



A Canadian Approach to Command at the Operational Level

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Preface

Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare, CMM, MSC, MSM, CD, a highly experienced combat arms officer who has commanded at all levels, was, until recently, Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC).

“We defend Canada, we defend North America, we deliver peace and security abroad” – if we were to choose words to go on a bumper sticker (beside our yellow ribbons) that describes who we are and what we do as a modern CAF – it would likely be these.

Our services, joint forces, and joint capability providers across the CAF develop and generate the tactical excellence and operational readiness that puts truth to these words. The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), supported by his senior Commanders, and enabled by the strategic military and defence staffs, formulates the strategic direction, in accordance with the Government of Canada’s intent, as to where, with whom, with what force structure, and when we deliver on these words, preserving the CDS’s unique responsibility to the Government of Canada for CAF operations. It is the responsibility of operational level Commanders to translate strategic direction into operational purpose, enabled and sustained through joint, interagency, and combined action – the how. The operational level Commands that exist in the Canadian context include North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM), as well as our recently-formed Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC).

CJOC's mission is to anticipate, prepare for, and conduct operations to defend Canada, to assist in the Defence of North America, and, when directed, to promote peace and security abroad. As a standing joint operational command with Component Commands, Regional Joint Task Forces (RJTFs), Joint Operational Support, Search and Rescue Regions, and assigned Task Forces – CJOC, with federal, provincial, host nation, international organization, and international military partners, performs that mission daily, and will continue to perform it in the future, in a world that is increasingly volatile, unstable, and unpredictable. *We do* and *will perform* that mission in all domains – maritime, land, air, space, and cyber. While missions of the day dominate common understanding of CJOC activities, conditions for mission success are designed and delivered in the Phase Zero – well in advance of operations. Phase Zero means effective monitoring *in* and *of* all domains, planning, practicing, and exercising generic and specified contingencies, and setting the command and control, Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (JISR) networks, force protection, and operational sustainment conditions to support current operations and enable crisis and contingency response. An effective Phase Zero requires strong and familiar partnerships – federal, provincial, multi-national, and international. In addition to delivering success in current operations, this '*mission preparedness*' is a key element of our sustained excellence in operations. But this 'operational level' of activity is not well known, understood, or taught to leaders within and across the CAF.

What then are the functions of the operational level of command in the Canadian context? How do we effectively partner, anticipate, prepare for, and conduct our ultimate mission? Where is this described, and how is it codified? Where are all these things

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taught, and how are they practiced? And why, in a period of seeming reduction in operational tempo, are our Operational Commands, and the operational level, so engaged and so busy?

The authors of this concept paper have done a superb job in describing the operational level of command, and in providing answers to these questions. Their contribution here is a key element of expanding this knowledge

and understanding across the CAF and the defence team at large, and is a superb lead into the CAF doctrine and its introduction to training and education to follow. It is my hope that their efforts will fuel the professional discussions required of those in the military profession to grow and evolve our understanding of the operational level of command. Well done to them.

Please read on.

Introduction

Within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the functions of command at the operational level are neither universally understood nor necessarily agreed upon. Different organizational models and levels of experience have led to sometimes significantly different views with respect to what operational level activities are necessary to ensure the delivery of tactical military effects that achieve strategic objectives – in short – excellence in operations. If consensus does not exist among senior leaders, then strong personalities rather than shared understanding and experience could drive future 'transformational' changes to CAF processes and organizational structures, roles, and responsibilities. The resulting differences, as opposed to unity of thought and



DND photo

SOF forces on the move.



Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare, then-Commander of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, speaks to Canadian soldiers stationed at Camp Alamo, Kabul, Afghanistan, 3 December 2011.

purpose, can lead to organizational inefficiencies and potentially less operational effect. With recent organizational changes and institutional experiences in mind, two basic questions need to be answered: What constitutes command at the operational level, and what does it mean in the Canadian context?

are complementary. For Canada, the operational layer resides in Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC), Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) and North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). Conceptual understanding of command at the operational level is a necessary precursor

The intent of this article is to offer that a specific Canadian approach to command at the operational level is emerging, with key and enduring functions that are far more expansive than merely commanding individually-named operations. Strategic level functions will not be specifically addressed here, although they do certainly impact on the *conduct of and preparations for operations*, as well as the dynamic behaviors of military organizations at the interface between strategic and operational. To be truly effective, the strategic and operational levels should work together in tandem, often with shifting boundaries and integrated and overlapping functions that



to the development of joint doctrine that can lead to enhanced professional understanding of the nature of the operational level of operations in the Canadian context, and advance unity of purpose and action by CAF organizations engaged in the operations agenda.

The government's *Canada First Defence Strategy* identifies three central roles for the CAF: defending Canada by delivering excellence at home, defending North America as a strong and reliable partner, and contributing to international peace and security by projecting leadership abroad. Within these areas of ambition are six core missions: 1) conduct daily domestic and continental operations with special emphasis on the Arctic and NORAD; 2) support a major international event in Canada on the scale of the Olympics or G8 summit; 3) respond to the threat or actual occurrence of major terrorist attack; 4) assist civilian authorities in Canada during natural disasters and other crises; 5) contribute to or lead designated parts of major international operations and military campaigns alongside multi-national partners; and 6) deploy task-appropriate forces globally in response to crisis when needed for shorter durations of time.¹ Implicit in these tasks are the pre-mission execution conditions set within operational commands to succeed in these tasks – as well as the efforts of force generators and capability providers to ensure, as a whole, the CAF and operational partners are poised for mission preparedness, while forces are postured for operational readiness. This article focuses principally upon mission preparedness and the joint operational responsibilities that ensure forces assigned are ultimately enabled and successful when committed to specified operations.

Where does the Operational Level Begin and End?

In military usage, the term 'operational' has existed for centuries, but only in the sense of the conduct of operations, as distinct from training or administration.² In the sense of a level – either of command or of the phenomenon of conflict itself – English use of the term is relatively new. Classically, military thought recognized two, not three, distinct levels – the strategic and the tactical.³ The idea has been intimately bound up with the related concept of 'operational art.'⁴ Certainly, that focus preoccupies almost all theory and doctrine published on the operational level.⁵ However, operational art in the sense of planning theatre-level campaigns is not what primarily concerns Canadian commanders working at the operational level.

Historians generally trace the operational level's roots back to Soviet thinking on deep operations in the 1920s, or farther with German military thought of the later 19th Century, right at the time that industrialization was first creating huge armies.⁶ Regardless, the contemporary English language concept comes largely from the 1980s manoeuvre warfare revolution, which shifted from a supposed attritional and positional approach, to one based upon deft manoeuvre and operational art.⁷ Manoeuvrist precepts stressed the importance of thinking at the operational level.⁸ Recently, something of a counter-movement seems to be developing, as exemplified by the critical analysis of Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, who argue that artificial separation of the operational level from the strategic led in conflicts like Afghanistan and Iraq to independent military activity that is



U.S. Marine Corps photo 140719-M-IN448-138 by Corporal Matthew Callahan

A Canadian infantryman with US Marines during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise 2014 in the Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, 19 July 2014.

not usefully connected with strategic ends.⁹ Indeed, the very nature of an operational level – distinct from the strategic and tactical – is intellectually contested and conceptually unclear.¹⁰ William Owen has taken an even more extreme position, flatly asserting that there is “no such thing as the operational level.”¹¹ No doubt, in the contemporary security environment, distinct levels often blur and merge.¹²

In the Canadian context, the idea of an operational level, and the corresponding operational art through which it is practiced, are even more difficult to articulate. Whereas some military writers might lament its absence or immaturity as a concept, others question the applicability of operational art to Canada.¹³ As a nation, Canada typically contributes forces to campaigns led by others. Lieutenant-General Jonathan Vance termed this choice “contribution warfare.”¹⁴ The CAF is neither *required* nor *able to generate* military forces larger than army brigade groups or naval and air force equivalents, with the possibility of one deployable joint task force headquarters which could control combined forces up to the same level. Therefore, there is little-or-no national imperative for operational level campaigning and command in the field. If theatre-level campaigning is rarely applicable, and if the very concept of a distinct operational level is somewhat problematic as an organizing principle, then how exactly does operational-level command concern the CAF?

The conceptual theme to what constitutes the operational level, certainly in contemporary Canadian practice, is integration – integration of the myriad activities necessary in order to accomplish

the things asked of militaries as they monitor the defence and security environment, partner with civil authorities and military forces, plan and prepare for contingency and crisis response, and lead and enable their own armed forces in the conduct of operations.

The decisions surrounding prospective deployment and participation of military forces on operations are made at the political level, customarily by Government. CAF operations or CAF contributions to civil authority activities at home or coalition and international partners abroad has to be worthwhile and appropriate in light of the nation’s strategic imperatives, overriding policy, departmental priorities, and other strategic factors. The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) is uniquely responsible for the provision of military advice to Government on these issues, and manages the interaction at political/military interface.¹⁵ That responsibility is enabled by the full range of strategic functions, as well as the support of service chiefs, functional experts, and operational level leaders who support and enable the CDS in fulfillment of this responsibility.

According to military doctrine, preparation and planning for operations begins once the military has received strategic direction and initiation from the government. However, strategic uncertainty and gaps or lack of unity in the international order do often result in decisions taken at the last moment, and degrees of strategic ambiguity in the real strategic objectives being pursued where operations are directed. Sometimes, just ‘being there,’ and ‘doing something’ is adequate strategic effect. At other times – being



DND photo IS2012-2007-001 by Master Corporal Marc André Gaudreault

Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Tom Lawson, addresses the troops during a dinner at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan, 8 December 2012.



DND photo AR2007-2041-10 by Corporal Simon Duchesne

Former CDS General Rick Hillier speaking with combat engineers at a forward operating base in Afghanistan, 24 October 2007.

there immediately is the strategic imperative, and eventually driving strategic objectives and operational outcomes – alone or with partners – follows. Operations are mounted with varying degrees of strategic precision regarding aims and intended effects – that can then be translated into operational and then tactical objectives. This phenomenon is not particularly Canadian, but rather, it reflects the contemporary strategic environment where the goals of employing military force frequently have less to do with traditional strategic issues. Rasmussen and Coker, for instance, observed that “strategy is no longer a question of defeating concrete threats in order to achieve perfect security; it has instead become a way of managing risks.”¹⁶

The pressure to ‘do something’ often leaves many questions with respect to what should be done, to whom, and how it should be done unanswered.¹⁷ The CAF, at certain times, has even been told what the number and nature of deployed forces on specific operations shall be, as opposed to being provided explicit strategic security or national objectives that inform the military ways and means that ultimately are committed.¹⁸ Indeed, these problems were clearly evident in General Rick Hillier’s direction to Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM) at commencement of operations in Kandahar in 2005.¹⁹ Command at the operational level seeks to inform and influence these deliberations by providing the CDS with relevant and useful information about the nature

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of the operational environment, understanding of operational challenges and adversaries, as well as understanding of the aims, forces structures, operational designs, and intentions of partners at the operational levels – ultimately contributing to the formulation of military advice that the CDS may provide to strategic decision makers. These inputs, among others, support Government as it

makes calculated choices with respect to available options and the effects that might result from military operations conducted by, with, and through operational partners and partnerships. The CDS does not prescribe political or strategic decision; instead, enabled by a clear picture of the strategic factors in play, and a clear understanding of the operational level environment, the CDS provides sufficient and timely information, understanding, and advice that allows the national authority to make the most informed decisions possible, mindful

and understanding of CAF views and opportunities, capabilities, objectives, and risks.

Functions of Operational Command

It is important to distinguish that in a Canadian context, the operational level is not limited to the classical level between the strategic and tactical in the conduct of a single operation or campaign. Instead, it involves command across multiple, simultaneous operations, rather than in any single operation or



Paratroopers from 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), exit a CC-130J *Hercules* during an airborne insertion into the Oleszno Training Area of Poland as part of NATO reassurance exercises, 4 July 2014.

theatre of operations, as well as the continuous monitoring of the defence and security environment in all domains, and the partnering, planning, and preparation for operations as required in defence policy, and from strategic military direction. Thus, the Canadian operational level involves more than just operational art and campaigning in a singular mission. In practical terms, the interpretation of strategic intent, the understanding of the operational environment, and orchestration of military action and effort takes place on a much wider scale – across operations, across domains, across theatres, across partnerships, and over time horizons – *in anticipation of, preparation for, and ultimately in conduct of operations* – many and concurrently – themselves.

Strategy provides a bridge between policy and action by applying national resources to achieve policy objectives. Tactical level forces execute operations to achieve military effects. The overarching responsibilities of the operational level commander can be categorized into two broad areas that close the gap between strategy and tactics: the conduct of operations and the preparation for (setting the conditions for success in) operations. The operational level of command integrates service and joint operational capabilities to enable concurrency, balancing of effort, and coordination of effects – in planning, in coordination, in mission preparation, and in application.

The design and control of operational level effects should always be command-driven, versus staff-led. Transformational principles of an operations-focused, command-led, and a mission command approach to command at the operational level remain

dominant in effective leadership of the operational level in the CAF context. Command-driven, as opposed to staff led, sustains clarity in the singular points of responsibility and accountability for the CAF in the operations agenda. This focus ensures clarity and organizational unity in understanding in terms of who issues what orders and how operational activities and risks are managed. *Authority* can be delegated, but *responsibility* cannot be delegated.

Conduct

For success in operations at the operational level, Canadian operational commanders perform four key functions:

1. **Translate strategic intent to operational direction, allocate resources to assigned forces, and influence conditions to enable mission success.** Conducting operations is the *raison d'être* of the CAF. The basic concept is well understood, codified in doctrine, and regularly practised. The operational commander sets the parameters for favourable outcomes. Through five phases (warning, preparation, deployment, employment, and redeployment), tactical level task force commanders execute operations to achieve military effects. In many ways, this activity seems straightforward – militaries know how to be in charge of military operations and CAF professional development stresses leadership in operations. Where the CAF is the provider of forces to missions led by other operational partners – this effort requires the careful balancing of force provider (national) intent, restraints

and constraints, as well as that of the mission partnership (coalition/alliance for example) and their broader intent objectives and desired effects.

2. **Provide, integrate, and enable effective and relevant military forces.** The environmental services, joint commands, and other parts of the CAF generate maritime, land, air, cyber, special operations, and joint forces for employment. The operational commander must integrate assigned forces into a militarily-effective whole and enable their success. National command and control communications and information systems (C3I), intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) networks, provisions for force protection and operational support and sustainment are nationally-provided joint enablers and therefore core responsibilities of the Canadian operational commander. The operational level commander seeks, to the greatest degree possible, to establish these networks and operational frameworks in advance of operations and contingencies; and ensures their integration with, contribution to, and leveraging among inter-agency and international operational partners.
3. **Inform, shape, monitor, assess, and report on campaign plans and their execution.** As the CAF contributes to either the inter-agency mission or coalition/alliance campaigns, the Canadian operational commander seeks to inform and influence the development of the partnered mission and campaign plan. The Canadian operational commander plays a key role in informing, influencing, and expressing the Canadian national viewpoint to the leadership of the

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campaign at the operational level, complementing that being conducted at the strategic level. Responsibility for monitoring its progress and evolution is another requirement. In simple terms, the operational commander needs to report to the national authority clear understanding of the operational level campaign, how the coalition/alliance or inter-agency team is conducting it – and measures of performance and measures of effect. Put in other words, “how is it going?” This understanding, provided by the CDS, is further key input to formulation and updating of military advice to Government, in particular as it relates to adapting strategic partnerships and interactions, as well as potential adjustments to the CAF mission, contribution to, and participation within a campaign.

4. **Engage and inform mission partners and stakeholders.** Support for Canadian participation in a military campaign depends upon an informed public, knowledgeable ‘opinion shapers,’ and well-informed strategic decision makers.

Success in combined operations depends upon close coordination with mission partners, not just of tactical manoeuvre but also of operational direction, resourcing, and condition setting. Building trust and familiarity at the operational level takes concerted effort. The operational commander must ensure support for and coordination of Canada’s participation in the campaign and its major operations. Shared understanding among stakeholders of the mission, operational actions, risks being managed, and results being achieved by the CAF contribution within the operation and campaign are necessary, as well as adequate understanding

of the overall mission partner or coalition campaign design, coalition actions, risks being managed, and results being achieved across the mission at large. Understanding of “how are we doing?” and “is it working?” within the CAF mission element besides across the operational team at large are key to enabling CAF operational agility and adaptability, as well as CAF and Canadian resilience in the face of significant risks and costs.

The requirement to supervise or monitor CAF contributions to the conduct of operations will always exist, even if those operations are purely tactical in nature. In the contemporary environment, local actions can have strategic consequences and therefore timely and accurate provision of information about CAF operational activity – even if modest – is frequently required by strategic leaders.



DND photo AS2014-0041-003 by Sergeant Bern LeBlanc

Paratroopers from Canada and Poland jump from a CC-130J *Hercules* aircraft in Poland, 29 June 2014.



Troops from 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Recce Platoon, 3 Section, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, A' Company, Third Platoon, United States Marines, and troops from the Japanese Western Area Infantry Regiment, use combat rubber reconnaissance crafts for training during Exercise RIMPAC in Kaneohe Bay off Hawaii, 29 June 2014.

Prepare

“War,” Clausewitz wrote, “is a serious business.”²⁰ Military failure, at the very least, results in significant casualties and the loss of hard-to-replace capital equipment; at the very worst, strategic disaster can have consequences for the state that can resonate for years or even lead to its dissolution. Consequently, preparing for operations represents a significant effort of the operational level of command. While the higher strategic level will anticipate the requirement for military action and determine strategic intent, and tactical level task force commanders will execute military operations as directed – and with forces generated and readied by environmental services and specialist joint forces, the operational commander must ensure that all domain awareness, partnerships, plans, and the preparedness to execute operations pre-exist the call for action and the need to employ – to the maximum degree possible and within policy and strategic constraints.

Regardless of the number of operations in train, the operational level commander remains responsible for adaptations to those operations (branches and sequels), as well as for the preparedness for other crisis or contingency. Furthermore, the operational level commander *contributes to* and *participates in* monitoring, with partners, the current and emerging defence and security environment in all domains – ensuring understanding of any likely indicators or warnings that could result in the call for major changes to current operations or for contingency or crisis response. This type of anticipatory military effort is ‘Phase Zero’ activity – continuous and on-going, not anticipatory to any one operation, but that provides the assurance of preparedness for any and all of the CAF missions and assigned tasks – before a specific military operation is directed. It becomes not just a basis for any specified operations that may be undertaken, but as the purpose and method of

engagement with inter-agency and international operational level partners in their own right – across the whole range of operational possibilities. Effective understanding of the operational environment and preparedness for operations entails common effort by many players. Phase Zero work comprises several key functions:

1. **Attain all domain understanding.** Building situational awareness is the first step toward comprehensive understanding of the operational situation and framing suitable responses, by which to add to strategic understanding and to inform the basis for mission preparedness. The operational commander must constantly monitor the situation and engage with potential operational partners – in Canada, in North America, and around the world. Appreciating military threats, potential adversaries, broader force protection and public security threats, natural and man-made disasters, political instability, and the gamut of other factors that could precipitate the consideration of Canadian military action is one part of understanding the operational situation. Equally important is to understand how potential operational partners view and assess the situation themselves, their interests and intent, their potential courses of action, and their force posture. Comprehensive understanding of the operational situation, along with some indication of the strategic environment, enables the operational commander to inform strategic decision-making and, most importantly, to drive other operational level preparedness functions. Furthermore, it ensures that Canadian equities in the global commons – maritime, air, space, and cyber – and the networks on which the CAF depends, including C3I, ISR, and sustainment – are protected and available to inform decision-making, as well as enabling contingency or crisis response.

2. **Plan for contingencies.** Contingency planning is a fundamental activity. Plans and procedures for the specified task related to defence, safety, and security of the homeland, as well as for the generic tasks related to peace and security abroad – are the operational description of ‘how’ the CAF translates the defence mission into Phase Zero and Phases 1 to 5 (warning up to deployment) tasks across the joint force. Contingency planning is collaborative – pursued and produced with inter-agency partners at home, and international partners abroad. Contingency planning also helps to identify capability limitations and gaps, informing requirements for current force operational readiness and future force development.
3. **Establish and maintain networks.** To be prepared to conduct potential operations rapidly and successfully, the operational commander must create relationships with specified as well as potential mission partners – prior to contingency or crisis response, or time of need. This technology enabled human networking builds on the contacts necessary to understand the perspectives of operational partners and facilitates planning, establishes pre-mission frameworks for command and control, ISR, force protection, and operational support, and then accelerates the integration of forces and coordination of effects in mission execution. Establishing physical networks of operational support hubs and integrated lines of communication in advance of a specific military operation is a key operational level preparedness activity, as is working out the human and technical details of command and control and ISR networks.
4. **Practice joint operations.** The Canadian operational commander is ideally-placed to conduct large-scale joint exercises and training that demonstrate the readiness and capability of the CAF to deliver on its assigned missions, while forcing the integration of environmental service elements and developing joint capabilities. Practicing standing operations and contingency plans, exercising the C3I, ISR, force protection, and operational support systems and networks, in addition to integrating the effectiveness of environmental service and joint force generated forces – in effect, playing out contingencies – with operational partners – before they are called are all key elements of mission preparedness.
5. **Drive joint capability improvement and influence joint force development.** As the employer of the end product of force generation activities of other parts of the CAF, the operational commander has an implicit interest in improvement of current capabilities and development of the future force, in particular, those capabilities germane to C3I, ISR, force protection, and operational support, as well as the space capabilities and cyber networks upon which all of these depend. This effort belongs to the joint operational level of interest and influence. The joint operational commander must take an active role in designing near term solutions and marshalling others to deliver them, as well as signaling the requirements for future force development.



DND photo PA2014-0144-11 by Corporal Mark Schombs

Major Edward Jun from the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Canadian Regiment, with American and Polish commanders at the start of a multi-national firepower demonstration with the Polish 6th Airborne Brigade and the American 173rd Airborne Brigade during Operation *Reassurance* in Eastern Europe, 17 July 2014.

Operational-Level Gap: Who is the Champion for Joint Forces?

If the role of the operational level force employer remains significant, a distinct lack of agreement within the CAF on the authorities, responsibilities, and accountabilities for joint capability development, joint force generation, and joint force management persists. There is no single champion or dedicated organization responsible for developing, stewarding, delivering, and sustaining the capabilities that enable the joint operational commander to integrate into an effective whole the contributions of the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force, and Special Operations Forces, while assuring effective integration and enabling with mission partners founded upon a backbone of national joint capabilities. For some capabilities, the operational commander has taken on the tasks of identifying and prioritizing joint enabler shortfalls, and marshalling others to deliver solutions. While a single champion may or may not be the right solution for the CAF, this decision should be made consciously; it appears that the current situation has developed organically as people and organizations do what is necessary to ensure success in operations, and the development and generation of joint capabilities and forces that function persistently in Phase Zero and therefore crucial to ultimate success in the steps leading up to and in the conduct of operations.

The Way Forward

In the Canadian context, command at the operational level is not limited to campaigning in a single theatre of operations following receipt of comprehensive strategic direction. It encompasses the maintenance of all domain awareness – alongside operational partners. It includes the *preparation for*, and *conduct of*, the entire spectrum of military operations: inside and outside Canada – in all domains – with a full range of operational and mission partners – concurrently. Whether or not a specific military effect has been ordered, the operational level commander continuously builds situational awareness by engaging partners and stakeholders to inform strategic decision-making and drive Phase Zero preparation activities, plans for contingencies, establishes networks, practices joint operations, and drives joint capability improvement. When strategic direction is issued specific to an operation, the operational level commander interprets national direction, coordinates with operational level mission partners, establishes the national networks for C3I, ISR, force protection, and operational support, issues direction, allocates resources, and influences conditions to enable tactical success. The operational level commander informs and shapes partnered campaign planning, and monitors and reports operational results – achieved by coalition/alliance and inter-agency operations at large, and by the CAF contributing to those very operations. Success in operations, including CAF adaptability and agility in those operations, as well as institutional resilience in the face of challenges and setbacks, is ensured by securing the trust and confidence of national stakeholders. This result can only be achieved by timely and relevant engagement with partners and informed stakeholders.



DND photo by Master Corporal David McVeigh

Canadian understanding and a unified approach to command at the operational level, so far advancing incrementally, has yet to be made 'normal.' As the CAF, with its operational partners, continues to learn while doing – codification of the operational level in Canadian joint doctrine, its implementation through professional military education, and its application in the business of command at the operational level as described here should continue deliberately, with the full consciousness of commanders within and outside the operational command framework. Canada's progress in this area compares to like-sized and like-minded military partners, and instills confidence among foreign and Canadian inter-agency partners that the CAF takes the operational level seriously, both prior to and during operations. CJOC, NORAD, and CANSOFCOM will remain central to how the CAF functions at

the operational level. Focus and effort in Phase Zero, assurance of all domain awareness, pre-operations maintenance of partnerships, plans, and joint training and exercises that practice them, as well as pre-contingency maintenance of the operational frameworks for C3I, ISR, force protection, and operational support need to be nurtured and sustained. In addition to the mission-critical operational readiness of environmental service and joint force provided tactical forces, mission preparedness efforts remain key to advancing and sustaining Canadian excellence in operations. Appreciation of the operational level and the key concepts behind how it is practiced in the Canadian context provide a good start.



NOTES

1. Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2008), pp. 7-10.
2. Bruce W. Menning, "Operational Art's Origins," in *Military Review*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (September-October 1997), pp. 32-47.
3. The etymologies of those two words reflect their antiquity, both stemming from ancient Greek words for "the art of the commander" and "to order or arrange troops," respectively. Carl von Clausewitz in his great work spoke only of the tactical and the strategic. Antoine Jomini, in his mid-19th Century analysis of Napoleon's campaigning coined the term "grand tactics" to describe "the little corporal's adroit maneuvering of corps-sized formations."
4. Allan English, "The Operational Art: Theory, Practice, and Implications for the Future," in *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives, Context and Concepts*, Allan English, Daniel Gosselin, Howard Coombs & Laurence M. Hickey (eds) (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2005), pp. 1-74.
5. CFJP 01, *Canadian Military Doctrine*, defines the operational level solely as "concerned with producing and sequencing the campaign," (p GL-6) and CFJP 3, *Operations*, when offering its definitions of the levels, states that the operational level "is the level at which campaigns are planned, (p. 1-2) and goes on to provide a whole chapter on campaign planning (Chapter 5). Another single paragraph on p 8-4 states: "Military peacetime activities will normally be planned and conducted at the operational level ... The activity itself should reflect Canadian national interests and be based upon a whole-of-government approach." US doctrine for what constitutes the operational level is equally focused upon campaign planning and Force Execution, for example, US JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*: "The focus at this level is on the planning and execution of operations using operational art," (p 1-8) and US JP 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning*, which describes operational art and operational design for the theatre-level execution of campaigns.
6. Gunther Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment" in Peter Paret (ed) *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 296-325.
7. Edward Luttwak, "The Operational Level of War," in *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Winter 1980-1981), pp. 61-79.
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