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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
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DEVELOPING STRATEGIC LEADERS – AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that effective strategic leaders are forged from a career of training, education and experience. In essence to explain that the development of a strategic leader is an evolutionary process, which must be continually shaped to meet the demands of the contemporary and future security environments, while remaining responsive to changing societal norms and values.

The training of a strategic leader can no longer be isolated to senior officers, dependent upon traditional and cultural tenets of command and leadership. The process must be continual, striving to develop and reinforce strategic leadership skills from the outset of a military career. Emphasis will be given to the requirement to prepare strategic leaders to think critically in order to deal with the chaos created by the constant evolutionary factor of change.

To achieve this goal the paper will initially examine strategic leadership in order to define the requirement and to demonstrate the complexity of the training task. Then to provide a comparative framework an outline of the contemporary training challenge will be presented. Subsequently, the requirement for an evolutionary approach will be framed around an examination of various factors integral to the current and future security environments, enhanced by an assessment of how our changing Canadian society influences the development of strategic leaders. Before concluding with a proposed way ahead for a more evolutionary approach to the development of strategic leaders, those factors constraining the promotion of such a thesis will be identified.

## INTRODUCTION

“History shows that many armies do not adapt well in peacetime to changing environments; some do not adapt at all and no longer exist as armies.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite the passage of time, the wounds created by the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, have not healed. In fact they continue to fester and fatalities will exponentially increase unless checked in the near future. These events, when combined with the instability created by the collapse of the Soviet Union, have produced a security environment that challenges even the most astute of our world leaders. But what has changed?

The premise that the current security environment represents a more complex world than was present during the Cold War era is widely accepted. The dismemberment of the Soviet empire, with the resulting superpower status of the United States, caused a “unipolarity” that threatens both states of lesser standing and those ideologies vulnerable to the weight of western culture. Wohlforth, in his work on international security, argued that prolonged unipolarity might create an environment so unstable as to permanently entrench terrorism in the very fabric of our global existence.<sup>2</sup>

With such complexity comes ambiguity and the question of paradigm relevance. In response, the Canadian Forces (CF) has begun to address many of its traditional views with the aim of improving its responsiveness to the rapidly changing security environment. Fundamental issues, such as the military’s ability to adapt its culture to meet the security demands of a shifting Canadian society, are in question. In many cases

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<sup>1</sup> Don M. Snider and Gayle L. Watkins, The Future of the Army Profession (Boston: McGraw Hill Publishing, 2002) 1.

<sup>2</sup> William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” International Security Summer 1999: 1.

the CF has been found wanting as expressed by its former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Baril, in his introductory remarks to “Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”:

“Here at home we are slow to understand and adapt to large-scale societal demands associated with the end of the Cold War and therefore were not prepared for these demands.”<sup>3</sup>

Other notions elemental to the construct of preparing the CF for war have been challenged. For example, the delineation of the contemporary battlespace into tactical, operational and strategic levels, so fundamental to every aspect of defence from training to capital procurement, is no longer widely accepted. Germane to this paper, is the effect that such uncertainty will have on the training of strategic military leaders if there is no clearly defined “strategic level” from which to form a baseline for analysis. Colonel Flowers, the Director of the U.S. Army Center for Army Leadership, suggested the following, “... the boundaries between echelons of leadership have become so blurred that they overlap almost to the point of invisibility.”<sup>4</sup>

This premise is further supported by the realities of today’s operational missions where leaders of relatively junior rank are called upon to make tactical decisions that have strategic relevance. Personal experience in the Bosnia theatre supports this theory where the failure to hold a single piece of ground could have undermined the mandate of the Dayton Accord in 1996. McCausland in his work on transforming strategic leadership cited a similar example in Brcko, where “mission failure” at the company level could have created strategic collapse.<sup>5</sup> Major Romaine in his essay on transforming training in the U.S. Army made the following deduction; “junior leaders must now lead

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<sup>3</sup> Canadian Department of National Defence, Canadian Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Officership 2020), (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2001) iii.

<sup>4</sup> Colonel M. Flowers, “Improving Strategic Leadership,” Military Review March-April 2004: 40.

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey D. McCausland and Gregg F. Martin, “Transforming Strategic Leader Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army,” Parameters Autumn 2001: 1.

soldiers in increasingly complex and ambiguous circumstances where seemingly simple tactical decisions can have dramatic strategic implications.”<sup>6</sup> Many experts believe that what is needed today are “warfighter-diplomats” and not the warriors of old.

This focus on complexity and the ambiguity created by the contemporary security environment<sup>7</sup> is meant to sensitize the reader to the challenge of preparing our strategic leadership to operate in this “chaos rich” milieu. What balance of training, education and experience is required to provide these individuals with the necessary intellectual agility to deal with this reality – to think critically? Can this training begin after 20 years of service in a compartmentalized fashion, or must exposure to “strategic skill sets” be integral to an officer’s professional development throughout his or her career, i.e., a more evolutionary method? Should staff officers possess “strategic insight” or is it only strategic commanders that require these skills? Draft Canadian leadership doctrine introduced the notion that staffs, at all levels, must be prepared to lead at the strategic level:

“While strategic leadership is expected of officers who occupy the most senior appointments in the CF, it must be emphasized that the staffs who work for and support them must shape their understanding and world views if they are to be fully effective.”<sup>8</sup>

The lessons learned by various American institutes clearly supports the argument that a strategic foundation is required early in a leader’s development. This foundation, augmented by carefully nurtured experience opportunities, must develop a learning

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<sup>6</sup> Major K. Romaine, “Developing Lieutenants in a Transforming Army,” *Military Review* July-August 2004: 72.

<sup>7</sup> Political, social and security environs are integral to the contemporary security environment.

<sup>8</sup> Canada, ADM HR-Mil, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations (DRAFT)*, (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2004) 75.

culture that remains pervasive throughout an individual's career. Wallace summarized this notion as follows:

“Leadership development is not a quick fix to an organization's leadership concerns, but rather it is a systemic, organic process ... part of organizational culture. It is not achieved by the completion of a single executive program, but rather it builds on a variety of experiences and responses to personal challenges. Development is not just training, it involves job experiences, coaching, feedback and mentoring. Leadership development must be an ongoing process that is consistent with the leadership principle of life-long learning.”<sup>9</sup>

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that effective strategic leaders are forged from a career of training, education and experience. In essence to explain that the development of a strategic leader is an evolutionary process, which must be continually shaped to meet the demands of the contemporary and future security environments, while remaining responsive to changing societal norms and values.

The training of a strategic leader can no longer be isolated to senior officers, dependent upon traditional and cultural tenets of command and leadership. The process must be continual, striving to develop and reinforce strategic leadership skills from the outset of a military career. Emphasis will be given to the requirement to prepare strategic leaders to think critically in order to deal with the chaos created by the constant evolutionary factor of change.

To achieve this goal the paper will initially examine strategic leadership in order to define the requirement and to demonstrate the complexity of the training task. Then to provide a comparative framework an outline of the contemporary training challenge will be presented. Subsequently, the requirement for an evolutionary approach will be framed around an examination of various factors integral to the current and future security

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony G. Wallace, “Future Directions in Leadership – Implications for the Selection and Development of Senior Leaders,” diss., Naval Postgraduate School – Monterey, California, 2003, 100.

environments, enhanced by an assessment of how our changing Canadian society influences the development of strategic leaders. Before concluding with a proposed way ahead for a more evolutionary approach to the development of strategic leaders, those factors constraining the promotion of such a thesis will be identified.

### STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP – WHAT IS IT?

There is no shortage of opinion regarding the composition of a strategic leader. The introduction to this paper identified that traditional definitions of leadership, as they formally applied to the tactical, operational and strategic levels, are no longer widely accepted as they relate to a Cold War paradigm. The complexity of the continuum of operations, from domestic to outright war fighting endeavors, indicates that strategic skills are prevalent at all levels, on both the horizontal and vertical scales. Furthermore, although the terms command and leadership are often synonymously employed, they are in fact two different notions. Leadership may at times be an integral component of command, yet not necessarily be a prerequisite for successful command, as history has so often demonstrated. Finally, although recent literature has coined the term “institutional leadership”, this paper will not attempt to categorically delineate between institutional and strategic leadership, but will differentiate between the two when appropriate.

Therefore, what are the roles and tasks, capabilities and competencies, characteristics and values required by strategic leaders? The “Cole’s Notes” version of the argument would state that they are components of three fundamental leadership skills; those being command presence, communications and decision-making skills.<sup>10</sup> However to so limit the discussion, while potentially sound, does not provide the necessary insight

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<sup>10</sup> See the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System.



for this paper. Therefore, let's begin with some of the tasks currently associated with strategic, or as cited in this first example, institutional leaders.

“Institutional leaders are charged with overseeing system capabilities and performance and making major policy, system and organizational changes designed to ensure the organization's continued strength, relevancy and viability.”<sup>11</sup>

General Hillier, on taking command of the CF in February 2005, advised his General Officers that his initial task was to clearly articulate a vision for the CF while creating the conditions for operational success.<sup>12</sup> Implied within this task was the requirement to provide the resources necessary to achieve the vision – a relatively daunting task given fiscal constraints compounded by anticipated future demands. Furthermore, General Hillier clearly stated that the role of his strategic leaders (both officers and senior non-commissioned members (NCMs)), was to overcome the inherent cultural inhibitions to transformation, to identify and develop the capabilities necessary to attain both strategic relevance and operational credibility while implementing the necessary change. Therefore the CDS, through his personal direction, set the conditions for “transformational leadership”, which as represented by Gary Yukl of the State University of New York, requires leaders to “step outside the culture” and to “start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive ...”.<sup>13</sup> Additional attempts are being made to capture this sense of responsibility in the draft CF leadership manual, where the authors assign institutional leadership tasks under the categories of mission

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<sup>11</sup> Colonel Bernd Horn, “Institutional Leadership – Understanding the Command, Management and Leadership Nexus”, Unpublished Draft, 2004, Chapter 3, p 1.

<sup>12</sup> Canadian Chief of Defence Staff General Officer Symposium, Cornwall, Ontario, 16 Feb 05.

<sup>13</sup> Gary Yukl, Leadership in Organizations (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998) 2.

success, internal integration, external adaptability, member well being, and the fortification of the military ethos.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Okros, in his contribution to the development of CF leadership doctrine, further categorized the roles of strategic leaders as follows:

“... to adapt to the external environment in order to lead and implement change; to achieve institutional alignment through organizational structure and resource management (to include performance measurement); to influence the external environment through alliance relationships, government and non-government departments, and the media; and finally to exercise stewardship of the institution by developing cultural strength and validity through credible professional capabilities.”<sup>15</sup>

With these roles and tasks in mind, what skill sets or “**competencies**” must strategic leaders possess to address their responsibilities?<sup>16</sup> While no two authors clearly address the relative importance of one competency over another, there is definitely a common thread that focuses around the following skill sets: technical, conceptual, interpersonal or social, adaptability and professional.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the predominant view is that leaders must acquire these skills early in their careers if they are to successfully apply them at the strategic level. The notion is that the nurturing of long-term expertise is more valuable than the short-term benefits derived through perishable skills training, normally isolated to one level of employment, e.g., at the tactical level.

“The ambiguity of contemporary crises and military events demands that the Army begin developing officers early in their careers who can predict second and third-order effects; negotiate; understand globalization; build consensus; analyze complex and ambiguous situations; think innovatively and critically; and communicate effectively.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Leadership in the CF, 4-3.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. A. Okros, “Self Assessment,” Presentation to National Security Studies Course Seven, 6 Jan 05.

<sup>16</sup> In this regard the terms executive, institutional and transformational leadership have all been employed in the effort to outline leadership competencies at the strategic level.

<sup>17</sup> Okros, Self Assessment Presentation, 6 Jan 05 (referred to Chapter 7, Leadership in the CF DRAFT)

<sup>18</sup> Flowers, 42.

To begin, **technical knowledge** encompasses those skills normally associated with the military application of force, i.e., what an individual needs to know to be an effective leader in the profession of arms. It is within this realm where the impact of experience at the tactical and operational levels, such as the mastery of tactics, techniques and procedures within a particular environment, has the most profound effect on the baseline of leadership competency, i.e., the “raw ingredients of performance”.<sup>19</sup> This premise represents the notion that accomplished strategic leaders should first be tactically proficient, having practically applied the doctrine and principles of war in a competent manner. Some would argue that it is here that a leader either develops or rejects the philosophy of mission command and the inherent risks associated with its application.<sup>20</sup> Leonard Wong and his associates in their recent study of strategic leadership competencies support this notion. They contend that to be a “world-class warrior”, to have the necessary skills to wield national power throughout the spectrum of conflict, one must first be tactically and technically proficient.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, to truly appreciate the second and third-order effects that a strategic decision may have on the operational and tactical levels of command, it is hugely advantageous to have practical experience at those levels. It is from this baseline that the following strategic technical skills are further developed: “systems understanding, i.e., political, social, interagency, coalition; recognition of organizational interdependencies; application of information-age technologies; and the skilful application of ends, ways and means.”<sup>22</sup> Finally, it is at the

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<sup>19</sup> George Klemp, “Leadership Competencies: Putting It All Together,” On-Line Internet, 1998, available at [www.cambriaconsulting.com](http://www.cambriaconsulting.com): 2.

<sup>20</sup> The concept of mission command argues for a decentralization of authority, the success of which depends upon the management of risk and an inherent trust between subordinate and superior.

<sup>21</sup> Leonard Wong, Stephen Gerras, William Kidd, Robert Pricone, Richard Swengros, “Strategic Leadership Competencies,” US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, September 2003, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 4.

technical level where those skills associated with the management of resources are best characterized.

**Conceptual skills** are represented by the power of the human intellect to analyze and overcome complex and normally ambiguous situations, in the military, political, social and economic realms – essentially to think critically.<sup>23</sup> The American Conference Board in its publication, “Developing Business Leaders for 2010”, indicated that the skills required to “shift business paradigms on a dime” are the result of long-term “business nurturing”.<sup>24</sup> This of course requires a degree of strategic analysis, which McCann and Pigeau argue requires innovation, intuition, mental agility, lateral thinking, judgement and vision.<sup>25</sup> It is often within the venue of strategic analysis where the qualities of “cognitive complexity” and “mental agility”<sup>26</sup> are most readily apparent. The capacity to predict second and third-order effects, while appreciating the impact of decisions on relatively diverse international environments is not a natural ability and requires years of development.<sup>27</sup> Doctrinal guidelines support this assertion, in that the capacity to implement change requires a degree of intellectual acuity generated through training, education and experience. Canadian leadership doctrine explains that, “senior leaders...draw on the intuition and tacit knowledge that comes with specialized or extensive experience to qualify objective information.”<sup>28</sup> BGen Macnamara, in a recent

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<sup>23</sup> Colonel P. Cadotte, “Human Dimension at the Strategic Level,” diss. Canadian Forces College, NSSC 1 Research Paper, 1999, 3. Colonel Cadotte provides a shopping list of “buzz words” that further amplify some of these concepts, e.g., visionary, systems approach, out-of-the-box thinking, change management, alignment of resources, motivate and inspire.

<sup>24</sup> Ann Barrett and John Beeson, “Developing Business Leaders for 2010,” A Research Report from The Conference Board, New York and Ottawa, 2002, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, ed., The Human in Command (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 1998) 367.

<sup>26</sup> Wong, 3-6.

<sup>27</sup> Flowers, 41.

<sup>28</sup> Leadership in the CF, 7-9.

presentation to the National Security Studies Course (NSSC), demonstrated that strategic staffs require these cognitive skills as they fulfill their role within the strategic leadership. This was most apparent in his views regarding strategic thinking and the development of a national security policy framework, where strategic staffs act as enablers within the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Branch. In this capacity, these staffs must analyze national, international, social, political and military trends in order to draw credible deductions and to develop workable and sustainable plans.<sup>29</sup>

As the term “critical thinking” has been introduced a number of times in the previous paragraphs it would be valuable to spend a moment to better understand the concept as it is relevant to the thesis of this essay. Dr. Seuss in his children’s books viewed thinking as follows, “Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the thinks you can think up if you only try!”<sup>30</sup> Although amusing, Seuss sends a message regarding critical thinking, which is that some effort is required to achieve mental agility. Diane Halpern, in her work on thinking critically, viewed the process in a somewhat more polished fashion:

“The term critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desired outcome. It is purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed. When we think critically we are evaluating the outcomes of our thought processes. Critical thinking also involves evaluating the thinking process.”<sup>31</sup>

It is the latter part of the above quote that provides some insight into a challenge we face in the development of strategic leaders, that being that many are so “culturally

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<sup>29</sup> Brigadier General (Retired) Don Macnamara, “Presentation to the NSSC 7 - Strategic Thinking in Policy Planning,” Canadian Forces College, 12 Jan 05.

<sup>30</sup> Major General (Retired) Lon E. Maggart, “Critical Thinking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Training Critical Thinking Skills for Battle Command ed. Sharon L. Riedel and Ray A. Morath (ARI Workshop Proceedings, 5-6 December 2000, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) 5.

<sup>31</sup> Diane Halpern, “Thinking Critically About Critical Thinking, Lessons From Cognitive Psychology,” Training Critical Thinking Skills for Battle Command ed. Sharon L. Riedel and Ray A. Morath (ARI Workshop Proceedings, 5-6 December 2000, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) 23-24.

engineered” that they are unable to break away from their own “procedural background”. Many find it difficult to relate to a cognitive result from the point of view of another, whom at the strategic level is likely outside of their cultural domain and may simply think differently, e.g., a politician, an engineer, or a bureaucrat. Paul and Elder in their work on critical thinking categorize this as “egocentric thinking”, where individuals are simply unable or unwilling to appreciate the “subjectivity” of others in their thought process. To overcome this, they argue that critical thinkers must have intellectual humility, courage, empathy, integrity and perseverance. In this manner, strategic leaders who may not have been suitably developed for the environment in which they must function, may begin to identify with the ideas of others and achieve the flexibility of thought necessary to adapt to their new circumstances.<sup>32</sup>

It is for that very reason that strategic leadership has a requirement for **interpersonal competencies**. Interpersonal competencies represent knowledge of human nature to the degree that one can influence, manipulate and otherwise lead diverse groups to a common goal. Wong explained that this requires a combination of “cross-cultural savvy” with interpersonal maturity, to not only build consensus but to negotiate and then communicate a strategy.<sup>33</sup> In the end it may be an individual’s communication skills, combined with the requisite command presence, that will make or break a message. The ability to convey an idea requires a leader to be both culturally and socio-politically literate if he or she is to gain the respect necessary to promote an initiative.<sup>34</sup> One cannot simply arrive upon a “scene” and expect to immediately generate the credibility

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<sup>32</sup> Richard W. Paul and Linda Elder, Critical Thinking – Tools for Taking Charge of Your Professional and Personal Life (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002) 13, 21-30, 93, 157.

<sup>33</sup> Wong, 4-8.

<sup>34</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Bernd Horn, “Unpublished DRAFT SSO3 Report – The Challenge,” Kingston, Ontario, 16.

necessary to “carry the day”. Today this requires media sense and an awareness of the perils that may result from inexperience. The impact of the media cannot be underestimated when developing an appreciation of those skills required of strategic leaders. Connecting with an audience may largely rest upon the media’s comprehension and subsequent “spin” of a message. Institutional leaders, when faced with the indirect approach to interpersonal relations, may be forced to achieve credibility through a computer monitor, a VTC screen or the written word.

One could argue that the most important competency for a modern strategic leader is **adaptability**. That given the constant presence of chaos, normally generated by the continuum of societal change prevalent today, leaders must demonstrate a superior degree of adaptation and improvisation if they are to effectively lead. Sun Tzu valued a steadfast and resolute General amongst all others when presented with chaos and the adversity of war.<sup>35</sup> Clausewitz viewed the issue as follows:

“... the ability to keep one’s head at times of exceptional stress and violent emotion ... Strength of character does not consist solely in having powerful feelings, but in maintaining one’s balance in spite of them. Even with the violence of emotion, judgment and principle must function like a ship’s compass.”<sup>36</sup>

The capacity to remain focused while disorder prevails may prove to be the delineating factor between success and failure. LCol Caravaggio in his work on a leader competency model, argued that given the complexities of the current security environment, often characterized by a lack of verifiable information, leaders must make “gut feel decisions calmly and accurately” based on their prior experience.<sup>37</sup> Alberts and

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<sup>35</sup> Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War – Classical Strategic Thought* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001) 261.

<sup>36</sup> Karl von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York, NY: Random House, 1943) 107.

<sup>37</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Angelo N. Caravaggio, “Command and the Military Leader Competency Model,” Unpublished work in support of Canadian Forces College curriculum responsibilities, 2004, 7.

Hayes in their work, “Power to the Edge”, stated that agility is recognized as a critical component of strategic leadership in the information age, “the more uncertain or dynamic an adversary and/or the environment are, the more valuable agility becomes.”<sup>38</sup>

Consequently, strategic leaders must be flexible in their efforts to innovate, while remaining vigilant of the ever-present requirement to adapt their response to a volatile environment. Leaders must guard against mental and physical fatigue and remain robust in their effort to maintain strategic effectiveness. This requires both resilience to failure and a personal and institutional capacity to rebound from defeat in order to achieve victory.<sup>39</sup>

The final competency to be examined is that of **professionalism**, perhaps the most familiar of all leadership requirements. It is here that the traditional characteristics and values of leadership are identified in relation to the profession of arms, e.g., integrity, loyalty, physical and moral courage, etc.. A pride in service, an obligation to uphold the ethics and ethos of the institution, to include an unwavering dedication of time and self, are paramount to the definition of professional competency.

“The military ethos comprises values, beliefs and expectations that reflect core Canadian values, the imperatives of military professionalism and the requirements of operations. It acts as the center of gravity for the military profession and establishes an ethical framework for the professional conduct of military operations.”<sup>40</sup>

Some may argue that there is little differentiation between the degree of professionalism held by tactical, operational and strategic leaders, and they may have a point. However, to understand the difference one must examine the impact that a breach

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<sup>38</sup>David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes, Power to the Edge – Command and Control in the Information Age, Information Age Transformation Series (Washington, DS: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication, 2003) 124.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 127-159.

<sup>40</sup> Duty With Honour – The Profession of Arms in Canada (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff; Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2003) 25.



in professional conduct may have on society. For example, Horn stated that, “no other bears the kinds of responsibilities senior military leaders do ... with the power to take life and mete out death just an order away.”<sup>41</sup> Wong believes that the astute strategic leader will readily understand that he or she is no longer simply a member of a profession but an instrument of the state, and that the consequences of error and misjudgement are significantly more pronounced.<sup>42</sup>

This section provided an insight into the requirements of a strategic leader. An understanding of the roles, tasks and competencies needed by strategic leaders should now assist in identifying the level of development and skill sets that must be attained to achieve both competency and credibility. Furthermore, the question of “how to get there” should now be firmly established in one’s own thoughts. Can this level of leadership growth be achieved in a modularized manner, much along the lines in which we address leadership training today? Is it reasonable to expect that a strategic leader can generate the necessary understanding of his or her mandate when the appropriate training begins years and potentially decades after entry into the profession of arms? Or should the development of a strategic leader take on a more evolutionary approach, continual in its application, from the start to the end of a leader’s career?

#### LEADERSHIP TRAINING AS IT EXISTS TODAY

It is beyond the purview of this paper to do a full “training needs analysis” to demonstrate that the training of leaders, in the skills required at the strategic level, should be a more evolutionary or continuous process than is present today. Such an endeavour

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<sup>41</sup> Horn, Unpublished DRAFT SSO3 Report, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Wong, 10-12.

would require a full assessment of both the Canadian Officer General Specifications (OGS)<sup>43</sup> and the equivalent specifications for Sr NCMs, which is clearly too detailed for the scope of this review. However, to represent the current training challenges it is prudent to outline selected observations made regarding leadership training as part of both the OGS structure and the three pillars of professional development, those being training, education and experience.

“... the majority of military officer’s training in the earlier years of his/her career is operationally oriented, with limited focus on acquiring the skills required for the strategic direction and management of Defence as a large public institution within the federal bureaucracy.”<sup>44</sup>

The above quote, taken from a Minister’s Advisory Committee Report to the Minister of National Defence, represents the end result of our current training system. Governance recommendations contained within the same report clearly indicated that further efforts are immediately required to better prepare both officers and non-commissioned members for their roles as strategic leaders, and that such initiatives must occur much earlier in the career development process. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many officers and NCMs are promoted to senior ranks levels without the requisite time to develop the necessary expertise to function at the strategic level. An interesting deduction made by the Minister’s Committee indicated that such circumstances create an environment conducive to consensus building and risk

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<sup>43</sup> Officer General Specifications (OGS) are the standards by which all officer training is based. The OGS are organized as follows: by requirement, i.e., Leadership and Command being most relevant to this paper; by component, i.e., Regular and Reserve (this paper is currently focused on the Regular Force); direction is provided regarding which development period (DP) the training should be delivered in, i.e., DP 1 is OCdt/2Lt, DP 2 is Captain, DP 3 is Major/LCol; DP 4 is Col/BGen; and finally, the proficiency level to be achieved, i.e., levels one to four, with level one being the lowest level and indicating a basic familiarity with the skill, while level four represents the most advanced level of ability.

<sup>44</sup> Achieving Administrative Efficiency: Report to the Minister of National Defence (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, August 21, 2003) 30.

avoidance, as senior leaders may lack the requisite strategic experience and confidence necessary to make forthright and definitive decisions while managing risk.<sup>45</sup>

Allan English further amplified the root of the problem in a report to the Officer Development Board. He concluded that the educational element of professional military development is mostly absent, as Canadian training institutions do not adequately present current academic and professional knowledge. Without this exposure English indicated that multifaceted and complex intellectual skills, vital to leadership at all levels, would not be developed. Furthermore, his findings illustrated that the training system often failed to achieve the stated ‘officer general specification’ learning objectives in the disciplines of leadership knowledge and skill, again failing to establish the foundation from which strategic leaders are developed. Greater effort is required to impress upon the leadership of the future that the nurturing of strategic skills requires a long-term and sustainable education programme.<sup>46</sup>

Colonel Beare, in a recent work on leadership, focused his efforts on overcoming the shortcomings of the experience pillar in preparing officers for future leadership challenges. He concluded that the opportunities to gain relevant experience, due to continuing resource constraints compounded by significant educational demands, have diminished to the point of being ineffective in assisting officers with the development of a personal leadership “tool-box”. He argued that officers simply do not gain the requisite career experience to meet the demands of senior appointments. Furthermore, Beare concluded that a deficiency in tactical excellence could fail to establish the conditions for

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 8, 31-32.

<sup>46</sup> Allan English, “Comments on DP 2 QS/TP Board Documents,” Development Period Three Study 2001 – Volume Four (20 June 2001) 1.

future leadership success.<sup>47</sup> This concept was further supported at the strategic level by the Minister's Report on achieving administrative efficiency. The report stated that a greater emphasis must be placed on providing opportunities to gain strategic level experience, to include postings to other government departments, for both officers and NCMs. The conclusion was that such opportunities should be made from the outset of an individual's selection as a potential leader and not simply as a final note in recognition of a long and proud career.<sup>48</sup>

Given this brief resume one should conclude that there is a deficiency in the manner by which the training system provides the requisite training, education and experience for our leaders to function at the strategic level. The impact that this situation has on our professional development system is further compounded by the complexity of the security environment in which our leaders lead.

#### THE GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT – TODAY AND TOMORROW

“While no one can see the future, it is at least possible to indicate a few of the directions that change is likely to take.”<sup>49</sup> Martin van Creveld

The aim of this section is to demonstrate the complexity of the global security environment in order to further define the challenge of providing

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development. Although references will be made to the both the current and future security environments, there will be no deliberate attempt to distinguish between the two from the outset. NATO's Chief of Staff for its Allied Command Transformation HQ, Lieutenant-General Maisonneuve, recently stated that, "... the demands of tomorrow are the demands of today"<sup>50</sup>. Therefore to examine the contemporary and future security environments in a similar context seems warranted. Where appropriate there will be a distinction between the two timelines; however, both military professionals and scholars agree that the post Cold War era has many distinctive features that will remain for decades to come.

As previously explained the fall of the iron curtain and the events of 9/11 created an international security environment with relatively new and distinguishing characteristics. However, what has remained consistent is the very nature of war. Colin Gray, in his assessment of how war has changed since the end of the Cold War, argued that the principal elements of war, "danger, exertion, uncertainty, and chance", remain consistent in their universal application to the realms of politics, society and culture.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, what did not materialize was the anticipated peace dividend with its associated economic prosperity, both of which were to result from the collapse of Soviet communism and the avoidance of nuclear Armageddon. On the other hand this new era introduced a plethora of emerging trends that warrant examination to determine their effect upon strategic leadership training.

In order to provide some focus to the review, this section of the paper will first examine the international environment to provide a framework for a review of the nature

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<sup>50</sup> Lieutenant General M. Maisonneuve, "Presentation to the NSSC 7," 25 January 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Collin S. Gray, "How Has War Changed Since the End of the Cold War?" diss. University of Reading, England, 2004, 1-7.

of future conflict. Emerging threats and trends that may shape the future of conflict will then be considered in order to delineate the nature of the future battlespace and the challenges facing our leaders.

### The Nature of Future Conflict Within the International Security Environment

Today one can find a plethora of terms that are employed to describe the international security environment and the possible nature of conflict. Many of these terms will be examined later in the paper in the section on emerging trends. What is clearly evident is that the global landscape is not a secure place in which to live despite the emergence of increased prosperity in many of the world's developing nations.<sup>52</sup> The very essence of chaos prevails, destroying those entities not able to overcome the madness of revolution and the ever-present nature of change. The debate regarding the prevalence of inter-state versus intra-state conflict continues; however, there is consensus that although intra-state conflict will prevail for the foreseeable future, inter-state war remains a possibility.

“Today more and more experts see a future security environment fraught with chaos, crises and conflict. It is no longer a question of if war will come but rather where will it happen and what will it look like?”<sup>53</sup>

Traditional rivalries, previously defined by ideological concerns, will persist, although potentially with a greater focus on ethnic, cultural, religious and economic

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<sup>52</sup> Some researchers believe that the increase in economic prosperity is due to a developing “economic interdependence of nations” due to globalization (see the DGSP Report on the Future Security Environment, Chapter Two, para 6).

<sup>53</sup> Future Security Environment 2025, (Ottawa, ON: Defence Planning and Management Website, The End of Major War, 2004) - no page numbers available, website version, see Chapter Two, Section Two.

venues.<sup>54</sup> The fragile balance within the Middle East, paid for with the lives of many, may now be overshadowed by other threats. China, with its staggering economic capacity, threatens to be a dominant global reality in the near future, if not already today. This potential may not be a “positive reality” should the debate between China and the U.S. over Taiwan independence escalate beyond political rhetoric. The nuclear menace remains, with the unknown posture of Iran and North Korea threatening to diminish the impact of seemingly “old” nuclear rivals such as India and Pakistan. Disruption and corruption are prevalent in many war torn regions such as Haiti, the Balkans and Africa, while the world continues to wallow under the weight of terrorism. The exponential nature of globalization, particularly in relation to the war with Islamic extremists (jihadism), remains corrosive to many international norms and values.<sup>55</sup>

The very nature of conflict within such an international climate is cause for  
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aspect of the global security agenda may dictate that the very nature of conflict is directed by one superpower to the detriment of the national will of others.

“A state that allows its capabilities at traditional interstate war to atrophy will be dependent on others for its security. All nations need not to follow the American pattern ... but will at least need to be able to contribute to coalitions designed to deter or defeat conventional aggression.”<sup>57</sup>

### Trends and Emerging Threats Shaping the International Security Environment

The list of developing trends affecting the security environment is extensive. Consequently, this paper will focus on a select few to illustrate the depth of knowledge and competency levels that leaders need to mature in order to be effective at the strategic level. The most significant trends affecting security are as follows: globalization<sup>58</sup>; failed and failing states; non-state actors; environmental degradation to include climate change and resource scarcity; pandemic diseases; the effects of scientific and technological innovation; the shifting balance of global power; and demographic shifts and urbanization.

**Globalization** is a phenomenon that will affect our strategic leaders for the remainder of the information age and beyond. Leaders must become accustomed to its impact early in their careers if they are to successfully manage its effects when in positions of authority. Treating Canada in isolation is not an option within a global community, where the events in a region may have an immediate impact on Canada. This interconnection has many positive aspects, the most potent of which may be a form of global governance, to include a system of international democracy, based upon open markets and economic freedom. Many view this as being contrary to reality, with the

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<sup>57</sup> Future Security Environment 2025, Website version – no page number available, see Chapter Two, Section Four.

<sup>58</sup> Globalization is commonly defined as follows: “... the increased mobility of goods, services, labour, technology and capital throughout the world.” (Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities, p 2).



belief that globalization simply promotes the hatred of those not benefiting from prosperity, i.e., the “have” versus the “have-not” nations. Furthermore, this condition may in fact perpetrate a crisis in identity amongst various ethnic and religious groups. The argument may become more relevant if terrorism does in fact become a permanent fixture of modern life as postulated earlier in this paper. Such a reality, compounded by the disillusionment of conservative Muslims (who are becoming increasingly hostile towards Western arrogance), and the influence of religious extremists, may create a state of despair so forceful as to rip at the very fabric of the Canadian way of life. Some argue that globalization is fueling a confrontation between Western secularism and radical Islam, which may stoke the fires of fanaticism and result in destructive tendencies beyond those currently experienced, i.e., the employment of weapons of mass destruction in a coordinated and sustained manner.

The advent of **states that have failed or are in the process of collapse** will pose significant security challenges for military leaders at the strategic level as they represent a major cause of worldwide volatility today.<sup>59</sup> The factors to be considered in the structure, training and employment of Canadian troops will depend upon the insights and deductions made by these leaders as to the causes and future impact of such calamities. Nations in a state of social and political decay are prone to take-over by rogue states, civil war, anarchy, and the rule of terrorist factions or globally connected criminal entities.<sup>60</sup> When such states have geographic relevance or possess human, military or natural resources of worth, then the subsequent vacuum of power will create the conditions for

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<sup>59</sup> The conditions for state collapse vary and include the onset of pandemic disease, resource scarcity - in particular potable water, environmental degradation, economic instability and endemic poverty. Regarding the latter, recent statistics reveal that over 1.2 billion people survive on less than \$1 US a day.

<sup>60</sup> Taliban rule in Afghanistan is often cited as an example of how a failed state offers sanctuary for terrorism.

occupation by rogue elements potentially with some form of foreign or trans-national backing.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, failed states cannot be considered in geographic isolation as the effects of failure may foster regional instability and require the subsequent attention of the global community. Researchers indicate that the environs of the Middle East, Africa and South-East Asia are ripe for such conditions in the coming decades, which may have a considerable impact on the Canadian Forces given our nation's propensity for providing aid to these regions.

“Afghanistan under the Taliban regime is a recent example of how non-state actors can use a failed state to carry out a campaign against a state adversary with global consequences for the rest of the international community.”<sup>62</sup>

The **prevalence of non-state actors**<sup>63</sup> has and will continue to have a significant role in global stability, as the nation state can no longer be counted upon to be the sole actor in international affairs. Many view the power of non-state actors as strictly a negative development but there are two sides to this argument. Non-state organizations, such as multinational corporations, can bring economic prosperity to previously underdeveloped regions. However, it is when sovereign nations can no longer control or exert their authority over non-state organizations acting within their borders that instability arises, thereby creating challenges for outside nations wishing to influence or at times impose stability on a region. Furthermore, when non-state actors team up with the ambitions of rogue governments the results can take the form of state power structurally supporting terrorist networks with financial resources. Non-state actors will

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<sup>61</sup> ABCA Strategic Assessment of the Security Environment (Kingston: ON, Report Prepared by ABCA Program Heads of Delegation at Exercise TEAL XXXV, 2001) 4-6.

<sup>62</sup> Future Security Environment 2025, Website version, no pages available, see Chapter 5, Section 8 – Failed and Failing States, para 79.

<sup>63</sup> Examples of non-state actors are as follows: trans-national crime syndicates to include drug cartels and illegal arms consortiums; terrorists; multinational corporations; religious groups; and the media.

pose significant challenges for the strategic leader, as both legitimate and non-legitimate entities will need to be dealt with in order to achieve national mandates.

Adding to the complexity of the international security regime are the mounting concerns over the influence that **environmental degradation, climate change and the scarcity of strategic natural resources** will have on global stability. Although first-order affects may appear obvious it is the comprehension of second and third-order affects that will require a developed level of sophistication by strategic leaders.

The realization that non-renewable natural resources are dwindling has been with us for quite some time. To what level will domestic security play a role in Canada's future as the nation strives to sustain its own consumption needs and protect its export capacity? Furthermore, the impact of resource scarcity has been felt in highly populated regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where the absence of arable croplands and fresh water has contributed to a climate of humanitarian collapse. Such conditions may be grounds for future regional conflict as developing nations literally fight for their survival.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, migrants striving for a better way of life will target resource rich nations such as Canada. The impact on domestic security will be significant and may be in conflict with Canada's future role as an expeditionary force (structured to provide prompt stability operations on a global basis).<sup>65</sup>

Aside from resource depletion, the degradation of our environment,<sup>66</sup> with its dramatic impact on the climate, has created a new set of complexities for strategic

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<sup>64</sup> Director Land Strategic Concepts in its publication, "Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities", indicates that by 2025 approximately 40 percent of the world's population will live in countries where chronic water shortages predominate (see pages 9,10).

<sup>65</sup> Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities, 9-11.

<sup>66</sup> Some causes of environmental degradation include: destruction of tropical forests, overuse of arable land, urbanization, unmitigated greenhouse gas emissions etc.. (see the ABCA Strategic Assessment, p 7).

leaders. The environment itself, uncontrollable in nature, presents military planners with consequences unknown to even the most profound strategists. The recent tsunami disaster in South-East Asia is a case in point – fundamentally unpredictable and unprecedented in consequence. When one compounds the costs of tsunami relief with other humanitarian initiatives over the past two decades, the potential threat to economic prosperity becomes evident.<sup>67</sup> Canada too remains susceptible to internal disruption as demonstrated by the ice storms of central Canada plus the Manitoba floods. Both events taxed Canada's domestic crisis management capabilities to the limit and would have been even more debilitating had they occurred at a time of greater international demand for Canadian military resources.

Hollywood has made a fortune on the very notion of a **pandemic crisis** and the subsequent effect on national and international security matters. These circumstances arguably exist in Africa where HIV/AIDS ravages its populace, greatly contributing to civil unrest, war and state collapse. The World Health Organization recently reported that over 1500 people die an hour, or approximately 13 million annually, from virulent diseases globally.<sup>68</sup> The fact is that a pandemic outbreak of any disease has the potential to quickly overwhelm the humanitarian resources of a state and potentially the international community if not properly managed.

Canada, a world leader in public health, has limited resources, military or otherwise, to deploy in support of such a catastrophe. Strategic leaders, faced with acute

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<sup>67</sup> The Director General Strategic Plans evaluation of the future security environment outlines several environmental catastrophes over the past years, in places such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Kenya, have the potential to overwhelm international resources and create global instability (see Chapter 5, section titled Climate Change).

<sup>68</sup> Future Security Environment 2025, Website version – no page numbers available, see Chapter 5, Section 7 – Pandemic Disease.

resource shortages require a comprehensive knowledge of both national and international capabilities in order to exploit available capabilities to address pandemic outbreaks.<sup>69</sup> From a force protection point of view, an in-depth understanding of the risks associated with troop contamination are required to protect both deployed forces and the Canadian public when soldiers, sailors and air men/women return home after periods of prolonged exposure. Finally an appreciation of other government department capabilities, reinforced by personal interaction and closer intra-departmental collaboration, is required to ensure a synergistic approach to the challenge of combating pandemic diseases.

Although advances in science and technology can be employed to mitigate the affects of many of the fore mentioned security trends, Canadian strategic leaders must appreciate the impact that **unprecedented technological innovation** will have on the global security environment. For example, science exploits the influence that robotics will have on the security environment and demonstrates that advances in the areas of nano and bio-technologies, to include integrated information pathways and smart/artificial intelligence capacities, will revolutionize the future of security operations.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, advances in sensing and precision strike capabilities, to include progress in the realm of non-lethal weapons, will minimize collateral damage and encourage a more humane employment of military resources.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Diseases commonly classified as having the potential for a pandemic outbreak are: the flu, HIV/AIDS, pneumonia, tuberculosis, diarrhoeal diseases, malaria and measles (See Future Security Environment 2025, Website version – no page numbers available, see Chapter 5, Section 7 – Pandemic Disease).

<sup>70</sup> Previous yardsticks such as Moore’s Law, which states that computing power will double every 18 months, have been shattered by breakthroughs in neural networks, bio-technologies and genetic algorithms (see Paul E. Allard’s work on, “Future Trends in Computing”, Briefing to the Army Symposium, Kingston, Ontario, 29/30 October 1998). Advances in microelectronic materials, nano-technologies and microminaturization are rapidly moving science towards the realm of artificial intelligence (See Ingar Moon’s work on, “Defence Technologies for the 2010 and Beyond Security Environment”, Briefing to the Army Symposium, Kingston, Ontario, 29/30 October 1998).

<sup>71</sup> Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities, 4-5.

However, relevant dangers exist in the creation of high-tech weapons when they are made available to entities beyond allied and disciplined nations through the vector of globalization. The mere potential that terrorists, non-state actors and/or rogue governments could obtain thermobaric or volumetric devices, directed energy or genetically engineered bio-weapons, should be cause for concern.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, strategic leaders must nurture a degree of technical awareness throughout their careers in order to properly assess the impact that science and technology may have to the defence and security of Canada.

The **shifting balance of global power** since the collapse of the Berlin Wall has created a new security environment; one arguably based on US domination:

“The role played by the United States in global affairs remains the most important geopolitical factor shaping the international security environment.”<sup>73</sup>

This development has created a sense of lost identify amongst many nations and international organizations (potentially the UN and NATO), while new organizations, such as the European Union, have emerged to fill a perceived need. Much has been written about the “U.S. hegemony”, all of which must be fully comprehended by Canadian strategic leaders as they strive to maintain national sovereignty, integrity and military credibility. The following passage reflects the challenge that Canadians face:

“The United States spends more on defense than the world’s other major nations combined, and more on research and development in the defense sector than the rest of the world combined. The U.S. economy is more than twice the size of that of number two (Japan) ... Hollywood is so dominant that the French find themselves compelled to legislate protective barriers against U.S. television programs and

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<sup>72</sup> ABCA Strategic Assessment of the Security Environment, 7-8.

<sup>73</sup> Future Security Environment 2025, Website version – no page numbers available, see Chapter 4, Section 1 – Whither the Unipolar Movement, para 30.

movies.”<sup>74</sup>

Some would infer that world peace, due to the lack of any major intra-state conflict, is at hand. However, the U.S. is quick to remind the international community that it, and potentially the Western way of life, is at war with terrorism. This reality has caused a fissure within both the UN and NATO, neither of which seem clear on their respective role in this endeavour. At the outset of the recent conflict with Saddam Hussein, some permanent members of the UN Security Council challenged the American leadership. In this matter the Council attempted to exercise its power of veto in the attempt to achieve regional stability. The impotence of the UN's stand on the war in Iraq further swayed the balance of power away from traditional coalitions and towards an American-led coalition of the willing. The fallout of these circumstances were further exacerbated by the ongoing Islamic jihad against the West, where the Muslim community appears divided regarding their role in the struggle for international recognition and influence. Furthermore, the nature of the relationship between China, Russia and the U.S. also continues to threaten the balance of power, all of which creates a level of uncertainty within the global community.

Given the above parameters, Canadian leaders must remain conscious of the effects that shifts in U.S. strategy will have on Canadian policy, capabilities and plans. What will be our response when called upon to operate in a security environment dominated by U.S. policy, making our forces extremely vulnerable and overly susceptible to attack by America's enemies? Canadian strategic leaders must focus on overcoming

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<sup>74</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, The End of the American Era - US Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century (New York, NY: Knopf, 2003)

the complexities of this environment if we are to achieve a degree of relevance in the eyes of our fellow Canadians and our traditional coalition partners.

The final trends to be examined that affect the security environment are the aspects of **demographic shifts and urbanization**. In essence this section will introduce the final portion of the paper addressing the security environment as the urban setting plays a major role in defining the future battlespace.

The study of demographics indicates a shared problem between industrialized nations and some parts of the developing world. Simply put, birth rates in the developed world are not sufficient to replace an aging population. Furthermore, the latter is creating a major strain on Western economies scrambling to integrate progressive immigration policies to bolster failing population bases. On the other hand the majority of the developing world faces the opposite challenge of how to provide a sustained and fulfilling quality of life to regions with robust population growth. The youth of these nations literally swarm industrial centres in the effort to escape poverty and seek employment. Where demand exceeds supply, which is the case in much of the developing world, unrest prevails causing civil strife and in the extreme, war. When the available industrial centre exists in Canada, strategic leaders are faced with the challenges of domestic security in the face of multi-ethnic demands.

“The UN estimates that by 2030 approximately 60% of the world’s population will live in urban centres.”<sup>75</sup>

Urbanization affects us all, particularly if you are one of the millions of Canadians who live in Canada’s urban sprawl. Furthermore, you have been affected if you are one of the thousands whom have visited or worked within the industrial ghettos of the world’s

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<sup>75</sup> Future Security Environment 2025, Website version – page numbers unavailable, see Chapter 5, Section 4 – Urbanization, para 61.



developing nations. Strife and conflict exist as a way of life within these metropolitan centres, characterized by squalid conditions devoid of the infrastructure necessary to sustain health and welfare. Without the benefit of a gradual evolution to urban life, as experienced by Western nations, many societies have not been able to accommodate themselves to the rigours of city life. Family structures, previously based upon a rural existence, are ineffective as people become isolated in the search for sustenance. Similar circumstances are now prevalent in many Canadian cities where the economic pulse of the country has led immigrants to an urban lifestyle. Crime, disease and the spread of “moral infidelity” are on the rise, further taxing the nation’s resources. The end result is that urban migration has affected stability within the global community.<sup>76</sup>

To further our understanding of the effect that the above trends and emerging threats will have on the security environment, this paper will now examine the potential nature of the future battlespace. It is within this milieu that leaders must develop an expertise, so that when presented with challenges at the strategic level they are able to base their conclusions on experience and knowledge vice conjecture.

### The Nature of the Future Battlespace

“The future battlespace: human decision-making will be sped up significantly, aided by network-centric warfare systems; autonomous robotic systems will be more

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, Website version – page numbers not available, see Chapter 5, Section 4 – Urbanization, paras 61 to 64.

prevalent and accurate, reducing the involvement of the human in the loop; increases in sensory technologies, remote engagement, accuracy and lethality will change the way war is conducted; nano-technology and bio-technology will impact warfighting significantly by 2012; directed-energy weapons will be operationalized to a low level creating new challenges and opportunity.”<sup>77</sup>

The future battlespace can be defined any number of ways. To provide some focus in relation to the essay’s aim, this section of the paper will address only a limited number of key factors. Primary amongst those will be the existence of an asymmetric threat, operating principally from complex terrain (predominantly urban), within an expanded battlespace. Furthermore, one cannot examine the operational battlespace of today or tomorrow without developing an appreciation of the role of the media.

“Operations will become increasingly complex due to the asymmetric nature of the threat, the use of urban terrain, blurred operations and the expansion of the battlespace. All activities will be conducted under the unrelenting scrutiny and glare of the national and international media that will beam events across the world in real-time.”<sup>78</sup> ABCA Strategic Assessment - Key Judgement

There is no denying it – warfare and the space in which it is conducted have significantly changed since the Cold War. General Krulak, former U.S. Marine Corps Commandant, indicated that Chechnya was a more likely model for the future when compared to the conduct of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. The same argument is made when comparing future operations to the recent manoeuvre of the American Coalition through Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein. However, any similarity ended once American Forces entered the confines of Baghdad, which many believe represents both the contemporary and future battlespace. It is relatively easy to make comparisons but not so easy to do something with them. On the whole NATO and its allies have been content to reinforce, and at times simply adapt, Cold War doctrine, strategy, equipment

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<sup>77</sup> Major General D.L. Dempster, Director General Strategic Planning, “Future Security Environment and Battlespace of 2012,” Presentation to the Army Senior Review Board, 11 February 2003, 1-22.

<sup>78</sup> ABCA Strategic Assessment of the Security Environment, 12.

and tactics to what they perceived to be a new way of doing business. What has become apparent is that our approach to the battlespace requires fundamental change. The Canadian Forces, as directed by its strategic leadership, must adapt to the new way of conducting operations throughout the spectrum of conflict or risk irrelevancy on the international stage. A worse fate would be the resulting professional and societal isolation, imposed by our own citizens, if we fail to adequately contribute to the defence and security of the Canadian people.<sup>79</sup>

**So what is asymmetry?** Steven Metz states the following:

“Asymmetry is acting, organizing, and thinking differently than opponents in order to maximize one’s own advantages, exploit an opponent’s weaknesses, attain the initiative, or gain greater freedom of action ... it can have both psychological and physical dimensions ... attempts to undermine an opponents strengths while exploiting his weaknesses ... uses methods that differ significantly from the opponent’s usual mode of operations.”<sup>80</sup>

Most observers recognize that this situation no longer portrays a concept represented by advancing Soviet Armies over central European plains, employing templated doctrine with predictable outcomes. The concern here is how to prepare leaders for this type of battlespace at all levels, tactical through to strategic? How are we dealing with the unpredictability of an asymmetric threat, which does not necessarily fit into our own prescribed teachings? A brief example resides in the manner by which the “intelligence preparation of the battlespace”<sup>81</sup> is taught to CF Intelligence Officers at the CF School of Military Intelligence. The School is cognizant of the new security environment and the risks inherent to an asymmetric threat deployed within the obscurity

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<sup>79</sup> ABCA Strategic Assessment of the Security Environment, 12-13.

<sup>80</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel B. Horn and Peter Gizewski, ed., *Towards the Brave New World* (Kingston, ON: Director of Land Strategic Concepts, Canadian Department of National Defence, 2003) 89.

<sup>81</sup> The process whereby a military appreciation is conducted to determine an enemy’s disposition, capability and intent is referred to as the “intelligence preparation of the battlespace”.

and complexity of urban terrain. Yet, the institution has not been able to fully break away from “templating the enemy”, employing strategies based on outdated doctrine to predict future enemy actions. Steps are currently underway to rectify the problem and the Intelligence School is to be commended on their efforts. However, the point is that the way ahead is complicated as the military training establishment is fraught with both cultural and institutional barriers to change.<sup>82</sup>

The goal of asymmetry is to create chaos; to dislocate, divert and segregate leaders from followers. If employed successfully this effect will be prevalent at all levels of command and prevail within both the military and political spheres of influence causing turmoil and confusion. Predetermined responses will be militarily ineffective or politically inappropriate given moral and ethical considerations, i.e., the human shield analogy. Elements of complexity will by necessity be integrated into coalition actions to ensure that the rule of law is followed and that collateral damage is minimized. Such complexity severely retards military momentum as experienced in Operation APOLLO when members of the Canadian Battle Group, hunting for Al Quaida insurgents in the mountains of Afghanistan, were required to obtain targeting authority for tactical level objectives from the strategic national headquarters in Ottawa. Not only did this inhibit the mission but exposed the chain of command to cyber threats designed to fracture command and control. Similar attacks were experienced by American Forces in the Gulf, when during the first week of the 2003 offensive they were subjected to over 20,000 assaults on the electro-magnetic spectrum. In both examples one must appreciate the complexity of the environment, the inherent chaos created by ineffective command and

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<sup>82</sup> Various discussions between Commandants CF Intelligence School and Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College, 2004.

control and the demands upon strategic leaders to press forward with the mission at hand to achieve national objectives.<sup>83</sup>

“Herein lies the difficulty for the military professional. Commanders will be required to operate in, and be comfortable with, ambiguous and uncertain surroundings. Moreover, of necessity, they will require the capability of adapting physically and theoretically to changes not only in their immediate operational area, but also in the larger international security environment. This will demand that individuals, units and formations be agile, flexible, and capable of responding to the unforeseen and unexpected.”<sup>84</sup>

With this as an understanding of asymmetry, what or who exactly is the asymmetric enemy? Astute readers will immediately challenge the use of the word “exactly” in the previous sentence, and this is precisely the point – one cannot exactly define the asymmetric enemy. It is easy enough to say he/she is a terrorist, an insurgent, a “jihadist”, an inter-continental criminal, or a freedom fighter. However, this only puts a convenient mask around what is truly important to the strategic leader – that being an appreciation of how the asymmetric enemy thinks and fights.

The asymmetric enemy will strive to achieve the advantage by stripping sophisticated opponents of their strengths, whether moral or physical in nature, operational or technical in application. In this manner, he will seek the security of complex terrain, those mountains, jungles or urban centres available to him, in order to strip his opponents of any technological advantage that they might possess. In Kosovo and again in Iraq, American air power, with its precision capability, destroyed all targets that were seen. Consequently, the asymmetric threat will remain hidden from view, both physically and electronically, by employing insurgent tactics, developed over centuries of guerilla warfare, within the urban setting. This transition into the urban environment has

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<sup>83</sup> Towards the Brave New World, 87-90.

<sup>84</sup> ABCA Strategic Assessment of the Security Environment, 13.

also created another phenomenon that leaders must manage, that being the capability to engage in the three-block war:

“Urban terrain will increasingly become the setting for conflict. Operations will often be characterized by what has become known as the three-block war, where forces can expect to be providing humanitarian assistance in one part of a city, conducting peace support operations in another and fighting a lethal battle in yet a third. Moreover, the requirement to transition from one type of activity to the next could be measured in minutes.”<sup>85</sup>

The intricacies of complex terrain are further compounded by the advent of robotic technologies and their extraordinary adaptability to the environment. The drive to minimize collateral damage and exploit any and all means to ensure force protection has motivated industry towards the application of robotic technologies to the science of war. Over the past decade, industry has taken great strides to develop both semi-autonomous and autonomous robots that can sense, act and shield forces with little to no risk to human operators. Some experts in the field estimate that by 2030 autonomous systems may in fact outnumber humans on the battlefield. However, one must appreciate that robotics may not be very useful when the demand is for extensive, sophisticated and politically astute human intelligence (HUMINT) to determine who is the enemy.

“Platoons of robots may take the place of live soldiers on the battlefield of the future. The ultimate battlefield robots may be able to think for themselves: to plan their travel routes; negotiate over, under, or around obstacles; and identify targets. They will also be able to coordinate among themselves and interact with humans on advanced levels.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Purpose Defined: The Force Employment Concept for the Army (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Department of National Defence, Chief of Land Staff, 2004) 4.

<sup>86</sup> Alan Christiansen, “Military Robotics: Marching from the Lab to the Battlefield,” on-line Internet, 2002, available at [www.mitre.org/pubs/spotlight/2002/alan\\_christiansen](http://www.mitre.org/pubs/spotlight/2002/alan_christiansen): 1.

From the sciences to the humanities - the complexity of the future battlespace cannot be solely measured by urban landscapes and the technologies associated with its mastery. The intricacies associated with ethical warfare and the rule of law are also further compounded within this complex setting.

“The aspect of opponent’s conducting asymmetric operations outside of the accepted norms of warfare and the law of conflict poses a moral dilemma to Western nations bound by these restrictions.”<sup>87</sup>

Ethical conduct and the application of the Geneva Conventions require a degree of sophisticated understanding when presented with the asymmetry of terrorism. A leader’s interpretation of right and wrong will be challenged by the disregard for traditional symbols such as the Red Cross, ruses employing medical and/or religious people to harbor and employ weapons, and the use of women and children as human shields. Ignatieff describes these circumstances in his work, “Ethics and the New War”, as follows:

“What distinguishes a warrior is not the uniform you wear, or your complex chain of command, or your formal training in the use of arms. It is your ethical discrimination. That is what distinguishes a warrior from a bandit, a mere killer, a terrorist. A warrior uses violence according to certain rules. Warriors distinguish between civilians and non-civilians. A terrorist does not.”<sup>88</sup>

In order to operate within this complexity, leaders must be able to employ the full spectrum of information operations as defined in the footnote.<sup>89</sup> It is well beyond the scope of this paper to examine all aspects of these operations. However, of note is the

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<sup>87</sup> C. Ajilon, “Asymmetric Threat Report, DND 2001,” (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2001) 202.

<sup>88</sup> M. Ignatieff, “Ethics and the New War,” *Canadian Military Journal* 2(4) (2002): 5.

<sup>89</sup> The essential components of Information Operations, as defined by the ABCA coalition, are as follows: computer network attack, efforts to counter propaganda, deception, psychological operations, electronic warfare, counter-information operations, security of friendly information infrastructure, civil-military cooperation, and public affairs (see ABCA Strategic Assessment of the Security Environment, p 16).

intrinsic requirement to rapidly fuse<sup>90</sup> and disseminate information throughout the chain of command in order to adequately react to the synthesized knowledge attained. The RAND Research Institution argues that the “return from leveraging an information factor ... may be greater than the marginal return of applying more firepower.”<sup>91</sup> What is pertinent to this paper is the significant level of competency required by a leader, to be developed over time, in order to adequately apply and exploit information operations against an asymmetric threat operating within complex terrain.

While dealing with this type of threat leaders must always be conscious of the **ubiquitous nature of the media** and the affect its presence can have on operational integrity:

“Today strategic leaders may find themselves directing commands before a live camera, one that never blinks, on a global stage. Satellite technology and the proliferation of 24/7 news networks have created the so-called “CNN effect” on strategic level decision-making and how warfighters direct their commands. The military must understand, anticipate, and plan for this new dynamic.”<sup>92</sup>

The presence of the media fills the demands of a population hungry for news, whether it is accurate or not. The impact of the “strategic corporal” or the frozen snapshot of an event portrayed out of context can quickly erode the best-laid military plans through political interference or the withdrawal of national support.

In summary the future security environment remains unknown. Although the risks are high when attempting to define the future, Gaffney in his work, “The American Way of War Through 2020”, made the following predictions: state-on-state warfare will

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<sup>90</sup> Fusion is an intelligence term commonly used to refer to the process of moving data through the cognitive hierarchy to achieve battlefield visualization, i.e., data to information to knowledge to understanding through the intelligence fusion process of collation and analysis.

<sup>91</sup> Towards the Brave New World, 94.

<sup>92</sup> M. Belknap, “The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?” (internet article - page number not available).



decline in frequency; classic military establishments, such as those still represented by the Russian Army, will become obsolete; Islamic extremism and the growth of global terrorism will continue; and the nuclear situations in North Korea, Iran, India and Pakistan will continue to proliferate.<sup>93</sup> Others such as a former American Director of Central Intelligence and the US Chairman of the National Intelligence Council postulated that the future could take shape in any of the following four options: the unipolar status quo, moderated through time; a multi-polar environment develops with a decline in Western influence; the emergence of a ‘benign world’ characterized by a global community; or a ‘hyper-anarchy’ scenario defined by an increasing fragmentation of the international system.<sup>94</sup>

Despite one’s view of the security environment, both contemporary and future, what should be clear is that the complexity facing our strategic leaders is considerable and will take a lifetime of experience, education and training in order for them to survive. To further amplify this understanding, the paper will now turn to some of the intricacies presented by the interaction of the Canadian military with its society.

#### THE EFFECT OF CANADIAN SOCIETY ON TODAY’S MILITARY LEADERSHIP

This paper will briefly examine the influence that Canadian societal norms, values and characteristics have on our current leadership. The aim is to further delineate those skills required by our senior leadership if they are to successfully operate within the milieu of Canadian society. Some believe that the Canadian military is out of touch with

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<sup>93</sup> H.H. Gaffney, “The American Way of War Through 2020,” diss., The CNACorporation – National Intelligence Council, 2004, 18-20.

<sup>94</sup> Proliferation: Threat and Response (Washington: US Department of Defence, 2001) on-line Internet available at <http://www.defenselink.mil>; 61-63.

the society it serves, that the professional ethos governing military conduct no longer reflects Canadian values.<sup>95</sup> While this paper will refute this perception, the emphasis will remain on highlighting those competencies required by our leadership to quell the critics and guide the men and women of the CF in a manner acceptable to both the profession and the society it serves.

The current leadership environment is strongly influenced by Canadian society; in fact it is governed by the rule of law and its intrinsic allegiance to civil authority. Given this as a start point for discussion the military simply cannot separate itself from the society it serves – it is literally against the law. Therefore, what is it about our society that creates this environment and provides the CF a unique leadership challenge? One should deduce that the very presence of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms,<sup>96</sup> framed within a multicultural and ethnically diverse population,<sup>97</sup> provides a good foundation upon which military leadership must be grounded.<sup>98</sup> The very nature of employment equity and the influence that a large civilian work force has upon the military provides additional insight.<sup>99</sup> This is particularly evident when one considers the power that previously unheard of privileges, such as those defined by the recent creation of paternity leave packages, has on the military cadre. Furthermore, the advent of stress leave is additional evidence of both our inviolate link to Canadian society and the new challenges facing military leaders.

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<sup>95</sup> Sarah Hill and Franklin Pinch, “Perceptions of Social and Cultural Gaps: Perspectives of Senior Canadian Officers,” (Ottawa, ON: National Defence HQ, Director Strategic Human Resources, 2004).

<sup>96</sup> Anne F. Bayefsky and Mary Eberts, ed., Equality Rights and The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Toronto: The Carswell Company Limited, 1985).

<sup>97</sup> LCdr Chris Dickinson, “Canadian Multiculturalism: A Neglected Military Resource,” diss., Canadian Forces College, Command and Staff Course 30 - New Horizons Paper, 2004.

<sup>98</sup> Mady Segal and Chris Bourg, ed., Lloyd J. Mathews, “Professional Leadership and Diversity in the Army,” The Future of the Army Profession (Boston: McGraw-Hill Primis).

<sup>99</sup> Captain J.E.M. Ewins, “Canadian Forces Applicant Survey: An Analysis by Employment Equity Groups,” (Ottawa, ON: NDHQ Personnel Research Team, 1998).

Recently, the continued wave of changing societal values has provided military members with previously unfamiliar venues by which to express discontent and to grieve perceived injustices. The Office of the Ombudsman, access to human rights complaint protocols, and a fully developed dispute resolution mechanism are further challenges to the argument that the CF is out of touch with society; not to mention the “burden of accommodation”, which is subsequently placed upon the leadership.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, there is the recourse provided by the media to service members. Always present as a venue, military professionals have been afforded greater flexibility in the manner by which they can interact with the media. In many regards the ‘troops’ are now encouraged to communicate with the media in the effort to further connect with Canadians. This of course requires an additional set of competencies for strategic leaders to master, if they are to manage the risk presented by the exercise of this right and to properly express national policy, in both official languages, at a time and place potentially of the media’s choosing.<sup>101</sup>

Despite the above there remains a ‘sensitivity’ towards military conduct given some of the moral set backs experienced by the CF over the past 20 years. The professional culture, with its seemingly outdated traditions, creates a degree of skepticism and concern amongst the military’s critics, only to be exaggerated in the ever-present glare of the media’s eye.

Society’s disapproval is often focused upon perceived injustices dealt to the soldier, sailor and air men/air women of the CF by its leadership. Although at times

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<sup>100</sup> K.A. Cameron, “The Establishment of an Ombudsman: Genuine Need or Band-Aid Solution?” diss., Canadian Forces College, Command and Staff Course 24, New Horizons Paper, 1998.

<sup>101</sup> DND 1211-56 (DOL) dated 27 November 2003. “LCol/Cdr and Above Second Language Training Succession Planning Committee,” (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence).

unfortunately true, a system of transparency has clearly been integrated into the very nature of Defence, embedded within the soldier's constitutional right to privacy as articulated in various Departmental and CF orders and directives. No longer can information regarding conduct and performance be withheld from an individual, while personal matters, such as medical status, are no longer readily available to the chain of command. In addition, a considerable amount of expertise is available to all military personnel to overcome the confusion that is often created by the very initiatives designed to protect the rights and freedoms of all Canadians. The leader today must not only be adept at the traditional military disciplines but must be well versed in the human sciences of anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy and yes, even political science.

To complete the above thought readers must understand the complexity of the decisions leaders make in relation to the "precedent of effect". When a choice must be made between the individual and the nation, the priority goes to the nation, and by extension its society and not to the individual. This precedent of effect becomes even more reflective of the difficulties faced by the leadership when one considers the many levels between the individual and his or her nation.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, in addition to the expertise required by today's leadership in human sciences, one could also add lawyer to the list.

At times the demands of society place seemingly unbearable burdens upon its military leadership. For those who believe that society has wrestled away the military's right to control the lives of its serving men and women, one simply has to reflect upon the

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<sup>102</sup> Employing the Army hierarchy as a model, the levels of precedence from the bottom up are as follows: the individual soldier residing in his or her section; the platoon, the company, the battalion, the Regiment, the formation (brigade or Land Force Area), the Army itself, the CF, the Department of National Defence and then the nation we serve, Canada.

responsibility of “unlimited liability”. We remain the sole element of society, which has the right and indeed the responsibility to order its personnel into situations where there is a high probability of injury or death.<sup>103</sup> Therefore the prerogative of a leader is to determine the freedom of action afforded to his or her soldiers, while the burden rests with the fact that we remain the single most important influence in their lives.<sup>104</sup>

To lead in this complex environment, shaped by the disciplines of Canadian society, leaders require certain tools and safeguards, particularly if one remembers that leadership is primarily a human activity. Foremost we must remember that the end result of the ‘unlimited liability clause’ is the loss of life. LtCol Tim Collins, Commanding Officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Irish, stated the following to his soldiers before crossing the Iraqi border, on 20 March 2003:

“It is my foremost intention to bring every single one of you out alive but there may be people among us who will not see the end of this campaign. We will put them in their sleeping bags and send them back. There will be not time for sorrow.”<sup>105</sup>

In this manner leaders must also be cognizant of their ethical conduct within the rule of law, as provided to us by society, with the expectation that we, as leaders, will uphold it. Somalia was a case in point where the military ethos was violated and the rule of law collapsed: “... by issuing an instruction to his subordinates that prisoners could be abused, he failed to properly exercise command over his subordinates, as it was his duty to do so.”<sup>106</sup> A second quote from LtCol Collins in his pre-campaign address is warranted to amplify the requirement for ethical integrity within the military community:

“If you harm the Regiment or its history by over-enthusiasm in killing or cowardice, know it is your family who will suffer. You will be shunned unless your

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<sup>103</sup> Queen’s Rules and Orders

<sup>104</sup> B-GL-300-010/FP-001, Military Training, Leadership in Land Combat.

<sup>105</sup> LtCol Tim Collins, CO 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Irish, on the Iraqi Border, 20 March 2003.

<sup>106</sup> Excerpt – Somalia Court Marshal.

conduct is of the highest, for your deeds will follow you through history. We will bring shame on neither our uniform or our nation.”<sup>107</sup>

Canadian society has become a culturally diverse nation, leaving some to consider the impact of demographics upon the Canadian Forces and its leadership.<sup>108</sup> One area of concern is the manner by which religious freedoms will manifest themselves, in particular as they relate to the requirement to kill another human being on the order of a military authority. The footnote below contains a rather lengthy quote taken from the words of Saint Augustine who died in 430 AD.<sup>109</sup> His words, although spoken in a dialect of the past, clearly express the concerns that many have today. Therefore to once again add to the list of competencies required of our leadership, one may also include Padre.

To master the leadership capabilities described above is clearly a daunting task. One must employ a wide range of leadership skills and techniques to cope with the ever-present nature of change integral to Canadian society as a whole.<sup>110</sup> To achieve professional competence leaders must first develop a foundation from which to mature their capabilities in the domains of interpersonal relationships, conceptual thinking skills, technical proficiency, and tactical acumen within a given military discipline.

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<sup>107</sup> LtCol Tim Collins, CO 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Irish, on the Iraqi Border, 20 March 2003.

<sup>108</sup> Major R.L. Hills, “The Military in a Changing Society: The Impact of Demographics on the Canadian Forces,” diss., Canadian Forces College, Command and Staff Course - New Horizons Paper, 1998.

<sup>109</sup> There are certain exceptions to the law against killing, made by the authority of God himself. There are some whose killing God orders, either by a law, or by an express command to a particular person at a particular time. In fact one who owes a duty of obedience to the giver of the command does not himself ‘kill’ - he is an instrument, a sword in its user’s hand. For this reason the commandment forbidding killing was not broken by those who have waged wars on the authority of God, or those who have imposed the death-penalty on criminals when representing the authority of the State in accordance with the laws of the State, the justest and most reasonable source of power.” Saint Augustine (died 430 AD)

<sup>110</sup> Numerous leadership models outline a variety of leadership styles, which require careful manipulation to respond to any given leadership challenge. Common amongst these models are the following leadership styles: directive, participative, supportive, achievement, delegating, transactional, and transformational, the latter being most commonly referred to in the Draft CF Leadership Manual.

One should now appreciate that Canada's military profession is not isolated from the society it serves. The CF strives to transform not only professionally but socially as well. This mandate provides a huge challenge for leaders as they progress from the tactical to the strategic realm.

### CONSTRAINTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC LEADERS

The author feels compelled to conclude with a series of proposals designed to encourage additional research into the manner by which the CF prepares its members for the rigors of strategic leadership, and to further demonstrate that such a process must be evolutionary in nature. The first stage in identifying the way ahead is to isolate and subsequently overcome institutional barriers limiting the preparation of strategic leaders.

“War is a science so obscure and imperfect that custom and prejudice confirmed by ignorance are its sole foundation and support.”  
Marshall of France – Herman Maurice Count de Saxe

Anthony Wallace, in his thesis addressing future directions in leadership, argued that a primary role of effective leaders is to endorse a climate in which the entrenchment of leadership obstacles is difficult to sustain. He outlines the 12 most common barriers to effective leadership, of which the most prominent are the presence of a restrictive institutional culture, sustained by a “fuzzy” governance model, with limiting hierarchical structures that are plagued by prejudice and have no clear-cut plan for succession.<sup>111</sup>

Colonel Flowers, Director of the Center for U.S. Army Leadership, clearly believed that it is the role of the institution to develop and sustain a culture that is flexible enough to survive transformation, while providing the benefits associated with the

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<sup>111</sup> Anthony Wallace, “Future Directions in Leadership – Implications for the Selection and Development of Senior Leaders,” diss., Thesis for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2003.

culture. In most cases this can be a difficult path to follow. Colonel Horn, the Director of the Canadian Leadership Institute, clearly identified a CF cultural impediment to healthy leadership in his article titled, “Soldier/Scholar: An Irreconcilable Divide?”

“The Army’s traditional myopic reliance on experience as the preferred, if not the exclusive, professional development tool has arguably created and perpetrated an attitude that has historically shunned intellectualism officership in the CF.”<sup>112</sup>

Colonel Horn goes on to postulate that this attitude is ingrained in the CF culture and that intellectual excellence, to include the technical disciplines, is often detrimental to the career paths of those actually most suited to lead at the institutional level. He used historical evidence from the 1990’s to substantiate his observations indicating that only 53 percent of officers held undergraduate degrees, while only six percent possessed graduate degrees, the majority of those in technical subjects. Horn continued to support his theory by arguing that the root of the problem rested in the absence of a clear distinction between education and training. The latter emphasizing drill like solutions to predictable scenarios, while education encourages reasoned reactions to volatile situations, i.e., shaping the mind to think through chaos. Clearly the educated leader would be better prepared to employ critical thinking techniques to deal with the problems of the future security environment, characterized by asymmetry and complexity.<sup>113</sup>

A climate or even a culture of risk aversion seems to permeate the CF and is clearly an impediment to the development of our strategic leadership. Although presented with doctrinal guidance to the contrary,<sup>114</sup> the manner in which we manage risk is clearly disruptive at all levels. When discussing the issue recently with a group of

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<sup>112</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Bernd Horn, “Soldier/Scholar: An Irreconcilable Divide?” The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin Volume 4, Number 4 (Winter 2001-2002,): 3.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 4-7.

<sup>114</sup> B-GJ-005-502/FP-000 – Risk Management for Canadian Forces Operations (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2002).



academics and senior officers, one of the latter made an observation using our political system as a point of reference, "... when our masters are risk averse so too will be the subjects ...". Despite the operational doctrine of mission command, which encourages a decentralized leadership style with significant latitude towards operational risk, our garrison policies, particularly those associated with resource management, severely restricts the degree of risk one is able to assume. For example, Level II and III commanders are only provided one half a percentage point leeway on their budget margins. This represents a \$15K "fudge factor" on a \$3,000K budget. What this encourages is micro-management, which eventually permeates beyond the constraints of resources and invades the ability to take measured operational risk, on what some would argue are matters of true significance - the lives of our soldiers.

There are also cultural impediments that exist as a result of our career management and human resource strategies. As with Horn's argument regarding an educated officer corps, so too exists a stigma surrounding a tour within our national HQ in Ottawa, before the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Yet in reality early exposure to the strategic level of command will greatly assist in developing an appreciation for our military "centre of gravity". Colonel Flowers identified a similar flaw within the US leadership programme where "some leaders consider it unsoldierly to have a strategic focus."<sup>115</sup>

The final cultural impediment to effective strategic leadership involves the reluctance of leaders at all levels to take ownership of their own self-development. Dr. Okros indicated that this unwillingness must be overcome if strategic leaders are to seek out and exploit opportunities for professional development at the levels required.

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<sup>115</sup> Flowers, 41.

Moving away from culture, other roadblocks exist within the domains of resource constraints (to include personnel) and operational tempo. Simply put, the time required to develop executive level skills is not available given the current tempo of operations. Snider and Watkins in their publication “The Future of the Army Profession” outline the problem as follows:

“... an excessive operational pace is a major source of degradation. It is detrimental to readiness, leader development, and job satisfaction; leads to micro-management; and is a major source of attrition ...”<sup>116</sup>

In contrast to Colonel Horn’s previous observations regarding the preponderance of operational experience inhibiting education, Colonel Beare took a different approach in a recent paper. He believed that the pendulum had swung in the opposite direction and that the predominance of training and education throughout a military career was inhibiting the attainment of operational experience, thereby limiting the foundation for all leadership training:<sup>117</sup>

“... the Officer Professional Development System ... does not establish a system whereby an individual is guaranteed to acquire the requisite experience. Neither does it define how that experience is to be integrated into the developmental whole... without a balanced developmental effort, officers will find themselves on an endless treadmill of training and education, with insufficient opportunity to command and practise leadership and their wartime craft with their soldiers, sailors and airmen and women, in their units under realistic operational conditions.”<sup>118</sup>

Despite this point of view, there is clearly a need for balance between the three pillars of leadership development, particularly given the constraint of time. The following is an unofficial continuum outlining a possible “command succession model”

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<sup>116</sup> Snider and Watkins, 10.

<sup>117</sup> Beare, 2, 5, 6, 24-25.

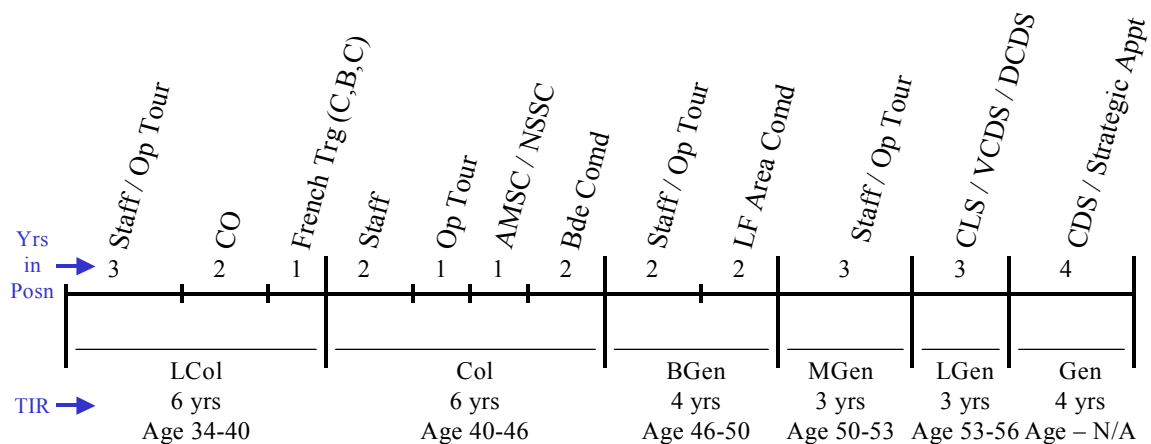
<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 4.

(originally designed for Army officers at the strategic level).<sup>119</sup> One can deduce from this chart that there is precious little time to develop an expertise in any particular area, thereby the thesis of the paper, that one needs to develop the skills required of a strategic leader in a cumulative and evolutionary manner.

## Army Command Career Model - LCol to General

Notes:

1. Chart based on a CRA of age 60; however, this is not meant to arbitrarily extend the career path of an officer.
2. Post graduate degree/Masters attained at CFCSC - CFC, Toronto (or equivalent).



A final constraint to the development of our senior leadership is the phenomena outlined by Colonel Neumann in his paper titled, “Generals Doing Generals’ Work”. The essence of the paper is that General Officers need to better balance their responsibilities between leadership and management activities. At times it appears that our General Officers are so ingrained in matters pertaining to the day to day activities of national defence that they have little time to adapt what Neumann calls a “proactive posture” in

<sup>119</sup> Developed by Colonel J.R. Ferron, Commandant Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College, November 2004.

order to plan for the future.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, a recent U.S. report coined the term “busyness” to reflect the same concept. It argued that General Officers must be provided the means to manage both their significant workloads and the subsequent stress that they are burdened with on a daily basis. By the time a leader reaches the strategic level he or she must know how to relax, to delegate and to impose personal limits on what they can and cannot do. Without these tools strategic leaders will continually focus on “doing” vice “thinking” and will eventually succumb to the numbing reality of never being able to accomplish anything of value.<sup>121</sup>

Despite the various obstacles facing the development of sound strategic leadership skills, one must understand that without a viable change management system, these constraints will continue to plague the CF. Our military force will remain reactionary in nature, suffering from chronic “change fatigue”. Therefore, to implement any of the following recommendations to overcome the previously listed strategic leadership constraints, the Department and the CF must adapt a more proactive change management regime to guard against cultural resistance.<sup>122</sup>

## THE WAY AHEAD - RECOMMENDATIONS

“There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order ...[because of] the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of

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<sup>120</sup> Colonel W.J. Neuman, “Generals Doing Generals’ Work,” diss., Canadian Forces College, NSSC 4, 2002.

<sup>121</sup> Horn, DRAFT SSO3 Report, 13-14.

<sup>122</sup> Captain (N) Westwood, “Leading and Controlling Change: A Role for Defence’s Senior Leadership,” diss., Canadian Forces College, NSSC 4, 2002.

it.”<sup>123</sup> Machiavelli

The aim of this section is to present the deductions made throughout the paper in the form of recommendations for change, i.e., how can we better develop our strategic leaders to meet the demands they will face today and tomorrow. The major themes are consistent with the main body of the essay and will focus on those changes required within the areas of culture, education, training, human resources, experience and finally transformation. Furthermore, these recommendations must be appreciated and applied in a holistic manner, as “stove piping” transformation initiatives within specific “categories of change”, without the necessary synchronization between each area, will minimize the intended effect and render the change initiative irrelevant. For example, to focus specifically on cultural change without modifying behavioral norms within the areas of education and training may create the conditions for failure vice success. In addition, if one fails to harmonize human resource policies with the overall initiative for change the recommendations contained within this paper will remain isolated and will consequently flounder. With that said, let us address the area with the greatest effect on the manner by which we develop our strategic leaders - culture.

Officership 2020 clearly provides the necessary guidance for any cultural shift in support of strategic leader development. Two of the eight listed strategic objectives support a learning organization in which the CF must create leaders who are able to “conceptualize” and formulate innovative responses to unorthodox situations through intellectual acuity and objective analysis.<sup>124</sup> A team from the CF Leadership Institute went further to indicate that the only way to ensure institutional success as a learning

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<sup>123</sup> Stephen Peter Rosen, Winning the Next War (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1.

<sup>124</sup> Officership 2020, 5-7.

establishment was to engrain “systematic support for continuous learning” into the culture and to reward the attainment of measurable goals in support of this endeavour.<sup>125</sup>

Other institutions have addressed the recommendation that not only the CF, but also other allied forces, develop a culture of innovation to promote transformation. Dr. Okros outlined the concept (as espoused in the draft CF Leadership Manual) wherein the CF must focus on transformational leadership to develop this culture of innovation if we are to thrive as a strategically relevant institution. A paper titled, “Adapt or Die”, portrayed this requirement as shaping an organization’s “state of mind” towards a sustained emphasis on strategic leadership.<sup>126</sup>

Given that the CDS is moving the CF towards a transformational future, a recommendation to integrate strategic leader development into this imperative – to further ingrain this concept into a new culture of intellectual maturity, seems to be well supported. Business has already embarked upon this path, as outlined by McCall in his book, “High Flyers”, where the emphasis is on a top-down approach to creating a development-oriented executive framework as a matter of strategic priority.<sup>127</sup> Making this recommendation is the easy part – the question of how to effectively modify culture is the real dilemma.

The solution to this challenge depends upon the CF leadership’s ability to alter established behavior patterns, as culture will be driven by behavioral change. A draft

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<sup>125</sup> Stephanie Paquet, Laura Hambley and Theresa Kline, Strategic Leadership Competencies for the Canadian Forces (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2003) 61-63.

<sup>126</sup> U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Adapt or Die – The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the U.S. Army (Leavenworth: US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2005).

<sup>127</sup> Morgan W. McCall, High Flyers – Developing the Next Generation of Leaders (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1998) 193-202.

U.S. White Paper<sup>128</sup> on the culture of innovation indicated a number of areas appropriate for Canadian consideration. The authors maintained that a process driven environment hampers strategic leaders, eroding creative thought and productivity (two critical behaviors). Although process is a way of life within the bureaucracy of the CF, strategic leaders must demand output in order to change the balance between process and product and to motivate a culture of strategic efficiency. To support such a behavioral shift we must better embrace the disciplines integral to “experimentation” with a view to stimulating “cognitive confrontation” and the merits of multi-option constructs. Too often process wastes valuable time, resulting in limited solutions to complex strategic problems. To mitigate the complexity of experimentation it is recommended that strategic planners focus on “joint operation” courses of action in order to streamline the process and exploit available time. In this manner the integration of “joint behaviors” and teamwork will be encouraged at all levels within the CF, the latter being a behavior well entrenched in the Canadian military psyche.<sup>129</sup>

Before leaving culture, a final recommendation is to encourage the CF to take the steps required to overcome an institutional “fear of perception”, often analogous to the “Globe & Mail test”, i.e., public acceptance. An example of this trend was the closure of the National Defence College in 1994. A solid institution, clearly committed to the development of Canadian strategic leadership, was disbanded due in part to a public misperception of economic waste. The point to note is that moral courage is required to maintain viable objectives when others perceive that which is not true.

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<sup>128</sup> Referred to in “Adapt or Die – The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the U.S. Army”

<sup>129</sup> Adapt or Die – The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the U.S. Army, 5-9.

Arguably behavioral modifications within the area of education can have the most profound impact on cultural change. Two factors play heavily upon the recommendations made in this section regarding education. First, mental agility is a primary asset for a strategic leader, one to be developed over time. Second, is that leadership remains a human activity; consequently, recommendations surrounding education will focus on human interaction.

Before outlining recommendations regarding content, the question of available time needs to be addressed. Earlier a “Command Succession Model” was provided, which demonstrated that time is the enemy. Therefore, where will the time be found to further enhance the skills required by strategic leaders? Obviously we need to continually improve the time currently dedicated to this objective; however, the real question is where and when to integrate new initiatives?

This paper proposes that a system of “professional development leave” be afforded to those individuals proven worthy of the opportunity – for argument’s sake, the top third of any (environmental) merit list. This leave, of three to four months duration (the time required for a university semester), would be provided within each DP, beginning with DP Two, but in the case of officers not before the completion of their respective environmental command and staff course. ADM (HR-Mil) must provide guidelines, but the intent is for leaders to individually identify and subsequently apply for professional development opportunities, i.e., a bottom-up concept to encourage a shared approach between the individual and the system regarding competency development. Although the time provided would accommodate a university course, the leave would not be restricted to formal academic disciplines; however, activities must relate directly to the



“Competency Model” previously discussed. Funding would be provided through educational incentives already in place. Furthermore, career incentives recognizing “professional excellence” would be awarded within the purview of the CF Personnel Appraisal System.

Should such a recommendation be treated favorably, the potential exists to move leaders in and out of various academic programmes, on a regular basis, in order to sustain an individual’s cognitive development. Furthermore, this initiative would be responsive to individual career paths, and if properly recognized as a professional development tool would serve to provide a degree of personal ownership in one’s career development.<sup>130</sup>

To support the requirement to overcome deficiencies in the human sciences (or the soft sciences as LGen Dempster, DGSP, recently referred to in a briefing to NSSC 7), leaders would be encouraged to develop their competencies in areas concerning human interaction. This would further broaden an individual’s capability to network with strategic leaders from other nations, plus those from other government departments and non-government organizations.<sup>131</sup> In a recent article on strategic leader education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the authors referred to this concept as taking a holistic approach to education in order to “bridge the jurisdictional-knowledge gap”. The intent is to shift the focus from training to education as one progresses from the tactical to the strategic levels of command and control, in order to address the skills not previously accommodated by institutional training programmes.<sup>132</sup> As one author put it, the essence of a progressive

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<sup>130</sup> Wallace, 103-104.

<sup>131</sup> LGen Dempster, Presentation to Canadian Forces College, NSSC 7, 3 February 2005.

<sup>132</sup> McCausland, 8-11.

effort to develop strategic leaders is, "... recognizing, nurturing, and rewarding life-long curiosity."<sup>133</sup>

Within the military context one should not treat education in isolation. Although providing the foundation for cultural change, education must be augmented with a sound training plan to be fully effective, as both disciplines are required to develop our strategic leaders. The primary training recommendation is to introduce strategic skills at a relatively junior level. Major Romaine of the U.S. Army argued that transformational leadership is founded upon years of training and experience and cannot be approached in a "back-end" fashion, i.e., at the end of a career.<sup>134</sup> Colonel Flower recommended that subjects requiring strategic competencies be introduced throughout U.S. training institutions and not be limited to General Officer courses.<sup>135</sup> To accomplish this it is recommended that individual strategic skill sets, such as those identified in Caravaggio's Competency Model, be viewed as "continuums of knowledge", delivered over prolonged periods of time.

Using the decision-making process to exemplify the above concept, an appropriate model such as the Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP) would be front-end loaded into Development Period (DP) Two, and subsequently reinforced as a leader's knowledge moved from one DP to another. This is in contrast to the current system whereby the Navy, Army and Air Force introduce their respective environmental decision-making model in DPs One and Two, only to have them discarded in favour of the JOPP in DPs Three and Four.

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<sup>133</sup> Horn, DRAFT SSO3 Report, 13.

<sup>134</sup> Romaine, 76.

<sup>135</sup> Flowers, 43.

To further expand upon the above it is recommended that the entire manner by which decision-making is taught to the three environments be reviewed. Decision-making is a foundation skill for strategic leaders; consequently, the approach to it should be standardized throughout the CF. Currently terminology is applied differently in all three environments, often causing disruptions to the learning environment – an example being the disputed employment of a “centre of gravity” at the tactical level. The language of the profession is contained within the art of campaign planning as practiced within the context of “jointness”. Staffs at all levels are exposed to this terminology within national publications, such as those providing operational direction and resource allocation. Therefore, standardize the approach to create a synergy between all levels of command in all three environments.

Furthermore, various mechanisms of the decision-making process must be refined to meet the requirements of strategic leaders within the security environment. As previously mentioned “templating the enemy” remains a common planning practice, accomplishing little towards a viable assessment of an asymmetric threat. BGen Macnamara outlined various means to conduct strategic analysis, within both the quantitative and qualitative domains.<sup>136</sup> These methodologies should be introduced to officers early in their careers so that they can practically contribute to strategic planning in the rank of Major and potentially Captain.

As mentioned earlier in this section of the paper, the CF must harmonize its human resource policies with any transformational initiatives if they are to be effective. An “operator”<sup>137</sup> is likely to view the role of our defence human resource (HR) staffs in

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<sup>136</sup> Bgen Macnamara, Presentation to NSSC 7, 12 Jan 05.

<sup>137</sup> Referring to an individual focused on the combat and combat support aspects of the profession of arms.

terms of maximizing the effectiveness of our most valued resource – our people. Yet in many instances a seemingly entrenched bureaucratic process prevents military members from exploiting non-traditional resources to develop personal and professional competencies. Colonel Cadotte in his paper, “The Human Dimension at the Strategic Level”, recommended that HR staffs become strategic partners in transformation and act as “agents for change” - a recommendation fully supported by this paper.<sup>138</sup>

As a result of perceived weaknesses in various HR management policies, some argue that the selection criteria for strategic leaders are not well articulated or understood. The reason for this may be that the requirements fluctuate with the changing security environment; however, certain principles should remain extant.<sup>139</sup> To rectify this oversight it is recommended that a “Competency Model for CF Senior Leaders” or a “Succession Management and Leadership Development Program”, as outlined by LCol Caravaggio<sup>140</sup> and the CF Leadership Institute<sup>141</sup> respectively, be adopted. Either model clearly outlines the capability requirements of strategic leaders; however, as explained by Paquet, models must be linked to appropriate training and development programs (with funds allocated) to be effective.<sup>142</sup>

The final HR recommendation pertains to the concept of “variation and selection” as outlined in the recent SSO3 Report provided by the CF Leadership Institute. In this instance the HR system must articulate a concept whereby the “path to success” is understood to be an individual one, with no “defined route” to senior leadership in existence. Variations in postings to take advantage of global and potentially unique

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<sup>138</sup> Cadotte, p 16.

<sup>139</sup> Horn, DRAFT SSO3 Report, 14-15.

<sup>140</sup> Caravaggio, 11-16.

<sup>141</sup> Paquet, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 58.

opportunities must be viewed in a positive manner, with the system able to apply “experience credits” to any individual’s career.<sup>143</sup>

Fundamental to all the change initiatives recommended to date is the requirement to nurture “experience”, to maximize the impact of those lessons learned throughout the leadership spectrum. For example, the need for leaders to gain inter-agency experience has already been introduced but deserves reinforcement. Paquet emphasized this requirement as follows:

“Both formal and informal training, such as classroom learning, foreign postings, special stretch assignments, foreign war college courses, special committee work, exchanges with other government departments, tours in the Privy Council Office, private sector tours, understudying and mentoring, have been very limited or nonexistent.”<sup>144</sup>

Earlier in the paper Colonel Beare claimed that the experience pillar of professional development had suffered due to excessive training and education demands. To guard against this, it is recommended that a business practice outlined by McCall in his book, “High Flyers”, be adapted by the CF. In this regard an experience-based developmental model, which must be aligned with the “CF Competency Model”, would be established to ensure leaders obtained the requisite amount of experience at all levels of their career. All available experiential tools would be encapsulated within the model and employed as appropriate.

One of the most sought after experiential tools by industry, and recommended for the development of CF strategic leaders, is that of mentoring. Many of the authors

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<sup>143</sup> Horn, DRAFT SSO3 Report, 2-3.

<sup>144</sup> Paquet, 58.

previously cited in this paper support the employment of mentors to augment the development of strategic leaders. These individuals, charged with the role of nurturing excellence, would take on a formal commitment and be integral to any strategic leader competency model.

The final recommendation to be made in this paper is to reiterate the integral role of transformation in the development of strategic leaders. The CF is poised for a period of ‘accelerated evolution’ and a commitment to strategic excellence must be clearly stated and firmly engrained in the transformational process. To achieve strategic excellence one must have leaders, properly trained and educated, with the requisite experience in place to sustain the ‘push for excellence’. This author supports the requirement for a dedicated CF transformation staff, directly responsible to the CDS, with a clear mandate to execute strategic leadership development.

## CONCLUSION

This paper strove to demonstrate that the development of a strategic leader must be a continuous and evolutionary process, designed and shaped to meet the extraordinary demands of a changing security environment, while remaining responsive to societal norms and values. The research concentrated on representing the extensive skill sets or competencies, contained within the training, education and experience pillars of professional development, that a leader must attain to function at the strategic level. This began by establishing the parameters for strategic leadership and exploring the values and competency requirements of individuals aspiring to lead at the executive level. To provide a comparative framework for the paper the contemporary challenges, regarding

the development of strategic leaders, were identified. Next a significant effort was applied to revealing the complexities of leading at the strategic level through an examination of both the contemporary and future security environments, which was followed by insights into how the characteristics and values of Canadian society influences our military leadership. Before outlining a series of recommendations to enhance strategic leadership development, the paper first identified and provided insights into how to overcome various barriers constraining the development of our strategic leaders.

While the security environment has changed since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the essence of conflict remains the same – it is a human endeavour. To operate within this realm a nation must have the leadership prepared and equipped to overcome the challenges presented by the ever changing, yet consistently present, nature of chaos. To accomplish this leaders must be developed over the span of their careers, integrating experiences, education and training into their personal psyche. This must be both a cumulative and evolutionary process if leaders are to endure the immense burden of responsibility contained within a complex world characterized by a growing asymmetric threat.

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