career, flexible career development and early promotion possibilities are necessary to provide the opportunities to achieve greater skills and to accept more demanding responsibilities. It is of course not possible to ‘fast-track’ or ‘deep-select’ everyone. “It is far better to focus limited resources on achieving significant developmental gains in a smaller number of high-potential people.”³¹ In order to ensure an adequate supply of officers suitably qualified to compete for senior (Level 1 and CDS) Canadian Forces positions, some officers must have unit level command experience in their mid-thirties and subsequent level command no later than their late thirties. Furthermore, in order to ensure sufficient development time within the senior/executive level ranks, I believe that at least 10% of General/Flag officers should be promoted to that rank no later than at 42 years of age. This will provide these officers with a minimum of ten years to complete at least five executive level developmental tours prior to being eligible for consideration to be CDS. These would include at least two NDHQ tours, one/two field tours at the operational level and one ex-department tour in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Privy Council Office or abroad (NATO/NORAD in present context). The US ‘below the zone’³² promotion selection offers an option for consideration in order to enhance availability and more time for these senior level developmental tours. Merit Boards at all levels should assist in this process by identifying those younger officers who should command sooner rather than later. It must be recognized however

³¹ William C. Byham, *Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders*. (Human Resources Magazine, February 1999), p. 3 of 7. <http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299byham.htm>

³² ‘Below the zone selection’ consists of a promotion option designed to fast track identified gifted leaders by allowing them to be considered for promotion one year before they would otherwise enter the normally established zone.

that people develop at different rates and at different times and that any adjustments to promotion rates/quotas must not disadvantage the ‘late bloomers’.

e. Two-way Dialogue. Succession planning has generally been a closed, paternalistic, top-down process with little input from the candidates. Intended successors have rarely been engaged in a frank discussion of career aspirations, personal desires or timings of movements. This tendency has been the source of much frustration and as previously stated, no doubt the source of significant retention problems. To highlight the present lack of communication that exists in the executive ranks on issues affecting succession planning/management, it is remarkable to observe that there is no systematic process of conducting an exit survey of prematurely departing senior officers, nor an outstanding request for analysis of this early release data. Individuals must assume greater responsibility for their career development, and this can only happen with two-way dialogue that must culminate with a commitment from the candidate. Each senior officer must take ownership of his/her development, with strong support from the ECS level and above. The senior officer corps of today is a different group with different priorities and interests than previous generations. It is important that the Level 1 leaders and CDS of today’s CF recognize this generational change. They should work harder at understanding what drives and motivates today’s officers; they should work at the morale of their officers, as well as their professional development; and help people derive gratification and satisfaction from their profession as leaders. If a succession process is to be successful, it must be responsive and interactive with the successor generation. The successor generation must not be left to sense that no one is listening to them. A successor plan requires regular meetings between the leadership of the Canadian Forces and the potential successors. The Canadian economy is healthy and the demand for capable leaders and managers is real; the ‘brain drain’ is a fact. To counter such a phenomenon requires a multi-pronged effort that engages the targets, officers at all levels.

g. Individually Tailored Development Plans. While the DSA career management process attempts to develop tailored development plans, success is largely determined by individual availability. DND professional development opportunities available for senior/executive leaders are listed at the DSA website http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dsa/engraph/Postings&Trg_e.asp. These programmes could be further enhanced with participation in the PSC AEXDP process including activities

listed at the CCMD website <http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/programs/special/aexdp/learn.html>. In particular, the sessions entitled Coaching for Breakthroughs and Commitments & Shaping and Implementing Effective Policy appear particularly useful for senior/executive CF leadership development. The feasibility of CF participation in portions of the AEXDP should be investigated.

h. Use of Self-Development Tools. Effective development begins with knowing oneself. This includes insight into one's personality, character, leadership style and preferences in the areas of decision-making and problem solving. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)³³ and the Strategic Leader Development Inventory (SLDI)³⁴ are valuable tools for self-awareness and therefore development. These self-analysis tools allow an assessment of individual character strengths and weaknesses and behavioral preferences. Administered periodically throughout a career, individuals can build on this base of self-awareness and formulate individual plans to guide their development throughout their career. Such tools "promote self-insight and the individual's acceptance of the need for further development."³⁵ The use of the MBTI and the SLDI as tools for self-development is recommended. It should be administered to officers on promotion to Captain/LT(N) and every 10 years thereafter.

i. Mentoring. The importance of mentoring in officer development can not be over emphasized. Often expressed in the context of junior officer development, mentoring is applicable and vital across the spectrum of officer development. The US Army has been engaged in a limited 1-on-1 mentorship program focussed at the mid-rank level since 1994.³⁶ Although the direct benefits of this trial program have been hard to evaluate, the indirect benefits for the participants are

³³ Association for Psychological Type, *What is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)?*
<http://www.apcentral.org/aptmbtiw.htm>

³⁴ U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, *Strategic Leader Development Inventory*.
<http://www-ari.army.mil/sldi.htm>

³⁵ William C. Byham, *Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders*. (Human Resources Magazine, February 1999), p. 5 of 7.
<http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299byham.htm>

³⁶ Carolyn J. Herbst, *Mentors and Associates – Change Agents*. (Resource Management, 2nd Quarter 1995).
http://134.11.192.15/pubs/rm_mag/2ndqtr95/rmmp_art.htm

undeniable and include new focus for career growth, goal identification and the renewed focus of energy towards goal attainment. Such benefits are clear and easily understood. Additionally, the feedback up the chain on issues of concern related to career development and progression opportunities are invaluable HR management tools. To be so engaged in the development of successors enhances our role as leaders and role models. An active 1-on-1 mentorship program targeting the “gifted leaders” and a general mentoring effort by all Commanding Officers is necessary. The 1-on-1 mentorship program should engage the identified “gifted leaders” with an accomplished leader 2 ranks above him/her on selection to DP-3, the CF Command and Staff College Course. (i.e., a Col/Capt(N) to mentor a Maj/LCdr.)

l. Clear Career Policies. Career policies are typically well articulated at the junior officer levels, but this is often not the case for senior officers. Professional and career development guidelines and policies including second language, education, and professional development requirements could be usefully summarized in an annual letter from DSA for the benefit of senior officers. The letter could also provide an additional mechanism to support the two-way communication deficiency identified at e. above.

m. Command Qualification Process. At present, only the Navy uses a formal Command Qualification process as a prerequisite for command assignment (sea-going ship command only). The Navy process involves a two-part procedure. Command Qualification Part One involves a series of ten exams in all areas of ship operations and warfare at sea. Upon successful completion of the Command Part One examinations, and with the recommendation of his Commanding Officer, an officer can present himself to the Command Part Two Board. This board consists of a Chairman at the Fleet Commander (Commodore) level and a Board of three Commanding Officers. This board involves a series of scenario driven questions designed to confirm knowledge, ability (through simulator usage) and Command appreciation. For the Navy, this process is an invaluable professional development and character building tool. It is recommended that an appropriate Army and Air Force process be developed for line officer development. If cross-service application of an appropriate unit-level command qualification process could be developed, subsequent efforts could address the necessity for command qualification/training at higher (formation) levels.

n. Opportunities for Education. The role of education as a fundamental tool of professional development is widely accepted. Indeed, the previously mentioned officer professional development studies have consistently reinforced higher educational levels as an important tenant and goal of senior officer development. LGen Dallaire's *OPD 2020* draft report suggests that by 2020, officers without under-graduate level degrees will be unable to deal with the challenges that they will face. With respect to senior officers, he further states that "senior officers without at least one post-graduate degree will be at a distinct disadvantage professionally when addressing the challenges of command, staff and operations."³⁷ As the culture in the CF evolves, it is vitally important that our senior leadership be well educated. The Canadian approach to educational requirements remains somewhat limited however in comparison to the American approach. At present, an under-graduate degree is necessary for service in the U.S. Armed Forces as an officer. A post-grad degree is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. R.H. Kohn in his article, *An Officer for the Next Century* states that "a master's degree earned in residence at a civilian university should become as important for higher responsibility as attending a staff college."³⁸ Indeed, Kohn frowns on granting master's degrees at war colleges (read RMC) as such a practice, he believes, encourages parochialism and isolationism. He considers it far more important that officers return to their parent society in mid career to avail themselves of the best education possible. In order to address the shortfall of education within senior officers, the CDS must be allowed to over-populate the officer corps to assure billets for higher level schooling. Presently the CDS has the authority to send a maximum of three General/Flag officers for education/non-DND employment at any given time. This number should be doubled.

o. Opportunities for Employment. In his 1998 report, *Into the 21st Century: Strategic HR Issues*, Capt(N) Okros stated "the CF must review their training and development policies to enable their members to meet the challenges of tomorrow; future learning must be continuous

³⁷ LGen R. Dallaire, *Canadian Officership in the 21st Century: OPD 2020 Statement of Operational Requirement*, (Translated from French Draft Report. January 2000), p. 15.

³⁸ Richard H. Kohn, *An Officer Corps for the Next Century*. (Joint Forces Quarterly, Spring 1998), p. 77.

and should not be limited to formal training. Less traditional options must be considered: experience in the private sector; partnerships with other federal governments; exchange with allied forces, NGOs and IOs; acquiring training and development outside of DND and the CF, through visiting specialists and experts.”³⁹ This view is supported by Kohn who states that while operations and command will no doubt remain the primary determinant in the assignment and promotion of officers destined for careers at the senior/executive level, there must clearly be room for more varied assignments including faculty duty, foreign country assignment, project development, membership in a reorganization task force, and joint staff duties.⁴⁰ A senior/executive level officer prepared for duty at the strategic level will have throughout his/her career maintained the right balance between service (army, navy, air force) and joint or combined operations. The joint service experience is particularly useful in establishing cross service credibility and legitimacy. As previously stated, the CDS has presently received permission for a maximum of three General/Flag officers to be placed on the Advanced Training List (ATL) for the purposes of furthering education or career broadening outside DND. This program should be expanded to include 10% (6-7 pers) of the General/Flag officer total.

³⁹ Captain(N) A. Okros, *Into the 21st Century: Strategic HR Issues*. p. 9-10 of 17.
<http://www.vcds.dnd.ca/vcds/dgsp/analysis/hr%5Fe.asp>

⁴⁰ Richard H. Kohn, *An Officer Corps for the Next Century*. (Joint Forces Quarterly, Spring 1998), p. 78.

Conclusion

It is hard to over emphasize the importance of all-round officer development and structured succession planning/management to the long-term health of the CF. Succession planning is about maintaining the continuity of an organization and its values, it is central to the organization's ability to sustain itself and survive.⁴¹ If we fail to look after the interests of our successors, to develop and stimulate them professionally, to give them the various skills they will need in their careers, and, above all, to make them want to continue with a career, then we will have failed to provide for our eventual succession. We will have abrogated a critical element of our responsibility for the continuing security of our nation. "Like all good human resource solutions, succession management requires a systematic, long-term approach."⁴² The present senior/executive level succession planning/management process is clearly an improvement on the ad hoc process that existed prior to 1997. I believe however that the process outlined above offers avenues and options for improving on that process, and will further ensure an enhanced pool of better prepared senior/executive officers for duty at the highest levels of the CF.

⁴¹ Randall S. Cheloha, *Hallmarks of Effective Succession Planning*. (MMC Viewpoint, Number 2, 1999), p.1&4.
<http://www.mmc.com/views/99fall.cheloha.shtml>

⁴² William C. Byham, *Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders*, (Human Resources Magazine, February 1999), p. 6 of 7.
<http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299byham.htm>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adelsberger, Bernard. *Graying Government*. Government Executive, January 1998.
<http://www.govexec.com/features/0198s3.htm>
- Boyle, Gen J.E.J. *National Command Boards*. NDHQ, CDS letter, 3 June 1996.
- Byham, William C. *Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders*. Human Resources Magazine, February 1999. <http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299byham.htm>
- Cheloha, Randall S. *Hallmarks of Effective Succession Planning*. MMC Viewpoint, Number 2, 1999. <http://www.mmc.com/views/99fall.cheloha.shtml>
- Dallaire, LGen R. *Canadian Officership in the 21st Century: OPD 2020 Statement of Operational Requirement*. Draft Report. January 2000.
- Evraire, LGen R.J. *General and Senior Officer Professional Development in the Canadian Forces*. Queens University, Kingston, Ont. 1988.
- Fraser, The Honourable John A. *Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces: Final Report - 1999*. Report to the Minister of National Defence. Ottawa, ON: December 1999.
- Garnett, VAdm G.L. *MARS Officer Career Development and Training Issues*. MARCOM HQ, Halifax, MARC: 5000-1 (N11 DCOS PER), 23 April 1997.
- Grossman, Robert J. *Heirs Unapparent*. Human Resources Magazine, February 1999.
<http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0299cov.htm>
- Herbst, Carolyn J. *Mentors and Associates – Change Agents*. Resource Management, 2nd Quarter 1995. http://134.11.192.15/pubs/rm_mag/2ndqtr95/rmmp_art.htm
- Horn, LCol Bernd. *Officer Professional Development: A Future Vision to Year 2020*.
http://www.vcds.dnd.ca/dgsp/dsc/d2000nws/1999/nov99/art01_e.asp
- Kaufmann, Amanda J.S. *Good Planning Smooths the Way*. InfoWorld; March 16, 1998.
- Kohn, Richard H. *An Officer Corps for the Next Century*. Joint Forces Quarterly, Spring 1998.
- Maddison, VAdm G.R. *MARS/MARE/SEA LOG Career Development*. NDHQ, MS: 5000-1 (CMS), 29 November 1999.
- Maddison, VAdm G.R. *The Responsibilities of Naval Leaders in Junior Officer Development*. NDHQ, MARC: 5000-1 (DGNP), 1 February 1999.

- Maddison, VAdm G.R. *1999 Senior Command Review Board – CMS Guidance to the Board*. NDHQ, MARC: 5000-23 (DGNP), 26 October 1998.
- Maddison, VAdm G.R. *Junior Officer Issues*. NDHQ, MARC: 5000-1 (CMS), 18 April 1998.
- Morton, LGen (Ret'd) R.W. *Final Report of the Officer Development Review Board*. NDHQ Ottawa, Ont. 1995.
- Moskos, Charles C. Jr. *From Institution to Occupation – Trends in Military Organization*. Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 4. No. 1, November 1977.
- Okros, Captain(N) A. *Into the 21st Century: Strategic HR Issues*.
<http://www.vcds.dnd.ca/vcds/dgsp/analysis/hr%5Fe.asp>
- Public Service Commission of Canada – Accelerated Executive Development Program website.
<http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/aexdp/axhome.htm>
- Rowley, MGen R. *Report of the Officer Development Board*. NDHQ, Ottawa. March 1969.
- Scott, Lynn M. *Strategic Human Capital: Preserving a Vital National Asset*. Institute for National Strategic Studies, Number 116, June 1997.
<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/forum116.html>
- Srinivas, Kalburgi M. *Human Resource Management: Contemporary Perspectives in Canada*. Toronto, Ont.: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1984.
- Stack, Jack. *The Next in Line*. Inc.: April 01, 1998.