

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We read with interest Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Rostek's article on the Management Command and Control Re-engineering (MCCR) initiative in your Winter 2004-2005 issue. As the MCCR Team Leaders, we feel compelled to offer a few comments.

The work of the MCCRT was complex, as LCol Rostek indicates. There were 19 teams identified overall that were doing work in specific areas. The re-engineering of business processes was clearly a major focus, but there were other aspects that were fundamental to the success. One of these was the issue of corporate leadership and advocacy. It was always difficult to make the progress we wished without the absolute commitment of all senior leaders. We encountered differences of opinion, communications failures, differences in the level of support, changing personalities, and the challenge of a large, dispersed organization under great stress. This was not inconsistent with the experience of private sector organizations.

Throughout this period, we came to realize that the changes we were advocating needed to be embedded into the culture of the organization. Given the existence of a military vs. civilian cultures, and army vs. navy vs. air force sub-cultures, this was a challenge. Most will agree that it takes several years to make cultural change, and it certainly was not going to be realized in the 30 months of the MCCRT existence.

Having said this, there are aspects of our work that have been perpetuated and continue to evolve:

- Business Planning – This process is now accepted as the norm and has developed into a very useful and functional means to address the distribution and accountability of resources. Improvements continue.
- Delegated Authorities – One of the fundamental ‘disconnects’ that existed up until the mid-90s was the lack of control leaders had over the resources that were necessary to carry out their responsibilities. Authority has been devolved to the extent that it makes sense to do so and the level of control – and accountability – is very extensive indeed.

- Headquarters Structure – The reduction in headquarters numbers was achieved specifically and has positioned the Canadian Forces (CF) to consider whether further change and consolidation is needed. General Hillier has a team studying this that, in fact, is drawing upon much of the MCCRT work.
- Force Generation vs. Force Employment – The responsibilities of the Environmental Chiefs of Staff and the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) in their respective force generation/force employment roles have been found to be workable, but have placed an increasing burden on the DCDS with the operational tempo experienced since the end of the Cold War. This area is now being assessed as well to determine how to make further improvements that will improve CF functionality in meeting future needs.
- Conflict Resolution – Some may question whether the development of a robust alternative dispute resolution capability has anything to do with the MCCR. In fact, the principles espoused by this activity address some failings in managing relationships that were exposed during MCCRT work. Our culture really has changed since the 1996-1997 period.

We could go on, but trust that these examples will serve as an indication of some of the seeds planted by the MCCRT initiatives. While the targeted personnel reductions were not achieved, nor held at the attained level of 33 per cent, some fundamental improvements and changes resulted. There are many reasons why some seeds did not take root, and LCol Rostek makes a case for this from a strategic perspective. Throughout, however, we suggest that the MCCR initiative should not be discarded casually as a failure nor as a fad – indeed, there are many fundamental changes in the organization that have grown from the work done.

Yours truly,

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