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## “Generals Doing Generals’ Work”

By /par Colonel William J. (Bill) Neumann

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# “Generals Doing Generals’ Work”

By/par: Colonel W.J. (Bill) Neumann

## **Abstract**

*Officership 2020* speaks to the required attributes and capabilities of our senior leaders and sets out developmental and educational guidelines to achieve them. This strategic guidance package for the Officer Professional Development (OPD) System is an excellent first step in the transformation of our officer corps, but does it go far enough to ensure that the Canadian Forces (CF) will gain maximum benefit from the talents of our most senior leaders? Perhaps we should also look at the work our generals perform.

Generals’ work, for the purpose of this paper, is discussed in terms of strategic command. In developing a working definition, it shows that command includes leadership behaviours (visioning, leading change and personnel development) and management activities (operational management). It then explores the interrelationship between leadership and management, and shows that, especially at the strategic level, leadership work is where the emphasis should be placed. Although great improvements have been made in the past few years, the paper is able to recommend several areas for continuous improvement focus. These include sustained visioning, risk acceptance and delegation. Change leadership challenges such as government interface, media relations and internal communications are also highlighted. Under the personnel development banner the paper recommends continuous improvement emphasis on leadership issues such as mentoring and coaching, as well as personnel recognition / rewards and the development of a leadership culture.

The paper concludes that strategic command is a marriage of leadership behaviours and management activities. The challenge is to maintain the right balance in the relationship. Although leadership work is where the emphasis should be placed, there is a strong “gravitational force” that tends to pull the focus to management work. The key to shifting the emphasis is through appropriate delegation. This will allow strategic command to adopt a proactive posture and think far enough ahead to prevent having worries near at hand.

## **“Generals Doing Generals’ Work”<sup>1</sup>**

*Confucius said, “People who do not think far enough ahead inevitably have worries near at hand” (Confucius 25).*

### **Introduction**

Dishonoured Legacy. These two words are not the headline of a scandalous article in a supermarket tabloid; they are the title of the “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia”. They represented a scathing indictment of the leadership of the Canadian Forces (CF) in the mid-1990s and served as a loud and clear wake-up call to all leaders in the organization.

Although one could argue specific findings and recommendations of the Somalia Inquiry, the ensuing media outcry and intense public scrutiny served as a catalyst to a series of studies of the leadership of the CF<sup>2</sup>. General Maurice Baril, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), stated that, “. . . the 1990s represented the first strong test of the contemporary CF Officer Corps and we found that part of it was broken” (Generalship 140). In 1999 the CDS appointed Lieutenant-General (Retired) Romeo Dallaire as his Special Advisor on Officer Professional Development. General Dallaire’s efforts led to the release of “Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Strategic Guidance for the CF Officer Corps and the Officer Professional Development (OPD) System” (herein entitled “Officership 2020”). The document is a sub-component of “Shaping the Future of Canadian Defence: A Strategy for 2020”, a strategic framework released jointly by the CDS and the Deputy Minister of National Defence.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Herb Koplowicz attributed “Generals Doing Generals’ Work” as a verbal quote of Dr. Elliot Jaques during a seminar on “The Requisite Organization” at York University in 1996.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed understanding of some of the reports refer to the following in the “Works Consulted” section: (Dishonoured Legacy, Vol 2 Chapter 15); (Granatstein, 1997); (Morton, 1997); and (Young, 1997). (Bland, 1995), and (Horn, 2000) also provide outstanding background information to the issues.

“Officership 2020” is a strategic plan that outlines the desired attributes of the Officer Corps and details how the CF will achieve the required results. Its vision is as follows:

*“Exemplary leaders serving Canada and devoted to the profession of arms.*

Leading by example, fully accountable, they are dedicated to their subordinates and inspire loyalty and mutual trust. They possess the spirit and expertise to succeed in a wide range of operations. These officers of high intellectual ability operate effectively in a technological and information-rich environment. With an understanding of national policies, military doctrine and their application to diverse national and international circumstances, they will boldly accept the risk and ambiguity inherent in the demands of their profession. They embrace the military ethos, understand and apply the appropriate levels of force, and draw strength from the values and aspirations of the pluralistic nation they serve. They welcome challenge and serve with courage and integrity” (Officership ii).

Although “Officership 2020” and management reform initiatives such as the “Integrated Defence Management Framework (IDMF)”, “Integrated Strategic Risk Management”, and the Department of National Defence (DND) change agenda are leading to improvements in the leadership and management of the CF, concerns still exist<sup>3</sup>. There is a wide-held belief ranging from the grass roots in National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) through to the senior leadership, as well as within academia, that the work focus at the strategic level inhibits the effective command of the CF<sup>4</sup>. General Dallaire, for example, advocated the employment of what he referred to as “Iron Colonels” within NDHQ to release general officers from the “tactical mindset and quagmire of the day-to-day emphasis of the in-basket” (Generalship 514). Statements such as

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on these initiatives, consult the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff Web Site at [http://www.vcdfs.forces.ca/intro\\_e.asp](http://www.vcdfs.forces.ca/intro_e.asp) and select the Director General Strategic Plans (DGSP) or Director General Strategic Change (DGSC) icons.

<sup>4</sup> Although this concept will be discussed later in the paper, the reader may wish to consult: (Horn, Foreword and Ch5), (Generalship 514), (Sussex Circle), (Granatstein), (Morton) and (Bland).

these lead one to question whether some or even many of our generals are placing their emphasis in the wrong work areas.

The aim of this paper is to explore the work focus of CF strategic level command, and, where appropriate, recommend continuous improvement actions to refocus generals' work to improve command effectiveness. The reader will see that the problem is one of general officers at NDHQ spending too much work time, or placing too much emphasis, on management work as opposed to leadership work. We will commence by developing a working definition of strategic command, which will concentrate on leadership and management. The next step will be to look at four work groupings that are important at the strategic level. After we argue where generals should place their emphasis, we will look at the reality in NDHQ and suggest specific areas for improvement.

Strategic command is a multi-faceted subject that can be approached from many different angles. In this paper we will not address command issues such as the profession of arms, authority and accountability, war fighting, leadership and command techniques, ethics or professional military education. All of these important issues are worthy of careful scrutiny in their own right. Instead we will look at the topic from a unique perspective; that of the work performed by those who hold the reins at the strategic level of the CF.

### **Definitions**

*“Command is a uniquely human endeavor.” (Pigeau and McCann C-8/19)*

There is a plethora of definitions of command, ranging from the concrete to the more abstract. The NATO definition is: “The authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, co-ordination and control of military forces.” Ross Pigeau

and Carol McCann view command in terms of the relationship between Command and Control (C<sup>2</sup>) which they see as “the establishment of common intent to achieve coordinated action”(Clarifying 1). They define command as “the creative expression of will necessary to accomplish a mission” and control as “those structures and processes devised by command to manage risk” (Clarifying 4).

When examining Command and Control (C<sup>2</sup>), Pigeau and McCann find a relationship between different yet complementary functions that is often confused or misunderstood. Command, from their perspective, encompasses human attributes or characteristics including authority, responsibility, accountability and leadership. Control, on the other hand, is process oriented (Putting C-2/19). Table 1 encapsulates the differences they see between command and control.

Table 1

C <sup>2</sup> VIEWED AS THE ATTRIBUTE OF COMMAND (Treats human as Commander)	C <sup>2</sup> VIEWED AS THE PROCESS OF CONTROL (Treats human as User)
Authority Responsibility Leadership Trust Empowerment Creativity Motivation Pro-action Naturalistic Decision Making	Organization Plans, Orders Doctrine, SOPs, ROEs Procedures Standards Software Equipment Reaction Expert Systems

(“Putting”C-10/19)

Other observers, who regard command from somewhat different perspectives and for different purposes, have developed command definitions that draw a fascinating parallel to the Pigeau-McCann model. Dr Bernd Horn sees command as “. . . a mix of leadership, management skills and authority . . .” (129). Kotter regards leadership and management as “. . . distinctive and complementary systems of action” (51) while Dr

Peter Bradley classifies command behaviours as being either leadership or management

(Bradley in Generalship 116). Table 2 displays Bradley’s classification.

Table 2

<b>Leadership Behaviours</b>	<b>Management Behaviours</b>
Visioning – developing and communicating the vision, developing and communicating commander’s intent	Planning and budgeting, business planning, allocating forces and resources
Motivating (inspiring) people	Organizing and staffing
Influencing change in people, organizations	Controlling and problem solving
Setting example, acting as role model	Producing goods, providing services
Engender faith, trust, respect	Supervising
Subordinates identify with leader	Decision making
Convince individuals they can perform beyond their expectations	Monitoring activities
Develop subordinates, challenge them to think for themselves, help them think about problems in innovative ways	Controlling
Provide support to followers	Coordinating
Coach and advise followers	Administering
Recognize followers’ achievements	Analyzing, conducting estimates

(Bradley in Generalship 117)

The parallels between these models are noteworthy but not surprising. Pigeau and McCann argue that there is a “mutual interdependence” between command and control and that “Command cannot be exercised without Control and Control is meaningless without Command” (Putting C-10/19). Bradley recognizes this interdependence between leadership and management, and states that some of the behaviours “may not fall entirely under one category” (Generalship 116). For the purposes of this examination, we will consider a working definition of command as a blending of the two models.

Given that our aim involves exploring work focus, we will adopt a working definition that allows us to delve into activities. Command will therefore be regarded as



a marriage between leadership and management activities<sup>5</sup>. However, in blending the Bradley and Pigeau – McCann models, leadership will be viewed more as the exercise of certain attributes and characteristics while management will be seen from the process perspective. When considering generals’ work we will, to a large degree, be discussing whether leadership or management should be the senior partner in the marriage.

Leadership and management are exercised at all levels of the organization, but for this examination we are concerned with the work of generals at the strategic level or, in the CF understanding thereof, at NDHQ. The CF, as with other militaries, also employs generals at the operational and, arguably, to a lesser degree at the tactical levels.

Although we will focus our discussion at the strategic level of command, many of the lessons to be garnered also have implications for the operational level. As an aside, the reader may come to the conclusion that the employment of generals at the tactical level is not appropriate<sup>6</sup>.

Before proceeding further we should develop a working definition of *work*. The Oxford definition is the: “application of mental or physical effort to a purpose” (1059). Purpose can also be considered as a task, with work being “what it is that a person does in carrying out a task” (Jaques, Requisite 18). Mintzberg, on the other hand, views work more in terms of organized human activity or the “division of labor into tasks to be performed” (Management 100). As we will see in the forthcoming section, however, generals’ work is to a large degree characterized by the required complexity of mental processing. Mental

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<sup>5</sup> The question of authority is clearly missing from this working definition of Command. While normally a vital aspect when discussing command, it is not crucial to this study of the work involved therein. “Authority, Responsibility and Accountability” will therefore be left to other authors to tackle.

<sup>6</sup> For the reader who wishes to delve further into this question, see (Zaccaro, Models and Theories of Executive Leadership), and (Jacobs and Jaques “Executive leadership” in the Handbook of Military Psychology).

processing in this case encompasses discretion, judgment and decision-making. For the purposes of this paper we will therefore adopt Dr Elliot Jaques' definition of work as "the exercise of discretion, judgment and decision-making [mental processing], within limits, when carrying out tasks: driven by values, and bringing skilled knowledge into play"

(Jaques, Requisite 18).

In summary, for the purposes of this paper, we will consider strategic command in general terms as the leadership and management work performed by general officers in NDHQ. This working definition may lead the reader to wonder if there is a qualitative aspect that sets strategic command apart from the exercise of command at lower levels of the CF. The next section will address this issue.

### **Strategic Command as Generals' Work**

*"Human nature explains hierarchy"* (Jaques, Requisite 1)

An excellent model for viewing strategic command is Elliot Jaques' Stratified Systems Theory (SST)<sup>7</sup>. Although Zaccaro expresses concern about some of the limitations of SST, it does provide a superb benchmark against which we can consider the work done by generals (417). SST relates complexity of mental processing with organizational echelon. In other words, because the conceptual requirements are more complex at each step up a hierarchical ladder or pyramid, the incumbent's cognitive abilities or "conceptual grasp" must be greater to deal at each subsequent level. Traditional models of hierarchical organizations divide them into three levels: basic production (tactical level), organizational or operating (operational level) and executive

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<sup>7</sup> See Note<sup>6</sup> above plus (Jaques, Requisite) and (Jaques, Bureaucracy).

(strategic level). Jaques on the other hand defines seven levels or strata based upon cognitive or work complexity requirements and even argues that there is probably an eighth stratum (Jacobs and Jaques 433).

Dr Jaques goes on to link his strata to what he refers to as “Time Span”. At each work complexity level there is a requisite time span whereby the longest target completion time of a task or sequence of tasks corresponds to the appropriate stratum (Requisite 39 and Bureaucracy 99). For example, an aircraft technician may have one month to overhaul a jet engine, while a Commanding Officer develops and implements a business plan that has a one-year life. The CDS deals with much longer time spans, creating the vision for “Strategy 2020”, which extends out 20 years. It is interesting to note that at higher strata, especially in a military organization, tasks often last longer than the remaining tenure of the incumbent. Table 3 is a matrix of SST strata related to corporate and military hierarchical echelons.

Table 3

<b>Time Span</b>	<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Domain</b>
20 + Years	VII	CEO	General	Strategic or Executive
10 + Years	VI	Corporate EVP	Lieutenant General	
5 + Years	V	Business Unit President	Major General	Operational or Organizational
2 + Years	IV	General Manager	B Gen / Colonel	
1 + Years	III	Unit Manager	LCol / Major	Tactical or Basic Production
3 + Months	II	First Line Manager	Capt / Lt	
<3 Months	I	Operator	NCM <sup>8</sup>	

Adaptation of (Jaques, Requisite 1) and (Jacobs and Jaques, 433)

Elliot Jaques’ research shows us that there are qualitative differences between levels of command or organizational strata. As people progress in a hierarchy they are

<sup>8</sup> One could develop a strong argument that many if not most Chief Warrant Officers function at Stratum II.

faced with increasing complexity and ambiguity. Technical knowledge and skill become less important, and cognitive abilities, intuition and vision become more important. Decision-making evolves from the comparison of advantages versus disadvantages, to the fabrication of solutions to problems that have uncertain outcomes (Jacobs and Jaques 435). These findings are supported by other studies, which highlight the qualitative differences between command levels and address the questions of development, selection and education of general officers<sup>9</sup>.

### **Work Categories**

Now that we have reviewed the qualitative differences between levels or strata in a hierarchical organization, we will shift our focus to more specific work activities. In order to facilitate this review we will subdivide Table 2 into four general categories. Specifically, we will look at visioning, leading change, personnel development and “operational management”<sup>10</sup>. These, in my opinion, are the work areas that require attention to ensure the long-term viability of organizations.

**Visioning** is also thought of as strategic thinking, creative thinking, pro-active thinking or creating the “Commander’s Intent”. Notwithstanding the various names assigned to it, visioning is the work that sets the culture, values and principles of an organization, and defines the long-term outlook and vision (Requisite 123). “Officership 2020” states that the Officer Corps must “have an enhanced ability to conceptualize at the

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<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed understanding see (Zaccaro Ch 1,3,5 and 6), (Jacobs and Jaques), (Jaques Requisite Part 4 Section 3), (Mintzberg on Management Ch4 & 5), (Morton and McNamara in Generalship) and “Officership 2020”.

<sup>10</sup> The term “Operational Management” is accredited to Steven Zaccaro (371). The other three category titles are conceptually adapted from Jaques, Mintzberg and Zaccaro but are widely used terms that cannot be specifically attributed to one author.

strategic level and apply related principles to design and build the force of the future” (1-10). In other words visioning is about envisioning the future and defining how the organization can best posture itself for success in changed circumstances.

Virtually all the references I have studied include vision, by one term or another, as amongst or the most important attribute(s) of executives or, in our case, strategic command.

“Vision is a sense of the future. It is an imagined possibility, stretching beyond today’s capability, providing an intellectual bridge from today to tomorrow, and forming the basis for looking ahead, not for affirming the past or the status quo. The power of a vision is that it gives leaders a basis for positive growth and transformation . . . . a leader uses vision and values to mobilize people, to facilitate change and growth, to create a future for his or her organization” (Sullivan and Harper 79 - 80).

Although visioning appears rather intuitive in nature, it prepares the organization to meet the challenges of the future. In the CF context it includes conceptualizing the culture, structure, mission and resources that will be required over the vision’s life.

**Leading change**, or evolving the organization, includes communicating the vision, motivating people to embrace it and setting the example. Given that change is inevitable, it is crucial that organizations not only have a vision, they should apply it in a pro-active manner to meet and stay ahead of emerging challenges. Moorhead and Griffin recognize many forces for change but state that they generally fall within four major categories: people, technology, informati

Strategic thinking in the CF must focus on all four major categories to ensure that we stay ahead of the full spectrum.

The greatest challenge to leading change is overcoming resistance. According to Moorhead and Griffin, resistance to change includes organizational and individual sources. Organizational factors encompass over-determination (job descriptions, Standard Operating Procedures), narrow focus (changing structure without considering other factors such as people), group inertia, threatened expertise, threatened power and resource allocation. Individual sources include habit (altered tasks), security (altered reporting relationships), economic factors, fear of the unknown, lack of awareness and social factors such as group norms (710). I would argue that change resistance (or limitations to effecting change) in the CF context also comes from external sources such as the people and Government of Canada.

Resistance to change should not necessarily be viewed as an evil to be indiscriminately snuffed out. Indeed, some change resistance can be beneficial. Responding to resistance forces leaders to further evaluate pro and con concepts generated by members of the organization. Healthy dialogue can lead to a critical examination or sober second look and, if conducted in a constructive manner, can be used by the leadership to sell the vision.

Leading change is the work of generals. Sullivan and Harper believe that; “Effective change cannot take place if it is relegated to a staff or committee; it is the personal responsibility of leaders” (13). This is not to say that change leadership is the sole purview of our generals. Clearly “buy-in”, positive action and innovative thinking are required throughout the organization. The activity of communicating the vision,

motivation, overcoming resistance and achieving buy-in, both internally and externally, is what I will refer to as “networking”.

Networking in this context includes but goes beyond Kotter’s definition of “. . . developing a network of cooperative relationships among those people they feel are needed to satisfy their emerging agendas” (155). Networking is about winning the acceptance of and support for the vision by those who will be impacted by it. This includes colleagues, subordinates and external “customers or clients”.

With regards to the external audience, CF strategic command must win the support of the Government of Canada (senior government officials from many departments as well as the politicians) to ensure the availability of resources required to fulfill the vision<sup>11</sup>. On a similar note, the government’s critical role in articulating the overall strategic framework that should drive the vision cannot be overlooked. Networking also includes the people of Canada, to whom the vision must be relevant and in keeping with their real and perceived security needs. Strategic command’s networking attention must also include allied militaries plus national and international non-government organizations. Although there is a need for lateral external networking at most strata of the CF, our generals must take the lead.

Internal networking amongst Stratum VI peers (Environmental Chiefs of Staff and NDHQ Level 1s), under the umbrella of the CDS’ Stratum VII vision, is crucial to success. Although the Stratum VI generals’ work includes the creation of their own organizational visions, they must be developed in support of the CDS vision and require the buy-in of peers. Collegiality needs to replace the historical inter-service rivalry

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<sup>11</sup> See (de Chastelain, General (retired) in Warrior Chiefs) and (Morton, Desmond in Generalship).

depicted by Douglas Bland (16). Finally, as discussed above, networking in the subordinate relationship is about articulating the vision and motivating people to embrace change.

**Personnel development** or developing those who represent the present and future of the organization (some of whom will eventually assume the reins of command) is central to the long-term survival of military organizations. Unlike civilian organizations that enjoy the luxury, to greater and lesser degrees, of being able to recruit and inject new talent at various strata; the nature of the profession of arms by and large encourages militaries to develop and promote talent from within. Civilian organizations, however, also recognize the value of personnel development and the goal for both is to develop members so they can work to their full potential. Elliot Jaques states that “individual development” [personnel development] encompasses coaching, counseling, mentoring, teaching [encouraging education / learning organization] and training (Requisite 110, 111, 118, 132). In the CF context I would submit that it also includes a focus on intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for members, and being a “career of choice” (Officership 2020 I-32).

The ethical and organizational success imperatives of personnel development are well documented<sup>12</sup>. There is, however, another interesting “imperative” that is linked to the “shelf-life” of the strategic vision. Full implementation of the longer-term aspects of the vision (10 - 20+ year time span) will likely come to pass after the strategic commander has departed the organization. The incumbent will not only wish to ensure

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<sup>12</sup> Most volumes in the “Works Consulted” section refer to these factors to greater or lesser degrees. (Officership 2020) outlines the CF vision albeit with an Officer Corps flavor. I also recommend the section on “Social Justice and Bureaucratic Employment” in (Jaques Bureaucracy), for some interesting views on the ethical imperative, as well as (Granatstein), (Morton) and (Young).



that personnel are appropriately developed to implement the vision over the short to medium terms, the motivation is probably strong to ensure that personnel will carry the torch after his or her departure.

The reader should notice that the previous three strategic command work areas encompass factors from the left hand column of Table 2. They can be considered leadership as opposed to management activities / behaviours. The next sub-section will deal with structure and process related work.

**Operational Management** includes the work activities that fall within the right hand columns of Tables 1 and 2. The term “operational” should not be confused with “operational level”. It encompasses the work, such as providing plans, structure, resource distribution and direction, which must be done to implement the vision. It also covers running the day-to-day business or operations of the organization. Effective operational management, as with the other three previously described work areas, is essential to the success of the CF.

### **The Question of Emphasis**

As stated earlier, the fundamental question to answer in this paper involves the “mutual interdependence” or marriage relationship between leadership and management related work. Should strategic command place its emphasis (spend more of its time and energy) on leadership or management work, or should both be given equal attention?

If the reader is looking for a scientifically quantified answer, regrettably one is not forthcoming. This should not be a surprise if we accept that command is a very human activity. The preponderance of current academic thought on the subject, as well as the general impression of leaders and subordinates in the CF, is that **strategic command**

**should place greater emphasis on leadership-related work than is currently the**

**case**<sup>13</sup>. This concern is shared by academics in the civilian realm. For example, Kotter states that; “Most U.S. Corporations today are over-managed and under-led”<sup>(51)</sup>.

However, even Elliot Jaques, who states that the CEO’s most critical work is to provide organizational values, culture, outlook and vision, fails to quantify the answer. Although most agree that the emphasis at the strategic level should be on leadership related work, few are willing to supply a clear ratio.

“Officership 2020” does try to quantify the issue when it states that Generals and Flag Officers should “. . . spend three quarters of their time looking externally at changes in Canadian Society and their operating environment and thinking ahead 20 – 30 years”<sup>(42)</sup>. I think, however, that this high ratio of focus strictly on visioning is not only unachievable, but likely undesirable. This would leave only 25 per cent of strategic command’s time to be shared between the remainder of the leadership work areas plus the management related work. I suspect but cannot confirm that the quote is based upon a misunderstanding of SST. It does not seem to recognize that Time Span is based upon the “longest target completion time” of a task <sup>(Requisite 39)</sup>, rather than an average or other arbitrary number of years. In another example, Mitzberg’s research led him to decry the “Fallacy of Detachment” in favor of a more balanced (but not quantified) approach <sup>(Rise and Fall 254 – 258)</sup>. There is no panacea; generals must focus on all the leadership work while ensuring that operational management activities are given sufficient attention.

Although we cannot quantify the relationship, I am comfortable in the conviction that our generals should emphasize / spend more time on leadership work than

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<sup>13</sup> See (Horn 130), (Generalship 117, 145, 514), (Moorhead and Griffin), (Bland 3, 21), (Morton 13), (Granatstein 6), (Officership 2020 I-15), (Zaccaro 368 – 370) and (Sussex Circle).

management work. Likewise I support calls for them to delegate a greater portion of their management functions to free up time for leadership work<sup>14</sup>. This leads us to the following section, which will look at the realities in NDHQ and make recommendations about work areas that are candidates for continuous improvement.

### **Continuous Improvement in Strategic Command**

*“What a manager / leader does on a minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour basis rarely jibes with any stereotype of a manager, a heroic leader or an executive, a fact that can create considerable confusion for those new to managerial jobs. This behavior is nevertheless understandable if one takes into consideration the diverse tasks (leadership and management), the difficult work (maintenance and change), and the complex web of relationships (beyond formal hierarchy) that come with the territory” (Kotter 16).*

I think it is safe to state that many of the strategic command issues that led to “Dishonored Legacy” and the Minister’s report on the “Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces” have been or are being addressed. Many will agree that we are in much better shape than we were ten years ago, but some strategic level generals still express concerns that they are forced to work in the present, concentrating their efforts on day-to-day crises at the expense of strategic thinking (Sussex Circle. Slide 17). Likewise, in a change-dominated world, it is not wise to rely on the old adage that: “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it.” Within strategic command, as throughout the CF, a focus on continuous improvement is required. This section will therefore offer suggestions for continuous improvement in the realm of shifting emphasis from management to leadership work. The section is divided into our four work categories of Visioning, Operational Management, Leading Change and Personnel Development. Given the complexity of many of the topic areas mentioned below, and the space limitations of this paper, most

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<sup>14</sup> Again see (Horn 130), (Generalship 117, 145, 514), (Moorhead and Griffin), (Bland 3, 21), (Morton 13), (Granatstein 6), (Officership 2020 I-15), (Zaccaro 368 – 370) and (Sussex Circle).

topics are handled in a fairly cursory manner. The reader is, however, directed to the footnotes for suggested further readings.

## **Visioning**

The CF has recently engaged in a series of organizational strategic planning activities, starting with the articulation of “Strategy 2020”. This document, and the initiatives it generated, inter alia, “Officership 2020”, the *Integrated Defence Management Framework*, *Long Term Capability Plan (Human Resources)*, Change and Sustainment Agendas, Risk Management process and the inception of the Legal Risk Management Committee, would seem to indicate that the organization is striving to develop a proactive stance. Henry Mintzberg, however, in “The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning”, could be seen as throwing cold water on these accomplishments. He separates “Strategic Vision” from “Strategic Planning” and expresses many concerns about the latter. These “pitfalls” include, amongst others, the inflexibility of plans and planning, issues with commitment (at the top and lower down), biases in the planning process and obsession with control, and he even expresses concerns that Strategic Planning can inhibit change.

I would make the case, however, that Mintzberg’s concerns are really about problems with or an overemphasis on process or management work. Strategic planning, as we have shown, is a strategic level operational management activity (planning) resulting from the CDS’ leadership work (visioning). The success or failure of “Strategy 2020” will depend not only on the validity of the CDS’ (and Deputy Minister’s) vision nor simply on how well the management process worked and will work over its life; it

will live or die on the full spectrum of generals' work. Time will be the judge, as it will be for Strategy 2025, 2030, 2035 etc.

The danger that strategic command faces, in my mind, is in becoming wedded to "Strategy 2020" and focusing too much on the operational management activities that fall from it. Given the ongoing pace of change, development of the vision for Strategy 20XX must continue concurrently with the leadership and management work resulting from "Strategy 2020".

### **Operational Management**

Although operational management is very important, we have shown that strategic command places too much emphasis on it. There are several factors that act like gravitational forces that pull the focus away from leadership work. One of the most prevalent and serious "forces" is risk aversion. I therefore find it fascinating that the Pigeau – McCann definition of control includes the concept of risk management. In the "Definitions" section we noted in our working definition of command that management activities (right hand column of Table 2) drew a parallel to control processes (right hand column of Table 1). It is not a huge intellectual leap of faith to contend that risk aversion will draw one's attention to risk management activities or, within our definition, shift generals' focus to management related work<sup>15</sup>.

While risk aversion is a challenge in many organizations, Jack Granatstein calls it "the single most serious problem faced by the CF"<sup>(15)</sup>. Bernd Horn believes that; "The

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<sup>15</sup> The reader should not, however, confuse risk management in this context with formalized *Risk Management* processes such as the CF Legal Risk Management Committee. Formalized *Risk Management* is operational management work that uses a process to analyze specific issue or project risks to assist the commander in taking risk into account when formulating complex decisions.

prevailing culture [in the CF] is one of political correctness, risk aversion and zero tolerance for mistakes” (132). Risk aversion leads to micro-management, which means that strategic command is drawn too deeply into management activities such as (over) controlling, (over) supervising, (over) monitoring and perhaps even product production. It also has the added down side of sending the terrible message that the general does not trust his or her subordinates.

Another problem with risk aversion is that it can lead to what is commonly referred to as “analysis paralysis”. As we can see from the following quote, analysis paralysis has been around for over 2500 years!

“A certain elder statesman of Lu was said to act after reflecting three times. When Confucius heard of this, he said, ‘Reflecting twice will do’” (Confucius 25).

Over analysis of issues or concepts leads to late decisions or, worse still, no decisions at all. I would also argue that risk aversion in an organization stifles original thought and either prevents individuals from learning from mistakes or stops the progress of promising people who have made minor errors.

Risk acceptance, then, is our next consideration for continuous improvement. Continuous improvement in risk acceptance is leadership work, in that it involves a shift in culture that must be driven from the top. Generals need to set the example by accepting risk, avoiding analysis paralysis, rewarding original thought, and allowing subordinates the space to make and learn from mistakes. The way to accomplish this is through the appropriate employment of delegation.

I am fully convinced that accepting risk and thereby exercising appropriate delegation is the key to shifting the strategic command focus from management to leadership work. In the words of John P. Kotter:

“Firms that are failing to delegate more from the top and to purge unneeded activities are facing increasing burnout among top managers.

of the leadership work, on the other hand, can and should be delegated as appropriate. For example, the work of conceptualizing the vision is the purview of the commander while the managerial work of drafting the strategic plans, organizing staff activity and monitoring subordinate staffing progress can be delegated.

Another good candidate for delegation is management work that comes from an external source or is not in direct support of the vision. As an example, the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Military) is the recipient of over half the Ministerial Inquiries in NDHQ. These requests are often sensitive, always “urgent” and clearly the subject of great scrutiny. Unlike many of his Stratum VI peers, the incumbent has chosen to delegate the review and signoff work to one of his “Iron Colonels”.

Delegation of management work, then, is the mechanism strategic command can use to shift emphasis / work time from operational management to the leadership activities. Continuous improvement in this area will be an unremitting challenge that will require generals to “let go”, show faith in subordinates and accept risk.

## **Leading Change**

Overcoming resistance, as discussed earlier, is the greatest challenge that strategic command must overcome when leading change. External and internal audiences must understand and accept the vision and CF members must be motivated to embrace it.

Military subordination to the government, which is a good thing, is a double-edged sword that on one hand gives the CDS position its authority with the incumbent responsibility and accountability. On the other hand the reality of government and politics presents strategic command with many challenges including limits on visioning



flexibility through policy (or lack thereof) and resource allocation. Unfortunately government interface is an historical weakness of the CF. Successive Defence White Papers have collapsed under the weight of budgetary realities and, without a national strategy confirmed by the Government, the CF is, by and large, relegated to a “random management” posture (Bland 268). Networking with elected politicians and senior bureaucrats across the political landscape is strategic level leadership work for which field command simply does not prepare our generals. In the words of Desmond Morton: “The job description for Canada’s senior commanders should provide for much more political skill and experience than it ever has” (Generalship 370). Without success in this area, not only will the CDS have great difficulty articulating a vision that meets with government expectations and approval, successive visions will likely wither on the vine from a lack of budgetary nourishment. This vital leadership work is clearly an area that will require continuous improvement focus.

Another major government interface concern is that of political maneuvering, which can force strategic command into a reactive vice proactive mode. The January and February 2002 furor in the House of Commons over whether Joint Task Force 2 soldiers had taken prisoners in Afghanistan and, more specifically, when the Minister of National Defence became aware of it, is a good example. As Major-General (retired) Lewis MacKenzie stated; “What is going to happen is that with the intense focus on the Minister, his staff will be on the back of the military 24 hours a day, seven days, for any possible information that they now think the Minister should have and therefore share with Parliament” (Globe and Mail). Issues such as these and the requirement to rapidly prepare for and respond to “Question Period” situations, plus other short fuse administrative

functions such as “Ministerial Inquiry” responses, are realities of government interface that focus a great deal of attention on managerial work. This is, of course, a huge challenge over which strategic command has no control. I think the only way to lessen the burden is through a continuing proactive educational campaign targeted at the politicians, media and general public. Appropriate delegation is, of course, also indicated in these cases.

A unique challenge that CF strategic command has to face is the relationship with senior DND bureaucrats in the integrated NDHQ. Although some malign this relationship and push for the separation of the CF and DND into two headquarters, the reality is that change simply will not happen in the foreseeable future<sup>16</sup>. In this structure the CDS and the Deputy Minister jointly develop a vision for the CF / DND and lead change within and across the gray line between their realms of responsibility. Clearly the networking abilities of the two individuals, as well as their Stratum VI subordinates, is crucial to the maintenance of a collegial and team focused atmosphere.

In order to effectively communicate the vision, strategic command must enjoy successful media relations, and maintain an open and proactive media posture. General de Chastelain stated that: “If we have a good story to tell, we should tell it. If we have a story we would rather see not told, and if we seek to obstruct its telling, we must realize that it will be told nonetheless and not sympathetically” (Warrior Chiefs 356). The CF will always face security and confidentiality issues, and our generals are cognizant of the reality of government supremacy, but these must be viewed as challenges not excuses for adopting a reactive posture. Although there is much attention paid to “communications

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<sup>16</sup> For further reading on this topic see (Bland) and the (1994 White Paper on Defence).

plans”, the fact that many if not most of our generals commence each workday with an update on the latest media “clips” indicates that they are indeed in a reactive mode. Breaking out of this mode will be extremely difficult, given the political interface and the less than affable relationship the CF has enjoyed with the media over the last ten years. However, the people of Canada have the right to know about their Canadian Forces and are an important audience for the CDS’ vision, so strategic command will have to demonstrate continuous improvement in this vital area<sup>17</sup>.

Internal communication of the vision and leading change within the CF is clearly crucial to success. What audience can be more important than the one that is most profoundly impacted by and who’s buy-in is the central to the implementation of the vision? Similarly, motivation of subordinates is one of the most basic of leadership tenants. The Chief of Review Services is currently in the process of studying concerns over CF internal communications, and the recommendations will hopefully lead to improvements as required. In the meantime the reader is encouraged to delve further into the abundance of available readings on this subject<sup>18</sup>.

### **Personnel Development**

Strategic command has been paying much closer organizational attention to personnel development over the past few years. “Officership 2020”, the fledgling Non-Commissioned Member Professional Development Program, subsidized education programs and succession planning being but a few examples. While very important, these programs represent the operational management activities that result from the

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<sup>17</sup> See (Coleman and MacKenzie in Generalship) for a more detailed discussion on this topic.

<sup>18</sup> Suggested readings include: (De Pree, Max. Leadership is an Art. New York: Dell, 1989), (Yates. Control Through Communication. Baltimore: Hopkins, 1989) and (Culligan. Back to Basics Management. New York: Facts on File, 1983).

vision of a professionally developed armed force. Strategic command must also strive for continuous improvement in the leadership aspects such as coaching and mentoring to ensure that those who come behind will be adequately prepared to assume the reins<sup>19</sup>.

The fact that the CF had to launch a major Quality of Life (QoL) project in the late 1990s to address serious personnel concerns is an example of extremely serious leadership failure. I would argue that QoL was the reactive result of media, public and political pressure to correct years of leadership neglect, rather than the proactive result of vision. Despite numerous QoL success stories in the face of a very parsimonious Government (and not to downplay the exceptional efforts of the NDHQ staff) some of the initiatives were flawed due to a lack of vision. For example, in the rush to address pay issues on the heels of media stories about junior ranks having to rely upon food banks, the CF was left with a problem with pay compression and even pay inversion. Although the short-term problem was solved, the organization was left with de-motivated senior officers and Non-Commissioned Members, and junior members who turned down promotions rather than accepting greater responsibilities or making increased personal sacrifices without the requisite rewards. Strategic command's new vision of positioning the CF as an "employer of choice", as articulated in "Strategy 2020", is evidence that they are striving to assume a proactive stance. However, overcoming the grassroots cynicism that surfaces when members hear the hackneyed expression that "people are our number one resource", will be a major challenge for our generals to overcome. The importance of success in this area cannot be understated.

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<sup>19</sup> For more information on the leadership aspects of personnel development see (Requisite 110-111), (Moorhead and Griffin Ch 20), (Jacobs and Jaques 442 – 446) and, for a dissenting view, (Zaccaro Ch 4 – 5).

Personnel development also applies to those at the top of the organization. As already discussed, command is distinctly human in nature so there is no magic formula for shifting emphasis from management to leadership work. Likewise one cannot look at the situation from a solely idealistic perspective. The gravity-like forces that pull the focus towards management work are very strong, and no organizational structure change or profound declaration in a meeting will lead to continuous improvement. Strategic command will have to aggressively tackle the overall challenge and include the development of a leadership culture as part of the vision. It will have to lead the change, set the example and ensure that proper personnel development takes place.

### **Conclusion**

Generals' work, for the purpose of this paper, was discussed in terms of strategic command. In developing a working definition of command we showed that it includes leadership behaviours (visioning, leading change and personnel development) and management activities (operational management). We then explored the interrelationship between leadership and management, and showed that, especially at the strategic level, leadership work is where the emphasis should be placed. Although we noted that great improvements have been made in the past few years, we were able to recommend several areas for continuous improvement focus. These include sustained visioning, risk acceptance and delegation. Change leadership challenges such as government interface, media relations and internal communications were also highlighted. Under the personnel development banner we recommended continuous improvement emphasis on leadership issues such as mentoring and coaching, as well as personnel recognition / rewards and the development of a leadership culture.

Strategic command or generals' work is a marriage of leadership behaviours and management activities. The challenge is in maintaining the right balance in the relationship. Although leadership work is where the emphasis should be placed, there is a strong "gravitational force" that tends to pull the focus to management work. The key to shifting the emphasis is through the development of a leadership culture wherein generals accept risk and exercise appropriate delegation. This will allow strategic command to adopt a proactive posture and think far enough ahead to prevent having worries near at hand.

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