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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

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**Responding To Crises:  
A National Command Council For  
Canada's Political Leadership**

By /par

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## **Abstract**

In the absence of a formal national security framework, the Prime Minister must rely upon *ad hoc* decision-making processes to orchestrate courses of action in time-critical scenarios for the application of national power and resources in pursuit of national security goals and objectives. The thesis presented in this paper supports the case for a formal national security decision-making process led by a National Command Authority and supported by a National Command Council comprised of national security stakeholders and subject matter experts. The multi-departmental National Command Council would serve to guide the National Command Authority through time-critical decision-making processes with the ultimate goal of developing viable courses of action for activities at home and abroad based on national security policy and the actual capabilities of Canada's national power and resources. This paper discusses the centre of power and decision-making within the Government of Canada; critical lessons from Canada's post-9/11 homeland defence mission; civil-military relations with respect to the control and administration of the Canadian Forces; and the application of the "Pigeau-McCann Command Model" to define the competencies, authorities and responsibilities of Canada's National Command Authority.



## Canada's National Command Authority

### Introduction

The new world order that emerged in the post-Cold War period was not what most western nations were expecting. Demands placed on Canada's military in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proved far more daunting than those experienced in the preceding 40 years. Of note was the CF's participation in 78 missions in the 13-year period immediately following the Cold War compared to the 24 missions between 1948 and 1989.<sup>1</sup> As operational tempo soared throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium, participation in theatres of operations such as the Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda, Kosovo, and homeland defence missions tested Canada's ability to evolve beyond traditional partnerships and peacekeeping operations.

A common problem cited by national security pundits has been the government's use of ad hoc decision-making processes when selecting courses of action for the application of national power and resources in pursuit of national security goals and objectives. Different from the Cold War period when ample time was usually available to debate issues before seeking consensus, throughout the 1990s the government was required to make time-critical decisions in response to escalating humanitarian crises and for the commitment of CF personnel to hostile theatres of operation. In the absence of any formal national security architecture to support timely and effective decision-making, the government's ad hoc processes routinely saw the Prime Minister confer with senior bureaucrats to arrive at national security decisions without due consideration to the advice and recommendations of national security stakeholders and subject matter experts. Exacerbating the challenges of time-critical decision-making were sketchy and incongruent national security, foreign and defence policy goals and objectives. Difficulties in strategic-level decision-making became more pronounced in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 when timelines became even more compressed and the Prime Minister assumed the role of Canada's "National Command Authority"<sup>2</sup> for the application of national

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<sup>1</sup> Chief of the Defence Staff, General Henault, AMSC Graduation Address, 13 December 2002.

<sup>2</sup> The Dictionary of Modern War, Library of Congress, 1991, p 419, describes the American "National Command Authority" as the President, Vice President and their authorized alternates or successors as the only authority for the release of nuclear weapons. Other references also include the Secretary of Defence. In Canada, the term was introduced in the wake of 9/11 during homeland defence operations to define the level of authority needed for the application of deadly force in a domestic scenario against non-military targets. A few days after 9/11, the CDS published a message (CDS Message, ROE Auth / CDS / OP NOBLE EAGLE 001-2001/192225Z SEP 01) confirming the Government of Canada as the sole authority for declaring civilian aircraft hostile and to order the engagement of civilian aircraft in Canadian airspace. Of significance, this was the first example of the Prime Minister, or his delegated representative being established as the "command authority" for the application of national power and resources in

power in terrorist scenarios such as the possibility of shooting down of hijacked civilian airliners.

The Prime Minister will continue to fulfill the critical role of key decision maker for the application of national power and resources to achieve national security goals and objectives; however, to guarantee the highest level of success, significant changes to current practices are needed. To ensure timely and effective strategic-level decision-making during rapidly evolving national security crises and emergencies, this paper argues that a formal National Command Authority (NCA) represented by the Prime Minister, or his delegated representative, and supported by a National Command Council (NCC) comprised of national security stakeholders and subject matter experts must be established as the centerpiece of Canada's national security architecture. The multi-departmental NCC would serve to guide the NCA through timely and effective decision-making; however, its primary responsibility would be to develop viable courses of action based on national security policy and the actual capabilities of Canada's national power and resources.

To support the thesis outlined above, this paper discusses the centre of power and decision-making within the Government of Canada; critical lessons from Canada's post-9/11 homeland defence mission; and civil-military relations with respect to the control and administration of the Canadian Forces. The paper culminates the discussion by applying the "Pigeau-McCann Command Model" to define the competencies, authorities and responsibilities that should be considered for Canada's National Command Authority.

## **Government Decision-Making**

To understand the manner in which strategic-level decisions are made with respect to the pursuit of national security goals and objectives, it is important to understand a few important aspects of the inner workings of the government and where the centre of power, influence and decision-making actually resides.

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homeland defence terrorist scenarios. The individual filling the role of NCA must be instantly available 24/7 to authorize the application of national power and resources in support of national security operations.

The composition and decision-making process of the federal Cabinet<sup>3</sup> are among the Prime Minister's most treasured prerogatives.<sup>4</sup> Over the past decade, federal government influence and power has shifted away from Cabinet ministers towards the "central agencies".<sup>5</sup> Within the centre itself, power has shifted to the Prime Minister and his senior advisors at both the political and public service levels and away from Cabinet and Cabinet Committees.<sup>6</sup> There are several negative consequences of this shift of power; however, one of the most disturbing, as recent evidence suggests, relates to the criticism that "elected politicians themselves no longer fully understand how the machinery of government or the bureaucracy actually works even after several years in office".<sup>7</sup>

Central agencies stand at the apex of the machinery of Government and are sometimes described as extensions of the office of the Prime Minister. They all have a direct link to the Prime Minister and play a key role in policy decisions and budget making.<sup>8</sup> The federal budget is the government's major policy statement and has come to dominate decision-making in the federal government. This provides great advantages for the central agencies and enables the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to introduce new measures and policies under the cover of budget secrecy and thus avoid debate in the Cabinet.<sup>9</sup>

Under the leadership of the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, the Privy Council Office (PCO) serves as the Prime Minister's personal staff and secretariat to the Cabinet and its committees. Supporting the Prime Minister across the full range of his responsibilities as head of government, the PCO also provides advice to the Prime Minister on the general structure of the decision-making process. The PCO manages the flow of business to ensure that the decision-making process functions according to the standards set by the

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<sup>3</sup> Ministers of the Crown appointed Prime Minister.

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada, The Privy Council Office, "Decision-Making Processes and Central Agencies in Canada." [http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=Decision/canada\\_e.htm](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=Decision/canada_e.htm), accessed February 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Central agencies include the Privy Council Office, the Department of Finance, the Treasury Board secretariat, the Interdepartmental Affairs secretariat, and the Public Service Commission.

<sup>6</sup> Donald J. Savoie, *Governing From the Centre – The Concentration of Power in the Canadian Politics*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Conference of Defence Associations, *Stability and Prosperity; The benefits of Investing in Defence*. [www.cda-cdai.ca/BID/cdastud3.en.html](http://www.cda-cdai.ca/BID/cdastud3.en.html), accessed 23 February 2003.



Prime Minister. Further, its members play a pivotal role in elaborating government policy and in supporting the Prime Minister in providing leadership and direction to the Government.<sup>10</sup>

According to Donald Savoie, a significant concern has emerged as a result of concentrating and controlling decision-making at the centre of government; namely, the ability of a few key civil servants and bureaucrats at the centre of power to handle the vast number of diverse issues that must be addressed by the government on a regular basis. The Prime Minister himself “suffers from an overload problem so that he can only focus on a handful of major policy issues in any given mandate”. When political direction from the Prime Minister is not forthcoming on key issues, the central agencies usually focus their attention elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> This can become detrimental to the nation if issues dealing with national security happen to be the issues not receiving government attention. As pressure from inaction mounts the situation can become exacerbated when central agencies attempt to orchestrate decisions, but without due consideration to expert departmental advice and recommendations. A potentially dangerous situation unfolds when national security decision-making is attempted, but within compressed timelines and in the absence of coherent and well-defined national security policy. As discussed below, these issues have plagued the government over the past decade.

In his paper *Reconciling The Irreconcilable? Canada's Foreign And Defence Policy Linkage*, Lieutenant-Colonel David Bashow argues that security policy is meant to serve as the bridge between foreign and defence policy identifying threats and risks to national interests. Of concern, security policy in Canada has been more ad hoc than codified in a structured manner. Bashow points out that Foreign Affairs is meant to be the lead agency of the nation's security policy; however, he also notes that policy reviews in 1994/95 and again in 2002/03 witnessed the generation of defence policy in advance of and in isolation from foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> In the absence of clearly defined national security and foreign policy strategies, senior defence planners have been challenged to produce a defence programme that meets the often-unpredictable interests of the government.

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<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada, The Privy Council Office, “Decision-Making Processes and Central Agencies in Canada.” [http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=Decision/canada\\_e.htm](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=Decision/canada_e.htm), accessed February 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Savoie, 8.

<sup>12</sup> David L. Bashow, *Reconciling the irreconcilable? Canada's Foreign and Defence Policy Linkage*. Canadian Military Journal, Vol1, No 1, Spring 2000, 17-26.

Bashow further argues that in the absence of clear policy commitments, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet have the power to designate anything they please as a national interest, and to commit whatever national capabilities and resources they deem necessary in its pursuits.<sup>13</sup> “One significant inconsistency in the application of foreign and defence policies has been the extraordinary number of commitments generated for the Canadian Forces by the executive branch of the government. It frequently appears that the PM and the Cabinet are unable to differentiate in a global sense between what constitutes a security threat and what is, in effect, a humanitarian tragedy.”<sup>14</sup> The CF’s ability to support and sustain current ongoing operations at home and abroad is undermined each time scarce military resources are committed to adventures outside of obvious national security, foreign and defence policy goals and objectives.

Decisions to deploy forces, to engage in military operations and to put troops in harm’s way are among the gravest which any government is required to make. “They should never be taken casually, and should certainly not be based on the spontaneous reactions of politicians or publics to media images, no matter how moving. They should instead be based on policies reflecting an accurate assessment of the country’s interests and capabilities.”<sup>15</sup> A number of means have been proposed to assist the PM and the Cabinet in their decision-making responsibilities on matters related to national foreign and defence policies. Some of these recommendations have included initiatives to educate, advise and broaden the awareness of the senior members of the government about military and security issues and how they relate to national interests.<sup>16</sup> Defence analyst Peter Haydon supports the return to a formal standing Cabinet Defence Committee, which would allow political factors to influence the development and implementation security policy, and an arbitration process that would resolve differences between political aims and military advice on how to achieve those aims.<sup>17</sup>

National security, foreign and defence policy goals and objectives form the foundation of effective government decision-making. As discussed above, the absence of well-defined,

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<sup>13</sup> Bashow, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Bashow, 17-26.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Delvoie, *Canada and International Security Operations: The Search for Policy Rationales*. Canadian Military Journal, Vol 1 No 2 (Summer 2000), 24.

<sup>16</sup> Bashow, 24.

coherent and congruent policy goals and objectives contributes to the difficulties in arriving at sound and practical decisions with respect to the application of national power and resources. However, equally responsible for poor decision-making has been the absence of any robust national security framework to coordinate and focus the efforts of national security stakeholders and subject matter experts in developing viable courses of action for the executive branch of the government.

Dr. Jane Boulden argues convincingly that the absence of any national security structure reinforces a sense of separateness between diplomacy and the use of military force.<sup>18</sup> Boulden cites the reconnaissance mission to Rwanda/Zaire in November 1996 to illustrate the problems that can arise in the absence of established interdepartmental planning, assessment, decision-making, and coordination procedures. She also highlights that these failings have not been unique examples within the current strategic planning and decision-making structure.<sup>19</sup> Flaws in the government's decision to volunteer itself as the putative leader of the mission were related to Canada's inability to sustain such a mission without support from key allies and inability to gather detailed and timely surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence information. According to the authors of a NSSC 5 Case Study, these and other critical factors were not properly factored into the final decision made by the Prime Minister and supported by the Privy Council Office.<sup>20</sup>

Professor John Kirton's study on the Rwanda decision-making process in Ottawa concluded that the desire of the government to commit to forces to Rwanda was generated by the Prime Minister himself, and that the PM was moved by heart-rendering television images of the human suffering and the plight of the refugees.<sup>21</sup> Kirton further asserts that it was the Prime Minister who championed moving Canada forward from a diplomatic mission to a military intervention operation despite objections of the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National

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<sup>17</sup> Peter T. Haydon, *The Somalia Inquiry: Can It Solve Anything?* Canadian Defence Quarterly, April 1997, 23.

<sup>18</sup> Jane Boulden, *A National Security Council For Canada*. School of Policy and Studies, Queen's University, (Claxton Papers ISSN 1491-137X;2) 2000, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Boulden, 2.

<sup>20</sup> National Securities Studies Course 5, Case Study: Operation Assurance – 1996 Rwanda Humanitarian Intervention Mission, 21 February 2003.

<sup>21</sup> John Kirton, *Foreign Policy Under the Liberals*, in F.O. Hampson et al. (eds.), *Canada Among Nations 1997: Asia-Pacific Face Off* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997) p 43.

Defence in Ottawa and the reluctance of Canada's major allies to become involved.<sup>22</sup>

Louis Delvoie cites a report by two government officials entitled "Lessons Learned from the [Rwanda/] Zaire Mission" where it was reported that the problems outlined in the study were known and understood by government officials well before a decision was made at the political level to launch a military initiative, but the issues were disregarded "in an exercise that proved to be a triumph of intentions and image building over coherent policy and rational decision making."<sup>23</sup> Similar concerns led the Somalia Commission to recommend the creation of a permanent advisory body to coordinate peace-support operations and decision-making. "Members could include representatives of the CF, DND, DFAIT, the Privy Council, the Prime Ministers Office, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and others, and would be responsible for overseeing all aspects of policy and decision making for peace support operations."<sup>24</sup>

In his book *Command and Control for War and Peace*, Thomas Coakley comments on the interconnectedness of the elements national security – "We are accustomed to thinking about national security in terms of isolated issues – in bits and pieces rather than holistically. But the elements of national security are as tightly bound together as the various organs, muscles, cells, and other elements of the human body: we can't change one without having an impact on them all."<sup>25</sup> Hence, the need for close and coordinated cooperation between national security stakeholders. Boulden comments on the difficulties that arise when national security decision-making is attempted on short notice. She also highlights the problems associated with not having a single entity or group that "consistently looks at the national security picture as a single concept and looks at the big picture on an ongoing basis – beginning, middle and the end."<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, the senior civil servants and bureaucrats within the Privy Council Office who guided the Prime Minister toward his final decision to commit Canada to the Rwanda/Zaire

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<sup>22</sup> Kirton, 44.

<sup>23</sup> Delvoie, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Boulden, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas P. Coakley, *Command and Control for War and Peace*. Washington: National Defence University Press, 1992, 172.

<sup>26</sup> Boulden, 30.

mission did not obtain a full appreciation of the actual national capabilities, particularly in the CF. However, as highlighted by Louis Delvoie, there is one much broader question that applies to both the Rwanda/Zaire and Somalia missions. Delvoie questions the motivations behind why the UN and Canada chose to intervene in the civil wars in these two regions but not in the bloody and destructive civil wars taking place at the same time in countries such as Sudan, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. In the case of Rwanda/Zaire and Somalia, the judgment of news organizations as to which wars and famines were newsworthy and which were not, has come to be substituted for rational policy making by governments. Delvoie asserts that Canada's desire to intervene in Rwanda, but not in other destructive civil wars and humanitarian crises is attributed, in part, to "the CNN factor".<sup>27</sup>

Notwithstanding the emotional influences created by the major television networks seeking larger media market shares, the civil servants and bureaucrats who provided the advice to the Prime Minister since the end of the Cold War often lacked a clear understanding of the impact and potential outcomes of known deficiencies and shortfalls as identified by national security stakeholders.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the Prime Minister, as the central decision maker on national security and defence matters, would have been better served by the professional expertise and competence of a multi-departmental national security advisory body specifically designed to formulate viable courses of action based on the actual capabilities of Canada's national power and resource base.

### **Lessons From Canada's Post-9/11 Homeland Defence Mission**

Since the end of the Cold War a number of events have triggered calls for a more formal approach to facilitate effective government decision-making with respect to national security and defence matters. However, few have been more compelling than those related to the manner in which the Prime Minister and his key advisors and federal departments participated in post-9/11 homeland defence operations and in the security mission mounted for the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta in June 2002. The following examples are drawn from the author's personal experiences as Director of Operations for 1Canadian Air Division (1CAD) homeland

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<sup>27</sup> Delvoie, 21.

<sup>28</sup> NSSC 5 Case Study: Operation Assurance, 7.

defence missions in the wake of 9/11 and the air defence mission in support of the G8 Summit.

As discussed above, a few days after 9/11 formal correspondence<sup>29</sup> from the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) confirmed the Government of Canada as the sole authority to declare a civilian aircraft hostile and to order the engagement of a civilian aircraft in Canadian airspace. Although the American command authority had delegated this specific authority to the two-star level within the U.S. military chain of command,<sup>30</sup> the Canadian Government decided to retain this command authority at the Prime Ministerial level. This marked a significant event in Canadian national security history in that it saw for the first time the Prime Minister as Canada's command authority for the application of national power against non-military targets in homeland defence operations.

Within days of the 9/11 attacks, 1 Canadian Air Division (1 CAD) submitted an urgent request through the CF chain of command to the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness (OCIEP)<sup>31</sup>, to designate Canada's highest priority vital points.<sup>32</sup> This was of critical importance in that once national vital points were identified, military capabilities would be deployed to protect them. After several hasteners had failed to obtain the requested information, 1 CAD took alternative action and using American criteria obtained through NORAD HQ to select Canadian vital points, published a new homeland defence document without Canadian-unique input for the identification of Canadian vital points. One year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a response from OCIEP was still pending. Had this issue been submitted to a formal national body such as a National Command Council, of which OCIEP would be a member, it is possible that the designation of Canadian vital points would have been addressed in an urgent and effective manner.

A most disconcerting issue surfaced a few months after 9/11 when it appeared that the PCO experienced difficulty in progressing a critical national security issue on behalf of the

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<sup>29</sup> CDS Message, ROE Auth / CDS / OP NOBLE EAGLE 001-2001/192225Z SEP 01.

<sup>30</sup> Two-star generals who have been delegated hostile declaration and engagement authority are expected to attempt contact with the American NCA, time permitting, prior to exercising their authority.

<sup>31</sup> OCIEP was formed within DND in Feb 2001 to champion the emergency preparedness of federal and provincial departments. OCIEP Mandate: an organization that can effectively focus on the changing nature of emergency management, CI protection and cyber issues.

<sup>32</sup> Canada's critical Infrastructure areas include: energy and utilities, transportation, communications, financial, food and health, government services, cyber security and protection. <http://www.ociepe.gc.ca/index.asp>, accessed February 2003.

Canadian Government. Three months after 11 September 2001, NORAD championed an important new cross-border concept that would allow Canada and the U.S. to support the other nation's homeland defence mission. The CDS submitted the proposal to the Prime Minister through the MND and PCO. Although the U.S. command authority, the Pentagon, the MND, CINC NORAD and the CDS had fully endorsed the proposal, it was rejected on three consecutive occasions by the PCO and returned to the CF to be re-drafted to address PCO concerns. It is not clear why the CDS did not exercise his prerogative to go directly to the Prime Minister on this issue; however, twelve months after 9/11 a successful resolution to this critical national security issue was still pending. Perhaps not perceived as an urgent issue by the PCO, the handling of this issue likely undermined U.S. confidence in Canada's participation in the North American homeland defence mission. A well-developed national security framework comprised of a formal NCA and NCC would have addressed this issue in an urgent manner. Even if the NCA had not approved the proposal, the issue would have been resolved effectively with a timely response to all stakeholders and interested parties, including Canada's North American homeland defence partner.

The ability of Canada's National Command Authority to effectively participate in homeland defence missions has been a constant concern since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. To ensure a high standard of readiness for the on-going mission, the Canadian NORAD Region (CANR) conducted computer-simulated and live fly exercises twice weekly. A critical player in these exercise scenarios was the Canada's National Command Authority. Because the Prime Minister was seldom available to participate, a senior military officer, usually from the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) group filled the role of the NCA. Under these conditions mission success was usually 100%; however, whenever NCA-level participation was attempted by employing Cabinet Ministers, mission success was often less than ideal.<sup>33</sup> Difficulties were related to establishing contact with the NCA in a rapid manner; the timely passage of vital information from key participants and stakeholders to the NCA;<sup>34</sup> and the facilitation of informed and timely decisions followed by NCA authorization to take appropriate action.

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<sup>33</sup> 1 Canadian Air Division / Canadian NORAD Region, OP Noble Eagle / Op Grizzly Lessons Learned, Jan to Jun 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Critical stakeholders included the Solicitor General, CF, DND, OCIPEP, RCMP, CSIS, Transport Canada, Health Canada and NAV Canada. Depending on the nature and type of the national security emergency or crisis, other stakeholders could include Customs and Immigration, Canadian Coast Guard, and Provincial Law Enforcement Agencies and other provincial departments.

The C2 framework used by the U.S. to conduct the same mission is based on a secure communications network that links all American national security stakeholders in one conference call within minutes of identifying a threat to national security.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, because of their NORAD involvement, CANR in Winnipeg and the National Defence Command Centre in Ottawa also participated in these conference calls. This architecture allows the U.S. command authority to receive vital information from all national security stakeholders and to then direct appropriate action.

There continues to be no equivalent national security architecture in Canada. Instead, Canada's NCA must liaise with his stakeholders in an informal manner, one at a time, and without other stakeholders knowing what has been recommended or discussed. To address this critical deficiency, each member of the NCC would need to operate a command centre 24/7, interconnected to other NCC operations centres and ready to provide instant situational awareness to the NCA. In times of crisis and emergency, NCC members, as depicted in Figure 1-1, would support the designated NCC lead-agency member<sup>36</sup> in formulating and then recommending national courses of action for NCA approval.

The manner in which the NCA prepared to participate in the G8 Summit in June 2002 was also of great concern. The Prime Minister was host of the G8 Summit and was not available to fill the role of NCA. Deputy Prime Minister John Manley was designated as the NCA, but only a few days before the event. This last minute appointment precluded Minister Manley from participating in any part of the extensive four-month training period. Noteworthy were his comments during the NCA mission brief five days before the event where he expressed amazement at the mission at hand.<sup>37</sup> Astonished with the significance of the NCA duties he was about to assume, it became evident during the briefing that the Deputy Prime Minister, who

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<sup>35</sup> Members of the U.S. National Command Centre threat conference call include the White House, Secretary of Defence, National Security Advisor, Pentagon, CINC NORAD, FBI, CIA, National Security Agency, US Coast Guard, NORAD Region Commanders, Federal Emergency Measures Agency, Nuclear Power Facilities, FAA, and several others.

<sup>36</sup> As seen in the G8 Summit, the Lead Agency for domestic security and law enforcement operations would normally be the Solicitor General, supported by other stakeholders, as required. The lead agency for national security operations outside of Canada would depend on the type of mission: diplomatic, humanitarian, humanitarian intervention, peace support, military, etc. DFAIT would be the lead agency for a pure diplomatic mission as was demonstrated in Rwanda in November 1996, whereas DND would assume lead agency for a pure military operation. CIDA might be designated as lead agency for pure international humanitarian operations.

<sup>37</sup> NCA role in the G8 Summit Defensive Counter Air Mission: Intense time-critical decision-making, initiated at a moments notice, day or night, to authorize the engagement of hostile targets threatening the G8 Summit.



was also Chair of the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Public Security and Anti-Terrorism,<sup>38</sup> had not been involved in Canada’s national security and homeland defence mission prior to his NCA appointment. Also disconcerting, the new Minister of National Defence, Mr McCallum, had been in his new ministerial position for less than a month and was briefed on the Government’s NCA role in support of the G8 Summit the day before G8 Heads of State arrived in Kananaskis.

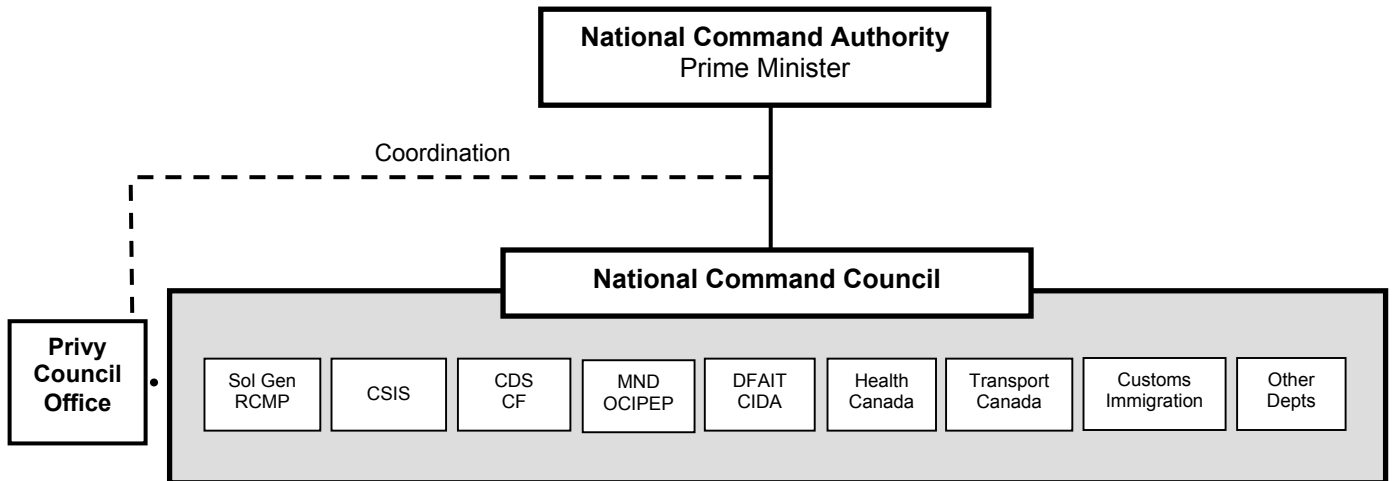


Figure 1-1 National Command Authority Framework

The CF leadership approached its role and responsibilities to homeland defence and security in a most professional manner. This was evident from the performance and successes enjoyed during exercise and real-world operations. However, members of the Cabinet who were expected to fulfill the role of NCA experienced difficulty in effectively participating in these unprecedented national security operations. A formal national command authority framework with a well-developed NCA succession plan would have better prepared the Prime Minister and his designated NCA representatives for Canada’s national security mission. The government’s participation and leadership role in Canadian national security operations, whether they are at home or abroad, would benefit tremendously from a formal NCA framework with a National Command Council and robust command and control structures.

<sup>38</sup> The mission of the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Public Security and Anti-Terrorist is to review policies, legislation, regulations and programs across the Government to strengthen all aspects of Canada’s approach to fighting terrorism and ensuring public security.

## National Command Authority and Civil-Military Relations

The Prime Minister, as the National Command Authority, must authorize military force to engage civilian aircraft in Canadian airspace. For this reason, the lines of authority and responsibility with respect to civil-military relations are critical in the application of military force in national security missions and operations. In times of conflict, guidelines for the conduct of operations are prepared by the CF and, in some cases, approved by the Government. Because national command of Canada's military also includes direction from the government, it is important to understand the manner in which the government provides control over the CF as it relates to legal authority, the role of the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence and the CDS.

Within the context of national security strategy, in theory a nation applies all of its resources – political, economic, scientific, technological, psychological and military – to achieve the objectives of its national security policy. At the strategic level of national security and defence, military strategy belongs to national policy makers, their advisers, and the nation's military leadership.<sup>39</sup> Activities at this level establish and sequence strategic military objectives; define limits and assess risk for the use of military and other instruments of power; develop strategic plans to achieve the objectives; and provide armed forces and other capabilities in accordance with the strategic plans.<sup>40</sup> The concepts of strategic command and civil-military relationships play a fundamental role in Canada's national security strategy and framework.

The National Defence Act (NDA) is the major determinant of civil-military relations in Canada.<sup>41</sup> The NDA provides the legal base for civil control of the armed forces; command authority in the CF and defence organization; and places politicians, military officers and public servants (or officials) in separate camps.<sup>42</sup> Part One of the NDA identifies the position of the Minister of National Defence (MND), the Deputy Minister (DM) and the Judge Advocate General

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<sup>39</sup> Canadian Forces Operations, B-GG-005-004/AF-000 Ch01 dated 1995-5-19, p3-1, 301.1

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 1-4.

<sup>41</sup> General (Ret'd) G.C.E. Theriault, *Democratic Civil-Military Relations: A Canadian View*. The Canadian Strategic Forecast 1996: The Military in Modern Democratic Society, Toronto. The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1996, 4-12.

<sup>42</sup> Douglas L. Bland, *National Defence Headquarters Centre for Decision*. Minister Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997, 3.

(JAG), and assigns to the Governor-in-Council (the Cabinet) responsibilities related to the good governance of the CF.<sup>43</sup> It charges the Minister with the management and direction of the CF. Part Two of the Act addresses itself to the Canadian Forces and establishes a clear distinction between the Department and the CF.<sup>44</sup>

The CDS is the sole channel of discourse between the government, including the MND, and the members of the Canadian Forces.<sup>45</sup> Section 18(2) of the National Defence Act specifies that all orders and instructions to the Canadian Forces from the government must be issued by or through the CDS. The government exercises its authority over and responsibility for its citizens in uniform through the CDS, or in other words, its national command responsibility as the government of a sovereign state. This responsibility remains even when CF units and personnel are placed under the operational command of allied military authorities. “The CDS gives military meaning and context to government direction – a daunting task considering the government’s lack of focus in defence matters”.<sup>46</sup>

Parliament is the instrument through which Canadians express the fundamental elements of national policy. Members of Parliament, aided by expert advice and counsel must identify the threats facing Canada and assess the country’s vulnerabilities to those threats.<sup>47</sup> To enable the CDS to command effectively, Colonel Fenton emphasizes the need for Parliament, the machinery of government, and elected officials to play a more active role in the supervision of the Canadian Forces.<sup>48</sup> However, General Theriault highlighted that “it is difficult to see how [Canada] can have an effective civilian control of national defence if the decision-makers, who ultimately have to be the people elected by the people, do not really understand the subject of defence. I see that as a significant problem in this country, and the problem is exacerbated by

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<sup>43</sup> Theriault, 4-12.

<sup>44</sup> Theriault, 4-12.

<sup>45</sup> J.I. Fenton, *Hail to the Chief: Strategic Command of the Canadian Forces*. Canadian Force College, National Security Studies Course 1, June 1999, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Fenton, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Douglas Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*. The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995, 127.

<sup>48</sup> Fenton, 11.

the fact that there is no government machinery to address it”.<sup>49</sup>

In 1990, the Little/Hunter Study<sup>50</sup> highlighted a number of findings with respect to the function of NDHQ and the government in times of emergency and crisis. Noteworthy deficiencies included: a lack of adequate government decision-making and crisis management systems; difficulty in determining the lead department; the inability to obtain timely decisions; the lack of coordinated information and advice to the government; and the generally poor communications among departments.<sup>51</sup> Based on the performance of the government throughout the 1990s, it appears that little was done to properly address the findings and observations of the Little/Hunter report. Action is clearly required to address the need for government machinery to properly deal with national security and defence matters. As previously discussed, this machinery should include a National Command Authority supported by an advisory council with membership representing all national security stakeholders and subject matter experts for the purpose of facilitating sound and timely decision-making. This security framework would greatly improve the government’s ability to lead effective decision-making across the entire spectrum of national security activities, including operation at home and abroad.

### **The “Command” in National Command Authority**

The function of Canada’s National Command Authority should be carefully considered in order to provide the proper framework that will allow the NCA the greatest opportunity for success. The NCA position does not demand a military-style commander. There are, however, important command qualities that should be associated with the position and then factored into the construct of the NCA framework. Because the individual designated as the NCA – a civilian politician – should not be expected to possess all the essential qualities and competencies of

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Mr John Harbron, Research Fellow with the Canadian Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996. [Addendum to General (Ret’d) G.C.E. Theriault, *Democratic Civil-Military Relations: A Canadian View*. The Canadian Strategic Forecast 1996: The Military in Modern Democratic Society, Toronto. The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1996]

<sup>50</sup> In the book “Canada’s National Defence – Volume 2 – Defence Organization”, Douglas Bland describes the Little/Hunter Study and states that in 1988, the CDS and DM, General Paul Manson and Ms Dewar, organized a special study to determine: the function of NDHQ in emergencies and war; how it should be organized to undertake these functions; what resources it would require; and the appropriate peacetime structure. The study was led by Lieutenant General de Chastelain and supported by two co-leaders: Major General W.E. Little and D.P. Hunter, a public servant.

<sup>51</sup> Douglas Bland ed, *Canada’s National Defence – Volume 2 – Defence Organization*. School Of Policy Studies, 1998, 448.

command, the NCA position should be supported by experts who can provide the skills and abilities needed. The Pigeau-McCann “Command Model” offers a framework to help identify and define the competencies, authorities and responsibilities associated with the National Command Authority.

In defining “What Is A Commander” Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann establish that command is a position with known duties and functions that exists within a larger military or national bureaucracy. They also assert that the definition of a commander should be anchored in a conceptual framework that describes the super-ordinate concept of command. From this, they have developed a command framework that delineates the factors that characterize Command. Known as the “CAR” structure, this three-dimensional model is formed by the three axes: Competency, Authority and Responsibility (CAR). The three axes define a volume of space within which any Command capability can be positioned.<sup>52</sup> Figure 1-2 summarizes the competencies, authority and responsibilities of the Pigeau-McCann Command Model. The paragraphs below discuss those characteristics and elements that are applicable to the role of the NCA.

Command requires certain “Competencies” so that missions can be accomplished successfully. An individual fulfilling the role of NCA, when involved in unexpected crises and emergencies of unknown intensity and duration would benefit from good health, which would in turn add to mental and physical endurance. Motor skills and agility are less important at this specific level of command. *Intellectual competency* is one of the most important competencies for the NCA to possess. As outlined in the “CAR” Command model, intellectual competency is critical for developing situational awareness, visualizing the problem space, making inferences, exercising reason, assessing risk and making judgments. A decision, tempered by experience, ought to flow from an analysis of what is to be accomplished, precise objectives, coherent options, and the cost of competing opportunities.<sup>53</sup> Of greatest value to the NCA position, the NCC could provide intellectual depth and experience to the NCA, and would ensure that NCA creativity does not lead to courses of action beyond the actual capabilities of the nation.

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<sup>52</sup> Pigeau and McCann in Bernd Horn and Stephan J. Harris, eds, *Generalship and the Art of the Admiralty: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership*. St. Catharines Ontario: Vanwell, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Douglas L. Bland, *National Defence Headquarters Centre for Decision*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997, p 12.

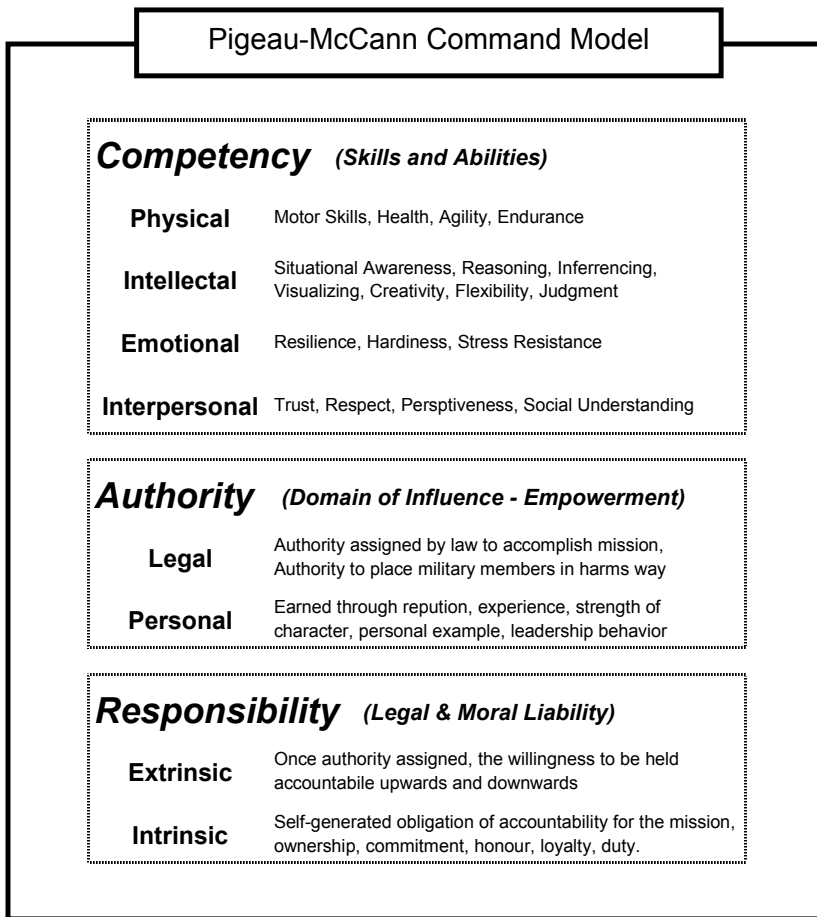


Figure 1-2

Command is often accompanied with stress and must therefore include a high degree of *emotional competency* -- resilience, hardiness, and a degree of emotional “toughness” to accept the potentially dire consequences of command decisions. The ability to maintain emotional control and balance, and to cope under stress while maintaining an appropriate perspective is critical to emotional competency. The Rwandan/Zaire mission in 1996 demonstrated the type of emotional challenges that the NCA can face. Equally difficult would be the shooting down of a commercial airliner suspected of having been hijacked by terrorists with hundreds of Canadian citizens on board. *Interpersonal competency* is essential for the development of trust, respect, and teamwork. Public displays of interpersonal weakness such as outbursts of anger and inappropriate comments undermine trust, respect and confidence in decision-making. The NCA would profit from the collective experience and wisdom of the NCC when faced with emotionally

difficult and challenging decisions.

*Authority* is the second dimension of command and refers to the domain of influence, or empowerment to act. The *legal authority* to issue orders and to compel obedience must be sharply defined in law, unambiguously delineated in organization and obvious in execution.<sup>54</sup> The National Defence Act assigns legal authority to the CDS and the Minister<sup>55</sup> with a line of authority flowing downward from Parliament, Cabinet and the MND, and covering all matters relating to national defence and the CF. Lines of accountability and responsibility flow upward and lead to the MND, who is accountable to the Prime Minister and to Parliament. The Cabinet is accountable to the Parliament for its actions and decisions on national security, and exercises national command on behalf of the Government.<sup>56</sup> As the head of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister holds full legal authority to exercise the role of NCA. *Personal authority* is more subjective than *legal authority* and cannot be guaranteed legislatively. It emerges when an individual possesses the combination of competencies that yield leadership behavior.<sup>57</sup> In the absence of personal authority, legal authority may usually instill obedience and force compliance with NCA direction. However, the presence of strong personal authority aids in building confidence and trust, and is critical to rally extra-ordinary efforts under difficult and challenging situations. The expertise and professional competence of a NCC would help to instill confidence and trust in the NCA decision-making process. However, the breakdown of NCA personal authority could lead to a situation where the NCA may be required to pass command to an alternate NCA representative. Under these circumstances, the NCC would again, play a critical role in providing stability and continuity during the transfer of authority within the NCA succession plan.

The third dimension of command, *Responsibility*, addresses the degree to which an individual accepts legal and moral liability commensurate with command. Canada's NCA is responsible to the Canadian public for national security decisions. *Extrinsic responsibility* involves a commander's willingness to be publicly accountable for his decisions, the resources

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>56</sup> Canadian Force Doctrine (First Draft) dated October 2002 – a new CF publication being circulated for review and comment.

<sup>57</sup> Brigadier-General (Retired) G.E. Sharpe and Dr Allan English, *Principles for Change in the Post-Cold War Command and Control of the Canadian Forces*. Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Canadian Forces Training Materiel Production Centre, Winnipeg 2002, 74.

he has been assigned and the legal authority that comes with the command position. Extrinsic responsibility also means being accountable downwards to subordinates. Members of the CF expect the NCA to make decisions consistent with their trust and loyalty. A lack of extrinsic responsibility could undermine personal authority (leadership behavior), which would in turn affect respect, trust and confidence. *Intrinsic responsibility*, which deals with personal ownership and self-generated commitment toward the mission, is associated with ethical qualities such as honour, loyalty and duty. "Of all the components in the dimensions of command, *intrinsic responsibility* is the most fundamental. Without it, very little would be accomplished".<sup>58</sup> In the case of the NCA, it is hoped that politicians involved in national security decision-making would set aside their political agendas and act in the best interests of the country. Although the NCA, who is an elected member of the government, will make all national security decisions, the sober and professional judgment of a multi-departmental NCC would offer stability to those situations that are vulnerable to political agendas and, as previously discussed, the so-called "CNN factor".

The two-dimensional plane formed by the axes of Responsibility and Authority, as shown in Figure 1-3<sup>59</sup>, is useful in demonstrating an important aspect of command. Where there is high authority and high acceptance of responsibility, command moves into the much-desired "Maximal" quadrant. In military command, the familiar case of high responsibility and low authority is well documented.<sup>60</sup>

The legal authority of the NCA is guaranteed through legislation; however, a slide in personal authority could result in the overall authority of the NCA plummeting and thus resulting in ineffectual command. Conversely, when command authority is high, but the NCA exhibits low responsibility, command moves into the "Dangerous" quadrant.<sup>61</sup> As discussed above, a multi-departmental NCC would assist in placing the NCA into the Maximal Command quadrant. The NCC would offer stability and continuity, and would assist the NCA in applying sober and

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<sup>58</sup> Sharpe and English, 74.

<sup>59</sup> Developed from the Pigeau and McCann discussion and model provided in Bernd Horn and Stephan J. Harris, eds, "Generalship and the Art of the Admiralty: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership," St. Catherine's Ontario: Vanwell, 2001. 90.

<sup>60</sup> Pigeau and McCann cite General Dallaire in Rwanda and Dutch officer Lieutenant Colonel Everts in Srebrenica as examples where responsibility was high but authority was low, resulting in ineffectual command.

<sup>61</sup> This type of command was most prevalent throughout the 1990s when the government exercised full national authority as provided by law, but demonstrated a lack of responsibility for the proper use of power, as was previously discussed in the Rwandan / Zaire mission of 1996.



professional judgment when detrimental influences tend to affect negatively on the outcome of effective decision-making.

The Relationship Between Authority And Responsibility In The “CAR” Structure – Holding Competency Fixed.

Balanced Command Exists Between The Dashed Lines.

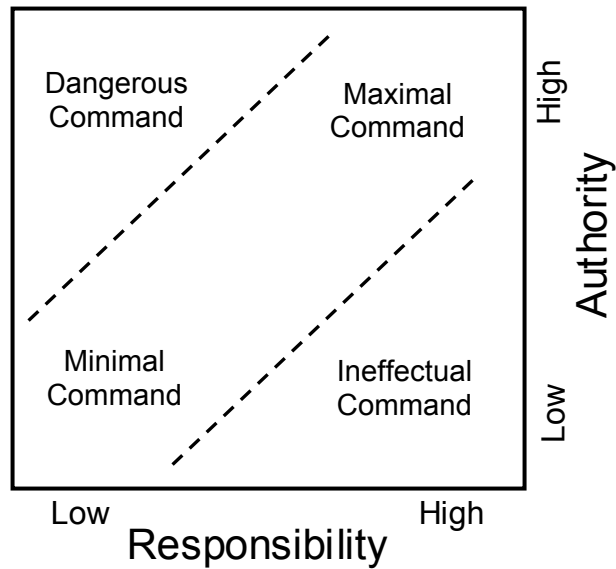
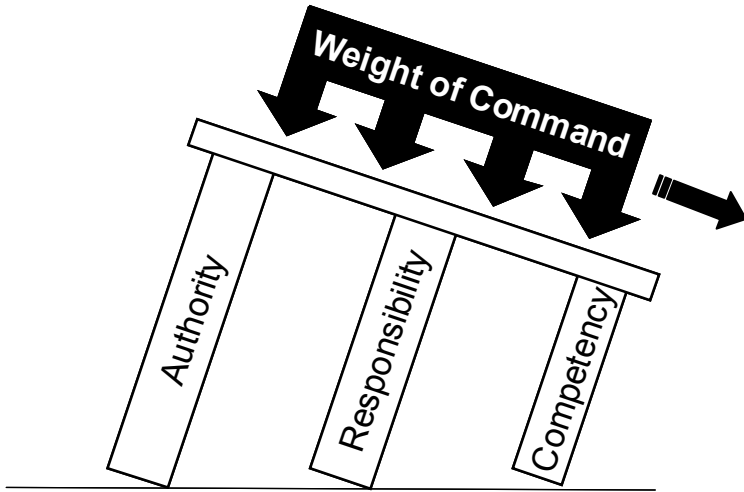


Figure 1-3 Responsibility and Authority

*Competency* should be viewed as the third leg of a three-legged stool, with the other two legs being *authority* and *responsibility*, all three of which must be properly balanced and of sufficient strength to support the weight of command (Figure 1-4). The highest level of command exerts the greatest weight upon the legs of the stool and must therefore have the strongest command qualities – *Competency, Authority and Responsibility*. The case where one leg is shorter or weaker than the others would cause an imbalance and lead to unstable command. As emphasized by Pigeau and McCann, “it is risky to assign authority to someone who does not have the competency to wield it”.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann, *What is a Commander?* published by Berd Horn and Stephan J. Harris eds, Generalship and the Art of the Admiralty: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership. St. Catherines Ontario: Vanwell, 2001.



need to include robust and effective command and control mechanisms in order to link the national security stakeholders of the NCC to Canada's National Command Authority.

## **Conclusion**

In the absence of a formal national security architecture, the Prime Minister has been required to confer in an ad hoc manner with senior bureaucrats to arrive at critical decisions, sometimes without due consideration to the advice from national security stakeholders and subject matter experts. To ensure more effective strategic-level decision-making during national security crises and emergencies, a National Command Council comprised of national security stakeholders and experts must be established as the centerpiece of Canada's national security architecture.

Over the past decade, power in the federal government has shifted to the Prime Minister and his senior advisors. As a result, politicians no longer understand how the decision-making machinery of government works, and civil servants and the PM increasingly suffer from information overload challenges. Of concern, this can be detrimental to the nation when national security issues are not properly addressed.

The manner in which the Prime Minister and his key staff participated in post-9/11 homeland defence operations has made a compelling case for a formal National Command Authority architecture. Specific areas of concern include: the manner in which civil servants respond to time-critical national security issues; the availability of the PM and his designated alternates to participate in homeland defence missions; and the lack of robust C2 structures to link critical stakeholders and subject matter experts to the NCA.

The NCA concept plays a fundamental role in improving the civil-military relations that are needed for Canada's national security agenda; however, there is no government machinery to address current deficiencies. Noteworthy problem areas as highlighted by the Little / Hunter Study include less than ideal government decision-making and crisis management; difficulty in determining lead departments and obtaining timely decisions; inadequate coordination of information and advice to the government; and the generally poor communications among departments. Action is required to address these deficiencies. Government machinery should include a NCA supported by an advisory council with membership representing all national security stakeholders and subject matter experts for the purpose of facilitating sound and timely decision-making. The NCC interdepartmental coordination structure should include the CDS, DND, OCIEP, Solicitor General, RCMP, CSIS, DFAIT, and Transport Canada. Other departments could be added depending on the nature of the crisis.

The Pigeau-McCann Command Model demonstrates the manner in which competency, authority and responsibility define a three-dimensional envelope within which all potential commander types can be plotted. The NCA, when placed in its optimum position within the CAR command envelope, occupies the highest level of competency, authority and responsibility. However, to reach this position, the NCA requires augmentation from external sources that possess the command qualities that the NCA may lack. Formal NCC participation in the NCA decision-making process will bolster NCA command capabilities and help to channel political creativity toward policy-based solutions, which would also be compatible with national capabilities and resources.

The multi-departmental National Command Council as discussed in this paper would serve to guide the National Command Authority through time-critical decision-making processes with the ultimate goal of developing viable courses of action for activities at home and abroad, based on national security policy and the actual capabilities of Canada's national power and

resources. A formal national security decision-making process lead by a NCA and supported by a NCC comprised of national security stakeholders and subject matter experts is essential if Canada is to successfully meet its security challenges in the future.

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