

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

by Daniel Gosselin

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Introduction¹

“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).²

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.³

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.⁴ 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.

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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.⁵

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.”⁶ 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.⁷

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.⁸ 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).⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.”¹¹ 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.¹² A knowledge-information gap between the political

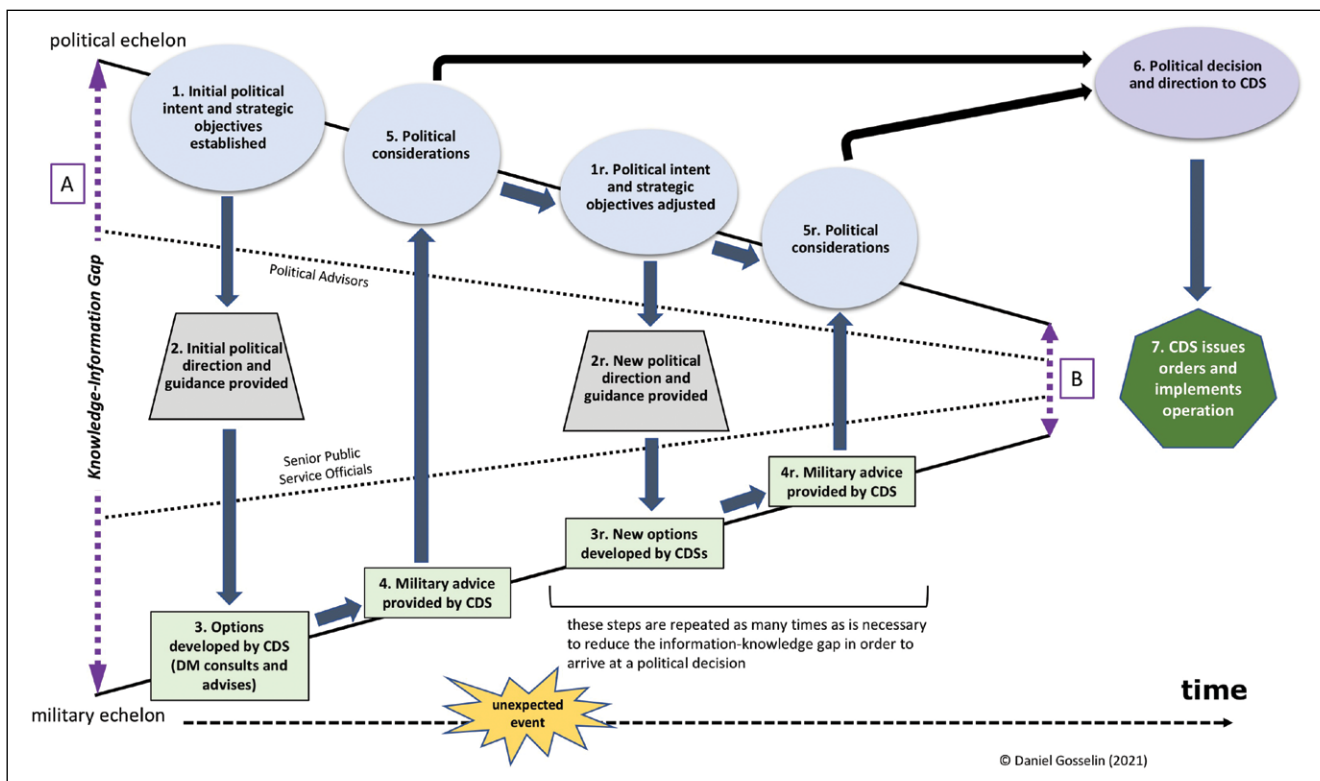


Figure 1: The Intent-Guidance-Options-Advice-Decision Model.

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.¹³

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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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.

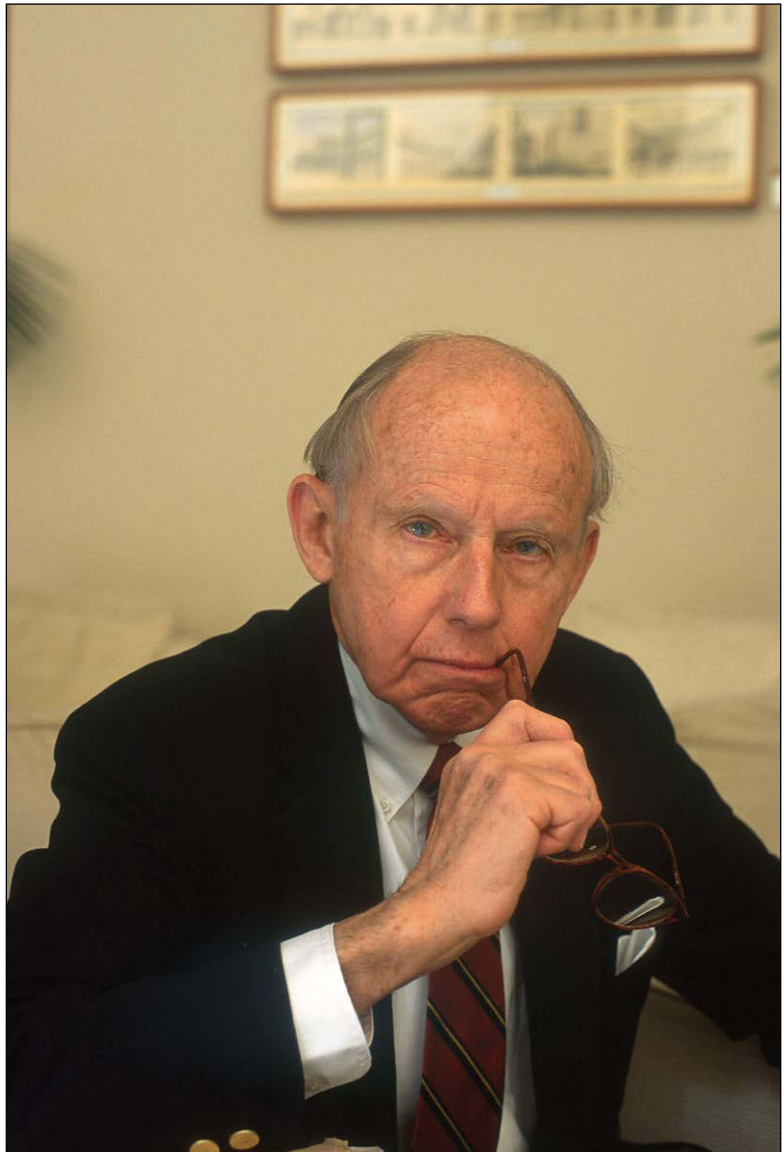
The central element of Huntington's vision was a professional military vocation distinguished by expertise, responsibility and corporateness. Under his theory of civil control,¹⁶ named *objective control*, the recipe was also to isolate the military from the larger society so that it could focus on its core purpose and cultivate expertise in the "management of violence" to support state policy.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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.¹⁹ 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."²⁰ 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.²¹ 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.²² 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.”²⁵

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.²⁶

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.”²⁷ In practice, “effective civil-military relations rely on a dialogue.”²⁸ 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.²⁹

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.³⁰ Critics of



General Sir Mike Jackson in 2003.

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.³¹ 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.³²

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.”³³

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.³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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.³⁶ 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.³⁷

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.³⁸ 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.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

“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.⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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.⁴³ 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,⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ 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,⁵² responsible for regional deterrence and defence to signal NATO's resolve and unity in response to Russia's action in Ukraine in early 2014.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ Harper announced the military deployment during a rare appearance at NDHQ a month later.⁵⁷



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.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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.⁶² 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 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.”⁶³ 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.⁶⁴

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.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

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.⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹

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).⁷⁰ 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.⁷¹ 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.⁷² 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).⁷³

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.”⁷⁴

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."⁷⁵

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.⁷⁶ 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.⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁸ In fact, CDSs rarely delegate to other senior officers their responsibility to advise Cabinet, attesting to the importance they place on this advisory role.⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰

In Ottawa, the policy and decision-making processes take place "in an environment that is as much a chaotic marketplace as a planned system."⁸¹ 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.⁸² 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.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶ 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.⁸⁷ 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.”⁸⁸ 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.”⁸⁹ 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).⁹⁰

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.⁹¹ 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.⁹² 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.⁹³

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.⁹⁴ 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.”⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ 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."⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁸

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.⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰

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.¹⁰¹ 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.¹⁰² 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.”¹⁰³

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.¹⁰⁴

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.¹⁰⁵ 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*, 12th 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 (1st 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.
- 33 General Sir Mike Jackson, reflecting on his experiences as a senior NATO commander, in “The Realities of Multi-national Command: An Informal Commentary,” in Gary Sheffield and Geoffrey Till, eds., *The Challenges of High Command: The British Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 163.
- 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.
- 36 Confidential interview. See also Steve Chase, “Kurdish fighters call Trudeau plan to withdraw CF-18 fighter jets ‘bad news’,” *Globe and Mail*, 21 October 2015, at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/trudeau-plan-to-pull-fighter-jets-out-of-iraq-bad-news-kurdish-government-says/article26912540/>.
- 37 Justin Trudeau, Mandate Letter to Minister of National Defence (November 2015); at <https://pm.gc.ca/en/all-archived-mandate-letters>.
- 38 Confidential interview with senior government official on 1 March 2021.
- 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>.
- 41 Liberal Party of Canada, *Real Change*, p. 69. Also, mandate letters of November 2015 to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- 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/>.
- 43 Interview with VAdm (Ret’d) Bob Davidson, 4 December 2020.
- 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>.
- 90 See Graham, *The Call of the World*, pp. 382-383. Also, Janice Stein and Eugene Lang, "Blame Hillier," *Maclean's*, 15 October 2007, pp. 24-28.
- 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.