

# CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

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National  
Defence

Défense  
nationale

Canada



### Cover

So elegant in its simplicity, CF-104763 went out of service in a blaze of colour as the flagship for 417 Tactical Fighter (OT) Squadron during the Operational Training Unit's close-out ceremonies in 1983.

DND photo



Listening to the Chief of the Defence Staff: The Politics of Military Advice in Canada



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## NATO Enlargement, Russia, and Balance of Threat



## Women's Lived Experiences of Serving in the Canadian Armed Forces Primary Reserve



## Project REGI-Net, or: How to Pull a Rabbit Out of a Hat

# CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

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## NOTE TO READERS

As a bilingual journal, readers should take note that where citations are translated from their original language, the abbreviation [TOQ] at the end of the note, which stands for "translation of original quote", indicates to the readers that the original citation can be found in the published version of the Journal in the other official language.

**Y**et again, another heartfelt welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of the *Canadian Military Journal*, and proud to say, 'on track and on time,' as we used to say in the fighter pilot business... Of note, this is now the fifth consecutive edition of our quarterly to be produced primarily out of the home since the outbreak of this terrible global pandemic fifteen months ago.

On a sombre note, it is with a heavy heart that I wish to announce that this issue of the Journal will be my last at the editorial helm of our publication. Frankly, after 36 years in an air force officer's uniform, serving as a fighter pilot, a senior staff officer, and a military educator, I "took the weekend off, got 'promoted to Mister,'" and for the last 17 years, have been honoured to serve as a professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, and as the editor of the *Canadian Military Journal*. Frankly, it has been one hell of a trip, packed with memories of friends, loved ones, and experiences that have been richly rewarding, and accomplished without regret, only with love and pride. Thus, after 53 continuous years of federal service, I believe it is time that someone else took a shot at this great job and the responsibility with which I had been entrusted for such a long time. Besides, my dear wife Heather of 51 years, has an impending 'honey do list' which is becoming downright intimidating, so it would appear I am going to be gainfully employed for some years to come.

Moving along, I am proud to announce that my designated successor is Dr. Christian Leuprecht, a Professor in Leadership, Department of Political Science and Economics at the Royal Military College of Canada, and an Eisenhower Fellow at the NATO Defence College in Rome. Christian is also cross-appointed to the Department of Political Studies and the School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, where he is affiliated with both the Queen's Centre for International and Defence Policy and the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, and as an Adjunct Research Professor, Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University, as well as the Centre for Crime Policy and Research, Flinders University, also in Australia. His publications have appeared in English, German, French and Spanish, and include 12 books and scores of articles. Furthermore, his editorials appear regularly across Canada's newspapers, and he is a frequent commentator in domestic and international media.

An acknowledged expert in security and defence, Christian brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the CMJ editorial chair. I wish him the very best of luck, and have the utmost of confidence in his suitability and abilities.

I owe myriad thanks to myriad people. First, foremost, and always will be my dear Heather. She has been, and is, my love, my soul mate, and my best friend, and I will love her until the end of time. The cover issue this time out is of one of the prettiest little jets to ever grace the skies, a CF-104 *Starfighter*. Most fighter pilots and those who wish they could be fighter pilots, would give lots to experience even an hour of flight in this magic little jet. I was incredibly fortunate to have that opportunity for nearly 2400 flying hours. And I swear, Heather loved the '104' almost as much as I. My little fighter pilot...

With respect to my time at the Journal, again, I have been, for the most part, blessed with very able assistants. This has been absolutely essential, since in terms of full-time staff manning, we are 'small but mighty,' consisting of only the Editor and the Publication Manager positions. Essentially, everything else is out-sourced. For the past 11 years, Claire Chartrand has been my Publication Manager, and quite frankly, I would be completely lost administratively without her. She is the embodiment of what an exceptional public servant should be, extremely competent and efficient, traits which have really come to the forefront during this initial 'year plus' of the pandemic. I will miss her, but feel secure in the knowledge that my successor can count upon her utmost support.

And there are others. Thanks to Major (ret'd) Mike Boire, my very able French Editorial Advisor, and to Martin Shadwick, my friend and stalwart commentator on defence matters for my entire tenure. Special thanks to all the members of my Oversight Committee and my Editorial Review Board, for their generous contributions and wise counsel over the years.

As always, lots of variety this time out... Taking point, Major-General (Ret'd) Daniel Gosselin, a frequent and highly articulate contributor to the Journal, graces us with Part Two of his compelling study, "Listening to the Chief of the Defence Staff: The Politics of Military Advice in Canada," for which he set the stage in Part One, published two issues ago. From my viewpoint, this series constitutes such compelling reading that it should be considered *mandatory reading* for all aspirants to higher command in our system, consisting of candid and frank insight regarding how to navigate the corridors of defence and political power.

He is followed by infantry officer Lieutenant-Colonel Chelsea Braybrook's analysis of Iran's present-day projection of power in the Middle Eastern region, based upon Harvard academic authority Joseph Nye's smart power model for success. British scholar Sumantra Maitra then tackles the sensitive issue of Russia's threat perceptions with respect to NATO's enlargement eastward into areas/states that were squarely within Moscow's sphere of influence. Maitra maintains, "... that Moscow is purely focused upon material and military aspects. It further suggests that Moscow's reflexive revanchism is sparse. Russia's foreign policy is tested and correlated with Russian rhetoric, military strategy and Russian balancing actions, in light of each phase of actual and potential NATO expansion."

Next, defence scientists Barbara Waruszynski and Kate MacEachern examine the role of women in Canada's primary reserve, and analyze their success in overcoming operational challenges, both in the early days and presently, "to work alongside the Regular Force in meeting operational challenges, both domestically and abroad." Finally, in our major articles section, Naval Combat Systems Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Craig Norman touts one ship's ability (HMCS *Regina*), to mitigate "...those aspects of service onboard ship which are impacting the retention of our sailors." This was made possible through the well-researched use of innovative technology and a compelling desire to better living condition onboard for our sailors.

## EDITOR'S CORNER



Photo : DND

Dave Bashow, "livin' the dream,' flying 439 Tactical Fighter (Tiger) Squadron's commemoratively-painted 'Tiger Bird 79' in German skies, June 1979, while deployed to Baden Soellingen. The good old days...

To round out the issue, we have two disparate opinion pieces. The first, entitled "Warrior Spirit," is an interesting viewpoint offered from a long-standing and highly experienced and qualified senior NCM, that I predict will almost undoubtedly generate countering viewpoints and debate, which we welcome here at the Journal. The second (and highly welcome) opinion piece represents a feminist perspective with respect to the successes and the failures of Operation HONOUR.

In closing, our resident commentator, Professor Martin Shadwick, takes a look at Canada's financial prospects with respect to national defence, given the past, current and ongoing unexpected drain on the national coffers associated with combating the pandemic, as well as the huge and necessary defence capital expenditures that are looming large. Finally, a book review that we hope will pique the interest of our readership.

Farewell, and stay safe.

David L. Bashow  
Editor-in-Chief  
*Canadian Military Journal*



Photo by Heather Bashow

"And still 'livin' the dream' in retirement, 2021. Amazing that the flight jacket still fits after 40 years..."

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**D**avid, thank you and your team for producing such an excellent journal. I wanted to comment on Gordon Bennett's article in Vol 21, No. 1, entitled "Is Your Organization Truly Innovative?" Mr Bennett does say that "innovation is not the same as change," and I agree with that. However, I think that change is a perfect opportunity for any organization to innovate.

I have previously published my thoughts on the evolution of change as a process towards transformation (see Vol 4, No. 4, Winter 2003–2004). For me, change is a linear and defined process, while transformation is a cyclical and infinite process—which could be the topic of a longer and more detailed article!

Today, every organization should have a permanent (non-temporary, deeply embedded) line item for not only **managing** change to the end state (as was done in the 1990s), but also **promoting** and forcing it, as needed. In doing so, this transformation-focused group would also force the organization to examine all of its processes and innovate with each cycle, with no time constraints. Moments of stability would be used to rest (transformation and innovation are exhausting) and to consolidate developments.

In his discussion of innovation and improvisation, Bennett quotes Admiral McRaven and Steve Jobs. This leads us to the importance of leadership in any innovative approach. As with transformation, a strong leader must be present and have an open approach to innovation. The leader will internalize this openness and motivate subordinates to do the same. Any element that attempts to "de-innovate" will be immediately put aside. The same

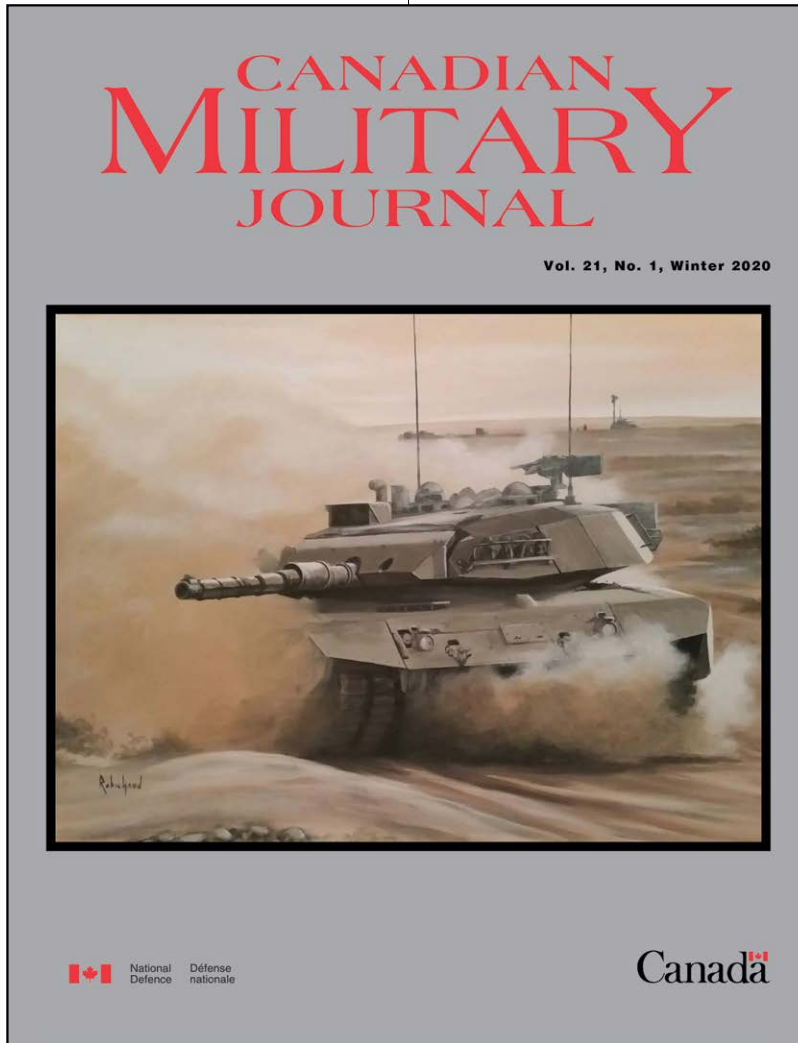
is true for transformation: without a leader who drives change, organizational transformation will not work. When we set up NATO's Allied Command Transformation headquarters, the usual approach was, as Bennett described: "same as last year." Or, in NATO's case, same as the last 60 years. To change this approach, we had to ask the question: "Why are we doing this?" Unfortunately, the only answer was often that we had been doing it that way for so many years, and no one could remember the real reasons why. It was at that point that we could focus on innovation and developing new approaches.

I disagree with Drucker that innovation and transformation are impossible in public organizations. With a strong leader and the creation of a high-level command focused on

innovation and transformation (what Bennett describes as "strategic engagement"), it is possible to develop a culture of openness to change and innovation. Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the article.

Sincerely,

J.O. Michel Maisonneuve  
Lieutenant-General (retired)



# Listening to the Chief of the Defence Staff: The Politics of Military Advice in Canada

by Daniel Gosselin

Major-General (Ret'd) Daniel Gosselin, CMM, CD, holds graduate degrees in civil engineering, public administration, and war studies. He served with General Hillier's Transformation Team, as Director General International Security Policy in the ADM (Policy) Group at NDHQ, as senior strategic advisor to two Chiefs of the Defence Staff, and as the Team Leader of the CDS Initiatives Group between 2015 and 2017. He was a senior mentor on the National Security Programme for several years, and he currently teaches strategic command and civil military relations at the Canadian Forces College. He also recently completed a Command Process Review for the CDS on issues arising from the spring 2020 CAF response (*Op LASER*) to the worldwide pandemic situation.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

“My primary role is to advise government on the ways and means to best provide for the military defence of Canada.” This is how General Ray Henault, then the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), characterized in 2004 to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs how “crucial” he considered his

responsibility “to provide sound and well-articulated advice to the Minister of National Defence, Cabinet – and in particular the Prime Minister” on the full spectrum of military requirements and capabilities of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).<sup>2</sup>

To Henault and all CDSs, the quality of military advice provided by the senior military advisor to the government is important, not only for creating the necessary confidence and trust between the military and political institutions in Canada, but more critically for the soundness of government decisions when committing the Canadian military to operations at home and abroad. Good and timely military advice offers the opportunity for the CDS to exercise a most direct – and often immediate – influence on the policies, strategies and decisions of the government that involve the CAF, particularly on military operations.

This article explores the provision of professional military advice by the CDS. It explains what constitutes military advice and outlines how this advice is formulated, processed and tested to reach the Minister of National Defence (MND), Cabinet and the prime minister. Part I of this article, presented in the fall 2020 edition of the *Canadian Military Journal*, examined the evolution of the spheres of responsibilities for the CDS and the deputy minister (DM) of National Defence.<sup>3</sup>

Part II examines the many complexities and the politics arising from the CDS providing military advice to the government. It consists of six sections and a brief concluding segment. Building from Part I, I begin by offering a typology of military advice, illustrating the wide-ranging spectrum that the CDS is responsible to provide to the government. In the second section, I introduce a model aimed at describing the interactions in the dialogue between the military, bureaucratic, and political echelons in Canada and outlining a number of key stages that unfold for major



Before Lieutenant-General Ray Henault's promotion to full general and appointment to command the Canadian Armed Forces, as Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, he confers with MND Art Eggleton (left), September 1999, in Ottawa.

government decisions that requires military – and defence – advice. The model is used as an organizing framework to structure the ensuing discussion and explain several points and arguments presented.

The norms of interactions between the military and political echelons from classic civil-military theories posit that there should be a clear demarcation between politicians and military professionals. The third section highlights how the boundaries in the exchanges between military and civilian leaders have evolved since American political scientist Samuel Huntington published his ground-breaking study on civil-military relations in the mid-1950s.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis of this section is to offer a notional basis to think systematically about the issues of military advice to the Canadian government, particularly when interpreting the application of the model presented in the second section.

The development of military options by the CDS starts with the government considering policy options that may include the use of the military, either domestically or internationally. In an ideal and simple world, the government should establish the political objectives that will set the framework for the CDS to develop a military strategy, options and operational plans. As shown in the fourth section, it is an unrealistic expectation for the CDS and senior military officers to expect clear and unambiguous political guidance when the government is contemplating deploying and employing the CAF, particularly for the more complex types of operations. The implications of this Ottawa reality significantly complicate the task of the CDS and senior officers in developing options and military advice for the Canadian government. The next section discusses the key characteristics that impact on the formulation of military advice in National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ).

The sixth section outlines how this military advice is provided to the government and tested. Military advice represents the collective professional judgement of many senior officers and defence officials, consolidated through the CDS. The discussion in this section exposes the many challenges that can arise in the dialogue and interactions between the military professional experts, senior public service officials and politicians, including the main sources of criticism that the CDS and senior officers may face in formulating and providing expert advice.

As this article illustrates, the responsibility for providing military advice to the minister, Cabinet and the prime minister in the complex world of government politics is a demanding and complex task for any CDS. To help navigate the complex environment of government decision-making, particularly to ensure that the military advice of the CDS is listened to, the article offers suggestions for senior military officers to adopt when engaging at the political-bureaucratic-military nexus.

**“The development of military options by the CDS starts with the government considering policy options that may include the use of the military, either domestically or internationally.”**

A brief note on sources and information obtained for this article. Because of the paucity of literature and scholarship on civil-military relations in Canada, and in particular on the topic of military and defence advice to government, over thirty interviews were conducted with senior CAF officers, DND officials and government officials. As part of the conditions established for the interviews, I have agreed not to cite or acknowledge any officer or civilian official without their consent.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout this article, I have selected specific case studies to help explain the different approaches to providing military advice to government and to illustrate the model presented. In those discussions, I do not attempt to offer an explicit judgement on the quality of military advice, or the level of influence provided by the CDS.

### A Typology of Military Advice

Part I of this article showed that it is only by understanding the evolution of the responsibilities and accountabilities of the CDS and the DM that one can fully grasp their respective spheres of advice to government. Because of the nature and complexity of defence activities and operations, the large majority of issues that require a decision from the MND and the government will call for both military and defence advice, which are constituents of policy advice to government.

Advice to the minister and the government is basically divided into two distinct categories reflecting the separate statutory responsibilities of the DM and the CDS. Defence advice is provided by the DM and comprises two essential components. The first includes advice on defence policy and departmental management issues, such as human resources, defence programs, acquisition and procurement, finances, and audit. The second includes advice on how best to implement government priorities, policies and programs at Defence, including how to achieve collaboration with other departments.

Military advice is the sole prerogative of the CDS and, referring to the words of Minister Douglas Young in his 1997 report to the prime minister, consists of advice on all matters relating to the command, control and administration of the Canadian Forces. This includes “military requirements, capabilities, options and the possible consequences of undertaking or failing to undertake various military activities.”<sup>6</sup> Table 1 elaborates on the types of military advice that the CDS may be asked to provide to the government. As is evident from this typology, there is a very high level of diversity in the type of expert military advice provided by the CDS, with each type introducing distinctive circumstances requiring different approaches, relations and skills when engaging with politicians.<sup>7</sup>



## Types of Military Advice

### A – Routine Advice to the MND and the government

1. Facts and strategic messages for the routine of Parliament or media management.
2. On preparation for Cabinet and other government meetings.
3. On preparation for international defence and security meetings (NATO defence minister meetings, meetings with other defence ministers).
4. On strategic communications for the development and maintenance of a narrative for the CAF.

### B – Defence Policy

1. On future defence policy.
2. On strategy and plans to implement current defence policy.
3. On the strategic environment, including the military implications of major trends and changes.
4. On strategic assessments impacting current and future policies.

### C – Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Matters

1. On force development, military requirements, force structure and future capabilities.
2. On readiness, preparation and interoperability of the force and equipment, and training.
3. On recruiting, employment and retention of personnel.
4. On administration and discipline (including appointments and removal from command).
5. On the Profession of Arms.

### D – Modern Warfare, Military Diplomacy, and Intelligence

1. On the character of modern warfare, and its implications for Canada's national security.
2. On the intentions and capabilities of adversaries (based on intelligence assessments).
3. On military-to-military engagement and relationships with allies.
4. On the intentions and capabilities of allies.

### E – Current and Future Operations (Force Generation and Force Employment)

1. On current and/or routine domestic operations.
2. On current international operations.
3. Advice, and options/recommendations, on potential future domestic operations.
4. Advice, and options/recommendations, on potential future international operations.

Table 1: Typology of CDS Military Advice.\*

Nearly all types of military advice described in Table 1 pertain to Canadian defence issues that spans the responsibilities of both the DM and the CDS, requiring the synchronization of their advice before engaging senior government officials and the political echelon. While the focus of this article is on the CDS and military advice, it is acknowledged that the DM at National Defence has a very important and influential role in defence decision-making and in the provision of defence advice to the government.

\* Advice in this table includes recommendations developed for a minister of the Crown or the government, in accordance with the meaning of the Access to Information Act. As such, it is protected from public disclosure (i.e., provided in confidence). See Part I of this article for a more complete discussion. Table prepared by the author.

Because of the broad range and complexity of the CDS advice typology, it is necessary to limit the scope of this study. Accordingly, the remainder of the discussion focuses more exclusively on the military advice provided by the CDS when the government is considering employing the CAF on operations (Box E in Table 1). This is a sphere of advice that is definitely more exclusive to the CDS than any of the other domains of military advice, particularly when advising on operational and tactical matters.

### The Intent-Guidance-Options-Advice-Decision (IGOAD) Model

The development of defence and military policies is complex, with many variables and relationships shaping government policies and decisions. There are several policy process theories and suitable models that can be applied to analyze the drivers of defence and military policies.<sup>8</sup> Based on those policy processes, and personal experience and observations, I developed a model to describe the interactions in the dialogue between the military and political echelons in Canada (hereinafter referred to as the IGOAD model, depicted in Figure 1).<sup>9</sup>

It is acknowledged that this illustrative depiction is deliberately simplified, considering both the uniqueness of each military activity or operation requiring a political decision and the inherent complexity of decision-making in government. The nature of the situation or crisis that requires the potential use of the Canadian military, particularly when adding the domestic and international political complexities that may surface, will obviously impact the process and approach to decision-making that the government will take. Yet, the model represents a useful and realistic representation of a number of fundamental – and generally consistent – stages that unfold for each major government decision that requires military advice when a CAF operation is anticipated.

The model divides the policy process into a series of discrete stages to facilitate the analysis of some of the activities and factors affecting the political-military interactions within each stage. The advantages of using such a model are numerous, including offering a schematic simplification of the complex world of public policy.<sup>10</sup> As one Canadian public policy authority stated, “envisioning policy development as a staged, sequential, and iterative process is a useful analytical and methodological device... such an approach reduces the complexity of public policymaking by breaking down that complexity into a small number of stages and substages, each of which can be investigated alone or in terms of its relationship to any or all of the other stages of the cycle.”<sup>11</sup> The *stages* model remains therefore one of the most enduring frameworks for analyzing policy making.

In Figure 1, the nature of the political-military dialogue is best explained using two dimensions, the horizontal representing time and the vertical representing the knowledge and information gap that may exist between the military and the government. The top and bottom lines respectively represent the political and military echelons, while the middle dashed lines symbolize the small group of political advisors and very senior public servants interacting daily with both the politicians and the CDS, and thereby frequently acting as intermediaries between the two main echelons.<sup>12</sup> A knowledge-information gap between the political

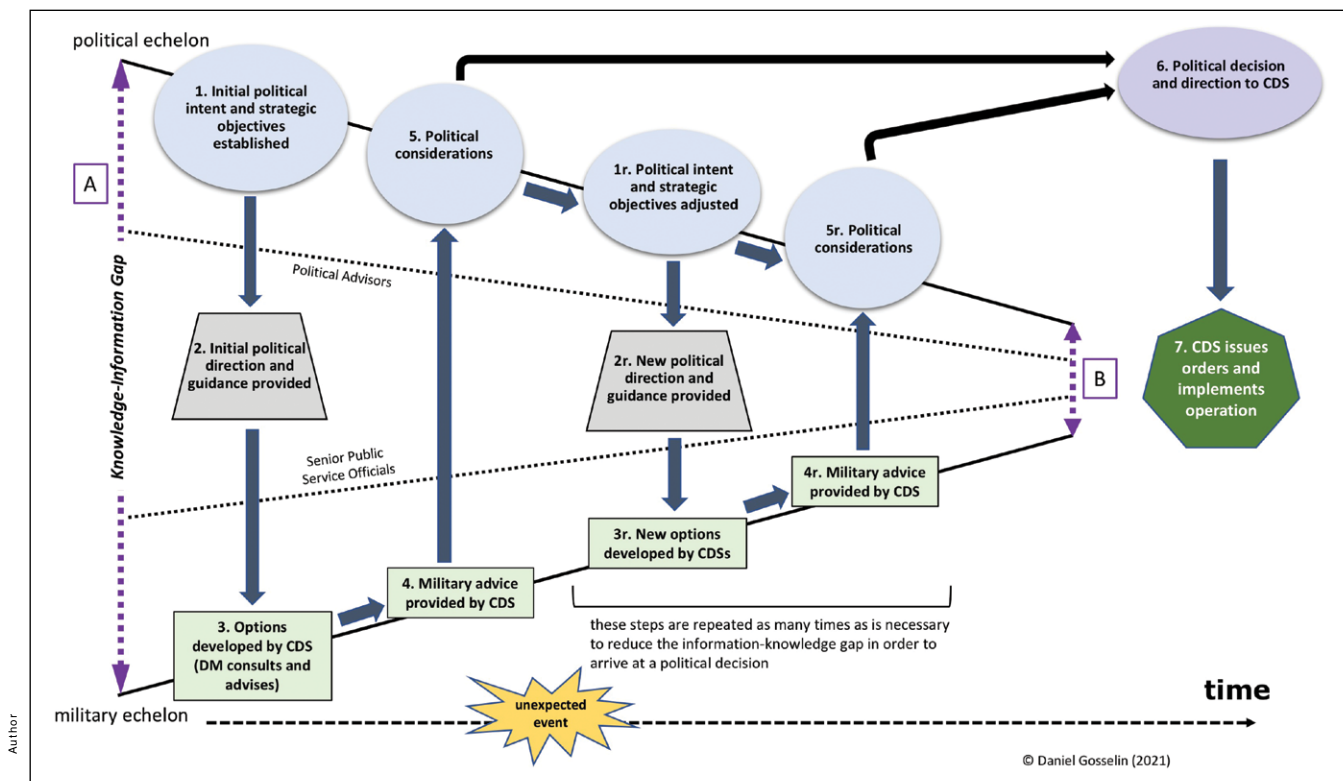


Figure 1: The Intent-Guidance-Options-Advice-Decision Model.

and military echelons is depicted by the bold dashed vertical arrows A and B. This gap is one of the most critical factors bearing on the necessity for a productive political-military dialogue before politicians can take a decision and the CDS can implement government’s direction.<sup>13</sup>

In the initial stages of the dialogue in support of a complex military activity or operation, the gap between the political and military echelon can be quite broad (A), particularly with a newly-elected government not yet fully familiar with the Canadian military. As the discussions and interactions between the two echelons take place over time, this information-knowledge gap will narrow (B).

The exchange of information between the political and military echelons is critical in two important ways. First, a robust and open dialogue will help the military appreciate the context in which the political decision must be made, interpret and understand the political intentions and objectives and obtain sufficient guidance to develop realistic options for consideration by Cabinet. At the same time, this discourse will allow politicians to become more knowledgeable about the military strategy and the options being considered, the capabilities and limitations of the CAF, and the plan(s) for executing all matters related to the operation, including the potential risks. A more informed and knowledgeable political echelon will allow Cabinet members to become more comfortable questioning and challenging military ideas. More importantly, this dialogue will generate a shared responsibility for the success of the process.

In its simplest and purest form, the dialogue between the government and the CDS leading to a decision consists of six key stages. In stage 1, the government establishes its political intent

and the strategic objectives it wants to achieve with the use of the military. In stage 2, initial guidance is transmitted – usually verbally – to the CDS (and the DM). As necessary, the DM will consult with senior public servants in the central agencies of the government and in other departments while the CDS and senior military officers will develop the military strategy and a series of options (stage 3). Once the option analysis is completed (or sufficiently developed), the CDS will provide military advice and recommendations to the MND, Cabinet, or the prime minister when matters warrant (stage 4). Cabinet will consider this military advice in light of other political, social and economic factors that impinge on domestic politics and national security (stage 5) before taking a decision and providing direction to the CDS (stage 6). In accordance with the *National Defence Act*, in stage 7, the CDS will issue orders and instructions to the CAF to give effect to the decision and to carry out the direction of the government.

For most scenarios, either because of the potential complexity of the military operation envisaged or the wide information-knowledge gap that may exist between the political and military echelons, several iterative formal and informal dialogues will be required before a government decision is taken. In this situation, as in shown on Figure 1, stages 1 to 5 will be repeated as many times as is necessary to reduce the knowledge-information gap to eventually arrive at a government decision (identified as stages 1r to 5r for ‘repeated’). As a result of this iterative process, the political and military echelon lines are shown converging as the knowledge-information gap becomes narrower. Note that the longer the dialogue and consultative process takes to arrive at a political decision, the greater the risk of unforeseen events surfacing and possibly re-widening the knowledge-information gap, delaying any definitive decision. Alternately, unexpected events may act as an accelerant to precipitate a government decision.<sup>14</sup>

It is accepted that the model cannot portray the increased complexity that arises when the military is just one of components of a whole-of-government effort, as was the 2003-2014 Afghanistan campaign for instance. In those situations, there are many iterative back-and-forth discussions, between departments and with the Privy Council Office (PCO), before arriving at aligned and coherent recommendations to Cabinet.<sup>15</sup>

The model aims to visualize part of a complex process and is used throughout the article as an organizing framework to structure the discussion and to explain several points and arguments presented. The political-military interactions and dialogue that occur in the policy development and decision-making process represent the central ingredients to this model. Any discussion on the norms of interactions and the boundaries of exchange between the military and political echelons, and the behaviours expected of the Canadian military in providing advice to politicians, must therefore start with a review of the Samuel Huntington's influential ideas outlined in *The Soldier and the State*.

### Huntington's Ghost and Canadian Civil-Military Relations

Huntington's study on civil-military relations has greatly influenced scholarship and thinking about the profession of arms for over six decades. In particular, it has shaped how military leaders came to define their profession and, by extension, the parameters of the relationships and dialogue between the professional military and the political leadership of the state.

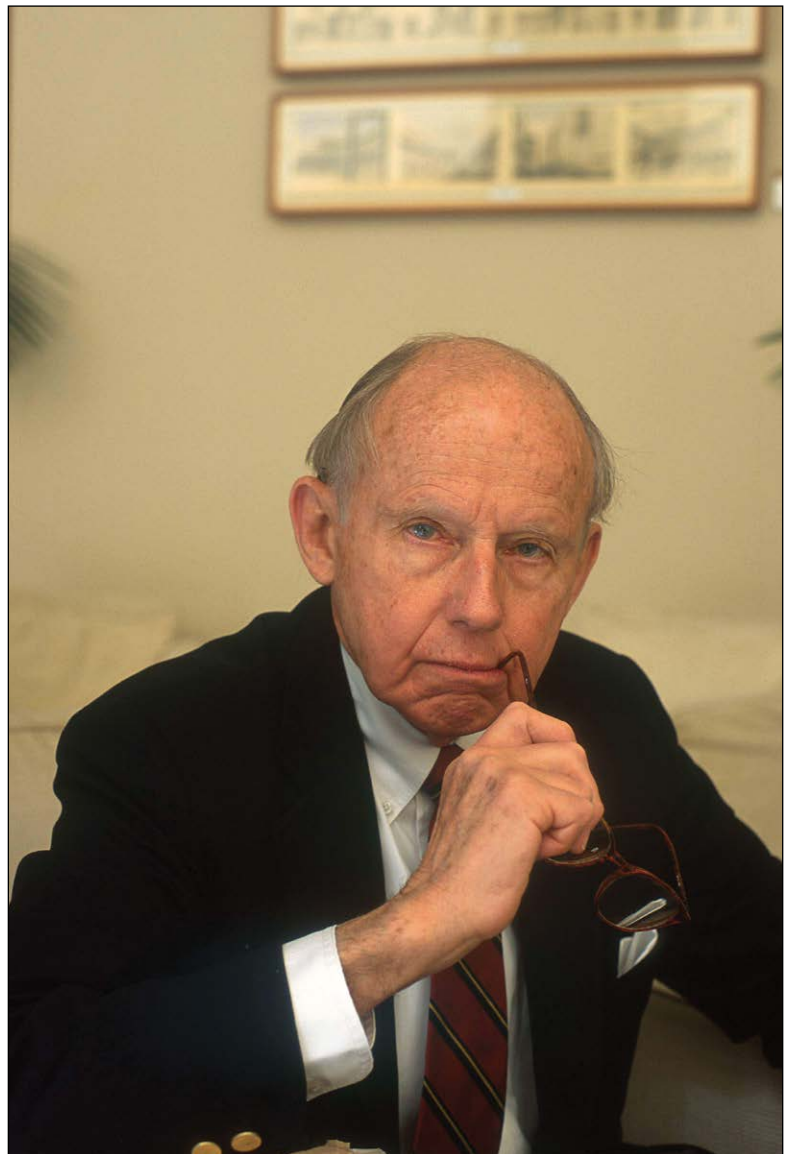
The central element of Huntington's vision was a professional military vocation distinguished by expertise, responsibility and corporateness. Under his theory of civil control,<sup>16</sup> named *objective control*, the recipe was also to isolate the military from the larger society so that it could focus on its core purpose and cultivate expertise in the "management of violence" to support state policy.<sup>17</sup> In parallel, this solution, prescribing a sharp division between the political and military roles, was aimed at ensuring political control and dominance over the armed forces. In addition to requiring a clear delineation of responsibility between military and the political leaders, objective control aimed to maximize military professionalism. According to the logic of Huntington's theory, with a recognition and respect of autonomous military professionalism, the military would adhere to their role as professional advisors and stay out of politics.<sup>18</sup>

While Huntington's theory has been challenged since its inception, it became increasingly clear following the end of the Cold War that it had lost even more of its relevance. New theories and fresh ideas about civil-military relations emerged in the 1990s.<sup>19</sup> A number of important criticisms, relevant to the focus

of this study and Canadian civil-military relations, were directed at some of the norms underlying the objective theory.

First, while Huntington worried that any prominent role of the military in political decision making would damage its professionalism, critics argue that the separation concept was "... flawed from the outset because it presumed that the military and political spheres could be distinguished in a comprehensive and meaningful way."<sup>20</sup> Unlike during the Cold War, it becomes more difficult in conflicts of low-intensity warfare to neatly separate and compartmentalize strategic political decisions and implications from military action.<sup>21</sup> Clearly delineating roles for political and military leaders, considering the complexity of military, defence and security issues, is unrealistic, and the notion does not reflect the modern norms and practices of military strategy making and policy implementation in most Western democracies today.

**"The central element of Huntington's vision was a professional military vocation distinguished by expertise, responsibility and corporateness."**



Samuel Huntington in 2002.

Agence Opale/Alamy Stock Photo/HP7XY3

Second, Huntington did not specifically consider the implications for military advice and strategy that the clear separation of the military and political spheres inferred.<sup>22</sup> Excluding the intellectual engagement of senior officers with how political and non-military factors might bear on the development of the military strategy or the conduct of the operations fails to account for the fact that political objectives, policy and military strategy are intrinsically linked.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, it oversimplifies the nature of the interactions that are necessary between the political and military levels to address complex military and defence issues and ensure coherence between policy, military capabilities and the situation on the ground. The range of tasks that now falls under the rubric of national security is much broader than strictly the “management of violence” that Huntington identified as the essence of the military mission.<sup>24</sup> Even as early as 1962, after the Bay of Pigs fiasco with the failed invasion of Cuba, President John F. Kennedy, dissatisfied with the military advice he had received from his senior military advisors, wrote to the Joint Chiefs stating that he regarded “... them to be more than military men and expect their help in fitting military requirements into the over-all context of any situation.”<sup>25</sup>

Third, while seemingly appealing at first to the military because of the dimensions of military expertise and autonomy of the profession, Huntington’s ideas can encourage military officers to be blind to political realities, and to believe that they alone are competent to judge on military matters. This can lead military officers to the conviction that they have both the right to insist that politicians follow their advice on military strategy and operations, and an obligation to dissent or resign if their advice is not followed.<sup>26</sup>

Confronted with the many problems of Huntington’s paradigm and norms that did not accurately reflect the Canadian reality, former Canadian military officer and defence management authority Dr Douglas Bland suggested in 1999 that one should look at political-military decision-making as a “shared responsibility.” In essence, with the Canadian experience in mind, Bland argued that the relationships and the arrangements between the military officers and political leaders are conditioned by a national regime of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures, with civil control of the military managed and maintained through this sharing of responsibility. What is involved and required is “civilian [political] direction of the military and not domination.”<sup>27</sup> In practice, “effective civil-military relations rely on a dialogue.”<sup>28</sup> American political scientist Eliot Cohen, in his 2002 book *Supreme Command*, stressed the need for an “unequal dialogue” between the political and military echelons, a robust dialogue where both sides express their views forthrightly to ensure good national decisions and sound military strategy, with the final authority of the political echelon unquestioned.<sup>29</sup>

The disappointing campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have generated much discussion, debate and criticism, particularly in the US and in the UK, raising many questions about the relationship between the military and the state, between generals and politicians, and between politics and the art of war.<sup>30</sup> Critics of



General Sir Mike Jackson in 2003.

Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy Stock Photo/B4YKX1

the Huntington model have been arguing for the past decade that the development of national security and military strategy cannot be neatly separated from the political process.<sup>31</sup> Not since the deliberations in the aftermath of the Vietnam War has the role of military leaders in shaping national strategies and their involvement in politics been discussed with such interest and passion.<sup>32</sup>

In summary, while Samuel Huntington’s ghost still lingers, scholars and practitioners of civil-military relations have recognized that the boundaries separating politics and politicians from the military have become blurred in democracies. Until the recent crisis of confidence triggered by allegations of inappropriate behaviour against two CDSs, civil-military relations in Canada had generally been healthy, sustained by a model of political-military partnership and “shared responsibility” that has developed very well since the dark days of the Somalia Affair.

### Looking for Political Guidance, but Dreading Direction

“Political guidance can be really helpful if you get it.”<sup>33</sup>

General Sir Mike Jackson  
Former British Chief of the Defence Staff

In the ideal framework of civil-military relations, politicians set out the political intent and the policy, provide direction and guidance to the armed forces, which then develops a military strategy and coordinates the means to enable the

achievement of the strategic objectives. “In the case of plans or orders developed at the strategic level, the CDS will receive political *direction* from the Government,” states confidently the most recent Canadian doctrine on operational planning.<sup>34</sup> The practical reality is that the Canadian national security and defence decision-making process is rarely as self-evident and as sequential as the idealized process portrayed within military doctrine. This section discusses the first two stages of the IGOAD model presented at Figure 1, particularly the process for identifying the political aims and objectives sought by the government when the use of the CAF in operations is contemplated.

Different types of national or international crises and scenarios bring about different ways for the government to declare its political intent and progressively identify the objectives it wants to achieve. At the same time, each situation offers an opportunity to the CDS and the DM (and other senior public servants) to understand and frame the nature of the problem requiring the use of the military, and to influence the crafting of overarching goals and specific objectives. To facilitate the discussion, I have identified four types of situations representing different starting points on government approaches to political intent and objectives. Each is discussed below with specific case studies.

The first is when the political level has publicly committed to take action on an issue involving Canadian defence and the CAF. This scenario tends to be most pronounced when a new government has been elected. During the fall 2015 election campaign, the Liberals had promised to end the combat mission in the Middle East, and to re-focus the military contribution in the region on the training of local forces and humanitarian support.<sup>35</sup> The CDS, General Jon Vance, certainly believed that once the government got to better understand the reasons for this combat mission, and appreciate the potential negative consequences with Canada’s allies of pulling out prematurely, the government would retreat from its promise.<sup>36</sup> As the CDS quickly realized as soon as he had his initial discussions with the new MND, Harjit Sajjan, this commitment was not just an electoral promise to be forgotten once elected; rather, it became the most immediate priority for the minister.<sup>37</sup>

Vance argued strongly – and on a number of occasions, against the decision to bring home the CF-18 fighter jets that were part of the US-led coalition bombing ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria.<sup>38</sup> He was not successful. The government’s intent was decisive and clear: the CDS had received direction and not guidance. From that moment forward, it was up to DND and the CAF to execute the government decision and develop options and a plan to refocus the mission in Iraq. While it took several weeks to restructure the CAF military contribution as part of a whole-of-government effort, there was no ambiguity in the political intent of the government with Op IMPACT.<sup>39</sup> In early February 2016, only a few months after assuming power, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made the formal announcement and airstrikes against ISIS ended two weeks later.<sup>40</sup>

**“Different types of national or international crises and scenarios bring about different ways for the government to declare its political intent and progressively identify the objectives it wants to achieve.”**

In the same electoral platform of 2015, Trudeau committed “to supporting international peace operations with the United Nations [UN].” It was also a high priority assigned to both the MND and the minister of foreign affairs.<sup>41</sup> Within months, the government proudly announced that Canada would send 600 troops to support a UN mission, without specifying where and when that mission would be.<sup>42</sup> Even with the spirited government statements about increased CAF participation in UN operations, it took nearly two years of planning, dialogue, negotiations for the government to eventually commit to the deployment of helicopters as part of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Vague political intentions and ambiguous – even conflicting – strategic objectives on the part of the government presented significant challenges to the CDS to develop realistic options for Cabinet about an important decision that the military had to eventually implement. The dilemmas and opportunities that nebulous political guidance create for the CDS are discussed in the next section.

A rapidly developing domestic or international crisis is the second situation where clear government intent can surface very rapidly. The CAF response to the Haiti earthquake in January 2010 is a good example of unambiguous political intent, leading to a quick prime ministerial decision. RAdm (later VAdm) Bob Davidson, the Director of Staff of the Strategic Joint Staff (DOS SJS) at the time, immediately asked his staff to look at CAF military assistance options for Haiti as soon as the magnitude of the earthquake became known to him.<sup>43</sup> Since assuming power in 2006, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper had shown decisiveness with sending CAF military personnel, including the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), to assist other nations in the wake of disasters. It was obvious to Davidson that Canada would respond rapidly and provide assistance, and that the CAF would be involved.

Lieutenant-General Marc Lessard, Commander Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command,<sup>44</sup> responsible for assembling and dispatching the military task force, vividly recalls being told the morning after the earthquake by the CDS, then General Walt Natynczyk, to “Go big. Go fast.” While traveling from Edmonton to Ottawa on the Challenger aircraft, Natynczyk had been involved in several phone calls with the MND, who was also in contact with the prime minister.<sup>45</sup> Within 36 hours, a Royal Canadian Navy destroyer and a frigate were leaving Halifax for Haiti, and a C-17 transport aircraft loaded with two helicopters and 200 personnel was en route to Port-au-Prince. Over the next weeks, Joint Task Force Haiti grew to over 2,000 CAF personnel as part of a whole-of-government effort delivering a wide range of services in support of the Government of Haiti.<sup>46</sup> When the political intent of the government and the strategic objectives are reasonably clear, as it was in this situation, and the CAF risks are well understood and manageable, steps 1 to 6 of the IGOAD model can occur very rapidly, within hours. As one senior general officer who was closely involved at the time remarked, a quick executive decision by the prime minister will also swiftly overpower the natural inertia of the Ottawa bureaucracy.<sup>47</sup>

The CAF's assistance to provincial governments dealing with the effects of forest fires, and spring floods are other examples of these types of situations, when both the political and military echelons become aware of the developing crisis or disaster at the same time, and government intentions for the military to respond and assist are predictable. The issue facing the CDS and senior military planners in those situations is not one of ambiguity of political direction or indecisiveness, but of being able to rapidly develop options and plans that achieve coherence between the policy intent, military capabilities and the reality of the situation on the ground such that the government can make a timely and informed decision and a public announcement.

The CAF response in spring 2020 to the COVID-19 pandemic represented a unique situation where the military and politicians saw the role of the CAF differently. It was clear from the early days of the crisis that the CAF would be part of the national response to the pandemic, potentially assisting various levels of government with military transport, logistics support and even assistance to law enforcement agencies if needed. The dynamics changed when both the Premiers of Quebec and Ontario made public demands for the military to provide direct support to long-term care facilities.<sup>48</sup> Initially, senior military planners discounted the use of the CAF for this role, seeing it as a misuse of the military. This type of task certainly challenged established beliefs and attitudes about what the military is about, and senior military officers resisted the notion of deploying personnel into these facilities. When it became evident that CAF personnel would likely be involved, senior departmental officials argued – unsuccessfully – to limit the employment to 30 days. Ultimately, political leaders, who viewed the protection of Canadians as an appropriate task under the dire circumstances, made the decision to deploy the CAF. The CDS was able to set the preparation and training requirements and several employment conditions for this unusual deployment.<sup>49</sup>

Pressure from Canada's allies and expectations that arise from the sense of responsibility and engagement that accompanies the country's membership in alliances or international organizations can also be significant in influencing the government to participate in military operations abroad. When NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history after the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien immediately assured President George W. Bush of Canada's military support in the anticipated military campaign against Al Qaeda. "I have made it clear from the very beginning that Canada would be part of this coalition every step of the way," stated the prime minister.<sup>50</sup> With a clear intent, yet flexible political guidance, senior Canadian military officers, in addition to scrambling for their maps of Afghanistan, rushed to develop realistic options for the government. The CDS, General Henault, immediately dispatched a team of three senior general/flag officers to US Central Command in Tampa, Florida to initiate discussions about the CAF's participation in the US-led intervention

in Afghanistan.<sup>51</sup> On 7 October 2001, Chrétien announced Canada's contribution to the coalition on the War on Terror. Even with the urgency of the situation, it took weeks of negotiations with the US military to determine how Canada could best contribute.

Similarly, at the G7 meeting in Japan in May 2016, the American delegation put significant pressure on Canada – at both the political and bureaucratic levels – to assume the Framework Nation role for the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (efP) mission in Latvia,<sup>52</sup> responsible for regional deterrence and defence to signal NATO's resolve and unity in response to Russia's action in Ukraine in early 2014.<sup>53</sup> Just over a month after the G7 meeting, following a quick analysis by the CDS and military planners of the feasibility of undertaking this important leadership role, the MND formally announced Canada's participation.<sup>54</sup> It was not a leadership responsibility for the Canadian military that the CDS had searched or lobbied for, but the government commitment sent a strong signal that NATO was a top defence priority for Canada. It is no coincidence that the announcement came the day after US President Barack Obama, who was visiting Ottawa, challenged Canada to do more to support the military alliance.

**“With a clear intent, yet flexible political guidance, senior Canadian military officers, in addition to scrambling for their maps of Afghanistan, rushed to develop realistic options for the government.”**

When a situation in the world or in Canada develops that may potentially demand the use of the military, the defence establishment can be quite adept at foreseeing circumstances where the government may be considering this option. Building from long-standing Canadian interests and principles, foreign and defence policies enunciated by the government, major speeches and public statements by the prime minister and other politicians, and ministerial mandate letters, NDHQ staff can often anticipate a request by the government, prompting the CDS to develop military analyses and options. On occasion, events around the world may provide the CDS with an opportunity to alert the government to options that the political echelon may not even have contemplated yet, and to offer capabilities that the military finds enticing to deploy for national – and institutional – reasons.

The decision in April 2014 by Prime Minister Harper to deploy land, air and sea elements to the Ukraine region in support of NATO is a perfect example of a bottom-up suggestion initiated by the CDS, then General Tom Lawson. Well aware of the prime minister's strong condemnation of Russia's illegal invasion of and occupation of Crimea, and of early discussions taking place at NATO about possible steps to deter further aggression and to reassure allies and partners in Central and Eastern Europe, Lawson approached the national security advisor to the prime minister (NSA) with a proposal for an immediate military contribution that the CAF could make if the government was interested.<sup>55</sup> Within only a few hours of this discussion with the NSA, the CDS was asked to come to the Langevin Block to brief the prime minister, who immediately made the decision to offer CAF assets and personnel to NATO.<sup>56</sup> Harper announced the military deployment during a rare appearance at NDHQ a month later.<sup>57</sup>



Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Chief of the Defence Staff General Tom Lawson announce that Canada will send six CF-18 fighter jets to Eastern Europe as part of a NATO mission during a press conference in Ottawa, 17 April 2014.

This discussion on political intent, direction and guidance raises a number of important considerations about stages 1 to 3 of the IGAOD model. First, when the political intent is clear and the objectives of the government are reasonably well established, the options to be considered by the CDS become more limited, the political-military dialogue is more unidirectional, and military advice, having a more limited impact on the decision, becomes focused more exclusively on how to implement the direction from the government.

Second, there is an important distinction between political direction and guidance. As military strategy is being contemplated and developed to meet a given political intent, political direction too early in the process – including unrealistic or nebulous constraints, may limit the development of military options and choices that could result in a better policy and strategy for the government and Canada. Military officers are generally unreceptive to, and frustrated by, direction and limitations that impinge on their professional autonomy and that raise doubts about their military expertise.<sup>58</sup> Bad and inflexible political direction, and conditions that may impact on how the operational risk has to be managed by the CDS, invite not only potential disaster in operations but also dissent or shirking on the part of the military.<sup>59</sup> Because of the spiral loop that exists between policy, military strategy and operations, the military will prefer and even crave political guidance that will give them an opportunity to ensure that the policy ends and the military strategy can align to meet the requirements for operational success. Good political guidance should provide

the military an opportunity to engage politicians and senior public servants with a military strategy and options that the government may not even have initially considered.

Third, the challenge of bringing clarity to national aims and objectives is even more acute when complex expeditionary operations are envisaged, such as the missions with the US-led coalition in Afghanistan after 9/11 or in support of the UN in Mali in 2018. In those scenarios, the government usually seeks to achieve a stated political aim not through the application of a distinctive and independent Canadian military strategy, but rather by contributing a respectable military force through participation in an alliance/coalition campaign or with the UN. In those situations of *contribution warfare*, it can be extremely difficult for the Canadian government to establish political objectives early in the process and to provide clear guidance to the CDS.<sup>60</sup> The resulting process – called strategy development, will necessarily be quite iterative, consisting of a continuous dialogue between the military and senior levels of the government to ensure the objectives (ends) of a given policy reflect the military means available to implement it.<sup>61</sup> Considering the inherent complexity of military operations, it is unrealistic to expect politicians to be solely responsible to align policy ends, objectives, ways and means. Along with other key actors in government, an experienced DM along with the CDS can play key roles to help frame the problem or issue in order to set the context for the right dialogue so as to facilitate defining the ends and strategic objectives sought by the government.

While military planners may hope and expect to receive clear political direction and guidance when the government contemplates the use of the CAF, as the Canadian military doctrine stipulates, there are many political realities that tend to preclude this precision.<sup>62</sup> For one, a newly-elected government may not have a sufficient understanding of the CAF capabilities and limitations, how the mission may unfold (including fears of escalation and entanglement once the mission evolves), and of the potential costs and risks in order to be in a position to enunciate any reasonable guidance at an early stage. As well, the dynamics of the situation or events may be complex or shifting rapidly, such that, except for enunciating a broad commitment of Canadian military participation, it may be too early to be able to outline clear priorities and strategic objectives. Alliance and coalition considerations, including negotiations about CAF participation (which necessarily trigger additional complexities), will usually delay and even hinder the development of any clear political guidance. Finally, domestic political considerations may make it difficult for political leaders to communicate clear expectations too early, particularly in public when they expect to be held accountable.

In summary, there is an important difference between the political intent of the government and the political direction and/or guidance provided to the CDS. While the broad political intent of employing the Canadian military may be clear and evident in some situations, it is another matter for the military to expect clear guidance when the knowledge-information gap between the political and military echelons is wide (vertical arrow A of

the IGOAD model). While it is recognized that policy objectives cannot be stated with any precision early in the process, ideally three elements should be articulated: the level of ambition, the resources available, and the time commitment.

### Formulating Military Advice in an Ambiguous Environment

In its highly critical report documenting the 1995-97 inquiry into the deployment of the Canadian Forces to Somalia, the commissioners blamed the CDS, General John De Chastelain for “[f]ailure to ensure that a proper analysis and comprehensive estimate of the situation were undertaken with respect to Operation DELIVERANCE and, accordingly, *failing to provide adequate advice* to the Minister of National Defence and the Cabinet with respect to these matters.”<sup>63</sup> The year 1997 proved to be a turning point for military professionalism in Canada, which led to many important reforms for the CAF, including developments in how the CDS formulates and confers military advice to government.

One of the most significant changes was initiated in early 2006 by the CDS, then General Rick Hillier, when he established a strong unified Strategic Joint Staff (SJS) reporting directly to him. Hillier knew that the military was at a distinct disadvantage in the Ottawa asymmetric environment when providing military advice and strategic analyses to the government. The intent with the SJS was to strengthen the capacity of the military to



REUTERS/Alamy Stock Photo/ZCKBNOA

Prime Minister Paul Martin (R) meets with newly-appointed CDS General Rick Hillier and MND Bill Graham in Ottawa 14 January 2005.



develop and provide "... timely and effective military analysis and decision support to the CDS," by initiating and synchronizing CAF and departmental strategic-level planning to translate government intent, direction and guidance into a range of credible military options and effective strategic effects.<sup>64</sup>

As Part I of this article highlighted, there is no formal doctrine on what constitutes military advice and how the CDS formulates this military advice to government. The CAF doctrine on strategic-level planning, identified as the CF Forces Employment Planning Process (FEPP), recognizes that the process for developing options for the employment of the military capabilities is "adaptive and dynamic," non-linear, and requiring a "constant interactive dialogue" between a myriad of actors at the political, bureaucratic and military levels.<sup>65</sup> While there is no doctrine that speaks to the process of formulating military advice, there is detailed CAF doctrine about the process to prepare plans and orders for operations. The current Operational Planning Process (OPP), while offering an "idealized process," offers good guidance for commanders and staffs at the strategic and operational levels.<sup>66</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this article to explain how military planning for operations takes place in NDHQ. What is more relevant to this study is an appreciation of the most important elements that influence the development and formulation of

professional military advice by the CDS. The relative failure of the Somalia mission in 1992-93 and subsequent inquiries and studies of the 1990s continue to weigh on the minds of senior Canadian military officers, who at the time were mid-grade officers watching the constant criticism of the military and are now responsible as senior general and flag officers with formulating military advice for the government.<sup>67</sup> The interviews conducted for this study with senior military officers and officials repeatedly highlighted three key characteristics that underlie the preparation of military advice: extensive consultations to bring clarity to the strategic objectives and to develop options and advice for the CDS; professional military expertise; and rigorous planning. Each is discussed in turn below.

The development of military options by the CDS involves assessing a multitude of factors that will determine the feasibility, impact and risks of each military option, with the intent of making recommendations to the government. Using a complex international operation as an example, Table 2 outlines a non-exhaustive list of typical questions that would be considered in the initial planning stage. The breadth and scope of the questions clearly highlight the complexity of the factors that need to be examined when developing options and formulating military advice to government.

## Selected Questions to Consider when Formulating Military Advice

### A. Government Strategic (Political) Objectives

- What public statements have already been made that can provide an indication of government intent?
- What are the strategic objectives sought by the Canadian government? And why?
- Is the government strongly supportive, hesitant or reluctant for the potential mission?
- Is the government being pressured by world events, NATO or a close ally?
- What are the national interests for undertaking this mission?
- What formal (or implied) guidance has been provided by the government?
- What is the expected timeline for the mission?
- What is Global Affairs Canada's position (supportive, neutral, hesitant)?
- What are the historical and current Government of Canada policies potentially impacting on the mission?
- What is the status of current diplomatic relations with the country(ies) where the mission may take place?
- What is Canada's exit strategy? Does it have one?

### B. Type of Mission

- Is this a whole-of-government mission?
- If so, which departments are expected to also participate?
- Is this contribution warfare only?
- What are the objectives of the mission (UN, coalition, alliance)?
- What is the location of the mission?
- Will there be a meaningful role for the CAF?
- What is the best military strategy for Canada?
- What are the options available or being considered?
- What kind of operational and tactical actions are envisaged?
- How best to achieve alignment between political objectives, military strategy and tactical actions?
- Can tactical actions meet the strategic objectives sought?
- What is the theatre of operations, and what are its peculiarities (geography, region, terrain, history, culture)?
- What is the expected duration of mission?
- If contribution warfare, which country will replace Canada?

**Selected Questions to Consider when Formulating Military Advice**

**C. Force Generation, CAF Capacity and Readiness**

- Does sufficient CAF capacity exist to take the expected role(s)?
- How long can the mission be sustained?
- Is there a limit (cap) on the number of personnel to deploy?
- If so, what are the risks and potential implications for the mission with this imposed limit?
- Are adequate resources provided by government for the mission (multi rotations)?
- Are the options being considered within the estimated (or allocated) financial resources?
- What key capabilities may be missing, and need to be provided by coalition lead?
- What are the main logistical challenges, and how are they going to be addressed?
- What is the readiness of unit(s) expected to deploy?
- What kind of pre-deployment training will be required (how much and for how long)?
- What kind of cultural, in-theatre and familiarization training will be required?

**D. CAF Institutional and Operational risks**

- Is the mission beneficial to the CAF? In the short term? In the long term?
- Will the mission enhance the CAF's standing and reputation with its main allies?
- What are the institutional risks with undertaking this mission?
- What are the operational risks?
- Can the operational risks be mitigated, and, if so, how?
- What are the risks to CAF personnel (including loss of life), and how can they be mitigated?

**E. Coalition/Alliance Arrangements**

- What is the coalition lead or alliance asking from Canada?
- Which country is the coalition lead nation, and why?
- What is the support expected from lead nation (intelligence, engineers, logistics, medical)?
- What are the command arrangements?
- Which country is strategically leading and/or commanding the mission?
- Which other nations will be operating with the CAF, and what role will they have?
- How are other nations involved in this mission considering the use of force?
- Will Canada able to influence on alliance/coalition military strategy?
- Will Canada have any senior diplomatic or military positions to be able to influence the mission?
- Will there be any interoperability challenges (including but not limited to intelligence sharing)?

Author

Table 2: Selected Questions for the CDS to Consider when Formulating Military Advice.

*Note: Assume an international mission in a complex, low-intensity environment.*

Politicians want options and strategic assessments from the CDS (and the DM) that will allow them to better define the problem before policy goals and strategic objectives are stated with precision. They also want to maintain flexibility and will use as much time as necessary – or is available – to define those objectives, as unforeseen events and external shocks may rapidly change the framing of the problem.<sup>68</sup> Conversely, to initiate planning, the military wants sufficient clarity with the strategic objectives the government seeks to achieve. Without clear strategic guidance, military planners will waste precious staff time and effort developing unrealistic military options, and they will not be able to rapidly develop credible options to allow Cabinet and the prime minister to make informed decisions. Politicians ask for options to help define the strategic objectives; the military want objectives to help define the options. In short, while it may seem counter-intuitive, and it is certainly not what the CAF doctrine calls for, initial options are sometimes needed to help define strategic objectives.<sup>69</sup>

For the more complex types of operations, those realities make the process of developing options and formulating military advice quite iterative, as portrayed in the IGOAD model through the repeated stages. Many of the questions listed in boxes A and B of Table 2 are therefore intended to help the CDS and the DM better understand those strategic objectives. In the integrated NDHQ structure, the responsibility to bring clarity to many of those questions, particularly those in box A, falls to the DM and the policy staff, who have a critical role to play, through constant dialogue with the MND, political advisors, and other senior government officials, to help the CDS narrow the knowledge-information gap between the political and military echelons.

Extensive consultations by both the DND and CAF staff, inside and outside government, are a critical ingredient to the formulation of military advice, particularly to ensure that any advice to government is nested within both existing government policy and the perspectives of other departments. As soon

as strategic-level planning is initiated by the CDS, dynamic discussions occur at every level of the CAF and the department, and in various directions, as the CDS, DM and the staff at NDHQ are attempting to bring clarity to, and even influence, the government's objectives. They are also seeking to understand the geopolitical environment, particularly how a given situation in Canada or in the world is developing, and to determine how other governmental departments, international organizations, and military allies are approaching the issue or crisis.

The majority of the questions listed in Table 2 can only be answered with the CAF and departmental leaderships leveraging a complex and well-developed network of contacts in government, in Canada, and around the world (when an international operation is considered).<sup>70</sup> The CDS and senior military strategic staffs are very well connected with the military staffs of Canada's close allies, which often allows the CDS to obtain critical information about the evolution of coalition/alliance military plans and even the peculiarities of the potential theatre of operations. Successful consultations, and no-nonsense discussions inside NDHQ to harmonize and even integrate military and defence advice into a coherent whole, are therefore critical to allow the CDS and DM to be in a position to present sound military options to the government.

The second characteristic that defines CDS military advice is professional military expertise. Military officers have considerable technical expertise and operational experience that is unique in government. For a complex international operation, like Canada's mission in Mali in 2018, the number of military and defence experts involved in the analysis, in developing feasible options and plans and in assessing the myriad of risks, is extensive. Any multifaceted military operation will always raise important considerations that only the military, with its developed knowledge, extensive training and unique expertise, can assess. The modern character of many low-intensity conflicts and warfare has given senior military advisors with recent operational experience greater power and influence with this expertise.

Rigorous planning by NDHQ staff, particularly within the SJS, the environmental components and the Canadian Joint Operational Command, is the third defining characteristic of CDS military advice.<sup>71</sup> When asked what best described the military advice he provided to government, General Vance, who served over five years as CDS and also two years as the DOS SJS, immediately emphasized rigour and research.<sup>72</sup> It is critically important that military advice be thoroughly researched and grounded in a deliberate and comprehensive process of analysis with much attention given to details that may impact the success – or failure – of a mission. When feasible, fact-finding and military reconnaissance visits to the potential theatre of operations are central to military planning. For instance, for the 2018 Mali mission (Op PRESENCE), two extensive visits to many central African countries and to UN missions in the region were conducted by teams of senior military officers and civilian members from DND and Global Affairs Canada (GAC).<sup>73</sup>

The culture of the military planning staff is inherently assiduous and diligent in assessing the potential consequences and risks of military operations and activities. It is grounded in very specialized knowledge, an appreciation of history and extensive operational experience. There are two aspects that make this military planning specialized. First, experienced senior military officers have the ability to visualize how the many different components of a military activity or operation need to be integrated in order to perform effectively as a complete formation or task force, while at the same time understanding how best to mitigate the risks to the mission, personnel and equipment. The challenge for the CDS when engaging with senior officials and politicians with this expertise is to find ways to simplify the core military issues to narrow as much as possible the knowledge-information gap.

**“Successful consultations, and no-nonsense discussions inside NDHQ to harmonize and even integrate military and defence advice into a coherent whole, are therefore critical to allow the CDS and DM to be in a position to present sound military options to the government.”**

Second, military planners are adept at – and fond of – rehearsal of concept (ROC) drills that allow them to test the plans in a virtual setting and to ‘wargame’ how certain scenarios may develop over time given different conditions and situations. These rehearsals are critical, not only to ensure all participants understand well the plan or the specific set of actions expected, but to improve the original plan and even develop additional contingency plans. ROC drills can also be very useful to the CDS and other senior defence officials to help develop a clear narrative to explain to government officials not familiar with military capabilities how a mission or a given CAF operation may unfold over time under certain conditions.

In sum, reliable expert military advice and detailed planning are at the heart of building trust between military officers, senior civil servants and politicians. It is an essential element for the constructive dialogue that is necessary

to develop sound strategy and help narrow the knowledge-information gap between the political and military echelons. Professional military advice represents the collective professional judgement of many senior officers and defence officials, consolidated through the CDS. Military advice is not infallible, but it will be more credible and therefore more difficult for civilian policy makers to question or to overrule when the planning is sound and thorough.

### **The Essence of Decision and the Politics of Military Advice**

“Good military advice...should invite questions and highlight risks. It should not box in senior policymakers but instead make clear that there are decisions to be taken.”<sup>74</sup>

Lawrence Freedman  
British Professor of Strategic Studies

The intersection of national policy, military strategy and professional military expertise means that the CDS occupies a unique position of authority in the structure of the Canadian government. Through his professional military advice and interactions with politicians, political advisors and senior government officials, the CDS is an important national actor shaping and influencing the making of defence and security policies. The machinery and processes of the

Canadian government raises a number of issues, complications and opportunities for the CDS and senior military officers. The starting point for this discussion is an understanding of how the CDS interacts with government officials and convey military advice to government.

Claims by defence critics and analysts that military advice from the CDS relating to decisions about the Somalia mission in 1992-1993 may have been filtered by senior public servants, contributing to poor decision making about the deployment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, led MND Douglas Young, in his March 1997 report to the prime minister, to commit, from that day forward, that "...military advice conveyed to the Minister and the Cabinet [be] clearly identified as such in all appropriate documents." Young also confirmed the practice that existed at the time that the CDS has "unfettered access" to the MND, and to the prime minister when the matter justifies it, and attends Cabinet "whenever important military issues are discussed."<sup>75</sup>

There are two ways for the CDS to offer military advice to government: written and verbal. Depending on the situation, and the type and complexity of government decision required, a formal letter by the CDS can be written to the minister, or a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) can be submitted by ministers when seeking a Cabinet decision on their proposals. When time is of the essence, a briefing deck may also be used to frame the Cabinet discussions. For Cabinet discussions that concern the CAF and when a MC has been prepared, a military advice section will be added to the MC.<sup>76</sup> There are no formal instructions from the PCO as to format for CDS military advice, but it will typically consist of one to three paragraphs either in support of the main recommendations contained in the MC, to reinforce an issue specific to the military, or to provide specific advice on a military operation (e.g., options, feasibility and risks). MCs (and briefing decks) are developed through several successive drafts, researched and consulted with the departments involved in the proposals.

One senior political advisor, who had years of experience in the office of the MND, stated that written military advice by the CDS is considered "sacred," and while MCs are constantly reviewed and edited before final ministerial signature(s), no one but the CDS has the authority to write and amend the military advice section of an MC. Even though the SJS will contribute with the preparation of this military advice section, CDSs will spend the necessary time to personally review, write and confirm the advice given to Cabinet in an MC.

When military issues are discussed in Cabinet, the CDS is invited to attend (often with the DM) and given an opportunity to provide verbal military advice to ministers. For significant military deployments, particularly if these are likely to be controversial and/or give rise to significant risks, the options are usually considered by a group of ministers, whether meeting regularly as a Cabinet committee or Cabinet as a whole, which is chaired by the prime minister. In 2018, the government established the Incident Response Group (IRG), a dedicated, emergency ad hoc Cabinet committee that convenes for high-level coordination and

decision-making in the event of a national crisis or during incidents elsewhere in the world that may have major implications for Canada. Often chaired by the prime minister, the IRG is attended by invitation only and by ministers and department officials with a role with the issue or incident discussed.<sup>77</sup> General Vance had the opportunity to attend a number of IRG meetings discussing the CAF support to the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>78</sup> In fact, CDSs rarely delegate to other senior officers their responsibility to advise Cabinet, attesting to the importance they place on this advisory role.<sup>79</sup>

Once Cabinet considers the advice of the CDS and renders a decision on a military deployment, Defence officials are informed by PCO in order to facilitate immediate and critical military planning and to initiate force generation activities. Written direction usually follows in the form of a letter from the prime minister to the MND. The CDS will then issue operational orders and directives to the CAF.<sup>80</sup>

In Ottawa, the policy and decision-making processes take place "in an environment that is as much a chaotic marketplace as a planned system."<sup>81</sup> Many senior military officers who first get exposed to this environment, and who are used to organized military planning and structured decision-making processes, find it disconcerting – and frustrating – that there is no proper formal process for military advice.<sup>82</sup> In general, the policy development processes and the structure of authority and decision-making of the federal government beyond Parliament are not legislated, with roles and processes remaining within the purview of the prime minister to alter and adapt to suit the agenda and priorities of the government. There is also no mention of military advice in the *National Defence Act*. While there is no formally articulated or single process for the CDS to convey military advice to the government, the practice that Minister Young outlined in 1997 has continued to this day, and every senior government official and

**"When military issues are discussed in Cabinet, the CDS is invited to attend (often with the DM) and given an opportunity to provide verbal military advice to ministers."**

former CDS interviewed for this study confirmed that the machinery is generally effective notwithstanding.

In this untidy environment, relationships matter significantly. Government departments are organized vertically, but the development of policies demands cross-government perspectives, and the resolution of most issues requires extensive horizontal consultation and collaboration. This reality present two challenges and a dilemma for the CDS. First, any military officer appointed to the position of CDS will not have had the time and opportunity to develop the career-long relationships that deputy ministers will have.<sup>83</sup> Two former CDSs, Generals Lawson and Vance, made it a priority early in their mandate to be more present in Ottawa to participate in all key deputy minister meetings (such as the Deputy Ministers Operations Committee) and to establish relationships with other deputy ministers and senior officials in PCO, particularly those key senior public servants who, day-to-day, deal with defence and security issues.<sup>84</sup> Relationships built on trust take time to develop.

Second, any CDS needs not only to learn the structure of the government and the role of key actors within it, but how policies and national security decisions are made, and, more critically, how to navigate effectively in the intricate political-bureaucratic

epicentre of Ottawa. Senior public servants who have spent their career in the Public Service in many different positions in Ottawa, like the DM DND, have learned to work – and even thrive – through the layers, hurdles and disjointedness of this system to advance the agenda of their department and the government. Notwithstanding that collegiality and collaboration is a dominant refrain in the world of federal deputy ministers, traditional bureaucratic politics are still present.<sup>85</sup> Most senior military officers are generally novice in this environment, and need to adapt very rapidly to succeed and be effective, particularly as CDS.

The dilemma that arises out of the position of the CDS is the unique relationship that a general or admiral who reaches the top military position will have with the prime minister (PM). While many in government proffer that the CDS is just like any other deputy minister, it remains that the CDS is a military officer that occupies a formal and unique advisory – and command – position in government. The CDS is not just another deputy minister.<sup>86</sup> It is not unusual for matters relating to operations and military deployments, particularly when the issue is pressing and of national significance, for the CDS to be engaged directly by the prime minister.<sup>87</sup> Every senior deputy minister interviewed for this study readily acknowledged the special relationship that may exist between a CDS and the prime minister. The unique and personal relationship that developed between General Hillier and Prime Minister Paul Martin was well known in government circles, and recent CDSs also had very good relationships with Prime Ministers Harper and Trudeau. The “unfettered access” of the CDS to the prime minister, that Minister Young referred to proudly in his 1997 report, is used infrequently, but it exists. The CDS-PM relationship is a circumstance that irritates many senior public servants, who believe that, at times, the CDS may be leveraging professional military expertise to advance and cultivate this special relationship and to exert influence. It goes without saying that any CDS needs to navigate this aspect very wisely and with unpretentiousness.

Another element that a CDS must handle with humility is professional military expertise. From his experience as Foreign Affairs Minister during the 2003 Iraq War discussions in Ottawa, former MND Bill Graham was suspicious of military advice, “...given the pro-American, pro-war bias ... [he] detected in the Canadian military brass.”<sup>88</sup> When asked in February 2016 by a Canadian press reporter at a major conference on defence and security if he was intentionally spinning the definition of combat to suit the new Liberal government narrative, General Vance answered tersely, to the delight of the pro-defence audience: “I’m the expert in what is combat and non-combat. Thanks for your question.”<sup>89</sup> Not surprisingly, like any expert, a CDS will be quite protective of military advice that they consider more exclusive to their role as senior military advisor to the government, more so when the matter relates to military operations. As well, Vance was astute and smart for not entering into a partisan political debate in a public setting.

While military officers are generally ill-equipped to comprehend the political dynamics of a crisis or situation, politicians and senior government officials lack the expertise on operational matters and will necessarily be heavily dependent upon the military expertise of the CDS. There is an opportunity

for exploitation of this military expertise to tailor the advice, and ultimately decision-making, toward the preferences of the CDS and the institution. One controversial example of this scenario is when General Rick Hillier convinced Prime Minister Paul Martin for Canada to take a more robust combat role in southern Afghanistan (Kandahar region).<sup>90</sup>

Politics is the process of choosing between competing ideas, with the military being one important policy instrument for the government. The military – and by extension the CDS by the nature of its senior position in government – is a political actor within the context of complex decision making in government.<sup>91</sup> An organization of the size and scale of the CAF (and DND) inevitably interacts in the Canadian political system at many levels. As well, the CAF as an institution has interests and preferences, which may be at odds and compete with those of other departments, senior officials and politicians. The military may attempt to control factors (particularly operational ones) that influence decisions by politicians, either through the monopoly of some information, biased analyses, or the control of options. In short, when providing military advice to government, the military will strive to have its preferences and interests reflected in policies and decisions.<sup>92</sup> This self-interested advice by the military is certainly not unreasonable, but how the CDS uses professional military expertise to exert influence on decision makers is critical for the credibility of the military. More importantly, it impacts the confidence that politicians and senior public servants may have with the judgement of the senior military advisor to the government.

Senior military officers should use their advice and expertise not as a way to steer or limit discussion and cut options, but to educate officials and politicians who lack expertise on military affairs so that they can gain the knowledge in order to ask the right questions. One former CDS related how highly valuable was the opportunity of spending over one hour on a return flight to Ottawa for a NATO summit

in Brussels talking one-on-one with the prime minister to explain how the CAF functions.<sup>93</sup>

Military officers are typically pragmatic people devoted professionally to solving real problems in a context that usually demands action and that requires quick decisions. They are seldom patient with those who contemplate and debate at length.<sup>94</sup> In government circles, however, they need to become comfortable with broadening the discussion about military options, capabilities, limitations and risks. There is an inherent deference to generals and admirals in government, as several senior government officials interviewed confirmed, reflecting a genuine respect for the profession of arms in Canada. Senior military officers must be conscious of the impact that their presence, approach and ingrained cultural bias may have in meetings, at times stifling open and frank discussions. As General Walt Natynczyk remarked, drawing from his extensive experience as both a CDS for four years and a deputy minister for seven years, “senior military officers need to be less assertive as they move up, particularly in the Ottawa environment.”<sup>95</sup> They have an important responsibility to set a tone that invites questions, challenges, and discussions about military matters.

**“Politics is the process of choosing between competing ideas, with the military being one important policy instrument for the government.”**



REUTERS/Alamy Stock Photo/2D157YB

Prime Minister Stephen Harper (R), walks with CDS General Walt Natynczyk while touring the Dahla Dam in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, 7 May 2009.

At the same time, politicians (and their political advisors) and senior public servants have a comparable responsibility to take time to understand the military profession and its culture. The MND and the prime minister's leadership and management styles, and their personal level of involvement, can have a significant impact on the quality of the dialogue. Politicians need to set the processes and establish the environment for an effective and respectful dialogue between the political and military echelons, one that encourages scrutiny of the political considerations and assumptions on which the military strategy is based and open deliberations about the various military options, with the intent of narrowing the knowledge-information gap and, ultimately, to be in a position to make sound decisions.

Many officers of the SJS and of other organizations in NDHQ involved in the planning for operations get highly frustrated with having to develop options and provide advice with limited or ambiguous political guidance. Significant time and staff effort may be devoted in NDHQ to develop futile options and military analyses. In the absence of clear strategic guidance and direction from the government, the military's own biases may hinder them from understanding the political implications of their advice or actions. Worse, they may be left to postulate on the political intent, fulfilling in fact a function that is supposed to be provided by politicians. When forced to act on a political plane, the policies and decisions adopted may not correspond to the wishes of the MND or the government.<sup>96</sup> Not surprisingly, when political guidance is

nebulous, senior public servants and ministerial political advisors will jump in and quickly attempt to fill the void.

Good political advisors to ministers and experienced senior public servants interacting regularly with the prime minister, and who appreciate the power and limit of their own position, can play an important role in bridging the knowledge-information gap between the political and military echelons. As Hugh Segal, former Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, underscored, political advisors play the role of translating between elected officials and public servants or military officers, and a good partnership will "maximize ... the acumen of political staff – with the ultimate goal of providing the best advice to ministers of the Crown."<sup>97</sup> One senior military officer involved intimately with the planning for the CAF mission in Mali in 2017 praised a senior political advisor in the office of the MND who was instrumental in facilitating discussions at the political level, helping to eventually unlock many of the reservations that existed with the CAF mission in Central Africa.<sup>98</sup>

At other times, the clash of political, military and bureaucratic cultures creates heightened suspicion and frustration for all, particularly when political advisors and public servants take the role of armchair generals. With arrogance and ignorance, they may overestimate what military capabilities can achieve, how quick they can be mobilized and deployed, or assume that military resources can solve virtually any problem. They are surprised when military leaders take a considered and more conservative approach to planning,

viewing it at times as a deliberate way to be bureaucratic or to limit or delay policy decisions.<sup>99</sup> Fortunately, most senior public servants and experienced political advisors are quite competent and perform an important role in most stages of the IGOAD model. A key factor underlying military planning that is sometimes overlooked by government officials is that, when considering prospective operations, the military provides options and advises the government about decisions they may implement. By necessity, the CDS will constantly look at the practical considerations of implementing any option presented to government, a reality that political advisors do not have to live with.

To the CDS and his senior military officers, the fogginess of political intent and guidance may offer an opportunity to shape the military strategy to maximize the overall contribution of the CAF, to deploy and draw attention to particular capabilities, to balance contributions from all the CAF environment components (i.e., services), and even to stay clear of onerous or poorly structured commitments that present greater operational risks (particularly in a coalition context). In short, the less limiting and constraining is the political guidance, the more flexibility is offered to the CDS to develop a military strategy that can serve both the national imperatives and the CAF preferences. It makes sense for generals and admirals to express a certain degree of modesty with professional military expertise, but not at the expense of nebulous objectives and flawed strategies. In those situations, they must speak up, candidly and privately.

The final element in this discussion centres on how the military advice is challenged and tested, as it ‘moves up’ from the military echelon to the political one. Every senior official interviewed for this study expressed a high degree of comfort that military advice by the CDS is properly challenged at many levels in government. The first place where military advice to the MND and government is closely scrutinized is inside NDHQ, as it should be. The integrated structure of the headquarters, with clear DM accountabilities in many defence and military domains, represents the first – and most thorough – level of scrutiny. An experienced DM will be able to steer the CDS with how the advice should be expressed for the right effect, and even be able to anticipate how the advice is expected to be received at both the senior bureaucratic and political levels. Discussions with other deputy ministers and with senior officials in PCO will also help to ensure that the military advice is consistent with government priorities and coherent with a whole-of-government approach.<sup>100</sup>

Closer to the political echelon, the role and engagement of the MND will be critical, particularly within the context of a shared political-military responsibility for successful outcomes. The need for consensus building in government, combined with the collective responsibility of ministers, provide another reason to ensure that military advice is subjected to informed questioning as it reaches the MND and senior political advisors.

Ultimately, in a democracy like Canada, politicians have “the right to be wrong” about the use of the military, even when given the best possible military advice by the CDS, because they must take into account factors such as national considerations and

domestic politics.<sup>101</sup> It is the politicians who make the decisions and that are to be held accountable to the Canadian public, and it behoves them to ask the right questions, either in direct discussions with the CDS or in Cabinet. Because of the importance of the issues under consideration when military deployments are considered, it is critical for the government to hear the military advice of the CDS directly, unfiltered, but it should never be too easy for the CDS to have any military advice accepted by politicians.<sup>102</sup> The many interviews conducted for this study confirmed that there is no indication that this is a concern in Canada. Indeed, the military advice of the CDS is being listened to by politicians, and it is also appropriately challenged.

## Conclusion – The Need for a Healthy Unequal Dialogue

“I have the highest regard ... for our military and military leadership. But decisions on deployments are always made in the end by civilian authorities, the elected democratic authority of the country.... I know that our military people will give us the best advice.”<sup>103</sup>

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

The provision of military advice to ministers and government involves a complex set of interactions where professional military expertise, bureaucratic preferences and political judgement converge in the discussions between senior military officers, senior public servants and politicians. As this article has highlighted, the responsibility for providing military advice to the MND, Cabinet and the prime minister in the complex world of government politics is a demanding – and one of the most important – task for any CDS. “The strategic battle procedure for the provision of military advice and government decision making is often quite messy,” concedes a former CDS.<sup>104</sup>

For the military and the CDS, there are two important considerations to draw from this study. Like politicians and public servants, the military brings to any discussion their own biases and preconceived notions. The discourse between the military and political echelons is one of ‘unequal dialogue’ based on the superiority of authority of politicians. Still, this dialogue can be characterized by an asymmetry in favour of the military due to its unique knowledge and professional expertise, particularly for matters relating to operations and military deployments. In the absence of clear political direction and guidance, it may be tempting – and even quite reasonable in some situations – for the military to shape the discourse space. To retain the trust and confidence of the government, a necessary requirement for the CDS to maintain meaningful influence with military advice, it is imperative for senior military officers to be humble, yet forthright, with this expertise.

As one former CDS observed on the dynamics of the government in Ottawa, personalities matter, but relationships are more important.<sup>105</sup> The greater emphasis in government on horizontality, particularly for any whole-of-government effort that involves the military, accentuates the need for greater collaboration and coordination across departmental boundaries.

**“Closer to the political echelon, the role and engagement of the MND will be critical, particularly within the context of a shared political-military responsibility for successful outcomes.”**

This requirement demands extensive consultations. This has always been a challenge for National Defence, more so for the CAF which cherishes its professional autonomy. To make matters worse, senior military officers may have spent very little time in their career in Ottawa and have few of the established relationships that senior public servants have. In addition to having to quickly understand how policy development and complex decision-making take place in government, they need to develop meaningful professional relationships to be effective. In the end, senior military officers need to become more comfortable with crossing the cultural boundaries that exist between the military, the Public Service and the political level.

For politicians, and senior public servants in PCO who directly support the prime minister and Cabinet, this review brings out two important lessons. First, the government should strive to bring clarity to political intent and national objectives as early as possible when military deployments are being considered. Clear strategic political guidance, developed in consultation with the CDS and the DM, will help to ensure unity of purpose within the government, particularly at DND and with the other involved departments. A vacuum of political guidance not only increases

bureaucratic politics but raises the risk that the CDS and various elements of the CAF and DND will be working at cross purposes with other departments, in addition to wasting precious staff time and effort developing useless military options.

Second, there needs to be a well-established machinery of government process for the CDS to provide unfiltered military advice to politicians (and for the DM to provide defence advice). The character of today's low-intensity conflicts and the types of operations where the Canadian military may be deployed is such that there is no sharp, neat boundary between the political and military realms, potentially creating conditions for increased political-bureaucratic-military frictions. In this 'shared responsibility' environment, politicians, senior public servants and military officers each have an important role to play to enhance the quality of the dialogue to help close the knowledge-information gap between political and military considerations. A robust and healthy dialogue will improve the quality of military strategies and national decisions, with the ultimate aim of reducing the risk of strategic failure when the government commits the military in operations.



DND photo/National Defence Image Library



Then-CDS General Jon Vance, speaks to CAF commanders during the rehearsal drill, 3 April 2020, in preparation to deploy CAF personnel under Operation LASER in response to COVID-19.

**NOTES**

- 1 I am grateful to Col Pat Feuerherm, Capt (N) David Mazur, LCol Erik Liebert, and Maj Michel Gosselin for their helpful comments in reviewing earlier versions of this article.
- 2 Gen Raymond Henault, testimony to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, NDDN-03, 20 October 2004, p. 4 and p. 21 (particularly for the 'crucial' characterization). Also, interview with Gen Henault, 26 February 2020, and exchange of e-mails with the author 22-26 June 2020.
- 3 DM of the Department of National Defence is referred to simply as DM in the remainder of this article.
- 4 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003).
- 5 The officers and officials (serving and retired) interviewed included: four CDSs, four deputy ministers of National Defence, two National Security and Intelligence Advisors (NSIA) to the Prime Minister, two senior PCO officials, three senior DND officials, one senior political advisor to the MND, three VCDSSs, four senior CAF commanders, four Directors of the Strategic Joint Staff, and several other senior officers involved at some point in with supporting the CDS in preparing military advice to government.
- 6 Douglas M. Young, "Authority, Responsibility, and Accountability: Guidance for Members of the Canadian Forces and Employees of the Department of National Defence." Document prepared for the *Report to the Prime Minister* (Ottawa: DND, 1997).
- 7 The idea for this typology comes from Peter Hamburger and Patrick Weller, "Policy Advice and a Central Agency: The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (September 2012), pp. 363–364, and p. 371.
- 8 See Paul A. Sabatier, ed., *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007). Also, Michael Howlett, "Policy Development as Decision-Making Process," in *Canadian Public Policy: Studies in Style and Process* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 12-36.
- 9 The underlying ideas for developing such a model also come from various sources and discussions including an excellent research article written by an Israeli scholar. See Kobi Michael, "The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma



- of Civil—Military Relations: The ‘Discourse Space’ Model and the Israeli Case during the Oslo Process,” *Armed Forces & Society* 33, 4 (July 2007), pp. 518-546.
- 10 The stages model is referred to differently in the literature including the “linear model,” the “heuristic stages model” or the “public policy cycle.” For a discussion, see Peter DeLeon, “The Stages Approach to the Policy Process: What has it done, Where is it going?” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process*, pp. 19-34. On the enduring advantages of this model, Jonathan Craft, “Conceptualizing the Policy Work of Partisan Advisers,” *Policy Sciences* 48, 2 (June 2015), p. 137.
- 11 Howlett, referring to the ideas of Harold Lasswell, in “Policy Development as Decision-Making Process,” *Canadian Public Policy*, pp. 32-33.
- 12 Those very senior public servants include the Clerk of the Privy Council (senior public servant in Canada), the National Security and Intelligence Advisor (NSIA) to the PM, and the Foreign and Defence Policy (FDP) Advisor to the Prime Minister. In this study, I use the definition of partisan political advisors adopted by Jonathan Craft, as those remunerated unelected political appointees with acknowledged policy functions who work within the office of elected officials, such as those the MND or the PM. See Craft, “Conceptualizing the Policy Work of Partisan Advisers.”
- 13 The American literature refers to a “civilian-military gap” when discussing the misunderstanding space between the political (civilian) and military levels. See Rosa Brooks, *How Everything Became War and How the Military Became Everything* (Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 2016), pp. 309-310.
- 14 A good example of this reality is the pressure imposed by the British and American governments on the Canadian government as it was contemplating its position and decision to participate in military action against Iraq in 2003. The pressure led Prime Minister Chrétien to make an immediate announcement in the House of Commons. See Eddie Goldenberg, *The Way It Works* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006): pp. 1-9.
- 15 Ideally, a third dimension should be portrayed on this figure to represent the many interactions with senior officials in other departments, such as GAC for international operations or Public Safety for domestic operations.
- 16 While both adjectives ‘civil’ and ‘civilian’ are used alternately in the literature, the term ‘civil’ (meaning the elected civil authority) is more appropriate in Canada and is employed throughout this article.
- 17 On the objective control theory, Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, pp. 80-97.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 19 Most notably, see Rebecca L Schiff, “Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance,” *Armed Forces & Society* 22, no. 1 (October 1995), pp. 7-24; and Peter D Feaver, “Crisis as Shirking: An Agency Theory Explanation of the Souring of American Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces & Society* 24, no. 3 (April 1998), pp. 407-434.
- 20 Christopher P. Gibson, “Enhancing National Security and Civilian Control of the Military: A Madisonian Approach,” in *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider, eds. (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2009), p. 242.
- 21 Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington D.C: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2006), pp. 5-7.
- 22 I use Richard Betts’ definition of strategy, which is “a plan for using military means to achieve political ends. Strategy is the bridge between the higher-level policy and the lower level of operations.” Richard K. Betts, “Is Strategy an Illusion?” *International Security* 25, 2 (Fall 2000): p. 7. The most current Canadian doctrine explanation of strategy is similar. DND, Chief of Force Development, *The Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process (OPP)*, Canadian Forces Joint Publication 5.0 (CFJP 5.0), Change 2 (Ottawa: DND, April 2008), para. 106, p. 1-3.
- 23 Risa Brooks, “Paradoxes of Professionalism: Rethinking Civil-Military Relations in the United States,” *International Security* 44, no. 4 (April 2020), pp. 11-12.
- 24 Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Should Military Officers Study Policy Analysis,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 76 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015): p. 33.
- 25 John F. Kennedy, “National Security Action Memorandum No. 55” (Washington: The White House, 28 June 1961).
- 26 Brooks, “Paradoxes of Professionalism,” p. 18.
- 27 Douglas Bland, A Unified Theory of Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 1 (October 1999), pp. 7-25.
- 28 Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 77.
- 29 Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2002), pp. 208-224.
- 30 The literature on this topic is quite vast. Two relevant analyses that touch on civil-military relations and strategy include the following: Hew Strachan, “Conclusion,” in J.B.A. Bailey, Richard Iron, and Hew Strachan, eds., *British Generals in Blair’s Wars*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 327-346; Matthew Moten, “Rumsfeld Assumptions,” Chapter 12 in *Presidents and Their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2014), pp. 340-368.
- 31 The U.K. government commissioned several important studies on this theme and a national inquiry looking into the Iraq War strategy and decisions. See notably, Committee of Privy Counsellors, *The Report of the Iraq Inquiry* (London: The Stationary Office, October 2016).
- 32 This is another area of academic and professional literature that has mushroomed since the 2003 Iraq War. See notably, William E Rapp, “Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making,” *Parameters* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2015), pp. 13-26; D.S. Travis, “Saving Samuel Huntington and the Need for Pragmatic Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces & Society* 43, no. 3 (July 2017), pp. 395-399; and Damon Coletta and Thomas Crosbie, “The Virtues of Military Politics,” *Armed Forces & Society* 47, no. 1 (January 2021), pp. 3-24.
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- 34 DND, *The Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process (OPP)*, para 402, p. 4-2. Emphasis added.
- 35 Liberal Party of Canada, *Real Change: A New Plan for a Strong Middle Class* (Ottawa: 2015), p. 71.
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- 39 Operation IMPACT is part of Canada’s whole-of-government approach to the Middle East. From DND web site, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-impact.html>.
- 40 CBC News, “ISIS airstrikes by Canada to end by Feb. 22, training forces to triple,” 8 February 2016; at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-canada-isis-fight-announcement-1.3438279>.
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- 42 Michelle Zilio, “Canada commits up to 600 soldiers for peacekeeping,” *The Globe and Mail*, 26 August 2016, updated 16 May 2018; at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/liberals-peacekeeping-mission/article31570609/>.
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- 44 Now reorganized and renamed as the Canadian Joint Operational Command (CJOC).
- 45 Interview with LGen (Ret’d) Marc Lessard, 18 February 2021. Also, confidential interview with senior military officer 20 February 2020, and General Walk Natynczyk’s discussion with the National Security Programme, 16 May 2012. Used with permission.
- 46 DND website, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/recently-completed/operation-hestia.html>.
- 47 Confidential interviews.
- 48 Philip Authier, “Legault appeals to doctors’ sense of duty; It’s ‘a national emergency,’ premier says in calling for help at CHSLDs,” *Montreal Gazette*, 16 April 2020, A1.
- 49 Confidential interviews.
- 50 Jean Chrétien, “I promise you that we will win” speech, *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 October 2001, p. A4. Also, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), The National Feature Documentary, *The Road to Kandahar*, 16 October 2006. No longer available on the Internet.
- 51 Interview with Gen (Ret’d) Ray Henault, 26 February 2020. The reconnaissance team included two general officers and one flag (navy) officer.
- 52 NATO’s Framework Nation concept is explained in Franklin D. Kramer, “NATO’s Framework Nations: Capabilities for an Unpredictable World,” Issue Brief, Atlantic Council, April 2014.

- 53 Confidential interviews with senior government officials. On Canada's role with NATO's eFP in Latvia, see Christian Leuprecht, Alexandre Moens and Alexander Lanoszka, "Canada as Framework Nations," in *Lessons from the Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017-2020*, NDC Research Paper No. 14 (Rome, NDC, November 2020): pp. 45-52. There is mention in this article of a phone call from President Obama to Prime Minister Trudeau advocating for Canada to take on this leadership role.
- 54 Murray Brewster, "Canada to send troops to Latvia for new NATO brigade," *CBC News*, 30 June 2016. At <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/nato-canadian-troops-baltics-1.3659814>.
- 55 Interview with Gen (Ret'd) Tom Lawson, 22 January 2021. The NSA position is now titled the National Security and Intelligence Advisor (NSIA) to the Prime Minister.
- 56 The Langevin Block has been renamed the Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council Building.
- 57 The initial announcement was for the deployment of CF-18s. Lee Berthiaume, "Canada to send CF-18s to Eastern Europe; Fighter jets to counter Russian 'militarism' in Ukraine conflict," *Ottawa Citizen*, 18 April 2014, p. A1. Announcements of other contribution came later. See Steve Chase and Kim Mackrael, "Ottawa sends warship as 'reassurance'," *Globe and Mail*, 1 May 2014, p. A3.
- 58 Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?" p. 38.
- 59 Peter D. Feaver introduces the controversial concept of senior officers shirking in his book *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*, paperback ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005), pp. 54-75.
- 60 I used the explanation provided by now Brigadier-General Jeff Smyth in his excellent analysis of Canada and contribution warfare, "Canadian Strategic Culture and Contribution Warfare: The Enduring Dilemma for the Chief of the Defence Staff," unpublished Defence Research Project for completion of Master of Public Administration (Toronto: Canadian Forces College, 2019).
- 61 Strachan, *The Direction of War*, p. 45.
- 62 The complex interactions that exist between the defence/military strategic, senior bureaucratic level (Privy Council Office), and political levels are not discussed in any of the CAF doctrine manuals. There is also no discussion on how national aims and objectives are developed by the government. The premise of the current CAF doctrine is that when military responses and actions are envisaged by the government, the CDS will be provided with "a defined set of national strategic aims and objectives" in order to subsequently develop plans to help achieve those objectives. See DND Joint Doctrine Branch, CF Experimentation Centre, *CFJP 3-0 Operations* (B-GJ-005-300/FP-001) (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Warfare Centre, 2011): para. 107, p. 1-2.
- 63 Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia (CIDCFS), in *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997), Vol. 5, p. 957. Emphasis added.
- 64 Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-000/FP-001, *CFJP-01 Canadian Military Doctrine* (Ottawa: DND, 2011), 5-7.
- 65 Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-001, *CFJP-05 The Canadian Operational Planning Process*, Change 2 (Ottawa: DND, 2008), p. 1-9. The strategic-level planning doctrine is included as part of the OPP manual, particularly pp. 1-9 to 1-18. This doctrine includes two short paragraphs on CDS military advice, at pp. 1-13 and 1-16.
- 66 *Ibid.* Preface to the manual.
- 67 Confidential interviews.
- 68 Confidential interviews. Also, Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations," p. 19.
- 69 See the discussion on this theme in Lt-Gen David L. Goldfein, Director U.S. Joint Staff, Keynote Address: "Providing 'Best Military Advice' as a Joint Leader" for the sixth annual military and federal fellow research symposium, Brookings Institute, 17 March 2015. At <https://www.brookings.edu/events/redefining-the-american-national-security-team-new-players-defenses-and-strategies/>.
- 70 ADM (Policy) – a senior civilian executive, is the primary individual in DND responsible to assist the departmental leadership in formulating operations policy and to manage the Department's relations with the central agencies of the government, and bilateral and multilateral defence relations.
- 71 The main CAF environmental components are the army, the air force, the navy and the special operations forces.
- 72 Interview with Gen Jonathan Vance, 24 Jul 2020.
- 73 Interview with Capt(N) David Mazur, 29 September 2020, who was involved in 2017 as a SJS military officer in the planning for this mission and participated in one of the visits in theatre.
- 74 Lawrence Freedman, "On Military Advice," *RUSI Journal* Vol. 162, No. 3 (June/July 2017), p. 18.
- 75 Douglas Young, *Report to the Prime Minister on the Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: DND, 1997), p. 29.
- 76 For a detailed discussion on MCS, see Glen Milne, *Making Policy: A Guide to How the Federal Government Works* (Ottawa: Glen Milne, November 2014), pp. 42-44.
- 77 This Cabinet committee is similar to the UK COBRA Civil Contingencies Committee, which has been in existence since 1972. See <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/cobr-cobra>. The author attempted to obtain from PCO the terms of reference for the IRG but was told that they were classified Secret and not available for distribution.
- 78 Confidential interviews. Also, see "Prime Minister Justin Trudeau convenes the Incident Response Group," 21 February 2020, at <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/readouts/2020/02/21/prime-minister-justin-trudeau-convenes-incident-response-group>.
- 79 Confidential interviews.
- 80 Interview with MGen Trevor Cadieu, Director SJS, 13 August 2020.
- 81 Milne, *Making Policy*, p. 1.
- 82 The issue of having a formal process was one of the main criticisms raised by the UK Iraq Inquiry about military advice and the decision to deploy British troops for the invasion of Iraq. See *The Report of the Iraq Inquiry: Executive Summary*, p. 57.
- 83 As of February 2020, there were 83 deputies in the federal government: 38 deputy ministers and 45 associate deputy ministers. Confidential interview.
- 84 On those initial priorities by Generals Lawson and Vance, the author was working in the CDS Office at the time and engaged in several related discussions with both CDSs. On Deputy Minister committees, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/programs/appointments/senior-public-service/deputy-minister-committees.html>.
- 85 Confidential interviews with senior officials.
- 86 The CDS position pay scale and entitlement for benefits is that of deputy ministers.
- 87 Every CDS interviewed confirmed having been contacted directly by the PM (and PMO). Confidential interviews.
- 88 Bill Graham, *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir* (Vancouver: On Point, 2016), p. 383.
- 89 Gen Jonathan Vance, 2016 Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence, 19 February 2016. CPAC, at <https://www.cpac.ca/en/programs/podium/episodes/90006795/>, at min 46:00 Also, Lee Berthiaume, "Top soldier defends Iraq mission as non-combat, says he's expert on 'what is combat'," *National Post*, 19 February 2016. Note that the quote in this article attributed to Vance is slightly incorrect. At <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/top-soldier-defends-iraq-mission-as-non-combat-says-hes-expert-on-what-is-combat>.
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- 91 See the discussions in Coletta and Crosbie, "The Virtues of Military Politics;" and Jim Golby and Mara Karlin, "The Case for Rethinking the Politicization of the Military;" Brookings, 12 June 2020, at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/12/the-case-for-rethinking-the-politicization-of-the-military/>.
- 92 See the fascinating discussion YF Reykers and Daan Fonck, "No Wings Attached? Civil-Military Relations and Agent Intrusion in the Procurement of Fighter Jets," *Cooperation and Conflict* 55, no. 1 (March 2020), pp. 66-85.
- 93 Confidential interview.
- 94 Colin S. Gray, *The Future of Strategy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2015), p. 43.
- 95 Walt Natynczyk, presentation to the Canadian Forces College National Security Programme, Ottawa, 25 October 2018. With permission.
- 96 Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, p. 13.
- 97 Hugh Segal, quoted in Nalisha Asgarali, "The Role of Modern Political Staff," *The Public Policy & Governance Review*, 17 November 2016.
- 98 Confidential interview.
- 99 See the discussion in Brooks, *How Everything Became War*, pp. 309-315.
- 100 Confidential interviews with several senior officials.
- 101 The "right to be wrong" in civil-military relations was coined by Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants*, pp. 5-7.
- 102 Freedman, *On Military Advice*, pp. 17-18.
- 103 Stephen Harper, quoted in Mike Blanchfield, "Harper defends Afghan mission," *Kingston Whig Standard*, 8 March 2006, p. 14.
- 104 Confidential interview with a former CDS.
- 105 Confidential interview with a former CDS.



Seats for an Iranian delegation at a nuclear energy conference sit empty in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 30 October 2017.

## 360° Iranian Smart Power in the Grey Zone

by Chelsea Braybrook

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### Introduction

The United States of America, known as the *Great Satan* in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has interfered repeatedly in Iran since 1953 to earn that epithet. Mosaddegh's 1953 American-sponsored regime change, American support to the Shah during his crackdowns, and the road to Ayatollah Khomeini's Revolution was just the beginning.<sup>1</sup> After the 1979 Revolution, American leadership botched the embassy hostage rescue effort during Operation *Eagle Claw*, backed Iraq during the Iraq–Iran war, led economic sanctions, and became embroiled

in the Iran–Contra Affair scandal.<sup>2</sup> More recently, American politicians have branded Iranian leaders and military units as terrorists, included the country with North Korea and Iraq as a member of the international *Axis of Evil*, backed out of the Obama-led Iran Nuclear Deal, and tweeted threats from the account of the former President of the United States' (POTUS) Twitter account @realDonaldTrump.<sup>3</sup> The term *Great Satan* was first used by Ayatollah Khomeini during the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979 when he was accusing the United States of America (US) of imperialism. He saw Americans exerting hard power – economic and military – throughout the Middle East, and sponsoring what he considered to be *corruption* all over the world.<sup>4</sup> Although other world powers have meddled in Iran, none has had as much influence as the US, effectively isolating the Islamic Republic from the rest of the world since the Revolution in 1979. Due to their persistent regional involvement, the US is included in the Middle Eastern region for the sake of argument in this article. Despite their isolation, Iran remains a regional power in the Middle East exerting power through their petrol-rich economy, the eighth-largest standing military in the world, a network of militant and political clients throughout the Middle East, and a political system and culture that is attractive to many in the region.<sup>5</sup> This article will focus upon Iran's power in the region through the lens of Joseph Nye's *smart power* model.



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Ayatollah Khomeini, Iranian revolutionary leader (centre), circa 1978–1979.

strategies, even if they are asymmetrical. Iran’s regional power strategy is a cautious example of a response to American smart power, something Iranian leadership figured out for themselves, long before the former POTUS’ recent tweeted warnings.

Iran’s version of smart power has been described by Canadian academics Dr. Eric Ouellet and Dr. Pierre Pahlavi, both full professors in Defence Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada, as “a powerful 360° influence strategy consisting of using every single means

and options available, while minimizing the use of violence.”<sup>14</sup> Harvard academic Joseph Nye wrote extensively on US power during the Cold War and post-Cold War ages. Nearly three decades ago in *Bound to Lead*, he noted that “power is becoming less fungible, less coercive and less tangible.”<sup>6</sup> This was the first time he introduced his idea of *soft power*, defined as the “co-optive behavioral power [of] getting others to want what you want,” resourced by attraction and ideology.<sup>7</sup> In the book, and subsequently in *Soft Power*, he was responding to critics and an American public who believed that their nation’s power was in decline.<sup>8</sup> His work sought to get away from the materialist bias of power as *hard power*, and explore the range of influence features outside of coercion and payment – or ‘carrot and stick’ – that encompassed power-through-attraction, or *soft power*.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Nye has evolved his model of soft power to “counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy.”<sup>10</sup> His newest model, which combines hard and soft power, is what he calls smart power. In smart power strategies, states combine hard and soft power to optimize the balance of coercion, payment and attraction.<sup>11</sup> States recognize that neither hard nor soft power can completely replace each other and that both are necessary, to some extent, to achieve the states’ strategic objectives.<sup>12</sup>

Iran seeks to challenge the current world order incrementally, employing a low-risk, low-cost strategy that avoids a large-scale head-on conventional military collision by remaining under the radar of the international community in the ambiguous *grey zone*, the areas in international affairs where it is extremely difficult to establish responsibility, and thus take punitive action.<sup>15</sup> Although Iranian military clients often receive the bulk of the media attention, Ouellet and Pahlavi note that “...a common mistake is to focus only on their violent manifestations – the tip of the iceberg – while



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Professor Joseph Nye in 2012.

Although Nye developed his power model based upon the US, his concept of smart power speaks to a broad, multifaceted approach to cultivating state power: economic, military and militant, cultural, and ideological.<sup>13</sup> If the world’s superpower – the US – exerts smart power, then it is only logical that competing powers and regional powers will adopt mirroring

failing to connect them with their soft and non-kinetic bottom ends.” With this in mind, the violence during the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 – the tip of the iceberg – created an excellent opportunity for Iran to advance its foreign policy aims in the region economically and diplomatically by improving relationships with states in the region. Since 2003, Iran has exerted smart power in the Middle East to counter the imbalance of power created by the US through the purposive implementation of a 360° grey zone foreign policy strategy. Using examples from Iran’s involvement in post-invasion Iraq, support of the al-Assad’s regime during the Syrian Civil War, and the relationship with the Houthi rebels during the Yemeni Civil War, evidence of Iranian 360° strategy, typically conducted in and around the grey zone, shows that Iran’s regional power strategy after 2003 is very smart, indeed.

**“Since 2003, Iran has exerted smart power in the Middle East to counter the imbalance of power created by the US through the purposive implementation of a 360° grey zone foreign policy strategy.”**

### The Smart Power Strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iranian leadership acts in a rational and pragmatic manner.<sup>16</sup> They want what other sovereign leadership wants: territorial integrity and no foreign intervention in their affairs, essentially the sovereignty that was envisioned in the Westphalian social order.<sup>17</sup> The problem is that, due to incessant meddling, they have been denied full sovereignty in modernity, leading them to prefer to operate as a *trans-Westphalian state* “...in the sense that they derive benefits from the status of a ‘normal’

state, but tend to test the limits of the system whenever possible and advantageous.”<sup>18</sup> This is Iran’s way of fighting the status quo of the international order in the grey zone. Here, Iranian leadership plays by rules in order to survive, but employs irregular tools to gain advantages, although not too obviously.<sup>19</sup> Iran’s national strategies tend to fall below the international radar because their survival depends upon it: the last thing they want is to confront the US or Israel in an all-out war on their home territories, but they want to reap some of the benefits that are usually associated with victories in war.<sup>20</sup> In this way, the activities of the leadership in Tehran stay below the threshold for crossing red lines, overt warfare is avoided, and ambiguity is fostered to create chaos and confusion amongst Iran’s Westphalian opponents. Essentially, grey zone operations are the norm.<sup>21</sup>

Iranian employment of a full-spectrum 360° strategy, largely executed in the grey zone, has been successful, and their foreign policy strategy is very smart in a uniquely Iranian way that is emergent, because of their particular set of circumstances, and focused upon long-term goals. In terms of hard power, Iranian leaders have developed robust conventional military forces that are optimized to effect regional deterrence. Militant and political clients are maintained through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its sub-unit, the Quds Force (QF), and economic aid is provided overtly and covertly to political groups and militant clients in the

region.<sup>22</sup> In terms of soft power, the Islamic Republic’s revisionist agenda and image as “champion of the oppressed” is very appealing to other actors in the Middle East.<sup>23</sup> Beginning with the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran proved demonstrably that they were not an American puppet, and that it was possible to reshape the international order in the Middle East with a lesser role for the US and its allies in the future.<sup>24</sup> Iran envisions a different future for the Middle East, one of pan-Islamism and anti-Americanism.<sup>25</sup> In this future, Iran ends



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The swearing of the oath of ratification of the Treaty of Münster (AKA, the Treaty of Westphalia) in 1648, by Gerard Ter Borch.

decades of American-imposed isolation, plays a much greater role in the region, plays a controlling role in economic markets, and enjoys real freedom and worldwide independence.<sup>26</sup> In this future, Iran is respected internationally as the regional superpower in the Middle East.<sup>27</sup> Iranian leadership takes the long view on the time horizon to achieve these strategic aims, and their 360° strategy is cautious and opportunistic.

In any use of power outside Iran's borders, there is a risk of overreach and resentment by the governments and populations that the Iranian leadership seeks to influence. Iranian leaders are well aware of their position in a mostly Arabic-Middle-East, and

opponents have traditionally had little problem igniting Arab Nationalism whenever Iranian influence gains traction quickly, visibly and/or internationally.<sup>28</sup> Iran's main opponents in the Middle East, Israel and Saudi Arabia, are closely allied with the US, and since Iran is "[l]acking alliances and friendly relations with surrounding states, [their] revolutionary leaders sought to develop allies at the sub-state level."<sup>29</sup> When a state's only option for allies is sub-state actors, it is difficult, if not impossible in a region such as the Middle East to exercise those alliances in the open. For these reasons, Iran's isolation necessitates a grey zone strategy, and since the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, Iran was practically 'spoon fed' three excellent opportunities to increase their regional power in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

### **Iranian Involvement in Post-Invasion Iraq (2003–2015)**

**I**ran and Iraq's shared history after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 is violent, and it is a constant concern for Iranian leaders. In a perfect world, according to Iranian leadership, Iran and Iraq would share in a bi-lateral relationship that would change the architecture of security and the economy of the Persian Gulf to counterbalance the US in the Middle East.<sup>30</sup> In order for the Iranian vision of the future to have a chance at coming to fruition, Iraq's territorial integrity must be preserved, and it must become a viable, independent state.<sup>31</sup> The invasion of Iraq by American forces in 2003 ultimately created a remarkable opportunity for Iran, although it is unlikely that anyone in



Protest scene from the Iranian Revolution, or the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

**“Iran and Iraq’s shared history after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 is violent, and it is a constant concern for Iranian leaders.”**

either the US or Iran recognized the extent of the prospect in 2003.

The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 effectively ended the 35-year reign of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, a regime that was irreconcilably hostile to Tehran, and created an opportunity for Shia-led opposition parties, like the Da'wa Party, to enter Iraq's political arena.<sup>32</sup> In the short term, the American invasion was a tactical military success, but in the long term, a power void was created in Iraq

that was ripe for the filling. In the years that followed the invasion, sectarian violence and chaos raged, and as a result, militias were created that the US could not influence or control, and organized crime began to flourish as the Iraqi government failed to function and to provide even basic services:<sup>33</sup>

It was at that moment, in April 2003, that the United States created the most fundamental problems in Iraq. At that point, having torn down Saddam Hussein's tyranny, there was nothing to take its place; nothing to fill the military, political, and economic void left by the regime's fall. The result was that the United States created a failed state and a power vacuum.<sup>34</sup>

In this void, the IRGC, the QF and other Iranian militant clients were able to enter Iraq, infiltrate militias, and gain influence for Tehran, paving the way for a greater role for the Iraqi Shia majority in the future of Iraqi politics. This Iranian opportunity extended into export economics in Iraq as international investors were investment-weary, due to the poor security situation and

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weakness of rule of law in the country.<sup>35</sup> Poor security was not a concern for Iranian leadership as they had the means of protecting their investments through the IRGC and the QF, and their investments reached into the billions by 2007 at a crucial time for the Iraqi economy, and included trade as well as the development of infrastructure and religious sites.<sup>36</sup>

Between 2006 and 2007, the fledgling Iraqi democracy was dubious, and sectarian violence reached its peak in post-invasion Iraq.<sup>37</sup> Iraq had an extremely nascent democratic structure and processes. The Iranian leadership had a vested interest in ensuring that the emerging government would be successful, as this new generation of Iraqi elites was friendlier to Iran. Iranian leadership took advantage of the opportunity to continue to influence the de-Ba'athification process and empower Shia's in the country, primarily through the Islamic Supreme Council for Iraq (ISCI), the Da'wa Party and the Sadrists, all of whom had long standing ties with Tehran.<sup>38</sup> Iran also provided support to the ISCI's Badr Brigade and Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, among other militias in Iraq. Initially, financial, equipment and training support was welcome as these groups vied for power. However, as sectarian violence worsened, Iranian support to militias dwindled into the grey zone, and its support to political entities increased to ensure its reputation was not irreparably damaged in the region.<sup>39</sup>

After the 2003 invasion, Iran achieved success in increasing smart power in Iraq, given the constraints of isolation and a weak economy. Prior to the invasion, Iran had virtually no ability to shape politics in Saddam's Baghdad, had very little market penetration, and was not seen positively by many Iraqis due to their checkered history. However, post-invasion, the supported Shia political parties kept ties with Tehran and were shaped in favour of Iran. In general, Iran has increased access to Iraqi markets, and many Iraqis viewed Iran favorably, due to their support of Iraqi

politics and economics, and their role in preventing US-dominance in post-invasion Iraq.<sup>40</sup>

In post-invasion Iraq, Iranian leaders 'pulled a series of levers' to see that Baghdad's nascent political process remained intact, that Iraq's territorial integrity was maintained, and that Iranian influence increased. Iranian smart power peaked from 2006 to 2007 and then began a steady decline as Iraqis grew to be wary of Iranian intentions, due to the magnitude of their involvement.<sup>41</sup> Iran could have been more successful in Iraq if its contributions had been more nuanced and more in-line with its 360° strategy in the grey zone. However, as a result, Iranian leadership enjoyed more economic benefits and more political influence in post-invasion Iraq because of its actions following the invasion.

### Support to Assad's Regime During the Syrian Civil War (2011-2017)

**I**ranian actions in Syria were much different from in Iraq, primarily through the use of militant hard power, but they are still commensurate with a 360° grey zone strategy. The Syrian civil war rages on, although cessation of hostilities was declared in 2017.<sup>42</sup> Fighting began in 2011 after Arab Spring demonstrators were fired upon by President Bashar al-Assad's security forces in Damascus, and the conflict quickly descended into a violent quagmire between government forces loyal to al-Assad, the Free Syrian Army, the Syrian Democratic Forces, al-Queda in the Levant or the al-Nusra Front, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or Daesh.<sup>43</sup> Iranian foreign policy has been supportive of the al-Assad regime since the beginning of hostilities, supplying forces, training soldiers, and providing intelligence, equipment and money, because Iranian leadership cannot afford to let Syria fall into the hands of Daesh or disintegrate along ethnic and sectarian lines, as it would present an existential threat to Iranian national security.<sup>44</sup> In

fact, Mehdi Taheb, a former IRGC commander, has described Syria as more important to the security of Iran than his own southern province of Khuzestan.<sup>45</sup>

Initially, in 2011, Iran's support to the al-Assad regime was conducted in the grey zone: it was largely covert, ambiguous and train/assist in nature.<sup>46</sup> From 2014 to 2016, coinciding with increasing Daesh violence and tactical successes in Syria, Iran's involvement became overt. Major-General



Burning objects in North Syria due to the civil war, revolution, and bombardment, January 2019.

Quassem Soleimani, head of the QF before being killed in a US airstrike at the Baghdad Airport in January of 2020,<sup>47</sup> appeared in Syria alongside Iranian forces from the IRGC and QF and members of Hezbollah, all wearing identifying uniforms and insignia.<sup>48</sup> In the case of Syria, Iran may be a reluctant power. However, Iranian leadership had little choice but to intervene abroad to stop Daesh before they consolidated real power and threatened the Islamic Republic at home.<sup>49</sup>

Judged by this standard, Iran’s projection of hard power in Syria was effective. QF and Hezbollah force deployment into Syria was conducted covertly and incrementally, and because there were so many factions participating in the Syrian civil war from 2011 to 2014, the extent of the Iranian contribution was not well understood, and many of their actions fell below the international community’s radar. Seven years later, after a series of incremental increases, the Iranian military now has a permanent military base eight miles south of Damascus, an act that would have certainly caused significant alarm – and maybe even overt action – among Western powers if it had been effected in 2011.<sup>50</sup> Iran’s strategy of slowly building up Syrian security infrastructure entrenched its role as a regional power, as a partner in the eyes of the al-Assad regime, and it has given Iranian leadership a permanent foothold that serves as a logistics hub for Hezbollah, all desirable outcomes achieved without ever crossing a red line.

Finally, Daesh poses an existential threat to Iran and to Iranian interests in Iraq. From the inception of the Islamic Republic in 1979, Iran championed the whole of the Muslim community, most demonstrably through the creation of Hezbollah and the QF mission, to protect and create a future for Palestinians.<sup>51</sup> Iran does not want sectarian conflict in the Middle East and has stayed clear of

sectarian arguments in the region, preferring to keep disputes with Saudi Arabia at the level of global Muslim interest, and focused upon US meddling.<sup>52</sup> Iranian leadership was eager to confront Daesh early and abroad through the grey zone strategy of support to militant clients, through the IRGC and QF, to primarily destroy the Daesh threat quickly and effectively, and secondarily, to protect their interests from Tehran-to-Baghdad-to-Damascus-to-Beirut.<sup>53</sup>

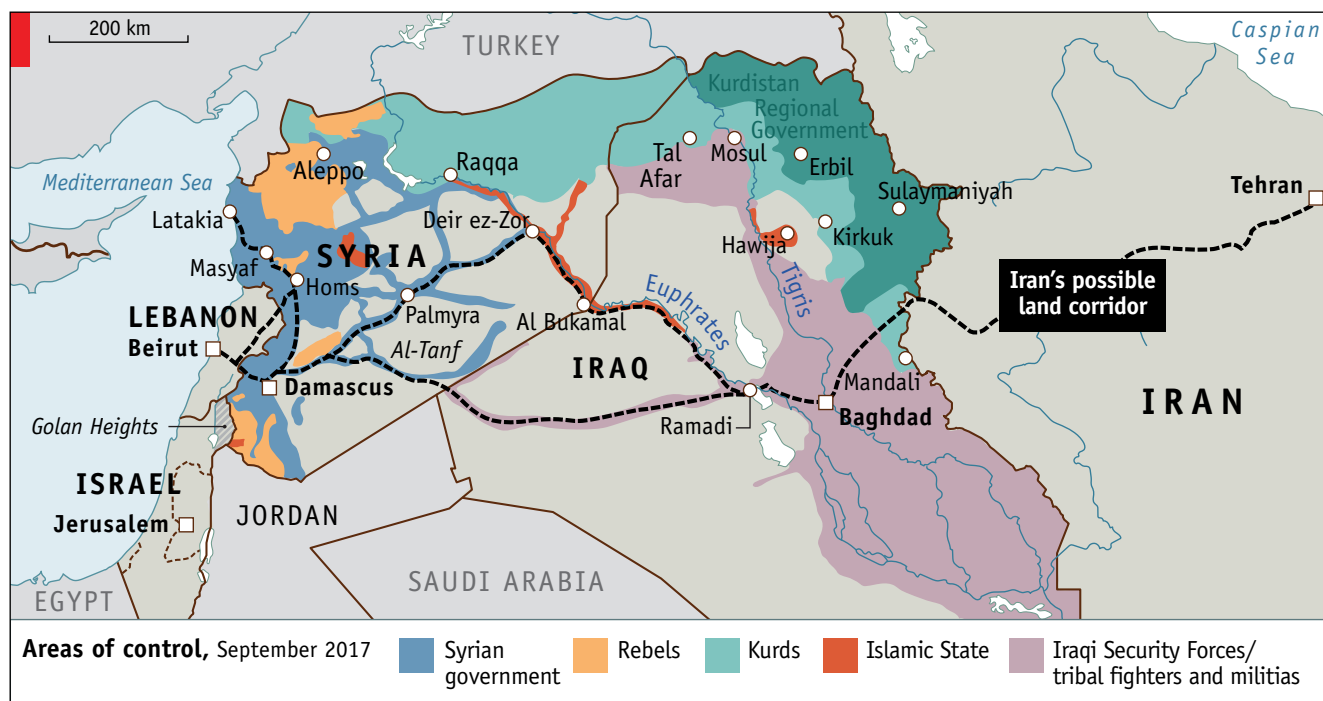
**“For at least the near future, Iranian leadership will enjoy military and diplomatic benefits for their actions in Syria.”**

By the end of 2017, Daesh was defeated, the Syrian-Iraqi border was secured, and al-Assad’s regime remained in power, so Iranian foreign policy efforts during the Syrian civil war produced favourable outcomes, and increased regional hard power for Iranian leadership.<sup>54</sup> It is still early, but Iran’s efforts in Syria were in-line with their 360° strategy, beginning in the grey zone and then emerging overtly when they were confident not to suffer international repercussions. For at least the

near future, Iranian leadership will enjoy military and diplomatic benefits for their actions in Syria.

**Support to Houthi Rebels During the Yemeni Civil War (2004-2016)**

Whereby Iran enjoyed more tangible increases in regional power from its efforts in Iraq and Syria, Iranian activities in support of the Houthi rebels in Yemen were conducted in a greyer part of the grey zone, but still as a part of the Iranian national 360° smart power strategy, albeit at the lower intensity end of the conflict spectrum. The Yemeni conflict has largely reached a stalemate, much to Saudi Arabia’s displeasure, given the blood and treasure they have spent in an attempt to counter the Houthi rebels and reinstall the Hadi government.<sup>55</sup>



Redrawn map from Institute for the Study of War published at <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2017/09/14/the-growing-power-of-iran-and-hezbollah-worries-israel>



REUTERS/Alamy Stock Photo/2CN31RE



In spite of the media attention and international ‘blame-game,’ there is very little evidence of significant levels of Iranian support to the Houthi rebels.<sup>56</sup> It is likely that agents from Tehran initiated limited support in 2004 at the outbreak of hostilities and scaled their contributions as the war progressed, and Saudi Arabia launched their first intervention in 2009, bolstering the Iranian image as the champion of the oppressed.<sup>57</sup>

Shi’ite Houthi rebels ride a patrol truck in Yareem town of Yemen’s central province of Ibb, 22 October 2014.

Akram Alraasy/Alamy Stock Photo/2D2EMD1



Yemini in front of homes destroyed by war and violent fighting in Taiz City, Yemen, 13 April 2017.

Unproven media reports claim that the latest ICBM fired at Riyadh was launched by Houthi rebels, but provided by agents in Tehran through a series of intermediaries.<sup>58</sup> Although possible, Iranian support trends have been more limited to the level of small arms, bomb-making materials, anti-tank munitions, untraceable cash and operative training.<sup>59</sup> In accordance with grey zone strategies as outlined by Pahlavi, low level support of this nature ensures that Iran's meddling stays far below any red lines, but it opens channels for dialogue and creates relationships with minority groups – like the Houthi rebels, seeds trust and creates the conditions for scalable future support if it is in Iran's interests.<sup>60</sup>

Because Yemen is a significant priority for Saudi Arabian leadership on the Arabian Peninsula, agents in Tehran cautiously extended support to the Houthi rebels, ensuring that their support did not result in an uncontrolled escalation of hostilities with Saudi Arabian leadership in Riyadh.<sup>61</sup> Iran's actions in Yemen can be evaluated as successful because the cost of its involvement was much less than the benefits they derive from supporting the Houthi rebels. In this case, Iran stayed involved in Yemen, stoked the conflict between the Houthi rebels and the Saudi-led coalition, and bolstered its image as the champion of the oppressed and challenger of the status quo in the Middle East.<sup>62</sup> Iranian strategy in Yemen is one of little risk, little gain, but it is an excellent example of successful, 360°, low-end, grey zone tactics in the region.

## Conclusion

Iran's multifaceted 360° regional power strategy is a worthy example of Nye's concept of smart power, albeit most of the strategy is conducted in the grey zone because the Iranians understand, and are cautious of, US hard power in the region. Leaders in Tehran know too well that American administrations have looked for a reason to exert US – or coalition – hard power within Iranian borders, an escalation Iranian leadership is desperate to avoid.<sup>63</sup> The three examples presented here demonstrate different elements of the Iranian 360° smart power strategy in the Middle Eastern region. Iranian efforts in Iraq cover a large portion of the 360° spectrum: military, diplomatic and economic, while their efforts in Syria and

**“When the role of the US and its partners in the Middle Eastern region is considered, Iran's deterrence mindset can be understood, and it becomes easier to see that Iran's foreign policy is logical and coherent, but that Iranian option space is limited to the grey zone and asymmetrical, multifaceted 360° strategies.”**

Yemen were conducted more in the military and militant-client portion of the spectrum. Throughout the region, they have built and increased soft power through their image as successful Islamic revolutionaries, revisionists, and the champion of the oppressed. Iran operates in the grey zone because it has proven to be an effective way of spreading their influence in the Middle East, and their actions in Iraq, Syria and Yemen are three post-2003 examples of the varied ways they exert smart power in the region.

It is easy from a Western perspective, to watch videos of ex-Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and fall into the trap of thinking that Iranians are crazy, unpredictable, and determined to turn the Middle East into a nuclear post-apocalyptic wasteland.<sup>64</sup> Former POTUS Donald Trump's threats to Iran were only the latest in an on-going threat environment. Leaders on both sides are guilty of lashing out and using deliberately inflammatory language to incite conflict.

This article does not endorse Iranian power plays in the Middle East, but it tries to understand them in context. When the role of the US and its partners in the Middle Eastern region is considered, Iran's deterrence mindset can be understood, and it becomes easier to see that Iran's foreign policy is logical and coherent, but that Iranian option space is limited to the grey zone and asymmetrical, multifaceted 360° strategies.

As overt hostilities continue to simmer – or rage – in the Middle Eastern region, as Iran struggles following the collapse of the 2015 Nuclear Deal, and as all sides jostle for just a little bit more power and influence, foreign policies would be smart to exclude terms like the *Axis of Evil* or the *Great Satan* because they leave little room for solutions where everybody wins a little bit. Foreign policy does not have to be a zero-sum game, and in order to solve the transnational problems of the future, world and regional powers all have a role to play in finding solutions. For a final and powerful image, seats like the ones depicted at the beginning of this article cannot remain empty at important world events.



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NATO Headquarters, Brussels, with the flags of all the member nations displayed.

## NATO Enlargement, Russia, and Balance of Threat

by Sumantra Maitra

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### Introduction

Recent scholarship and declassified documents have thrown open further debates about NATO enlargement at a time when the unity and strength of the alliance is under scrutiny. As the primary offshore balancers in Europe, Britain and the United States show retrenchment tendencies, and the European Union seeks an independent military force projection capability, and arguably, strategic autonomy bordering upon future hegemonic aspirations.

Mary Elise Sarotte, a renowned post-Cold War authority, currently the Distinguished Professor of Historical Studies at the Henry S. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins University, questions conventional wisdom about the benevolent intention of the American and West German strategists in the early

post-cold war days.<sup>1</sup> The West German motivation, especially, was not predicated upon integrating former Warsaw pact countries and spreading “liberal democracy,” or institutions, but to push the frontiers further east, at the cost of Moscow’s sphere of influence. Joshua Shiffrin, an Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University, argues that American policymakers repeatedly assured the desperate Soviet leadership that the alliance would not move east, even though most of the pledges were informal in nature, and arguably, were debatable when one of the original parties, the Soviet Union, collapsed.<sup>2</sup> It is appropriate to suggest that whatever may be the reason, both Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin were under the impression that there would not be any actual movement of hardware and infrastructure towards the east.<sup>3</sup>

But what about Moscow’s threat perceptions? That is an immensely policy-relevant question, but one which has been hardly explored. The conventional wisdom suggests that NATO enlargement led to a revanchist Russia. This article summarizes the Western debate and push for enlargement, and then divides and explores three phases of Russian reactions to NATO enlargement, in light of the realist Harvard Professor of International Affairs Stephen Walt’s balance of threat theory.<sup>4</sup> Ignoring the rhetoric



Tanks on parade in Moscow's Red Square, 7 May 2021, in celebration of the 76th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in 1945.

emanating from Moscow, as well as Western media, and studying actual observable reactions of Moscow vis-à-vis phases of NATO expansion, this article will suggest that Moscow is purely focused upon material and military aspects. It further suggests that the evidence of Moscow's reflexive revanchism is sparse. Russian foreign policy is tested and correlated with Russian rhetoric, military strategy and Russian balancing actions, in light of each phase of actual and potential NATO expansion. The article will conclude that Russia balances against perceived threats, only in areas where it has entrenched material and military interests. Otherwise, Russia is aware of her relative military inferiority, and is agnostic about NATO and EU enlargement. Reality is, therefore, perhaps more complex. The enlargement itself was not the cause of Russian revanchism, and there was no uniform reaction from Russia about "Western betrayal." Moscow was quite agnostic about NATO enlargement in parts of central Europe and former Warsaw pact countries. Moscow, however, did display aggression when Russia's direct strategic interests were perceived to be threatened, such as Russian military supply chains in Eastern Ukraine, a naval port in Crimea, and defensible terrain and established bases in Georgia.

These findings have enormous policy relevance as both NATO and EU plans further enlargement, American and British isolationism grows, and the European security scenario alters rapidly. The policy relevance of understanding Moscow's strategic

motivations is manifold, and helps guide British and American grand strategy in the changing security dynamics of Europe. The choice of pushing Moscow out of European balance is a political choice for London and Washington. Alternatively, a détente can be reached if London and Washington are willing to accept a small Russian sphere of influence. But there is no evidence that every single instance of NATO enlargement will be met with Russian military aggression or balancing maneuvers.

**"But there is no evidence that every single instance of NATO enlargement will be met with Russian military aggression or balancing maneuvers."**

This article is, accordingly divided into four sections, followed by a policy-relevant conclusion.

### **The Western Debate About the Push for Enlargement**

Assurances from Western leaders regarding NATO enlargement began on 31 January 1990, with West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher making clear that the changes in Eastern Europe and the German unification process must not

lead to an 'impairment of Soviet security interests.'<sup>5</sup> Ruling out NATO 'expansion of its territory towards the east, i.e. moving it closer to the Soviet borders.' NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner stated that the alliance is not looking to any shift of balance, or to extending military borders to the east.<sup>6</sup> This pledge was repeated subsequently by Helmut Kohl, Margaret Thatcher, James Baker, Douglas Hurd, Francois Mitterrand, and George H.W. Bush. Margaret Thatcher said



Danita Delimont/Alamy Stock Photo/J2GK9N

(From left), President George H.W. Bush, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Manfred Wörner, Secretary General of NATO, in the Rose Garden of the White House, October 1990.

all this, as well as being the forum which brought the Soviet Union fully into a discussion about the future of Europe,” a pledge repeated by President Bush, and subsequently my British PM John Major, who personally assured Gorbachev, as late as in March 1991, saying: “We are not talking about the strengthening of NATO.” Subsequently, when asked by Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Dmitri Yazov about East European leaders’ interest in NATO membership, he repeated, “Nothing of the sort will happen.”<sup>7</sup>

From the Western side, the first hint of NATO enlargement came with Secretary-General Manfred Wörner’s declaration in March 1992, that NATO’s doors are open. NATO’s enlargement policy was not a concerted effort initially, but organically developed throughout the early-1990s, and it gained momentum under the

to Gorbachev at NATO’s London summit in 1990: “We must find ways to give the Soviet Union confidence that its security would be assured. ...CSCE could be an umbrella for

Presidency of Bill Clinton, whose administration tied it to the changing grand strategy of the United States. It was also a matter of serious debate within the US administration, the main driver



dpa picture alliance/Alamy Stock Photo/JD73CE

Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl sign a treaty in Bonn, Germany, 9 November 1990.



Czech President Vaclav Havel delivers a speech during the NATO summit in Washington, 23 April 1999, as US President Bill Clinton looks on.

swathes of territory, as well as preventing the rise of ethno-nationalist harmful elements.<sup>11</sup> While superficially sympathetic to Russia, NATO expansion was primarily a security endeavour, and NATO was unwilling to let Russia have any say regarding the process.<sup>12</sup>

Further push for NATO expansion came from Germany, specifically from German Defence Minister Volker Rühle. He said that German stability would be threatened if its new eastern frontiers are not further moved east.<sup>13</sup> In the United States, National Security Council speechwriter Jeremy Rosner, leading the NATO Enlargement Ratification

of the expansion claim. While the Central and Eastern European states were wary of Russia and wanted to be under the security umbrella of NATO, they were rebuffed initially, for fear of Russian reaction.<sup>8</sup> In April 1993, Clinton met Lech Walesa of Poland, Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia, and Arpad Goncz of Hungary, who collectively argued that NATO should expand. Clinton's foreign policy was predicated upon the idea that peace is promoted with trade and free market, and democracies rarely go to war with each other, which was otherwise known as the democratic peace theory.<sup>9</sup> NATO expansion and the spread of liberal institutions was, therefore, a means to this policy.

Office alongside Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, lobbied for Senate Approval for NATO's geographic expansion, and coined the term "enlargement" as opposed to a more aggressive sounding "expansion".<sup>14</sup> The idea was, however, territorial expansion and forceful spread of institutions and American support for democracy promotion, as opposed to a narrower Cold war era idea of Containment.<sup>15</sup>

The idea of expansion was vigorously debated within the alliance.<sup>10</sup> The primary arguments made for expansion were that it would help communist states transition to democracy, and enhance continent-wide security, and prevent a security vacuum in large



US President Bill Clinton visits Russia, 10 May 1995.

The opposition to this Clintonian NATO expansion came from strategic circles. The Pentagon was initially opposed to NATO expansion, and supported the Partnership for Peace (PfP), to allay Russian fears that would arise. Strobe Talbott, then-adviser to the Secretary of State cautioned, saying: “The key principle, as I see it, is this ... An expanded NATO that excludes Russia will not serve to contain Russia’s retrograde, expansionist impulses; quite the contrary, it will further provoke them.”<sup>16</sup> The idea that Russia would inevitably be provoked by territorial expansion was also furthered in academic arguments.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the Clinton administration was ideologically committed to expanding NATO and democratic peace.<sup>18</sup> In January 1994, Clinton stated in a speech in Prague: “The question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how.”<sup>19</sup> It was followed by Clinton’s speech in Poland, calling the PfP, ‘...a first step toward expansion of NATO.’ By 1995, the process was inevitable.

### Russian Reaction to the First Phase of NATO Enlargement

The North Atlantic Council announced a summit in Madrid in July 1997, which decided to set the course for the Alliance to move towards the 21st Century, consolidating Euro Atlantic security.<sup>20</sup> On 10 December 1996, NATO invited Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to apply for membership at the Madrid summit. The first phase of the enlargement process was expected to take two years to complete, and by 1999, NATO was ready for new members. Because of its size and its geostrategic location, Central Europe was invaluable for NATO.<sup>21</sup>

Russian reaction to NATO expansion is difficult to chart as those reactions are also in phases. Initially, neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin felt threatened by the NATO alliance, as firstly, both these leaders were under the impression that NATO is not expanding territorially, and both wanted to work with NATO, under the impression that NATO could provide some strategic stability in Europe, and secondly, both were under no illusion that the former Warsaw pact countries were no longer under Moscow’s direct command. The common consensus in foreign policy circles and elites is that NATO enlargement results in the diminishing security buffer between Russia and West, and makes the defence of conclave and strategic chokepoint like Kaliningrad difficult. Russian Defence Minister Grachev did not see a NATO expansion in the horizon, and the Russian military doctrine in 1993 was designed to foster an era of “partnership and cooperation,” even though it did mention that territorial expansion is a military threat, in future, should it ever happen.<sup>22</sup> Since 1994, Atlanticists and liberals in the Western sense, have not acted as a unified political force within Russia.<sup>23</sup> The Russian ruling elite, as well as opposition, whether communist or ultra-nationalist, were consistently skeptical of NATO enlargement, as were the Russian military elite. Russia’s Intelligence Service (SVR) in 1993 also referred to NATO as the “biggest military grouping in the world that possesses enormous offensive potential.”<sup>24</sup> As late as 1994, there was no inclination in Russia that NATO was going to expand. At the end of 1993, First Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev confirmed to Russian lawmakers that ‘The greatest achievement of Russian foreign policy in 1993 was to prevent NATO’s expansion eastward to our

borders.’<sup>25</sup> There was a surprise in Moscow, with the launch of the NATO enlargement study in 1995, prompting Yeltsin to declare that the Cold war had been replaced with Cold Peace. The democrats in Russia felt betrayed and disappointed. Public opinion also started to turn against NATO.<sup>26</sup>

Even though neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin felt threatened by NATO, they both made it clear, that NATO expansion would be a constant source of animosity with the West. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin’s comments in Belgium also mentioned the threat to Russian interests would be NATO’s material and infrastructure in the former Soviet sphere. Even before there were any official statements from the United States about NATO expansion to the east, it was officially regarded by Russia as a threat to its national interests, a sentiment that was openly conveyed to the West. Yevgeny Primakov, at that time the director of the Foreign Intelligence, said in November 1993 that material and territorial expansion of NATO is dangerous for Russian interests, as Russia will be compelled to redeploy troops to the West.<sup>27</sup>

The Russian military and political elite acknowledged Moscow’s material and territorial inferiority compared to the Western alliance. The addition of central European states only increased that gap in aggregate power. However, two conditions from NATO’s side helped in allaying Russian fears. Russia participated in the Partnership for Peace in exchange for special status within North Atlantic Council. The partnership for peace program meant that there was a visible reduction of force posturing from the Western side. NATO’s new security doctrine resulted in a substantial reduction of conventional as well as nuclear forces.<sup>28</sup> The forward presence of the United States was reduced from 325,000 to 100,000 troops, and European members cut their troops by more than 500,000. As Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were invited into NATO, the land sea and air units were reduced by 30-40 percent, and 35 percent at readiness level compared to 1990 statistics. Theatre level nuclear weapons were reduced by 80 percent. These reductions were clearly visible and denoted the lack of offensive power or offensive intention on NATO’s part.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, despite the rhetoric, there were conciliatory efforts from both sides.

**“Even though neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin felt threatened by NATO, they both made it clear that NATO expansion would be a constant source of animosity with the West.”**

The Russian foreign ministry condition was that Moscow would agree to NATO enlargement in Central Europe, as long as there are “no deployments of nuclear weapons or allied combat forces on the territory of the new member states,”

both conditions agreed by NATO.<sup>30</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov also considered PfP to be damage limitation.<sup>31</sup> NATO’s acceptance of Russian conditions happened around the same time when Russia was also invited to join Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia, and to endorse the Dayton accords.<sup>32</sup> The “NATO Russia Founding Act,” which was signed by both parties in May 1997, led to the creation of the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), which allowed Russia to establish a mission at NATO. Yeltsin, in return, officially accepted the first round of NATO enlargement, to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary as inevitable, while making it clear that Russia has strong opposition to NATO expansion to the Baltic countries, or the former borders of the Soviet Union. This new ‘red line’ was repeated throughout the remaining years of Yeltsin’s presidency.<sup>33</sup>



In sum, there were visible Russian posturing and rhetoric that increased with NATO's eastward enlargement. But it could be argued that Russian reaction remained limited, due to a clear reduction of NATO's offensive capabilities, as well as perceived lack of clear offensive intention.

### Russian Reaction to the Second Phase of NATO Enlargement

The second phase of NATO enlargement started with the invitation of more central European members, as well as the Baltic states which formed the Soviet Union, to their membership in 2004, one year after the Iraq invasion. The period also saw Russian strategic calculus change after the Kosovo war, as well as a change in Russian leadership. Even though Russian military doctrines started to reflect the changing dynamics, Russian leadership showed flexibility in aligning with NATO after Kosovo and after the 11 September terror attack.

Tensions between Russia and NATO escalated again during the conflict in Yugoslavia, and Russia warned in the first PJC meeting to caution against the unilateral use of force without authorization from the United Nations. NATO ignored the warning, and the centrepiece of NATO's new relationship with Russia, the Permanent Joint Council, broke down during the war in Kosovo.<sup>34</sup> The war in Kosovo highlighted that NATO was not

serious about Russian 'consultation,' nor was NATO unaware of Russia's diminished military clout.<sup>35</sup> Around the same time, another significant change happened as NATO started to discuss the possibility of moving one of its headquarters in Rendsburg, Germany to northern Poland – a stated redline for Russia and something NATO explicitly promised not to do earlier. The Russian Defense Minister in 1998 warned that such a territorial move would lead to a military confrontation. There was no military confrontation during the move, but Russia suspended ties with NATO and withdrew its representatives from NATO headquarters in March 1999. Russia did return to the NATO table for talks eventually within a few months, but with a clear interest that Russian troops are part of peacekeeping in the Balkans.<sup>36</sup> By the end of 1999, Boris Yeltsin resigned and Vladimir Putin was President.

The Kosovo campaign triggered the debate within the Russian military and strategic planning community with respect to NATO's hidden goals, and subsequently triggered Russian military doctrines to be adjusted reflecting its defence policies.<sup>37</sup> The first time since the Cold War, Russian strategic planners had to deal with the scenario of NATO forces projecting power within a weakened Russian territory, in the name of human rights.<sup>38</sup> Around the same time, right after NATO enlargement in Central Europe, the Russian military updated Russia's military doctrine, which focused upon Russian economic inferiority, the gap in military capabilities, and the need for a multipolar world. The language



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Russian servicemen atop an APC, patrol the streets of the Chechen capital, Grozny, 1 August 2001.

makes it abundantly clear as to which organization the document refers. Russia had abandoned its ‘no first use’ policy of nuclear weapons against an overwhelming conventional attack from a great power or alliance in 1993. That was continued in this new document.<sup>39</sup> NATO, on the other hand, maintained no change in its nuclear posture, reiterating no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons in new member states.<sup>40</sup>

Vladimir Putin was initially less hostile to the idea of NATO itself, even when Russian strategic doctrines continued to consider NATO a threat. He accepted that NATO enlargement agreed under Yeltsin was a *fait accompli*, and at least publicly stated that he wanted to rebuild relations with NATO. In his meeting with NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, Putin stated that there is a need to resume Russia-NATO contacts and compare the military doctrines and strategic concepts of Russia and NATO.<sup>41</sup> Putin continued with the mixed messages, saying he is willing to theoretically consider the possibility of being a member of NATO in future in a BBC interview. Further, while attending a meeting with NATO in February 2001, he mentioned that Russia was willing to coordinate with the US to form a European wide missile defence system instead of a NATO missile defence in Europe, and was willing to send Russian experts to Brussels to discuss the possibility, explain Russian and American cooperation on technology and to test public interest.<sup>42</sup> For the first time since the Kosovo crisis, Russia announced a full meeting with NATO, even when NATO was reticent about commenting upon Russian membership.

The 11 September attack on the United States changed the strategic dynamics of Europe. Russia was undergoing its own problems with the Chechen insurgency. Immediately after the attack, Putin said, ‘If NATO takes on a different shade and is becoming a political organization ... we would reconsider our position with regard to such expansion if we are to feel involved in such processes.’<sup>43</sup> Within two weeks of the attacks, Russia declared that it would assist the United States in operating out of central Asian airbases, typically used and operated by the Russian air force and considered under Russian spheres of influence, as well as unilateral closure of an espionage centre in Lourdes, Cuba and a naval base in Vietnam. In December 2001, the United States unilaterally pulled out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which was simply called a mistake from the Russian side, but nothing else was done about it by the Russians.

There were significant changes on the side of NATO as well. The 11 September attacks changed NATO’s own reasoning about enlargement from “democracy promotion” of the Clinton era to an alliance determined to pull efforts to tackle international terror. In the 2002 Prague summit, this new line was communicated by President George W. Bush, as he stated, “Expansion of NATO also brings many advantages to the alliance itself. Every new member contributes military capabilities that add to our common security. We see this already in Afghanistan—for forces from Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and others have joined with 16 NATO allies to help defeat global terror.”<sup>44</sup>

This reframing of NATO resulted in further cooperation and made NATO enlargement more palatable to Russia for the time being. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov confirmed Russian understanding of NATO’s new position, and said, “Russia no longer considers NATO enlargement to be a menace because the alliance has undergone a radical transformation from a Cold War instrument to defence against global terrorism and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century threats.”<sup>45</sup> When NATO planned to invite seven new countries to join the Alliance at its Prague summit in the fall of 2002, the position was repeated by Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, regarding NATO expansion in the Baltics. Ivanov stated: “Russia is not planning to get overly dramatic about the situation.”<sup>46</sup> During the Rome declaration of May 2002, Russian understanding was that NATO and Russia will act jointly and equally as a side of twenty, instead of the previously agreed 19+1 formula, and would focus upon international terrorism and reaction to crises.<sup>47</sup>

**“Vladimir Putin was initially less hostile to the idea of NATO itself, even when Russian strategic doctrines continued to consider NATO a threat.”**

As evident from the sequence of events, Russia was initially skeptical with respect to NATO enlargement in the second phase when for the first time, actual member states in the Baltic region which formed parts of the Soviet Union, were invited to be part of NATO. NATO hardware and outposts also

moved east in a breach of a previously declared redline, and the Kosovo war was viewed in Russia as a direct attempt to claw away at the Russian sphere of influence. The Russian military elites also consistently saw NATO enlargement as a serious threat to Russian security and interests.<sup>48</sup> Previously, in the 1990s, certain sections of the Russian military viewed NATO enlargement as German expansion and continuation of German grand strategy in East Europe.<sup>49</sup> During the early-2000s, NATO enlargement started to be considered as an American plot to move inexorably eastward, and a continuation of American hegemony. While NATO was not part of the Iraq war, it did not have any discernible difference in Russian military thinking, as evident from the statement in 2003, after the Iraq invasion, by Russian General Yuri Baluyevsky, who stated that the world needs to be multipolar, otherwise it breeds instability.<sup>50</sup> The Russian political leadership’s view of NATO showed greater flexibility. That could be attributed to a change in NATO’s reframing of its cause of existence, focused more upon counterinsurgency as well as fighting Islamic terrorism, just as Russia was facing a Chechen insurgency, Russian perception of NATO’s offensive intention underwent a change, which led to a temporary alignment of interests. The Rome declaration of 2002 further changed the relation between Russia and NATO as procedurally, Russian administration gained the framework of NATO-Russia Council, and perceived that NATO’s primary motivation shifted to counter-terrorism. While Russian military doctrine remains unchanged, the political speeches highlighted that Russia did not consider NATO a threat, but rather a partner against Islamic terrorism in a changing global security scenario. Russia did not perceive any offensive intention, and NATO’s declared offensive capability did not increase. Russia’s perception of a threat from NATO therefore remained neutral. NATO’s declared force posture with no new weaponry in the new member states, added to NATO’s focus on counterterrorism, led Russia to perceive a distinct positive change in a NATO – Russia future.

## Russian Reaction to NATO Invitation to Ukraine and Georgia

The third and final phase of NATO enlargement is explored in this section, before relations with Russia broke down permanently, and Russia, for the first time since the Second World War, went to war with another sovereign state in Europe. After the second phase of NATO enlargement, in 2004, relations with Russia quickly broke down due to the animosity with the United States over the Iraq invasion at around the same time when the so-called ‘colour revolutions’ rocked Russia’s neighbourhood. This is also the time when the Russian military doctrines changed and Russian redlines on NATO’s further territorial enlargement continued. Russian political statements and military doctrines consequently reflected this change of perception.

When asked about further NATO expansion plans regarding Ukraine and Georgia, Vladimir Putin said that Ukraine should exercise the plan independently but stated categorically that Russian position regarding territorial expansion remained unchanged, a hint at Yeltsin era red line.<sup>51</sup> Russia maintained that the only way Russia would find further NATO expansion acceptable was if NATO transforms itself into a political organization, which, needless to mention, NATO had no intention of doing. NATO meanwhile was transforming and enhancing its military capability as individual NATO members were preparing for a war in Iraq as part of the “coalition of the willing,” something which Russia opposed earnestly and joined forces with France and Germany to curtail. During the Iraq war, NATO supported Poland with communication and logistics, and on the request of Turkey, NATO took precautionary measures to install missile defences in Turkish territory, even when NATO was not taking part in the war as an organization.<sup>52</sup> Russia continued to maintain that it had concerns regarding further NATO expansion, including territorial and infrastructure, and would change Russian military doctrines accordingly.<sup>53</sup> Asked specifically about Ukraine again, Russia repeated that Ukraine is free to choose its future, within the EU, as long as it does not join NATO.<sup>54</sup>

As NATO continued with plans of another round of expansion, a territorial red line for Russia, NATO also began F-16 patrols over the Baltic Sea and Baltic territory, a significant new development in offensive capabilities, infuriating Russia. Putin immediately demanded that any new NATO member state accede and ratify the Conventional Forces Treaty to avoid any sort of a “strategic grey area.”<sup>55</sup> By that time, there were massive transformations within Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004), which added on to Russian understanding that NATO is behind the crisis, and is trying to encircle Russia and encroach even further. By this period, it was also clear that Russian intention (and Putin’s dream) of a “transformation” of NATO into a political institution instead of a primarily military one, with Russia being an equal member, was not going to be fulfilled anytime soon, and that was mainly because of NATO’s new members, who were disinclined to allow Russia

any decision-making powers. NATO’s focus upon democracy promotion and nation-building in Iraq, corresponded with Western support of revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine.

Finally in 2006, at Moscow University, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, “we firmly raise questions about the transformation of NATO, the Alliance’s plans for enlargement, the reconfiguration of the U.S. military presence in Europe, the deployment of elements of the American missile defence system here, and NATO’s refusal to ratify the CFE Treaty. The future of our relations largely depends on what direction the transformation in NATO will proceed in after the Riga Summit, and the extent to which the security interests of Russia are going to be considered.”<sup>56</sup> The rhetoric from Moscow was not just directed to NATO, but also at Ukraine and Georgia. Lavrov further warned that any move from Ukraine or Georgia towards NATO would mark a “colossal geopolitical shift” for Russia. The pitch continued to rise, with President Putin’s Munich speech in 2007, where he said: “I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernization of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust.”<sup>57</sup> That same month, the US planned to talk with Poland and the Czech Republic regarding the placement of missile defences, a significant permanent weapons system, which Russia considered a clear threat. At NATO’s Bucharest summit in 2008, Putin warned: “We view the appearance of a powerful military bloc on our borders ... as a direct threat to the security of our country.”<sup>58</sup> Russian military generals started threatening war with Ukraine if NATO expanded eastward. In 2006, the Russian military journal stated that it would be shortsighted for Russia to ignore the fact that the NATO extension might be a central tenet of the United States striving to achieve unipolarity.<sup>59</sup>

In August 2008, after Russia’s war with Georgia, NATO’s foreign ministers declared that Russia’s military action had been disproportionate and that cooperation in the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was suspended until further notice. Around the same time, NATO conducted an exercise in Georgia from 6 May until 1 June 2009, which was perceived in Russia as a clear indication of NATO’s design on Russian borders. A 2009 essay from *Military Thought* stated, “As previously, the Americans will continue actively to foist their values on the rest of the world relying on all the force and assets available to them,” a charge repeated in 2010 after analysis of ongoing wars of choices by the United States.<sup>60</sup> Another stated: “The armed conflicts of the late 20th and early 21st Centuries have been a graphic demonstration of the United States’ desire for a unipolar world and its determination to solve any problems by force, ignoring the opinion of the world community.”<sup>61</sup> During the Arab Spring, the Russian military was certain that the instability and events in the Middle East were to promote American unipolarity.<sup>62</sup> In most of these cases, NATO was considered to be an arm of either German or American grand strategy.

**“Russia maintained that the only way Russia would find further NATO expansion acceptable was if NATO transforms itself into a political organization, which, needless to mention, NATO had no intention of doing.”**

Eddie Gerald/Alamy Stock Photo/BSGAKY



Russian armoured personnel carriers on their way to the city of Gori during the Russo-Georgian War, August 2008.

Regardless of which, it was in all the cases, considered a threat to Russian security. At any rate, an enlargement plan with Ukraine and Georgia were the final territorial red lines and completely unacceptable at any rate, and that was made clear from the Russian side repeatedly. NATO continued to be ambivalent about it and offered Georgia and Ukraine Membership Action Plans, suggesting that membership in NATO was not a matter of whether, but when. In August, Russia and Georgia went to war over South Ossetia. Russia later stated that the war stopped NATO expansion.<sup>63</sup> Ever since the 2008 war, Russia came out with new military doctrines stating NATO expansion as its biggest threat, and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu identified NATO expansion as one of the top three threats to Russia.<sup>64</sup> On 5 February 2010, President Dmitry Medvedev approved the Russian Federation’s new updated Military Doctrine, which had been being drafted since 2005, right after another phase of NATO expansion in 2004. This text supplemented the Russian National Security Strategy of 2009. The most serious threat was the attempt “...to attribute global functions to NATO in breach of international legal norms” and the NATO infrastructure moving closure to Russian territory. “The deployment (buildup) of troop contingents of foreign states

**“The most serious threat was the attempt ‘...to attribute global functions to NATO in breach of international legal norms,’ and the NATO infrastructure moving closer to Russian territory.”**

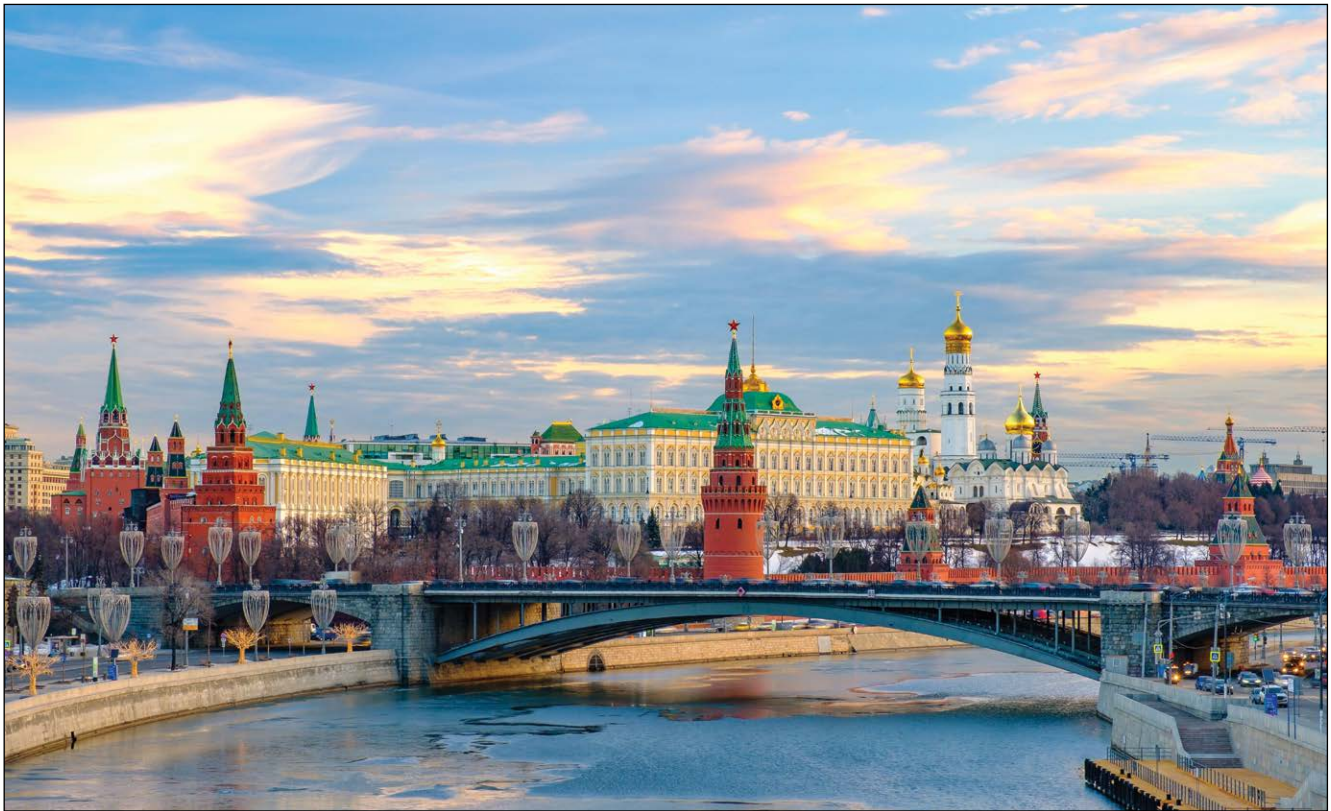
(groups of states) on the territories of states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies and also in adjacent waters” and maintains that the way to solve the threat is a European security initiative and the changing of NATO into a political union.<sup>65</sup> A more recent revision of the military doctrine was published on 26 December 2014, which reinforced the threats of NATO expansion as well as military infrastructure and large-scale military exercises and deployment and buildup of military contingents of foreign states or alliances, in the territories of the neighboring states of Russia.<sup>66</sup> Prompt Global Strike concept is mentioned as a military danger but within a context of interstate rivalries. Concerning NATO, “an abrupt exacerbation of the military-political situation (interstate relations),” “a show of military force” through exercises in Russia’s neighborhood or “obstructing” state and military command and control, by means of a “global strike,” was considered a threat.<sup>67</sup> Russian National Security Strategy, dated December 2015, also cites NATO troop deployments, and induction of former Soviet-allied states as the top threat to Russian security, adding that NATO missile defence plans are destabilizing, especially for Russia to protect its natural resources and maritime interests in the Arctic Sea.

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Armed men, believed to be Russian servicemen, supply an APC in front of a Ukrainian marine base in the Crimean port city of Feodosia, 23 March 2014.

Sergei Sharmakov/Alamy Stock Photo/T171C8



Morning in Moscow city landscape with Kremlin in the background.

## Conclusion

From the evidence observed, the Russian military elite, as well as civilian leadership, were always opposed to NATO territorial enlargement; however, the prospect was not taken seriously in the initial days after the Soviet collapse, and was considered implausible even during the early years of the Yeltsin administration. Each of the subsequent instances of NATO enlargement resulted in a Russian reaction, even when the reaction was varied, but the evidence that *any* and *every* NATO enlargement, *per se*, resulted in Russian revanchism is sparse. In reality, Moscow is quite agnostic, and pragmatic about NATO's relative power superiority. The Kremlin is also aware of Russia's lack of sway in the European balance. The only instances one can expect Moscow to lash out, are when "direct" strategic interests are threatened, as has been observed in Georgia and Ukraine.

The traditional balancers of Europe, the Anglo-Americans, can therefore debate on whether, the European integration would eventually come at a stop, given that there will be logically a limit to enlargement. Second, if Europe will be ever ready to take the security burden, and to balance Moscow as an independent actor. Third, how to eventually find a place of co-existence with Moscow in the European security architecture, or if that is even possible. At the end of the day, whether to compromise with Moscow and let Russia have her own small sphere of influence in parts of Europe where there are already Russian established bases and interests, or to push Moscow out and risk a localized proxy war of attrition, is a policy question beyond the scope of this article.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See, Mary E Sarotte, "Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to Bribe the Soviets Out" and Move NATO In," in *International Security* 2010 35:1, pp. 110-137; Mary E Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993-95," in *International Security* 2019 44:1, pp. 7-41.
- <sup>2</sup> J.R. Itzkowitz Shiffrinson, "The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," in *International Security*, 2016; 40:4, pp. 7-44.
- <sup>3</sup> Svetlana Savranskaya, Tom Blanton, NSA archives, GWU, Briefing Books, "NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard." at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-03-16/nato-expansion-what-yeltsin-heard> "NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard." at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>
- <sup>4</sup> The greater the aggregate power, that is, the combination of the state or bloc's total resources, which include population, industrial and military capabilities, the greater is the threat perceived by a peer rival. Second variable is geographic proximity, which argues that the states are more threatened, if the threat originates nearby than faraway, especially if not separated by buffer states or high seas. Finally, offensive power, that is military capabilities and technology, and perceived as offensive intention, of a nation or a bloc, can alter the threat perception of the state in question. See, Stephen Walt, "Origin of Alliances", *Explaining Alliance Formations, Balancing Behavior.* (Cornell University Press, 1987) pp. 28-29.
- <sup>5</sup> Genscher stated in a speech at the Tutzing Protestant Academy on 31 January 1990: "What NATO must do is state unequivocally that whatever happens in the Warsaw Pact there will be no expansion of NATO territory eastwards, that is to say closer to the borders of the Soviet Union." Stephen F. Szabo, *The diplomacy of German unification* (New York: St Martin's, 1992), p. 58.
- <sup>6</sup> Quote from Defense News, 29 April 1991, cited in Gerald B. Solomon, *The NATO enlargement debate, 1990-1997* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), p. 8.
- <sup>7</sup> Svetlana Savranskaya, Tom Blanton, "NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard."
- <sup>8</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, 'Building a new NATO,' in *Foreign Affairs*, 72:4 (September/October 1993), pp. 28-40.
- <sup>9</sup> Douglas Brinkley, 'Democratic enlargement: the Clinton doctrine,' in *Foreign Policy*, 106 (Spring 1997), pp. 110-127.
- <sup>10</sup> Michael R. Gordon, 'U.S. opposes move to rapidly expand NATO membership,' in *New York Times* (2 January 1994).
- <sup>11</sup> See Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler and F. Stephen Larrabee, 'Building a new NATO', *Foreign Affairs* 72: 4, Sept.-Oct. 1993, pp. 28-40; Henry A. Kissinger, 'Expand NATO now,' in *Washington Post*, 19 Dec. 1994, p. A27; Strobe Talbott, 'Why NATO should grow,' in *New York Review of Books*, 10 Aug. 1995, pp. 27-30; Richard Holbrooke, 'America, a European power,' in *Foreign Affairs* 74: 2, March-April 1995, pp. 38-51; William E. Odom, 'NATO's expansion: why the critics are wrong', *The National Interest*, Spring 1995, pp. 38-49; Madeleine Albright, 'Enlarging NATO: why bigger is better,' in *The Economist*, 15 Feb. 1997, pp. 21-3; Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'A geostrategy for Eurasia,' in *Foreign Affairs* 76: 5, Sept.-Oct. 1997, pp. 50-65.
- <sup>12</sup> NATO, 'Study on NATO enlargement', 3 Sept. 1995, Ch. 2.C.27, at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_24733.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm)
- <sup>13</sup> George W. Grayson, *Strange Bedfellows: NATO Marches East* (Landham, MD: University Press of America, 1999); Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2002 p. 313.
- <sup>14</sup> Douglas Brinkley, 'Democratic Enlargement: the Clinton Doctrine,' 1997, in *Foreign Policy*.
- <sup>15</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening's NATO's Door*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2002, p. 253.
- <sup>16</sup> Strobe Talbott, *Russia Hand*, Penguin Random House, 2002, p. 100.
- <sup>17</sup> For more on opposition to NATO enlargement within United States, see, Michael E. Brown (1995) "The flawed logic of NATO expansion," in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 37:1, 3pp.4-52; Dan Reiter (2001) "Why NATO Enlargement Does Not Spread Democracy," in *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 41-67; Kenneth N. Waltz (2000) "NATO expansion: A realist's view," in *Contemporary Security Policy*, 21:2, pp. 23-38; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," in *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/1995), pp. 5-49; 3 May letter to Talbott published in Richard T. Davies, "Should NATO grow? A dissent", *New York Review of Books* (21 September 1995).
- <sup>18</sup> For a detailed study on the domestic push during a Clinton Presidency, read Kimberly Marten, "Reconsidering NATO expansion: a counterfactual analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," in *European Journal of International Security*, November 2017.
- <sup>19</sup> JM Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington: Brookings, 1999), p 57.
- <sup>20</sup> Peter Trenin-Straussov, *The NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council in 1997-1999: anatomy of a failure*, (Berlin: Berliner Informationszentrum für Transatlantische Sicherheit, July 1999), pp. 1-8.
- <sup>21</sup> J Smith. 2008. *The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?* CSIS Report (November 14). Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- <sup>22</sup> Alton Frye, "The New NATO and Relations with Russia," in *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23, No. 3 (September 2000), p. 95
- <sup>23</sup> Oksana Antonenko, "Russia, NATO and European Security after Kosovo," in *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 1999, pp. 124-144.
- <sup>24</sup> Alexei Arbatov, (2000), "The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya," in *Marshall Center Papers*, No. 2 (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen).
- <sup>25</sup> JM Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, pp. 190-191; Talbott, *The Russia Hand*, p. 140; and JM Goldgeier & M McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War*, Washington, DC: Brookings, p. 184.
- <sup>26</sup> A poll by the newspaper, *Moskovskiy Novosti*, found that 51% of Russians viewed NATO expansion as a "serious threat" to Russia; only 14% disagreed. A poll by the respected Russian Centre for Public Opinion found a similar majority "unreservedly negative" on the proposed changes in the Alliance, see C Caryl, *Ivan O Public Speaks: No to NATO*, US News and World Report, 24 March 1997, p. 42.
- <sup>27</sup> Primakov Report by the Russian External Intelligence Service in autumn 1993, quoted in AA. Sergunin, *Russian domestic debate on NATO enlargement: from phobia to damage limitation*,

- European Security 6: 4, Winter 1997, pg. 61–62; Elaine Sciolino, *Yeltsin says NATO is trying to split the continent again*, New York Times, 6 Dec. 1994.
- <sup>28</sup> *The Transformation of NATO's Defence Posture*, July 1997, at: [www.nato.int/docu/comm/1997/970708/infopres/e-defpost.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/1997/970708/infopres/e-defpost.htm)
- <sup>29</sup> CA Wallander, (2000) *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies: German-Russian Cooperation After the Cold War*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press; and *Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War*, International Organization 54/4: 705-35.
- <sup>30</sup> Whether NATO genuinely believed solution or just placated Russia is a matter of debate. US ambassador to Moscow, Jack Matlock, for example, said those promises are unsustainable. Valery N. Gorokhov and Dmitri Ye. Gorovtsov (1998), *NATO Expansion: A View from the State Duma*, Demokratizatsiia, 6/1, p. 71.
- <sup>31</sup> M Rühle, (2014), *NATO enlargement and Russia: discerning fact from fiction*, American Foreign Policy Interests 36(4)
- <sup>32</sup> J Smith, (2008) *The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?* CSIS Report, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- <sup>33</sup> Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Gusev made these comments at the 1999 Munich Security Conference. See R. Burns 'Russia opposes more NATO expansion', Associated Press, 7 Feb. 1999.
- <sup>34</sup> P Trenin-Straussov, (1999), *The NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council in 1997–1999: Anatomy of a Failure*, Berlin: Berliner Informationszentrum für Transatlantische Sicherheit, pg. 1–8.
- <sup>35</sup> J Smith, (2008) *The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?* CSIS Report, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- <sup>36</sup> A Frye. (2000) 'The New NATO and Relations with Russia,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23/3, pg. 95.
- <sup>37</sup> Oksana Antonenko, 'Russia, NATO and European Security after Kosovo', in *Survival*, vol. 41, no. 4, 1999, pp. 124–44.
- <sup>38</sup> A Arbatov, (2000) 'The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya', *Marshall Center Papers*, no. 2 (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen).
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DND photo WT07-2019-0013-005 by Private Jordyn Anderson



Reservist from 38 Brigade Group's Influence Activities Company conducts patrols and executes key leader engagements during Exercise MAPLE RESOLVE 19, 11 May 2019.

## Women's Lived Experiences of Serving in the Canadian Armed Forces Primary Reserve

by Barbara T. Waruszynski and Kate H. MacEachern

Dr. Barbara Waruszynski, DSocSci., is a Defence Scientist with Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA), Department of National Defence (DND), and she specializes in diversity and inclusion research for the advancement of Defence and Security. Barbara is the project leader for two studies that looked at the attraction, recruitment and employment of women serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. Specifically, she is looking at ways to improve recruitment strategies and the military culture to enable greater diversity and inclusion in the Canadian military.

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### Introduction

**S**trengthening Canada's military capacity and capabilities to address modern-day conflict requires personnel from the Primary Reserve to work alongside the Regular Force in meeting operational challenges, both domestically and abroad. In helping to augment the capabilities of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Primary Reserve members, primarily across the Naval Reserve, Canadian Army Reserve, Royal Canadian Air Force Reserve, Military Personnel Command Reserve, and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command Reserve,<sup>1</sup> are ready to respond if and when needed. The Primary Reserve is instrumental in supporting the Regular Force by responding to humanitarian challenges, both domestically (i.e., natural disaster emergencies) and in international operations. It is within this context that we examine women's lived experiences of serving in the Canadian Primary Reserve. Specifically, the purpose of this article is to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with being a woman in the Primary Reserve.



To better understand these challenges and opportunities, a qualitative study conducted by Waruszynski and MacEachern (2019) examined the attraction, recruitment, employment, and retention of women in the Primary Reserve.<sup>2</sup> Through the use of focus groups and individual interviews, the researchers were able to take note of the lived experiences of women serving in the CAF Primary Reserve. These participants also provided suggestions on how the CAF could increase the representation of women and thereby foster a more integrated, diverse, and inclusive Canadian military to further strengthen its defence capabilities and operational effectiveness.

### Reservists Strengthening Military Capacity and Capabilities for Enhanced Operational Effectiveness

The current defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, highlights the important role of Canadian Reservists:

The Canadian Armed Forces is greatly enhanced by being able to employ the varied backgrounds and skills of Reservists. The prevalence of Reserve units across Canada, including in major urban centres, makes them extremely valuable as a means to tap into Canadian diversity, capitalizing on different ways of thinking and problem solving, and accessing the deep cultural knowledge resident in Canadian communities. Reservists bring a wealth of experience from their primary occupations that has allowed the Canadian Armed Forces to access in-demand skills and trades...that would otherwise take years to develop in the Regular Force.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, women represent 16.1% of the total force with 16.8% in the Primary Reserve.<sup>4</sup> By 2026, the CAF's intent is to increase the representation of women in the Canadian military to approximately 25%.<sup>5</sup> Although women have been involved with major conflicts throughout Canada's history (see Waruszynski, MacEachern, Raby, Straver, Ouellet, & Makadi, 2019),<sup>6</sup> it was not until the 1970s that women were given greater opportunities to serve as members of the CAF. In 1988, women represented 17.9% of the Primary Reserve.<sup>7</sup> Representation was highest in the Naval Reserve (37.6%), followed by the Communication Reserve (35.1%), Air Reserve (28.5%) and the Militia (12.3%).<sup>8</sup>

The appeal of a military career is relatively universal. Both men and women, who are in the Primary Reserve or Regular Force, seek opportunities to serve their country and to pursue a challenging and adventurous career.<sup>9,10,11</sup> However, there are specific reasons why individuals may choose a career in the Primary Reserve over the Regular Force. For example, Defence scientist J. Anderson (2018) discovered that the Primary Reserve provided an opportunity to try-out the military, while others wanted the opportunity to learn new skills, or to stay in shape through continuous exercising. Moreover, familiarity with the military has been found to be an important part of attraction and recruitment, and this appears to hold for people wanting to join the Primary Reserve. According to Anderson (2018), two-thirds of Primary Reserve members had family or friends who were serving members of the CAF.<sup>12</sup>

DND photo 20200814NKA00266D029 by Corporal David Veldman



Able Seaman Ashtyn Bartlett drives a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat through Maniitsoq Fjord during Operation NANOOK 2020, 14 August 2020.

One of the most positive aspects of joining the Primary Reserve is the ability to have more control over making decisions related to family/work-life balance. The Primary Reserve offers more flexible options for those who prefer to work part-time in the Canadian military, but not as a full-time service member. For example, the employment terms for a reservist do not require an extended commitment. For those working part-time in the Army Reserve, the occupational opportunities are varied, and the investment required is typically one night a week and one weekend a month.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the variability in occupations is important (i.e., paramedics, nurses, doctors, and dentists, as health-related occupations have been listed as top fields of interest for women in the Canadian public).<sup>14</sup> It may be worthwhile to highlight these types of occupations to the public to appeal to women who may be unfamiliar with the CAF.

There are many who benefit from the opportunity to be employed part-time with the Canadian military. For example, students who are enlisted in the Primary Reserve are able to work part-time during the school year and then have full-time summer employment. Also, the Primary Reserve is an option for individuals wanting part-time employment in smaller communities where opportunities may be limited. The pay and working conditions are potentially better than what is available in small communities, where other options might include fast-food or big-box retailers. In addition, the training and ability to develop unique skillsets can aid in professional development and future employment opportunities.

The Primary Reserve is also appealing for women who want to be a part of the military, but also require the flexibility to control their schedules and their geographic locations. Women who prefer to remain close to family and friends, or who need to take care of their children while remaining employed can find a good balance between work commitments and family life. Such flexibility would also be relevant for spouses of Regular Force members who choose to remain with their families when moving to a new city, or if they need to maintain a connection to the CAF.<sup>15</sup>

### Issues Affecting Women in the Primary Reserve

The key findings of this qualitative study are based upon the perceptions of 168 women in the Primary Reserve\* who work in several bases/units across Canada, including Ottawa, Bagotville, Trenton, Montreal, Quebec City, Edmonton, Vancouver, Halifax, and Winnipeg. Some of the central issues raised by participants were consistent with previous research with women in the Regular Force.<sup>16</sup> This is not unexpected, as members of the Regular Force and Primary Reserve work in the same environments, carry out similar tasks/jobs, and may have the same colleagues and supervisors.

The key areas that are discussed next include: (a) motivation to join the CAF and reactions to joining; (b) experiences with recruiters and the recruitment process; (c) the masculinized culture of the CAF; (d) issues in military training; and (e) concerns over kit and equipment.

\* Two female participants were from the Regular Force but provided suggestions on how to improve the recruitment of women in the Primary Reserve.

**Motivation to join the CAF and reactions to joining:** In general, many participants spoke about several motivating factors to join the CAF, including: opportunity to experience new adventures, travel around the world, undergo challenges, pride in wearing the Canadian military uniform, ability to give something of themselves to help people around the world, and the benefits of job security and subsidized education. As noted in the study on women in the Regular Force,<sup>17</sup> family and friends were primarily great supporters of the women joining the Primary Reserve, especially if the people who supported them came from military backgrounds.

**Experiences with recruiters and the recruitment process:** The majority of participants articulated positive experiences with the recruiters and the recruitment process; however, some of the participants felt that the recruitment process was too long. Several participants also stated that the recruiting staff seemed at times uninformed about the occupations, disinterested in their role as recruiters, and lacked female recruiters to help answer female-oriented questions. These findings parallel those in the Regular Force study,<sup>18</sup> including the lack of qualified female recruiters and the ability of recruiters to speak to issues impacting women in the military.

**The masculinized culture of the CAF:** Working in a masculinized culture subjected some women to harassment, discrimination, and even sexual assault, similar to the findings in the Regular Force study.<sup>19</sup> The military culture was described as an “old boys club,” with many women experiencing harassment, including inappropriate comments and jokes. Some spoke with frustration about Operation

HONOUR and how the program was treated by male colleagues, where some of the men viewed Operation HONOUR as a program for women.

Women in the Primary Reserve study raised concerns about the potentially triggering nature of Operation HONOUR presentations, particularly for women who had experienced sexual harassment or assault in the past. This perspective is important as it speaks to the need to ensure that all members feel psychologically safe in their work environments. Overall, women in the Primary Reserve<sup>20</sup> and Regular Force<sup>21</sup> suggested that Operation HONOUR is a step in the right direction to help eliminate sexual misconduct in the military, but the program may need further evaluation to ensure it is effective in addressing sexual misconduct and encouraging real change in attitudes and behaviours.

**Issues in military training:** Specifically related to women in the Combat Arms, some of the participants expressed issues with certain male instructors who were perceived as being unprepared to integrate women into combat units. Participants highlighted that there are some instructors who adjust their expectations and assessments based upon the anatomy of female members (i.e., perceptions that women are less likely to succeed in infantry training due to their smaller height and body size).

**Concerns over kit and equipment:** Another common theme was the concern with respect to one’s military kit and equipment. This issue was raised over 20 years ago,<sup>22</sup> and raised again more recently by members of the Regular Force.<sup>23</sup> The key concern is

“One of the most positive aspects of joining the Primary Reserve is the ability to have more control over making decisions related to family/work-life balance.”



Captain Skye Simpson flies a CC-130J *Hercules* on approach to landing in Kamloops, BC, during Operation LENTUS 17-04, 21 July 2017.

that the uniforms, rucksacks, and safety equipment are made for an average male body type and do not necessarily fit a woman's body type. This implies that women are wearing ill-fitted safety equipment or gear that may be too big and uncomfortable, placing physical safety at risk, and in some cases, causing physical injury.

### Perceptions Unique to Primary Reservists

Many participants in the Primary Reserve study felt that they were not always viewed as an integral part of the CAF, despite performing the same work and having similar responsibilities as Regular Force members. Several participants stated that, often, they did not want to identify as being Primary Reservists because they felt it would change how Regular Force members would treat them. Much of this centered upon the perceived lack of respect for the Primary Reserve. For some, this was reinforced by the fact that they earned less pay and had fewer benefits.

In a similar vein, there were a number of participants who spoke about wanting to be members of the Regular Force, but were "...unwilling to relinquish control of their lives to the military." Many had started out in the Regular Force but left due to family commitments, or did not want to leave their geographical locations. This is an important point for the CAF to consider. Women are still primarily responsible for household responsibilities including child care (i.e., taking care of sick children, booking medical appointments, etc.) and often must make career sacrifices in order to maintain family commitments.

time basis, but indicated that the positions or contracts were not available. It was felt by these participants that the CAF should perhaps consider its current members and how best to utilize the talent available to enhance retention. Relatedly, there were many concerns attributed to the perception of recruiting more women in order to meet the representation goals for women in the CAF. As in the Regular Force study,<sup>24</sup> women in the Primary Reserve expressed deep concern over recruiting more women simply because of their *gender* as opposed to their *merit, knowledge, skills* and *abilities*. Despite these concerns, it was also felt that efforts to recruit more women into the CAF is an acknowledgement that Canada, and its international partners, would be better served by a military that is representative of its population.

### The Way Ahead

Participants in the Primary Reserve study put forward several key suggestions on how to improve the current culture in the military. These suggestions include: (a) foster an inclusive culture; (b) educate others on the Primary Reserve and associated benefits; (c) promote family-friendly policies; and (d) recognize best-fit recruiters.

**Foster an inclusive culture:** One of the most important suggestions for the CAF is to focus on changing the masculinized culture. Participants highlighted the need to focus on public messaging that the CAF culture is trying to change its image by accentuating greater respect, trust, and dignity for all. This was also highlighted in the Regular Force study,<sup>25</sup> where participants focused on the need to promote and communicate values of mutual respect, trust, diversity, better integration, leadership, and a safe culture.

Relatedly, some women also joined the Primary Reserve so that they could follow their military Regular Force spouses/partners without fear of separation, or be able to obtain employment in a new location. There are two perspectives to consider with this point. First, there are women who want to be part of the Regular Force, but are restricted by their desire to put family demands first. Understanding how to better serve this element could lead to greater retention in the CAF. Second, spouses/partners of Regular Force members may represent valuable candidates for recruitment into the Primary Reserve.

Many participants wanted greater opportunities to work with the Primary Reserve on a full-



DND photo LG2006-0754d by Corporal Bill Gomm

Second Lieutenant Gillian Bida of The Saskatchewan Dragoons, in the turret of a G-Wagon, watches for suspicious movement during Exercise WAGONS WEST.

**Educate others on the Primary Reserve and associated benefits:** The Primary Reserve provides an excellent opportunity for members of the Canadian population to engage with the military without the full-time commitment of a military career. Highlighting the benefits of pursuing this part-time opportunity is a force multiplier for attracting all members of the population. Notwithstanding, there are features that may be uniquely appealing to women who are focusing upon family-related concerns (i.e., child care commitments). Participants also expressed the importance of emphasizing benefits received in the Primary Reserve, whether through part-time (i.e., Class A) or full-time (i.e., Class B) employment.

**Promote family-friendly policies:** Participants felt that there was a need to promote how the CAF is helping members to address their family-related needs through changing family policies for both men and women in the CAF. This aspect remains an integral component for women serving in both the Primary Reserve and Regular Force.

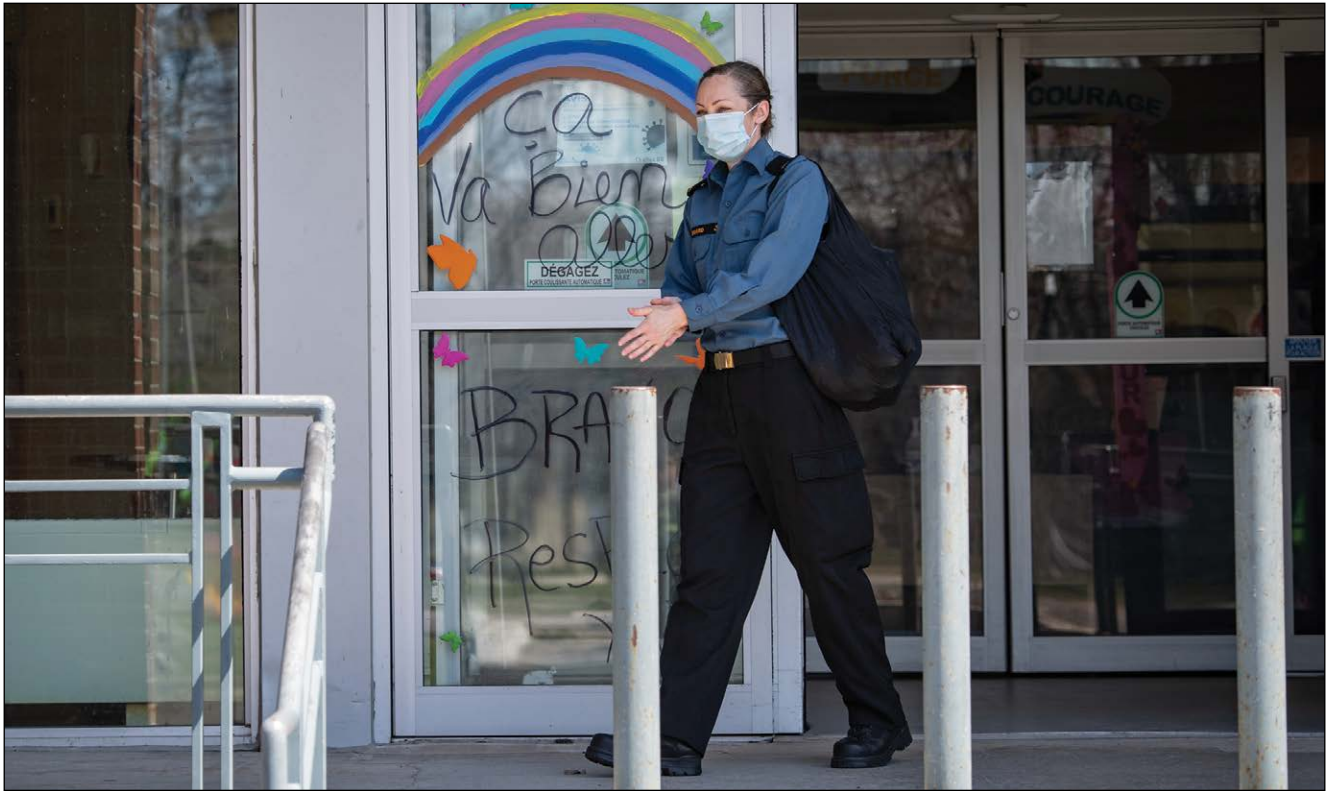
**Recognize best-fit recruiters:** Participants stressed the importance of getting best-fit recruiters who are knowledgeable about the Primary Reserve, and have a good understanding of the different occupations offered by the CAF. Participants highlighted the value of having knowledgeable female recruiters who are able to answer female-specific questions. Participants suggested that excellence in recruiting practices needs to be recognized/acknowledged through more formal processes (i.e., RCAF Commander's Commendations or Recruiter of the Year Award).

## Conclusion

The foregoing study provides a window into the lived experiences of women serving in the Canadian Primary Reserve. This article addressed several general areas impacting reservists, including: (a) their motivation to join the CAF and reactions to joining; (b) their experiences with recruiters and the recruitment process; (c) the masculinized culture of the CAF; (d) issues in military training; and (e) concerns over kit and equipment. It also examined some of the unique issues impacting women working in the Primary Reserve. Several suggestions were put forward by the participants to help address the need to increase the representation of women in the Primary Reserve, including: (a) foster an inclusive culture; (b) educate others on the Primary Reserve and associated benefits; (c) promote family-friendly policies; and (d) recognize best-fit recruiters. The participants also highlighted that recruiting highly skilled women and men will help to strengthen military capacity and capabilities for enhanced operational effectiveness. As the defence policy reiterates: "To continue to benefit from all the strengths of Canadian society and be successful in a highly competitive labour market, the Reserve Force will dramatically improve the recruitment process to ensure it is agile, flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of those who serve Canada through the Reserves."<sup>26</sup>

**"The participants also highlighted that recruiting highly skilled women and men will help to strengthen military capacity and capabilities for enhanced operational effectiveness."**

CMJ



A Naval Reservist changes shift at the Manoir-de-Verdun long-term care centre in Verdun, Quebec, during Operation LASER, 3 May 2020.

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DND photo XA01-2019-0110-019 by Corporal Stuart Evans



HMCS *Regina* and MV *Asterix* conduct a Replenishment at Sea exercise while deployed.

## Project REGi-Net, or: How to Pull a Rabbit Out of a Hat

by Craig J. Newman

Lieutenant-Commander Craig Newman, a *Naval Combat Systems Engineer*, graduated from the *Royal Military College of Canada* in May 2008 with a *BSc in Physics*. After initial training and service, he completed a postgraduate *MSc. degree in Guided Weapons Systems* at *Cranfield University* in the UK. He has held staff positions at *Director General Maritime Equipment Program Management*, *Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Breton* and *Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters*. Operational deployments include *Operation ARTEMIS* in Bahrain (November 2014-April 2015). From May 2017 to August 2019, he served as the *Combat Systems Engineering Officer* aboard HMCS *Regina*, and deployed on Operations *PROJECTION*, *ARTEMIS*, and *NEON*.

### Introduction

In company with Motor Vessel *Asterix*, sailing with Maritime Forces Pacific's first embarked Helicopter Air Detachment flying the CH-148 *Cyclone* helicopter, and later joined in theatre by members of the Naval Tactical Operations Group, on 6 February 2019, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Regina* departed Esquimalt, British Columbia for participation in Operations *PROJECTION*, *ARTEMIS*, and *NEON*. While deployed, the ship:

- conducted naval boarding operations as part of Combined Task Force 150 in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman where it interdicted 9,155 kilograms of illegal narcotics worth just over \$4.7 million USD;
- completed a Government of Canada Global Engagement Strategy port visit to Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam;

- provided support to multinational coordinated enforcement of United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea;
- participated in Exercise *TALISMAN SABRE 2019*, with the United States Navy, Royal Australian Navy, and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force.

After more than 190 days, on 19 August 2019, HMCS *Regina* proudly returned to homeport having accomplished her mission between Esquimalt, Hawaii, Guam, Singapore, Seychelles, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Japan, Australia, and Fiji.

HMCS *Regina's* experience is just one example of how the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is realizing operational success daily across the globe, but there is a high demand placed upon our officers and sailors to generate and sustain that effect. According to the *RCN Strategic Plan 2017-2022*, the recruiting and retention of sailors is currently one of the navy's strategic objectives. Any



HMCS *Regina's* embarked CH-148 *Cyclone* helicopter, 'Bronco.'

DND photo XA01-2019-0485-006 by Corporal Stuart Evans

Head or Chief of Department onboard ship will likely agree that personnel shortages and “pier head jumps” are more common than we would care to admit. It is easy to see how improving a sailor’s quality of life at sea could go a long way to retaining those who would otherwise release from the RCN due to the demands and stresses of their occupation and work environment, as well as the large amounts of time spent away from home. And so, the *Strategic Plan* describes that one aspect by which the success of the plan will be measured in the coming years is by having “...sailors digitally connected, through their personal devices, to friends and family when deployed.” What makes HMCS *Regina*’s latest deployed experience unique from other units is how, in an effort to mitigate those aspects of service onboard ship which are impacting the retention of our sailors, we achieved that strategic objective through an undertaking we named Project REGi-Net. But for some of those involved, including myself as the ship’s Combat Systems Engineering Officer (CSEO), achieving that success presented unique challenges, and placed the accomplishing of our commander’s objectives at odds with operational, technical, and logistical policies and processes. This article describes some of those challenges which involved naval technical risk management, as well as my personal observations, and I hope to impart upon the reader a sense of the very likely internal and external conflict such a scenario may generate while carrying out one’s duties, if they have not already found themselves faced with similar dilemmas.

## Discussion

The RCN is making progress towards realizing its connectivity objective across the Fleet, but that progress has been gradual and iterative. Whether alongside or at sea, while onboard, ship sailors have internet and Defence Wide Area Network access using their Ship Local Area Network (ShipLAN) account. Understandably though, personal use of the network is restricted since that connection necessarily prohibits access to certain websites, and denies some forms of use. ShipLAN computers are also typically only located in workspaces and are limited in numbers. The project description for the future Internet Support to Sailors (IS2S) system describes how it will “...provide the capability for sailors in the *Halifax*-class to connect their Personal Communication Devices (PCDs) wirelessly to the internet from within the ship, while in port, in order to enable online training whilst improving morale services.” It will do so by creating Wi-Fi networks in locations, such as the Commanding Officer’s Dining Room, Wardroom, Chiefs’ & Petty Officers’ Lounge, and Crew’s Lounge. In the last few years, the creation of an internet connection through a temporary Wi-Fi network in the Hangar while alongside foreign ports by using local cellular service providers was commonplace. And building upon that idea, in late-2017 and early-2018, Canadian Fleet Pacific (CANFLTPAC) *Halifax*-class ships were directed to establish quality of life Wi-Fi networks by essentially implementing “interim IS2S systems.” These systems were designed and installed by sailors using components locally procured by CANFLTPAC, such as antennas, cellular and Wi-Fi routers, Ethernet cable, and SIM cards. In the case of both the Hangar Wi-Fi system and the interim IS2S system, these capabilities were only available alongside or at a range from land with a

cellular signal. Of note, these initiatives were implemented without the formal naval Engineering Change (EC) process being followed, but ostensibly proceeded at risk clearly with the support of the RCN’s leadership, and undoubtedly with the strategic objective in mind; “sailors digitally connected while deployed.”

As an example, in January 2018, just prior to Intermediate Multi-Ship Readiness Training HMCS *Regina* received direction from CANFLTPAC staff to hastily install an interim IS2S system. However, a number of technical issues, including a subsequent order to transfer system components to another ship, delayed progress and meant that it was not until the fall of 2018 that the system was operational. Notwithstanding Command approval to implement the system, as a “rabbit” (i.e. an unauthorized EC), without the support of a Life Cycle Materiel Manager (LCMM) and thus without the ability to request any significant assistance from Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton, the ship’s staff had to independently overcome those issues without conflicting with their primary roles and responsibilities. Having finally completed the task, in many ways, the team demonstrated the very best qualities and capabilities of our sailors. It serves as a reminder that their knowledge and skill needs to be invested in, and their initiative and ideas need to be encouraged if there is any hope for them to complete their mission under the most challenging of circumstances a warship might encounter. It’s our responsibility to ensure that when the ship and her crew are deployed halfway around the world and in the middle

**“The RCN is making progress towards realizing its connectivity objective across the Fleet, but that progress has been gradual and iterative.”**

of the ocean, they are ready to solve those problems for which one simply cannot wait for external support or direction in order to stay in the fight.

Since the navy has a rich but oftentimes confusing traditional lexicon, at this point, it may be beneficial to describe the term “rabbit.” *Jackspeak* defines “rabbit” as a “frequent descriptive term for a gift – or something that has been acquired...Rabbitwork is material made in a workshop on an unofficial basis.” So, in this context it should be clear how this term has come to apply to an unauthorized EC, and the subject of this article.

Intending to enhance the capability to be introduced by the IS2S system, in November 2017, a Maritime Evaluation (MAREVAL) request was submitted by Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters N6 to Director Naval Requirements (DNR) proposing the installation of the commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) Cobham Sailor GX 100 System in HMCS *Ottawa* prior to the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2018. That project would necessarily replace the Cobham Sailor 500 Fleet Broadband System to make space available for the new system, but in doing so, the Cobham Sailor GX 100 System was going to introduce a maritime broadband satellite internet connection to the ship’s Wi-Fi networks, providing sailors the interim IS2S system capability both alongside and at sea. The request was supported by DNR in December 2017 and reiterated in March 2018, and FMF Cape Breton prepared an EC installation specification for the system (EC 20180087, 28 August 2018). However, also in March 2018, the evaluation was reassigned by MARPAC HQ N37 to HMCS *Regina* in preparation for her deployment in 2019.

Unfortunately, due to resource constraints and reprioritization required during the ship's EC Work Period of the summer of 2018, the installation was cancelled and assigned back to HMCS *Ottawa* for the fall of 2018. (Note: As of the late-summer of 2019, I understood that progress towards full operational capability continued on the MAREVAL [Maritime Evaluation] in HMCS *Ottawa*, despite some early technical challenges.) Upon completion of her deployment on Op PROJECTION in 2018, HMCS *Calgary* formally submitted an observation which identified a number of issues related to their quality of life Wi-Fi network (which happened to use components inherited from HMCS *Ottawa*'s network established on that ship's previous deployment). Observations included hardware and configuration issues, as well as high cost and time associated with keeping the system functional during port visits.

With the MAREVAL assigned back to HMCS *Ottawa* and having reviewed HMCS *Calgary*'s deployment observation on the interim IS2S system, in late-November 2018, anticipating possible challenges during our upcoming deployment, key personnel onboard HMCS *Regina* began considering what options were available to us. Beginning with a clever name, Project REGi-Net, the team comprised initially of the Executive Officer, Operations Officer, myself, Logistics Officer, and Communication & Information Systems Officer got to work. The notion of how the ship could install a COTS system similar to the IS2S system was the focus of our effort without proceeding much farther than creating a short list of operational, technical, and logistical considerations. Upon deploying in February 2019, the interim IS2S system was available to HMCS *Regina* alongside foreign ports, but not without a number of problems similar to those encountered by HMCS *Calgary*, including network set-up and administration, rapid data usage, and inconsistent internet service provision censured by foreign governments. All this resulted in a medium-to-low user experience and satisfaction. While it was seen as a good effort to improve the quality of life onboard ship, from the point of view of HMCS *Regina*, the interim IS2S system did not provide a capability consistent with modern expectations for internet access, such as maintaining social connections, which contributes to the morale and welfare of sailors, and ultimately their retention. This was especially true for a ship's crew, which by the end of the deployment, after accounting for pre-deployment Ship Readiness Training and preparations, would spend the better part of two-thirds of a year away from home. Exacerbating the issue, the reconfiguration of the Cobham Sea Tel 5004 Satellite Television System to receive TV internationally at sea had proven exceptionally challenging. That is unfortunately common for deployed ships, and, considering the pace of deployed operations, it is surprising that there is no standard modification or direction promulgated by the System or Design Authority to make the system functional in different regions of the globe to receive satellite TV internationally. For the majority of the first half of the deployment, satellite TV simply was not available despite the best efforts of the ship's and Forward Logistics Site's staff prior to and during the deployment. This further limited entertainment options for the crew operating in a high stress environment, separated from family and friends for an extended period of time. As such, the leadership onboard HMCS *Regina* quickly began to realize

**“As such, the leadership onboard HMCS *Regina* quickly began to realize those anticipated challenges, as well as additional concerns, to the crew's quality of life during the deployment.”**

those anticipated challenges, as well as additional concerns, to the crew's quality of life during the deployment.

The project team soon recognized, however, that (a) satellite TV was unavailable while deployed, but (b) satellite TV was distributed from the ship's Entertainment Broadcast Room (EBR) to the messes using coaxial cable, and (c) internet is available ashore at home from service providers using coaxial cable. Building upon our initial list of considerations, the concept of replacing the satellite TV system with a COTS maritime broadband internet satellite system was further explored. Benefits of this approach included:

- not having to run additional cabling throughout the ship by using the existing coaxial cable and installing coax-Ethernet adapters on either end of the cable runs;
- leveraging the established Wi-Fi networks already in the CO's Dining Room, Wardroom, C&POs' Lounge, and Crew's Lounge (four end-user locations) through the interim IS2S system;
- new hardware would be limited to the ship's Hangar Top (satellite antenna), EBR (satellite system and adapters), and the four end-user locations (adapters);
- not interfacing with any ship's systems other than for electrical power;
- unlike the MAREVAL, not having to remove the Cobham Sailor 500 Fleet Broadband System (a redundant but occasionally necessary satellite communications system).

The design, therefore, was a creative solution to the problem by leveraging existing infrastructure to minimize the impact upon the ship's configuration. While a number of COTS systems were investigated, the Cobham Sailor GX 100 System utilizing Inmarsat's Global Xpress network quickly became the selected solution, due to a Standing Offer with the Department of National Defence and to use of the same hardware as the MAREVAL. The system also already had an LCMM. For further assistance, we selectively engaged additional staff ashore and ship-board subject matter experts, such as Weapons Engineering Technicians – Communications, Naval Communicators, and those with an interest and experience in information technology.

By late-April 2019, having refined the design, preparing an accurate cost estimate was possible. Through the ship's Deployed Logistics Supply Support Standing Offer the additional financial authorizations were in place to enable the purchase, delivery, and installation of hardware, contracting for external support, as well as the activation and renewal of a monthly service subscription until the end of the deployment. The estimated cost amounted to approximately \$196,000. The ship's Rest and Maintenance Period (RAMP) occurring in May 2019 alongside Dubai, U.A.E., was quickly approaching and presented the best chance to install REGi-Net. Recognizing an opportunity, we took the initiative to identify both the problem and the solution first to our leadership ashore by submitting a briefing note to Commander CANFLTPAC outlining the issue, the plan, the risks, and seeking approval to implement the project. We were confident in the project's potential to



succeed but, acknowledging the configuration management concerns, our expectations were tempered by a typically risk-adverse approach to such matters. In accordance with Naval Order 3001-0 “In-Service Naval Materiel Risk Management,” rather than the Operational Authority accepting the risk such a scenario ultimately required the risk to be reviewed and accepted by the Technical (Design) Authority at Director General Maritime Equipment Program Management (DGMEPM). Given the scope of our proposal, prior to submitting the risk assessment to DGMEPM, seeking the endorsement of coastal authorities seemed the logical first step. Much to our surprise, we received enthusiastic support from Commander CANFLTPAC, and with consideration for our project timeline, were granted permission to proceed while further discussion took place between external organizations.

As the CSEO, I subsequently prepared the Statement of Work for the contractor with direction on the ship’s requirements, and a Risk Assessment for the Design Authority to consider endorsement and acceptance of the deviation we would undertake. The Risk Assessment, recorded in the Defence Resource Management Information System, identified a number of areas of concern:

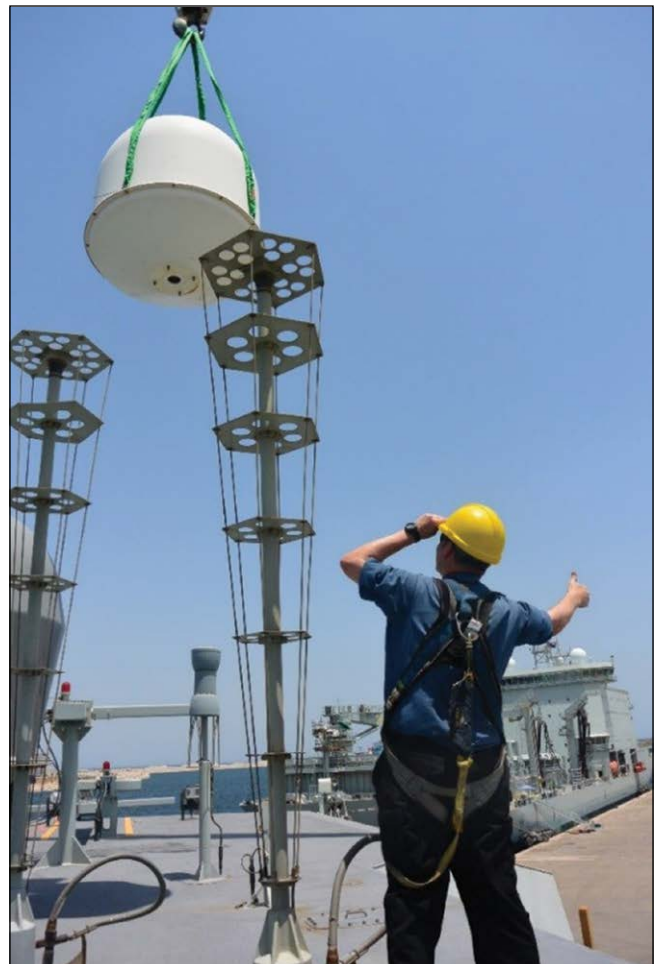
- **Basis of Design and Design Intent:** Improper configuration management and engineering change in accordance with the Naval Materiel Management System. All REGi-Net components would be clearly labelled by ship’s staff to ensure they could be identified for auditing purposes and future removal, and in the absence of a Technical Data Package, a detailed system diagram and additional documentation would be produced by the team;
- **Integration:** This included differences between the size, weight, and power requirements of the new system compared to the satellite TV system, including the existing antenna pedestal. Rack space for components was available in the EBR. The new antenna was heavier than the satellite TV antenna. The ship’s Marine Systems Engineering Officer, also a Naval Architect, provided the team with a positive assessment on the suitability of using the existing pedestal;
- **Emissions Security (EMSEC):** Proper EMSEC design of REGi-Net and the conduct of a Technical Communications Security Configuration Inspection would not be possible within the period of ship availability alongside. It was acknowledged that this could result in other entities collecting and exploiting sensitive or classified information and/or the ship’s systems located in close proximity to REGi-Net. Unlike the interim IS2S system, additional cabling would not be run through the ship, although the type of data moving through those existing cables would be different (internet versus television). And rather than sending data through cables between the Bridge Top and the four end-user locations, the data would travel between the Hangar Top, EBR, and the end-user locations. The Wi-Fi networks in the four end-user locations were previously established, although the means to provide external internet connectivity would be different (satellite versus cellular). Nonetheless, it was well known that since at least late-2017, similar “rabbits” (i.e. the

“REGi-Net was minimally building upon that system already in place, and not in a way deemed by the team to exacerbate any pre-existing risk.”

Hangar Wi-Fi system and later the interim IS2S system, or forms thereof) were already operational in CANFLTPAC Halifax-class ships with the approval of and on the direction from the RCN’s leadership. This therefore implied to us that the RCN had at least assessed and accepted a level of risk associated with operating Wi-Fi networks connected to the internet in and around those four end-user locations, regardless of whether the ship was alongside a foreign port or at sea. REGi-Net was minimally building

upon that system already in place, and not in a way deemed by the team to exacerbate any pre-existing risk;

- **Radio Frequency (RF) Safety:** Unlike most other RF emitters onboard, REGi-Net would not have a ‘lock-and-key’ operational control method. Without an RF survey or detailed analysis by the Quality Engineering Test Establishment (QETE), there would be unknowns associated with potential electromagnetic interference between other shipboard and helicopter systems, as well as hazards of electromagnetic radiation to fuel and ordnance. Fortunately, as part of the MAREVAL, QETE had already completed and made available Maximum Exposure Limit distance calculations



Alongside Dubai, a member of HMCS *Regina* directs a crane operator with the removal of the satellite TV system antenna, with MV *Asterix* in the background.

DND photo DSC\_1554



DND photo DSC\_1603

Crewmembers of HMCS *Regina* and a contractor secure the REGi-Net antenna into the satellite TV system pedestal.

for the Cobham Sailor GX 100 System. This information was provided by the Formation RF Safety Officer who was consulted in their capacity for assistance on the project. Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) safety documentation was reviewed, a ‘lock-out-tag-out’ control method was devised to prevent transmission when required, the QETE “Controlled Environment” safety distance of 25 metres was adopted, the Hangar Top was designated as a denied occupancy area when transmitting, and blocking (i.e. no-transmit) zones were established using the system’s software to cease transmission in the direction of other ship’s systems and the superstructure. As a precaution, REGi-Net would be shut down or blanked in specific sectors around the ship during evolutions including sending personnel aloft, coming to Flying Stations, or loading/unloading susceptible ammunition for our weapon systems.

It was our assessment that by implementing these mitigations we brought the risk to as low as reasonably practicable. By the time the ship came alongside Dubai for the RAMP, all operational, technical, and logistical preparations and arrangements were in place. The LCM and OEM were engaged and ready to support. And so, as the majority of the ship proceeded ashore on mission leave, the contractors got to work.

Between 16-23 May 2019, the satellite TV system was deactivated and preserved in place (with the exception of the antenna which was removed and prepared for shipping back to Canada) and Project REGi-Net was successfully implemented. Most of the time and effort was focused upon system activation with Inmarsat,

since installation was relatively straightforward. The Assistant CSEO and Senior Communications Maintainer oversaw and aided the contractor with their work to ensure that they were constantly supervised while onboard ship. The total cost was calculated as \$196,375.65 (exceeding the team’s original estimate by \$375.65 or +0.2%). In our experience, while alongside foreign ports the cost of the interim IS2S system through local cellular service providers varied, although it would not be wholly inaccurate to estimate its cost as perhaps \$1,000 a day. That was less than the approximate daily cost over the contracted period of REGi-Net at \$1,657.33 (30 day month). However, a simple cost-benefit analysis of REGi-Net versus the interim IS2S system demonstrated to us that the advantages of the former outweighed those of the latter. From a policy and documentation perspective, a unit temporary memorandum was issued to set expectations and requirements for fair and acceptable use of the new network capabilities, and the Unit RF Safety Program Standard Operating Procedure was updated. Shortly after departing Dubai, with careful management of the bandwidth (approximately 16 MBs download, 4 MBs upload), the crew was able to collectively witness and celebrate the Toronto Raptors taking the NBA Championship. But more importantly, throughout the remaining three months of the deployment services such as Skype, FaceTime, YouTube, Netflix, and iTunes were available to the ship’s company at sea. REGi-Net required little in the way of maintenance or operation, provided dependable service, and no adverse effects associated with the identified risks were observed, either thanks to the mitigations put in place and/or the fact that the risks were non-existent.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Project REGi-Net was an initiative derived from the RCN’s strategic objectives, inspired by similar projects in process, and implemented through the efforts of a small team of dedicated and professional ship’s staff. Individually, we were trained by the RCN to solve problems within our areas of responsibility. Collectively, we provided our Commanding Officer with the means to address a concern for the crew’s wellbeing on deployment, and in doing so, helped to improve the quality of life onboard ship for sailors across different generations and with changing expectations regarding internet connectivity. Over the remainder of the deployment, there was a tangible increase to morale and welfare communicated to us by numerous members of the crew, as well as a noticeable decrease in the use of the ship’s satellite telephones (i.e. “morale phones”). In a matter of months, we achieved this objective and delivered an unprecedented capability to an RCN ship, which stands in contrast against the years that the organisation has been working towards fully implementing that goal.

However, it is acknowledged by those involved in the project that REGi-Net could not have been implemented under any other circumstances by following the typical technical and logistical policies and procedures. And based upon the risk management policy, the decision to accept the risk rested with the Technical Authority rather than the Operational Authority. The support of senior leadership, which understood the associated risk despite the unknowns, was essential. The ship had to be deployed on operations to have access to the required financial authorizations. And the availability of the equipment and the timing of installation during the RAMP was critical. Having widely and fully disclosed its existence as an unauthorized EC, REGi-Net became a contentious and divisive issue between the operational and technical

communities, resulting in Director General Maritime Equipment Program Management issuing direction by message that the system was to be removed as soon as practicable following the deployment. Concerns raised by external organizations centred on the configuration management aspects, proceeding without proper technical endorsement or acceptance of the risk assessment and deviation, the EMSEC and RF safety issues discussed above, as well as not following the process to approve outside agencies to conduct work onboard ship. (Note: As of the late-summer of 2019, I understood that REGi-Net was to be uninstalled during the ship's Short Work Period between September-October 2019, and that the satellite TV system would be reinstalled.)

On a personal note, as the ship's CSEO, Project REGi-Net was perhaps the most challenging but fulfilling technical experience of my Head of Department tour. Over the course of 27 months, I was fortunate to be provided with many professional development opportunities and to learn from numerous mentors (officers and sailors of all ranks). I joined the ship during Basic Single Ship Readiness Training, helped coordinate work periods and sea trials during the Tiered Readiness Program, completed Intermediate Multi-Ship Readiness Training twice (once with Sea Training Atlantic, and once with Sea Training Pacific), supported exercise torpedo firings during a Submarine Commander's Course, lost at sea a portion of the Towed Array Sonar System (and subsequently oversaw a Technical Investigation), completed Mission Specific Readiness Training, supported an Anti-Ship Missile Defence Exercise firing (well, mostly...due to poor weather it was just a single successful tracking run), and I got to finish my time onboard with a 6.5 month deployment. But through Project REGi-Net, being able to exercise my knowledge, skill, and experience as an engineering officer to creatively solve a technical problem (something which seemed lamentably uncommon compared to the more mundane administrative tasks associated with the position), to work closely with the interdepartmental team to see the plan to completion, and to share the results of our efforts with and enjoy them alongside the crew was a truly rewarding and rare opportunity.

Willfully implementing a "rabbit" goes against a technical officer's instincts developed during our training and employment. It creates, in a sense, a cognitive dissonance. On one hand, the engineer is employed onboard ship to uphold the Naval Materiel Management System comprised of numerous references, policies, and processes, and they are responsive to technical organizations ashore. On the other hand, the engineer is responsible to their Commanding Officer as an advisor and to enable the Commanding

Officer's intent to their utmost ability. When the two roles of the engineer are seemingly at odds with one another, which standpoint is correct and which is incorrect? By virtue of my qualifications and appointment as the CSEO, there was a measure of trust invested in me by the Naval Technical Branch to execute my duties competently and to overcome such challenges. In general, my experience as the CSEO of HMCS *Regina* with this and other risk assessments, led me to conclude that oftentimes, the process can be frustratingly subjective, especially where only qualitative rather than quantitative probabilities and severities can be assigned to hazards, and where a lack of information can lead to erring on the side of caution or perhaps even result in indecision, all of which can negatively impact mission objectives despite its intent of supporting operations. However, while they do not guarantee a desirable or risk-free solution, risk assessments are still invaluable problem solving tools. But sometimes the time and space within which to make a decision may not permit a risk assessment to be conducted, or to be completed with the greatest level of detail or consultation, or to even reach the approving authority for review and acceptance before follow on action must taken. As an advisor to my Commanding Officer, I endeavoured to objectively approach Project REGi-Net like any other problem in order to provide sound technical guidance. In doing so, after thoroughly reviewing and being satisfied with all aspects of the project and its risk, I helped the team navigate the issues to the best of my ability.

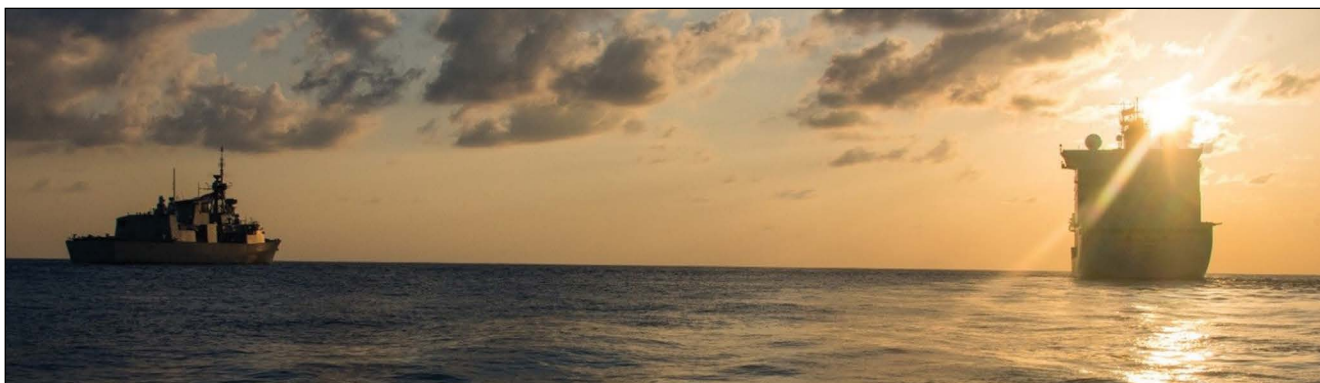
Still, there were many personnel within organizations ashore who did not agree with our conclusions and actions which led to an additional source of conflict. I understood both sides of the argument very well, and helped my chain of command to similarly understand the situation and the risk assessment process. However, despite the unknowns and the uncertainty, and the potential professional and personal friction the project could and did cause, I still had confidence in and therefore supported the plan. And in the end, Team REGi-Net ultimately achieved that strategic objective; "sailors digitally connected while deployed."

### Acknowledgement

The author wishes to thank all members of Team REGi-Net, as well as the external subject matter experts who provided support to the project, and to also acknowledge the work of those who were subsequently engaged to address the impact of Project REGi-Net's implementation.

CMJ

DND photo XA01-2019-0153-016 by Corporal Stuart Evans



HMCS *Regina* and MV *Asterix* at sea.

DND photo TM02-2019-00500035 by Corporal François Charest



A door gunner keeps watch from a CH-147F *Chinook* helicopter as part of Operation PRESENCE, Mali, 13 May 2019.

## Warrior Spirit

by Ian Daniels

*“Two rounds to the body, one to the head. Troops, that’s how you kill the enemy before he kills you.”<sup>1</sup>*

Those are the words I remember from small arms training before deploying to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Those words echo the same instruction I received during basic military qualification twelve years earlier. There have been many discussions within the United Nations regarding the future of peacekeeping operations and the effectiveness of past deployments.<sup>2</sup> Just as there has been at the UN level, there has also been ongoing debate within the Canadian government. Peacekeeping mandates will change with every complex mission. However, when it comes to war fighting the mandate is always the same. Quite bluntly, kill the enemy and win the fight. The exclusive role of the Canadian Armed Forces should be that of engaging in justified wars as it is trained to do because any other responsibility, including peacekeeping, is outside the distinctive skillset of its soldiers which can cause a breakdown in the understanding of the mission.

A Canadian Armed Forces soldier is trained to close with and destroy the enemy.<sup>3</sup> This instruction is drilled into all soldiers from the start of their military career until it becomes second nature. In contrast, the military’s primary function during peacekeeping

missions is to observe and report on security related issues while providing security.<sup>4</sup> This is a very different role considering the natural instincts of a soldier. By examining the job description and skills of a Canadian Armed Forces soldier, it is very difficult to see how this translates into peacekeeping observation. Because of this conflicting ideology, the Canadian Government and UN officials acknowledged that during difficult missions of the 1990s, peacekeepers had been rendered impotent.<sup>5</sup> The principles of peacekeeping came under heavy scrutiny and it became apparent that it was difficult for a military force to adapt to the realities of peace operations.

Because a soldier is asked to perform a role that contravenes their natural instincts, there will undoubtedly be misperception as to what is their involvement in the mission. When this occurs, Canadian involvement can be marred. This was certainly the case in Somalia in 1993. The Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group was a quick reaction immediate response force hastily deployed to act as peacekeepers for the United Nations Operation in Somalia I.<sup>6</sup> During the mission, civilian Shidane Arone was killed by Canadian soldiers for intruding upon the Canadian camp. The mandate for this mission was not clear to the war fighting battle group and in some cases, orders had been given by leadership to apprehend and even abuse intruders to deter looting. Consequently, during the inquiry that followed, Canadian officials acknowledged that

training leading up to the mission was centered more upon war fighting than upon peace operations.<sup>7</sup>

The incident in Somalia invoked public condemnation of the Airborne Regiment and ultimately led to its disbandment. Likewise, it is easy to identify other disturbing trends that occur when soldiers are sent on peace operations. The genocide in Rwanda was left unchecked, due to the hesitance of global nations to get militarily involved where no national security issues were present. It was felt that military forces should not be involved in peace operations. In a post-Cold War society, governments believed the sole purpose of the armed forces was to win wars and peacekeeping operations would be wasted in Rwanda. Being unable to clearly define the mandate and military necessity resulted in 8000-10000 civilian deaths per day.<sup>8</sup>

Another example of the conflict between peace operations and traditional military roles became obvious in Canada's participation in the UN mission in the Balkans. Because of the controversy revolving around Somalia, Canadian officials did not want to acknowledge that its peacekeepers were engaged in a battle in Medak, Croatia. Slated as a peacekeeping mission, the soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were faced with conflicting orders and mandates during a heavy battle with Croatian forces that resulted in six of its soldiers being wounded. This battle was the largest in Canadian history since the Korean War, yet the government refused to answer questions about the engagement publicly and abandoned the scarred soldiers upon their return.<sup>9</sup> All of these tragedies occurred because soldiers are not properly suited for peace operations and are certainly not trained to stand by and observe opposing forces; they are engineered to win battles, and ultimately, wars.

Opponents of this idea claim that peacekeeping is a proud Canadian tradition. After all it was then-Canadian Minister for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, who catapulted peacekeeping into the spotlight during the hostilities of the Suez Canal. He received worldwide recognition, and eventually, a Nobel Peace Prize in 1957. At one point in history, Canada boasted that it was the only nation to have contributed to every UN peacekeeping mission.<sup>10</sup> Supporters of peace operations over war fighting also believe our nation can accomplish the best of both worlds. In an era known for counter insurgency, there remains lingering doctrine within the Canadian Armed Forces leadership that supports a "three block war" concept. This would see our nation involved concurrently with peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and war fighting activities. Supporters believe this concept would return our nation to its historical status of a peacekeeping icon.<sup>11</sup>

Although once a Canadian tradition, peacekeeping supporters cannot deny that when it comes to our military, our national pride was born from winning battles. This was evident during the First World War, exemplified by the famous battle for Passchendaele. In the fall of 1917, Canadians overcame unimaginable adversity securing a victory there, which earned them a reputation as the best offensive force in the West. In future battles, they would lead the Allied advances.<sup>12</sup> As well, during the Battle of Britain in 1940, RCAF pilots achieved impressive battle honours flying alongside the RAF in the summer of 1940. There were 117 Canadian pilots flying with the best in the world. These few accounted for 194 downed enemy aircraft. They defeated the German *Luftwaffe* in what was anticipated to be certain defeat.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, in relation to counter insurgency, Canada quickly demonstrated its abilities among coalition partners in Afghanistan. Canadian soldiers led an offensive in the Panjawi District known as *Op Medusa*. This



DND photo AR2011-0025-088 by Corporal Tina Gillies

A soldier from Task Force Kandahar provides security while on a foot patrol, January 2011.

victory, like others in Canadian history, came at a heavy cost resulting in four dead Canadian soldiers. This battle destroyed the Taliban command centre and earned Canadians the deepest respect of the Afghan population.<sup>14</sup> Canadian Soldiers made an important contribution to the war in Afghanistan and because of this, the United Nations expects future presidential elections in the country to be corruption and violence free.<sup>15</sup> With respect to peacekeeping traditions, Dr. Maloney professor of War Studies at Royal Military College argues, “Canada must kill for peace. We cannot shirk that responsibility by wishing it away in the pursuit of some unattainable and idealistic cultural image.”<sup>16</sup>

Understanding that Canadian Armed Forces soldiers are trained to be warriors leaves little doubt that they are better suited to fight wars than to engage in peace operations for which they do not have the skills required. Canadian soldiers have been extremely successful and effective when employed in the role for which they were intended. When they have been asked to

partake in missions that do not suit their skills, their success and reputations have come into question. Therefore, our military should be employed as it was intended to be employed, and bask in the proud tradition our nation has of winning battles to support long term global stability. Canadian soldiers are ultimately trained to fight for our freedom; a job many people would rather not do.

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DND photo by Sailor First Class Bryan Underwood



Members of HMCS Halifax make their approach to an exercise target during a NATO boarding party assignment as part of Operation REASSURANCE, 3 March 2021.

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## So Close, and Yet So Far: A Feminist Perspective on Operation HONOUR

by Wendy Kean

### Introduction

**W**hen Operation HONOUR officially ended in March 2021, I experienced a peculiar mix of joy and regret. Operation HONOUR had failed to achieve its goal of eradicating sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF); even so, it had two significant successes through the establishment of the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC) and the emergence of Respect in the CAF (RITCAF) training. These two developments alone indicate how sincerely the CAF has accepted the necessity of change, even if Operation HONOUR was not as successful as intended.

In the early-1980s, when I was a teletype operator in the Primary Reserve, I accepted a tasking to Rendezvous 83 in Wainwright, AB. With five other female teletype operators, I was attached to a company of 1 Canadian Signals Regiment. To the best of my recollection, the ratio of men to women on that exercise was 8000 to 100, but except for one unfortunate incident in the mess at the end of the exercise, I never felt unsafe. The signallers who worked alongside us were professional and friendly, and little behaviour that would now be deemed inappropriate took place. One cannot deny, however, that expectations at that time were low. We worked out of a field teletype centre known first as the CLIT (Communications Land Interface), then, when leadership learned women were attached posted in for the exercise, the STIF (Strategic-Tactical Interface), or as an attempt at humour,

the STIF CLIT.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the acronyms were more important than what they signified.

I share this anecdote, not to shame the unit I worked with, but to highlight the progress that has been made against such casual and quotidian sexualized humour. It is equally important to acknowledge the successes of Operation HONOUR despite the scandal surrounding its demise, and to focus upon the work that remains, as the events of spring 2021 make clear. The ongoing work done after the promulgation of the operation order (op order) for Operation HONOUR is impressive for its recognition of the challenges of diversity in the CAF, the lack of diverse representation in senior leadership, the endurance of gender stereotypes, and the need to strengthen its ability to work with the complexity of the community that makes up the institution.<sup>2</sup> Yet however much it ‘aimed for the bull’s eye,’ Operation HONOUR missed the mark by a significant margin for several reasons, including its name, its sense of institutional self-sufficiency to address the problem, and its failure to consult scholarship on professional ethics, sexual misconduct, and gender in its development.

### Discussion

“**H**onour” is a relative term, with its implied hierarchical categories of the honourable, the honoured, and their opposites, the dishonourable and the dishonoured. As the name for an operation to eliminate sexual misconduct, it stumbled from the beginning by implying that the primary concern was

the injury done to the operational readiness and the effectiveness of the institution of Canadian Armed Forces,<sup>3</sup> rather than the sexualized violence and disempowerment experienced by those members who were its victims. Given what has fallen out at the highest ranks in the spring of 2021, it is clear the operation failed to live up to its name, and that it did so in two significant ways. First, by framing Operation HONOUR in the language of military values, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) gave the impression that sexual misconduct in the CAF, or anywhere else for that matter, is a matter of self-control and self-regulation,<sup>4</sup> rather than one of inter-personal violence arising from power imbalances in the culture and the institution. Second, the op order framed an ‘either-or’ approach to sexual misconduct by choosing to prioritize policies and training<sup>5</sup> to change behavior, rather than to develop a professional code of conduct to shape character and to guide the always-complex nature of relationships in the workplace. With the end of Operation HONOUR on 24 March 2021, I propose that any new endeavour to address these issues begin by considering key concepts, from professional ethics in general, and feminist theory in particular, to develop a more coherent and workable policy for ending sexual misconduct in the CAF. It may also be helpful to connect that policy with the Defence Ethics Programme to broaden it and its impact upon the culture of the CAF and the Department of National Defence, given the extensive interactions between military and civilian personnel on bases, wings, and formations.

It is important to begin by understanding why I propose feminist theory as a resource for addressing sexual misconduct, even though females are not the only victims, and may be counted among the perpetrators. Feminist theory is not just about women, nor does it necessarily privilege them over men but, offers a critique, based upon women’s experience of the operative power dynamics in society and its institutions. Developed in the

1960s, feminist theory came out of women’s experience in the workplace, and it examines the distribution and application of power from the perspective of those who are vulnerable to acts of oppression, including sexual discrimination and harassment, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.<sup>6</sup> Because of its origins as a critique of social and workplace dynamics, it is a helpful tool for developing a workable and contextually realistic professional ethics for the CAF.

All ethics deals in some way with questions of power: who has it, how much, and what they do with it. Ethics also deals with questions of identity in relation to power: who has power in any interaction or relationship, and who does not. The task of professional ethics is to regulate the use of power in the workplace to offset inappropriate imbalances. Therefore, any response to sexual misconduct in the CAF must concern itself with the various forms and uses of power in the institution and how they can be exercised to serve the good of all its members. First, it is important to understand what is meant by power.

American moral theologian Richard Gula describes power as having resources someone else needs. This means that power’s opposite is not weakness, but the dependence which results from the lack of those resources.<sup>7</sup> In the CAF, a member’s power is relative to their resources including, but not limited to, rank, position, seniority, education, sex, gender, age, and health. Gula writes, “Where there is an inequality of power in any kind of relationship, the greater burden of moral responsibility falls upon the one with more power – in other words, more resources. This burden is known as fiduciary obligation.”<sup>8</sup>

Fiduciary obligation is the foundation of all professional ethics. It describes one’s duty to exercise power and authority in ways that will serve those who are dependent or who have fewer resources.

In the CAF, this means establishing relationships of trust over and above the projection of command authority. It also requires the one with power to set and maintain the boundaries appropriate for managing the inequality of power and resources in the relationship. While the word “honour” can acknowledge one’s duty to those who are less powerful institutionally or socially, the better moral term is “responsibility” – less glamorous, but more helpful for recognizing the demands of the governing power dynamic.

Power in the CAF is an important and necessary institutional good. The problem with it is, even outside of rank, its *social* distribution tends



DND photo Master Seaman Peter Reed

Lieutenant (N) Patricia Corbeil directs HMCS Toronto to come alongside USNS Patuxent during a Replenishment at Sea exercise in the Mediterranean.



to be unequal – between men and women, for example, or those who identify with the dominant cultural makeup of the institution and those who do not. The reality is that power is ambiguous, however it is defined. On one hand, it places those who do not have power or the resources they need to carry out their work in a position of dependence on those who do. On the other, it confers on those with power and resources the capacity to influence and serve others for good. It is the moral responsibility of the chain of command to ensure and oversee the benevolent and deliberate exercise of both aspects of power and to manage the relationship between power and dependence. This also requires the organization to distinguish between obedience, when and where it is appropriate, and subservience, which is never appropriate.

Feminist theory speaks of the ways the use of power impacts individuals and groups through a four-fold description of power: power-over, power-to-do, power structures, and power as a resource. Each type of power is neutral in itself; how they are exercised determines whether they are *empowering* or *oppressive*. It is the right use of power that manages the tension between power and dependence, builds trust, and strengthens effective working relationships.

**Power-over** is the power to make someone do what the person with power wants them to do, including what which is not in their best interest.<sup>9</sup> Such power is an essential command function, getting members to sacrifice personal goods up to and including life for the sake of others, or for operational goals. It also provides for powers of punishment. It is, therefore, the most morally demanding of the uses of power.

**Power-to-do** is a combination of the ability and the capacity to act.<sup>10</sup> It is conferred through training and experience and is demonstrated through instruction, supervision, counselling, and encouragement. Essential for developing competent and professional members of all ranks, it is vulnerable to misuse and abuse through the preferential treatment of some, and the denial of opportunities to others on the basis of criteria other than competence, ability, or institutional need.

**Power structures** are the institutional framework.<sup>11</sup> Positively, these include the chain of command, rank, appointments, and training systems. They are also found wherever mentorship and encouragement are exercised regardless of rank or position. Negatively, power structures cause harm when they create preferential relationships or exclusive networks inside or outside the chain of command. They also give rise to unhealthy institutional politics and the tendency to disadvantage those who have fewer connections or allies within the framework.

**Power as a resource** is a social and institutional good. It confers autonomy of decision-making and provides access to others with needed resources.<sup>12</sup> While this power tends to favour the privileged, it is also found in healthy team environments, support networks, and self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. The CAF has expanded this form of power through the Defence Diversity Council and its Advisory Groups.

Moral leadership requires the one with more power to maintain appropriate boundaries for interpersonal interaction, which in turn helps to manage the inequality of power.<sup>13</sup> An imbalance in legitimate sources of power magnifies the impact of any inappropriate behaviour and increases the risk of misconduct. Sexual misconduct is an extreme abuse of power. It occurs when power is used to dominate the other, either intentionally or unintentionally, by discriminating on the basis of sex or gender identity or through sexually demeaning behaviour. An extreme example is the mistreatment of detainees by American service personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad in 2007. Such violations take place when individuals are unable or unwilling to accept the responsibility for the power they have. Similar violations occur when a member ignores or refuses to accept the authority that comes with their power, so that even if the other party consents to a personal relationship, for example, that person remains an unequal participant. The allegation of a relationship between Major Kellie Brennan and General (retired) Jonathan Vance is a recent example. In an interview with Global News, Major Brennan said, “I wasn’t allowed to tell the truth until I was given permission to tell the truth.”<sup>14</sup> This statement speaks plainly of her powerlessness to speak about the relationship and its impact upon her.

The inequality of personal and institutional power in the workplaces and social settings of the CAF has significant moral and ethical consequences. The essential weakness of Operation HONOUR was its reliance upon the use of power-over by the chain of command, as this power could be used for good and for ill. I observed the impatience and confusion of well-meaning leadership regarding the duty to report, especially in cases where complainants were not yet ready to do so. The tendency to use power-over to force reporting stemmed as much from a fear of being disciplined for not reporting in a timely manner as the desire to help the complainant get justice. Major Brennan’s comments above demonstrate the use of power-over to dissuade members from reporting misconduct by senior personnel within their own units. Both examples of resorting to power-over in reaction to the misuse of power-over sum up the failure of Operation HONOUR. The recent decision by the Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Lieutenant-General Frances Allen, to replace duty to report with duty to support is a welcome correction to an op order dependent on one form of power-over to address the harms done by another form of power-over.

## Conclusion

The importance of duty to support illustrates why the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC) and programmes like Respect in the CAF (RITCAF) have been more successful than Operation HONOUR – they demonstrate the exercise of power as energy, competence, accompaniment, even empowerment. In particular, the SMRC is successful because it does not determine when, whether or how victims will report, but helps them find yet another form of power to decide what they will do and when. This is called the power within. It is this power which is at the heart of duty to respond and which was lacking in Operation HONOUR. It is the same power that

RITCAF training seeks to give members. To respond according to the needs of the individual who has been affected by sexual misconduct enables them to experience their personal power. This is crucial for enabling them to withstand the investigative, juridical, and disciplinary processes that lie ahead. The goal of any future development of CAF policy on sexual misconduct must focus on the healthy balance between the needs of the victim and the requirements of the institution for due process to enable the healthy expression of the power that lies within of all its members. This, I believe, is the only ethical way

forward. After forty years of immersion in CAF culture, as junior NCM, spouse, and chaplain, I am hopeful.

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DND photo LV01-2018-0751-006

NOTES

- 1 The acronyms are correct, but the actual names used of the facility may only be approximate. In 1983, I was more attentive to the acronyms rather than the official name of the worksite, for obvious reasons.
- 2 See Department of National Defence, *The Path to Dignity and Respect: The Canadian Armed Forces Sexual Misconduct Response Strategy*, 2020.
- 3 Government of Canada, *CDS Op Order – Op HONOUR*, August 2015. Modified 2017-09-29. Paragraph 3.
- 4 *Ibid.* Paragraph 9.
- 5 *Ibid.* Paragraph 14.
- 6 For a helpful summary of Feminist Theory, see Amy Allen, “Feminist Perspectives on Power,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Fall 2016 Edition*, Edward N. Zalta (ed). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/feminist-power> and Noelle McAfee, “Feminist Philosophy,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Fall 2018 Edition*, Edward N. Zalta (ed). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/feminist-philosophy>
- 7 Richard M. Gula, “Professionalization, power and dependence” in *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*. Paulist Press, 1996, pp. 28-38. While Gula writes from the context of pastoral ministry, he discusses the complexities of relationships where dependence and friendship overlap. A similar dynamic exists in the CAF, especially within occupations, workplaces, and on operations, where maintaining strict boundaries between personal and professional relationships are often hard to maintain or police.
- 8 Gula, p. 32.
- 9 Allen, p. 2.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Allen, p. 3.
- 12 Allen, p. 4.
- 13 Gula, p. 32.
- 14 ‘Amanda Connolly et Mercedes Stephenson, “Roar and be heard’: Woman behind Vance allegations calls for independent investigation”, *Global News*, 28 February 2021, accessed at <https://globalnews.ca/news/7665687/canadian-forces-military-police-investigation>.



This Bagotville-based CF-18, which graphically displays cosmetic wear appropriate to its age, is rather symbolic of the overdue need for a fighter replacement decision.

## A Perfect Storm?

by Martin Shadwick

It would, at least at this juncture, be imprudent and premature to suggest that the eye-watering levels of public spending associated directly or indirectly with the pandemic will inevitably trigger significant cuts in Canadian defence spending—with all that implies in terms of military capabilities and force structure—and the de facto evisceration of the now four-year-old defence policy statement, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. Indeed, there have been suggestions in some quarters that *heightened* or at least *accelerated* defence spending, most likely in terms of shovel-ready infrastructure, could prove useful as an economic stimulant. Other observers have acknowledged that more than a few nation-states have paused or scaled back at least some projected defence procurement, but are quick to note that others—Australia and Sweden spring readily to mind—are still moving forward with ambitious defence modernization and expansion schemes. Even the

recent British defence review, although calling for additional and substantial personnel reductions in the British Army, was noticeably more charitable toward the Royal Navy (and to a lesser extent the Royal Air Force). Indeed, it could be argued that the cuts in the British Army’s end strength and holdings of older equipment were necessary to help generate funding in the



A recent concept design for the proposed Canadian Surface Combatant.

transformative fields of space, cyber, unmanned vehicles and artificial intelligence, and would likely have occurred even in the absence of COVID-19.

That said, it would be unwise—given the long-established tendency of Canadian governments, of all political persuasions, to fight deficit and debt problems by, in part, significant reductions in defence spending—to assume that the post-pandemic Department of National Defence will be spared some measure of fiscal trauma. Moreover, DND’s vulnerability to pandemic funding pressures and the concomitant need to “build back better” in a variety of social policy fields could well be heightened by unfortunate overlap with a range of big-ticket (and thus highly visible and potentially contentious and vulnerable) items, and a variety of other not-insubstantial procurement projects. These are anchored by the long-awaited successor to the stalwart CF-18 *Hornet* (which caused considerable heartburn for the Harper government and quickly generated angst for the Trudeau government), and by the potent but pricy Canadian Surface Combatant (which has to date drawn comparatively modest media and public attention, largely on the basis of delays in schedule and increases in cost, but which could become the source of controversy on other fronts), but include a broad range of other land, sea and air projects, including replacements for the Airbus A310 tanker-transport and the CP-140 *Aurora*. Also on the list, but only now starting to generate attention outside of military and defence-academic circles, is a thoroughgoing modernization of NORAD’s early warning and related capabilities. The last major overhaul (i.e., the NAADM accord of 1985) was comparatively straightforward technologically, but still managed to generate a shrill, ill-informed and frankly embarrassing political, media and public debate. In 2021 and beyond, the potential for an infinitely messier and more convoluted debate should not be discounted.

These are by no means the only challenges. Recent allegations of sexual misconduct against some very senior serving and retired officers have refocused and reignited political, public, media and other attention to a series of supposedly systemic—and certainly not new—problems in Canada’s armed forces. These collectively engage pivotal questions of law, ethics, morality, leadership and ethos, but they also have other implications. If these problems are not addressed effectively, thoroughly and with dispatch, one of the multiple painful consequences for Canada’s armed forces could be a deep and profound—indeed, Somalia affair-like—erosion of public esteem. A March 2021 survey conducted by Nanos Research on behalf of CTV News and the *Globe and Mail* concluded that Canadians were not confident about the military’s ability to change its workplace culture “following multiple reports of sexual harassment and discrimination in the Canadian Armed Forces.” When asked if they were “confident, somewhat confident, somewhat not confident or not confident that the [CAF] in the long run can change its workplace culture to be welcoming for everyone,” only thirteen percent of respondents expressed confidence. Twenty-nine percent were “somewhat confident” and 56 percent were either “not confident” or “somewhat not confident.” Fully 61.3 percent of the female respondents were either “not confident” or “somewhat not confident” of the military’s ability to change its culture. Nor were those surveyed impressed by the Government of Canada’s investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct and discrimination. Noted the survey: “Canadians are six times more likely to say the Government of Canada is doing a “very poor” (21 percent) or “poor” (33 percent) job at investigating allegations of sexual misconduct and discrimination in the

Canadian Armed Forces rather than a “very good” (one percent) or “good” job (seven per cent).”

Contemporary public opinion polling on Canadians’ broader perceptions of the armed forces and their roles make for much more uplifting reading, but it is arguably apparent that the stellar numbers generated by public opinion polling around the close of the Afghanistan operation (see, for example, the 2014 Tracking Study conducted for DND by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives) have, to some extent, perhaps inevitably, dimmed in more recent public opinion polls. To be sure, Canadians still rather like their armed forces, but exactly what they do continues to elude a distressing number of Canadians.

A core question, consequently, is whether a ‘perfect storm’—the combination of extremely high pandemic and pandemic-related public spending, a timing confluence with some particularly big-ticket and potentially controversial procurement projects, and a conceivable erosion of public esteem—will prompt or at least facilitate significant reductions (even if temporary) in Canadian defence spending.

In September 2020, a major public opinion survey of “Canadian knowledge and attitudes about defence and security issues”—conducted by Nanos Research on behalf of the Canadian Defence and Security Network (CDSN)—provided a most useful glimpse into public perceptions of Canada’s place in a disordered and pandemic-weary world, perceived threats to Canada, the perceived and potential roles of Canada’s armed forces and of the relationship between Canadian society and the Canadian military. Some of its findings, such as strong support for international peacekeeping, were unsurprising albeit not reflected in the numbers of Canadian military personnel on peacekeeping duty in recent times. Others, such as seemingly robust support for defence spending, even in the midst of a costly pandemic, were perhaps somewhat unexpected—although one wonders if such numbers would be repeatable today. In any event, they are no guarantee of fiscal largesse from Ottawa.

Canadians, reported the survey, “...are twice as likely to say that Canada is facing international threats to a high degree than to say they are not facing threats at all.” Just 20 percent, noted Nik Nanos in the *Globe and Mail* of 14 November 2020, “say they believe those threats are low.” The foremost threats identified by respondents included China (22 percent), the United States/Trump administration (17 percent), cyber attacks (10 percent), terrorism (seven percent), trade wars (seven percent) and climate change (six percent). In terms of “the greatest international threats” Canada will face in ten years, 15 percent of the respondents identified China, while 13 percent and eight percent, respectively, cited climate change and the environment and cyber attacks.

When queried on Canada’s place in the world, observed Nik Nanos, the most frequent responses included peacekeeper/mediator (31 percent), followed by a leader (13 percent), an advocate for human rights and freedom (10 percent) and an example or role model for what countries should be (10 percent). In advancing Canada’s place in the world, respondents stressed diplomacy (82 percent), international trade (80 percent), and the environment (79 percent), immigration (59 percent) and, intriguingly, tied at 54 percent, national defence and foreign aid. By a margin of more than three-to-one, “Canadians say we should be promoting our country’s values rather than its interests. Responses to a

DND photo by Aviator Zamir Muminlar



A blind, deaf and mute survivor of COVID-19, resident at the Cartierville Long-Term Care Centre touches the Canadian flag on Major Simon Godin's uniform during the CAF's departure ceremony as part of Operation LASER in Laval, Quebec, 11 June 2020.

separate question about which values and interests Canadians want promoted provide a snapshot of who we are as a country." The top values included inclusivity, fairness and equality (25 percent), peace (13 percent), human rights (13 percent) and democracy (11 percent). The "top two unprompted interests we want advanced included

trade (36 percent) and environmental responsibility/climate change (16 percent)."

In his assessment of how well "our vision of the world and our role in it fit with how the CAF supports those ambitions," Nik Nanos noted that "peacekeeping and defending Canadian territory/Canadians are the top two missions respondents saw as appropriate for the Forces (40 percent and 35 percent, respectively). Canadians also place a high priority on a role for the military that includes helping authorities with crises at home," including natural disasters and pandemic relief.

When "...it comes to international missions that Canadians support most, they included participating in natural disaster relief (77 percent), UN peacekeeping (74 percent), defence cooperation with allies (70 percent) and conducting cyber operations (65 percent). But Canadians are much more divided when it comes to combat missions such as air strikes, or fighting on the ground or at sea." The "key takeaway is that there is significant political licence for humanitarian, peacekeeping and cooperative defence missions with allies. However, cross the line into direct combat, and Canadians are more likely to have a view that 'it depends.'" In essence, "we are pragmatic," says Nik Nanos. "When Canadians see a mission aligning with our values of peace, order and good government, or our self-image of leading by example, there is a default green light to proceed. Once a potential mission veers outside that frame, our political leaders have more explaining to do." Canadians, he posits, "...want a mission for the CAF that is 'peacekeeping plus.'" The 'plus' is continuing to defend our borders, keeping Canada secure and stepping up to help respond to natural disasters," at home and abroad.

DND photo by Sailor 3rd Class Megan Sterritt



Members of the Land Task Force prepare the staging hub for COVID vaccination clinics to on-reserve Indigenous communities in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada., local Indigenous authorities and Public Safety in Thompson, Manitoba, during Operation VECTOR, 28 March 2021.

The survey's findings on defence spending were intriguing. "In the real world, there are trade-offs. In this nationally representative study, two scenarios were introduced: raising defence spending through a tax increase, or less defence spending and a reduction in the capacity of the Armed Forces. In that context, respondents were asked if they wanted more or less defence spending." It "is quite striking that only about one-in-six Canadians (15 percent) want less or much less defence spending. Four in [ten] Canadians want more (10 percent) or much more (31 percent), while another 39 percent want spending to stay at current levels." Even though "Canadians are gripped with concern about their personal and economic health because of the pandemic, there is very little desire to cut defence spending."

Also intriguing are the findings of DND's most recent annual tracking study. Undertaken in its 2020 guise by Earncliffe Strategy Group Inc. in collaboration with its sub-contractor Leger, the 2020 tracking study focused, as in past iterations, upon such issues as "the image of the CAF, the role of the CAF at home and abroad [and] perceptions of equipment procurement and the funding of the CAF" as well as "views about Canada's [military] operations, including the NATO Mission Iraq." The initial qualitative phase of the survey included a series of eight cross-country focus groups in February of 2020 (i.e., pre-COVID-19 in Canada) and a quantitative element utilizing telephone or online approaches, spanning July and August 2020.

The key findings of the qualitative component of the tracking study found that:

- "awareness of and familiarity with the CAF continues to be very low," particularly among the 18-34 cohort;
- "despite the limited familiarity with the CAF, most [respondents] tended to hold very positive views of the CAF and those who serve in it";
- most [respondents] "viewed the CAF as a primarily peace-keeping and supportive force and would prefer it plays a defensive, rather than offensive, role";
- domestically, "respondents view the CAF's role" as responding to natural disasters, protecting our borders/sovereignty and search and rescue. Participants "agreed that all the domestic roles they were presented with are important. However, most seemed to believe the CAF's efforts should be dynamic and fluid across these various roles; prioritizing those that demand more immediate focus and attention depending on the situational context or level of threat." While "specific awareness of the CAF's role in patrolling the Arctic continued to be low, we detected slightly less resistance to the CAF playing this role than we may have detected in the past, especially among the younger participants"—an interesting observation given that your scribe has rarely noted such 'resistance' in multiple generations of York University students;
- "supporting allies, particularly the UN, was seen as a worthwhile endeavour, particularly in a peacekeeping or supporting role." Respondents viewed "aligning ourselves with other countries" as useful albeit with caveats regarding "our relationship with the United States, and a certain level of apprehension about American politics and our potential to be collateral damage;"

- participants "were not able to say definitively whether they felt members of the CAF were diverse and representative of Canada's population." When asked whether they thought there were any barriers that could prevent individuals from diverse backgrounds from joining the CAF, many felt that while it was probably changing for the better with time, there still seemed to be a sense that the CAF was likely a predominantly macho environment."

The key findings of the quantitative element of the tracking study found that:

- the percentage of respondents "who say they are very or somewhat familiar with the CAF has fallen" from 52 percent in 2018 to 46 percent in 2020;
- while "the vast majority {of Canadians} (82 percent) have a positive view of those who serve in the CAF, the percentage who have a strongly positive impression (42 percent) has declined from 2018 (57 percent)." Pride in the CAF "has dipped slightly over the past four years, from 70 percent agreeing it is a source of pride in 2016 to 66 percent in 2018 and 62 percent in 2020. The percentage who provide the highest rating (5 on a scale from 1 to 5), indicating that the CAF is very much a source of pride, has fallen from 37 percent in 2016 to 28 percent" in 2020;
- respondents "strongly agree that the CAF should be involved [internationally] in disaster relief and humanitarian aid," although 'strong support' has slipped from 69 percent in 2018, to 51 percent. Respondents also believed that the "CAF should be involved in peace support operations (45 percent strongly agree) and non-combat roles in support of UN or NATO missions (43 percent strongly agree)" though "support was higher in both 2018 and 2016." Combat roles (22 percent strongly agree) were among the "activities respondents are least certain the CAF should be involved in";
- "NATO membership is still viewed as important (83 percent agree it is important to Canadian security), but the percentage who strongly agree has fallen from 63 percent in 2018 to 49 percent";
- respondents "feel the CAF's most important domestic roles are responding to natural disasters (70 percent very important), protecting against terrorism (69 percent) and search and rescue (64 percent). These three were also rated most important in 2018 and 2016." Slightly "less than half (44 percent) strongly agree that the CAF is doing a good job performing its roles here in Canada, while another 39 percent somewhat agree. The proportion who strongly agree has fallen from 50 percent in 2018";
- "compared to improving health services (77 percent high priority) and creating jobs (70 percent), funding the CAF is less important (48 percent). Domestic operations (46 percent) are deemed more important than international operations (36 percent)."

What should be read into such findings? On one hand, they suggest that Canadians still like their armed forces but without the effusiveness that was apparent in some public opinion polling of a decade or so ago. There remains an impressive if somewhat dimmed reservoir of goodwill for Canada's armed forces. How fast that reservoir might erode in the face of the allegations



In response to the recent devastating outbreak of COVID-19 in South Asia India, Canada is answering the call for help by delivering related medical aid to India under Operation GLOBE. Here, members of 2 Air Movements Squadron, 8 Wing Trenton, prepare medical supplies and load onto a CC-150 *Polaris* aircraft from 437 Transport Squadron, 5 May 2021.

of sexual misconduct—both surveys predated the most recent developments—remains to be seen. Both polls suggested high levels of public support for domestic operations but, interestingly, the respondents to the Tracking Study appeared to interpret such operations in essentially constabulary terms (i.e., sovereignty protection, disaster relief) while their Nanos counterparts appeared to embrace a troika of home defence, sovereignty protection and disaster relief. The public reaction to NORAD modernization consequently promises to be most interesting. Both polls suggested very high levels of public support for “peacekeeping” and/or “UN peacekeeping”. A careful review of the polling data suggests that “peacekeeping” does not necessarily mean classic Pearsonian-style peacekeeping (there were references, for example, to the Canadian “peacekeeping [operation] in Ukraine”) but more specificity on what respondents...and Canadians generally...mean by “peacekeeping” is clearly required. In some cases it could refer to much more contemporary, and risky, “peace support” operations with human security or quasi-human security mandates, but that would then fly in the face of the polls’ findings that Canadians are extremely wary of commitments—UN or otherwise—involving or potentially involving combat.

And what of the other potential elements of a putative ‘perfect storm’? Ottawa, fiscally battered by pandemic and pandemic-related expenditures, is certainly looking for money...and DND represents a very large slice of available discretionary spending.

Decisions to pause or delay, rather than cancel selected procurements, might buy DND some relief, but pauses and delays have painful fiscal and operational implications. In terms of specific projects, the CF-18 replacement already has a demonstrated ability to produce political indigestion, notably, but far from exclusively, over cost. NORAD modernization, judging by 1985, does so as well, but the NORAD issue is further complicated by a long-standing Canadian preoccupation with national sovereignty, and an American preoccupation with national security. The Canadian Surface Combatant (CSC) debate is not about to morph into an exact replay of the SSN debate of the late 1980s—there is no nuclear element, after all—but the existing debate over cost will almost certainly gain traction and be joined by other issues, including its roles, transparency, the off-loading of accountability to the private sector and the perceived lack of opportunities for long-established naval sub-systems suppliers with Canadian facilities.

A perfect storm? One hopes not, but...

Professor Martin Shadwick *has taught Canadian Defence Policy at York University for many years. He is a former editor of Canadian Defence Quarterly, and he is the resident Defence Commentator for the Canadian Military Journal. He is also a highly respected colleague whom this retiring editor shall miss greatly.*



**The Iconoclast: Shinzo Abe and the New Japan**

by Tobias S. Harris

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456 pages, \$16.64

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Reviewed by Richard Desjardins

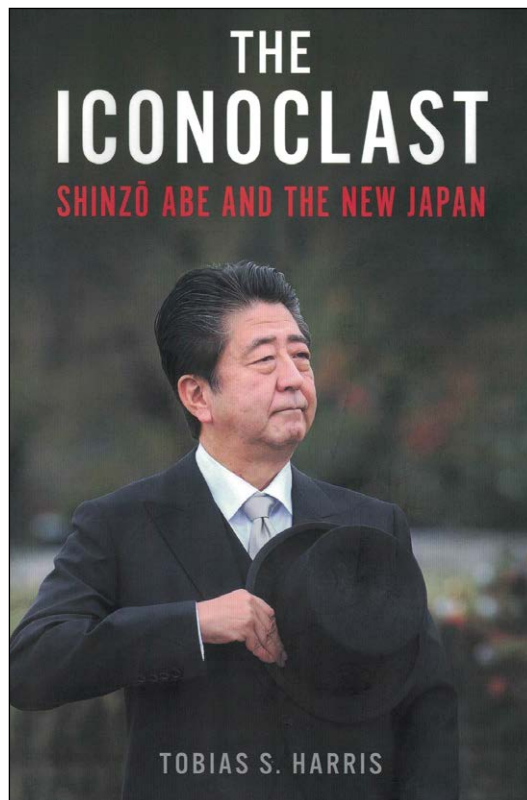
As the United States and its allies coordinate a response to China’s rise and its increasingly aggressive behavior, countries like Japan are likely to find themselves on the front line of a potentially dangerous confrontation. The disappearance in late-2009 of the Far Eastern Economic Review based out of Hong Kong entirely devoted to regional (Asian) news coverage left a gap. Regional media outlets have opened up since then, particularly on the internet. However, they tend to be theme-focused. None of them aim to keep readers informed on a weekly basis concerning events as they occur. Accordingly, we have to welcome any effort that is done to make up for this void.

The book under review is a good example of such effort. It is also an excellent primer on Japanese politics and how domestic issues can and have impacted Japan’s role in the Western Pacific. The study of Japanese politics has generally been the focus and interest of academia and policy-makers with little attention to the general public. Tobias S. Harris has done a great service in delivering an excellent introduction to one of Japan’s most interesting political figures of the postwar period, leaving out intellectual jargon without sacrificing a sophisticated description of his rise in the political world.

While Japan is identified as a parliamentary democracy, it can easily be misleading to think that politics here is conducted in the same manner as what we expect in the West. Professor Nathaniel Thayer had already introduced us to the particulars of Japanese-style democracy in his classic *How the Conservatives Rule Japan* (1969). Thayer had revealed to us that politics in Japan was really an internal struggle among factions of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a party that ruled for a large part of the postwar period. This system began slowly to fissure as the postwar consensus around anti-communism and economic development started wearing thin. The rise of Junichiro Koizumi as prime minister (2001-2006) began the true process of reform of Japan’s

postwar system, particularly in the area of the economy. It is in this environment that Shinzo Abe’s rise can best be understood.

The first Japanese prime minister born in the postwar period (b. 1954), Abe was also the longest-serving. His rise was not entirely foreseen despite his auspicious family origin. Indeed, his maternal grandfather, Kishi Nobusuke, was a prominent figure in national politics. While he had been involved in the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and his role there threatened to lead to his prosecution for war crimes, the anti-communist euphoria of the immediate postwar period insured him a role in politics. He would eventually become a prime minister (1957-1960). Among his paternal lineage, Abe included a grandfather as a prominent politician (Abe Kan) as well as his father as a high official in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a party that would dominate postwar politics for decades.



Despite his family background, Abe developed an independent streak. He became a member of a new brand of politicians, so-called “new conservatives”, who sought to shed Japan’s burden left by the defeat in the Pacific war. These new conservatives wanted Japan to become a “normal” country with a certain pride. Among the issues that this group took up for reform was the American-imposed constitution and a more modern military (as opposed to the self-defense force). Abe’s chance for a breakthrough came when Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi named him secretary-general of the LDP, a key post for anyone aspiring to occupy the office of prime minister.

In foreign affairs, Abe launched several offensives with various trips to Southeast Asia all designed to harness this region to the international system, an initiative implicitly directed against China. Reform of national security began with the adoption of the Specially Designated Secrets Act in 2014, a law designed to better protect documents too easily accessible to the media. The law was vociferously opposed at home but supported by the United States. Once adopted, the opposition fizzled. Better protection of state secrets would improve military cooperation with the United States. China’s aggressive moves in the East and South China Seas and around disputed sovereignty over islands claimed by Japan motivated Abe to assert the country’s position and strengthen the national security apparatus. Other measures included the creation of Japan’s equivalent of a National Security Council with supporting staff, and reform of the civilian-military structure, giving the military a more active role in policy-making balanced by greater power in the prime minister’s office.



## BOOK REVIEW

Tobias Harris is a fine writer and analyst. He is a graduate of Cambridge and Brandeis universities and attended the Institute for Social Science at the University of Tokyo as a Fulbright scholar. He also worked in close contact with a member of the Japanese Diet (2006-2007). He is a senior vice-president based in Japan with Teneo, an international advisory firm to senior executives. He has made extensive use of Japanese and Western sources for this biography (newspapers, books). His notes are themselves worth reading for details on some of the events he describes in the main text. An index is provided to facilitate searches of individuals and particular issues. Harris's success is to have skillfully embedded Abe's political life in the context of Japanese politics. For readers

unfamiliar with Japanese domestic politics, this book will be an education. We are introduced to the infighting between factions and their role in shaping Japanese policy and the country's future, suggesting that despite all the changes in Japan following the end of the Cold War, tradition lingers on. To use a term made famous by the late scholar John K. Fairbank, it is a case of transformation within the tradition. Abe, a politician whose family roots stretched through the entire twentieth-century, taking him to the dawn of the twenty-first, is indeed a true iconoclast.

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