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Authority, Responsibility and Accountability for Strategic Direction

By /par …Colonel M.S. Skidmore

ABSTRACT

This paper is about the role of senior officers, particularly general officers in the development of national strategic direction. It examines the issues of authority, responsibility and accountability as they relate to the occasionally conflicting roles of senior officers as the expert advisors to government on defence matters and as the heads of the profession of arms charged in the general officers' scroll with "the stewardship of the Canadian Forces". This paper offers the view that it is no longer enough for senior officers to merely advise the Minister on purely military matters in conjunction with the civilian officials of DND. Given the political landscape within which national security and national defence policy are formulated in this country, with much control exercised by the central agencies of government, senior officers have to learn how to positively influence those civilian officials in the central agencies in order to give defence and security the attention that they deserve by government. The paper also offers the view that the CDS, as the head of the military profession should utilize the CDS' Annual Report to Parliament as a means to communicate serious professional concerns directly to Parliament. This would provide a tangible demonstration to CF members and to Canadians generally that their professional military is committed to transparency and to a higher calling than just loyalty to the government of the day. In concluding, the paper warns that failure to reconcile this conflict between the responsibility to confidentially advise government and the responsibility to also maintain its standing as a credible profession could result in serious leadership challenges in the future.

"Informed Canadians are the best allies the Canadian forces and the Department of National Defence can have. Without knowledgeable taxpayers, the Forces cannot enjoy public support. Without public support, they face a difficult challenge acquiring the necessary resources to perform their mission. There is legitimate need for secrecy in matters o defence and national security, but the military must make a special effort to be transparent to Canadians"[1].

"If you don't like transformation, you're going to like irrelevancy even less"[2]

INTRODUCTION

In concluding his introduction to a published collection of important documents related to *'The Higher Organization of National Defence'*, Douglas Bland anticipates the central issue of this paper. *"One might conclude after considering the papers presented here that future studies would be more useful if they addressed ways to manage the problems of national defence in the reality of that policy field rather than recommending how to manage this reality out of existence. Nevertheless, these reports provide a history of what has been tried, what is wanting, and a guide to which paths might be followed and which should be avoided. They do not, however, provide a solution to the defence problem because, as Maurice Pope noted in 1937, there is a 'limit to which we can go in our search for a suitable organization to control the national means of defence.' That limit is usually called politics and 'the art of the possible'".* [3]

This paper is about authority, responsibility and accountability (ARA) as they relate to "the art of the possible" and the development of national strategic direction and policy for security and defence in Canada. More to the point, it is about how military officers, especially general officers, as a professional body, might engage themselves within the highly centralized, highly politicized, and incremental policy-making environment of Canada. More specifically still, it postulates that, given the circumstances extant in our society today, the responsibilities of the military profession might cause us to consider extending our participation in process beyond our traditional boundaries. That is, the moral authority that comes with our specialized and unique knowledge might place upon the military profession a responsibility to become more actively and more vocally involved in security policy development. Rather than accepting the collegial decision making process currently demanded by cabinet and the central agencies that support it, the military, embodied in the form of the CDS and the environmental commanders, must more clearly articulate and more forthrightly press the professional view in advising government. Governments must make security and defence policy decisions based on a spectrum of other societal and economic factors but the military profession must equally ensure that operational considerations are adequately factored into the government's deliberations.

As will be demonstrated, there are strains in Canada's civil-military relations that cause much frustration within government and within the military profession. However, many of these strains are actually just symptoms of the weaknesses within the Canadian

[1] MND Report to the Prime Minister – *"Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces"*, p. 35.
[2] LGen (Retd) Fred Sutherland to NSSC 5. 6 Feb 03.
[3] Bland *"Introduction: The Higher Organization of National Defence"* N/SS/CNS 433/LE-1 p. 1

political model. In order to address the deficiencies in our civil-military relations, it is likely that Canadians would have to ask themselves hard broader questions about our entire form of government where transparency and the relevance of our political institutions' accountability evaporates at the door to the cabinet chamber. These questions could in turn create unwelcome impetus for a renewed constitutional debate, which as we have seen in the 1990s, would as a minimum severely disrupt the national agenda, or worse, threaten the Confederation of Canada, as we now know it. So, from the political and social perspectives, risking such a potentially divisive self-examination for an apparently low pay off societal good, like more efficient security, is probably not worth the political capital or the effort in the view of politicians and the prime minister in particular. This paper then is a discussion about how the military profession in Canada can legitimately affect security and defence outcomes in Canada when our advice is not necessarily welcome, when the processes for decision-making minimize our professional input and when there is no change to these processes apparent anywhere on the immediate horizon. The question for professional military officers over the medium term then becomes one of how to remain true to our professional responsibilities to society in an organizational culture and in a political environment that largely ignores military opinion but demands loyalty in the form of public agreement or public silence. If nothing else, the credibility and integrity of senior officers amongst our most important public, the CF members, could be further called into question.

However, we must also bear in mind that this idea of professional assertion has to balance against the two fundamental principles of civil-military relations in a democracy. The first is the subordination and unquestioned control of the military by the duly constituted civil authority elected by the people. The second principle is the mandatory preservation of apolitical, non-politicized military forces, devoid of any kind of political partisanship or activity. In the words of a former CDS, *"Although well respected on the whole, this second principle is perhaps not as universally understood, and it warrants awareness and prudence on the part of both politicians and the military."*[4] We will return to this important notion in due course.

DISCUSSION

Before proceeding further, it is worthwhile clarifying what is meant by Authority, Responsibility and Accountability. Rather than consider sterile, stand alone definitions, it is equally worthwhile to consider how the departmental and CF leadership view the linkage between them. According to the CDS and the DM:

"Having a responsibility involves having the authority and the obligation to act, including the authority to direct or authorize others to act. It also means being accountable for how those responsibilities have been carried out in light of agreed expectations. In a public sector organization such as the CF or DND, each individual is obliged to account fully and promptly to those who, in the hierarchy, conferred the

[4] Theriault. p.1.

responsibilities, for the way they have been carried out and for how the relevant authorities have been used"[5].

"It is essential that every one of those responsible for a specific issue both consult and work with colleagues who should be involved. Nevertheless, those responsible remain accountable for the overall results, even though they may have collaborated with others in getting the job done".[6]

From these passages we might conclude that the ARA issue is relatively straight forward. However it is these consultations between colleagues and the de facto requirement for agreement between colleagues before an issue can meaningfully proceed higher in the decision chain, that can blur the ARA demands contained in the first passage.

A frequently recurring theme in Canadian national security studies has been the historical and ongoing absence of substantive political strategic. Informed commentators[7] have argued that from a security perspective, Canada is simultaneously blessed and confounded by the absence of a concrete military challenge to our way of life. In places like Israel, security is a first principle, high on the priority list of almost all of its citizens, making security decisions expensive and difficult but still, obvious priorities for governments of all political stripes. In Canada, the security requirements are much less obvious and therefore the decisions are frequently harder to make and are more likely, beyond the risk tolerance of our politicians. The politicians in both countries respond to the same stimuli, public opinion, but in Canada public attention and therefore government attention is focused elsewhere. In short, relative to most other files, the political payoff for sustained attention by politicians and public service officials to the security and defence portfolios is too low to warrant the time, effort and political capital.

A number of commentators[8] have advanced to the notion that civil-military relations in Canada have been and continue to be habitually strained as defence and other nationally security stakeholders cry out for strategic direction and resources. Even post-911, security and defence are not high government priorities, relative to the traditional social goods like education and health care. Security and defence concerns are certainly receiving more attention in Canada but in the minds of the various publics, things like health, education, infrastructure and the national debt are far more pressing. Therefore, logically these social goods remain stronger draws on the national purse and the attention of the prime minister and therefore the central agencies, than security.

In fact, over the past thirty plus years, successive governments have had little inclination to devote time to security or defence policy.[9] However, the military profession is not alone. The notion of a crisis in civil-military affairs would likely be recognized in

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[5] Baril & Judd, *"Organization and Accountability"*, Part IV *"Authority and Accountability",* p.2
[6] Ibid. p.2.
[7] See Bland, English, Morton references as examples. Also several speakers at NSSC 5.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

any line department where they too have to fight for scarce resources and the attention of government to address their own looming national crises.[10] As Savoie demonstrates, matters are made worse by the emergence in the last thirty years of a political strategy, accepted by all governments, which demands that most important decisions be coordinated by the "central agencies".[11] The capacity of the central agencies is large but is still finite, so they tend to manage the present and look to the horizon only so far as it helps them to pre-empt surprises. In addition, the Centre's tendency to keep a lid on things in order to focus the bureaucracy on advancing the prime minister's priority licem

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resources are allocated to address it and how these two important decisions are made. These important procedural decisions in turn can affect the policy outcomes. So deciding how to decide can have a great deal of impact on how ends are joined to means.[13]

It is also important to note that public policy decisions in Canada are made by politicians, advised and assisted by civil servants, (although there is an emerging concept of some sort of on-line or town hall based "Dialogue with ordinary Canadians" as a sop to the various constituencies outside of the actual decision loop). Defence policy matters are complicated by the specialized military knowledge required for, and high risk and high cost associated with most defence decisions. For this reason, defence decision-making is unique in that it includes senior technical professionals (specifically, the CDS and his military staff).

The Role of the Central Agencies

You have to dig deep and read between the lines but the Government of Canada website actually offers links to a disarmingly honest appraisal of the processes by which our government works[14]. Interestingly, although the site lists recommended references does not make any mention of Savoie's comprehensive but critical examination of the central agencies[15], it does refer the visitor to this interesting document that covers many of the same themes as Savoie but with a veneer of positivism that sounds vaguely reminiscent of Animal Farm[16]. Bearing in mind that this constitutes the Government of Canada's official public position an important deduction may be gleaned from the quote "*The Canadian experience shows that there is as much art as science to crafting Cabinet's decision-making systems"*[17]. Immediately, this suggests that the decision-making process in Cabinet and therefore for the nation, is not necessarily all that formal (science), or put another way, the formal management processes upon which so much of the bureaucracy is based is not necessarily important to policy-making.

The realities of the current structure of government under all of this generation's prime ministers, is that Cabinet Ministers constitute little more than a focus group for the prime minister in his decision-making[18]. *"Ministers will soon learn that the prime minister will be pursuing a handful of priority initiatives and that they and their departments are not to get in the way. They (Cabinet Ministers) will also come to terms, if they have not already done so, with the fact that the prime minister can appoint, dismiss, promote, and demote not just them, but also their deputy ministers. He can make all these decisions with whatever advice he chooses to seek and accept. Moreover, ministers will also come to see that concerns over performance are channelled (by PCO) to the prime minister so that they and their deputy ministers will have a particularly strong accountability relationship with him. This, for obvious reasons, has a profound*

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[13] Bland. Queens' SPS 834 Defence Decision making 1998.
[14] Government of Canada website.
[15] Savoie, "Governing from the Centre".
[16] Schacter with Haid. The Institute on Governance site at http://www.iog.ca which includes the April 1999 Cabinet Decision-Making Précis by Mark Schater.
[17] Schater with Haid. P. 2.
[18] Savoie p3. & Dr. Peter Cameron speaking to NSSC 5 on 21 Jan 03

impact on Cabinet and how individual ministers go about their work."[19] Complicating matters further, *"The fact that the deputy, owes his job to the Prime Minister and the Clerk, rather than to the minister of his department, gives him a measure of freedom to be frank and act upon principle, without fear for his career".*[20] Elsewhere Savoie notes that "*Public servants, particularly deputy ministers, either become well versed in the survival game or they lose their membership in the deputy ministers' club."*[21]

Savoie also emphasizes that this has the effect of 'politicizing' the bureaucracy to the point that they are mere extensions of the political leadership. *"This can only serve to shift their focus away from strategic policy and corporate management functions towards the partisan and personal interests of the political leadership which happens to be in office. Yet, it is expected that central agencies should be role models for line departments, given that the clerk of the Privy Council is also head of the public service. To sum up, for the centre of government, coordination now means operating an early warning system for the prime minister, anticipating and managing political crises, and pursuing prime ministerial priorities. The emphasis is less on policy coherence and more on keeping a lid on, so that the prime minister and the centre can get things done in areas that matter a great deal to the prime minister. Governing by bolts of electricity describes well how things actually work at the centre of government"*[22].

What the bureaucracy appears to need is what the military community calls mission command. Thirty years after the Glassco Commission, recommended decentralization of government operations, the same deductions are again emerging under the banner of modern managerialism. These concepts though can be at cross-purposes with the higher intent and the need for horizontal coordination between departments unless there is strong central control. The task force on strengthening policy capacity concluded that the PCO was the logical agency to provide the strategic direction necessary to allow departments to function in an efficient decentralized fashion but tied together through a clear strategic vision and horizontal coordination, but unfortunately, PCO "*was overly preoccupied with managing short-term issues and political crises".*[23]

Another insight might be gleaned from a quote concerning the Policy Committees of Cabinet. *"As the name suggests, the division of labor (sic) between the two policy committees of cabinet rests on a distinction between whether a given issue is more a matter of economic or of social policy. Issues in the areas of foreign affairs and defence, which often do not find a natural 'home' in either of the two policy committees, are sometimes referred directly to full cabinet, without going through committee."*[24] Or

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[19] Savoie p. 344.
[20] Schater with Haid, p. 23 – Or another way of looking at it is that the DM is indentured to the Prime Minister through the Clerk and is therefore at career risk if he/she does not adopt the highly politicized mantra of the Central Agencies. *"Central agencies instinctively think first of the prime minister, second, again of the prime minister, and third, of the cabinet process, as their 'clients'"*. (Savoie p. 7)
[21] Savoie p 316
[22] Savoie p. 336.
[23] Savoie pp. 66-67.
[24] Schater with Haid. p 12.

perhaps more accurately, in practical terms, without either the social or the economic committees handling the files, foreign affairs, defence and security are all 'homeless' (Perhaps Collette Bradshaw could take us on!). Thus, process alone marginalizes security and defence.

We do need to be mindful though that various individuals from the political realm, the civil service and the military, with actual experience in the provision of military advice to government maintain that the system works quite well. They cite frequent meetings between the Minister, the DM and the CDS, in pairs or as a group of three to resolve issues and to come to a common understanding of the forces at play in formulating defence policy. They also paint a complimentary picture of the CDS' infrequent input at Cabinet[25]

However, to the casual Canadian observer and the CF service member the evidence is that military advice is routinely ignored or worse still not solicited for fear that the prime minister will not like the answer. The recent announcement of Canadian participation and a leadership role in the Afghanistan mission apparently caught a number of senior commanders off guard. Even if this is not in fact true, the appearance that it is true undermines the credibility of our senior commanders in the eyes of the public and more importantly in the eyes of those service personnel who these same commanders will have to order into the Afghanistan theatre to do the job.

There are many other examples but the most illustrative file concerns the Sea-King Helicopter replacement project and the decision to cancel the purchase of the EH101. The prime minister made a partisan political decision to cancel the helicopter deal prior to his election in 1993, and most Canadians were supportive at the polls. The prime minister's priority was on deficit reduction and the $5 billion programmed for this project seemed a reasonable target, even if it was not all real money available to contribute to the deficit. The military had an obligation to voice our concerns about the decision but it appears that no such advice was solicited or offered.[26] Once the decision was made, the decision was obeyed. Despite paranoia in the press about endangering the crews of our sea kings, the fact is that many services still have them in use and are still upgrading them for future use.[27] The problem for our current crop of commanders is that in taking our capital for the project, we have been left a Sea King maintenance cost legacy that is crippling. Apparently, we also need to start immediately to acquire the new airframes so that we have them before the sea kings really do become dangerous some

[25] Including former MND Eggleton, former A/CDS Vice-Admiral Murray, former MFA Barbara McDougall and Ken Bartleman. See also General Therriault's and General Maurice Baril's very positive assessments from their time as CDS.

[26] Appearance is important. Even if professional military advice was solicited or offered, from a professional perspective the military has been undermined by the government's continued refusal to deal with the contract one way or another. The political intransigence should prompt a professional reaction from those senior leaders who are best informed – as a minimum an explanation to aircrew why the Sea King replacement project is not the matter of urgency being described in the national media. See Peter C. Newman's column *"Canada's Flying Coffins"*, MacLean's Magazine, February 3 2003.

[27] Including Marine One for the President of the Unites States and Egyptian President Mubarak's personal helicopter according to CBC Newsworld on 02 March 2003.

years hence. In addition, despite political pressure to reassess the options (and in fact to choose any other helicopter), the professional military opinion remains that the EH-101 is the right choice.

So, with the need clearly identified, the money available and the precedent set with the SAR Cormorant buy, it is unconscionable that the purchase be delayed any longer. Having survived the abandoned the 'Red Book' promise to 'scrap the GST', the prime minister's refusal to allow the EH-101 purchase seems particularly petty.[28] The unexpected and operationally unnecessary Griffon helicopter buy at Cabinet direction make the current EH-101 delay all the more unconscionable. These examples would suggest to the casual observer, including just about everyone in uniform, that despite the assurances of past CDSs and MNDs, the profession's advice to government function is not at all healthy. Unlike just canvassing Canadians for their views on a particular subject, there comes a time when as a profession, your advice can no longer be ignored. Something has to be done to get accountability back into some sort of order or Canadians will be at risk.

The Departmental Solution

Some better-informed defence commentators like Douglas Bland and Jack English argue that the fundamental problem lies in the ambiguous nature of civil-military relations within DND.[29] Bland, who is probably our nation's best informed commentators on civil-military relations, offers in his books a compelling forensic on how we arrived in this situation and argues that the solution to our authority, responsibility and accountability lies in adhering to the division of these elements as intended in the National Defence Act (NDA). He further argues that engaged Ministers of National Defence, who rely upon their Deputy Minister for advice on policy and administration and their CDS for military advice, will achieve a healthy and workable balance between the political, the administrative and the professional military. Bland sees adherence to the National Defence Act (NDA); that is the separation of the Canadian Forces Headquarters (CFHQ), from which the CDS provides professional military advice, and NDHQ, where the DM provide policy and administrative advice, as an important step in achieving this balance. Although custom and law provide relatively clear delineation of responsibility between the political, bureaucratic and military spheres, in practice, the lines have become increasingly blurred over the years to the point that ambiguity has become a virtue called collective decision-making.[30]

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[28] Peter C. Newman *"Canada's Flying Coffins"*, MacLean's Magazine, February 3 2003.

[29] Bland, D., *"National Defence Headquarters: Centre for Decision-Making",* pp. 4-5. See also English, "Lament for an Army", p. xiii "… *a defence establishment that had forgotten too much and learned too little."*

[30] Ibid. (Bland) p. 11. *"It might appear to some that there is an unnecessary degree of ambiguity in the relationships and responsibilities between senior political, military and bureaucratic officials for national defence. "This perception, however, arises from a confusion between legal authority and the understandable desire of officials to consult with each other and to work together. Once it is understood that each [politician, officer and] official [has] specific responsibilities under law and that these cannot be shared collegially, the ambiguity disappears. NDHQ as the institutional centre for defence ought to*

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In time, Douglas Bland's recommendations might be taken seriously and the division of authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities intended in the NDA and established in law might then coherently guide the process of policy-making and strategic direction within DND and the CF. In the mean time, the imbalance in accountability, brought about by institutional ambiguity, places a political premium on the advice of officials; that is non-military advisors, because the officials astutely and appropriately place their priority on harmonizing various social pressures to which governments are particularly sensitive. The problem for the senior officer of the present is – how do we fulfil our legitimate responsibility as professional advisors to government when the balance of accountability is so badly blurred and we are becoming increasingly marginalized as just another constituency of "ordinary Canadians" to be placated?

For this reason, close liaison between the CDS and the DM, direct access to the MND and CDS participation in occasional cabinet meetings amounts to little influence where it matters. The lesson for the military profession m501.96117 Tmsu501.96117 Tmustsurtelybce tast

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- A longer-term realignment of ARA within DND and the CF as in Bland's model appears to be a long way in the future, and might even be unachievable.
- In any case, the Bland model relies heavily upon the Minister and the DM being engaged and relevant in policy-making, which is not always the case. Personalities matter.

Influencing the Centre

Even the Prime Minister is wary of the powers of centre to some extent. In launching his Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, he decided to bypass the Cabinet process for fear that the PCO driven interdepartmental review process would fundamentally change it. *"If a Prime Minister can have such fears, one can only imagine what must go through the mind of a typical line minister as he gets ready to bring forward a proposal."*[32]

According to Savoie, aside from the other central agencies themselves, there are two groups that consistently influence the centre; the Provincial Premiers and the media (the "bolts of electricity"). This is because these two groups can hold the decision-making process to account and can confront the prime minister on a day-to-day basis. As direct conduits for providing military advice to Cabinet and the central agencies though, neither is very useful. As a branch of government that is exclusively federal, provincial premiers are only interested in defence in as much as it affects each province and the balance of distribution between provinces – effectively acting as restrictions to our freedom of action (i.e. you can't close base X in my province). We are also prohibited from commenting about policy decisions to the media although curiously no one cares if we do so if we are enthusiastically supporting the plan. Thus, the conditions of our employment prevent us, as a profession, from informing Canadians and our service members about our professional military opinion, if and apparently only if that opinion runs contrary to official government position. Logically, if CF members comment publicly in favour of a government policy, we are already involved in politics.

There are however legitimate means by which the professional military opinion on government decisions can be leveraged to close the accountability gap between the military as a profession with obligations to society and the military as a unique federal service with obligations to government.

First though, it is important to re-emphasize that the military, especially at the general officer rank, is a profession and to recall Samuel Huntington's thoughts on the responsibilities associated with professional status. The Canadian military is after all, an institution created by Canadian society to serve the values, interests and goals of Canadian society. Officers receive special commissions or warrants from society, bestowing upon the officer the responsibilities and through progressive and continuous training, characteristics that render the calling a profession. These are*:*

[32] Savoie p 317.

- A specialised area of expertise which is essentially the management of violence on behalf of the state.
- A separate corporate structure which the profession is largely responsible for determining on behalf of society.
- Social responsibility for the protection of the state and for the values of the society.[33]

In 1999, in an attempt to educate the officers of the CF and the officials of DND on how government works and the roles and accountability framework of the integrated NDHQ in providing advice to government, the then CDS and DM (Baril and Judd respectively) issued a joint paper entitled *"Organization and Accountability"*. A curious aside, this document, which is a word-for-word reproduction of the 1997 volume entitled, "*Authority, Responsibility and Accountability"* in the MND's Report to the Prime Minister, contains no reference to that document or its origins. The document does much to clarify responsibility (the Organization piece) but is less convincing about accountability.[34] Even the joint signature block (CDS and DM) sends subtle messages about the ambiguity.[35] It does however try to instil in DND and CF members the idea that horizontal coordination within the department and between the department and external agencies is important. Therefore, the first major deduction is that the CF should devote more effort towards understanding, and influencing these other departments, particularly the central agencies.

Having probably avoided NDHQ and other government departments (OGD) for much of their careers, many senior officers are poorly prepared to effectively influence policy development. The first hurdle is clarifying that 'working the system' to integrate your professional concerns into the development of policy is not being political, rather it is doing your job, influencing and educating government officials on the most important service of national government. Indeed, the NSSC was created to provide senior officers with this capacity.[36] Cotton captures the idea *"We need military philosophy to give us a*

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[33] Huntington, Samuel, "The Soldier and the State: The Theory of Politics and Civil-Military Relations",Cambridge Mass., The Belknap Press of Havard University Press, 1957.

[34] See Sharpe and English – *"With the publication of documents like Organization and Accountability, DND claims to have addressed some of these issues adequately. Yet, this publication is really only a description of the ideal state of affairs in DND. With few concrete examples to illustrate the principles outlined in the document and many new directives coming out every day that run completely contrary to the initiatives described in this document, there is wide-spread cynicism in the ranks about such published descriptions of departmental values". p. 56.*

[35] Baril, Judd, *"Organization and Accountability"* covering letter. The principal intent of the joint document appears to have been to clarify the confusion regarding CF personnel working directly within the DM's chain of authority and civilian officials working within the CF chain of command. The tactics of a joint versus separate CDS and DM letters were surely considered and the joint approach won out, but the joint document appears to say too little of substance despite its wordiness while communicating much about organizational ambiguity.

[36] MND report to the Prime Minister, *"Leadership and Management of the CF"*, Recommendation 55. "*Include in courses for senior military officers a component specifically designed to teach them how to operate effectively in an integrated civil-military headquarters."* And by extension one would insinuate and hope, how to operate effectively with OGDs, including Central Agencies.

clear grasp of values and organisational science to give us a grasp of techniques, for without both we shall continue to muddle through the process of institution building in the military."[37]

Cultural change will be required though. As we invest time and training in officers schooled in public service ways, the warrior side of our culture has traditionally tended to view these officers as "bureaucrats". Never completely accepted as equals by the public service and vilified by their military peers, these officers tend to become what Bland describes as "marginal men"; neither bureaucrats nor warriors; attacked by both.[38] And yet officers like Maurice Pope and Charles Foulkes who knew the system and knew the bureaucracy did achieve high rank, high office and made a difference. Perhaps the trick lies in managing such officers so that they remain bureaucratically astute but operationally relevant. As more Canadian general officers command internationally perhaps that credibility corner can be turned. The troops are astute and recognize success, so if general officers are both effective operators and influential bureaucrats, the derision might continue but the respect for the chain of command will strengthen.

In our role of advising government, which is necessarily through the central agencies, military officers could do much better at speaking the bureaucratic vernacular and in recognizing that there is little taste in Ottawa for defence spending no matter how compelling the operational argument. That operational argument has to be clearly articulated and politicians should not ever be allowed to completely dismiss it, but also, CF senior officers need to be mindful that helping someone else's agenda advance or solving another OGD's problem could bring rewards in cooperation.

CF officers could also be much better informed about the subtleties of the centre as well. They have a tough and a legitimate job, part of which is challenging our parochial ideas and ensuring that our proposals do not negatively affect other programs. The problem is that defence policy usually does affect other programs, through cost if nothing else. Military officers have a tendency to expect results too quickly and have no inclination to foster long-term relationships so that we can start to break into the relatively closed circle of government officials. Our cultural view that working with career civil servants is somehow beneath us and sullies our image as warriors is probably only exceeded by the civil servants perception that military officers are unschooled, neophytes in the realities of public administration. The CF needs to do more to expose our officers to the public service and the political and bureaucratic environment so that they can be effective in developing policy in the latter part of their careers. Our lone Brigadier in the PCO is a start but much more could be done to improve our effectiveness. Equally, more could be done to expose the central agency staff to the realities of the military and military operations. Visits by PCO staffers (including the Clerk of the Privy Council) have already taken place and have contributed much towards putting a face on the faceless at both ends of the exchange.

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[37] Cotton, C.A., *"Commitment in Military Systems",* p.64
[38] Bland, *"The Administration of Defence Policy in Canada 1947 to 1985", pp 96-97.*

The recent budget success shows that for the time being at least, with an engaged minister with influence in the central agencies and with a good grip on our financial situation, the centre can be influenced to take defence policy seriously. We need to ensure that we stay on top of our financial situation and maintain an accurate and easily understood picture so that the central agencies understand that more resources will be required. The Minister himself seemed to indicate after the Budget that all was now well in DND, so there is a very real danger that the CF is now off the central agency screen again.

A new and important tool, fallout from the Somalia Inquiry criticisms and the resultant Minister's Report to the Prime Minister in 1997, was the CDS' Annual Report to Parliament. In the volume entitled *"Leadership and Management of The Canadian Forces"* the following two key recommendations were made concerning accountability:

"Parliament plays a prime role in stimulating informed debate on defence matters. The Government has during this mandate significantly enhanced this role. We should:

> *64. Continue to work to enhance the role of Parliament and its committees in their consideration of security issues and, in particular, ensure that the Department and the Forces are responsive to the need for Parliamentarians to be well informed in a timely manner.*
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> 65. *Have the Chief of the Defence Staff prepare an annual state of the Canadian Forces report which the Minister of National Defence will submit to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans' Affairs."*[39]

The government evidently did not accept the recommendation of the Somalia commission completely wherein the commissioners suggested that in order … *"To strengthen the capacity of Parliament to supervise and oversee defence matters, the National Defence Act be amended to require a detailed annual report to Parliament regarding matters of major interest and concern to the operations of the National Defence portfolio and articulating performance evaluation standards. Areas to be addressed should include, but not be limited to:*

1. *a description of operational problems;*
2. *detailed disciplinary accounts;*
3. *administrative shortcomings;*
4. *fiscal and resource concerns; and*
5. *post-mission assessments."*[40]

The government did not accept this recommendation citing the Part 3 Estimates as an equivalent report to Parliament. Thus, under the guise of preventing duplication of effort, the CDS's report to parliament was to be focused on and restricted to reporting *"accomplishments"*. However, the MND also offered that *"Should Parliament perceive*

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[39] *"Report to the Prime Minister – Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces"* Volume, p. 1. – It is interesting to note that the title of this volume refers exclusively to the CF but the contents make many recommendations that are departmental in nature. Again, the ambiguity creeps in.

[40] DND/CF website http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/reports/monitor_com_final/eng/chap2_e.htm#strength

gaps in the information being provided, subsequent reports will be modified accordingly." [41]

Thus, the door is open and the CF have the opportunity and indeed the responsibility to inform Parliament. The purpose of this accounting to Parliament by the CDS about the CF (as distinct from DND or NDHQ) is important: informing Canadians; that is the taxpayers, what is happening with the greatest expenditure of public money and possible of Canadian youth in our society. The reason that we inform Parliament is that *"Members of parliament … are not elected to govern. Rather, they are elected to hold those who govern accountable for their policies and decisions."*[42] So instead of using briefings to parliamentary committees and the annual CDS Report as mere endorsements of government policy, what better place, to articulate the professional military strategic view on security and defence policy, both extant policy and future requirements? Were a consolidated departmental report required, that is an NDHQ or ministerial position, that too could be provided, but the inference in this recommendation is that the CF leadership must provide a purely military professional accounting of itself to Parliament, warts and all. In order to meet the intent of its inception, the report must become a real assessment of military capabilities, gaps and requirements prepared by operators rather than a report on what went right according to the Public Affairs staff[43].

Perhaps, a workable model would be like the military after-action review (AAR) wherein the operators (in this case the CF as a profession) offer observations and concerns to which, the bureaucracy (DND), the Minister, and even the central agencies might offer countering views and healthy doses of economic and political reality. Based upon the validity of the positions offered by each perspective, parliament and Canadians would be better able to come to an understanding of their priorities as a nation. This would serve the triple purpose of informing Canadians through Parliament, demonstrating to our service members that the chain of command is engaged in providing professional input, and equally importantly, cause military professionals to understand where our concerns actually sit within the departmental, ministerial, cabinet, central agency and parliamentary priorities. While one can only speculate, historically there is evidence to suggest that despite driving a livelier defence debate in this country, social goods would remain the priorities and little would actually change, but at least Canadians and military professionals would know that the decisions were broadly considered and based upon solid, unvarnished advice. In addition, our service members would see their chain of command supporting them, plus government's and society's response.

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Savoie p. 50 . In a purely constitutional sense too, the CDS reports directly to the Governor General for important reasons of accountability. By design, professional military opinion and conduct of military operations is meant to be separated from the political interference and political decisions are meant to be made free of military interference.

[43] It is unclear who actually prepares the CDS' Annual Report but the only points of contact indicated in the original two iterations are DGPA offices. If the CDS' report is in fact prepared by DGPA (a departmental agency), and if the DM or MND's office have any approval capacity regarding its content, there exists a danger that the report does not meet the aim as originally conceived. By definition it is the CDS' personal report to parliament – not DGPA's, not the DM's and certainly not the MND's.

Initially such a system would likely create tensions and turmoil, but over several iterations, the issues would be well articulated from all perspectives and a common understanding of the wishes of the majority of Canadians would emerge. Essentially this is transparent government! Specific security and defence policy decisions could still be made behind closed doors in the Cabinet, respecting the customs of collective decision-making and a unified cabinet position. All that would change would be that while the cabinet's weighting of criteria would remain confidential, the criteria themselves and the various publics' perceived merits and deficiencies of each would be evident to all voters.

This is an interesting notion in that, perhaps the CF as a profession, has in place the moral authority, the professional responsibility and the accountability framework (the CDS's Report to Parliament) needed to re-invigorate the democratic principles of transparency and of Parliament as the legitimate accountability mechanism for government decision-making. The CDS' Report to Parliament, properly conceived and in the spirit and intent of democracy and Parliamentary oversight could be the impetus for much needed reform. Maybe this is a step too far, but as the ultimate guarantor of our way of life, perhaps the CF has a responsibility, using the legislative means available to it, to permit the declared accountability framework to work. By empowering our elected representatives with our true perception of reality, even though those perceptions might well be in conflict with the government view, we could arm parliamentarians with the information that they need to hold cabinet accountable.[44] The argument that as public employees, "we are the government" misses the point of the responsibilities of a profession within a society and the declared purpose and intent of the CDS' Report. It comes down to our responsibility to tell Parliament and the Canadian people our true opinion as a profession or as Bland put it, *"possessed of a higher loyalty"*.[45]

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to illustrate that, as a profession, the Canadian Military has an obligation to its service members and to society-at-large through Parliament that extends beyond the strictures of institutionalized ambiguity and forced collegiality of collective decision-making. It has attempted to establish that strategically, the political and bureaucratic environment extant in Canada has reached a state of grave imbalance. Authority and the ability to decide how to decide is concentrated with the Prime Minister's Office and his immediate advisors in the central agencies where politicians and politically motivated civil servants have control of the nation's agenda. Cabinet Ministers and line departments appear to have marginal influence in a system wherein Cabinet is little more than a focus group, providing only a veneer of consensus. Lacking any real accountability framework, beyond elections with increasingly poor turnout, the government has been able to run rough shod over professional advice in many spheres and indeed over parliamentary oversight.

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[44] Savoie. p. 50 As previously cited. *"Members of parliament …are not elected to govern. Rather, they are elected to hold those who govern accountable for their policies and decisions."*

[45] Bland, *"Chiefs of Defence – Government and the Unified Command of the Canadian Armed Forces"* Chapter 8.

In the case of the CF responsibility, both morally and in law, rests with the chain of command. Commentators like Douglas Bland, who have proposed that a return to the fundamental balance of the NDA as a solution to our ARA imbalance, have not yet offered ideas on how to overcome the accountability problems above Cabinet. When operational decisions are clearly being made without professional input, the profession has an obligation to alert the Canadian People through Parliament. Whether fact or merely illusion, it also appears to the officers and NCMs of the CF that the professional advice of our senior leaders is often ignored or worse still not solicited, which in turn contributes to a lack of confidence in the chain of command, which could be operationally significant. Certainly, it is already significant from a Human Resources point of view, when our soldiers' views have to be publicly-articulated by people like Scott Taylor.

This paper has also tried to prove that the CF is already too highly politicized and that the political and bureaucratic accommodations necessary at every level in order to advance issues to Cabinet, have diluted our professional advice to the point where that professional advice has to be clearly identified as such. It advanced the notion that mute silence by our profession in the face of politically motivated, militarily unsound strategic direction only constitutes loyalty to the government of the moment. Loyalty to our professional principles and to the coming generations of Canadians who must fight with and continue pay for our strategic decisions, demand a clearer articulation of our professional opinion at the front end of the process.

The solutions to this imbalance may lie in becoming less insular and more engaged in the public policy debate. As a profession, we need to develop our bureaucratic skills to become operationally effective in our advice to government role. To some, this manoeuvring might appear to be political but it can be done within the existing legislative framework and existing institutions. Agencies like Parliament, the Office of the Auditor General, SCONDVA, and the media, can be brought into the policy formulation process much earlier so that the professional military view is understood at the outset. Senior leadership within the CF will require considerable courage of conviction to stand their ground, and that ground will have to be carefully chosen but the pay offs could be enormous.

As this country has seen many times before, be it the Somalia Inquiry, the national blood supply, or municipal fresh water, policy sets the conditions for failure but it is frequently the mute official who passively accepted the intolerable circumstances who takes the blame. In most instances, someone has to die before the necessary changes are made. Our profession, embodied in our senior leadership already has the professional authority and the moral accountability to Canadians and CF members to do the job. It is now a matter of senior leaders deciding if they have the responsibility to more forthrightly advise government and Canadians using the legitimate tools available.

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