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Encouraging Enthusiasm:

Realigning HR Management in the Canadian Forces

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Executive Summary

This paper discusses the Human Resources Management (HRM) for the Canadian Forces, recommending adoption of modern HRM practices as an essential element of CF Transformation.

Developments in HRM over the past two decades have focused on a more engaged employee, who sincerely wishes to be a part of the organisation and contribute to its success. Senior leaders play a key role by incorporating the corporate philosophy and vision in a strategic HR management framework to encourage the development of the appropriate attitudes, expertise and behaviours necessary to build collective corporate success. Corporate leaders are engaged both collectively and individually to make decisions on how to best develop and employ their subordinates for the full range of employments necessary for corporate success. Individuals are actively supported in their personal success through adherence to corporate values and developing competencies, skills and knowledge necessary for corporate success.

The current CF HRM framework does not encourage either CF leaders or members to view all the essential functions or employments of the CF in a positive manner. While the current situation is difficult, the changes obliged by CF Transformation will increase dramatically the requirement to restructure not only the framework in which traditional and new leaders are included in making decisions, but deal with the growing number of new areas of expertise that will be essential for future CF operational success. The encouragement of enthusiasm through strategic HRM is a key aspect of CF Transformation to imbed within all CF members the culture and attitudes outlined by the CDS.

en·thu·si·asm

Etymology: Greek *enthousiasmos*, from *enthousiazein* to be inspired, irregular from *entheos* inspired, from *en-* + *theos* god

1 a : belief in special revelations of the Holy Spirit 2 a : strong excitement of feeling.¹

Introduction

“Why is it,” a senior Army officer asked rhetorically almost six years ago, “that we have not seen a VCDS wearing a green uniform in a very long time?”² Put slightly differently, why is it that for a significant period, the CF has consistently failed to produce a candidate for one of its three most senior military posts from a particular environmental background (i.e. uniform colour) that was more credible than those for whom their environmental background was from the other two? As important, or perhaps more so, is this even a relevant issue in the selection of a VCDS, or would the leadership skills, competencies, familiarity with the issues and ability to deal with organisations both inside and out the CF and DND, and personal enthusiasm for the position be of greater importance?

To be fair, the centre of the discussion that followed the rhetorical question was on just these issues. Particularly, it included concern that there had been a lack of interest among their senior leadership predecessors as a group in institutionally encouraging an understanding of, and enthusiasm for the work done by the VCDS Group, despite the fact that this work had a direct and important impact on Land Forces Command success in meeting the tasks it had been assigned by the CF.

¹ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed at <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/enthusiasm> on 2 April 2006.

² Personal recollection of the author. This conversation occurred during one of the initial discussions of succession planning by Land Forces Command senior leadership in the Fall of 2000.

Underlying the question is a concern about how the CF as a whole identifies, develops, educates and trains individuals for positions that do not necessarily have any particular affiliation to a Branch, MOC, community or environmental background. As with all the positions throughout the CF and in particular NDHQ that enable the success of the CF overall (and the VCDS is but one, albeit a senior one), the ability and enthusiasm of the incumbents to manage issues that transcend parochial classification, regional and environmental interests is key. This includes the development of the competencies and expertise required of both officers and senior NCOs as senior, strategic leaders within a large and complex organisation. As such, this makes the entire issue fundamentally more than an “Army”, “Navy” or “Air Force” issue and requires a strategic CF approach.

The skills, knowledge and competencies that are required are not trivial and are often not directly or even remotely aligned with those developed along classification or environmental lines for deployed operational forces. Knowledge of issues concerning the exploitation of outer space for example, or corporate management, business planning, information operations, HR, KM, procurement and a host of others. They consequently require an investment of time and attention on behalf of both the CF and individuals to ensure that suitable numbers and quality of CF members are prepared to take on responsibilities within these areas of expertise, from entry level to the most senior. While some of the areas of expertise noted above are already of interest to the CF, like the position of the VCDS within the Army community (at least until recently) they are not receiving sufficient institutional support in the generation of enthusiasm among CF members as a whole for their specific contribution to CF success.

The recent changes announced and being implemented by the CDS to transform the CF for the future will accelerate this dynamic. As the Chief of Force Development and the new

operational commanders charged with developing an integrated and coherent approach to CF operations start to exert their influence, with them will come further demands for well-developed competencies, skills and knowledge. These demands will be related to their own particular concerns rather than that traditionally expected by the Environmental Chiefs of Staff for the generation of tactical excellence as currently envisioned. Meeting these demands will require not only commanders and advisors well-versed in their particular functional responsibilities, but also cognisant and supportive of the role played by others in an environment where there are no clear answers nor absolute delineations of responsibility.

The difficulty that the CF faces is that the current HR management strategy places a significant premium on classification and environmental imperatives, in line with previous structures and assumptions that organised the CF to operate in a disjointed, environment-specific manner with only incidentally integrated activities. As a result, the CF and the senior CF leaders has only indirect effect at best on the HR management structures for encouraging both institutional and individual enthusiasm for the full range of CF activities, from tactical operations to strategic planning. There is little scope to either develop pan-CF expertise or generate enthusiasm for the strategic-level organisations for which these expertises are of principal importance. Consequently, they do not play a direct, influential or visible role in the long-term development of CF personnel. Not only has this in the past marginalised the development of a sound understanding across the CF of wide range of issues becoming increasingly important to success for operations, but will also restrict the CDS, his new

commanders and Level 1³ principal staff officers in encouraging enthusiasm for the *modus operandi* of the CF of the future.

Held captive by its tactical, MOC-oriented approach, the current CF HR Management philosophy is struggling to meet the demands for competent and enthusiastic personnel for the wide variety of functions necessary for CF success now and is poorly positioned to adapt to the CDS vision. In order to fully support and energise CF Transformation, a CF HRM philosophy that emphasises the unified nature of the CF and acknowledges the value of each part of the CF structure as a whole and the full range of the expertise necessary to make it function well, is required to encourage enthusiasm in both the institution and CF personnel for the future.

HR Management as a Strategic Partner

Human Resources Management: the activities, policies and practices involved in obtaining, developing, utilizing, evaluating maintaining, and retaining the appropriate number and skill mix of employees to accomplish the organization's objectives.⁴

In discussing HR, the intent is not to conduct a sweeping review of the entire range of functions, processes and policies that pertain to personnel from recruitment to release. It is rather, to review some of the current thought concerning the role of strategic HR and the guiding principles necessary for its structure to contribute positively to the operational success of the CF through managing its personnel to meet the wide variety of employments that they could be expected to fulfill throughout their careers. The principal thought is that if CF HR Management is successful in encouraging enthusiasm within the institution for full range of CF activities, and

³ The term 'Level 1' (L1) represents those who have a direct report to either the CDS or the DM.

within CF personnel to be enthusiastic about the employments necessary to accomplish mission success, HR will be indeed a valuable strategic partner.

Background

Modern HR management theory has developed dramatically from the early personnel models that assumed most workers did not like work and as a result managerial responsibilities towards workers weighed heavily towards close supervision and control. Human resources theory has developed a more positive view of the contributions made by employees, now assuming that they sincerely wish to be a part of the organisation and consequently the role of HR management has shifted dramatically. Positive motivation, organisational culture and the coherence of corporate goals with HR management practices to encourage behaviours and attitudes that contribute to corporate success are the keys to successfully harnessing the best possible performance from employee performance and potential. At the same time, the role of HR at all levels has reallocated emphasis from the mechanical processes of maintenance and administration of personnel to a more proactive role emphasising change and positive engagement in corporate strategy.⁵

In addition, modern HR management has moved beyond what techniques and procedures produce results that are good in and of themselves towards a greater understanding of why and how HR policies, procedures and programmes reinforce the knowledge and behaviours necessary to achieve competitive advantage. A dynamic process that adapts as businesses reorganise, change and adapt to meet market and client demands, cooperative

⁴ Gary Dessler et al. *Human Resources Management in Canada, Canadian Eighth Edition*, (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2002.), 2.

⁵ Dessler et al. 46-50.

planning between Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), line managers and HR staffs to ensure HR management policies and programmes reinforces the corporate goals while supporting employees in meeting those goals.⁶ Effectively, they develop the institutional framework necessary to support enthusiasm among the leaders and employees for the attitudes, behaviours, competencies and skills necessary to ensure the corporation delivers the right results.

In the modern concept of HR Management, Strategic HR Planning shapes the corporate environment by generating commitment on the agreed philosophy, vision and goals of the organization from the entire range of stakeholders: leadership, employees, suppliers, unions, financiers and customers. Effective HR management encourages the stakeholders to become enthusiastic about their role in the organisation, to value their contribution and to believe that the corporation also values it.⁷

The role of the corporate philosophy and vision are especially important over the long

- e. foster employee loyalty and commitment.⁸

HR Roles

In complex organisations such as the CF, strategic HRM planning encourages commitment to organisational strategies and the shaping of HRM strategies of the individual stakeholders. With a coherence of strategic vision between the corporation and its constituent parts, and HR management practices that reinforce this vision, individuals understand the value of their contribution and develop a greater sense of commitment, or enthusiasm towards achieving corporate goals.⁹

As a strategic partner, HR operates through four major roles: transactions, translations, transitions and transformations. Of the four, the first two are oriented towards people and are of relatively short term. The transitions role refers to the introduction of new activities, policies or practices to better support current organisational objectives. The last, and perhaps of greatest significance for the CF, is the transformation role, where HRM can operate in a strategic, leadership change role. As an organisation changes its structure and often the accompanying culture, HR can work to suggest and then implement new practices and systems to support the fundamental strategic change plan. Focused on aligning HR management practices to meet the transformed corporate objectives and goals, strategic HR management can positively influence the enthusiasm of both the organisation and the workforce towards quickly moving forward.¹⁰

⁸ Gary Dessler et al., 12. See also Kossek and Block, 2.24.

⁹ Dolan and Schuler, 47-48. See also Dessler et al., 55 and 59-60.

¹⁰ Kossek and Block, 1.9. See also Lou Cataline et al, *Enabling Human Resources as a Strategic Partner*. (Houston, Texas: American Productivity & Quality Center 2000), 8. Accessed at [http://www.apqc.org/portal/apqc/ksn/EnablingHR\(full\).pdf?paf_gear_id=contentgearhome&paf_dm=full&paf_eselect=contentitem&docid=100700](http://www.apqc.org/portal/apqc/ksn/EnablingHR(full).pdf?paf_gear_id=contentgearhome&paf_dm=full&paf_eselect=contentitem&docid=100700) 19 Jan 2006

Of course, the alignment of HR management practices must be backed up by the organisational culture and employed actively. The greater the degree of senior leadership adherence to, and adoption of, the corporate strategy and the alignment of each function or division within the organisation with the associated HR management policies, the greater the likelihood that both the constituent parts of the organisation and the workforce will be enthusiastic in working towards goals that they see are valued and for which their efforts will be valued.¹¹ Senior leaders across the organisation must participate in “walking the walk”, not only for their own “part ship”, but also in support of their their peers to ensure that each functional area contributes effectively to overall success.

HR Strategy Development

To obtain this coherence of vision, culture and HR alignment in a strategic partnership, a number of key players in the corporation must play a direct role in the HR strategy and HR management. In addition to the central leadership role of the CEO supported by the Chief HR Officer (CHRO), the full range of line managers (or function heads) must be included in the discussions concerning the corporate strategy and then the HR strategies and HR management policies that will bring it to life. Inclusion of all these stakeholders will ensure that not only are the key business leaders aware of the implications of the decisions taken by the CEO, but a sense of ownership for those decisions as they will have had a hand in shaping them to meet their particular requirements in meeting the overall corporate objectives. Throughout the

¹¹ Lia Smith, “Aligning Human Resources to Business Objectives” *Continuous Journey: The Magazine for Continuous Improvement*, (June/July 1994), 36. An APQC survey indicated that an increase in the senior management engagement in strategy/HR alignment resulted in an a corresponding increase in commitment from line management and the view that HR was a strategic partner and positive change agent. See also Kossek and Block, 2.26-27.

decision process and in subsequent reviews, the CHRO and HR officers within line organisations (and functional groups) have a strong advisory role in shaping the decisions to best meet corporate goals, however it is the CEO and their subordinate line managers that remain in command of identifying the results to be gained. This remains the case as the individual subordinate leaders develop their HR plans within the corporate programmes and contribute to the overall assessment of where either overlaps or gaps exist between the current reality and the desired future.¹²

This strategic dialogue between stakeholders is important in developing a common appreciation for the complete situation confronting the organisation, as pointed out by John Verdon in commenting upon strategic planning in uncertainty:

“the participatory creation of a number of plausible futures as the initial phase of strategic planning does much more for leadership thinking than an acceptance of a ‘no surprises’ future....the resultant strategic plans and thinking are more robust....it is clear that the planning process (by which a ‘strategic conversation’ is undertaken and perceptions negotiated to an agreement) is more significant than the ultimate plan.”¹³

Without participation or ‘voice’ in the strategic conversation, stakeholders are alienated from the corporate strategy, not likely to be represented well if at all in the determination of corporate philosophy, visions and goals and consequently alienated from the process, weakening the potential for overall success. This “buy-in” process is critical to success, as each participant is

¹² Donald W. Jarrell, *Human Resource Planning: A Business Planning Approach*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1993), 111-113. HR staffs can provide information and advice on the personnel environment, alternative strategies to support the corporate goals and independent analysis of strengths and weaknesses within the workforce to assist in making corporate decisions. See also Dessler et al., 64-65, and Kossek and Block, 2.24.

¹³ John Verdon, *Strategic Planning Process – Uncertainty, Mitigation, Preparedness (D Strat HR Research Note RN 09/03)*, (Ottawa: D Strat HR 2003), 10.

accorded institutional credibility and by extension acknowledges that of the other participants as well as the strategy that binds them.

HR Management

Two specific areas of HR management that have a significant impact on organisational success germane to this particular discussion are the degree to which organisations are able to identify the skills and competencies of their personnel and then manage and develop them to meet specific employments. Called variously talent management, succession planning or more familiarly to CF members, career management, it is concerned with ensuring the right person is in the right job at the right time. In addition to the development of functional or technical expertise, this type of planning is increasingly concerned with the identification and development of those individuals who demonstrate the competencies, expertise and capabilities to assume positions of senior leadership, whatever their original background.

In an environment of increasing dependence on knowledge across a variety of domains, companies are increasingly focusing on the abilities of the individual, and where they can be best employed to achieve success for the organisation. Over the longer term, the focused development of expertise and competencies within the workforce to meet the wide range of corporate technical and leadership positions ensures that the corporate strategy and priorities are reinforced, both at the business or functional level, as well as with individuals as they pursue personal goals within the organisational structure.¹⁴

¹⁴ Kossek and Block, 3.14.

Current HR Management in the CF

Ensuring that all the key responsibilities important to CF institutional and operational success are developed is not an intuitively obvious process, and indeed many businesses fail at this as well, whether in terms of particular skills or knowledge, or in the development of successive generations of potential senior leaders. Identifying key positions as well as the groupings of competencies and skills or knowledge requires a clear understanding of the corporate strategy and then those areas in which poor performance has a dramatic effect on overall performance. As discussed earlier, the effective meshing of the individuals that have the potential to perform well in those areas with the positions that will generate the maximum impact requires a centralised approach that works within and supports the corporate strategy, both at the corporate and business-unit levels.¹⁵

In the CF context, HR management should be defined by the CF strategy and then informed by the requirements and demands of the full range of L1s as they meet the obligations imposed upon them by government direction in order to ensure that the available CF personnel are developed and distributed in as effective manner as possible for the CF as a whole, not only particular areas. While activities related directly to readiness for deployed operations would and should remain an important priority, other CF strategic obligations to the government would receive the considered, collective attention that they are currently lacking. Each L1 would be

¹⁵ Mark Huselid, Richard W. Beatty, Brian E. Becker, ““A Players” or “A Positions”? The Strategic Logic of Workforce Management.” Harvard Business Review, December 2005, accessed at http://www.apgc.org/portal/apgc/ksn/A_Players_or_A_Positions_CCB.pdf?paf_gear_id=contentgearhome&paf_dm=full&pageselect=contentitem&docid=123923

able to air their concerns more effectively within the HR Management system as well as contribute to the solution of pressing CF needs in more collective manner.

CF Doctrine

Before discussing the current CF HR strategy and HR management framework, it is worthwhile examining some of the doctrinal context that shapes the CF overall and the HR Strategy in particular. The foundation of the military profession in Canada is *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, issued in 2003. It describes the profession as conceived in Canada, and includes a discussion of the expertise required of military professionals: core knowledge, support knowledge and specialized knowledge. Core knowledge, that which traditionally related to the fighting disciplines, is identified for the CF by the DCDS and ECS collectively and includes recognition that the joint and combined nature of war and will have an impact on the evolution of environmental, and CF, culture. Supporting knowledge covers that which is required to run effectively a large institution focused on the spectrum of conflict up to and including combat. Part of the larger collective of the profession of arms, it makes an invaluable contribution to the ability of the profession to meet its obligations. Unlike the core knowledge however, there are no specified CF leaders or leaders that are responsible for the identification of this knowledge and how it would affect the evolution of CF culture. Lastly, specialized knowledge consists of that which is not specific to the military but organized and disciplined by other professional bodies (lawyers and clergy for example). Again, no particular designation of CF senior leadership is made to identify the body of knowledge and integrate its

particular issues into CF culture.¹⁶ This is not to say that institutional leaders such as ADM (Mat), ADM (IM), the Chaplain General and others could not be quickly suggested, and may be acting in that capacity currently. However, the fact that they received not even a general doctrinal acknowledgement collectively is instructive towards the underlying approach that permeates CF HRM.

The conceptual framework for CF leaders however, explicitly indicates their institutional obligations as part of the senior leadership team. In *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, the role of leaders (among other tasks) in reconciling competing obligations, enabling collective mechanisms of voice, aligning culture with ethos as well as initiating and leading change all indicate an engaged and valued role for each senior leader within the larger CF senior leadership team. More pointedly, it notes that “effective leaders.....develop and improve individual, group and organizational capabilities”, which is further expanded with the statement that “the senior leadership team must anticipate the future, both realistically and imaginatively, and establish a comprehensive strategic direction for the CF over the long term.”¹⁷ Clearly, the CF believes that the strategic direction of the CF and the methods used to achieve success are responsibilities in which all the senior leaders of the CF must participate and share.

This lack of explicit recognition for particular senior CF leaders concerning all the knowledge types required by the CF is of concern as *Duty with Honour* goes on to highlight the changing nature of war and in particular “deciding how to conduct these operations will certainly

¹⁶ Department of National Defence. *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy 2003), 50-52.

¹⁷ Department of National Defence. *Leadership in the Canadian Forces – Conceptual Foundations.*, (Kingston: CF Leadership Institute 2005), 48-51.

call for new conceptual models to help the profession redefine the new nature of conflict and security, broadly understood, as well as different kinds of knowledge and skill sets”.¹⁸

Completing this task effectively and embedding it firmly in CF culture and activities will require the engagement of those knowledgeable in the full range of expertise and knowledge in the CF. With official doctrinal recognition accorded to only the senior leaders most concerned with one knowledge category, the potential for important developments to be overlooked or downplayed by institutional bias is significant.

For example, the Leadership doctrine manual that was issued in 2005 defines five major dimensions to CF leadership: mission success (the primary outcome), internal integration, member well-being and commitment, external adaptability and the military ethos. In discussing internal integration, the coordination of in-house functions and processes and the achievement of teamwork and cohesion are highlighted, however the doctrinal basis for this coordination and teamwork is uneven, lending only weak support to the development of institutional coherence in the CF leadership.¹⁹

Current CF HR Strategy

The CF HR strategy is defined in the publication *Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future*. Described as aligned with the Defence strategy, “the HR governance process develops and executes the HR strategy to support the Defence Mission....integrated with the Environmental Commands and other Capability Components to

¹⁸ *Duty with Honour*, 71.

¹⁹ *Leadership in the Canadian Forces – Doctrine*, 4.

ensure that HR strategy and policies support all facets of the Defence Mission”.²⁰ This conforms to modern HR theory, with the HR strategy linked through strategic HR management to support the organisational objectives and goals as determined by the CF and subordinate L1s.

The ability to meet organisational requirements for the right person, with the right professional development in the right position, committed to their particular mission within the CF is embedded as a characteristic of the HR Strategy.²¹ *Military HR Strategy 2020* also acknowledges that HR management must be flexible and adaptive to the changing requirements of all components of the organisation, recognising “tolerable differences based on environment and context”. This linking of HR management to the overall corporate strategy has some currency outside the narrow confines of the HR-Mil Group, having been the focus of Defence Management Committee in 1999. In a discussion paper on strategic HR issues for that body, Cdr A. Okros pointed out that an HR Management system must address three requirements, one of which was producing the right person in the right job to meet the mission.²²

Military HR Strategy 2020 confirms the requirement for a system that is “fully integrated across the organisation, (and) centrally co-ordinated”.²³ In moving from strategy to action, in other words the management strategy, it reconfirms the close link that must be maintained between the CF level processes and the coordination that must then occur with the subordinate processes conducted by the ECS and other Groups Principal (L1s). Consequently, future CF

²⁰ Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future*, (Ottawa: Chief of Defence Staff and Deputy Minister National Defence 2002), 7-8.

²¹ *Military HR Strategy 2020*, 16. These aspects are addressed as aspects of Retention and Recruitment in the HR Strategy.

²² Cdr A. Okros, *Into the 21st Century: Strategic HR Issues*. Defence Management Committee Discussion Paper. (Ottawa: VCDS 1999), 10.

HR management systems must be flexible and adapt to the changing needs of the people and the organisation that it serves. The requirement to be attentive to future trends and requirements is clearly outlined, pointing out the need for central determination of HR trends internal and external to the CF as well as the identification of future skills in conjunction with concept development as well as the means to access or deliver the training that would deliver these new skills.²⁴

“People First” has been the motto of HR in the CF for several years and predates the latest statement of the HR strategy. Addressed directly in the 2003 HR Strategy as a principle of CF HR, it notes: “the motivation, commitment and expertise of people are essential to the operational success of the CF”. *Military HR Strategy 2020* specifically confirms the concept that the value of the individual to the CF increases when they are effectively developed and employed not only to CF requirements, but also in concert with the aspirations and enthusiasm of the individual.²⁵ Early understanding and the consequent implementation of this prior to the 2003 Strategy document has been somewhat confused however. As Col Claude Wauthier points out, the focus is maturing. From the mistaken perception that “People First” meant the desires of the individual would be met before the requirements of the CF, regardless of the circumstances, a more balanced realisation is developing that confirms that the individual has a

²³ *Military HR Strategy 2020*, 17-18.

²⁴ *Military HR Strategy 2020*, 20-23.

²⁵ *Military HR Strategy 2020*, 4.

valid and important voice that must be taken into consideration in decisions that affect them personally.²⁶

Assessed against the criteria outlined in the previous section, despite the apparent adherence to sound HR management theory, the CF HR management system is in serious difficulty. As will be discussed in detail below, there are gaps in the alignment between the CF corporate structure or goals and HR processes and a dysfunctional relationship between the CF senior leadership and ADM (HR-Mil) as the senior HR advisor within the CF. In particular, this is most evident in the manner in which CF corporate culture is reinforced and in the conduct of succession planning. Consequently, the development of skills, knowledge and competencies for the future does not serve the full range of requirements necessary for the CF operational successes that would lead to strategic success overall.

Current Difficulties in CF HR Management

The difficulties being faced by the CF in managing personnel is not a new issue, to either those that are trying to make it work, or those that have studied it from a professional point of view. Most recently, the Human Resources Strategy Transition Working Group (HRST WG) in late 2003 specifically noted that

²⁶ Col Claude Wauthier, *A Human Resources Governance Framework for the Canadian Forces*. Unpublished Paper. (Toronto: CFC), 12-14. A recent Director Military Careers, responsible for the detailed management of all CF personnel below the rank of Col, he further outlines that "People First" actually signified the obligations of the CF to ensure that CF members were properly trained, equipped, compensated and cared for to meet the obligations of the Service. As noted by the COS ADM (HR-Mil), the CF has been moving from a "people first" loyalty framework to a more mission oriented "country/CF first" framework. See Rear Admiral T. Pile, *Transforming the CF Personnel System, Presentation to HRST Steering Committee*, (Ottawa: DND, Dec 2005), 11.

“HR is not a central part of strategic or operational planning These problems are compounded by weak horizontal linkages between the HR-Mil Group and other L1 organisations”.²⁷

In other words, CF-level HR has little to no visibility in influencing the future of the CF, nor is it particularly well connected to the strategic level CF leaders that it is supposed to be supporting. Compounding the issue is the inability of the HR-Mil structure to impose itself as the central CF authority in HR matters. The HRST WG identified a number of issues that related to the poor effectiveness of strategic HR, specifically:

- a. Lack of ADM (HR-Mil) influence on CF strategic planning;
- b. Lack of clarity regarding ADM (HR-Mil) Functional Authority, and
- c. Prevalence of unregulated, informal influence by ECs and Branch Advisors.²⁸

These issues were identified as the result of a focused discussion with high-level representatives of the ECS, VCDS, DCDS, ADM (Mat), ADM (IE) and ADM (IM) on governance issues. While perhaps not HR professionals in their own right, the various representatives nonetheless pointed to several major weaknesses that hindered strategic HR management in the CF. In addition, each of the representatives was also asked to indicate their preference for the role of the HR-Mil Group role in CF HR. Reflecting some generally minor differences in execution, there was strong support expressed for re-establishing the HR-Mil Group with central

²⁷ Department of National Defence. *Human Resources System Transformation Problem Definition, Draft for Discussion 21 November 2003* (Ottawa: HRST Working Group 2003), 1-3/11.

²⁸ *HRST Problem Definition*, 1-9/11.

functional authority over HR and decentralised execution, which would address in part some of the frustrations currently experienced.²⁹

The HRST WG also noted that there were significant discontinuities in the HR system, and concluded that this was due to uncertainty over how the HR system should be managed. For the HRST WG then, the fundamental question that needed decision from the senior leadership was: “How should the CF be managed: as one organisation or as “3-plus the rest” organisations?” In reviewing the factors that bore on the question, the Working Group noted from the outset that a significant legacy was the tri-service mindset, despite the passage of almost four decades since unification and integration, which emphasised combined operations over joint capabilities.³⁰

In addition, the diminished status of ADM (HR-Mil) due to various change initiatives and the move of the ECS with their associated Branch Advisors to Ottawa had all contributed to a vague understanding of the responsibilities and authorities for HR between the CDS, ADM (HR-Mil) and the L1s, further weakening the CF ability to manage HR strategically.³¹ In discussing these issues, the HRST WG noted that the fundamental reasons for a unified approach to military HR had not changed in the intervening 35 years. It went on to point out that in fact, “in the current strategic environment, joint operations and joint capabilities have acquired greater importance”, lending even more weight to the imperative for a unified, central approach to HR

CF was a recurring theme in HRST WG problem definition paper. The relative dominance of Branch³² or Environmental interests often led directly to ineffective ADM (HR-Mil) influence, a sense of being left as “orphans” in the case of several pan-CF MOC and a lingering question as to whether the mission requirements of modern military operations, or the CF overall was being well served by this reality.³³

It is worth pointing out that the CF is not the only organization struggling with the development of expertise and capabilities that do not sit neatly in one environmental (or Service) domain. The US for example, despite the 20 years that have passed since the Goldwater-Nichols Act, has recently been reviewing the progress of instituting jointness within the officer corps of the Armed Services due to concern over a lack of progress when compared against the rising level of joint missions being conducted. In a recently completed review for the Office of the Secretary of Defence, it noted a cultural resistance to developing jointness in the Service officer management systems. A significant recommendation of the report was the development of a more strategic approach to joint officer management, aligning human capital to the organization’s mission, “rather than empowering other influences, such as organizational, administrative and cultural heritage, or current social, cultural and legal practices and beliefs”.³⁴ As a final note on the US experience, it is interesting to note that the only US Service to provide increasing numbers each year of officers filling Joint Duty Assignment List positions is the US

³¹ *HRST Problem Definition*, 2-1/13.

³² Branch is used to indicate the full range of MOC- or ECS-generated agencies such as communities, regimental councils, branch advisors etc, not part of the formal CF HRM structure, that provides advice or even direction on the management of CF personnel.

³³ *HRST Problem Definition*, 2-3/13 and 2-9/13.

Marine Corps, arguably the most like the CF of the four. This difference is attributed to the attitude of the Services, which despite Goldwater-Nichols Act obligations, continued to place higher premiums on Service employments and expectations.³⁵ While this could be expected in an environment of several independent Services, it would seem that, theoretically at least, the CF would enjoy a significant advantage in its strategic approach to HR management although this may be difficult to discern in current practice.³⁶

The HDP Group study commissioned to review the CF Human Resources system also points to the organizational downsizing of the 90's as a major factor in the institutional weakness of the CF HR System. During that time, the drive to retain operational capacity removed much of the institutional components and linkages of the HR System to protect deployable units from personnel cuts. As a result, the CF capability to identify knowledge, skills and competency gaps is poorly developed³⁷

impotence of the central HR authority has a direct impact on the ability of the CF to ensure the appropriate professional development of CF members for the full range of employments that are necessary, and to employ individuals in positions that suit their abilities and interests. This has made it increasingly difficult to manage the classifications and trades not directly aligned with a particular environment (the Logistics or Communications and Electronics Branches for example). This is also the case for the other L1s, lacking either the desire or capacity to develop independent HR staffs to ensure that their interests were being met or that they could influence the development of the personnel that worked directly for them.³⁸

This has resulted in an HR structure in which the requirements of Environmental Commanders and their associated Branches are given careful consideration and precedence at the expense of other considerations. Broader CF concerns or of the L1s that are not Environmental Commanders or of individuals that have interests that do not correspond directly to that of the Branches (but may be aligned with the CF or non-influential L1s) are not as well served and can be completely invisible to the CF leadership as a group.³⁹

Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in how the CF as an institution leads and manages people. Succession planning, mainly conducted by the ECS, is perhaps the most visible expression of this interest. However the ongoing debates over the control and integration of recruiting, education and training, whether retention or recruiting needs to be the focus of CF efforts as well as the ultimate direction of HR Strategic Transformation point out there is a wider general interest, and that there is still a significant divergence of opinion over

³⁸ Catano, Jackson, Macnamara, 32.

who controls the various HR levers, why and to what effect. The difficulties faced by MOSART and HRST, both in existence for several years as pan-CF initiatives, in producing change in CF HR is another indication that the various parochial interests continue to exert a strong influence.

The career management process, the CF version of succession planning, provides an appropriate example of how CF processes are not providing the CF with strategic HR management. As defined by CFAO 4-11, "Branch shall advise and assist the Personnel Group on personnel and associated matters which arise within his branch."⁴⁰ Limited in providing advice concerning the general management of the branch, over time this has changed dramatically and without formal acknowledgement or central control. As the HRST WG points out, "the extent to which Branches control the individual members of the Branch, the criteria for selection for training, employment and development as well as the actual training required has expanded to the point that there is no longer any real central control in place to affect succession planning."⁴¹ Clearly while issues of Branch concern, usually oriented towards the security of supply of deployment-ready Branch members to deployable units – a key capability at the operational level for the CF – are being satisfied, the transparent and central management of these issues amongst all the other obligations that must be met, in a CF context, is non-existent. There is also an impact on the ability of the CF to manage a host of other HR issues as the influence of Branches is exerted to meet the priorities as they see them

³⁹ *HRST Problem Definition*, 6-7/9. For example, while ADM (HR-Mil) was responsible for CF-wide attrition, ECS and Branch Advisors were responsible MOC-specific attrition. How one is separate from the other is difficult to discern. See Kathleen Currie ed., *HR 2020 Internal Assessment (D Strat HR Project Report PR 01/2003)*, (Ottawa: D Strat HR 2003), 36/94.

⁴⁰ Department of National Defence, *CFAO 4-41 Branch Advisors*. Accessed at http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/admfincs/subjects/cfao/004-11_e.asp 2 April 2006. The CFAO has been in effect since 1985, and like many other regulations, has yet to be updated to reflect the changes that have been wrought in the CF since that time – the Personnel Group is now ADM (HR-Mil).

arranged from their point of view, often in line with the desires of the ECS that has been designated the Managing Authority for that branch.

Col Claude Wauthier highlighted the confusing and ultimately counterproductive effect that results from the current situation in his discussion of an HR Governance Framework for the CF. He noted that the HR staffs of Environmental Commands and other L1s, Strategic Enablers as he termed them, were often a disruptive and confrontational element as they approached HR issues from their environmental/functional silos, which further diminished the already weak central staff authority. The use of the Military Human Resource Policy and Planning Committee, which regrouped the central ADM (HR-Mil) staff with the Strategic Enablers, obscured the leadership role of the central staff further. With the nominally subordinate critics of central authorities given a seat at the table with the ADM (HR-Mil) staff, it conferred the impression of equal partnership status. There was no acknowledgement within the MHRPPC of the primacy of ADM (HR-Mil) direction on HR strategy, resulting in complete paralysis and a lack of effective CF direction and oversight.⁴²

Clearly, the Environmental Commanders and other principal Force Generators for the operational units and formations that apply force at the bidding of the nation, have a fundamental and legitimate requirement for significant influence in their areas of particular concern. There is an obvious and natural interest in the succession planning that contributes to this operational capability and need to be able to encourage enthusiasm for these vital tasks. This is also true however, for the other L1s who may also be generating operational capability or are completing vital tasks for the good of the CF overall. They too have a requirement for a

⁴¹ *HRST Problem Definition*, 6-3/9.

direct influence over the succession of the individuals within the CF that have talent in the areas of particular concern and need to be able to generate enthusiasm for their corporate or institutional role and tasks in the CF. This is consistent with both good strategic HR management principles and with the doctrinal framework that the CF has established for itself.

The reality is that beyond Environmental or Branch processes, there is little succession planning conducted in the CF as the current “strategic” HRM framework, by either design or default leaves little to no institutional “space” left once these are complete. The HRST WG points out that

“since the succession planning processes all focus on the needs of the group conducting them, little if any importance is placed on the needs of the CF as a whole. Members are selected for development within an Environment or Branch based almost exclusively on the requirements for development within the Branch or Environment. Capabilities required within the larger context of the CF (HR, Joint planning, Space etc) are not considered with the result that the CF as a whole acquires these capabilities by chance, if at all, rather than by conscious effort.”⁴³

The usefulness of such an approach varies with the rank, experience and employment of the individual. There is no denying that at the entry level, both officers and non-commissioned officers are employed in their early careers in tactical positions and largely, though not exclusively within one of the three environments. This changes as they gain experience and rank and the distribution of the Col/Capt(N) rank across the CF is illustrative of this trend. At this rank, only 28 percent are employed within the ECS, leaving the vast majority working for either Commanders or L1 staff within the larger CF structure. In terms of the experience and

⁴² Col Claude Wauthier, *A Human Resources Governance Framework for the Canadian Forces*. Unpublished Paper. (Toronto: CFC), 41-42. See also Catano, Jackson, Macnamara, 14.

⁴³ *HRST Problem Definition*, 6-7/9. It should be pointed out that there is currently the MOSART project, an HR initiative to address the issue from the occupational structure perspective that has been underway for some number of years.

background expected for positions at this rank, only 40 percent have the explicit expectation of a specific environmental orientation, whether in combat or support, regardless where in the CF they are employed.⁴⁴ With the establishment of the four new Commands and the consequent requirement for senior officers to lead the staffs, the percentage of Col/Capt(N) in positions other than in the ECS will likely increase although it may have little impact on the distribution of environmental background required, dependent upon how the positions are defined.

The concentration upon Branch and Environmental priorities also has an impact on the CF members. When an individual expresses either talent or enthusiasm for these areas of importance to the CF, they are unlikely to be supported by the Branch as they do not correspond to Branch priorities and there is not a corresponding champion within the system to take up their case. The result is an HR Management system seriously compromised in its abilities either to meet overall CF requirements or to exploit the full range of interests and skills resident in CF personnel in meeting those requirements. In addition, due to the lack of attention or priority that the Branch or ECS gives to these CF employments, they gain the reputation of being undesirable from a career point of view, contributing to a perception that these employments are only for those who are not top performers or are at the end of their careers.⁴⁵ The perception then creates its own self-fulfilling prophecy as Branch members have no encouragement to develop enthusiasm to express interest in such employments in the first

⁴⁴ I am indebted to WO CJJM Poulin, a member of the Director Senior Appointments (DSA) staff, who provided on 6 February 2006 the raw data for Capt(N)/Col employment in the CF. DSA is responsible for the career management of this rank.

⁴⁵ Catano, Jackson, Macnamara., 33. Interestingly, in discussing the role of the career managers, the authors noted the perception that field and environmental needs were dealt with preferentially by career managers although they did feel that the career management system was aligned with corporate objectives. How a system that was aligned with corporate objectives could then provide distorted results was not examined.

place, or even consider them as reasonable employments for fear of harming their chances of success in the CF.⁴⁶

As was pointed out earlier, the alignment of HR management processes and programmes was an essential element to achieving strategic success. In its application of HR management for CF members however, it is clear that they have not been applied strategically but tactically and to a certain extent functionally to serve parochial interests. Consequently, for neither the CF overall, nor for CF members is the CF exercising strategic HR management in the encouragement of institutional or individual enthusiasm for the full range of corporate objectives necessary for success.

Not only is the ability to influence the employment and selection patterns within the CF affected by this disjointed, bottom-focused HR management system. The ability to direct and manage individual training is beyond the ability of the CF as a whole. The HRST WG has pointed out that the lack of a coherent CF approach has resulted in a chaotic training system with “eight different training systems, each responsible only to itself and each responsible for training only a portion of the overall CF capability”.⁴⁷ Part of the problem stems clearly from a lack of a coherent CF approach to training, a shortfall that the Military HR Strategy 2020 addresses only tangentially.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ This was reinforced anecdotally as recently as April 2006, when the Director CF Ethics related that he was having great difficulty in his succession plan for the imminent retirement of one of his few subordinates. Despite the fact that suitably trained and interested individuals existed the Branches concerned were uninterested in supporting his request. Quoted with the kind permission of Col Y Desjardins, D Eth.

⁴⁷ *HRST Problem Definition*, 4-1/8.

⁴⁸ *HRST Problem Definition*, 6-7/9. Focussed on professional development and education, the Strategy indicates merely that a “just in time” training philosophy will be adopted, and has only 2 relatively minor training initiatives, neither or which are to review the coherence of training. See *Military HR Strategy 2020*, 22 and 37-42.

In addition, the evolution of the term Managing Authority from a training management term to becoming largely analogous to Environmental Commander also implied ownership of the process, its oversight and the delivery systems.⁴⁹ This has further restricted the ability of the CF to manage and direct the systems that could provide adequately skilled individuals, as much of the training process is almost completely controlled by organisations that have limited interest in pan-CF issues. The result is a training and PD system that cannot identify or address CF-wide issues, achieve any economies of scale, nor influence the flow of training as it crosses general, MOC or specialty thresholds due to the competition for resources between the various MAs to handle “their” training. At issue is not the natural and essential nature of environmental inputs and influence to ensure that CF personnel are properly prepared to work and fight in their respective domains, but that the CF has the opportunity to manage that the training system so that it addresses all the needs of the CF, not only those of concern to the organisations that own the training assets. Effectively, the CF training system is neither fully aligned to CF operational objectives, nor does it appear to be developing this capacity in line with strategic HR management principles.

CF Transformation

“The CF will become more effective, relevant, and responsive, and its profile and ability to provide leadership at home and abroad will be increased. The CF will become more effective by better integrating maritime, land, air and special operations forces. It will become more relevant, both at home and abroad, by adapting its capabilities and force structure ... The transformation of the CF will focus on the establishment of new integrated (beyond joint) organizations and structures, including a unified national command and control system. These

⁴⁹ *HRST Problem Definition, 4-7/8. As the study points out, while the ECS cover the bulk of MOC in the CF, they do not cover all under their MA umbrella, with the result that the ‘orphan’ MOC are now calling for MA status in order to compete for resources and training facilities on a similar basis.*

goals demand that the CF move beyond traditional thinking to adopt a fully integrated and unified approach to operations.”⁵⁰

Regardless of the appropriateness of the current HR management structure to achieve success currently, more relevant is whether it is positioned to actively support the CF of the future. Over the past two years, the Government of Canada and the CDS have been shaping a transformation of the CF, describing a changed philosophy, vision, objectives and capabilities to meet the current and future threats to Canadian security.

As pointed out by the Government in the 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS), transformation of the CF will “require a fundamental change to the culture of our military to ensure a fully integrated and unified approach...this will require...fresh thinking surrounding doctrine and concepts...it will put a premium on having in place the right people with the right skills to get the job done.”⁵¹

The Future CF

While operationally relevant air, land and maritime forces remained a key component of the future CF, the Government outlined a dramatically changed operational and cultural context in which they would work. Gone was the predominance of single-environment employments, to be replaced by a fully integrated approach to command with new formations and units such as the Standing Contingency Task Force and Mission-Specific Task Forces prepared to work together cooperatively in a Canadian team that would be greater than the sum of the individual

⁵⁰ Department of National Defence. *1950-9 (CT) CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation dated 18 October 2005, CDS Intent*, 3/10.

⁵¹ Department of National Defence. *Canada’s International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence*, (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence 2005), 4.

parts. The CF of the future would continue to evaluate the force structure on an ongoing basis to either modernize capabilities that had continuing relevance eliminate those that did not and acquire new ones as required. In addition, the DPS highlighted the importance of CF personnel in a successful transformation, gaining and excelling in the use of knowledge and skills to operate in complex environments. The transformed CF would also feature a revised command and control structure, with the introduction of Canada Command for the command of operations in Canada and the establishment of the Special Operations Group for expansion of Special Operations Forces beyond the JTF II capabilities.⁵²

The vision of Gen RJ Hillier, appointed CDS in January 2005, influenced significantly the DPS. The new CDS, armed with his experience as an operational commander in the new era of international operations and the realities of modern conflict, moved quickly to outline his philosophy for the future. Instead of concentrating on the traditional Cold War-like opponents (“the Bear”) and the international context that supported them, his focus was on the modern state and non-state actors (“the Snakes”) that characterised military operations in the post 9/11 world. Empowered by the DPS that supported his view of the world and of the CF within it, the CDS Planning Guidance that eventually emerged in October 2005 from the work of the four CDS Action Teams analysing his world perspective provided the direction that was essential to orient the CF for substantial change.

The CDS Intent drawn from this planning guidance, outlined in the quotation at the beginning of this section, provides a clear vision of where and how the CF was to change. Not only would capabilities change, but also their relationship to one another to highlight CF integration across the three environmental domains with a unified, coherent command structure

⁵² *Canada’s International Policy Statement*, 11-12.

focused on operations. It is a bold vision for the CF, reorienting not only capabilities based on the type of opponent but also in the approach the CF will take in confronting those opponents. In stressing integration “beyond joint” and a unified command and control structure, the CDS is laying out a fundamentally different view of CF operations, and of the CF than has been traditionally the case.

The Changing Structure

In so doing, the CDS is answering the fundamental question posed by HRST WG. In the debate between either “one organisation or ‘3-plus the rest’ organisations”, Gen Hillier is clearly outlining a vision of one single force, both for operations and institutionally. In fact, he had publicly outlined this vision earlier in the year when he addressed the Conference for International Strategic Studies:

“I put six principles in place when I talked to my commanders in Cornwall in June to guide us and shape the Canadian Forces in implementing this transformation. Number one was a CF culture and attitude. Wrapping the pillars, the fundamental pillars of the air, land and sea forces around with a Canadian Forces context that gives them the context and the vision and the aim of what they have to bring forward and achieve and how they are going to do it by and large. No void for them to fill with an army transformation or a navy transformation or an air force transformation, all solely exclusively on their own. A Canadian Forces attitude that translates down to operational entities.”⁵³

Culture and attitude: characteristics that apply specifically to CF members, no matter what their employment or expertise. The institutional implications for this cultural change are explicitly noted in upcoming Institutional Leadership manual, where the movement of the CF

⁵³ Gen RJ Hillier, *Setting Our Course*. Speech to the CISS at RCMI, 22 July 2005. Accessed at http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/cft-tfc/00native/General_Hillier_CISS_Speech_22_Jul_b.doc 4 Apr 2006.

from an environmental to CF culture and the moulding of branch and environmental identities into a single entity symbolized by the CF are embedded.⁵⁴

Clearly, the CDS recognises the fundamental importance of the sea, air and land forces in bringing forward operational capability. In the structure he has established however, there are other elements that are also important for CF operational success. One only has to look to the establishment of Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) and Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM) to note that the CF will in the future draw on more than operational forces generated along environmental lines. In addition, there are many examples within the CF currently of expertise that have pan-CF application, such as space, conceptual experimentation, doctrine development, HR and others. However, as the new command and control concepts and joint capabilities such as information operations and others are developed and more visibly integrated into CF institutions and operations, the rate of growth in demands for new expertise and competencies, not necessarily related to any one Branch or environment, will accelerate.⁵⁵ Success in these new areas will depend heavily on the ability of the CDS and his senior leadership team to support the development of not only compliance with the new requirements, but enthusiasm within the CF and in CF members for these new organisations, the new operating concept and the attitudes, skills, competencies and experience necessary for operational effectiveness.

⁵⁴ Department of National Defence. *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution, CFLI Draft January 2006*, (Kingston: CFLI 2006), 19. These concepts are articulated as some of the messages that the senior leadership, as stewards of the profession, must explain, support and nurture.

Aligning HR Management to the Transformed CF

The radical transformation proposed and being implemented by the CDS cannot but have a subsequent impact on the manner in which many CF personnel are identified, trained, developed and selected to meet their new obligations. With a change in philosophy, vision and objectives of the institution of the military profession in Canada, it is an ideal opportunity to review the position of HR within the institution and examine the opportunities to position HR management as a strategic partner to encourage enthusiasm for the future.

As earlier described, CF Military HR and HR management are poorly postured to support the type of change envisioned by the CDS. The discontinuities underlying the current system, biased in its implementation on traditional Service lines engendered in the “3-plus the rest organisations” approach are clearly insufficient for the present and will be even less effective in identifying, developing and employing CF members for the new, integrated capabilities and formations that are being established. Clearly, the ECS and Branches associated with their environments continue to have a fundamental role to play in assuring the effectiveness of the operational units and formations that are their principal *raison d’être*. With the new CF strategic vision however, there must be a change in the balance of the approach that recognizes the changed CF priorities and structure, in which they and others will play an important part in meeting CF goals, in terms of deployable forces and other CF capabilities.

⁵⁵ An example that is being reviewed for its relevance is the possibility of “knowledge warriors”, individuals who have superior abilities to process multiple sources of information in complex situations in real time and exploit this understanding to anticipate, avoid or resolve problems. Born of technological innovation, it could have wide application in operations although it is not yet part of current activities. See Christine A.R. MacNulty, *Knowledge Warriors: Are they born or made?* Paper presented at the NDIA SLAAD Annual Symposium 24 April 2001. 2-3.

The new structure requires new thinking on how to manage our people strategically and encourage CF success individually and as a force.

Future CF HR Management

In order to implement strategic HR management successfully, a CF-based approach is essential. Key to engaging effective HR practices will be the re-establishment of ADM (HR-Mil) and the Group staff as the HR authority for the CF, responsible for policy development, execution of centralized processes and the coordination and monitoring of HR processes in the L1s. Already there is general support for this measure although there is the requirement to engage in further discussions to secure a fuller understanding of the supporting role that the newly designated Chief of Military Personnel (CMP) should play as a change agent in CF Transformation. Work has progressed in this area with the reconfirmation of CMP as the functional authority for HR in the CF and the changes in the CMP organisation to focus on its primary role of Personnel Generation for the CF.⁵⁶

This discussion should be part of the wider engagement of the full range of CF senior leaders. To ensure that the HR management programmes and processes support the full range of CF activities, it is essential that each of the L1s and the new operational and Force Generation commanders, led by the CDS, participate fully in the discussions, supported by CMP and his staff. The command decisions by the CDS on HR management that would flow from these discussions would then shape the strategic CF HRM for the transforming CF and provide for a more informed senior leadership that would play a substantive role in their implementation, especially in areas that affect them directly. Not only will it gain their support and active

enthusiasm for the changes, it will also increase the likelihood that the processes and programmes put into place will be supportive of their particular HR issues. In addition, the participation of the full senior leadership team in the discussion and decision processes would also increase the overall level of understanding of where and why the programmes fit, leading to better implementation of these programmes in their organizations in manners that would support overall CF objectives and goals.

Changing the Balance

Shifting to CF HR management system aligned towards the requirements of all the L1s represents a significant departure from current norms and practices, where the ECS and the Branches exert the preponderance of influence. It is however, a key step in aligning HR Strategy and HR management with the re-oriented CF vision and would support directly the “beyond joint” culture desired by the CF. While the ECS and Branches could continue to play an important role for issues important to them within the CF, it would permit the establishment of institutional “space” to deal with issues important to the L1s and the new operational and force generation commanders individually and collectively. Not only does this make sense in pure HR management terms, it is also consistent with the type of senior leadership demanded by CF doctrine as articulated in *Duty with Honour* and the *Leadership* publications.

In particular, a centrally-oriented, strategic HR management would permit a more deliberate, dynamic and inclusive identification of CF-wide fields and competencies such as HR, space, Information Operations, policy, doctrine, requirements/procurement and others as valued

⁵⁶ Department of National Defence, *CF HR System Transformation Sitrep, 1901-1 (ADM (HR-Mil))* 10 Mar 2006, 1/9.

competencies for a successful CF. This is not a new concept, as the HDP Group report on the CF HR System in 2000 noted:

“There must be mechanisms and systems in place to identify job skill requirements, existing skills of staff and gaps that exist, and they must be flexible and adaptable for accelerated organizational reconfiguration”⁵⁷

The CF would gain in two manners from this more strategic, pan-CF focused and inclusive approach. First, there would be greater visibility within the CF senior leadership to the competencies, knowledge and skills that support operational and institutional success, in what domains they are particularly relevant and where specific attributes could be used to contribute to the success of others. Second, with the full senior leadership team more directly engaged in the HR management processes of their Group or formation, there would be a more active encouragement of enthusiasm in CF personnel, regardless of their Branch or current employment to identify interests and competencies in the specified fields. Confident that their skills and expertise was of importance and value to the CF, and that the L1 or formation commander possessed institutional authority in the central HR management processes to influence their chances of personal success, CF members would be more likely to step forward in areas that were of importance to the CF, regardless of whether they were important to their current commander or Branch.

ADM (HR-Mil) has launched initiatives that reflect this type of approach. A Director General Military Careers project is reviewing Succession Planning and Careers, of which two aspects are of particular note for this discussion. First is development of a new process for determining the potential of an individual, with a set of revised selection processes to better

⁵⁷ Catano, Jackson, Macnamara, 15.

focus employment, education and training. Second, the project is developing a CF succession planning mechanism that builds upon the current processes, primarily Environmental Commander-sponsored, to support the CF across the spectrum of operations, operational support and corporate management functions.⁵⁸ Both are consistent with the philosophy of strategic HR management alignment with overall corporate goals and are indications that there is potential to implement this approach across the full range of HR management activities in the CF. For both steps, a key measure of success will be acceptance of by all the L1s, including the ECS, of the criteria developed and the validity of the succession requirements and subsequent plans articulated by the L1s based on their areas of responsibility rather on Branches or MOCs.

The recent reorganisation of the ADM(HR-Mil) Group to Chief of Military Personnel (CMP) and the reconfirmation of the central nature of CMP's responsibility for the CF HR function are also signs that the CF is moving in this philosophical direction. In addition, it appears that a more inclusive approach to dealing with the concerns of all the operational commanders and L1s is being developed to account for their particular concerns, although the how and why have yet to be confirmed.⁵⁹ Again, the key issue or success will be the extent to which a pan-CF approach is taken rather than one that places an institutionalised bias on

⁵⁸ Commander JA Roche, *DGMC Project Update: MEM 19 – Jan 06*.

⁵⁹ Rear Admiral T Pile, *Transforming the CF Personnel System, Presentation to HRST Steering Committee*, 20 Dec 2005, 7-9. Work on the HRM Framework is ongoing, and has identified three groups of stakeholder: the chain of command, the Career Field and Branch Advisors, and the education/training provider. While looking into wider CF interest in the management of personnel, it appears to remain tied to particular tactical occupations. See Commander JA Roche, *HR System Management Framework: Stakeholders Duties and Responsibilities (Presentation)*, 8-15.

particular areas of CF capability without regular review and adjustment based on overall CF success at the strategic level.

Conclusion

Modern HR Management for some time now has emphasised the strategic partnership role, rather than the administrative as a means to energising corporate operations. Occupying a strong central position that is aligned strategically with the corporate vision and imperatives, an effective strategic HR management structure encourages enthusiasm in identifying key skills, knowledge and competencies, supporting the acquisition of these attributes by individuals and then facilitating the intelligent distribution of personnel to meet the wide range of demands according to corporate priorities as determined by the senior leadership team.

While the current CF HR strategy is nominally in line with this model, the reality of CF HR management practices clashes dramatically with this inclusive, strategically driven ideal, despite explicit support in modern CF doctrine for such an approach. Strategically paralysed and consequently captured by parochial Branch and ECS interests oriented along traditional Service lines, CF HR management has little to no ability to encourage the enthusiasm necessary to generate the full range of competent individuals needed for current operations. Unable to overcome the paralysis generated by the competition between the “one organisation or ‘3-plus the rest’ organisations” corporate visions, a truly CF vision of HR management has been lacking, resulting in uneven HR policy application that leaves strategic competencies and developing CF capabilities almost invisible to most CF members, adversely affecting CF strategic success.

Despite the fact that it is clearly ineffective for even the requirements of the current CF structure, the “3-plus the rest” approach has been the de facto reality, marginalising the mandated strategic role of ADM (HR-Mil)/CMP to effect HR management to meet CF imperatives. With the advent of the new vision of the CF for the future, integrated, unified and developing new capabilities for the modern style of conflict, this situation will become even more acute than at present. Without a significant change of approach to managing personnel in the CF, the CDS will have grave difficulties in effectively developing the attitudes, skills and competencies that CF members will need to bring his reorganised and refocused CF to full capacity and achieve strategic success.

A fundamental re-orientation of HR in the CF, stressing the central nature of CF vice Branch or environmental priorities is imperative. A strong, centrally directed, strategic CF HR management system aligned to the vision of an integrated and unified CF would strengthen and deepen the cultural change required to bring to life the new structures and capabilities that the CDS vision requires. Inclusive of all the L1s and their particular requirements, both in planning and implementation, such an approach could provide the mechanisms necessary to create the institutional and individual enthusiasm vital to encourage, develop and then employ the right individuals in the right employments across the entire spectrum of CF capability requirements.

HR is changing with the CF. The recent and visible structural change from ADM (HR-Mil) to the Chief of Military Personnel and the underlying thought that all L1s should participate in the process of managing and encouraging CF personnel are steps in the right direction. Further work is required to reinforce these changes and imbed within the CF to both the institutional and individual enthusiasm for the broad range of employments within the CF necessary for success.

As this work progresses, it will position the CF to be successful in moving into the future with a strategic HRM framework that encourages enthusiasm and then supports individuals in meeting CF requirements. At that point, the question of why “we” were not producing a VCDS, or any other significant CF leader, would cease to have any relevance. Not only would “we” have been successful in developing individuals obviously suited for their roles, but as members of the full CF team, regardless of uniform colour or location of employment, we would have all played our role in developing the enthusiasm necessary to support them getting there.

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