

CF Photo Unit by: Pte C. Stephenson, ISCS2-849-293



The reason Canadians were sent to Somalia.

## OPERATION "DELIVERANCE": INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS OR DOMESTIC FAILURE?

by Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) Charles S. Oliviero

Canada has been deploying peacekeeping troops beyond her borders at least as long as any other country. The Canadian Forces (CF) have participated in every major United Nations mission, and have been widely credited in military circles with having created many of the procedures now used in peacekeeping. Lester Pearson supposedly 'invented' peacekeeping.<sup>1</sup> It was hardly surprising, therefore, that in December 1992, Canada cobbled together yet another contingent of soldiers bound for another seemingly routine mission.

This time the country was Somalia. This was just another example of Canada answering the call. Children were starving. Warring factions were brutalizing each other and terrorizing the civilian population. Once again, the Canadian Forces responded to a government call to assist the international community in bringing stability, protection and relief to a country most Canadians could not even find on a map.

This paper will review the Canadian participation in the intervention in Somalia. It will not delve into the details of the actions of individual Canadian soldiers. Nor will it investigate the actions of the Canadian Airborne Regiment or discuss the disciplinary problems. It is not an exculpation of the Canadian Army. It is not a call for reform or for an investigation into the internal workings of battalion and regimental leadership.

Rather, it will take a broad view of the *raison d'être*, the planning and conduct of the mission, and the process by which Canada dispatched its force. It will answer questions that have been either obscured or forgotten: Was the mission really a failure or could it be counted as a success? Why did Canada go at all? Was the national political will served by the military? How? There is still a great deal to be learned from Canada's Somalia mission. To paraphrase the philosopher George Santayana, if the Canadian Forces does not learn from how it reacted to the conflict in Somalia, then it will go on making the same mistakes every time its soldiers deploy to some war-torn part of the globe.

### BACKGROUND

Somalia is a most inhospitable place. The land is not rich in any natural resources, and the region is now of little strategic interest. But at the height of the Cold War, the Horn of Africa played a significant role in the ideological chess match between the US and the USSR. Somalia commanded the southern entrance to the Red Sea, as well as the north-western portion of the Indian Ocean.

Modern day interest in Somalia can be traced to the colonial period and roughly a century of war, famine,

Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) C.S. Oliviero, a former commanding officer of the 8th Canadian Hussars, is finishing a PhD at Royal Military College.

disease, chaos, poverty, and ruin.<sup>2</sup> In 1950, the UN created the Trust Territory of Somalia and gave it to Italy, its former colonial master, to administer. The independent republic of Somalia was created on 1 July 1960. Almost immediately, the new country began to fight with its neighbours. In 1969, the president was assassinated and General Mohammed Siad Barre took power in



a coup. He immediately suspended the constitution, disbanded the national assembly, and abolished all political parties. Barre created a personal fiefdom where only his clan and family members held power.

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was steady economic and political deterioration as Siad Barre grew more tyrannical and unpredictable. Between 1981 and 1991, a host of confusing and shifting alliances rose up against Barre, and opposition groups began to gain control of their own territorial fiefdoms. Beyond the thousands that died as a result of Barre's punitive actions, hundreds of thousands fled the country either to neighbouring Kenya or Ethiopia.<sup>3</sup> In 1990, the major factions joined forces, and in January 1991 General Mohammed Farah Aidid finally forced the dictator out. However, the coalition soon fell apart, as did the country. "After January 1991, Somalia descended into anarchy and disintegrated into clan-dominated areas."<sup>4</sup> With most of the national infrastructure destroyed, and a major drought in progress, a human catastrophe of unimaginable proportions loomed large.

## THE MISSION

Early in 1992, the UN imposed an arms embargo on Somalia. The Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference jointly appealed for a cease-fire so as to be able to offer humanitarian aid. In April 1992, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution

751 (SCR 751), which authorized a 50-man observer mission – the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). But the fighting continued. The UN stood by, helpless to stem the tide of violence, while the Somali population starved.

The extraordinary lawlessness in Somalia compelled the UNSC to amend SCR 751 to allow for four battalions to act as security units to protect food convoys. UNOSOM grew to just over 4,000. In August 1992, Canada's Ambassador to the UN, Louise Frechette, was asked if Canada would provide one of the battalions. The Canadian mission would be to secure the northern city of Bossasso, and was to begin the operation in October.

But Canada was already helping. Three Hercules aircraft flying out of Nairobi were already bringing in food. With the agreement to provide a battalion, National Defence Headquarters sent a Warning Order on 4 September 1992. The Army would provide a mechanized infantry battalion, and the Airborne Regiment was put on alert. The Air Force would provide tactical airlift Hercules and Sea King helicopters. The Navy would provide strategic lift and offshore logistics with HMCS *Preserver*. All units began training and pre-deployment provisioning.

By mid-October, the situation had changed radically. UNOSOM had all but fallen apart. Austria had withdrawn its promised battalion. Kenya was not happy with the positioning of a UN contingent inside its border. The Secretary General's Special Representative, Mohammed Sahnoun, resigned. And, financing had still not been approved at UN Headquarters. Amidst all of this turmoil, HMCS *Preserver*, fully loaded with supplies for a peacekeeping mission, set sail. The Hercules aircraft were approaching their 300th sortie. The Airborne Regiment was still planning to land at Bossasso, even though the requirement for that was now in doubt. At this point, with public calls for action in the American press becoming ever more strident, the US publicly offered to lead a UN-sanctioned mission to ensure the security of humanitarian aid to Somalia.

The offer was welcome, but it did not come without complications. The American proposition completely changed the nature of the mission. UNOSOM had been approved under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. The US offer could only be sanctioned under Chapter VII. The distinction between the two articles was both simple and profound. Under Article VI, troops would be permitted to use deadly force *only* for self-protection, whereas under Chapter VII, troops would be sanctioned to use force to *impose* peace. The implications were obvious and far ranging, encompassing Rules of Engagement (ROE), equipping of the force, mission statements and even force structure and composition.

Meanwhile, chaos reigned in Somalia. Every week the warlords were pilfering thousands of tons of food and other relief supplies sent by the international community<sup>5</sup>, and there was a growing public outcry. Somalia became a *cause célèbre*. CNN showed pictures of starv-

ing children. On 3 December, in a rare display of political will and solidarity, “the Security Council adopted, unanimously, its resolution 794 (1992), authorizing the use of all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.”<sup>6</sup> Operation “Restore Hope” and the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) were authorized.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of November, the countries with troop commitments to UNOSOM were fast dwindling. Belgium, having promised to support a peacekeeping operation, withdrew completely, and Egypt and Pakistan signalled their intentions to join UNITAF, leaving Canada as the sole contributor to UNOSOM. As soon as SCR 794 was adopted, Canada too suspended its troop commitment. UNOSOM was stillborn, but the Airborne Regiment was ready to go, the Hercules were still moving supplies and HMCS *Preserver* was already in the Indian Ocean. Canada was still committed to supporting the UN mandate, but the issue now, with events so far in train, was how.

Shortly before 4:00 PM on 4 December 1992, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General John de Chastelain, spoke on the phone with the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Colin Powell. The CDS assured Powell that Canada would participate in the enforcement phase of “Restore Hope”, but that it would not remain for the follow-up peacekeeping mission:

Powell was surprised. He said that he had thought we were to have been involved in the peacekeeping phase, and that he assumed we would still want to. I replied that we were not prepared to do both; that we had responded to his President’s request to get involved in the enforcement phase, and that once it was over, and we too had handed off to a peacekeeping unit, we would leave.<sup>8</sup>

Earlier that day, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Barbara McDougall, had already announced that Canada would join the US coalition.

That same day, Colonel Serge Labbé was named as the commander of the Canadian Joint Forces Somalia (CJFS). At the time, he was attending a course in England. Colonel Labbé was informed by phone and ordered to fly directly to Camp Pendleton, California to meet with his American in-theatre commander, Lieutenant General Robert Johnston, Commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. For the non-military reader, apart from the confusion stemming from the collapse of UNOSOM, there may not appear to be a problem. This would be wrong.

The new mission was *completely* different. Whereas UNOSOM was to have been a relief supply-protection mission in a quiet region, operating under Article VI of the UN Charter, Canada had now agreed to provide a potential *fighting* force under Article VII. The Canadian commander had no staff, no headquarters, and no orders except to report to General Johnston. To complicate matters, in just 24 hours Colonel Labbé’s instructions had already changed.<sup>9</sup> Originally he had been told to take his time. Now he was to be in Somalia *before* his troops came ashore. That gave him less than a week to select, train and deploy his headquarters. Meanwhile, HMCS *Preserver*, fully loaded to support the original mission, was in the Gulf of Aden. Not only would Labbé need to receive orders, he and his staff would have to assemble, conduct a mission analysis, make a plan and decide on a course of action – even though it was still unclear where the Canadian contingent was supposed to operate.<sup>10</sup>

But if things were unclear in Canada, it was worse in Somalia. There was still no consensus by the warlords to allow any foreign troops into the country. This meant that the coalition had to be prepared to fight its way ashore:

Despite being a humanitarian mission, our reading of the deteriorating situation in southern Somalia . . . was that there was every likelihood some or all of our operations would be, initially in any event, opposed. The Airborne was given the additional direct and indirect firepower necessary to not only defend itself but also fulfil its mandate of being able to provide the secure environment necessary for the safe distribution of relief supplies.<sup>11</sup>

Any staff college graduate would agree that the correct solution to such radical changes would have been to recall everyone, tell the Americans to wait, and to start again. Time would be needed for a proper staff estimate;



One of *Preserver*’s zodiacs off the coast of Mogadishu.

battle procedure and thorough staff checks would take a couple of weeks – if the staff worked around the clock. Doctrine called for looking at all options, and weighing them against each other.<sup>12</sup> The Airborne Regiment would need time to integrate its new attachments. Civilian shipping would have to move new supplies. All of this would take time and staff effort. Unfortunately, that is not what happened:

It wasn't just a matter of telling *Preserver* to sail to Mogadishu instead of Bossasso or, having the Airborne land at a different airfield in the south. Rather than conduct a quiet quasi-independent peacekeeping operation in

hours notice to move as of 'D + 2'. Since 9 December was the planned D-Day for the Marines, this meant that the Airborne would deploy on 11 December. Labbé was therefore driven to deploy his headquarters on 10 December; he noted in his diary that, "I sense that I have very little to say in what is going on – things are being driven by National Defence Headquarters with a momentum of their own."<sup>14</sup>

Could Labbé have said, "stop"? Could he have insisted that NDHQ give him more time to go through the necessary steps in a more deliberate fashion? Would the Americans have accepted the Canadian desire to mount their operation in a more methodical fashion? The answer to these questions is probably a guarded "yes". But caution is advised. Before being critical of Colonel Labbé and his staff, one must step back and appreciate the military culture in which all of this happened. Successful officers **never** told their superiors that a job could not be done. Such actions were fine for staff college debates, but not real life. In spite of General de Chastelain's assurance that the CF would "do less with less" – and that senior officers would not accept tasks from the government which unnecessarily put soldiers at risk – this did not happen. The Army was stretched to the breaking point, and yet contingents were regularly being dispatched to the world's disaster areas. Senior officers, raised in a climate where nobody ever said "no", were extremely reluctant to disappoint superiors – military or civilian. To do so would have been to admit failure, to admit that they were unworthy. Colonel Labbé was a paragon of loyalty. Intelligent, charismatic and driven to excellence, he handpicked a staff that he knew would rise to the professional challenge of a lifetime.

Given the opportunity to participate in a meaningful, positive, and exciting overseas deployment, it is no wonder that the officers of Canadian Joint Forces Somalia (CJFS) were able to abbreviate the normal doctrinal procedures. All were highly trained professionals with decades of operational, UN and staff experience. The opportunity to mount one of the most complex operations in the military, a *joint* and *combined* military operation,<sup>15</sup> would not likely ever be offered again. The loss of a week's sleep to mount such an operation would not have been seen as a burden. It was a badge of honour.

But, why did this have to be done? The transcript of the telephone conversation between Generals de Chastelain and Powell refers to another conversation between the President and the Prime Minister, and it seems clear that sometime between 25 November and 4 December the Somalia operation was discussed by the two national leaders: "We had responded to his President's request to get involved...."<sup>16</sup> It also seems clear that the redirection of the Somalia mission from peacekeeping to intervention, with or without proper preparation, came from the highest level.

Like all armed forces, the Canadian Forces has well-defined doctrine on how to go about mounting operations. Doctrine establishes a broad set of guidelines, as well as detailed operating procedures.



CF Photo Unit by: Sgt. Snashall, ISC93-35A

An Airborne Regiment corporal on patrol in Belet Huen, January 1993.

Bossasso, some 1,150 kilometres away from Mogadishu, all of the CF in theatre would be geographically focused as a tri-service contingent under the operational control of a Coalition commander concerned with 29,000 other troops in an area 40 per cent of that envisioned by the 4,219 all ranks of UNOSOM. . .<sup>13</sup>

From California, Colonel Labbé flew to Canada, selected a headquarters staff, received instructions from the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, and issued his own orders. It was now 7 December 1992, and still only about 48 hours after he was first called in England. The next day, NDHQ placed the Airborne Regiment on six

However, it would be rare to find any particular mission which fit neatly into a doctrinal mold without any need for modification or adjustment. In fact, inherent flexibility is the hallmark of sound doctrine. There is, however, a very fine line that divides flexibility from 'ad hocery', and the CF had become masters of the *ad hoc*. In spite of its own doctrine, there were repeated examples of NDHQ cobbling together contingents on short notice for overseas deployments. This had become such a regular practice that the practice had become routine. It was reminiscent of British officers longing for the end of the Second World War to be able to return to 'real' soldiering. Everyone knew that the practices were wrong. But they worked. With senior leaders unwilling to re-write the doctrine to legitimize this *ad hoc* system, staff officers became adept at making do. After all, failure was not an option. Doctrine was not allowed to interfere with reality.

In the case of "Operation Deliverance" – the code name for the Canadian operation in Somalia – the line separating flexibility from the *ad hoc* was indeed crossed. The decision to retain the Airborne Regiment was not a bad one. It was a highly trained infantry unit, and flexibility was one of its characteristics. But, the unit had already undergone one drastic change – it had been retrained as a mechanized infantry battalion. To then change its mission, add new troops, and give it a new mandate was too much change too soon. Further, to place it under a new HQ and commander with so little time to properly analyze the situation, follow the doctrinal model and possibly offer alternatives to the political leadership, can rightly be called a rush to judgement by NDHQ. But the senior officers knew what kind of man they had chosen to lead this mission, and they knew that he and those with him would rather die than disgrace themselves with failure.

In a properly functioning civil-military relationship, the military is subordinate to and responds to the civil authority. Such has always been the case in Canada. There is, however, an aspect of this relationship which seems to be poorly understood by the Canadian military and, more importantly, by senior members of the Department of National Defence. The crux of the problem is this: As much as the military is *legally* obliged to follow direction from the political authority, it is *morally* obliged to inform that same authority when the tasks assigned are ill advised. This is one of the most difficult aspects of military leadership, and it is also why most countries with professional armed forces have a specially trained group of officers, generically called a 'general staff', that runs the armed forces. Canada abandoned its general staff decades ago, and one is left to wonder whether the latter half of the civil-military equation has ever been fully appreciated since.

Canada's lack of a general staff is a highly complex issue that, due to lack of space, cannot be discussed here. In essence, however, the problem is that there is no single cohesive body of specially trained officers whose loyalty is to the nation and not to the specific government in power. Ideally, a general staff can be considered in the same way as an independent judiciary which need not fear political displeasure or interference. A properly constituted general staff would have been largely immune from much of the political pressure that played such a key role in the decision-making that led to the troop deployment to Somalia.

How much pressure did the Presidential telephone call, referred to by the CDS, put on the Canadian political leadership? Did this pressure cause Canada to re-role a peacekeeping force on just a few days' notice to become a peace-enforcement force subordinated to an American commander? Did it also explain the CDS's willingness to accept whatever mission the Americans might give, or the Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff's (VCDS's) sudden sense of urgency to get into theatre? Although it is impossible to know whether the CDS or



A 427 Squadron Twin Huey helicopter flying over a village in the Canadian area of operations in western Somalia.

the VCDS might have suggested to the Minister that he postpone or even scrap the mission, the telephone conversation between Generals de Chastelain and Powell and the change of heart of the VCDS seem to imply not.

In the end, the military staffs both at NDHQ and in the headquarters of the Canadian Joint Forces Somalia created all of the necessary preconditions, did all the staff work, and translated all of the directives and orders into the actions needed to deploy to Somalia. Some of the staff work was belated, but the troops got there and got on with their missions. The rules of engagement were not issued until after the Canadians were in theatre, but commanders at all levels managed. CF Organization Order 1.327, which gave CJFS its legal mandate, was not issued until 10 February 1993, but this

was not a civilian corporation; soldiers worked perfectly well with only verbal instructions. They had justifiable faith in their leaders. The national political will had been translated into military direction, which in turn had been translated into action — just as the doctrine demanded. It was not ‘by the book’, but it had worked. No one expected Canadian soldiers to do any less, and the vast majority did not disappoint.

Once in theatre, the soldiers set about restoring some semblance of order and humanity in a destroyed country. In the aftermath of the Somalia ‘scandal’, it is difficult to remember that the overwhelming response of those with whom the Canadians came into contact, worked for, worked with, or helped, all had the same reaction: the Canadians were outstanding! The US commander sent a personal letter to the CDS. He commended the Canadians for “high levels of motivation and professionalism” in the 100°F heat, “the very striking successes” of their humanitarian projects, the fact that “there was no mission the Canadians were not willing to handle”.<sup>17</sup> The same tone of praise and admiration can be read in letters from literally dozens of non-government organizations.

HQ UNITAF developed a matrix by which success or failure of the several subordinate contingents could be measured. As noted by the CJFS Chief of Staff:

A sector could be declared secure when several measurable parameters were met. These included the number of weapons confiscated, the number of violent incidents, the number of people

to the point where humanitarian organizations could function effectively. The fact that UNITAF forces were never able to declare the cities of Mogadishu and Kismayu secure, defined the overall mission as a failure. Declaring the Belet Uen [Sector] secure at the end of March 1993, should have defined the Canadian mission as a success. . .

The Canadian contingent stood out amongst all the others for their ability to do what no one else did. They overcame all of the obstacles and won praise for themselves and for Canada. But the Chief of Staff goes on:

. . . Yet, the murder of a Somali by Canadian soldiers has caused the Canadian media to report Operation Deliverance for the past three and a half years as Canada’s failed UN mission to Somalia.<sup>18</sup>

### ANALYSIS

Let us return to the unanswered questions: Was the mission really such a terrible failure, or could it be counted as a success? Why did Canada agree to participate in the first place? Was the national political will served by the military, and if so, then how was this accomplished?

Although Somalia indeed once had geostrategic value, by 1992 it held none. The Vice-Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Jeremiah, admitted that there was nothing there of geopolitical value, and that the intervention had but one motivation — humanitarian.<sup>19</sup> Considering that Canada had no embassy in Somalia, that the country was not a direct recipient of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funding, and that there were no Canadian non-government organizations in the country, it would be fair to say that the same held true for Canada.<sup>20</sup> So why did Canada go? Certainly Canada’s offer to send troops under Chapter VI was in line with its stated foreign policy objectives of promoting international peace and harmony, but what of the change of heart and the re-rolling of the contingent for Chapter VII operations? Is it credible that Canada sent a task force into a hostile environment on the basis of a telephone call from the American President to the Canadian Prime Minister? Certainly, in the end, the Canadian contingent did achieve the foreign policy objectives of promoting peace and harmony, even if this was

arrived at by an indirect fashion. Since the Prime Minister was never called to testify before the Somalia Board of Inquiry, the question remains moot. And, as any military historian knows, troops have been deployed to foreign countries in the past for far less valid reasons.

wounded by guns reporting to medical facilities, the number of hijackings, etc. Remember that a secure environment in Somalia would not be one where there were no such incidents, any more than it would in Detroit or Los Angeles, but one where the level of violence was reduced



A Royal Canadian Dragoons Cougar patrol talks to villagers while stopping for lunch near Mataban in western Somalia, 4 April 1993.

CF Photo Unit by: Sgt. E. Dixon, ISC93-10411

This takes us back to the issue of the civil-military relationship in Canada. At the time of this mission, Canada was highly experienced in the mounting and the conduct of Chapter VI operations. The staff both at Army headquarters and at NDHQ had gained a lot of experience in how to react quickly to requests from External Affairs. But the fact that peacekeeping missions had in the past been sent on short notice did not *automatically* make it acceptable to do so every time. It is easy to look backwards and say that the landing of troops in Somalia was not difficult. But that misses the point. The essence of military planning is to be prepared for any eventuality. Had the Somali warlords been more aggressive, would the Canadian contingent have been adequately prepared?

Troops that are scheduled for duty in a UN peacekeeping mission (Chapter VI) routinely train and prepare for about six months in advance of deploying. This pre-deployment training allows operating procedures, equipment loading scales and inter-personal relationships to be established and tested. Such training is carried out to minimize the probability of troops encountering unexpected situations that might lead to needless casualties. Elsewhere, Canadian commanders have been criticized for sending troops that were of questionable readiness to far more benign theatres of operations.<sup>21</sup> Yet, here is an example of a mission that theoretically called for the Canadians to have to fight, and still preparation was of an absolute minimal level, even below that deemed acceptable for troops embarking on a peacekeeping mission. There is no proof that a general staff would have made everything go smoothly. What it would have done, however, is regulate how often politicians could commit Canada to last-minute operations. A properly trained, educated and constituted general staff would be far less likely to be co-opted or politicized. It would, therefore, be more likely to provide the government with unvarnished military advice and expertise. The ability to work in adverse conditions and abbreviated time blocks is the hallmark of a professional military force. But Canada had made a habit of pushing its military beyond its natural limits. A professional general staff would have almost certainly have prevented this from becoming the norm. It would have protected the military from the worst tendencies of uninformed political decision-making.

The issue of HMCS *Preserver* being laden with equipment for a peacekeeping mission that did not occur is a good example of potential disaster. For the actual Chapter VII mission, the CJFS staff quickly realized that there were serious deficiencies. There was, for example, not enough transport available. There were far too few combat engineer supplies; instead, the ship was loaded with plywood and construction material to build a peacekeeping camp. There was insufficient tentage. Ammunition scales, both quantities and types, were inadequate; recall that a Cougar squadron had been added to the force at the last minute.<sup>22</sup> In the end, the military staff determined that in spite of such deficiencies the mission should proceed, and so the military must bear the burden of responsibility. But the fact that hundreds of Canadians

were not killed as they forced their way into the country does not justify unnecessarily hasty preparations. The Canadian contingent drew on its internal experience and the professionalism of its soldiers to make the best of a bad situation. This does not justify senior NDHQ staff officers sending them on such short notice.

The question of mission success is a thorny issue. Certainly, the murder of one Somali and the torture of at least one other remains a heinous blot on the reputation of Canada and its armed forces. But, does this constitute mission failure? Is it correct to accept the media's branding of Operation "Deliverance" as a failure? The European and American press, while being understandably shocked at the murder, nonetheless remained complimentary of Canadian actions in Somalia.<sup>23</sup> Unquestionably, the public perception of the Canadian soldier as an even-handed, fair and peace-loving professional suffered a terrible strain. But that is not the same as mission failure. Operation "Restore Hope" saved literally thousands of lives, and the Canadians received many kudos.<sup>24</sup> Certainly the Canadian contingent — the *only* contingent to achieve its assigned mission objectives — can take credit for some of those saved lives.<sup>25</sup> In the Canadian area of responsibility, schools were rebuilt, markets were reopened, and peace was restored. Does this not constitute mission success? Of course it does.

The question of serving the national political will, that is, of translating political will into military action, is perhaps easiest to answer. Clearly the CF translated the political direction from the Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence into action. It is a credit to the professionalism of all the uniformed personnel on the various staffs that they were able to 'make it happen', even if it did involve bending some doctrine and using *ad hoc* solutions. Even after all that has occurred, Colonel Labbé remains complimentary of the staff work done by NDHQ.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, one wonders if senior officers have made note of the two-sided nature of the military relationship, and the obligations of senior uniformed personnel to tell their political masters truths that they may not want to hear.

Lastly, what was learned from Operation "Deliverance"? Is the Canadian military doomed to fulfil Santayana's historical prophecy? Cynics might say that the mission taught all senior officers to be sure to 'cover' their decisions and actions, for lawyers will never again be far from sounds of conflict. On a more positive note, Operation "Deliverance" reinforced the Canadian commitment to world order; it proved, once again, that true military professionals can deliver exceptional results with very little direction or resources. It began a process whereby the CF has been forced to become more accountable to the society that it serves; and it has provided many leadership lessons that may save lives on some future deployment.



*Note on sources:* Written sources are detailed below, but there were many unwritten sources such as conversations, e-mail and general confidences based upon friendship and a shared belief system. The Commander, Chief of Staff, G3 and G5, and several of the junior officers for the Canadian mission to Somalia were all personal friends and brother officers of the author. Where possible, and where permitted by the source, a full citation has been given. Where this has not been possible, then the author has taken the liberty of paraphrasing so as not to betray any trust placed in him.

1. Whether Canada invented peacekeeping remains debatable. It is certainly true that a Canadian General, E.L.M. Burns, led the first UN mission into the Sinai and that Canada has only missed a couple of very small missions. It is also true that Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in the field of peacekeeping, and that most subsequent governments have been inordinately proud of Canada's ability to dispatch troops to the world's hot spots.
2. John F. Antal and Robert L. Dunaway, "Peacemaking in Somalia: A Background Brief", *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 77, No. 2, February 1993, p. 40.
3. Helen Chapin Metz, ed. *Somalia: A Country Study*, (Washington: Library of Congress, 1992), p. xxix.
4. Martin R. Ganzglass, "The Restoration of the Somali Justice System", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1996, p. 114.
5. UNITAF assessment of the situation as quoted by Colonel Serge Labbé, "Canadians in Somalia – Setting the Record Straight" or "The Somalia Cover Up", unpublished monograph, p. 4.
6. UN Department of Public Information reference paper dated 30 April 1993, as quoted by Labbé, p. 11.
7. The US called its contingent UNITAF (Unified Task Force). Op "Deliverance" was the Canadian contribution to UNITAF.
8. Copy of telephone transcript between General A.J.G.D. de Chastelain and General Colin Powell. SCOI Ref. DND 001869/000956.
9. Conversation with Col Labbé regarding notes in his diary. Notes indicate that between 5 Dec and 6 Dec Rear Admiral Murray, who had been in US Central Command HQ at Madill AFB Florida, had a change of heart. His earlier instruction that there was no rush changed in telling Labbé to deploy within one week.
10. Labbé, "Canadians in Somalia," p. 10. Conversations between the author and the CJFS G3 and Chief of Staff corroborated the fact that the staff had no firm direction on this matter from NDHQ.
11. *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
12. The Operations Planning Process is the process by which a commander, with his staff, carries out the analysis of the situation, decides on a plan, issues orders, controls its execution and prepares for unforeseen contingencies.
13. Labbé, "Canadians in Somalia," p. 13.
14. Handout provided to Somalia Board of Inquiry by Colonel Labbé, "Overview of Comd CJFS Pre-Deployment Activities for Op Deliverance", p. 2.
15. In the hierarchy of military operations, it is self-evident that some are easier than others. A joint operation involves elements from all three services (land, sea and air) and is arguably at the top of the scale of difficulty for any single nation. A combined operation involves more than one nation and is complex by its very nature for all of the obvious reasons.
- Op "Deliverance" was a joint operation within a combined operation.
16. SCOI Ref. DND 001869/000956.
17. Letter from Lieutenant General R.B. Johnston, USMC, to Admiral J.R. Anderson, CDS, 1 May 1993.
18. Young, D.R. "Mission Success – Mission Failure," a monograph for students at the Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College, p. 1.
19. Andrew S. Natsios, "Humanitarian Relief Interventions in Somalia: the Economics of Chaos", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1996, p. 69.
20. Conversations with senior staff officers of Canadian Joint Forces Somalia, 23 Mar 1999.
21. The author was a member of the Board of Inquiry, which investigated one Canadian battle group's performance in the Former Yugoslav Republic.
22. The Cougar is an armoured vehicle with a 76 mm gun that uses unique ammunition.
23. German, French, British and American military colleagues of the author were all puzzled by the fact that the mission could be considered a failure because a few thugs got loose.
24. See "Canadian Troops Win Somali Kudos", *Christian Science Monitor*, 19-25 Feb 93, Vol. 85, p. 6.
25. See SCOI Ref. DND 001869/000956 and letter from Lieutenant-General R.B. Johnston, USMC, to Admiral J.R. Anderson, CDS, 1 May 1993.
26. It should be understood that the "Joint Staff" at NDHQ was neither joint nor a true staff. Only in the aftermath of the Somalia Inquiry did DND create and train a proper Joint Staff at the national level.

## Contemporary Issues in Officership: A Canadian Perspective



Editor  
Lieutenant-Colonel Bernd Horn, PhD

### ***Contemporary Issues in Officership:***

***A Canadian Perspective*** examines the challenges faced by the Canadian Officer Corps as a result of the turbulent changes of the post-Cold War era. The book's central theme is that the Canadian Forces must place a greater focus on education and intellectual development to prepare its officers for the ambiguity, uncertainty and rapid pace of change that they face in operations. Available through The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies for \$25.00. Send payment to 2300 Yonge Street, Suite 402, Box 2321, Toronto, ON M4P 1E4:

Telephone (416) 322-8128

E-mail: [ciss@inforamp.net](mailto:ciss@inforamp.net)

Web Site: [www.ciss.ca](http://www.ciss.ca)