# CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

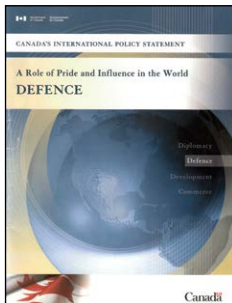National Defence
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**HMCS *St. John's* participates in a tow exercise during *Spartan Warrior*, 1 November 2016.**
DND/Formation Imaging Services/Tony Chand

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## NOTE TO READERS

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

# EDITOR'S CORNER

Welcome everyone to the Autumn 2019 edition of the *Canadian Military Journal.* Once again, this is quite an eclectic issue, but we hope there is at least something between our pages this time out that will appeal to all of you.

Taking the point, Brigadier-General Jay Janzen, currently the Canadian Armed Forces Director of Public Affairs, advances an alarming 'wake-up call' with respect to today's chaotic information environment, which he maintains is replete with "…fake news, disinformation, post-truth, and weaponized narratives." Janzen further cautions that "…commanders attempting to manoeuvre in this politicized and contested battle-space face considerable risks, and strategic paralysis is often the result…Inaction therefore, is not an option – the CAF must adapt to change and complexity in order to remain both credible and potent in this burgeoning domain." General Janzen will review the informational fault lines, scan the complex information environment, consider the implications for Canada's civil-military relationship, and then advocate for a refined strategic communications approach.

Next, Colonel (ret'd) Brian Frei, a force protection and security expert, examines the role that civil-military relations have historically played to date during this 21st Century in *shaping* Canada's defence policies, as well as the *implementation of* those policies, and he does so through the lens of pragmatic control theory. Then, a diverse team of talented researchers, Ben Zweibelson, Kevin Whale, and Paul Mitchell, tackle the fascinating world of design theory, and how the application of explicit military design approaches that break with traditional military planning can apply systems thinking and design to contemporary military challenges.

This team analysis is followed by social scientist Professor Dave Blackburn, who reviews the effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces' *Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR)* Program. Blackburn states that the objective of the R2MR Program is: "'…to improve short term performance and long term mental health outcomes' of CAF members and their families, by means of training modules included in career courses and pre- and post-deployment courses." While Dr. Blackburn concedes that the program's objective is bold, he has reservations. "The fundamental question is whether a training program delivered in a classroom setting can realistically hope to achieve that objective. Is the R2MR program effective, relevant, useful and efficient? Currently, it is impossible to answer those crucial questions, because no formative and summative evaluation of the R2MR program as a whole has ever been conducted. This article invites reflection on the need for a summative evaluation of the R2MR Program in order to assess its true contributions to performance and the mental health of CAF members and their families."

In the last major article of this issue, Jamestown Foundation Research Fellow Dr. Sergey Sukhankin discusses the activities of various Russian quasi-Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), which he refers to as "…a phenomenon of great complexity and outreach." In doing so, Dr. Sukhankin concentrates his analysis upon the following key themes: "Emergence, evolution, and development of Russian PMSCs/irregular forces through the lens of history; Main *disadvantages of* and *associated with* Russian PMSCs; Key functions and missions performed, depending upon the geographic theatre; and the nascent 'division of responsibilities' between various Russian quasi-PMSCs."

We then offer four very different opinion pieces for consideration by our readership. In the first, Captain Mitchell Binding, a freshly-minted helicopter pilot and previous contributor to the CMJ, examines the Russian understanding of global 'colour revolutions,' as advanced by General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Next, infantry officer Lieutenant-Colonel John Benson discusses what he perceives as a professional development gap, and offers a strong advocacy for the encouragement of professional discussion and debate in professional military journals as a developmental tool. Then, combat engineer Captain Lawrence Glover discusses the concept of incentivised fitness in the Canadian Army, and makes "…an argument using existing research in the field of Behavioral Medicine that the incorporation of physical fitness incentives in selection board scoring guides will enrich our culture of physical fitness." Captain (N) Jeff Biddiscombe, who was, until recently, the Commanding Officer of 1 Field Ambulance in Edmonton, offers a succinct historical tribute to his unit's service and accomplishments during the First World War.

This time out, our own Martin Shadwick examines recent analysis calling for Canada to do a re-think of its national capabilities and capacities as a 'middle-sized country' that depends extensively upon reliable trade partners and trusted allies, and instead consider embracing the vision of a "…more self-reliant and 'beefed up' approach to Canadian foreign and defence policy." Finally, we close with two book reviews dealing with very different subjects for our readership's autumn reading consideration.

Until the next time.

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

DND photo/CFJIC ISC87-348

National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa.

# What if the Pen *is* a Sword? Communicating in a Chaotic, Sensational, and Weaponized Information Environment

## by Jay Janzen

Brigadier-General Jay Janzen, OMM, CD, *initially an Armoured Officer who transferred to the Public Affairs Branch in 1999, has served both domestically and abroad in numerous senior military Public Affairs positions. He was awarded the NATO Meritorious Service Medal for his role as a leading communications strategist and military spokesperson for communicating NATO's multifaceted response to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. General Janzen is currently the Canadian Armed Forces Director of Public Affairs.*

## Introduction

Fake news, disinformation, post-truth, and weaponized narratives are new descriptors that have unexpectedly permeated today's chaotic information environment. Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) commanders attempting to manoeuvre in this politicized and contested battle-space face considerable risks, and strategic paralysis is often the result. According to scholars from the RAND 'think-tank,' the deciding factor in future warfare will be narrative, or more specifically, "whose story wins."[1] Inaction therefore, is not an option — the CAF must adapt to change and complexity in order to remain both credible and potent in this burgeoning domain. Efforts are well underway at the operational and tactical levels, including several interrelated efforts to modernize and harmonize military public affairs, information operations, non-kinetic targeting, and other enablers. This article argues, however, that decisive narrative battles will take place primarily at the strategic level, and that serious points of potential failure exist along the fault-lines of the political-military dynamic. A scan of the complex information environment will be conducted from a strategic perspective, highlighting domestic and adversarial quandaries. The article will next consider implications for Canada's civil-military relationship, including the need to add *ethical influence* to the CAF public affairs toolbox. It will then advocate for a refined strategic communications approach: *Altruistic Adaptive Communications Engagement* (AACE). Then, it will conclude by recommending corresponding institutional adaptation at the strategic level to ensure the CAF remains ethical, flexible, connected, and formidable in the information domain.[2]

## Media Sensation and Politics: A Virtual Minefield for Military Commanders

The information marketplace in which Canadians live is both crowded and contested. Gone are the days of tightly controlled messages and brands. Today, ideas spread and mutate in a chaotic fashion similar to contagion.[3] The 'many-to-many' communications revolution ushered in by the advent of social media has both bolstered and eroded ideals, such as democratic debate, transparency, and information credibility. Regrettably, critical thinking has given way to 'surfing' for the typical information consumer, and this flickering of attention from topic to topic creates a "vulnerability to falsehood."[4] Today, truth appears customizable, perception is everything, and "facts matter not at all."[5]

The pace of today's media cycle is unrelenting, unceasing, and virtually unconstrained by physical or virtual borders. Broadcasting technology now resides within mobile phones, and spaces once controlled by media and governments are now teeming with new players with myriad motivations. Business models for media have been disrupted, resulting in upheaval, staff reductions, and far fewer expert journalists in the domain of defence. The rise of superficial 'infotainment' is undermining serious journalism and critical thought.[6] A 2018 industry study revealed that only 49% of Canadians trust the credibility of media reporting. Globally, 66% of individuals surveyed believe media are more concerned with attracting viewers than accuracy, and 59% suspect journalists are more driven by ideology than public interest.[7] This leads some scholars to postulate that media agencies employ a 'problem frame' that highlights a discourse of *fear* and *crisis* because these boost audiences and benefit the bottom line.[8] The only media watchdogs in Canada are self-regulating, journalists are seldom investigated, and penalties amount to corrections penned and positioned as offending outlets see fit.[9]

When political dynamics are intermingled with a sensationalized media landscape, the results are a veritable minefield for military commanders. Donald Savoie, an academic expert in the field of public administration, says government operates in a "fishbowl," and issues that would scarcely be noticed in the private sector become months-long, full-blown political crises when the public sector is involved.[10] While access to information requests are an important mechanism of government transparency, Savoie highlights their extensive use by media,

> **"When political dynamics are intermingled with a sensationalized media landscape, the results are a veritable minefield for military commanders."**

legislators, and interest groups seeking to embarrass the government.[11] Similarly, he notes how internal government audits aimed at improving performance are regularly exploited by journalists and opposition parties for professional and partisan purposes.[12] Public figures are regularly targeted by 'gotcha questions' from media, which the Open School of Journalism says "poisons the news."[13] Other political science experts, such as Peter Aucoin and Mark Jarvis, agree that media has become increasingly aggressive and hostile, leaving many "doubting the value of enhanced transparency."[14] They add that, rather than raising accountability of elected officials, new mechanisms of transparency have primarily served to increase the exposure of public servants.[15] According to Savoie, all these factors have led to a countervailing pressure by ruling governments to "manage the news, to cover up errors, and to put a 'spin' on damaging information."[16] Journalists rightfully complain of excessive delays in accessing government documents and the frustration of receiving meaningless talking points in response to detailed queries. Clearly, alarming trends are emerging on both sides, but for now, these remain the exception to solid journalistic standards and ethical communications staff in Canada. That said, their growing predominance threatens to erode the fabric of democracy and government accountability.

### Weaponization of Information

As the information environment grows increasingly fractured, sensational, and polarized, it becomes vulnerable to other alarming trends. Over the past decade, potentially maligning state and non-state actors have begun to place increasing emphasis on the development and deployment of 'weaponized' information capabilities. Such 'weaponized' tactics generally consist of efforts to leverage overt and covert information sources,
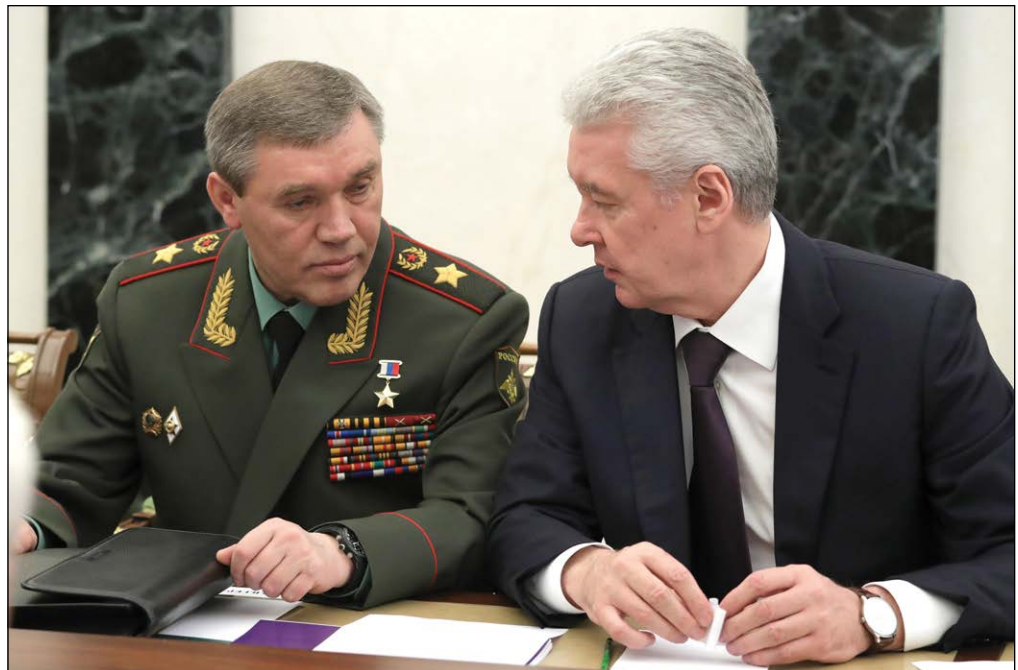


The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia/First Deputy Defence Minister Valery Gerasimov (L), and the Mayor of Moscow, Sergei Sobyanin, at a meeting of the Security Council of Russia in the Kremlin, 6 April 2018.

ITAR-TASS News Agency/Alamy Stock Photo/MB2AJD

platforms, and technology in an attempt to disrupt democratic systems, alliances, and societal cohesion. Kremlin attempts to sow discord and confusion during several recent electoral campaigns in Europe and America provide an illustrative example of the potential dangers behind such activities. Experts fear that such measures have the distinct potential to create deep threats to national security.[17] In 2013, Russia's Chief of the General Staff, General Valery Gerasimov, stated that, "the rules of war have cardinally changed," and the effectiveness of "non-military tools" in achieving strategic or political goals in a conflict has exceeded that of weapons.[18] NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Intelligence and Security recently indicated that Russia was stepping up its use of propaganda and disinformation to offset its relative military weakness.[19] During operations in Georgia and Ukraine, the Kremlin was suspected of refining capabilities including maskirovka (deception) and reflexive control (covert efforts to make an opponent voluntarily select a preferred, predetermined course of action). Russian officials have also spent considerable resources developing global information platforms, including overt media, such as RT and Sputnik. They have unleashed covert proxies including mock 'think-tanks,' planted 'experts,' and co-opted bloggers and activists sometimes pejoratively called 'useful idiots.'[20] Some of these, exemplified by fake Twitter personality Jenna Abrams, are quoted by top media, and they attract tens-of-thousands of followers before they are exposed.[21] Artificial intelligence is increasing the sophistication of automated 'bot' accounts, enhancing their ability to evade detection and raise the profile of disinformation. Leveraging these tools, the Kremlin seeks to divide alliances, disrupt national cohesion, interfere in elections, and create turmoil in western societies. China's doctrine of "Three Warfares" (psychological operations, media manipulation, and legal warfare) previously directed principally at Taiwan, is now increasing in Central and Eastern Europe.[22]

Non-state actors, such as Daesh, have also proven effective in this domain, spreading extremism and attracting international recruits via video, social media, and the on-line magazine Dabiq.[23] The terror group has even employed drones to record aerial propaganda footage of attacks upon Iraqi government forces. Both state and non-state actors are rapidly weaponizing the information domain, and scholars fear the victims will be truth, reason, and reflection.[24] Strategists postulate that future conflict will hinge upon competitions between strategic narratives, meaning that the implications for CAF commanders are great.[25] But given that adversarial information campaigns will extend into the politicized domestic media environment, how will senior officers counter disinformation attacks while dodging policy pitfalls? Will military generals be capable of distinguishing covert attacks by adversarial proxies from the legitimate probing of Canadian media and opposition members? The following section deals with the serious quandaries arrayed along the fault lines of the civil-military relationship.

## The Information Environment and Civil Control of the Military

In a Western civil-military context, a key element of political control over a nation's armed forces is an active free press that functions as a watchdog.[26] Accountability is a basic and essential attribute of open, democratic societies. Journalists help ensure military leaders remain responsive to politicians, and that elected officials remain accountable to citizens. The current degradation of the information environment has led to widespread criticism of the press, eroding their veracity and

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (a.k.a. Daesh) propaganda photo showing masked militia holding the ISIS black banner of Muhammad.

Parliament Hill, Ottawa.

legitimacy. This assault has dangerous consequences, including weakening society's "resiliency to weaponized narrative that a respected press provides."[27] It also reduces civil control over the military, and diminishes government accountability. Professional media criticism is an important democratic safeguard that helps ensure military activities and expenditures remain aligned with the expectations and norms of wider society. The CAF, therefore, has a vested and long-term interest in ensuring defence journalism in Canada remains active, credible, and professional. After all, the military and the Fourth Estate share the same desired end state: a vibrant and healthy democratic society. Obviously, the ongoing relationship will remain tumultuous, but military leaders should consider the media a powerful potential ally in the fight against adversarial information efforts.

> **"Civil-military matters become even more complex when 'weaponized' attacks are introduced into the information stream."**

Civil-military matters become even more complex when 'weaponized' attacks are introduced into the information domain. The nexus between the military, their political masters, and journalists will create puzzling predicaments as the nation faces covert information attacks. The Kremlin and other actors are employing decentralized hybrid information tactics in order to obscure the origins, motives, and intent of such action. As more is learned about these hostile activities, one matter is becoming increasingly clear. The broad parameters and guidance behind these hostile campaigns are generated at the *strategic* level, and the potential targets, outcomes, and effects are themselves strategic. Therefore, a uniquely military response to such developments would be inappropriate, as it is a civil responsibility to set policy, consider alternatives, define national discussions, and make strategic decisions.[28] That stated, civil-military relations expert Stephen Saideman argues that generally, elected officials lack "the power, the expertise, and the interest" to engage in serious accountings of complex military issues.[29] He argues that parliamentarians are constrained by restrictions on the accessing of military information as well as by limitations upon their time. Politicians therefore, have a strong tendency to focus upon *sensational*, yet *superficial* issues, rather than weighty matters of strategy and policy.[30] He feels the best Canadians can hope for is that the Minister of National Defence (MND) and the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) perform well on their own, as oversight from Parliament will be weak and ill-informed.[31] Another expert, Yagil Levy, builds upon this theme by observing that the media are predisposed to cover "episodes" rather than complicated processes.[32] He notes that a "news-as-commodity" approach can lead to media bias, potential manipulation by the military, a

General Sir Mike Jackson leaving Downing Street Watch with War Cabinet Meeting, April, 2003.

lack of advocacy for policy alternatives, and diminished civilian control.[33] The third and final aspect in this trinity of trouble is the fact that military strategists are unlikely to get timely and decisive political direction regarding how to respond to information attacks. As the highly-distinguished British General Sir Mike Jackson, a former Chief of the General Staff once quipped regarding deployed military operations: "…political guidance can be really helpful… if you get it."[34] So, if such guidance is scarce for deployed commanders, what can be expected in response to hybrid information attacks whose origins and very existence may be extremely difficult to detect? Crown ministers are consumed with the frenetic issues of the day, often fueled by media and opposition activity. This leaves military leaders with a dilemma. If political direction is not forthcoming, should generals accept the risks of active engagement in the hybrid information environment? Donald Savoie sums up the expectations of ruling political authorities this way: civil servants are to avoid public profile, and even if actions are correct 99 percent of the time, the focus will be on the one percent that goes wrong.[35] Senior CAF officers have faced disproportionate criticism in the past for minor public 'kerfuffles,' including calling terrorists "murderers and scumbags," citing "toxic narratives" in the media, and calling upon journalists to engage in deeper debates besides whether deployed military missions constitute "combat." These incidents were met with a barrage of outrage from select journalists, including accusations that the military is bent upon using its public relations machine to

> **"To successfully inform, one must earn the trust of audiences, which also requires *targeted persuasion* to generate specific effects such as trust and learning."**

stifle political debate, and to muzzle, marginalize, and intimidate journalists.[36] Clearly, military leaders will not enjoy *carte blanche* when it comes to confronting sensitive, strategic-level information issues directed at the CAF or Canadians *writ large*. But, given the gravity of the potential threats, inaction is also not an option. Hybrid information attacks will not be limited to the military alone. Rather, they will be omnidirectional, synchronized, adaptive, and potentially overwhelming.[37] Therefore, it is time for serious engagement with respect to this matter among senior political, military, and government officials. A pan-government strategy must be developed that includes standing or rapidly-delivered political guidance, along with ample delegated authorities and boundaries within which officials are empowered to respond and engage. Further, the government must seek to partner with media, 'think-tanks,' opinion-leaders, and others in civil society in order to foster cooperation, coordination, and resiliency in the face of potential adversarial information campaigns. Time is short, as the 2019 federal election in Canada is an obvious target for hybrid action. The specific details of such a whole-of-government strategy are outside the scope of this article, but one key civil-military question remains: should the CAF engage in activities aimed at influencing Canadians and generating desired effects among the population?

### The Question of Influence and Countering Narratives

Given significant shifts in the information environment, it is time to reconsider whether is it necessary and appropriate for domestic public affairs activities to attempt to *influence* Canadian and allied audiences. Current Canadian public affairs (PA) doctrine is fourteen-years-old, and based upon principles of openness, transparency, credibility, and the duty to *inform* Canadian and international audiences of CAF activities.[38] Conversely, the recently- updated information operations (IO) doctrine is aimed at affecting the will, capability, and understanding of a range of actors and audiences, but strictly in accordance with laws, policies, doctrine, orders, and directives. Traditionally, PA has been used within Canadian and Allied territories to *inform* populations, while IO has been leveraged in overseas environments to *dissuade* and *counter* the efforts of potential adversaries while *attracting* the support of local populations. Within Canada, IO is only conducted under Crown prerogative, which occurs exclusively under exceptional circumstances.[39] With PA limited to *informing* activities, and with IO *influence* normally limited to overseas operations, how can the CAF hope to permeate the complexity of the current information environment? A small group of political activists and select journalists seem troubled by the prospect of CAF influence in Canada, and conjure images of propaganda machines, the "weaponization" of public affairs, and the muzzling and intimidation of journalists.[40] In short, they fear that the CAF will engage in many of the very same tactics that potential adversaries employ on a regular basis. Such arguments ignore the fact that it is virtually impossible to inform audiences without engaging in some degree of influence. When communicators seek to educate, they approach subjects from a particular viewpoint, and they possess conscious and unconscious biases that are impossible to escape. To successfully

To be permissible, domestic PA influence efforts should be required to meet four key criteria: they must be *truthful*, *transparent*, *helpful,* and *limited*.

The motto of the PA Branch is 'Veritas,' (Latin for truth), and all practitioners must consistently strive to uphold this maxim. In the 'post-truth environment,' *credibility* is more essential than ever, necessitating the need to ensure all PA communications are truthful and grounded in fact. This should not preclude the use of narrative devices such as storytelling, framing, metaphor, and emotion; so long as the collective results of such efforts affirm *facts,* rather than elicit *deception*. Truth must remain the primary and inviolable principle behind all communications to domestic and allied audiences. In overseas theatres, information practitioners not simultaneously employed in PA positions may use tactical deception and misinformation to lure adversaries into making bad decisions. This is fair game during armed conflict, but such activity must not be conducted by those currently performing a PA function, and should be limited to adversaries to the greatest extent possible. Deceiving an in-theatre civilian population is counterproductive to overall efforts, particularly in counterinsurgencies, where establishing trust is pivotal to success.[41]

Second, PA influence must always be *transparent*, meaning all communications efforts must be *attributable*. Some activities may be more or less formal than others, but the responsible agency or individual must always be real and identifiable. The use of covert proxies to achieve direct information effects should never be permissible in PA campaigns. CAF officials may seek to inform Canadian stakeholders and opinion leaders, but must never attempt to control how those entities communicate with their own audiences. Similarly, PA officers may attempt to persuade journalists during background conversations, but media remain free to report in any way they see fit.

Third, all PA efforts to persuade must be *helpful*. For example, a campaign to solicit interest among Canadians in joining the CAF would be considered by most to be *beneficial*, not *harmful* information. Similarly, seeking support and understanding for ongoing CAF deployed operations will be viewed by the majority of Canadians as normal and permissible activity. There are definite grey areas, however, particularly in areas of policy and procurement, where CAF members must tread with extreme caution. CAF campaigns to solicit increased defence funding, or the procurement of specific equipment, for example, would be highly inappropriate, as such decisions fall squarely under the purview of the civil authorities. Decisions regarding the deployment of troops, policy development, and matters before government must always be considered off-limits for comment by uniformed members. On the other hand, efforts highlighting the interesting and valuable service of military members among Canadians is not a harmful activity, and thus, should be conducted with creativity, pride, and flair.


Brigadier-General Jay Janzen, the current Canadian Armed Forces Director of Public Affairs.

DND photo


The Directorate of Public Affairs crest.

DND photo

inform, one must earn the trust of audiences, which also requires *targeted persuasion* to generate specific effects such as trust and learning. The question then, is not *whether* CAF commanders and communicators should influence, but rather *how* they should govern attempts to persuade.

### Ethical Influence – A New Approach

In order interact with Canadians in a meaningful and visible way, the CAF should consider the formal adoption of a concept of *ethical influence* into updated CAF PA doctrine. Limiting domestic communications to *informing alone* risks being drowned-out and possibly outmanoeuvred by adversarial efforts. On the other hand, the CAF cannot compromise its moral standing and credibility by leveraging the tactics of authoritarian states and extremist groups. The concept of *ethical influence* offers a clear solution to this dilemma.

Finally, CAF efforts to influence domestic populations must be limited. Campaigns should strive to be noticed in a crowded information landscape, and efforts should be made to engage Canadians to the point where they consider and understand the military viewpoint on appropriate issues and subjects. CAF efforts should cease at this point of understanding, leaving citizens free to make informed decisions based upon context that includes military perspectives. The military should never engage in lobbying or attempt to manipulate public opinion on defence issues. Doing so would be counterproductive and likely lead to reduced respect and credibility among the population.

Ethically-based military influence should also include the ability for CAF commanders to respond to criticism, from media and from pundits, particularly when arguments lack context, or are based upon factual errors. For example, isolated incidents and the words of a few disgruntled members are occasionally leveraged by media to portray a narrative of widespread institutional crisis and ineptitude that is not reflective of wider reality. CAF officials must be free to counter negative commentary in the media by contributing valuable context to public debate, so long as such activities remain outside the realm of major policy and procurement decision-making. Commanders should also be at liberty to highlight the presence of adversarial information activity in the Canadian environment, and to encourage citizens to engage in critical thinking and information verification. As with a pathogen, the best defence to disinformation is not an antidote, but rather awareness and protective measures.[42] The CAF should be free to foster healthy skepticism ahead of anticipated information attacks, and military communicators should actively undermine adversarial campaigns and reinforce Canadian narratives whenever practicable. Countering disingenuous narratives and highlighting potential adversarial influence is not a nefarious and weaponized activity. Rather, it stems from a transparent desire to provide valuable context to Canadians. Direct public responses to sensational reporting may cause angst for a small minority of journalists with lower professional standards and ethics. Undoubtedly, this will lead to reactions regarding CAF counter-narrative efforts, necessitating the need to assess risk, and to engage only when appropriate and strategically beneficial. The criteria 'truthful, transparent, helpful, and limited' must be considered holistically, and assessments must be unambiguous prior to taking action. These standards should be enshrined in CAF PA doctrine, as failure to fulfill them will result in a loss of credibility and the moral high-ground relative to the conduct of our adversaries and critics.

### Altruistic Adaptive Communications Engagement

Today's chaotic information environment is a high-stakes affair, necessitating the need to minimize risks and maximize payouts. To ensure a winning hand, the CAF needs to play an 'ace,' by adopting a methodology of Altruistic, Adaptive Communications Engagement (AACE). This article will now outline the key tenets of such an approach, and then conclude with associated recommendations to ensure future success.

> **"Narrative is another powerful tool that must be harnessed by military communicators."**

The 'altruistic' aspect of this outlook is primordial, and has already been discussed at length in the previous section on *ethical influence*. It is critical that all military communications bear the hallmarks of 'truth, transparency, limits, and helpfulness' in order to reinforce the credibility and moral authority of the CAF and its commanders amid a toxic post-truth environment. This altruistic moral stance may limit the availability of short-term tactics and tools, but it will prove to be a clear strategic advantage over the course of a long-term battle of narratives.

The second precept of the AACE methodology is 'adaptive communications.' Military leaders and communicators should seriously consider leveraging the principles of narrative and design thinking in order to achieve enhanced results in the current information domain. Design thinking is a creative problem solving process that employs empathy, experimentation, and the analysis of interplay within systems in order to arrive at innovative solutions. The armed forces of several allied nations are applying this process to military strategy, and this article argues that this utility extends into the domain of strategic communication. Wilbur Schramm, an American authority on mass communications, advanced a classical linear model of communication that no longer applies in today's 'many-to-many' networked and contested communications environment.[43] General James N. Mattis rejected linear approaches in strategy, noting that a "…joint force must act in uncertainty and thrive in chaos."[44] Multiple, creative, and constantly evolving solutions will be required for success in the information environment, necessitating 'outside-the-box' thinking that considers interrelationships between actors, the dynamics of complex audiences, and the identification of potential boomerang effects that may arise as a result of CAF communications actions. Design thinking will place more emphasis upon listening, empathy, creativity, and the interconnectedness of the information environment. It is argued that by leveraging this non-linear process, new and more creative communications campaigns will result.

Narrative is another powerful tool that must be harnessed by military communicators. Traditional news releases and talking points must give way to the use of emotion, metaphor, and imagery to convey essential information to selected audiences. Cognitive psychologists agree that the human brain is six-to-seven times more likely to remember facts associated with stories as opposed to facts in isolation.[45] Strategist Emile Simpson argues that future conflict will centre upon "competition to impose meaning on people," which is "as much emotional as rational."[46] As the CAF seeks to counter sensational and adversarial information, it must leverage the persuasive power of narrative in its communication campaigns. As Nassim Taleb, the thinker behind the concept of the 'black swan,' wrote: "…you need a story to displace a story… my best tool is a narrative."[47] An insurgency may adopt a 'David versus Goliath' narrative to rally a population, necessitating the need for government forces to respond with another culturally-appropriate archetype to combat it. The human brain is hardwired to recognize the narrative form, making it an effective vehicle to describe conflict, identify desire, and drive audiences towards potential satisfaction.[48] In other words, they enable a "normative leap" from fact to values, and from observation to action.[49] Such

constellation of ideas in order to cause a situation to be perceived in new ways.[53] For example, familiar concepts such as 'sickness versus health,' 'authentic versus artificial,' and 'wholeness versus fragmentation,' can be leveraged to generate cognitive bias and to help establish framing. If a general was to speak of the need to 'eradicate the scourge of terrorism,' for example, he would be employing the 'sickness versus health' metaphor, which the audience would unconsciously apply to the opposing force. These devices are being employed by CAF adversaries and critics on a regular basis, which necessitates efforts to reframe issues and situations in order to successfully apply a Canadian military perspective. Practitioners must ensure such devices are: grounded in truth, ethical, eloquent, coherent, inclusive to intended audiences, and useful in achieving strategic objectives.[54] All these narrative tools help raise values and emotions to the surface of communications, which translates into *resonance*. For example, instead of explaining *what* the CAF does, the focus should be on *why* our members serve.

An additional fundamental for inclusion in adaptive communications campaigns is the need for clear, attainable objectives, as well as for constant evaluation and adjustment. In order to measure and evaluate effects in the information environment, one first needs to understand the dynamics at play inside the current system. Such environmental analysis is a significant challenge, given the volume of information, the sheer number of influencers, and the pace of shifts and trends in the domain. No perfect solutions exist, and resources are scant, but the CAF has begun to experiment with methodologies that will help identify the most prominent information trends and impacts within the defence information environment. These initiatives are currently in their infancy, and should be prioritized and resourced in order to mature. If this occurs, enhanced information awareness will help inform communication campaign design processes and improve efforts to evaluate communications effectiveness.

Establishing relevant objectives and evaluating the success of communications campaigns present unique challenges. First, the CAF must not overestimate the potential to shape beliefs or perceptions among populations. The key is to set objectives that focus upon incremental changes in audience behaviour, and then, to identify and reinforce success. For example, it would be unrealistic to attempt to convert disinterested audiences into CAF supporters or potential recruits overnight. A more realistic objective would be to identify and concentrate upon the most amenable audience segments, conduct targeted activities designed to pique their interests, and evaluate the percentage that elected to seek further information. Such efforts will do little to change values and beliefs, but they will build rapport, enhance credibility, and establish networks. Naturally, it is critical that actions match words, since the 'say-do gap' will rapidly destroy even the most effective campaigns and narratives. The CAF must work to improve its baseline understanding of the complex information environment, and then adopt practical tools in order to assess whether strategic communication objectives are being achieved.

The final component of the AACE methodology is 'engagement.' General Stanley A. McChrystal once wrote that

Sir Lawrence Freedman, Emeritus Professor of War Studies and author, 24 August 2016.

constructs can be disarming to antagonistic and agnostic audiences, and they are difficult to disprove. Simpson borrows from Aristotle in arguing that effective narratives must blend rational argument (logos), with passion (pathos), and moral suasion (ethos). Logic alone lacks impact, while emotion can sway populations, but it is imprecise and open to misinterpretation. When the foregoing elements are grounded in morality, and the sender of the information is viewed as credible, a powerful narrative trinity takes effect.[50] Narrative should be aspirational, tap into the identity of intended audiences, borrow from historical motif, and adapt over time to remain enduring and relevant.[51]

Noted strategist Lawrence Freedman remarked that power comes less from knowing the *right* stories than from knowing *how* and *how well* to tell them.[52] This leads to the concept of framing, which relates to appealing to cognitive bias by prepositioning a particular outlook around a given situation. For example, a military operation could be presented as having a 60% chance of improving security (positive frame), or having a 'four out of ten' chance of failing to fulfil its objectives (negative frame). Frames are closely related to generative metaphors, which entails borrowing from an existing

> **"Establishing relevant objectives evaluating the success of communications campaigns present unique challenges."**

of the average CAF member, and leveraging individual experiences across networks would generate exponential effects. Regulations should be updated and clarified, and leaders at all levels should encourage subordinates to connect appropriately within their communities. Further, CAF members with extraordinary networks and communications talents should be identified, selected, and trained to help amplify strategic narratives. For example, some CAF members have established thousands of virtual followers, due to their outside interests and proficiency at social media engagement. If a group of these likeminded troops were provided with narrative material regarding recruiting campaigns, and were willing to occasionally raise such issues on their networks and in their own words, the results could be highly compelling. For this reason, it is recommended that the CAF experiment with the idea of a 'social media task force.' Clear guidelines and training would need to be developed, along with approved narrative material and measurable objectives. Initial efforts should be modest, focused, and closely monitored with a view to enhancing success and reducing risk. Regular monitoring of participants would be critical to ensure guidelines were followed, and CAF-related content appropriate. Political and marketing experts Nigel Jones and Paul Baines believe that engagement activities such as military blogging can be extremely effective, especially at lower levels, where *risk* is accepted in order to achieve *relevance*.[57] Key to this and all of the aforementioned approaches is to conduct *listening* as well as *engagement*. As such, it will be essential to establish mechanisms to ensure that data collected by troops conducting listening and engagement is passed to commanders. If done correctly, the engagement and listening generated by a 'social media task force' could produce considerable outcomes for a very low-level of investment.



DND photo/CFJIC ISC94-35A

Canadian Airborne Regiment commando Corporal Frank Mellish on patrol in Somalia.

"it takes a network to defeat a network."[55] An important first step is to conduct research regarding the networks an organization desires to influence, employing a process known as target audience analysis. This detailed procedure enables the mapping of both *supportive* and *adversarial* audiences, and can be extremely useful in identifying vital points of effort. Next, networks must be effectively exploited. CAF members all possess their own unique networks, which represent an untapped resource with tremendous potential. Unfortunately, CAF regulations such as QR&O 19.36, 19.37, and 19.375 are highly restrictive, and they leave members with the distinct impression that there is very little that can be communicated publicly regarding their military employment. The Commission of Inquiry into the deployment of the Canadian Forces to Somalia recommended that these regulations be updated in order to allow military members greater freedom of expression within constraints.[56] Obviously, some restrictions on communications are required to ensure operational security is maintained, and that matters of policy are not publicly debated by military members. That said, there is a plethora of material 'inside the lanes'

A second aspect of 'engagement' that the CAF should seriously consider is the establishment of official strategic spokespersons. The Chief of the Defence Staff is the principal spokesperson for the CAF, but his engagements need to be carefully managed in order to conserve effect for when they most advantageous or urgent. It would be unwise to expose Canada's top general to frequent media engagements on non-critical subjects, diluting the impact of his appearances and limiting flexibility in the event of mishaps, not to mention the demands placed upon his time. Most other senior officers are reluctant to provide on-the-record briefings to press, as they represent significant risk and effort for benefits that may not be readily apparent. Operational updates to media are exceptionally rare, considering the number of significant missions the CAF is currently conducting. This article has explored several reasons why military-media engagements can be adversarial, but it must be stated that a major source of dissatisfaction for journalists is the lack of frequency of such opportunities. And yet, many senior officers lack the time, training, and desire for public exposure. Contrast this with the United States, where a senior military

Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo/AWWPD8

The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

spokesperson conducts weekly media briefings for the Pentagon press corps. A team of full-time, trained military spokespersons work daily to stay informed on important issues, refine communications approaches, and engage with the media and public. Their efforts reduce the burden upon senior commanders who can stay focused upon operational matters and save their public appearances for significant occasions and updates. Further, if a spokesperson becomes embroiled in controversy, the flexibility exists for senior commanders to follow-up and reframe the situation. These same spokespersons could also be leveraged as a strategic social media messaging capability, including countering sensational and adversarial narratives when required. One important advantage of such an approach is the rapport that permanent spokespersons can potentially build with both journalists and the public. Over a period of time, trust and credibility can be established, and unique personality traits can cause audiences to become more sympathetic and receptive to strategic narratives. Such approaches are far superior to bureaucratic, institutional communications, which are faceless, distant, and incapable of effective interaction and listening. The CAF, therefore, should seriously consider employing spokespersons at the strategic level, and seek to leverage tactical networks for additional effects via experimentation with a 'social media task force.' As the CAF continues to confront adversity and chaos in the information battle-space, a foundation of ethics, adaptation, engagement, and listening, such as that advocated by the AACE methodology, will be essential for success.

## Wildcards – Barriers to Advancement

While the timely playing of an 'ace' can be impactful, strategists must remember that 'wildcards' can quickly neutralize their effectiveness. In order to successfully leverage the AACE methodology, senior government and military leaders will need to be cognizant of two potential barriers to progress. First, government and military officials must prudently increase their level of risk tolerance in the domain of communications. It is somewhat ironic that the defence institution is prepared to accept ultimate risks on the battlefield, yet it tends towards a risk-averse approach in the public domain. The motto "who dares, wins" is as applicable to strategic communications as it is to warfare. Canada's adversaries are demonstrating a growing willingness to take risks in the information domain, and as strategist Mikkel Rasmussen indicates: "…in a risk-averse world, the risk-taker is king."[58] In the 'many-to-many' communications environment, the loss of direct control is unavoidable, as is risk. Rasmussen notes that such risks can never be *eliminated*, but some can be *filtered* at a cost, which necessitates careful deliberations regarding risk tolerability.[59] Senior CAF and departmental officials must carefully consider the level and areas of risk they are prepared to accept in order to access the benefits of enhanced engagement in the information domain. If authorities want to avoid 'handing the crown' to a potential adversary in this environment, then a significant increase in current communications risk resilience is required. Canada's Auditor General once noted that if employees are to be empowered and encouraged to innovate, leaders must be prepared to accept *risks* as well as *mistakes*, and focus upon *learning,* rather than *blame*.[60]

Embarking upon significant culture change is another risk that must be considered when implementing the AACE methodology. For example, military planners will need to consider whether sending information or cyber messages might be as effective in some cases, as would be sending a missile. Defeating an insurgent group decisively on the battlefield using weapons and tactics has proven to be very difficult. The CAF should spend more time considering how to undermine an adversary's will to fight, or diminishing the reasons for fighting that such groups possess. Hard power will remain an important aspect of achieving such aims, as deterrence is only credible when backed by the threat of real force. Considering other tools such as information campaigns, however, will enhance the CAF's ability to achieve strategic objectives.

The second potential obstacle to advancing strategic communication capabilities is failing to adequately resource renewed efforts. Ideas alone will not be sufficient to counter the sufficient investments that potential adversaries are making in the information domain. In 2014, the Kremlin spent $600 million USD on the operation of RT and Sputnik alone, not to mention the millions more spent on funding new military information capabilities and global information proxies.[61] Despite this growing Russian investment, NATO and its member states have been reticent to establish new capabilities and direct funds towards strategic communication capacity. Canada is one of a handful of allies with a professional public affairs branch, and modest investment is being allocated towards further operationalizing this capability. That said, in order to solidify long-term success, a moderate level of additional capital and human resources will be required, along with the need to reallocate military communications resources to create capacity at the strategic level. Currently, the few PAOs assigned to support the Strategic Joint Staff are also responsible for departmental coordination with commands and force generation for deployed operations. This small team has been chronically understaffed for the last several years, yet has managed to maintain a baseline of support. The AACE initiatives described in this paper cannot be delivered within existing resources — they come with a cost. A potential regrouping of PA assets within ADM(PA) may offer part of the solution, but a more holistic review of all military communications assets across the CAF may be required, along with a moderate level of capital and human investment. Some consideration should also be given to the idea of leveraging the skills of personnel from the IO community in domestic roles, but under public affairs doctrine and principles of *ethical influence* whenever they are employed in such a capacity. Both the IO and psychological operations communities are also in need of more formal career structures, training, and investment in order to maximize their potential for future CAF deployments. Public Affairs Officers require additional training and culture change in order to more effectively work with other information-related capabilities during overseas operations. If senior leaders are serious about defending Canada's interests in the future information domain, it is essential that the wildcards of risk-aversion and resources are addressed seriously and without delay.

> **"Canada is one of a handful of allies with a professional public affairs branch, and modest investment is being allocated towards further operationalizing this capability."**

## Conclusion

Despite the pervasive chaos of the information environment, one thing is clear: coming narrative battles will undoubtedly unfold at the strategic level. This will create significant civil-military relations challenges for CAF commanders, given the difficulty in distinguishing legitimate democratic accountability activities from adversarial information attacks. A pan-government comprehensive strategy will be required to produce the required flexibility and speed necessary to manoeuvre in this rapidly-evolving environment. Cooperation with civil society, and a tacit understanding between government, opposition parties, and responsible media will also need to be seriously investigated.

NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium.

If the CAF intends to influence the outcome of future narrative battles and 'whose story wins,' then significant measures, such as those described in the Altruistic Adaptive Communications Engagement methodology, ought to be given serious and urgent consideration. The pen clearly has become a sword, which must be recognized as a dangerous and double-edged weapon in today's information domain, necessitating a rethinking of risk tolerance and new investments in the area of strategic communication. If the CAF can learn to leverage the information domain judiciously, ethically, and flexibly, it will help defend the fabric of democratic society and enhance operational effectiveness in Canada and around the globe.

CMJ

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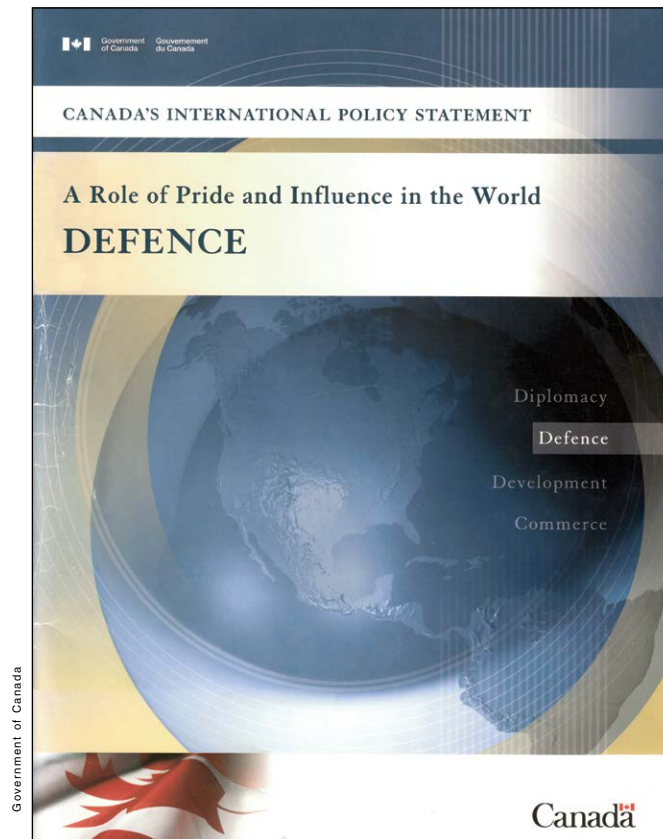
Canada's 2005 *Defence Policy Statement.*

# The Evolution of Canadian Defence Policy through the Pragmatic Control Theory of Civil-Military Relations

## by Brian Frei

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### Introduction

Since 2005, Canadian Defence Policy has undergone three separate periods of renewal by successive governments, resulting in three distinct defence policies: the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement*,[1] the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy*,[2] and the 2017 *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*.[3] Given the changing political and global contexts throughout this period of time, shifts in the balance of influence in the civil-military relationship can be seen in the three defence policy renewal processes. This article will explore the role that civil-military relations plays in shaping Canadian Defence Policy and its subsequent implementation. By examining each of these policy development processes through the lens of pragmatic control theory, it will illustrate the negative impacts upon military effectiveness that resulted from unbalanced relations in 2005 and 2008, and postulates that, barring significant changes in global or domestic context, the more balanced relationship that led to the development of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* in 2017 signals a more effective implementation process for the coming years.

Studies of civil-military relations focus upon the application of civilian control over the military. At their root, civil-military relations theories seek to understand how state political systems are best protected from the power of military forces, while simultaneously empowering military leaders to protect the state.[4] Within modern democratic societies, the risk of a military coup, the ultimate breakdown of civil-military relations, is minimal. However, the study of civil-military relations often examines the *balance of influence* between military and civilian leaders on various issues, such as policies, procurement, and strategy, in what the distinguished American political scientist Elliot Cohen, Dean of the Paul A. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, refers to as an unequal dialogue: "…unequal in that the final authority of the civilian leader [is] unambiguous and unquestioned."[5]

Prime Minister Paul Martin arriving at CFB Comox in 2004.

harmonious relations can contribute positively to military effectiveness.[9] But what does military effectiveness mean? A variety of authorities have proposed definitions that relate to the ability of a military to achieve assigned objectives while others base their definitions on measures of professionalism and power. Nielsen's recognition that military activities span the spectrum of the tactical, operational, strategic and political levels leads her to the conclusion that military effectiveness should likewise be judged at each level.[10] To that end, senior Slovenian military officer and distinguished scholar Branimir Furlan's definition of an effective military as one that "…understands its role and mission and is capable of transforming political guidance into effective military action and responses" provides a foundation from which to study the implementation of defence policy.[11]

While some authorities, such as Dr. Peter Feaver, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University, choose to focus upon the interactions of individuals as principals and agents to understand the dynamics of civil-military relations,[6] others examine this relationship through a variety of structural approaches. Objective civilian control theory postulates that military and civilian leaders occupy discreet structural roles, with military leaders abstaining from any political involvement, and civilian leaders exercising a directive control over military policies, but not upon operations.[7] In contrast, pragmatic civilian control theory argues that military leaders must be politically sensitive, but not ideological, as they interact collaboratively with civilian leaders to achieve national goals, which are political by definition. As a result, pragmatic control theory suggests that civil-military relations exist as a delicate balance of influence that may shift "…based on a threat, crisis, or mission, instead of position, profession, or institution."[8]

While each of these theories provides a framework to understand the role and balance of civilian control over military forces, Colonel Suzanne Nielsen, a Professor of Political Science and Head of the Department of Social Services at West Point, examines the more practical impacts of civil-military relations on military effectiveness. In particular, Nielsen notes that "…conflict-laden relations between political and military leaders will harm a country's national security," while


General Rick Hillier (L), in Kandahar, Afghanistan, 29 September 2006.

"As the political, security or social environments change, so too does the delicate balance of civil-military relations."

Taken together, these theories suggest that context plays an important role in shaping the civil control construct at any particular period of time. As the political, security or social environments change, so too does the delicate balance of civil-military relations. Pragmatic control theory therefore provides a particularly useful lens through which to examine Canadian civil-military relations in light of the dual civilian-military leadership structure of Canada's Department of National Defence. Thereafter, military effectiveness can be examined through the policy implementation process in the context of the existing civil-military relations.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of Canada's successive defence policies through a pragmatic control lens, it is necessary to first understand the context in which each policy was developed. With each of these three defence policies having been crafted under different governments, and in differing global and domestic settings, the contexts that defined the civil-military relationship during those periods clearly resulted in shifts in the balance of legitimate military influence.[12] With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to examine the policy commitments in the 2005 and 2008 statements against the outcomes that were realized in the intervening years. Thereafter, a comparison of the civil-military relations environment of 2005 and 2008 with that of 2017 provides a perspective upon the challenges facing implementation of *Strong, Secure, Engaged.*

When Paul Martin assumed the leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada, and the position of Prime Minister from Jean Chrétien in December 2003, he sought to establish a policy position that would distinguish his leadership from Jean Chrétien's. With the global war on terrorism and rising public support for defence, Paul Martin turned to his Minister of National Defence (MND), Bill Graham, to "produce bold, innovative policies."[20] It seems that Paul Martin was looking to promote integrated foreign and defence policies that would reassert Canada's role on the global stage. In keeping with traditional Canadian civil-military relations, Minister Graham first tasked senior bureaucrats within the Department of National Defence (DND) to craft the new defence policy. However, after two drafts failed to meet the Prime Minister's intent, an unprecedented decision in recent history was taken. Contrary

## The 2005 Defence Policy Statement

Although successive Canadian governments have had a long history of exercising a "…strict form of control over the Canadian military,"[13] in the year leading up to the publication of the 2005 defence policy statement, *Defence: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, General Rick Hillier, then-Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Canadian Forces,[14] was granted exceptional influence over Prime Minister Paul Martin's defence policy.[15] Several authors have examined the civil-military relationship that existed during this period in Canadian military history through Feaver's principal – agent theory, particularly given the unique relationship that existed between General Hillier and Prime Minister Martin.[16] However, for the purpose of a comparative study of successive defence policies over a period of thirteen years, pragmatic control theory suggests that *context*, and not *relationships*, plays a central role in determining the degree of influence granted to military leaders.

With global events shaping domestic policies, Canada had embraced the peace dividend ideal presented by the end of the Cold War, resulting in significant cuts to Canadian Forces budgets and personnel. Coupled with the Somalia Affair, public opinions about defence and defence spending fell to low point during the mid-1990's. However, through concerted efforts to improve public opinion and to improve Canada's international reputation as an ally,[17] Canadian attitudes were already beginning to swing in favour of increased defence investment in 2001.[18] Following the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001, Canadian attitudes shifted in acknowledgement of the country's position as an ally and partner and of its early commitment of combat troops in Afghanistan.[19]



Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (L), at the G-7 Summit in Halifax, NS.



Minister of National Defence Bill Graham (L), and General Rick Hillier attend a repatriation ceremony at CFB Trenton, 27 November 2005.

to the traditional understanding that defence policy is a civilian prerogative, a new CDS would lead the policy development.[21] In selecting General Rick Hillier as the new CDS, Prime Minister Martin approved General Hillier's vision for the Canadian Forces and directed that he lead the defence policy review.[22]

Within DND, the Deputy Minister, Mr. Ward Elcock, felt that his role was to facilitate and empower General Hillier's policy development rather than to protect his normal role as the "principal defence policy advisor."[23] Additionally, two senior Assistant Deputy Ministers, Mr. Allan Williams in Materiel, and Mr. Kenneth Calder in Policy, both retired shortly after the defence policy review was completed.[24] With these changes in the highest positions of the Department, and with Prime Ministerial approval of his policy objectives, General Hillier was granted a degree of influence over Canadian defence policy that far surpassed the traditionally- strict civil control of the military.[25]

The new *Defence Policy Statement* was published in 2005 under Minister Graham's cover, although the tone of the document clearly reflects General Hillier's ideals: "Above all, this policy is about change, and providing our military with a bold new vision to deal with an increasingly uncertain world."[26] Billed as a "New Defence Vision," the *Defence Policy Statement* laid out a framework for transforming the Canadian Forces to make it "…more relevant, more responsive and more effective."[27] Central to this vision was General Hillier's plan to transform the Canadian Forces to achieve greater integration of joint operations, better interoperability with partners and allies, and to increase capital investment on major equipment.[28] What the Defence Policy Statement did not do was to lay out the fiscal plan to achieve this vision. Instead, the Defence Policy Statement made consistent reference to the 2005 Budget announcement that had been announced earlier in the year, promising $13 billion in additional baseline funding.[29]

Throughout the remainder of General Hillier's tenure as CDS, he made significant steps towards reorganizing the Canadian Forces through his Transformation initiatives, all of which fell within his sphere of influence as Chief. However, his efforts to advance the large capital projects to acquire new capabilities, such as the proposed 'Big Honking Ship' failed to produce tangible results.[30] Likewise, General Hillier's vision of the Joint Support Ship fulfilling a dual role as a replenishment vessel and as an amphibious transport was scaled back to a resupply and "limited sealift capability."[31] Unlike the internal reorganization of the Canadian Forces, capital projects require long-term, sustained commitment from within the bureaucracy of the DND and General Hillier's vision alone was unable to see these projects realized.[32] With the balance of military influence in the civil-military relationship having been tipped uncharacteristically in favour of the military leadership, the failure to advance these capital projects raises questions regarding the level of support General Hillier received from Departmental officials. As the Canadian Forces attempted to implement the vision presented in the Defence Policy Statement, the domestic and global context of the political and security environments continued to evolve.



Government of Canada

*Canada First Defence Strategy.*

### The 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy*

With only three years separating Paul Martin's *Defence Policy Statement* and Stephen Harper's *Canada First Defence Strategy*, the implementation period of General Hillier's vision also set the context for the development of the new strategy. Riding strong public support, General Hillier used his influence to shape Prime Minister Martin's 2005 decision to send Canadian troops to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Despite Martin's initial inclination to send Canadian troops to Darfur in a United Nations role, General Hillier successfully argued that taking a leadership role in Kandahar Province would demonstrate Canada's commitment to the United States after Chrétien's decision not to participate in the Iraq war and Martin's decision not to join ballistic missile defence.[33] While the decision to shift the Canadian mission from Kabul to Kandahar was clearly made by the civilian political leadership, "…no CDS in a generation had held as much sway with a Canadian prime minister," nor had a CDS "…been able to shape both the formulation of Canada's defence policies and influence the nature of military deployments to such a degree."[34] General Hillier's level of influence was about to peak however, as the political landscape would be changed by the election of Prime Minister Stephen Harper in January 2006.

> **"As the Canadian Forces attempted to implement the vision presented in the Defence Policy Statement, the domestic and global context of the political and security environments continued to evolve."**

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announces a maintenance contract renewal at Mirabel, Quebec, 1 September 2010.

Following the publication of the Gomery Commission report[35] on 28 November 2005, Paul Martin's minority Liberal government lost a vote of non-confidence by a margin of 171 to 133 votes as a result of allegations of corruption within the party.[36] Although Paul Martin was not found to be involved in the 'sponsorship scandal,' the Conservative Party won the election in January 2006 and formed a minority government. This change in government brought with it a change in the context surrounding defence policy in Canada.

With Stephen Harper having campaigned on a platform that was strong on defence, initial appearances suggested that General Hillier's vision would see broad support from the new government. However, it quickly became clear that the new Prime Minister would pursue different defence priorities: the need for strategic airlift capabilities; an increased presence in the Arctic; and additional forces dedicated to domestic operations.[37] None of these initiatives had been part of General Hillier's vision in 2005. Without sufficient funds to fully support both Stephen Harper's *priorities* and General Hillier's *vision*, tension rose in the civil-military relationship, and General Hillier's influence over defence policy began to wane.[38]

Throughout this period, the new mission in Kandahar was proving to be a hard fight. Rising casualties had the divisive effect of galvanizing popular support for the soldiers while simultaneously eroding support for the mission in general. Although Stephen Harper remained committed to the mission in Afghanistan, his efforts to mitigate public discontent over progress in Afghanistan, and the price being paid for it, prompted controversial public responses from General Hillier. In particular, in July 2007, following an announcement that the Canadian Forces would handover combat operations to the Afghan National Army in 2008, General Hillier made public statements that contradicted then MND, Gordon O'Connor.[39] Ultimately, the degree of tension between Minister O'Connor and General Hillier caused the Prime Minister to move O'Connor out of the defence portfolio as part of a larger Cabinet shuffle.[40]

While both the public calls for Minister O'Connor's removal and Stephen Harper's final decision to do so would suggest that General Hillier maintained substantial influence over the government's defence portfolio, in reality, General Hillier's public statements served to erode his influence significantly. By effectively forcing the Prime Minister's hand, General Hillier caused the Prime Minister to take measures to reduce Hillier's influence by replacing Deputy Minister Ward Elcock with Robert Fonberg. Harper believed that Elcock was too sympathetic with the military, so Fonberg was chosen to reassert civilian control in the Department.[41] With his background in the finance department and the Privy Council Office, Fonberg quickly began to exert increased control over the Department's spending. General Hillier's influence was further curtailed by imposed requirements to "…clear all statements and interviews with the Privy Council Office."[42] Finally, when General Hillier spoke out publicly against setting an Afghan withdrawal date and was rebuked for overstepping his role by attempting to sway how parliamentarians voted, the compromise decision that was reached regarding the future of the mission clearly signaled a shift in the balance of military influence over defence policy back in favour of the civilian leadership.[43]

In Kandahar, Afghanistan, Minister of National Defence Mr. Gordon O'Connor is welcomed by Colonel Fred Lewis, the Deputy Commander of the Canadian Contingent of ISAF, 29 August 2006.

The drafting of the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy* was therefore carried out in a very different civil-military relations environment than the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement.* By comparison, the *Canada First Defence Strategy* represented a significant change in the operational priorities of the Canadian Forces, away from a focus upon international reputation to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty and security at home. While international operations continued to be a core mission under the 2008 *Strategy*, the tone of the policy document mirrored that of Stephen Harper's campaign theme leading up to the 2006 election, making the position of 'Canada First' abundantly clear.[44] General Hillier's vision for a Standing Contingency Task Force for expeditionary operations disappeared, replaced by commitments to enhance Arctic operational capabilities with new icebreakers and domestic rapid reaction battalions. Unlike the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement* that provided in-depth analysis of defence requirements and missions, the 2008 Strategy aimed "…to ensure the Canadian Forces (CF) have the people, equipment, and support they need to meet the nation's long-term domestic and international security challenges."[45]

Even the roll-out of the *Canada First Defence Strategy* reflected the stricter civil-military control environment in 2008, with the strategy being formally announced on 12 May 2008, but a policy document being published only on 19 June 2008.[46] When the policy document was published, it was widely criticized as lacking detail and analysis that could provide real perspective to Canadians on the country's overall defence strategy. Instead, the document focused largely on the investment strategy needed to fund the included defence priorities.[47] As a result, the overall tone of the document differs significantly from that of the 2005 Defence Policy Statement. The former was clearly written from the viewpoint of the military, with a clear focus on relevance, responsiveness and effectiveness, whereas the latter clearly prioritized the concerns of tax payers and citizens at home. Given the departure of the *Canada First Defence Strategy* from General Hillier's vision of 2005, it can only be concluded that the Canada First Defence Strategy was crafted with much less military influence and much more bureaucratic effort to ensure that it aligned with the governing party's priorities for defence.

Despite the passage of nearly a decade since the publication of the *Canada First Defence Strategy*, with over seven years under Stephen Harper's leadership, many of the main commitments have failed to materialize. The autumn-2008 financial crisis that plunged Canada into a recession certainly impacted the government's fiscal priorities.[48] Whereas some may have viewed the shifting budget priorities as a temporary setback in the implementation of the *Canada First Defence Strategy*, for military leaders, the financial crisis created an opportunity to refocus defence spending on urgent operational requirements. Equipment identified as mission requirements in support of the ongoing operations in Afghanistan were purchased, but other major procurement projects, such as fighter replacements, new surface combatants, and Arctic off-shore patrol ships have all faltered.[49]

While it is impossible to know with certainty how support within the military impacted these various projects, it is clear that immediate operational needs progressed more quickly than those that attracted more concentrated political attention. Likewise, proposals that did not fit with ongoing transformation efforts within



Strong, Secure, Engaged – Canada's Defence Policy.

> **"The autumn-2008 financial crisis that plunged Canada into a recession certainly impacted the government's fiscal priorities."**
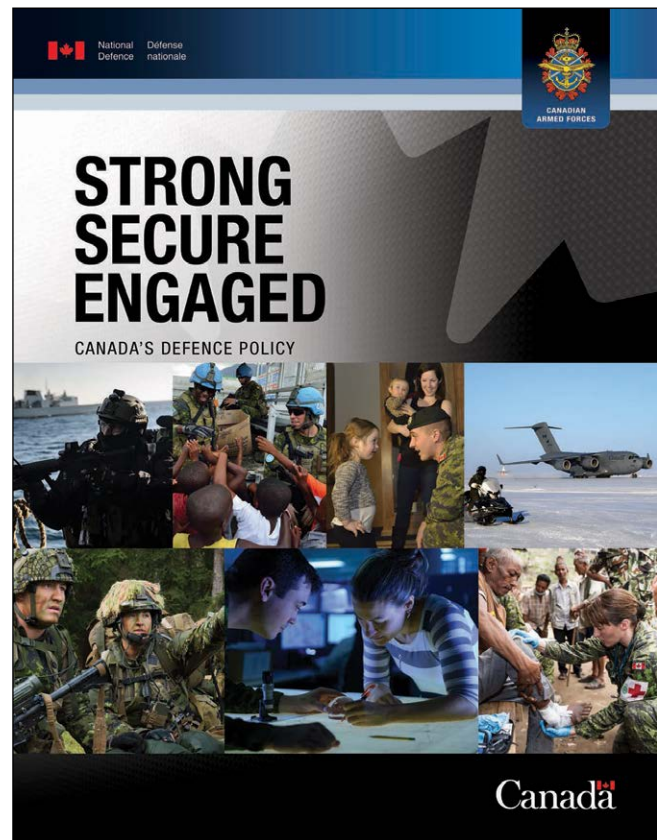
the Canadian Forces, such as the creation of the rapid reaction battalions did not advance. Given the lack of alignment that existed between the priorities of the government and of the senior military leadership, it is likely that the military leadership shirked some projects in favour of others.[50] Professor Phillipe Legassé of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs even goes so far as to conclude that: "Hillier opted to use his influence to frustrate O'Connor's attempt to reformulate certain aspects of Canada's defence posture."[51] If this is indeed the case, an argument can be made that the form of strict civil-military control employed by Prime Minister Harper did not engender maximum military effectiveness.

### 2017 *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*

Having examined the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement* and the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy*, it is clear that unbalanced civil-military control relationships can negatively impact successful policy implementation, regardless of whether the balance of influence is tipped in favour of military, or towards civilian leadership. In these cases, the resulting policies faced criticism: the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy* having been described as "…money without vision," while the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement* was justifiably described as "…vision without money."[52] Though the 2017 Defence Policy is still in its second year of implementation, the context of the civil-military relationship in which it was developed suggests that *Strong, Secure, Engaged* may enjoy broader support among military and civilian officials alike.

Konstantin Shaklein/Alamy Stock Photo/K8WKME

A North Korean missile test, 8 September 2017.

and Donald Trump's election as President of the United States and his posture with respect to NATO, there was building interest in the 2017 announcement of *Strong, Secure, Engaged*.[55] The fact that the new defence policy was announced on the heels of Minister Chrystia Freeland's 6 June 2017 foreign policy speech further illustrated the depth to which foreign and defence policy were being linked.[56]

Given the combined focus upon both vision and money in *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, the detailed list of initiatives provides a road map of institutional and operational priorities with a framework for managing defence funding over the next 20 years.[57] Moreover, con-
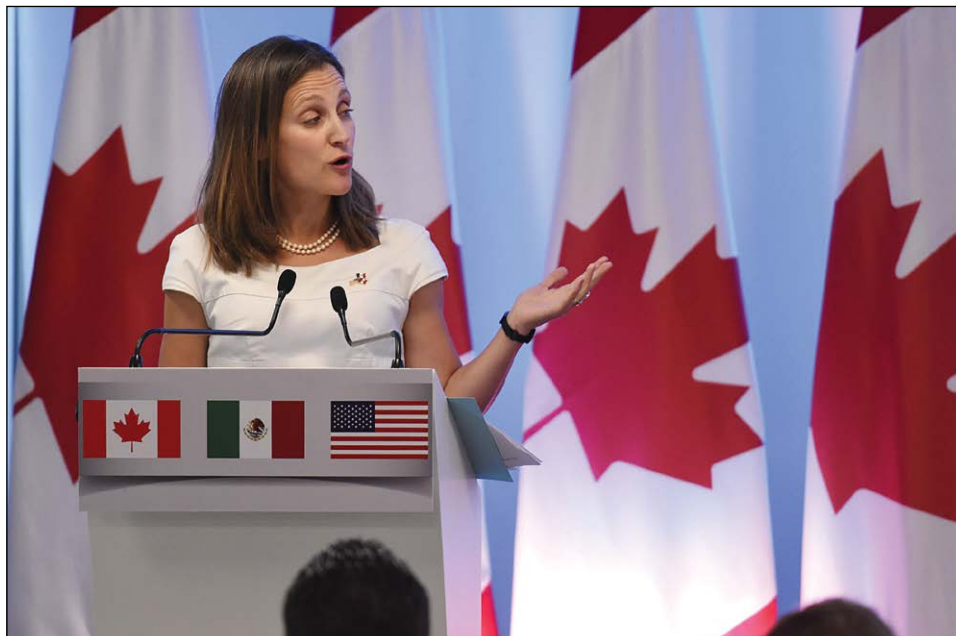
The context in which *Strong, Secure, Engaged* has been developed is markedly different than that of the previous two defence policies. First and foremost, the length of Stephen Harper's time in office as Prime Minister created political space between the *Canada First Defence Strategy* and *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. With Justin Trudeau's election in 2015 a full seven years after Stephen Harper announced his defence policy, Trudeau's government faced less pressure to distinguish its policy on defence from the previous government. Additionally, the closure of the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan in 2014 de-escalated the profile of defence policy amongst Canadians, thereby allowing space for comprehensive policy development to occur.[53]

The conduct of public consultations across all defence stakeholders in Canada between April and July 2016 provided a unique opportunity for parliamentarians, military leaders, allies and partners, defence industry experts and interested Canadians to ensure their views of Canadian defence policy were heard. This process also reflected a government interest in developing a balanced defence policy that met the needs of Canadians in what seemed to be an increasingly-complex world.[54] Between the ongoing fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, North Korean nuclear tests,

sistent with the positive working relationship that appeared to exist between General Jonathan Vance and Deputy Minister John Forster, informal sources have confirmed that *Strong, Secure, Engaged* was developed as a collaborative effort between the military and civilian leaders within the Department. As the Department and the Canadian Forces move into the implementation of *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, it is clear that this environment of collaboration continues to exist through the joint monitoring of progress by the CDS and the



SOPA Images Limited/Alamy Stock Photo/K4BF0R

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland speaks during the press conference of NAFTA negotiations in Mexico City, 5 September 2017.

Deputy Minister.[58] Although critics have rightly raised concerns over the stability of priorities and funding for *Strong, Secure, Engaged* over successive governments to come,[59] optimists see a document that is "…clear in setting out to balance the ends, ways and means."[60] While there are certainly a number of challenges that threaten to impact negatively the implementation of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* in the coming years, the apparent balance of influence in the current civil-military relationship provides a possible beacon of hope.

## Conclusions

This examination of 2005, 2008 and 2017 Canadian defence policies through the lens of pragmatic control theory has demonstrated the important role that *context* plays in defining civilian-military relations over time. While principal-agent relationships may form a portion of the overall context, changes to the broader political, security, and social environments, both domestically and globally, factor strongly in the shifting balance of military influence. As a result, future studies of the evolution of civil-military relations over time should examine the broader role of context, without being constrained only to the principal-agent framework.

Moreover, this study has attempted to show that Canada's successive defence policies have been shaped by changes in the delicate balance of military influence over the policy process. Given the limited changes that occurred to the overall threat to Canada between 2005 and 2018, it is clear that the civil-military relationship in Canada is sensitive to much more than just changing threats, crises, or missions. The dramatic shift in civil-military relations that took place between the defence policies of 2005 and 2008 clearly illustrates the impact of context beyond the threats posed by Canada's operations in Afghanistan. While pragmatic control theory suggests that military leaders need to be politically sensitive, while working collaboratively with civilian leaders, theories suggesting that military influence is dependent upon the existence of threats or crises fail to appreciate the nuanced relationships created by the broader role of context in all its forms.

From the perspective of understanding the relationship between civil-military relations theory and military effectiveness, this study of the defence policy process in Canada adopted the broad definition of military effectiveness proposed by Branimir Furlan. The implementation of a defence policy is a key measure of a military's capacity to "understand its role and mission" and to transform "political guidance into effective military courses of action and responses."[61] In keeping with Suzanne Nielsen's assertion that military effectiveness must be evaluated at multiple levels, the challenges faced in the implementation of both the 2005 and 2008 Canadian defence policies suggests that studies of military effectiveness must include a consideration of measures appropriate to the strategic and political levels. In this context, the definition of military effectiveness should broadly include the capacity of military leaders to work within the realities of the political space in order to bring coherence to the overall national defence objectives.

Then-Lieutenant-General Jonathan Vance addresses the audience during the Canadian Joint Operations Command change of command ceremony in Ottawa, 9 September 2014.

> **"Given the limited changes that occurred to the overall threat to Canada between 2005 and 2018, it is clear that the civil-military relationship in Canada is sensitive to much more than just changing threats, crises, or missions."**

Finally, this examination of three successive defence policies has attempted to illustrate that an imbalance in the relative influence of military and civilian leaders led to problems during policy implementation. Whereas the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement* benefited from strong military vision, its implementation suffered from bureaucratic challenges associated with funding issues. In contrast, the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy* benefited from fiscal commitment as a result of the civilian leadership during the policy development stage, but faltered as a result of misalignment between military and government defence priorities. In both cases, the imbalance in the civil-military control relationships can be explained by the global, domestic, and political context in which these policies were developed, thereby validating pragmatic control theory as a useful lens through which to view the changing civil-military relations during these periods of time.

In contrast, the environmental context leading to the development of *Strong, Secure, Engaged*: Canada's Defence Policy in 2017, appears to have enabled a more balanced civil-military control relationship throughout the policy development process. If Nielsen is correct in suggesting that harmonious civil-military relations engenders military effectiveness, the balanced influence seen in the development of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* suggests a more sustainable collaborative approach to implementation in the future – provided there are no significant changes in context. With luck, the implementation pitfalls that hampered both of the previous defence policies can be avoided. That said, the future is never as clear as the past.

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9    Suzanne C. Nielsen, "Civil-Military Relations Theory and Military Effectiveness," *Policy and Management Review* 2, No. 2 (2002), p. 13.

10   *Ibid.*, p.14.

11   Branimir Furlan, "Civilian Control and Military Effectiveness: Slovenian Case," in *Armed Forces & Society* 39, No. 3 (2012), p. 438.

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17   See for example: Conference of Defence Associations, *Caught in the Middle: An assessment of the operational readiness of the Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: Conference of Defence Associations, 2002), pp. ix-xviii, at: https://cdainstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/caughtmiddle_2001.pdf; Conference of Defence Associations, *A Nation at risk: The decline of the Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: Conference of Defence Associations, 2002), p. viii, at: https://cdainstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/nationatrisk_2002.pdf; and House of Commons, Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, *Quality of Life in the Canadian Forces,* 2000, at: http://publications.gc.ca/Collection/D1-17-2000E.pdf.

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20   *Ibid.*

21   *Ibid.*, p. 23.

22   *Ibid.*, p. 24.

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# Rounding the Edges of the Maple Leaf: Emergent Design and Systems Thinking in the Canadian Armed Forces

## by Ben Zweibelson, Kevin Whale, and Paul Mitchell

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Dr. Paul Mitchell *holds a BA (Hons) from Wilfrid Laurier University, a MA in War iStudies from King's College London, and a Ph. D from Queen's University in Kingston. He has worked at the Canadian Forces College since 1998, first as the Deputy Director Academics, and later as its first Director of Academics, a role he presently occupies again.*

*"In many systems the creative leap occurs as something indescribable and beyond reason…it takes some courage to deny this form. [Creativity] is an island of mystery on a sea of irrationality, even for devoted navigators on the waters. Unfortunately, anyone engaged in analysis of the design process is bound to abandon citizenship of the island if he is trying to consider the design process as a conditioned and influenceable one, subject to planning and control."*

Horst Rittel[1]

*"Thinking occurs only when circumstances are unfamiliar and old routines do not work."*

Karl Weick[2]

*"The challenge of systems thinking lies in the ability to identify patterns by analyzing the system as a whole instead of focusing on isolated events or factors…"*

Bill Bentley & Scott Davy[3]

## Introduction

Over the past fifteen years, the over-arching military and defence field, including theorists, practitioners, and academia, have engaged in a different way of making sense of the complexity and emergent qualities of reality. From the organizational heights of senior executives and their staffs, down to the micro-tactical engagements by individuals on battlefields across the globe, a diverse and expanding collection of militaries are now compelled to seek novel processes, emergent language, and quite disruptive methodologies to shatter outdated ways of making sense of reality. For militaries in the 21st Century, small groups and networks of experimental practitioners apply customized techniques that address innovation, divergent thinking, and creativity, as well as critical reflection in ways far removed from traditional and institutionally accepted norms.[4] In this crucible of emergent transformation, militaries are attempting to apply systems theory within a trans-disciplinary process that falls under the general moniker of 'design' or 'design thinking.'

Design as a modern discipline existed as far back as the echoes of the Second World War, when militaries first attempted to think about complex contexts through a systems methodology for improved command, control, and development.[5] Despite growing out of a military context, design in the 20th Century was largely a civilian discipline, both in private sectors as well as in academia.[6] Only recently have militaries experimented with an explicit military design approach that breaks with traditional planning, with the Israeli Defense Force in the late-1990s first demonstrating a deliberate design alternative to traditional military strategy and decision-making.[7] Since then, the American, Australian, and numerous European militaries have developed or experimented with different incarnations of design.[8] Canadian military forces are no different, as the Canadian Forces College (CFC) has embarked upon the introduction of design theory and various individuals within the Canadian Armed Forces have applied systems thinking and design to contemporary challenges.[9]

To readers unfamiliar with what military design encompasses and how it differs with traditional planning processes, we might start with defining design through military eyes. As mentioned earlier, modern design arrived after the Second World War with the emergence of General Systems Theory,, as well as a multidisciplinary exploration on complexity, social constructivism, post-modern philosophy, and management theory. These different groups of professionals began looking at creativity, critical thinking, and innovation, as well as organizational change in ways profoundly different from earlier traditional constructs. Initially manifesting in architecture, engineering and advertising industries,[10] the first 'design schools of thought' became solidified in design programs at UC Berkeley, Stanford, Carnegie Mellon, as well as other interdisciplinary campuses seeking to expand arts and sciences in novel approaches.[11] As defined aptly by Berkeley alumni and design theorist Harold Nelson, design is "…seeking what is needed but does not yet exist" and this undiscovered yet essential thing or idea will provide the organization advantage in the future emergent system.[12]

> **"To readers unfamiliar with what military design encompasses and how it differs with traditional planning processes, we might start with defining design through military eyes."**

Encouraging an organization or a group to discover or create something they need, but do not recognize initially is challenging. Being cognitively flexible enough to accept a novel design output that will emerge in the future system as the thing or idea providing them advantage is also quite hard to convey, especially within a traditional military culture and context. New things and ideas usually require new language, new mental models, as well as, often, the critical reflection and potential disruption of deeply-held beliefs, values, methodologies, and even interpretations with respect to reality.[13]

Consider the initial reactions to the smart phone, ride-sharing systems such as Uber, and the arrival of Netflix in the early-2000s. In all these examples, major corporations and entire industries misunderstood or rejected enormous opportunity in these designs because the design outputs either broke with cherished beliefs with respect to 'how the world works,' or their future success could not be imagined at the time. Blockbuster Video went from their pinnacle of success in 2005 to bankruptcy in 2010, while missing the chance to buy Netflix twice. Motorola literally trained Apple how to make phones in 2005, only to then watch Apple trigger a smartphone revolution in 2007 with the iPhone, and then dominate what once was Motorola's market.[14] With smartphones and social media platforms came the ride hailing services such as Uber, which now is devastating the traditional taxi industry.[15] Currently, 'the verdict is still out' on developments such as crypto-currencies, 3D printers, drone technology, and the expansion of artificial intelligence into multiple applications. And yet, these developments and many more not even yet imagined will undoubtedly alter many key aspects of our current complex reality, and will only reveal themselves in non-linear and unexpected ways.

When these disruptive innovations first emerged, the traditional industries and dominant players were both deceived by their own expectations regarding how the future was supposed to unfold, and surprised when radical change occurred through innovation and system transformation. However, in retrospect, it again becomes rather obvious and deceptively linear. This paradox inhibits design thinking from gaining broad acceptance in that non-linear and innovative processes cannot be nailed down, codified, or put into linear methodologies for an organization to once again "plan the future as it is supposed to go."[16] Despite a rather-storied history of modern design applications in civilian and academic disciplines since the 1950s, militaries failed to introduce any formal military design methodology as a complete and systemic alternative to traditional analytic-based, reductionist decision-making until the late-1990s.[17] Design in military applications has been limited, due to many deep institutional barriers and cultural aspects of the military profession.[18] However, there are some budding examples as well as a widening interest in military communities with respect to how to further pursue design in practice.

This article will provide readers with one such example of how a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Wing implemented elements of systems thinking and design despite institutional, organizational, and cultural resistance. Ironically, as this example was being initiated at a tactical level, the Canadian Forces College had just begun engaging in design experimentation for

Stringer/Reuters/RTXEXTL

A Lebanese army-held checkpoint in the village of Ainbouswar, 4 August 1993, which was a strategic position for Pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God) militants after fighting with Israeli forces during the Seven-Day War (Operation *Accountability*) in south Lebanon in July 1993.

educational reform with equally-obstinate institutional barriers.[19] And now years later, design in education and application in 2019 remain quite embryonic in the Canadian military, but this article will provide a brief explanation of the larger military design movement and how the Canadian Armed Forces is being increasingly introduced to the core concepts.[20]



PeerPoint/Alamy Stock Photo/A46M27

Israeli Defence Force soldiers patrol the hills overlooking Ramallah on the West Bank, April 1997.

### A Brief History of Military Design: From Lebanon to Toronto in a Decade

Military design first took form with the establishment of the Israeli Defense Force's (IDF) think tank named the Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI). Spearheaded by Brigadier General Shimon Naveh, OTRI in the late-1990s developed a military design approach to complexity termed 'Systemic Operational Design,' (SOD), that broke with traditional linear and analytic-based planning and strategy.[21] While individual visionaries had previously explored alternatives to the military's emphasis upon objectives

and 'ends-ways-means' logic, such as that advanced by U.S. Air Force Colonel John Boyd, fighter pilot and military strategist, in the 1980s, the IDF represented the first formal design endeavor by a military organization.[22] However, due to internal *political* as well as *intellectual* disruption during preparations for the 2006 Lebanon War, SOD was suddenly scrapped, and Naveh's group of radical intellectuals were banished from IDF inclusion.[23] However, this initial concept of design intrigued two nations that were struggling in the chaos of the Iraqi insurgency.

By 2005, Naveh and a small group of SOD theorists began inculcating design into Australian and American militaries.[24] The U.S. School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) became a testing ground for SOD education, which transitioned into a U.S. selective interpretation of SOD that was named 'design,' and later rebranded 'Army Design Methodology' in 2010. The Australian Army took a parallel course to the U.S. Army by stripping out SOD's esoteric philosophy and primarily retaining systems theory and architectural design concepts, with Australian doctrine presenting 'Adaptive Campaigning' as their design-like approach to complexity in war.[25] By 2013, multiple militaries (primarily in the industrialized West) explored or introduced design education into their military schools, doctrine, and research, although often in divergent manners and even without using the word 'design.'[26] Canada first considered design as early as 2009. However, by 2013, select faculty at the CFC began to introduce formal design education at the senior and later mid-grade officer levels, an effort initially met with skepticism and resistance.[27] Subsequent years have seen a robust expansion of design education embodied in the CFC's Joint Command and Staff Programme (JCSP) capstone design exercise *Shifting Sands*, and the National Security Programme's (NSP) *Strategic Designer* exercise, which occur each June in the academic year.[28]

The Royal Netherlands Army began introducing some basic design concepts by 2013 into their field grade officer education, with the Polish Army following suit by 2016, and the Swedish National Defense University exploring similar design education in 2017.[29] NATO, as well as multiple military institutions such as the U.S. Air War College, U.S. Cyber Command, and the Naval Postgraduate School have also *explored* or *introduced* formal design education. Yet this burst of interest in design across international militaries is not without turbulence and disruption. While the 2005-2010 period for SAMS demonstrated significant theory, research, and experimentation for a blend of design approaches,[30] since 2010, the Fort Leavenworth program has shifted towards a U.S. Army doctrinally-focused design practice highly favoring a functionalist operational planning application.[31] There certainly remains design education at Leavenworth. However, the scope, scale, and depth of it may no longer be as extensive or dynamic as it was during the period of 2005-2010, when many different concepts, as well as a variety of design methodologies, were experimented with.[32] The U.S. Army is hardly alone in this cycle of waxing or waning design interest, with the Australian Army also demonstrating an earlier 'high interest' period of design concepts in 2005-2008, with a reduction thereafter,[33] as well as a Canadian

> **"Canada first considered design as early as 2009. However, by 2013, select faculty at CFC began to introduce formal design education at the senior and later mid-grade officer levels, an effort initially met with skepticism and resistance."**

initial surge in 2009,[34] with a subsequent drop until after 2012, when the CFC refocused student education upon design.[35]

Despite fluctuations in various military services, or institutional 'fickleness' as the military design movement matures, many others continue to explore and develop competing design theories and experiments in practical applications within a pluralized community of professionals. One prominent example is again found in Canada, where distinguished researchers, such as Dr. Philippe Beaulieu-Brossard and Dr. Philippe Dufort, have hosted multiple international design conferences and workshops, and have helped shape an entire 2017 issue of the *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* (JMSS), and another special issue for the *Blue Knight Review* in 2018 to feature design articles from the leading experts in the military community of practice. In Warsaw at the Operational Art and Tactics Institute, the Polish Army has, since 2015, also embarked upon an expansive and deliberate military design education program intent upon becoming an Eastern European Center of Excellence for design practitioners.[36] Design experimentation continues in Scandinavian nations,[37] and across the European continent,[38] as well as within NATO[39] and other relevant or allied partner nations.[40]

Within a decade, the original experimentation by the IDF triggered an intellectual firestorm of creativity and critical thinking with new combinations of previously- unrelated disciplines of thought. Within this swirling international exchange of ideas and applications, several military organizations have applied some form of design and systems theory towards complex and dynamic challenges in a military context. Canada has one example that will be presented here as part of this apparent revolution in military thought and action.

## Deliberate Systems Thinking and Accidental Design: A Practical Application within the RCAF

In 2012, as Wing Commander of the RCAF's tactical aviation forces (1 Wing), Brigadier-General K. Whale (a colonel at the time) and his planning team became deeply engaged in what they now recognize as deliberate systems thinking and accidental design. Prompted by a problem of how to re-introduce medium-to-heavy-lift helicopters (MHLH) into the RCAF's Tactical Aviation Enterprise (TAE),[41] but within the context of a resolutely resource-constrained strategic environment, pressure was high to find personnel efficiencies from within existing force structure to support the re-introduction of this additional fleet. To enable the complex planning effort, the team read and absorbed the distinguished American systems analyst and founder of the Society for Organizational Learning, Dr. Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* explanations of "aspiration…, reflective conversation…, [and] understanding complexity…,"[42] as well as bestselling author and Professor Emeritus at the Harvard Business School, Dr. John Kotter's *Leading Change,*[43] before any analysis began which ultimately proved pivotal to their mindset and broad enterprise-wide engagement that progressed over more than a year.

Successive iterations of first principle, 'deep dive' assessments and reframing eventually highlighted an outdated Cold War force structure that had independent helicopter squadrons paired with co-located Canadian Army brigades, functionally and linearly linked to a Wing tactical level headquarters (Figure 1) – a model that had endured for decades. Over time, there had been unit level 'tweaking' to address local requirements, and even RCAF-level adjustments, such as changes to which trades focused upon first line maintenance, but the catalysts for change never crossed the bar that forced a full system-of-systems level review sufficient to challenge the prevailing force structure model. As Whale's team analysis progressed, the Cold War model proved to be unworkable in the current and future contexts, and, not only were there no personnel efficiencies to be found, it became clear that this RCAF Wing had already more than consumed any potential efficiencies in an insidious transformation that had occurred over the previous years.

Driven by organizational pressures to sustain operational outcomes as resources were squeezed over decades, Wing level sub-system innovation progressively found ways to work around the outdated force structure model, laying the foundation of a reframed, interdependent Wing that was defiantly pro-



Figure 1: 1 Wing Cold War Design.



Figure 2: 1 Wing Restructure Model 2013-2017.

ducing task-tailored, scalable aviation detachments in spite of the inefficiencies of the legacy structure. In effect, what started as a quest for efficiencies led to major changes to unit roles, and a new 'system-of-systems' Wing employment model that not only re-integrated MHLH, it accelerated and formalized the institutional transformation that was already well underway (Figure 2).
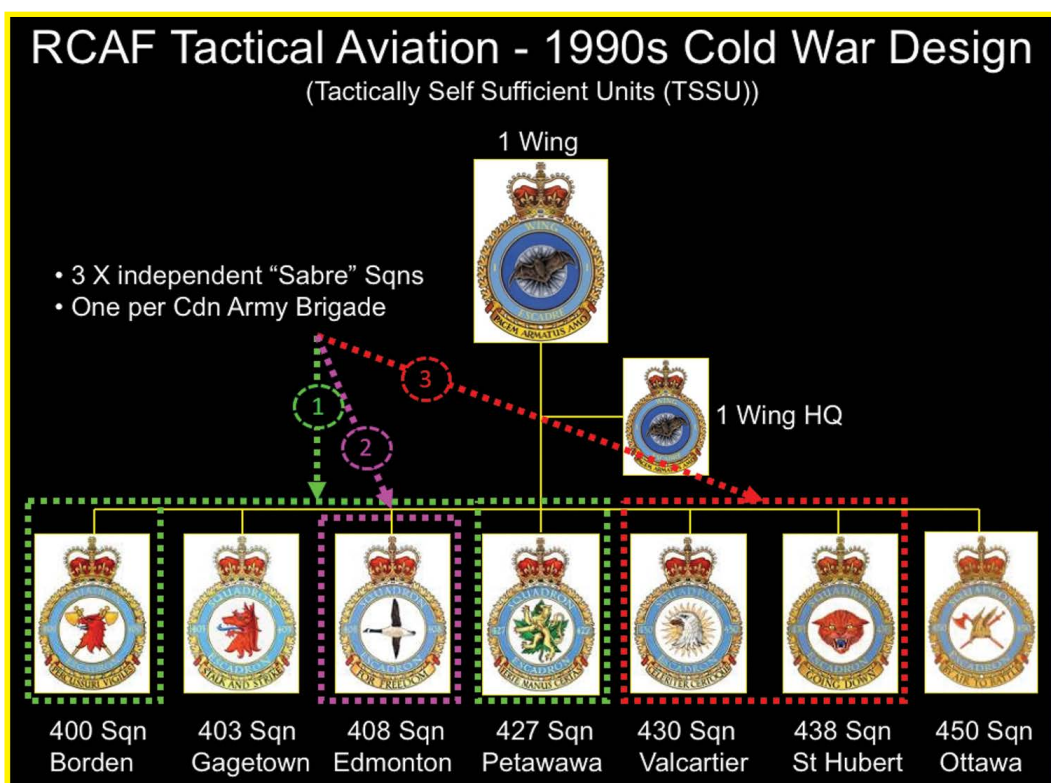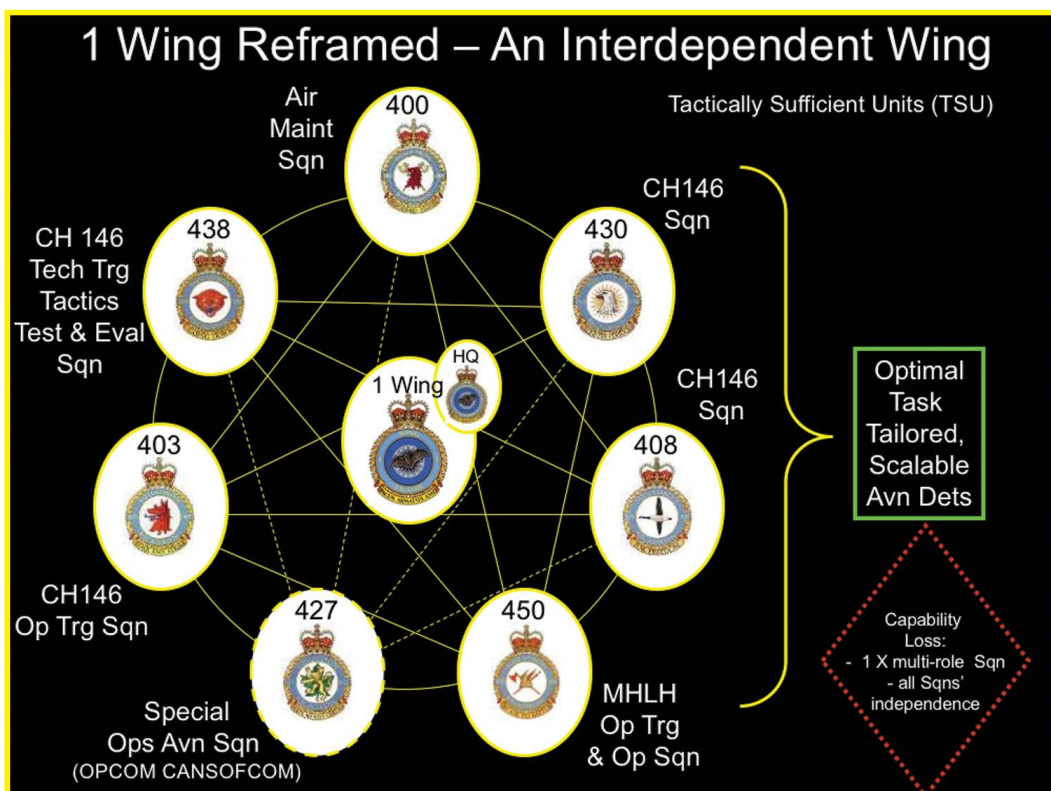
Each squadron had to re-balance or divest equipment, vehicles, and positions to support the logic of the Wing re-design, which removed individual squadrons' independence, and in one case, even drove a complete re-role from a multi-role flying squadron into an air maintenance squadron upon which most of the other squadrons would now have to rely. These changes were a cultural challenge at first until everyone in the Wing could visualize their new role within the entire re-framed system. The collective payoff for the RCAF which was a more capable and balanced TAE that included a mix of MHLH (CH-147F *Chinook*) and CH-146 *Griffon* multi-role capabilities to enable the highest level of task-tailored aviation detachment production possible. After endorsement by the chain of command, the resulting comprehensive five year restructure plan was activated in earnest, and was completed in 2017, bringing the Wing's force structure into alignment with its operational reality.

Those skeptical of the merits of the disruptive design were presented with real world substantiation by an unfortunate twist of fate as the planning team was wrapping up their recommendations. In November 2013, Canada dispatched its Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) for humanitarian support to the Philippines following the devastating effects of Typhoon *Haiyan*.[44] The Joint DART team was enabled by a robust RCAF Air Task Force that included a small helicopter detachment from 1 Wing. A testament to the reframed, interdependent Wing model, the detachment was rapidly generated not only with aircraft, personnel, and equipment from every squadron within the Wing, it also included support from across the Tactical Aviation Enterprise.

This air power force structure reframing is a *relatively simple* yet *tangible* example of the potential of systems thinking and

> **"These changes were a cultural challenge at first until everyone in the Wing could visualize their new role within the entire re-framed system."**

design in the military context. Throughout the process, a systems thinking approach was deliberately leveraged as an antidote to traditional linear thinking, an approach that proved instrumental to conceiving the new organizational model. Instead of applying the analytic optimization methodology entrenched in Canadian military doctrine, Whale encouraged his design team to frame their complex situational challenge within a systemic outlook. In retrospect, Brigadier-General Whale recognized elements of accidental design in his team's approach only when he was exposed to design theory for the first time while attending the CFC National Security Program in 2015-2016, well after 1 Wing's restructure was well into execution. The school drew from a variety of design methodological perspectives, including some more widely published American Army views. In particular, subject matter experts Colonel Stefan Banach and Dr. Alex Ryan's *The Art of Design* (Figure 3),[45] a part of CFC's introduction to design theory, illustrated the inherent interplay between systems thinking and design that Whale and his team had employed, a 'happy accident' he now credits to previous exposure to elements of Senge's description of "mental models."[46]

Looking back, Whale's team leveraged some form of Banach & Ryan's "problem situation… framing… reframing… and reflective thinking,"[47] that is expressed in a variety of other military design approaches in different terms, such as in Systemic Operational Design, as well as human-centric design methods. Brigadier-General Whale, as one of the authors of this article, reflects upon his personal experience that he would have much preferred to have been exposed to design thinking earlier in his professional development which could have assisted his team's evolution of thought that led to the reframed Wing force structure model. This highlights both the still-youthful nature of the



A CH-146 *Griffon* helicopter and a CH-147F *Chinook* helicopter fly in formation during Operation *Presence-Mali*, 5 June 2019.

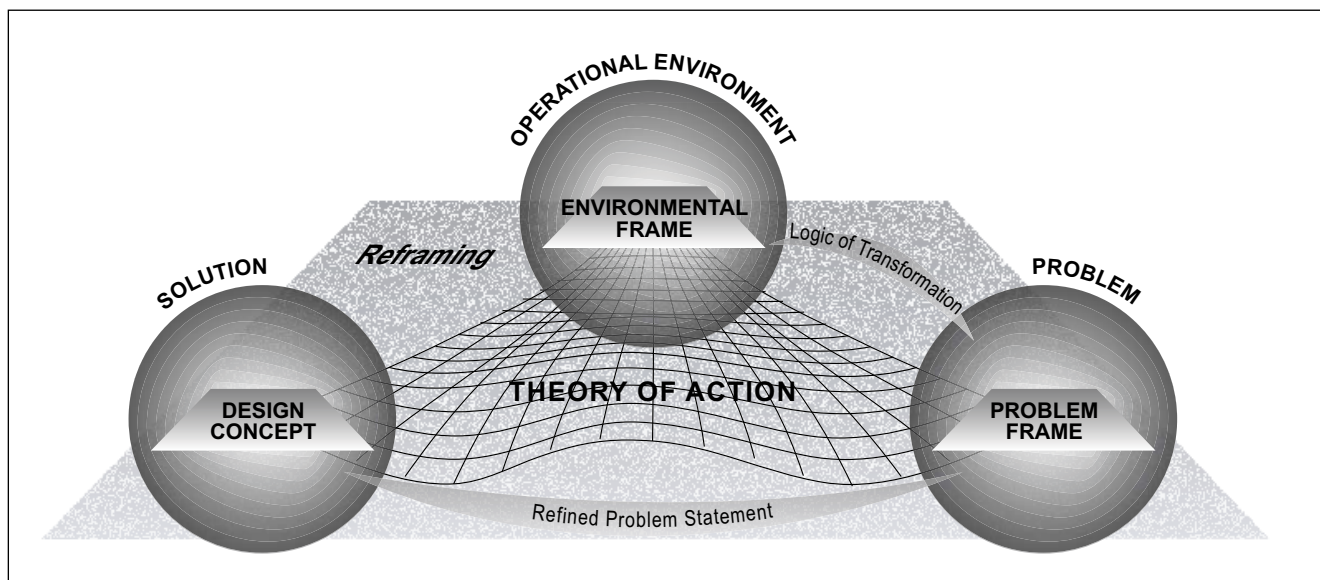DND image TM02-2019-0074-0027 by Corporal François Charest

Figure 3: Elements of Design.

military design movement in that many General Officers/Flag Officers today have *limited* or potentially *no exposure* to design in practice or education, and that institutionally, many militaries are unsure when exactly to first expose design to officers and enlisted service members, or how to best educate with respect to design.[48]

In a promising development for 21st Century Canadian Armed Forces education, the CFC now offers design at the major rank level on the Joint Command and Staff Programme in the Advanced Joint Warfare Studies stream, and 'design like' activities have been included for officers taking the Institutional Policy Studies stream since 2015. Therefore, younger cohorts of senior officers have now been exposed to the opportunities and advantages offered by these new operational epistemologies. Furthermore, by 2020, the JCSP will be revamped in such a way as to include design thinking as part of the larger 'core' of activities offered to all students taking that program.

### Conclusion

Faced with the complexity of 'wicked' problems that are an inescapable element of modern warfare and conflict operations, military leaders and planners must adapt and consider innovative ways of enabling critical thought. The traditional ways of preparing for conflict, as well as the linear decision-making methodologies of the Cold War Era, are no longer sufficient, and are likely impeding necessary 21st Century growth and innovation. The military design movement, with its multi-disciplinary nature and systems-thinking logic, may be considered a threat to the ritualized ways of planning and acting in military organizations. And yet, military design is tasked to disrupt, innovate, and provide the organization 'that which it needs, but does not yet exist.' Within this reality, it is most promising that the Canadian Armed Forces have begun to explore the emergence of design, both *accidentally* and *deliberately*, as part of professional

**"The formal and evolving introduction of design at CFC should expand and accelerate the potential advantages design theory has to offer the Canadian Armed Forces."**

military education. In terms of military educational options, the Canadian flexibility and openness towards multiple military and civilian design methods and theory lends to a wider degree of experimentation, and away from the ritualistic military cycle of convergent thinking, codification, and indoctrination of a single universal concept over alternatives.

CFC's introduction of design theory is building upon the foundations of the pioneering Israeli SOD concepts and subsequent evolutions to enable and integrate design and systems thinking in the Canadian military context, and not a moment too soon. As illustrated by the RCAF's Wing-level force structure re-frame example, real world complexity is already attracting the use of non-linear thought to uncover innovative solutions. At every level of military 'sensemaking' in highly-dynamic and fluid contexts, bright minds and multi-disciplinary teams are *increasingly* if not *reluctantly* drawn to new ways of thinking to address their task of 'seeking what is needed but does not yet exist.'

When traditional linear thinking fails, it is only by embracing new ways of thinking, creativity, and critical reflection that military planners will realize *desired* as well as *emergent* and *transformative* outcomes that will evade the Uber or Netflix-like disruption to complex military operations, if not national security itself. The formal and evolving introduction of design at CFC should expand and accelerate the potential advantages design theory has to offer the Canadian Armed Forces. From Lebanon to Toronto in a decade may seem like a long time, but such is the nature of grasping the nuances of design. The emergence of systems thinking and design in military planning and education is a pervasive global phenomenon that now includes Canadian Armed Forces within its ranks.

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# NOTES

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28  Zweibelson, "Thinking Outside the Box by Designing with Semiotic Squares: Efforts of the Canadian Forces College's Design Approaches in 2015"; Beaulieu-Brossard and Dufort, "Introduction to the Conference: The Rise of Reflective Military Practitioners."

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30  Ryan, "A Personal Reflection on Introducing Design to the U.S. Army"; Butler-Smith, "Operational Art to Systemic Thought: Unity of Military Thought"; Stefan Banach and Alex Ryan, "The Art of Design: A Design Methodology," in *Military Review* 89, No. 2 (April 2009), pp. 105–115; Stefan Banach, "Educating by Design: Preparing Leaders for a Complex World," in *Military Review*, April 2009, pp. 96–114; Jeb Downing, "Systemic Operational Design" (Microsoft PowerPoint, 6 January 2015).

31  Based on multiple public and private correspondences between the authors and with former SAMS students, faculty, visiting lecturers, Fellowship participants, as well as SAMS retired Commandants on this specific topic.

32  School of Advanced Military Studies, *Art of Design: Student Text, Version 2.0*, Version 2 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2010); Graicer, "Beware of the Power of the Dark Side: The Inevitable Coupling of Doctrine and Design"; Ryan, "A Personal Reflection on Introducing Design to the U.S. Army"; Butler-Smith, "Operational Art to Systemic Thought: Unity of Military Thought."

33  Aaron Jackson, "A Tale of Two Designs: Developing the Australian Defence Force's Latest Iteration of Its Joint Operations Planning Doctrine," in *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 17, No. 4 (June 2017), pp. 174–193.

34  John Anderson, "From Systemic Operational Design (SOD) to a Systemic Approach to Design and Planning: A Canadian Experience," in *Canadian Military Journal,* Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 2012); Matthew Lauder, "Systemic Operational Design: Freeing Operational Planning From the Shackles of Linearity," in *Canadian Military Journal*, Operational Planning, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Autumn 2009), pp. 41–49.

35  Mitchell, "Stumbling into Design: Action Experiments in Professional Military Education at Canadian Forces College"; Beaulieu-Brossard, "Encountering Nomads in Israel Defense Forces and Beyond"; Zweibelson, "Thinking outside the Box by Designing with Semiotic Squares: Efforts of the Canadian Forces College's Design Approaches in 2015."

36  Relying upon U.S. military assistance, the Polish Army has quickly implemented extensive design education for their Field Grade Officers, as well as their conventional and Special Forces from 2015-2018 at the time of this writing.

37  Sookermany, "On Developing (Post)Modern Soldiers"; Zweibelson *et al.*, "The Emergent Art of Military Design: Swedish Armed Forces and the Contemporary Security Environment."

38  De Spiegeleire *et al.*, "Designing Future Stabilization Efforts"; Pazdziorek, *Wojskowa my l operacyjna w konfliktach zbrojnych przełomu XX i XXI wieku*; van der Veer, "MilitaryEpistemology.Com"; Ben Zweibelson *et al.*, *Over the Horizon Podcast 5 – Designing Future Security: An International Roundtable on the Military Design Movement*, ITunes or Soundcloud, Over the Horizon Podcast Series, accessed 12 February 2018, at: <https://overthe-horizonmdos.com/2018/02/12/podcast-5-design-ing-future-security-an-international-roundtable-on-the-military-design-movement/.>

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44  Operation *Renaissance* 13-1, at < http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad/op-renais-sance.page>.

45  Colonel Stefan J. Banach and Dr. Alex Ryan. "The Art of Design: A Design Methodology," in *Military Review* (March-April 2009), pp. 105-115.

46  Senge, p. 8

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An HMCS *Whitehorse* crew member programs coordinates into the GPS of a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) in the Pacific Ocean during Operation *Caribbe*, 12 April 2019.

# The *Road to Mental Readiness* Program: Social Innovation or Smokescreen?

by Dave Blackburn

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## Introduction

A program comprises a coordinated set of goals, specific objectives, sequentially organized content, training aids, learning activities, and procedures designed to evaluate whether the program's objectives have been attained.[1] The final component of a program – the evaluation procedures – is especially important, as that is what makes it possible to judge the program's value, utility, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and to propose improvements or, in some cases, a shutdown of the program.[2] In fact, the primary role of the evaluation is to develop procedures for measuring a program's performance.[3]

For a federal department such as the Department of National Defence, program evaluation is a way of generating the feedback required by decision makers throughout program life cycles. That feedback not only helps with decision making and program improvement, but also contributes to ensuring that the program is accountable to elected officials and ultimately to the taxpayers.[4] Consequently, program evaluation involves a rigorous, systematic procedure for gathering and analyzing data on programs.[5] To pave the way for drawing conclusions and making recommendations, it must be agreed that evaluation is a specific function, that it must be carried out by independent evaluators, and that the evaluation report must be afforded a certain visibility in order to highlight its legitimacy and its importance.[6]

The *Road to Mental Readiness* (R2MR) Program (*En route vers la préparation mentale* (RVPM) in French) was developed beginning in 2008[7] by Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS)

clinicians and military personnel, at the request of the Chief of Military Personnel and the Surgeon General and with guidance and direction from the Mental Health Education Advisory Committee (MHEAC).[8] Other partners such as the Land Force Doctrine and Training System, the now-defunct Joint Speakers Bureau, Operational Stress Injury Social Support, Defence Research and Development Canada, and the Director Military Family Services also collaborated in developing the program.[9] The objective of the R2MR program is "to improve short term performance and long term mental health outcomes"[10] of CAF members and their families, by means of training modules included in career courses and pre- and post-deployment courses. Without question, the program's objective is a bold one, given the complexity of the mental health field and the specificities of a military career, which may accentuate the risk factors contributing to the development of operational stress injuries and affect performance.[11, 12]

The fundamental question is whether a training program delivered in a classroom setting can realistically hope to achieve that objective. Is the R2MR program effective, relevant, useful and efficient? Currently, it is impossible to answer those crucial questions, because no formative and summative evaluation of the R2MR program as a whole has ever been conducted.

> **"The R2MR program provides complete training and education in mental health."**



SURGEON GENERAL'S MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY
Canadian Forces Health Services Group

AN EVOLUTION OF EXCELLENCE

National Defence, Government of Canada

This article invites reflection on the need for a summative evaluation of the R2MR program in order to assess its true contributions to performance and the mental health of CAF members and their families. Without this type of program evaluation, doubts will linger concerning the program's validity and effectiveness.

Before I proceed, in the interest of transparency, I must disclose that from 2011 to 2014 I was the manager of the *Road to Mental Readiness* program in my capacity as a staff officer at the CAF Mental Health Directorate. Through that proximity to the program, I acquired a thorough knowledge of its inner workings and its strengths and weaknesses. However, for ethical reasons, I waited a few years before undertaking an analysis of the R2MR program and writing this article. Taking a step back gave me the necessary perspective to approach those tasks objectively.

## The *Road to Mental Readiness* (R2MR) Program

The initial rationale behind the creation of the R2MR program was that mental health training in preparation for a deployment should be repatriated to Ottawa, as there were a number of different training programs being given on various CAF bases at the time. The idea was to have a single national program for mental preparation of members and their families and to centralize development of the program's content and delivery at Canadian Forces Health Services Headquarters in Ottawa.[13] The local initiatives would disappear or be absorbed into the new program. That included the *Programme d'entraînement en résilience militaire* (PERM), the military resilience training program developed by a psychologist, Christine Routhier, and her team and delivered at CFB Valcartier.[14]

The R2MR program provides complete training and education in mental health. It was developed to increase mental health literacy (in the sense of the concept proposed by Jorm *et al.*[15]) and to improve resilience and mental toughness.[16] Above all, the R2MR program is a brand that encompasses all the courses on resilience offered at various stages in a military career cycle and all the training phases offered to CAF members and their families within a deployment cycle.[17] Figure 1 illustrates the R2MR program in relation to the career cycle and the deployment cycle.

Let's take a closer look at the deployment cycle of the R2MR program, which is made up of six phases. The first three phases of training are given to members and their families during the pre-deployment period. The last three phases are given to members and their families during the post-deployment period. Phase 4 is delivered at a Third Location Decompression (TLD) site, usually in Cyprus or Germany. The deployment-specific training was developed for CAF members and their families in the context of Canadian operations in Afghanistan.
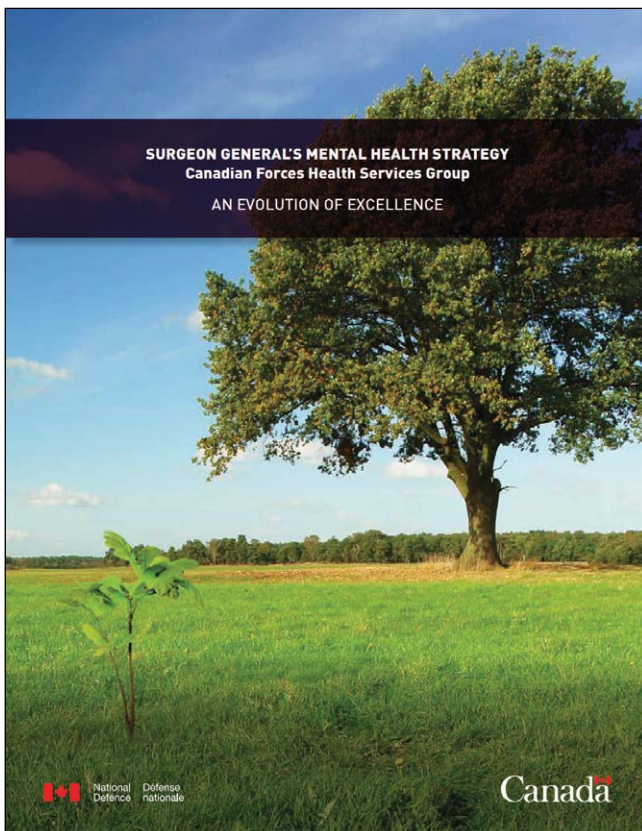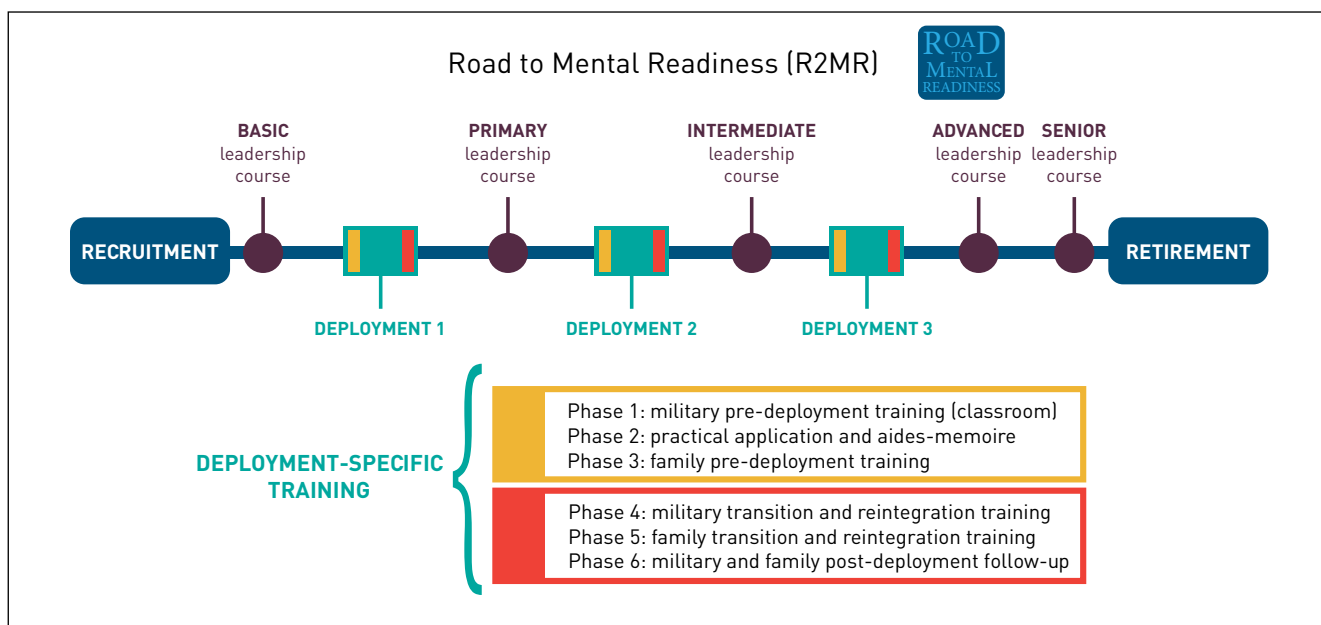
Figure 1: Institutionalization of resilience.

For the purposes of this article, we will focus specifically on Phase 1 (military pre-deployment training) of the deployment cycle. This first phase takes the form of one day of classroom training co-delivered by a current or former CAF member and a mental health professional, both of whom have taken five days of qualification training.[18] Phase 1 consists of nine modules focusing on the following subjects: Mental health and deployment (50 min); Mental toughness and the brain (50 min); The Big Four strategies (40 min); Psychological preparation (30 min); Values, beliefs and meaning (30 min); Family considerations (50 min); Mental health first aid for self and peers (40 min); and Practical applications (30 min).[19]

Once the members have completed Phase 1 of the deployment cycle in the R2MR program, they are supposed to be able to understand reactions to stress, recognize the challenges and their impact, learn and apply strategies for mitigating the impact and recognize when to seek outside help.[20] The R2MR program is compared to a psychological bullet-proof vest, and the claim is made that after absorbing the information and learning the techniques taught in the various phases of the program, members will be effectively armoured.[21]

The case for the R2MR is made as follows on the program's website: "Research has shown that educational approaches such as *Road to Mental Readiness* are having a positive effect on reducing mental health stigma, encouraging individuals to seek care, removing barriers to accessing care, and providing leaders at all levels with a better understanding of what they can do to assist fellow CAF members."[22, 23]

**"There is no generally agreed-upon definition of military readiness in the general or military scientific literature."**

## Mental Preparation: A Key Component of Military Individual Readiness (IR)

R2MR training "is designed to ensure that the most appropriate training is provided when required to ensure CAF personnel are prepared mentally for the challenges they may encounter…. R2MR… has a solid foundation in the concept of resilience. Resilience is the capacity of a soldier to recover quickly, resist, and possibly even thrive in the face of direct/indirect traumatic events and adverse situations in garrison, training and operational environments."[24]

That statement raises many questions. Claiming, in the absence of any evaluation, that a program like the R2MR, delivered in a classroom for a few hours out of an entire military career, can teach all the tools required in order to be "prepared mentally" diminishes the complex, multidisciplinary concept of military individual readiness (MIR), when that concept should be central to a program like the R2MR.

There are several different functional definitions of military individual readiness. Some researchers[25, 26] define it from the point of view of the individual and include only cognitive dimensions. Others[27, 28] take a more holistic perspective, defining MIR as including social factors. There is no generally agreed-upon definition of military individual readiness in the general or military scientific literature. Tucker, Sinclair and Thomas state that there is no real consensus on the concept of readiness or on a functional definition.[29] However, there is consensus within the scientific community regarding certain common elements of the concept of readiness, which is defined as being "prepared mentally or physically for some experience or action."[30] One strength of that

definition is that it emphasizes the mental and physical aspects as key elements in readiness. Mental preparedness is therefore a component of military individual readiness.

In the military context, Reineck[31] defines readiness as "the state of being prepared for something about to be done or experienced." Sharp and English[32] use the term "personal operational readiness" as an equivalent to "individual readiness" and define it as "the physical, operational and psychological preparedness of an individual to deploy."[33] Their definition emphasizes psychological condition (preparation for deployment and ability to manage the stressors associated with deployment) or, in other words, the ability to cope with being separated from immediate family members and with the event of deployment itself. Tucker *et al.* had previously proposed that individual readiness should be considered as "the capability of an individual soldier or a unit to perform assigned duties."[34] But that definition does not specify the elements which enable an individual to achieve that capability. Even earlier, Caliber Associates had provided a fuller definition of MIR, calling it "the extent to which an individual is prepared (trained), able (skills), and motivated (morale, desire, concern, etc.) to perform his/her job as part of the larger military mission."[35] Caliber Associates emphasizes the importance of an individual's training, skills and motivation in building his or her readiness.

In addition, theories like that of McGonigle *et al.* show that the concept is multidimensional and that each dimension has direct and indirect impacts on people. Individual readiness includes a component called "motivation." For example, Shamir, Brainin, Zakay and Poper[36] consider individual readiness to be a combination of morale and the effective influence the group will have on the individual. Group morale represents the motivational component of individual readiness, and it is connected to the group's collective sense of efficacy, in a context where it is taken for granted that the group has the ability to perform effectively.

Although discussing several types of readiness (family, individual, unit and service) might be somewhat confusing, the variations between the definitions of individual readiness reveal the multidisciplinarity and complexity of the concept. Morrison and Fletcher[37] believe that one of the key elements of individual readiness is cognitive readiness. They define the cognitive aspect as a person's degree of mental preparedness to perform in accordance with the "established standards" in the complex and uncertain military environment. Specifically, the cognitive aspect is mental preparation, which includes skills and competencies, learning, motivations and dispositions that a person must develop.[38] Cognition plays a role in the art of expecting the unexpected and being able to adapt successfully to stressful situations. Morrison and Fletcher[39] also believe that individual readiness (cognitive aspect) is influenced more by psychological than by physical or social factors. Those psychological factors include intelligence, personality, dispositions, motivation,

emotions, beliefs and attitudes. Adam, Hall and Thomson[40] are of the opinion that the cognitive aspect is too inclusive to adequately define individual readiness. They note that when the cognitive aspect is emphasized as the central element of individual readiness, other dimensions (social, professional, cultural and familial) are largely neglected. In their view, individual readiness is the product of individual skills, knowledge and experiences, but it is impossible to separate an individual from his or her social, professional and cultural environment, and the type of environment has an impact on individual readiness. Reineck's[41] definition of readiness is interesting in that it takes into consideration not only the individual aspect, but also the group and the system in which the individual functions. Thus, Reineck characterizes individual readiness as "a dynamic concept with dimensions at the individual, group, and system levels, which, together, influence one's ability to prepare to accomplish the mission."[42] Individual readiness is one component of a system (and a system in itself) and interacts with other systems (family readiness, unit readiness and service readiness). A lack of readiness in one or more of the systems can interfere with achieving and maintaining a member's individual readiness.

It follows that service readiness, which is characteristic of all military forces, depends on the readiness of the units, and so on. In the case of a deployment for which family preparation is inadequate, the entire service may suffer the consequences. According to Adam, Hall and Thomson,[43] that conceptualization is reductive in that it does not take into account the complexity of the multiple systems which may influence individual readiness. As examples, they cite influences from Canadian society or the identities within a service (DND and the CAF). However, they agree that the level of individual readiness is an integral component that is supported by a number of other systems.
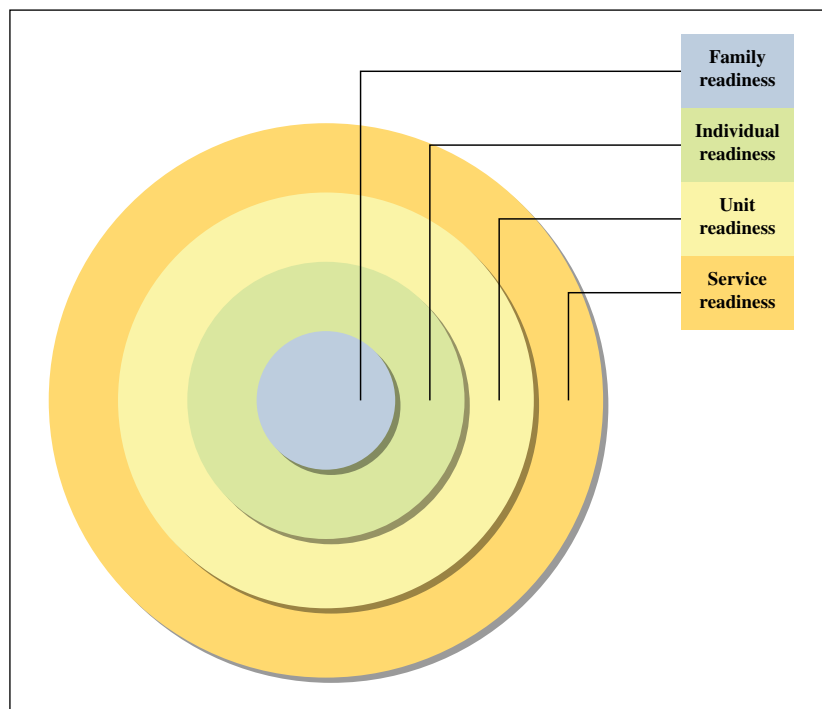


**Family readiness**

**Individual readiness**

**Unit readiness**

**Service readiness**

McGonigle, Casper, Meiman, Cronin, Cronin and Harris, 2005

Figure 2: Levels of readiness and their interactions.

For Thompson and McCreary,[44] individual readiness is malleable to some degree – like physical fitness, which can be improved by exercising and playing sports. That idea is based on the assumption that individual readiness is a way of being (i.e., the development of a unique way of thinking) rather than the sum of many competencies, and that it can therefore be improved through training and preparation.

In light of all of these elements which may be part of the conceptualization of military individual readiness, including mental preparation, I have serious questions about the impact of the R2MR program and, objectively, how likely it is to achieve its stated objectives.

## Summative Evaluation of the R2MR Program

It is important to note at the outset that a complete evaluation of the R2MR program would require evaluating each phase of each cycle individually, then conducting an overall evaluation. That would undoubtedly be a massive task, but it is necessary in order to validate whether the program is achieving its intended outcome and whether it is valuable and useful to the members and their families.

According to the Canadian Evaluation Society, "Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation or results of an initiative for the purposes of learning or decision-making."[45]

To the best of my knowledge, there is no document, report or scientific article that presents the results of a complete formal evaluation, both formative and summative, of the R2MR program.[46] As such, there is no scientific proof that the R2MR program is able to achieve its primary objectives or help prepare CAF members and their families mentally.[47]

Yet, in the spirit of recognition, improvement and validation, the R2MR program would benefit greatly from a summative evaluation. This type of evaluation involves "systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs, services, policy, or processes, in order to make judgments about the program/process, improve effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future development."[48] The data gathered as part of the summative evaluation is used for the purpose of "judging the merit or worth of a program at the end of the program activities, and [the evaluation] usually focuses on outcomes."[49]

As part of a presentation to the PTSD Conference 2016, held at Memorial University, a senior staff officer who manages the R2MR program noted that the program had been evaluated.[50] What that officer described as an evaluation consisted of a pre- and post-training questionnaire completed by about 28,000 of the approximately 54,000 CAF members who participated in the R2MR program from 2008 to 2013. The results showed "[s]ignificant increases in knowledge and confidence" and "[m]oderate effect sizes on stigma related questions."[51]

> "It is important to note at the outset that a complete evaluation of the R2MR program would require evaluating each phase of each cycle individually, then conducting an overall evaluation."

However, it is clear that administering a questionnaire before and after the training and comparing the results (the means) using a paired-sample Student's $t$-test and the calculation of Cohen's $d$ does not constitute a summative evaluation of a program. Moreover, effect size is a descriptive measure that cannot be used to judge the significance of the variance between the pre- and post-questionnaire means. In order to show significance, it must be demonstrated that the difference between the means of the two groups is not due to chance.[52]

Two studies have actually been done on the R2MR program, but they do not directly evaluate it. In 2014, Fikretoglu, Beaty and Liu of Defence Research and Development Canada published the results of one of them: "The primary purpose of this study was to compare the two different versions (Versions 5 and 6) of R2MR that were recently developed to identify the version that may lead to better receipt and enactment of key R2MR concepts, especially stress management (and Cognitive Restructuring) skills."[53] In 2011, two researchers at the CAF Mental Health Directorate completed a study that compared the R2MR program (the new program used by the CAF) and *Battlemind* (the U.S. program formerly used by the CAF) in terms of perceived value and impact (according to CAF members decompressing in Cyprus).[54]

In the final analysis, the fact that no summative evaluation has ever been conducted of the R2MR program diminishes it considerably. Programs are evaluated periodically in order to validate their relevance and quality. But such evaluations also help establish consistency between the direction, objectives, needs, content, developments in the field of activity involved, teaching strategies, support provided for application of learning, and the human resources and material, technological and informational resources required by a given program.[55]

## Social Innovation or Smokescreen?

All things considered, the fact that the R2MR program has not been evaluated since its introduction almost 10 years ago is problematic in many respects. In recent years, the R2MR program has continued to develop and expand, even beyond the frameworks of the Department of National Defence. In a short time, thanks to a strong brand and targeted outreach, it has come to be regarded as a panacea. Since 2013, the R2MR program has grown by offering training for specialized occupations, the Special Forces, members of the Navy, the Disaster Assistance Response Team and even civilian police forces and emergency responders.

Within and now outside the CAF, the R2MR program is perceived as functional and as achieving its objectives. The Mental Health Commission of Canada, which coordinates the civilian version of the R2MR program delivered to police forces, states on its website, "Preliminary evaluation results show that participating in R2MR training reduces stigma that often surrounds mental health problems and mental illness and increases resiliency…."[56]

A loadmaster from 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron, Greenwood, Nova Scotia, launches smoke indicators as part of a simulated mission during an Advanced Search and Rescue Exercise, conducted from 17 to 21 September 2018, in the Azores Islands.

The belief that the R2MR program is effective and is achieving its objectives is becoming more and more deeply rooted in the CAF. A few years ago, I was a member of a board of inquiry into the suicide of a CAF member. As part of the board's work, we conducted interviews with a number of CAF members who had interacted with the person who had committed suicide. During one interview, a superior of the deceased member said, with great seriousness and conviction, "[translation] But he had done the *Road to Mental Readiness* program before his deployment! He had the tools to not commit suicide." However, Phase 1 of the deployment cycle in the R2MR program consists of only four or five slides on suicidal behaviour. The R2MR program is not in any way an integrated suicide-prevention program.

On balance, and despite the fact that it has not yet been evaluated, does the R2MR program represent a social innovation?

There is an existing definition that may help answer that question: the Réseau québécois pour l'innovation sociale defines social innovation as "[translation] a new idea, approach or intervention, a new service, a new product, a new law or a new type of organization that responds more effectively and more sustainably than the existing solutions to a well-defined social need; a solution that has been adopted within an institution, an organization or

a community and that produces a measurable benefit for the community, not only for certain individuals. The scope of a social innovation is transformative and systemic. In its inherent creativity, it constitutes a break with the status quo."[57]

It may be tempting to say that the R2MR program is a social innovation, as it meets several of the criteria from the above definition. Of course, it must be admitted that the R2MR program is first and foremost a collage or montage of knowledge, techniques and tools from multiple disciplines such as sports psychology and from other similar programs. The R2MR program does not reinvent the wheel.[58] There is nothing revolutionary about it, aside from the fact that it was developed within an organization, the CAF, which until a few years ago was more reactive than proactive regarding psychological difficulties and the mental preparation of its personnel.

In addition, a social innovation must produce a "measurable benefit." The CAF members and their families who participate in Phase 1 of the deployment cycle in the R2MR program must make measurable gains in comparison with their condition prior to the program. To find out whether the R2MR program has beneficial effects, we must implement a scientific methodology for program evaluation in which data is collected that can reveal results and

> **"It may be tempting to say that the R2MR program is a social innovation, as it meets several of the criteria from the above definition."**

Portrait taken on location of Warrant Officer James Gourlie during Exercise *Common Gunner*, in the training area (Airstrip 1) at the 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown, Oromocto, New Brunswick, 30 April 2019.

generate indicators. The program must also be able to demonstrate that it is meeting its objectives in connection with the intervention processes, the short-term objectives and the long-term objectives, as established in the program logic model.[59]

In that case, if the *Road to Mental Readiness* program is not a social innovation, does that mean it is merely a smokescreen?

Not necessarily, at least not across the board. Many components of the R2MR program may be useful for CAF members who are to be deployed on an operational mission. Teaching the Big Four strategies may help members manage their activation levels and make better decisions. On the other hand, I am personally convinced that the R2MR program, even if it were to be evaluated, will never be able to achieve its main objectives. The field of mental preparation is not well known enough; it is vast, complex and multidisciplinary; and the impact of a classroom training course may be influenced by numerous factors, including preparation, experience, time management, management of the individuals and the instructors, and the size of the class.[60]

## Conclusion

In conclusion, can transmitting knowledge about certain key mental-health concepts really improve short-term performance and long-term results with respect to mental health?

In fact, there is reason to question what exactly is meant by improving short-term performance and long-term results in terms of mental health. Are we talking about successfully managing stressors related to deployment and doing one's work without errors? Are we talking about not developing psychopathologies? Those objectives are broad and vague, and they do not reflect favourably on the R2MR program.

Personally, based on my theoretical knowledge, my clinical and professional experience, and my deployment in Afghanistan, I very much doubt that acquiring theoretical knowledge in a classroom can really protect, and even "armour," a CAF member – that is to say, a human being – in all his or her complexity, when that person faces the realities of deployment in a theatre of operations and a potential operational stress injury. I have carefully summarized the complex, multidisciplinary concept of military individual readiness in order to demonstrate that mental preparation is only one of the components of overall individual preparation and the various forms of readiness. I may be wrong, but I believe that as long as the R2MR program has not been the subject of a summative evaluation, it cannot claim to be achieving its objectives.

The message conveyed about the impact of the R2MR program must be transparent and honest, because the men and women in uniform, as well as their families, deserve that. We must stop promoting the program by claiming that it is evidence-based.[61]

The R2MR program uses components (for example, the Big Four strategies) which have been validated within other mental preparation programs such as the one used by the U.S. Navy Seals.[62] However, we cannot assume that a component which has been validated in Program X will automatically be validated in Program Y. Such reasoning is flawed and unscientific, and it only illustrates an inadequate understanding of the concept of evidence-based decision making. Developing and validating a program does not mean obtaining a large number of previously validated components and putting them together in the belief that we will thus automatically obtain a validated, effective program. That would be like saying, "We're going to build a super-vehicle by taking parts from a Porsche, a Ferrari, a Jaguar, a Lamborghini and a McLaren." Each of those cars is unique, and each functions thanks to a set of components specific to it.[63] We know very well that putting together parts from all of them will not produce a superior car. The same principle applies in program development.

Each time a rotation is repatriated from a CAF mission, a few members will return to Canada with symptoms resulting from potentially traumatic experiences in theatre. Unfortunately, some of them will develop operational stress injuries such as depression, alcohol dependency and post-traumatic stress disorder. Neither the *Road to Mental Readiness* program nor any other program currently in place in the CAF can claim that it is a psychological bullet-proof vest[64] for the brain or that it is protecting members' brains. Mental health is complex, and it is a field in which many mysteries remain to be solved.

In short, the *Road to Mental Readiness* program must be evaluated in its entirety in order to determine whether it has the capacity to meet its objectives effectively, or whether the whole thing should be scrapped and a new program created. The program was developed and is administered with public funds that come from Canadian taxpayers; therefore, managers at the Department of National Defence must be accountable to the Minister and other elected officials, who in turn must justify the program's existence to Canadians. In addition, all programs have a life cycle. Now that the combat mission in Afghanistan is a thing of the past, is training that is based on the deployment cycle still useful and valuable?

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, a summative evaluation of the R2MR program is required in order to determine the program's future. The evaluation must be conducted by a team of university researchers or a team of program evaluation experts who are independent of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence. And at last, everyone will finally agree that this type of evaluation should have been conducted long ago!

**CMJ**

> **"Each time a rotation is repatriated from a CAF mission, a few members will return to Canada with symptoms resulting from potentially traumatic experiences in theatre."**



DND photo XC54-2019-0008-02 by Captain Annie Morin

Crew members of HMCS *Yellowknife* gather around the Pelorus (compass) on the bridge while enroute in the Pacific Ocean, 28 March 2019.

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Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin greet each other in the Kremlin.

# "*A black cat in the dark room*"[1]: Russian Quasi-Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) – 'Non-existent,' but Deadly and Useful

## by Sergey Sukhankin

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### Introduction

An event that took place in early-February 2018, near Deir el-Zour, a city in eastern Syria, resulting in the decimation of between 60 and 200 Russian mercenaries[2] fighting on the side of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, brought into the limelight the issue of Russian private military contractors – a tool of power politics allegedly increasingly relied upon by Moscow. A seemingly-local incident in a far-flung Syrian province uncovered unsavory details pertaining to activities of Russian quasi-Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) – a phenomenon of great complexity and outreach. This article will discuss Russian quasi-PMSCs from different aspects, concentrating upon the following key themes:

- Emergence, evolution, and development of Russian PMSCs/irregular forces through the lens of history;

- Main disadvantages *characteristic of* and *associated with* Russian PMSCs;

- Key functions and missions performed, depending upon the geographic theatre; and

- The nascent 'division of responsibilities' between various Russian quasi-PMSCs.

From a methodological point of view, this article will make extensive references to Russian-language sources, as well as to the results of the author's own research on the subject.

## Continuity and Tradition: Why History Still Matters

Russia's employment of private military groups and non-state actors has had a long historical tradition that dates back to the late-16th Century. Summarizing this experience from this perspective, and up until 2013-2014, the following usages or functions were ascertained:[3]

1) *Geo-political functions* with the Livonian War (1558–1583)[4] and the Time of Troubles (1598–1613)[5] serve as first examples. These practices, which first occurred within the pre-1917 period, also blossomed after the outbreak of the Cold War, which gave rise to multiple regional conflicts that erupted in parts of Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, state-sponsored/controlled use of non-state actors[6] was replaced by private initiatives and 'volunteerism' (Transnistria, South Caucasus, and the Balkans). Despite limited scope (1991–1995), this interim usage period was important from an operational prospective,[7] resulting in the emergence of a large group of individuals further sub-divided into: (a) ideology-driven militants ("*adventurists*") guided by anti-Western sentiments, ready to participate as militants in other regional conflicts for little-or-no pecuniary stimuli (Igor Strelkov/Girkin participated in the Balkan War, and would later use this experience in Ukraine); and (b) profit-driven militants ("*mercenaries*") that either joined domestic criminal groups and/or offered their services to foreign PMCs.

2) *Geo-economic functions* fitting the "power economy" concept (*silovya ekonomika*) described by Professor Alexandr Ageev "…as a state-controlled system of coercion (including a reliance upon limited-scale military conflicts, if necessary) aimed at realizing economic goals."[8] Examining utilization from this perspective, the first state-sponsored instances of using non-state actors can be traced to the expedition of Yermak Timofeyevich (1582–1584), which was handsomely-*financed* by the virtually-omnipotent Stroganov family, but was *de-facto procured* by the Russian state. In effect, Russia's subsequent colonization of Siberia and the Far East followed this pattern. The gap that emerged after 1917 (the collapse of the Russian monarchy) lasted until the end of the USSR, and re-appeared in a different form only during the late-1990s, with the emergence of quasi-PMSCs such as Antiterror-Orel, Antiterror, Redut-Antiterror, the RSB Group, and the Moran Security Group[9] that attempted to act as Western PMSCs, yet did not become competitive in global markets.

3) *Para-military functions* resting upon non-linear forms of warfare – an element of Russian/Soviet traditional strength. Within this domain, some distinctions should be introduced:

- The Imperial period (1721–1917), when the development and active employment of irregular military forces was premised upon eastern and southern expansion of the Russian Empire, and the need to integrate the non-Russian peoples within the architecture of the Russian state.[10] Therefore, this trend – irregular formations were primarily composed of the non-Russian peoples ("*inorodcheskiye wojska*") – survived all major regional conflicts fought by the Russian Empire until 1917.



*Lenin's Arrival at the Finland Station in Petrograd,* on April 16, 1917.

*German infantrymen following a tank towards Moscow in the snow, Russia, 1941.* (Artist unknown).

- The Soviet period (1921–1988) ushered in a new milestone in the development of irregular forms of warfare, which greatly owed their development to the Russian Civil War (1917–1921), and the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945). In effect, lessons gleaned from these two debacles would be used in the creation of Special Forces (*Spetsnaz*).[11] Further, the Soviets would, through so-called 'military advisers' sent to the Third World countries, successfully confront the United States during regional conflicts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, while in the Middle East, active implementation of the Soviet experience of non-linear warfare, via the KGB, gave boost to the rise of contemporary terrorism.[12]

> **"Non-military functions were used in the pre-1917 period to extinguish what is now known as 'hybrid threats,' and they appeared to be regaining their former importance after 2011."**

4) *Non-military functions* were actively used in the pre-1917 period to extinguish what is now known as "hybrid threats," and they appeared to be regaining their former importance after 2011. It ought to be noted that Russian/Soviet traditions with respect to using irregulars and non-state actors also received a boost after 2010, due to the influence of hectic shifts in the Middle East – the so-called Arab Spring of late-2010.

## PMSCs *à la russe*

Employment of non-state military/security-related actors by Russia sharply contrasts with Western practices. In the West, the key objective boils down to a reduction of employment and operating costs, gaining efficiencies, and creating economies of scale.[13] In Russia, military-political considerations serve as the basis that determines other elements. A second key difference is the issue of *status*. From a legal prospective, Russia does not have PMSCs, *organization of/participation in* such entities is classified as "mercenary" and is punishable by the Russian Criminal Code (Article 359). Yet, these *de-jure* non-existent entities do *de-facto* exist, and factually, are occupying an increasingly-important role in the Kremlin's policies. This discrepancy can be explained by so-called "plausible deniability,"[14] – the ability of the Russian state to remain a stakeholder in areas of strategic geopolitical/economic interests without direct participation therein, thereby preserving a 'close-to-zero' level of accountability to both the *domestic* and the *international* audience. This is by no means new to Russia or the USSR. In effect, its continuity irrespectively of the epoch or political regime is best underscored by the "*Grechko – Grachev – Zakharova pattern.*"[15] There is every reason to believe that it is the advantage of "plausible deniability" that has stood behind Russia's unyielding determination to deny legal status to PMSCs, in spite of the fact that an intensive debate regarding the subject has been dragging on since at least 2012, and the Russian General Staff even started to entertain the idea in 2010.[16]

The lack of legal status does not mean to imply the *absence* of these entities. In effect, quasi-PMSCs are pieces of a larger puzzle that fully complies with Russia's changing perception of warfare frequently ascribed to Russia's Chief of General Staff, Army General Valery Gerasimov.[17] Nonetheless, these ideas had, in one form or another, been discussed by such prominent military thinkers as Evgeny Messner, Vladimir Slipchenko, and Nikolai Ogarkov, and theymerely received fresh impetus by virtue of the influence of the developments in the Middle East between and 2010–2013. Therefore, Russia's growing interest and

At this juncture, it must be noted that the year 2013 was of crucial importance. It signified practical implementation of previously-elaborated theoretical precepts fully complying with the "new generation warfare" concept promoted by General Gerasimov. This process took a double-track form, reflected in the creation of the *Special Operations Forces* (SOF) – a force directly subordinated to the General Staff – fully commensurate with the realities of non-linear confrontation of the new type.[19] Designed as a force

General Valery Gerasimov and President Vladimir Putin visit the Tsugol Range to observe the main stage of the Vostok 2018 military exercises held jointly by the Russian Armed Forces and the Chinese People's Liberation Army, 13 September 2018.

reconsideration of non-linear warfare is a by-product of a combination of Russia's own experiences and global trends, expressed in a combination of the following factors:[18]

- *The changing nature and evolution of warfare*, reflected in the necessity to wage counter-insurgency campaigns (CIC) against non-state actors (guerilla forces, terrorists, pirates) without a clearly identified 'front line.' Clearly visible during the Libyan and Syrian civil wars, this factor intrigues Russian military thinkers for yet another reason which pertains to the United States and the West in general, namely, weakness in conflicts waged by rules of non-linear warfare.

- *The public negative perception of war casualties* – a factor especially relevant to Russia and the USSR, given their bitter experiences in Afghanistan (1979–1989), and Chechnya (1994–2000), and the impact thereof upon the state.

- *The new/non-typical tasks,* such as protection of infrastructure, and challenges faced by armed forces, requiring prompt and non-standard actions, which proved to be one of the main deficiencies of the Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan.

- *Commercialization of war* – an element neglected by the Soviet Union, and, until recently, the Russian Federation – where PMSCs are playing an increasingly-important role, one that accrues huge economic benefits.

> **"When speaking about operative theatres and the evolution of the Russian quasi-PMSCs, Syria and Ukraine occupy a very special role."**

capable of performing "…*reconnaissance, sabotage, subversive, counter-terrorism, counter-sabotage, counter-intelligence, guerrilla, anti-partisan and other actions*"[20] the SOFs are able to collaborate with local military formations, thereby liquidating the previously-observed deficiency of both the Soviet and the Russian armed forces.[21] Being "large army-type structures comprised of professionals of the highest quality," these formations are also able to operate in tactical groups/smaller formations, akin to the Soviet *Spetsnaz,*[22] and do not require any coordination with other armed forces branches.[23] A merger between Soviet traditions of *Spetsnaz* and challenges brought forth by the changing nature of war was explicitly demonstrated during civil wars in Libya and Syria. A second notable aspect pertained to emergence of the *Slavonic Corps Limited* – Russia's quasi-PMSC, and a predecessor of the Wagner Group created by Moran Group, destroyed in Syria in 2013 – as an attempt to commercialize warfare and change rules of the PMSCs dominated by the West. The post-2013 developments vividly demonstrated that both elements present two sides of a single phenomenon built upon principles of asymmetry and hybridity, past experience being merged with the changing nature of warfare.

### How the Steel was Tempered: Between Ukraine and Syria (2014–2018)

When speaking about operative theatres and the evolution of the Russian quasi-PMSCs, Syria and Ukraine occupy a very special role. The former became the 'birthplace' of contemporary Russian quasi-PMSCs (2013), a venue of their

'triumph' (2015–2017), the seeming 'graveyard' (2018), and the 'springboard' toward other missions. At the same time, Ukraine should be viewed as a 'testing ground' that helped to overcome initial deficiencies of the early Syrian period. Indeed, the role of both venues was best described by Igor Girkin/Strelkov, who stated: "…the Battle of Debaltseve [Ukraine] signified the process of genuine transformation of the Wagner Group from 'private security company' into a genuine shockwave formation, which would be fully completed later in Syria."[24]

The "Ukrainian Chapter" signified three crucial developments. First, evolutions of both the *tasks performed*, and the *role allocated* to the private military contractors. During the "Crimean Operation" (January – March 2014), quasi-PMSC groups played an auxiliary role to the SOF; while later, when hostilities on the Ukrainian Southeast entered into an active phase (May 2014), these forces (the Wagner Group and the ENOT Corps) assumed a central role in operations on the territory of the Luhansk Oblast. Notably, missions carried out by members of quasi-PMSCs ranged from frontal attacks akin to shock-wave troops (the Battle of the Luhansk Airport; the Battle of Debaltseve), to intelligence gathering and information-psychological operations, and elements of classical guerilla warfare (The Il-76 'shoot down'), as well as subversive actions, such as the liquidation of the 'opposition forces' among separatists. A second aspect is premised upon the ability of these groups to *transfer* and successfully to *apply* the knowledge gained in other regional conflicts.



Oleg Zabielin/Alamy Stock Photo/H344EJ

Soviet *Spetsnaz* in Afghanistan.



ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo/DWE8YB

Alleged Russian soldiers in full body armour and armed with assault rifles next to the besieged Ukrainian Military Base in Simferopol, Crimea (Ukraine), 5 March 2014.

For instance, while in Ukraine, the Wagner Group operated with small and highly-maneuverable groups, extensively relying upon off-road vehicles[25] – an element that must have been adopted in Syria, in view of the *de-facto* calamitous experience of the Slavonic Corps, which was destroyed by the jihadists using the same tactic. The third element that emerged was the "division of responsibilities" between various mercenary groups. For example, hostilities in the Ukrainian Southeast highlighted the emergence of the Private Military Company (PMC) MAR, allegedly under the protection of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB), established in Saint Petersburg in 2014, and MAR took part in the annexation of Crimea and ensued hostilities in the Southeast, which unlike the Wagner Group, did not take a direct part in military operations, concentrating upon non-typical (for armed groups) missions, such as logistics and the protection of critical infrastructure.[26] The post-2017 period showed that the Wagner's role in Ukraine has primarily shifted toward being the force employed as a means to prop-up a current quasi-independent regime loyal to Moscow, and also the training of locally recruited militants, which is commensurate with functions performed by Russian military contractors in Africa.[27]

In Syria (2013–2018), Russian quasi-PMSCs were allocated a crucial role in ground military hostilities from the very inception of their mission, acting as shockwave troops and bearing the greatest amount of hardships in frontal attacks against anti-Assad forces.[28] Owing to the factor of "plausible deniability," it is very hard to accurately estimate their losses, or even the cumulative number of private military contractors who have taken part in hostilities, suffered by Russian mercenaries. The best example – the military encounter near Deir el-Zour – where some sources have claimed Russian mercenaries lost up to 200 men (and some sources have claimed even more), whereas an official Russian statement claimed only five Russian citizens to have been killed,[29] as well as "several dozens wounded."[30] It is interesting that the evident lack of clarity on the matter of Russian PMSCs may have already become a subject of information obfuscation used by the Russian side to cloud the issue to an even greater extent.[31] Therefore, based upon available information (and confirmed by several sources/accounts/testimonies), it is possible to make several inferences with respect to the activities of Russian quasi-PMSCs in Syria. Most importantly, visible upward trajectory is intact. The defeat in early-2018 is a separate case study and should not deceive observers with its results. Following a significant failure in 2013, specifically, the defeat of the Slavonic Corps near Al-Sukhnah, the Wagner Group would perform extremely successful missions, playing a decisive role in the first (March 2016) and second (March 2017) Palmira offensives, and also some smaller engagements near Latakia and Aleppo. In fact, a statement by Colonel General Aleksandr Dvornikov, then-commander of the Russian Armed Forces in Syria (2016),[32] and the accounts of some former Wagner fighters, suggest that in Syria Russian quasi-PMSCs were used, for the first time ever, together with the SOF in a military mission, where the mercenaries acted as shockwave troops, while the latter were used as elite *Spetsnaz*. Incidentally, this model, which proved to be workable in Syria, could be employed by the Russian side

Aleppo, Syria, 2 February 2017. Russian servicemen with a service dog taking part in a mine clearing operation at the Citadel of Aleppo.

in other theatres in the event of an outbreak of instability and/or a confrontation with NATO and/or United States forces, and presumably, even more successfully.

In the final analysis, the Ukrainian and Syrian cases have drawn upon three crucial qualities, each of which were greatly attributable to the "plausible deniability" advantage, showcased by Russian quasi-PMSCs. First, it afforded a very high level of flexibility, meaning that Russian mercenaries "…can come from and be deployed anywhere."[33] Second, they are extremely low cost, both in terms of economic expenditures, with the average salary ranging between $1,500 and $3,600 per month, depending upon the qualifications required, the theatre of operations, and the complexity of the mission.[34] And in the Syrian case, *de-facto* costs were covered by the Syrian side. Further, the Kremlin's reputation both domestically, where the majority of the Russian audience has no sentiments toward 'mercenaries,' and abroad, in some sense, the impact of quasi-PMSCs might even be beneficial for the Kremlin from an information-psychological prospective, which, given their lack of a legal status, leaves "…no opportunity for the West to bring their members before a court." *Ultimately*, and, perhaps, *most importantly*, between 2013 and 2018, Russian quasi-PMSCs proved to be capable of *creating* and *maintaining control* over zones of instability, including artificial ignition of tensions and anti-governmental sentiments among a local population – an indispensable quality in the "new generation warfare" framework.

### Beyond 2018: Business and Ideology

The post-2018 period has produced new lines in the evolution of Russian quasi-PMSCs that have included the expansion of geographic theatres and the growing importance of the non-military (geo-political and geo-strategic) components. Specifically, intensification of Russia's involvement in Africa, consisting primarily of activities with resource-endowed, yet politically unstable and internationally-isolated countries, is actively supported by the use of quasi-PMSCs. Up until now, the presence of Russian private military contractors has been officially confirmed in the Central African Republic (CAR),[35] Sudan,[36] and Libya (in 2012).[37] However, *unofficially*, this operative theatre also includes Burundi, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Yemen and Mozambique.[38] The post-2014 period has demonstrated that Moscow "…has intensified pursuit of opportunities along the Libya–South Sudan–Democratic Republic of Congo–Ethiopia–Somalia–Yemen perimeter," which in turn could be seen as an attempt to increase its influence in "…the whole of East Africa…. including Tanzania, Burundi, Botswana and even Angola, where Russia is already involved in the extraction of diamonds and has ambitions to grow its share in development of hydrocarbons."[39] Indeed, in comparison with China, France, and the United States, Russia's opportunities in Africa might seem meagre for the moment, and yet this is reversible, since Moscow *does* have its strengths, with the provision of "security export"[40] being one of them. It ought to be noted that in Africa, both for tasks ascribed to the Russian quasi-PMSCs and the regular forces employed, they drastically

> **"It ought to be noted that in Africa, both for tasks ascribed to the Russian quasi-PMSCs and the regular forces employed, they drastically differ from tasks ascribed in Syria and Ukraine."**

differ from tasks ascribed in Syria and Ukraine. Specifically, Russia's involvement in Africa has allegedly led toward the emergence of a new quasi-PMSC named Patriot, which, unlike the Wagner Group, is said to be composed of top-notch professionals/members of the Russian military, and is tasked with functions that are more commensurate with Western practices (such as non-participation in combats).[41] Also available are Sewa Security Services, which is said to be closely related to Yevgeny Khodotov, who worked for Yevgeny Prigozhyn, an alleged sponsor of the Wagner Group and The Internet Research Agency, aka the Troll Farm.[42] Furthermore, it is important to note that African countries with *alleged* (and *confirmed*) presence of Russian quasi-PMSCs, have become areas for the involvement of Russian political consultants and large sociological research, both of which are meant to boost the position of current ruling elites, as well as pro-Russian information campaigns also sponsored by Prigozhyn.[43]

A second aspect that has acquired a dangerously-new turn after 2018 pertains to youth military-patriotic upbringing, and the role of quasi-PMSCs therein. It is crucial to note that this component has been elevated by the Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Defense to the status of one of Russia's strategic projects, both at home and internationally, with the Youth Army (*Yunarmia*) taking the lead.[44] As noted by Alla Hurska of the Jamestown Foundation, the link between military-patriotic organizations and quasi-PMSCs is growing, which is visible in both Russia itself[45] and artificially-created zones of instability, such as the Ukrainian Southeast.[46] At the same time, one of the most nefarious examples of this strategy abroad was the infamous "Zlatibor affair" – a youth camp closed down by the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs during the summer of 2018. A local episode turned out to be a matter of huge political scandal that necessitated the personal involvement of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić to calm public discontent.[47] Later investigations, ultimately downplayed by the Serb authorities, unraveled a number of shocking details. As it turned out, training that also included anti-Western politization of the Serbian youths, was jointly conducted by the Veterans of the Yugoslav War Society (headed by Željko Vukelić) and the ENOT Corps, which took active part in hostilities that occurred in the Donbass and stood in the forefront of the formation of the Russian Union of Donbas Volunteers – an umbrella organization for the recruitment of mercenary forces.[48] What is more, it was later revealed that the Serbian officials had been informed about the camp well in advance, but did nothing to investigate its activities, while Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had concomitantly rendered its full support. This episode in Serbia uncovered yet another aspect, which draws upon existing ties between the Russian government, quasi-PMSCs, irregulars (Cossacks and the Night Wolves biker gang close to Vladimir Putin), and the clergy (both Russian and indigenous) – as a new trait of Russia's actions in the Balkans.

Those developments – growing involvement in Africa (and potentially, Latin America,[49] with Russian prominent military experts calling to challenge the United States via establishing an alliance with China according to the formula "Chinese money – Russian security"[50]), and the Balkans – underscore the fact that Russian quasi-PMSCs have gained in
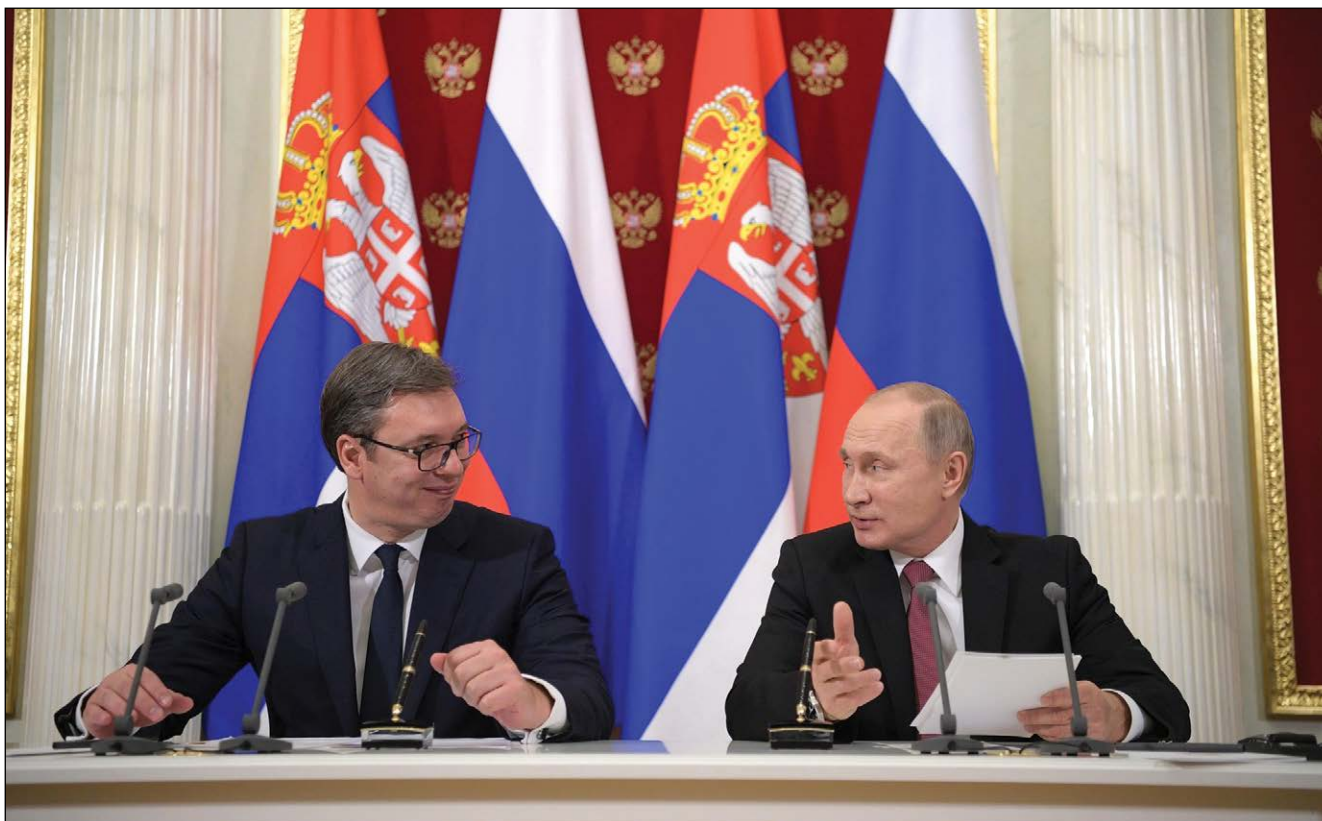
Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during a joint press conference with Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić in the Kremlin, 19 December 2017.

complexity and sophistication, and they should not be regarded as a separate and/or a standalone phenomenon. In effect, Russian quasi-PMSCs are an element of Russia's "*active measures 2.0*"[51] – which also includes misinformation/disinformation, indirect corruption, Information Operations (IOs), 'hacktivism,' and release of the 'kompromat,' (heavy-metal diplomacy) – a renewed strategy aimed at challenging the West in areas strategically important to Moscow.

## Conclusion

To be able to effectively confront Russian quasi-PMSCs, it requires the West to *elaborate upon* and *adopt* a non-standard game plan. Yet, first and foremost, an answer for the question as to how 'private' Russia's quasi-PMSCs actually *are*, needs to be determined. Some supplementary evidence (logistics, training, Command and Control, pertinence to the Military Intelligence Agency (GRU), and persons close to Kremlin) suggest these entities are not private, but are, in fact, state-sponsored/backed entities acting *in* Kremlin's interests and *with* its full support.[52] Additional complexity of the issue is stipulated by flexibility, universalism, and the 'close-to-no' level of responsibility of these entities – key qualities that have been demonstrated by quasi-PMSCs – elements that bar the West from using

27 November 2012. The first Cossack patrol commenced patrol duties near the Belorusskiy railway station in central Moscow.

either sanctions policy, or legal accountability (such as an appeal to the Montreux Document), or military measures to the fullest possible extent. Western key problems are based upon the following conditions: (a) legally, they do not exist; (b) they could be masked under the guise of 'military patriotic societies,' 'veteran organizations,' or 'security companies'; (c) they could be invited by legitimate political regimes under the guise of 'military instructors/specialists.' Moreover, if these structures enjoy the *support of,* or, what is more likely, are *coordinated by* the General Staff, the Military Intelligence Agency, the Federal Security Service, and possibly, the

Members of the Night Wolves Motorcycle Club attend a Prayer for the Day of Memory and Grief ceremony marking the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, Kaliningrad, Russia, 17 June 2015.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dealing with these higher-level entities is a matter of even greater difficulty and concern. At this juncture, three episodes should be mentioned. The

Servicemen of the Russian National Guard's Far Eastern Military District are photographed during a military oath ceremony at the Alley of Heroes, Vladivostok, Russia, 17 December 2016.

first, which occurred on 27 March 2018, is related to the issue of legalization of quasi-PMSCs. Despite the potential profitability and previous full-fledged support for legalization expressed by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, former Deputy Prime Minister for the Defence and Space Industry, Dmitry Rogozin, prominent *siloviki,* and even President Vladimir Putin himself, the initiative was ultimately and unanimously rejected by the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia), the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) and the Federal Guard Service of the Russian Federation (FSO).[53] A second episode pertains to Putin's remark of December 2018 pertaining to the Wagner Group "…being able to push forth their business interests in any place in the world,"[54] *de-facto* not only admitting existence of the group, but also giving a nod of approval for its operations/actions. The third episode (December 2016) relates to Dmitry Utkin, the alleged-commander of the Wagner Group and some of his associates, also related to the quasi-PMSCs, who participated in a gala organized in the Kremlin and were decorated with The Order of Courage – a fact that has been admitted by the Kremlin.[55]

Finally, yet another aspect that could be defined as the "hydra effect" must not be obfuscated. Indeed, the massacre of early-February 2018 near Deir el-Zour, with its concomitant heavy casualties, has not discouraged new members from joining quasi-PMSCs. This, however, is easily explained. Benefits that are received by private military contractors are incomparable with the hardships middle-aged men with military experience and their families have to face in Russia's far-flung provinces, especially given economic hardships Russia has been experiencing since 2013.[56]

> **"Indeed, the massacre of early-February 2018 near Deir el-Zour, with its concomitant heavy casualties, has not discouraged new members from joining quasi-PMSCs."**

CMJ



Advert in Russian language: "I am choosing the mercenary army service contract," photographed in the West Siberian city of Chelyabinsk, 15 December 2004.

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2   "Стрелков: от удара коалиции в Сирии погибли от ста до нескольких сотен военных из «ЧВК Вагнера,» вывезли несколько «КамАЗов» трупов," *Newsru.com*, 9 February 2018, at: https://www.newsru.com/russia/09feb2018/accuseklautod.html.

3   Sergey Sukhankin, "The Russian State's Use of Irregular Forces and Private Military Groups: From Ivan the Terrible to the Soviet Period," in *War by Other Means* (Washington: Jamestown Foundation, 12 April 2019) at: https://jamestown.org/program/the-russian-states-use-of-irregular-forces-and-private-military-groups-from-ivan-the-terrible-to-the-soviet-period/.

4   When a Dithmarschen-born merchant and pirate Carsten Rohde was employed by the Russian side to conduct military operations on the Baltic Sea against the Swedish and Polish naval forces.

5   The best example of this was the so-called "People's Militia" (*narodnoye opolcheniye*), first assembled in 1610 (presenting a unique mixture of military contractors and partisan/guerilla fighters drawn from both ethnic Russians and non-Russian peoples) managed to evict Polish forces from Moscow (1612), giving rise to the Romanov Dynasty (1613)

6   In the USSR, the term "non-state actors" is not really a recognized categorization or entity.

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10  This trend was visible until the end of the Caucasian War (1817–1864) fought by the Russian Empire against the indigenous population of the North Caucasus.

11  Interestingly enough, the idea to use experience of the Soviet-Nazi war (1941-1945) in the formation of Special Forces equipped with the knowledge of non-linear warfare was first proposed by the Soviet Marshal Georgy Zhukov in the early-1950s.

12  Sergey Sukhankin, 12 April 2019.

13  Christopher R. Spearin, "Russia's Military and Security Privatization," in *Parameters, the US Army War College Quarterly*, 48, No. 2 (Summer 2018), pp. 39-49, at: https://publications.army-warcollege.edu/pubs/3659.pdf .

14  Sergey Sukhankin, "'Continuing War by Other Means': The Case of Wagner, Russia's Premier Private Military Company in the Middle East," in *Russia in the Middle East*, (Washington: Jamestown Foundation, 13 July, 2018) at: https://jamestown.org/program/continuing-war-by-other-means-the-case-of-wagner-russias-premier-private-military-company-in-the-middle-east/ .

15  This pattern has been demonstrated on three well-known occasions within three distinct historical interims, when Russia/Soviet Union used mercenary/irregular forces to achieve specific geopolitical objectives: in 1970, Marshal and Soviet Defense Minister Andrei Grechko warned the Soviet pilots sent to the Middle East that the USSR would not be responsible for them should any of them be shot down and captured during hostilities; in 1994, Defense Minister Pavel Grachev labeled Russian active military covertly assembled to topple Dzhokhar Dudayev

as "mercenaries," *de-facto* not acknowledging involvement of the Russian state in the affair; In 2018, the Director of the Information and Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova denounced involvement of the state-backed mercenaries in a fight with the coalition forces.

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Moscow, the Kremlin, and the Moscva River by night.

# What Is the 'Technology of the Colour Revolutions,' and Why Does It Occupy Such a Prominent Place in Russian Threat Perceptions?

## by Mitchell Binding

## Introduction

For the last several years, scholars and military practitioners alike have been preoccupied with the actions of Russia in Ukraine and Syria, and what this new trajectory means for global peace and security. In order to better understand the factors that underlie this complex geopolitical situation, it is necessary to examine Russia's understanding of the 'technology of colour revolutions,' and why it occupies such a prominent place in Russian threat perceptions. This article begins with an explanation of *what* exactly constitutes the 'technology of colour revolutions,' and follows by providing examples of *when* and *where* Russia has perceived these technologies. An analysis of *why* Russia views this as an existential threat follows, and the article concludes with an opinion as to *how* the West can approach this problem.

## What is it?

Colour revolutions are widely understood as a phenomenon whereby popular protests dislodge an incumbent party from power. Beyond this basic agreement, however, Russia and the West disagree strongly with respect to how they come about, and for what purpose they exist. The narrative in the West maintains that colour revolutions are essentially organic uprisings that manifest in corrupt and authoritarian regimes. The West politely defines them as "…non-violent mass protests aimed at changing the existing quasi-democratic governments through elections."[1] Similarly, they have been described as "…counter-elite-led, non-violent mass protests following fraudulent elections."[2] An important point is that colour revolutions are understood as a natural step in the process of democratization.[3] It is also worth noting that Western observers do not see external assistance as *necessary* (although not *unhelpful*) for a colour revolution to take place.

Russia has a very different view, and it cannot be explained simply by alternative 'narratives.' Starting from the neo-Hobbesian worldview that global powers are in a state of competition and inevitable rivalry, Russia views the West's support of colour revolutions as nothing more than a lever of strategic power to be utilized in the expansion of Western influence.[4] They are seen as a set of tools used by the West to bring down regimes with which it disagrees. Further, colour revolutions are not simply the utilization of tools of propaganda – they exploit the mobilisation and

weaponization of popular protest toward the violent overthrow of a standing government 'by the people.' This provides 'legitimacy' of the action itself, but also an opportunity for intervention by foreign government to assist the 'democratic' over throwers.

Russia's view of colour revolutions as such can be appreciated. Russian history abounds with episodes of invasion, revolution, and collapse. The 20th Century was particularly traumatic for Russia. "[It] suffered two world wars, absorbing colossal human and material losses; [saw] two empires collapse; experienced unspeakable levels of domestic repression; and at virtually no stage enjoyed a comfortable relationship with its neighbors or the wider world."[5] This likely explains President Vladimir Putin's opinion that "Revolutions are bad. We have had more than enough of those revolutions in the 20th Century."[6]

Viewed from this context, Russia observes colour revolutions occurring around the globe, and the West's unconditional support for them, and fears that they mask underlying objectives of 'normative hegemony' under the guise of support for human rights.[7] This helps explain the Russian conceptualization of colour revolutions that diverges so markedly from the Western conceptualizations. The view is that they are "…orchestrated by the US and the European Union in order to isolate Russia within a belt of hostile nations or area of instability."[8] Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, called colour revolutions "unconstitutional change of government," and argued that they are "destructive for the nations targeted by such actions."[9] Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, defined colour revolutions as "…a form of non-violent change of power in a country by outside manipulation of the protest potential of the population in conjunction with political, economic, humanitarian and other non-military measures."[10] Again, the focus is upon the fact that popular protests are instigated and supported by outside manipulation, ostensibly for foreign strategic objectives.

Russia views the West fomenting these colour revolutions with particular 'technologies.' These include "…long-term foreign cultivation and financing of an internal opposition and general divisions within society; creation or co-optation of an opposition elite; foreign [non-governmental organizations] NGOs and outside agents advocating 'globalisation' and 'westernisation;' campaigns in support of democracy; and exploitation of elections."[11] These technologies also include 'professional coordination centers,' emotional engineering of protesters, control of mass media and alternative media, and Public Relations specialists.[12] These methods supplement large-scale information wars, and the use of generous legal discourse to conceal true objectives.[13] General Gerasimov adds to this list the military training of rebels by foreign instructors, supply of weapons and resources to anti-government forces, application of Special Operations Forces and private military companies, and the reinforcement of opposition units with foreign fighters.[14] It should be noted that the perception of these 'technologies' may simply be Russia seeing in the West some of its own methods, such as the use of 'electoral technologies' such as the media, and their own method of lending 'political technologists' to preferred candidates in target countries' domestic politics.[15]

### Historical Precedents

Russia sees these attempts by the West to subvert legitimate political regimes everywhere it looks. General Gerasimov, at the third Moscow Conference on International Security in 2014, sought to demonstrate Western involvement in precisely 25 colour revolutions, spreading across the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe (see Figure 1 below).[16] This article will only focus upon a few key revolutions that played major roles in developing Russia's current threat perceptions. The first was the so-called Bulldozer Revolution in Yugoslavia in 1999. For many Russian military and political leaders, this was the watershed moment where everything changed. President Putin expressed to the Kremlin: "This happened in Yugoslavia; we remember 1999 very well."[17] The first colour revolution in post-Soviet Eurasia was unexpectedly successful in using non-violent protest to oust an autocratic leader, and henceforth became a role model for future movements.[18] The mobilization of mass protests was linked to 'training' in non-violent methods in the United States, and the involvement in the country of foreign-linked NGOs – which was enough for Russia to view the colour revolution in Yugoslavia as artificial.[19]



Russian Government/Alamy Stock Photo/F54FF9

Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces General Valery Gerasimov before a meeting with Defence Ministry leadership and representatives of the military-industrial complex in Sochi, Russia, 12 May 2015.
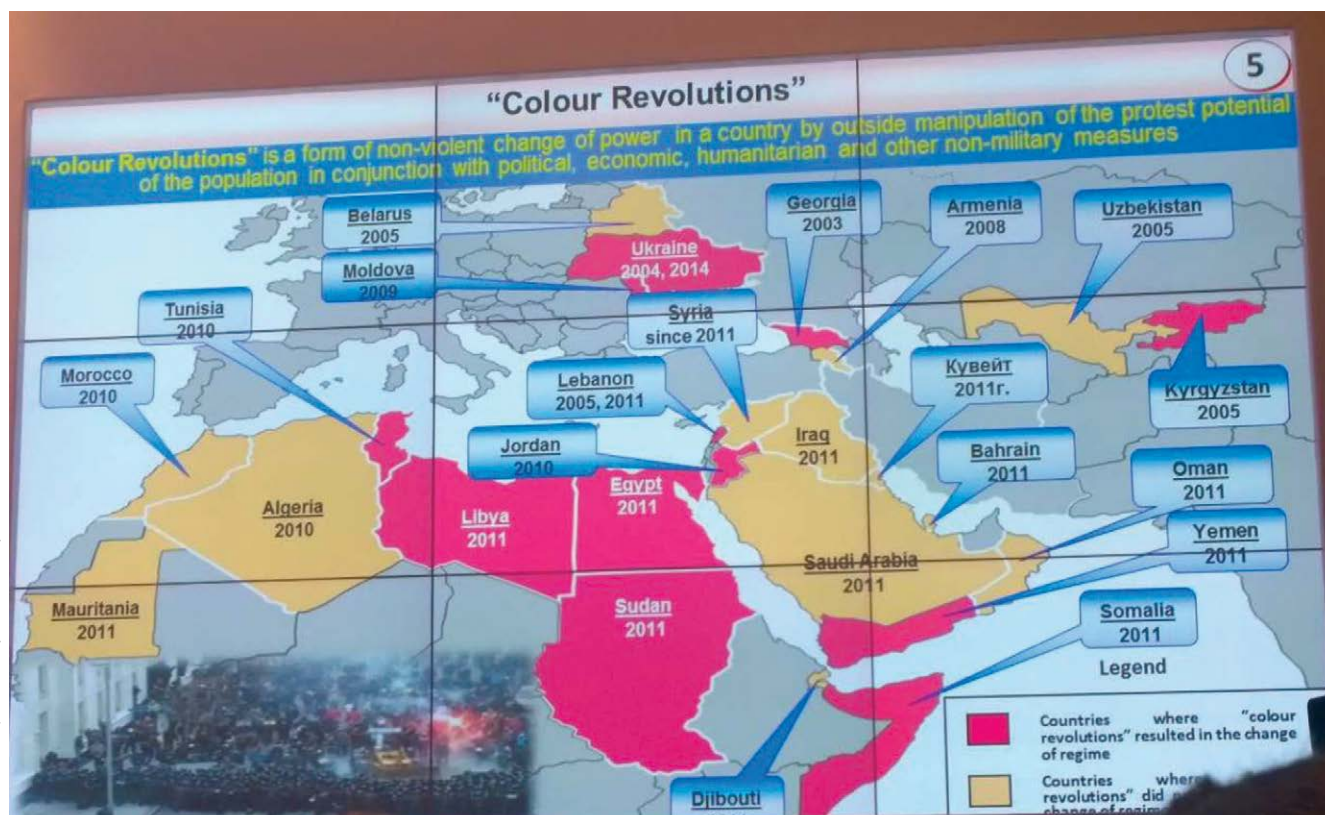
Figure 1. Photograph of a slide presented by General Gerasimov in 2014.[20] "'Colour Revolutions' is a form of non-violent change of power in a country by outside manipulation of the protest potential of the population in conjunction with political, economic, humanitarian and other non-military measures."

Not long thereafter, the 2003 Rose Revolution occurred in Georgia, raising the stakes by occurring right on Russia's doorstep, and bringing the phenomenon into the post-Soviet sphere. Once again, the mass mobilization of protesters was supported by the formation of civil society groups that included some 'trained and funded by Western organizations'.[21] As in Yugoslavia, the matter was made worse by the failure of Russia to prevent the democratic movement, as well as the imposition of a new leader, who was West-leaning. These circumstances, coupled with the desire to reassert some semblance of authority, eventually led to the 'Five-Days War' in 2008, which resulted in a Russian invasion and restoration of authority.[22]

The 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine particularly enraged Russia. Here was another colour revolution within the post-Soviet space, but this time the West was apparently able to plant the seed of mass protests in a heretofore stable and increasingly prosperous country.[23] The unexpectedness of the uprising fuelled the Russian perception that the West was manipulating the electoral process to replace incumbent leaders with those favourable to their foreign policies.[24] Furthermore, the upset in the unconventional third round of voting that saw Russia's pick for president lose to the West's preferred candidate stung Putin personally. Russia had a close relationship with Ukraine and felt it had significant influence in its politics, and Putin had personally travelled to Ukraine twice during the campaign to support the East-leaning incumbent.[25] When Putin's candidate lost, it not only reaffirmed the conviction that the West was going too far in its interference, it was seen as a personal affront.

Finally, the most widespread of the colour revolutions was the Arab Spring in 2011. President Putin again recounted to the assembled Kremlin that a whole series of controlled 'colour revolutions' took place, in which the West cynically took advantage of the peoples' legitimate objection to tyranny.[26] In this, "…standards were imposed on these nations that did not in any way correspond to their way of life, traditions, or … cultures. As a result, instead of democracy and freedom, there was chaos."[27] Russia learned several lessons from the colour revolutions of the Arab Spring that have informed their threat perceptions. First, the potential of social media to mobilize populations, and even to facilitate regime change, became very clear.[28] Second, military leaders observed that "…a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months or even days, be transformed into an area of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war."[29] Furthermore, General Gerasimov derived from these lessons that the 'rules of war' had changed, to the extent that "…non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals [had] grown, and, in many cases…exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness."[30] These lessons were accepted so thoroughly that they altered the (previously discussed) Russian military doctrine, and have subsequently been seen at work in Ukraine and Syria.

## Russian Threat Perceptions

These foregoing examples, which occurred over the last twenty years, have solidified to Russia the threat that it faces from the West. As a vector for influencing or bringing down the Russian regime, it is viewed as the most likely approach in order for conflict to remain unattributable, and under the threshold for retaliation. This is why the 2014 Russian military doctrine listed the destabilization in 'certain states and regions' as one of its main external military threats, as well as

the internal destabilization of the political and social situation in the country, provocation of 'interethnic and social tension and extremism,' and information operations influencing the population, especially 'young citizens.'[31] This fear comes from the events of the colour revolutions reviewed thus far, but most of all, from the perceived attempt at a colour revolution within Russia in 2011–2012. This event was the manifestation of the Kremlin's worst fears – that the unrest and political instability would spread from the Middle East, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe, and infect the Motherland as well. Following the re-election to a third term of President Putin, popular protest regarding perceived political corruption and fraud shook the Russian regime.[32] Protest movements with 120,000–200,000 citizens (over 10% of Moscow's population) were recorded, and Russia was nearly paralyzed for a matter of months.[33] President Putin and the Kremlin had been very prepared for such an event, however, and successfully diffused the protests using all the tools of the state at their disposal, both forceful and persuasive.[34] Mass media and counter protests were utilized to entrench the message that the protesters were 'foreign-backed revolutionaries' intent upon regime change and bloody civil war.[35]

The perception in Moscow that the West had attempted a colour revolution in Russia had immediate consequences. Australian writer, foreign policy expert, and former diplomat Dr. Bobo Lo maintains that: "Putin's personal sense of *'obida'* (offense) at U.S. support for the public demonstrations against him… was the single most important reason behind the hardening of Russian policy toward Washington."[36] These events also motivated the hardening in Russian threat perceptions toward potential technologies of colour revolutions.

The manifestation of these perceptions can be seen in the suspicions cast upon foreign NGOs, and especially those linked to Western money or promoting Western values.[37] These suspicions motivated the passing of the 2012 Foreign Agent Law, as well as the 2015 Undesirable Organizations Law, giving the Russian government the authority to curb foreign-linked organizations that were believed to be supporting nefarious democratic movements (i.e., the National Endowment for Democracy, the Soros Foundation, and so on).[38] Even more concretely, the 2014 Russian military doctrine very clearly established colour revolutions as a primary threat, both *internally* and *externally*. It confronts activities meant to affect "…the sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of states," as well as "forcibly changing the constitutional system of the Russian federation," and "destabilizing the internal political and social situation;" in response, the newest military doctrine promises to "neutralize possible military dangers and military threats by political, diplomatic, and other non-military means," and to "develop and realize measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness of military-patriotic indoctrination of citizens."[39]

Further implications of this hardened stance are that Russia has concluded it must display aggression to prevent the West from thinking it can push Russia too far. In Russia's view, if non-aggression is the axiom behind colour revolutions, then to *counter* a colour revolution, the violence must be escalated.[40] This is the reason why many observers consider Russian interference in Ukraine and Syria to be just such counter-revolutions; not only did they derail insipient mobilizations, Russia (in their view) successfully played back the West's own liberal and legal discourse to justify its actions.[41] An additional benefit has been the widespread domestic support for President Putin's forays abroad, which surely helps to allay fears of another uprising.[42] However, this successful counter colour revolution has not entirely dissipated Russian unease. The Russian Security Council released its analysis in 2015 that there was 'great risk' that the West may attempt another colour revolution in Russia in order to oust the current political regime, and to maintain global hegemony.[43] The Secretary of the Security Council, Nikolay Patrushev, further elaborated that the West continued to finance opposition forces while simultaneously imposing economic sanctions with the hope of causing mass protests in Russia.[44] This threat is viewed as existential, since the political system in Russia is "…centered on individuals and their networks rather than formal institutions."[45] In fact, it has been argued: "No single person in the six decades since the death of Stalin has been so intimately identified with power and policy in Russia. Putin has become synonymous with political Russia."[46] This perpetual
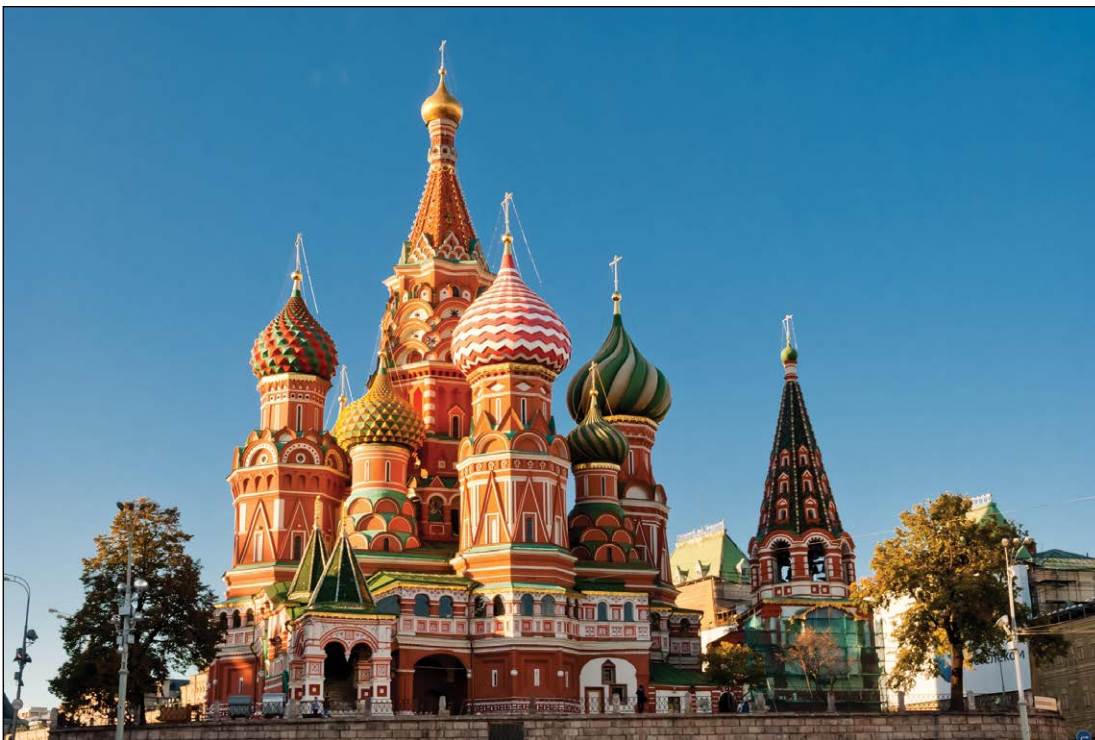
St. Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, Moscow.

Marco Saracco/Alamy Stock Photo/HXKA8C

preparedness for Western interference provokes the Kremlin to search for ways to push back, and creates a scapegoat that is useful for unifying the Russian people – who themselves fear insecurity and collapse on a cultural level – against a common enemy.

## How to move forward?

The final remarks should be to consider what exactly the West should do with this understanding of Russian threat perceptions regarding the technologies of colour revolutions. Naturally, it should be presumed that Russia's leaders will utilize all manners of statecraft at their disposal to protect the national interests of Russia, including the use of narratives and counter-narratives (i.e., information operations) to convince domestic and international citizens that Russia is in the right, and that the West in the wrong.



An alleged Russian military vehicle driving towards the besieged Ukrainian Military Base in Perevalnoye near Simferopol, Crimea (Ukraine), 5 March 2014.

Nevertheless, the West should equally acknowledge that Russian threat perceptions and concerns for the stability of its political regime and social situation are legitimate. Opportunities should be sought for constructive engagement and accommodation, even within the current context of sanctions and opposing narratives surrounding Russian involvement in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. A further complicating factor is the ongoing investigation into Russian 'meddling' in the 2016 United States elections (one could say their own attempt at a colour revolution). Given the highly contentious nature of the issues on both sides of the divide, engagement will be difficult. There is surely the concern that 'giving an inch' now will result in 'losing a mile' later, especially if Russia and others 'learn' that current behaviour is the key to winning concessions. However, in the current climate, and especially since Russia views non-military action as potential military threat, the threat for escalation *remains* and should be *avoided*. Unfortunately, for the foreseeable future, a prevention of escalation is likely the best that can be achieved.[47] Less optimistically, the implication that both Russia and Western countries perceive that the other is working to destabilize and overthrow their



A deployment of a Russian anti-aircraft missile system of large and medium range (the C-400 *Triumf*) in the area of Sevastopol, Crimea, 13 January 2018.

political and social order may prevent any cooperation whatsoever, and thus, defensive lines will be fortified, alliances strengthened, and escalation anticipated.

## Conclusion

To wrap up this brief analysis, within this confusing state of global affairs, and given the increase in unattributable interference by different actors, it is important for Western academics and security practitioners to appreciate the Russian view with respect to the technologies of colour revolutions, and the prominent place they hold in Russian threat perceptions. This Russian perspective is underwritten by a hostile interpretation of popular protests in a large number of countries – most specifically Yugoslavia, Georgia, Ukraine, the Arab Spring, and in Russia itself. This deeper appreciation by the West will foster a better understanding of the global security environment and future conflict trajectories, but will also help to lessen misunderstandings between Russia and the West, and reduce the likelihood of future hostility.

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Officers' Mess, Canadian Forces College Toronto.

# From the Mess to the Journal: A Proposal to Professionalize Professional Discussions

## by John Benson

### Introduction and Context

The Officer's Mess has long been a preferred arena for professional discussion. In addition to providing a social setting for Officers to relax and enjoy each other's company, it has been employed as a sounding board for the 'proverbial good idea fairies' in discussions of a professional nature. In fact, the Junior Officer's Guide written in 1959 specifically states that "…the discussion of professional affairs should be encouraged."[1] Naturally, the Mess is not the only environment designed for professional discussion. Encouragement of professional discussion is the *raison d'être* of professional military journals, such as the *Canadian Military Journal*.

In the first issue of the *Canadian Military Journal*, the then-Chief of Defence Staff, General J.M.G. Baril, wrote of the importance of the journal in the "…informed discussion and debate of the whole range of issues and topics that are relevant to the profession of arms."[2] He went on to "…encourage members of the Canadian Forces to share their views and ideas by writing articles that will stimulate the intellectual growth and development of our profession."[3] This article proposes a change in lexicon from *encouragement* to *institutionalization*. Identified gaps in competencies at all levels of officer professional development could be addressed through the use of professional journals in which a symbiotic relationship is created. Officers at the Developmental Period (DP) 4/5-level could develop and encourage strategic thought through publication of articles, officers at the DP 2 level can develop writing skills and critical thinking through responses to these articles, and officers at the DP 3 level could demonstrate skills related to the development of subordinates through a formal mechanism of coaching and mentoring of the DP 2 officers.

### The Professional Development Gap

Various reports and studies conducted over the last quarter century have identified recurring gaps in officer professional development at Developmental Periods 2, 3, and 4/5. Officers at the General Officer/Flag Officer (GO/FO) level (DP 4/5), are seen to be "…discerning and intellectually disciplined…but] lack the essential critical thinking skills and creative abilities to lead at the strategic level."[4] DP 3 is heavily dependent upon formal professional military education (PME) through the delivery of the Joint Command and Staff Program, resulting in limited professional development for a majority of officers that do not attend. Even those that do attend are not provided with the opportunity to develop Officer General Specification (OGS)-based requirements related to developing subordinates.[5] The officer corps, at all levels, lacks "basic staff skills, such as effective writing."[6] In summary, the officer corps lacks strategic thinkers, formal methods for developing subordinates, and effective writing skills.

DND photo/CFJIC IEC97-1137-17

Chief of the Defence Staff, General Baril, inspecting Canadian Forces members on UN duty in Haiti during 1997.

These requirements include sub-competencies such as contributing to the development of military strategy, defence and security policy, stewardship of the profession and the promotion of a learning organization vision and culture. It is understood that, by the nature of the positions that senior officers hold, they are likely to increase proficiency in some (or all) of these competencies through experience. However, the institutionalization of contributions to professional journals would strengthen these proficiencies in a visible and measurable manner.

Some officers, of their own volition, will contribute to professional journals regardless of whether it is a requirement of professional development. An excellent example of this is an article published in the Summer 2017 issue of the *Canadian Military Journal*. Brigadier-General Carignan, recently the Chief of Staff Army Operations, presented her analysis of the issue of using victory as a strategic objective for military planning.[12] She presented a clearly-articulated argument with proposals for reconsidering the issue. The article forces the reader to reflect upon a topic of interest to the profession of arms and to use critical thinking skills. To be sure, there are others in similar positions and similar rank that have contributed in a comparable manner. The value of contributions of this nature to professional development are clear; the subject is relevant to the military profession, and it is written in a manner that allows for professional discussion of the subject.

The potential difficulties of enforcing professional development at the DP 4/5 level through similar contributions to professional journals are two-fold. Without a doubt, the time and effort required to put to paper ideas such as those presented in the Carignan article are difficult to manage for officers that are generally in high-tempo, time-consuming positions. In addition, there could be some reticence on the part of officers to put forward ideas and proposals that may not be accepted by their peers and superiors.[13] While these difficulties should be considered, the benefits to the individual and to the organization far outweigh the disadvantages.

We should, as a profession, constantly seek to improve. Discussing and debating ideas through the use of professional journals must be encouraged, and we must strive towards a culture in which a *professionally considered* and *articulated* argument should not have an impact upon the career of an individual. Once again, the debates in the *Canadian Army Journal* in 1938 between a captain and a lieutenant-colonel, both of whom would rise to the ranks of General Officer, provides an example of the value

## The Conceptual Framework

The gaps in competencies and officer professional development *can be*, and *are,* addressed to a certain level through formal PME. This could be augmented through the use of professional journals. This concept is not new. Perhaps the best example of the use of professional journals for the furtherance of professional development and critical thinking in the Canadian context was the interaction between two future Second World War generals during the interwar years. The tactical debate with respect to armoured doctrine in the pages of *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, between Lieutenant-Colonel E.L.M. Burns and Captain G.G. Simonds proved the worth of professional journals in advancing critical thinking and professional development.[7] In the post-war years, the *Canadian Army Journal*[8] was used for self-development and preparation for promotion examinations, but this initiative was short-lived. Contribution to professional journals is currently limited to personal initiative, and the results are predictable. Civilians accounted for 42% of contributions to professional journals in a fourteen-year period between 2000 and 2013. Only 5.5% of contributions came from General Officers/Flag Officers, and a similar percentage came from officers at the rank of Colonel/Captain (Navy).[9] Civilians, be they public servants, retirees, or academics, form an integral part of the Defence Team and their contribution is critical. However, their contribution should not replace the obligation of officers of the profession to discuss concepts, and to demonstrate critical thinking and effective writing skills.

Many of the common officer requirements for DP 4/5 officers that require increased proficiency are expected to be accomplished through experience and/or self-development, according to the Officer General Specification (OGS).[10] And yet, as noted in the *CAF Professional Development Study* of 2014, there is no specific direction provided as to how this should be *done* or *measured*.[11]

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Two of the Canadian Army's prominent intellectuals from the inter-war years, General H.D.G. Crerar, and Lieutenant-General E.L.M. Burns (right), pictured here in Italy, 1944.

The contributions of senior officers could also be employed in a more systemic manner to provide professional development opportunities for junior officers. At the DP 2 level, the Canadian Armed Forces Junior Officer Development (CAFJOD) program is the principal method of professional development, other than environmental training and experience. It attempts to fill the void in professional development beyond that previously provided through the Canadian Forces Staff School, among other activities. Staff Duties is one of the modules covered by this program. Use of articles published of questioning the status quo, and forcing critical thought within the profession. The Carignan article also demonstrates one of the methods that time pressures can be relieved in order to ensure contributions to professional journals. The article was written and reviewed while Brigadier-General Carignan was a student on the National Security Programme (NSP) in Toronto. As part of the requirements to complete NSP (or equivalent courses), students must write persuasive essays and papers related to the profession of arms. In fact, a simple search of the CFC Papers available online[14] demonstrates a start point for many officers that have completed the course in the past. These papers, with some revision and support from a fully-qualified staff, can be used to present ideas in the appropriate format within our professional journals.

The institutionalization of contributions to professional journals by DP 4/5 officers would, on its own, provide an avenue to address some of the gaps identified by studies such as the *Jeffery Report.* There is no doubt that senior officers demonstrate critical thinking on a daily basis in the positions they hold. However, contributions to professional journals would reinforce this proficiency and could act as a forcing function for the development of the "…creative abilities [required] to lead at the Strategic level."[15] Beyond this, they could also provide the cornerstone for professional development at lower levels. Intellectual curiosity is contagious; as junior officers (and indeed non-commissioned members) of the profession of arms are exposed to the ideas and critical thinking of senior officers, they may seek self-development on their own initiative.



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Lieutenant-General Guy G. Simonds during the Italian Campaign.

DND photo IS13-2019-0006-014 by Private Hugo Montpetit

Brigadier-General Jennie Carignan, the Commander 2nd Canadian Division and Joint Task Force (East), visits flooded areas in Gatineau, Quebec, 22 April 2019.

publication. Yet, for this exercise to be of value, DP 2 officers require feedback with respect to their work. This is where officers at the DP 3 level can become directly involved in the process. DP 3 officers should provide the role of *mentoring* and *encouraging* professional discussion by assigning these papers as part of professional development, and by providing constructive feedback once completed. Ideally, this should be done by DP 3 officers outside the chain of command of the writer. This will relieve the pressures on the small group of DP 3 officers that are actually in supervisory positions, as well as provide another opportunity for members

by senior officers in professional journals could enhance the competencies acquired through the CAFJOD.

Officers at the DP 2 level should be required to read these articles, and to demonstrate critical thinking and effective writing skills by responding to them. The format in which they respond can be flexible. They can use critical thinking to disagree with the arguments put forward, articulate why they agree with the premises of the article or elaborate upon the concepts to add to the discussion. Regardless, the emphasis should be upon demonstrating their critical thinking skills through effective writing. As an additional benefit, simply being exposed to the ideas in these articles and others in the professional journals should help to cultivate a *culture of continuous learning.* The papers written by DP 2 officers should not be written with the objective of being published in a professional journal. That said, some may prove to be of value in furthering the professional discussion of the subject and could be published. But the objective is demonstration of the development of the competencies required at their level. Many of the articles written may be related to subjects that are outside the comfort zone of junior officers. This should be seen as an advantage of the system. Encouraging junior officers to think outside their tactical context can only help to encourage further self-development and continued learning in their career.

While some of the papers written by DP 2 officers may be of a quality and significance that they should be submitted for publication, the vast majority will simply be a practical demonstration of critical thinking and effective writing. The *quantity* of papers that would be written would, in itself, make it impracticable for

of the profession to discuss and debate issues of importance to the profession. Papers written by DP 2 officers could be submitted to a central organization, such as the Canadian Defence Academy, to be distributed to DP 3 officers across the CAF. This will, in turn, force DP 3 officers to continue their own professional development by remaining current with respect to professional journals and provide them with the impetus to consider issues that may not be of personal interest, but are of interest to their profession.

The mechanism for feedback need not be burdensome, especially as DP 2 officers far outnumber their DP 3 counterparts. The emphasis should be upon quality of writing and arguments, with recommendations to improve or support to bring the paper to a level at which it could be published. There is obvious potential for inconsistency at this point in the feedback provided to DP 2 officers. While guidance should be provided to DP 3 officers in order to provide a certain standard of feedback, it is the process of reading, considering, and responding to articles written that should drive professional development. The DP 3 officer that does not consider wholly the arguments put forward, or that demonstrates a lack of effort in response should be challenged by the DP 2 officer. The principal objective of this exercise for DP 3 officers is to provide an avenue to improve their mentoring and coaching skills. Some officers may simply not have had much opportunity to do so in the past. They should seek to learn from this process *as much*, if not *more*, than the junior officers. Once again, by being involved in the process and remaining current with respect to subjects of interest to the profession, DP 3 officers will be better prepared to not only provide feedback, but to become involved in the discussion themselves.

Canadian Defence Academy Headquarters Kingston.

## Benefits

The potential advantages of the implementation of a system such as the one proposed in this article should be evident. The process of writing, considering, responding and providing feedback would certainly address some of the officer professional development gaps that have been identified in several studies. It could be used to *enhance*, rather than *replace*, formal professional military education at all levels. It would present an opportunity for officers at all ranks to become more familiar and more engaged with professional discussion that already occurs within our professional journals. Most importantly, it should provide the spark for officers to actively seek self-development and lifelong learning with respect to their profession. The cost is relatively modest. While additional individual effort will be required by all involved, it could hardly be considered wasted effort. A small coordination cell, likely located within the Canadian Defence Academy, would have to provide the function of receiving papers written by DP 2 officers, and then distributing them to DP 3 officers. This commitment would be the price to pay to reap the benefits of the concept, both for the individual and for the profession.

## Conclusion

The CAF has a considerably well-developed professional development system in place to ensure that officers are well-equipped to be the custodians of the profession, and to answer the call of government when requested. This system has been the subject of much discussion and analysis over the last quarter-century and should continue to be so into the future. While improvements can always be made with respect to education and formal professional military education, there is clearly room to continue improving with respect to self-development. The concept of exploiting professional journals to invoke strategic thought, develop critical thinking and effective writing, and to promote mentoring and development of subordinates has been employed in the past. In the current environment, where competing priorities will always create pressures on the time available to officers for professional development, this option should be considered.

There are many related factors that were not considered specifically in this article. While the focus has specifically been upon officer professional development, there clearly is scope to consider the professional development of enlisted personnel as well. There is no doubt that the outstanding Osside Institute

could consider elements of this concept in their own pursuit of what is perhaps the best professional development system for non-commissioned officers in the world. As with any professional development, consideration would have to be given with respect to the value of professional writing as scoring criteria for promotions. In addition, there would likely be some discussion required with respect to the boundaries of professional discussion and debate. These factors should be considered in any elaboration of a concept such as that which is proposed in this article. Even better, they could be discussed through the use of professional journals.

The Officer's Mess will always remain an excellent venue for professional discussion. We must remember, however, that professional journals, when properly exploited by the members of the profession, should be the venue of choice. Putting pen to paper, at all levels, ensures that the good ideas do not remain within the walls of the Mess.

*Lieutenant-Colonel John Benson is an infantry officer with the Royal 22e Régiment, currently deployed out of country. He most recently served as Executive Assistant to the Commander of the 1st Canadian Division in Kingston. The irony of the fact that this was his first submission for possible publication is not lost on him, although he would like to thank Dr. Alan Okros and Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) Peter MacLaurin for their support.*
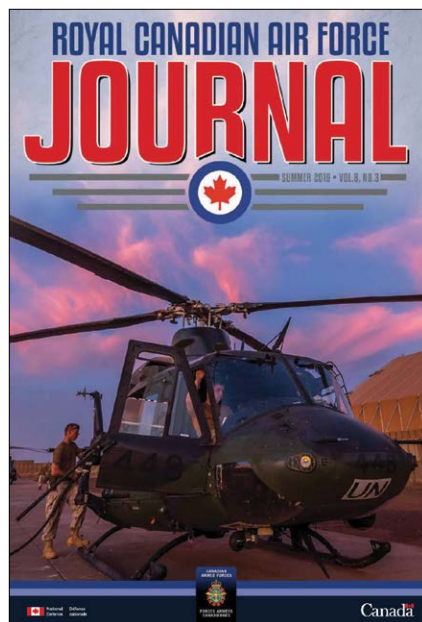
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*Department of National Defence*

*Department of National Defence*

*Department of National Defence*

*Brian Mulroney Institute of Government/St. Francis Xavier University*

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# Re-thinking Incentivized Fitness in the Canadian Army: An Evidence-Based Approach

### by Lawrence Glover

## Introduction

The Canadian Army (CA) selection board scoring guides outline criteria for the promotion of well-balanced and intellectually competent leaders, both commissioned and non-commissioned. However, what the scoring guides do not capture is the requirement for leaders to have a high standard of physical fitness beyond the minimum requirements for universality of service. Understanding that a universality of service study is currently underway, which may subsequently impact physical fitness requirements in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), this brief article will make an argument using existing research in the field of Behavioral Medicine that the incorporation of physical fitness incentives in selection board scoring guides will enrich our culture of physical fitness. Furthermore, the incorporation of promotion incentives previously approved by the Armed Forces Council (AFC) will subsequently be revisited. Finally, in the interest of well-rounded discussion, this article will examine counter arguments for the incorporation of physical fitness incentives, such as those outlined in the previously-featured article written for the *Canadian Military Journal* by Major M.J. Draho (Vol. 15, No. 3). In doing all this, I hope to spark discussion that will forward our approach to incentivized fitness, as it has the potential to truly enhance member well-being and operational effectiveness for the CA, as well as for the CAF, *writ large*.

## The CAF's Progress towards Incentivized Fitness

Physical fitness *is*, and always *has been*, undeniably critical to the profession of arms. It can be argued that it is the cornerstone of combat readiness as a product of the fact that military operations often necessitate intense physical effort for extended durations with limited rest. This is especially true as it relates to the roles and responsibilities for certain trades within the CA whose tasks often require an increased level of maximal strength and muscular endurance relative to other trades in the CAF. Indeed, there is a significant body of research that confirms the positive impacts of physical fitness upon individual and collective performance. In particular, comprehensive review articles provide irrefutable evidence that physical fitness improves health outcomes with respect to chronic disease and premature death.[1] Other research confirms the lasting impacts that physical fitness can have upon mental resilience within a military environment.[2] Further research in

the field of Organizational Behaviour supports these direct and indirect benefits of physical fitness, even making ambitious links to a net positive financial return and improved organizational performance.

On 8 December 2015, the AFC fully embraced existing research and endorsed the provision of FORCE Test incentives to begin on 1 April 2017, including promotion incentives and material rewards, such as clothing and accoutrements for exceptional fitness scores. The CAF has also made advances in its efforts to provide members with the knowledge and resources through guiding policy, such as "The Canadian Army Integrated Performance Strategy," and the recently-released "Canadian Armed Forces Physical Performance Strategy: Balance." Nonetheless, although the CAF continues to advocate the importance of physical fitness, and has recently introduced the aforementioned material incentives, its proposed attempts to include criteria for promotion have yet to materialize. As a result, we have yet to tap into the true potential this initiative has with respect to health.

### Research in Health Behaviour Change

To illustrate the influence of education and material incentives, one needs to look no further than public health research, such as that conducted by researchers Murphy and Breslin of the Ulster University Doctoral College, Faculty of life and Health Sciences, School of Sport, in 2014.[3] In this study, 68 participants completed a randomized control trial that saw them split into three distinct groups to complete a six-week exercise program. While one group served as the control group, another served as the financial incentive group (FI), and received a 33% discount with respect to the exercise program, while the third group received education dealing with goal setting and weekly activity planners, as the implementation intention prompt group (IIP). At the end of the six-week program, individuals in the FI and IIP group lost an average of 6.3 kilograms and 6.4 kilograms respectively, while those in the control group lost an average of 1.6 kilograms.

This study is one example among many that exposes the impacts of health education and material incentives upon individual motivation for physical fitness, supporting the current CAF model for physical fitness incentives. However, a limitation of this research is that the *sample size* is small, and the *scalability* of this model is limited within a military setting. Moreover, existing evidence in the field of Behavioral Economics reveals that material incentives and education efforts in-and-of themselves are temporary in nature, and often limited in scope without an accompanied change in sociocultural factors. Ultimately, the vital ground for the CAF in its attempts to change health behaviour rest with changing social norms. This vital ground can be seized with leadership that promotes physical fitness, and can be further explained by the Social Cognitive Theory.

### Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory suggests that the acquisition of new behaviors results from observing behaviors modelled by others. Research within this field supports the powerful link between physical fitness modelling and health behaviour change.[4] In a novel study conducted by researchers Mark Stevens *et al*, at the University of Stirling, 583 individuals from sports teams and group exercise classes across the South of England were surveyed using the 15-Item Identity Leadership Inventory. The results clearly demonstrated that leaders who embodied cultural norms and identity leadership in physical fitness settings, as perceived by their subordinates, had significantly increased participation rates and
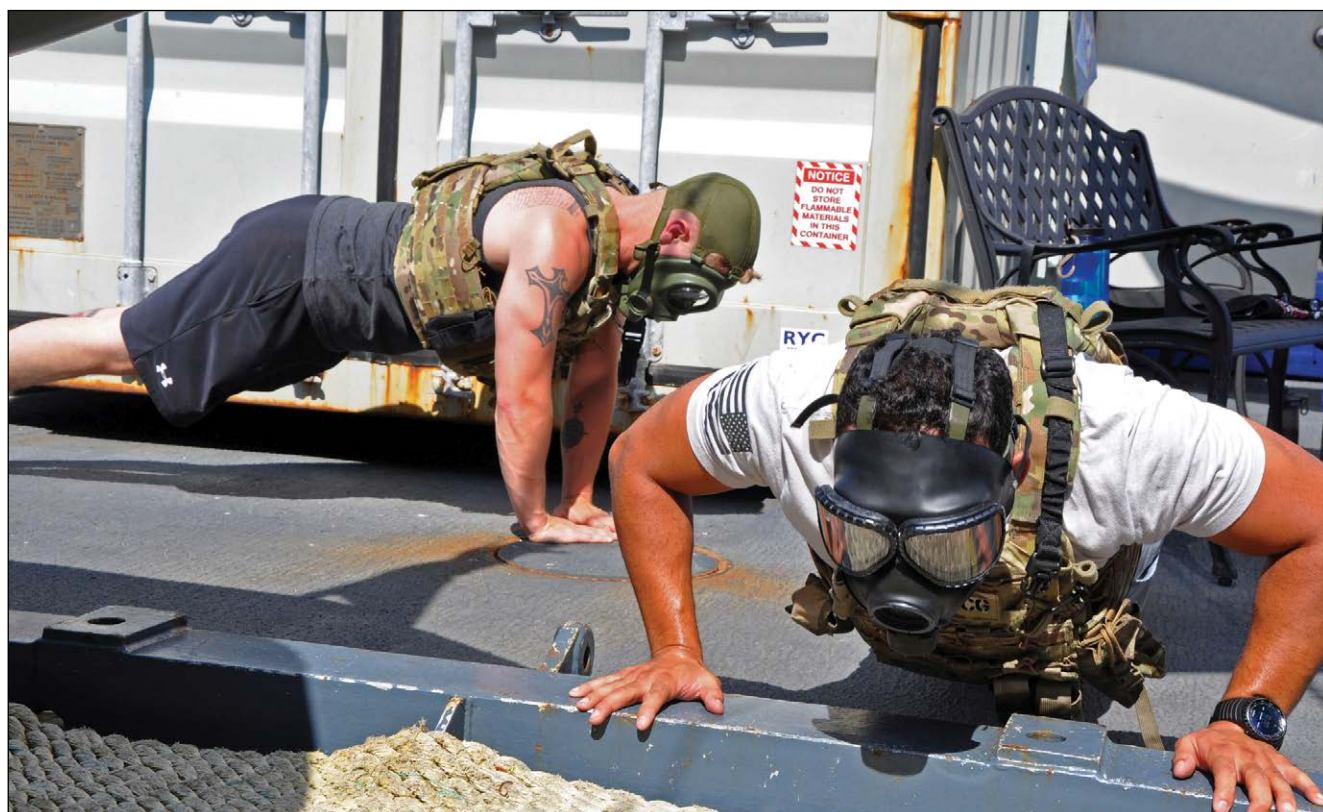
better overall performance. Additionally, as the title aptly suggests, "Exercise contagion in a global social network" conducted by researchers Sinan Aral and Christos Nicolaides at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) proved that physical fitness habits are highly contagious, and that interventions targeting this domain have the potential to significantly impact behaviour modification.[5] Taking the aforementioned research into consideration, and a significant body of knowledge that clearly demonstrates the impact that leadership can have on subordinate engagement, it is reasonable to conclude that physically fit leadership stands to be exceptionally transformational. But how can we incorporate physical fitness as a part of the promotion system, and most importantly, how to do so in a way that is both effective and inclusive for its members?

### The Way Forward with Incentivized Fitness

As the attempts to incorporate physical fitness in promotion criteria have fallen short, and a highly-competitive performance evaluation system is utilized, leaders in the Canadian Army are often promoted on criteria such as their second language profile (worth up to four additional points), and additional professional certifications, (worth up to three additional points). While these characteristics certainly enhance the intellectual capacity of Canadian Army's officers and non-commissioned officers, they do not provide a tangible incentive for individuals to enhance their physical fitness. In contrast, it can be rationally understood that physical fitness incentives will act as a compelling motivator, sinces promotion is desired for a large number of reasons, not limited to professional experience and financial gain. Consequently, the inclusion of physical fitness promotion criteria will motivate leaders and set the example for their subordinates to do the same.

The simple approach to achieve this is to simply re-examine the implementation of FORCE test incentives previously approved by the AFC in 2015. These were two additional promotion points for platinum, gold and silver incentive levels, with one additional point rewarded for a bronze incentive level. While this methodology is being proposed for the FORCE test, as it is currently our best measure of physical fitness requirements for CAF operations, it is understood that as testing methodologies evolve, these incentives will evolve in-turn to reflect different measures of physical fitness.

### Examining Counter-Arguments to Incentivized Physical Fitness

The counter-arguments to incentivizing physical fitness will invariably be centered upon concerns that promoting individuals based upon physical fitness scoring is not inclusive for all persons across the CAF, that a high standard of physical fitness is not an indicator of leadership potential at higher rank levels, and that the errors in the delivery of the physical evaluation itself would risk the promotion of *inadequate,* yet *fit* leaders. All these arguments are indeed well- founded, and would have detrimental effects to our institution. However, the proposed approach to incentive physical fitness would see those at a bronze level and above eligible to receive merit board points. Currently, the bronze incentives level is based upon the 50th percentile of CAF members. Therefore, 50% of the CAF would be eligible for this incentive. Surely this should be viewed as inclusive, purely from a mathematical standpoint.

It is also important to note that it is not recommended for these points to replace any existing criteria. Rather, they would simply be *added to* and *augment* existing criteria for promotion, such as second language profile and professional certifications, as well as foundational criteria of job performance and leadership potential. Lastly, concerns with respect to impartial test application can be alleviated by examining FORCE evaluation procedures which limit evaluator interpretation of test standards, and rest periods compared to previously-employed physical fitness testing models.

### Conclusion

It is almost consensus among modern military theorists that the future security environment will be comprised of *highly networked*, and *potentially technologically superior* state and non-state actors, leveraging all elements of power to achieve desired outcomes. Despite this theory with respect to the changing nature of warfare, physical fitness will still be critical in the 'fight of tomorrow,' as it can be expected that land power will continue to be essential to the maintenance of national defence and the exercise of sovereignty. This is reflected in the latest Canadian Army Operating Concept.[6] Moreover, the benefits of physical fitness are not limited to tactical implications, since they extend to resilience and force well-being in general. For that reason, the importance of physical fitness will remain extant. Keeping this in mind, should physical fitness promotion criteria be established through the methodology previously approved by the AFC, or in a different format, this small change stands to serve as a powerful instrument to improve operational effectiveness in the years to come.

Captain Lawrence Glover *enrolled in the CAF in 2011, serving with the 2 Combat Engineer Regiment as the 5 Troop Commander and Squadron Operations Officer, 24 Field Squadron. Following this first tour, he was employed as a Tactics Instructor at the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineers. As of summer 2019, he has returned to 24 Field Squadron for his second regimental tour. He holds a B.Sc, majoring in Biochemistry from Mount Allison University.*

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DND photo VL10-2018-0011-011 by Nedia Coutinho

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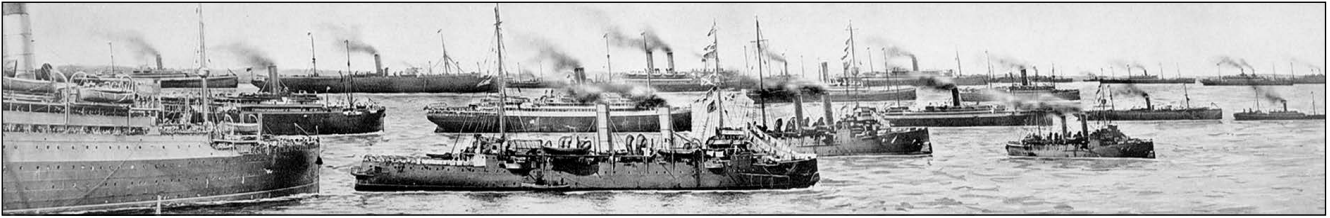
The sailing of the first contingent to reach Plymouth, England.

# 1 Field Ambulance and the Great War, 1914–1918

## by Jeff Biddiscombe

### Introduction/Mobilization

The First World War began after Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August 1914. Great Britain responded by declaring war on Germany on the 4th. With Great Britain entering the war, so too were all the Dominions of the British Empire—including Canada. In Ottawa, the Governor-General issued an Order in Council on 6 August to call out the first Canadian units to active service. No. 1 Field Ambulance was organized in September 1914 at Valcartier, with its troops drawn from various medical units in Eastern Canada.[1] On 30 September, No. 1 Field Ambulance left Quebec aboard the S.S. *Megantic* as part of the First Contingent bound for England.[2] After arriving there on 14 October, the unit wintered in Salisbury Plain before being deployed to France on 8 February 1915.[3]

### Ypres

April 1915. After first arriving in France on 12 February 1915,[4] No. 1 Field Ambulance first saw action on the Western Front on 23 April at Ypres after the Allies faced a surprise attack from an enemy force four times their size. Following weeks of artillery barrages, the Germans preceded their ground assault with a poisonous gas attack. "They [the gassed soldiers] staggered in, weak and semi-stuporose, with bloodshot eyes and hacking cough. Some had attacks of vomiting; all had an intense dyspnoea, rapid heartbeat, and the severer cases a ghastly ashy colour of the skin."[5] By the time the Canadians were withdrawn from the battle on 4 May, the three Canadian and two British field ambulances supporting the battle had cared for 10,000 Allied wounded.[6]

*"Landing of the First Canadian Division at Saint-Nazaire, 1915,"* by Edgar Bundy.

### Festubert

May, 1915. With the Allies on the attack, the German forces defended with more poisonous gas and a new weapon: illicit projectiles called 'dum-dum' bullets (bullets reversed in their cartridges). Dum-dum bullets caused the worst wounds seen yet by the Canadian medical staff: "… terrible

Ridge at 5:30 a.m. under a withering supporting barrage from almost 1,000 artillery pieces. More than 15,000 infantry went in on the first wave, and most of the Ridge had been captured by noon on the first day. The victory, however, came at a heavy cost with 3,598 dead and 7,000 wounded. "Wounded men sprawled everywhere in the slime, in the shell holes, in the mine craters, some screaming to the skies, some lying silently, some begging for help, some struggling to keep from drowning in craters."[10] No. 1 Field Ambulance initially supported the battle by manning the Corps main dressing station, along with Numbers 4, 8, and 10 Field Ambulance.[11] On the third day, the unit pushed forward to take responsibility for clearing the field of wounded as the 1st Canadian Division continued its advance.[12]



September 1916: The Horse Ambulance at an advanced dressing station.

laceration of the tissues, with the production of a gaping, gruesome wound of exit."[7] With Numbers 1, 2, and 3 Field Ambulances working together as one large unit,[8] they collectively cared for more than one thousand Allied wounded over the course of this battle.[9]

### Vimy Ridge

9–12 April 1917. The Canadians saw their first action as a Corps during the battle of Vimy Ridge. After months of planning and rehearsals, the four Canadian divisions stormed the



April 1917: Use of a tramway to evacuate the wounded at Vimy Ridge.

Canadians who have received 'Blighty wounds' being evacuated to England from an advanced dressing station, June 1917.

## The Last 100 Days

August—November 1918. After successfully repelling a major German spring offensive, the Allies began their final offensive to win the war with an attack at Amiens on 8 August.[13] For this first battle of the new offensive, No. 1 Field Ambulance operated the Canadian Corps main dressing station, with support from Numbers 2, 3, 5, 10, and 14 Field Ambulance. After a rapid and extensive advance at Amiens, the Canadian Corps was moved north to Arras. Commencing their attack at Arras on 26 August, the Allies advanced to Canal du Nord over a two-week period at a cost of

*The Return to Mons,* by Inglis Sheldon-Williams.

13,000 casualties—9,500 of them being Canadian. Cambrai was taken by 9 October at a cost of another 10,000 Canadian wounded, and finally, Mons on 11 November 1918. During these last hundred days of the war, No. 1 Field Ambulance supported the 1st Canadian Division throughout the entire offensive.[14]

## Armistice

November 1918—January 1919. After the armistice came into effect on 11 November, one of the terms was for the Allies to occupy Germany west of the Rhine. The two most senior Canadian divisions—the 1st and the 2nd—were selected to be part of this initial Allied occupation force. On 13 December, the 1st Canadian Division crossed the Rhine at Cologne and established a bridge-head on the east shore. No. 1 Field Ambulance, for its part, set up the divisional rest station southeast of Cologne at Wahn.[15]

## Demobilization

After being relieved at the Cologne bridgehead on 9 January 1919, No. 1 Field Ambulance began the long journey home on 10 January.[16] Following a six-week wait in Belgium, the



*Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, CWM 19710261-0343*

*Olympic with Returned Soldiers,* by Arthur Lismer, a future member of the Group of Seven.



*DND/Library and Archives Canada/PA-003944*

The Officer Commanding and NCOs of 1st Field Ambulance, January 1919.

unit sailed for England on 16 March, and then onward to Canada on 14 April aboard the S.S. *Olympic*. Arriving at Kingston, Ontario in early-May, No. 1 Field Ambulance personnel were discharged through the local Dispersal Station for Area "H". After a final administrative and financial review was completed, No. 1 Field Ambulance was formally disbanded by General Order 211 on 15 November 1920.[17] The unit's long and distinguished period of service during the Great War was finally over.

*Captain (N) Jeff Biddiscombe, MMM, CD, was, until recently, the Commanding Officer of 1 Field Ambulance, based in Edmonton. His areas of interest include the history of the Canadian Forces Medical Service.*

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THE WESTERN FRONT, 1914-1918
CANADIAN OPERATIONS

ALLIED FRONT, 15 DEC 1914
ALLIED FRONT, 20 MAR 1918
ALLIED FRONT, AFTER THE GERMAN OFFENSIVES OF MAR-JUL 1918

LEGEND
A The Battles of Ypres, Apr - May 1915
B The Actions at Festubert and Givenchy, May - Jun 1915
C The St Eloi Craters, Mar - Apr 1916
D The Battle of Mount Sorrel, 2-13 Jun 1916
E The Battle of the Somme, Jul - Nov 1916
F The Battle of Vimy Ridge, 9-12 Apr 1917
G The Battles of the Scarpe, Apr - May 1917
H The Capture of Hill 70, 15 - 25 Aug 1917
J The Battle of Passchendaele, 26 Oct - 10 Nov 1917
K The Battle of Amiens, 8-11 Aug 1918
L The battle of Arras, 26 Aug - 3 Sep 1918
M The Canal du Nord and Cambrai, 27 Sep - 11 Oct 1918
N The Capture of Valenciennes, 1 - 2 Nov 1918

Directorate of History and Heritage, DND

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The high-scoring Second World War ace George "Buzz" Beurling meets Prime Minister Mackenzie King in Ottawa on Parliament Hill, 9 November 1942.

Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent makes a radio address prior to his departure from Rockcliffe Airfield in Ottawa for a round-the-world trip.

# Time for *Strong, Secure, Engaged Two,* or Something More?

## by Martin Shadwick

I n a thoughtful and thought-provoking analysis of 29 June 2019, *The Globe and Mail's* international affairs columnist, Doug Saunders, opined that "suddenly, Canada finds itself almost alone in the world, with a Liberal government realizing that its optimistic foreign policy no longer entirely makes sense." Reminding us that "we've been here once before," he notes that "both times, Canada has faced a United States whose confrontational, easily-angered president has to be managed carefully by a reluctant prime minister. A Britain, badly weakened, that has turned inward and is withdrawing from the world stage. A Russia that has changed from a precarious ally into a dangerous threat. An authoritarian tide sweeping across China and Central Europe. A Western Europe embroiled in political crisis and instability. And a democratic world collapsing into ugly totalitarianism or racial intolerance." "[The] first time was in the mid-1940s, as the world slipped into the grip of the Cold War. Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King found his old foreign policy tools impotent and his old relationships ineffective, until his visionary foreign minister, Louis St. Laurent, stepped in to play a key role in creating a new arsenal of international organizations and alliances that would hold the democratic world together and transform the language of international relations for three generations."

This time around, "…Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is staring across a strikingly- similar foreign policy void. Large parts of the world have slipped away from international co-operation and democratic peace—this time with the United States leading the retreat." At best, observes Saunders, "…it's a temporary stress test of the Canadian government's capacity to handle an unstable world without reliable partners. At worst, it's a long-term international crisis that defies both Mr. Trudeau's optimistic expansionism and the more defensive approach of his Conservative predecessors. Either way, we're stuck." Given this harsh reality, posits Saunders, "…whoever ends up in 24 Sussex [Drive] after [the 2019] federal election must thoroughly rethink the notion of Canada as a middle-sized country that depends on trusted allies and reliable trade partners and an outsize role in the old international organizations. All of those certainties have vanished."



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the Remembrance Day ceremony held in Ottawa at the national War Memorial, 11 November 2016.

This was not, of course, the type of geo-political and geo-strategic landscape—and the types of challenges for Canadian foreign and defence policy decision-makers—that were envisaged during Canada's most recent federal election in 2015. In that campaign, the Trudeau Liberals spoke optimistically of the prospects for restoring Canada's place on the international stage, while lambasting the Stephen Harper Conservatives for "steadily diminishing" Canada's international "influence and presence." Instead of working "…with other countries constructively at the United Nations, the Harper Conservatives have turned their backs on the UN and other multilateral institutions, while also weakening Canada's military, our diplomatic service, and our development programs." "[Whether] confronting climate change, terrorism and radicalization, or international conflicts, the need for effective Canadian diplomacy has never been greater than it is today. Our plan will restore Canada as a leader in the world. Not only to provide greater security and economic growth for Canadians, but because Canada can make a real and valuable contribution to a more peaceful and prosperous world." "[If] there ever was such a thing as a 'Trudeau Doctrine,'" notes Saunders, its core was evident in Trudeau's June 2015 observation that Canada "…has always understood that being fully and firmly committed internationally is important not only to our own success but also to the success of others." "Four years ago," writes Saunders, "the Trudeau Doctrine…seemed to many observers to be reasonable and attainable: It was, at the very least, a way for Canada to expand its sphere of trade and political partnerships around the world, making it less dependent on traditional partners by building on the existing circle of open-minded democracies. What was less apparent in 2015 was the extent to which the entire Trudeau Doctrine was premised on having the co-operation of the United States. Without a U.S. president seeking similar goals, without a circle of open-minded democracies, Mr. Trudeau's combination of pragmatic hardball and moral influence would go nowhere."

Cited at some length, Janice Gross Stein argues that Canada "…is now almost totally isolated within a tiny circle of pluralist liberal democracies" and believes that "the country needs to drop any pretense of idealism and signalling of Canadian virtues." Canadian policy "has to be interests-based. All it can do now is protect our national interests." Yet, as Saunders notes, "'national interests' doesn't mean what it used to. Ensuring Canada's physical and economic security is no longer a matter of supporting existing alliances; it requires a lot more effort and spending a lot more money to create new blocs and democratic spaces where none existed."

This "insecure, unstable new world," argues Saunders, "requires new approaches to Canada's international relations." He identifies three approaches that "should be a starting point, postelection, for either [major] party." First, "a central plank in any Canadian government's foreign policy should be working closely with fellow liberal democracies, and especially those that embrace pluralism and open trade, to invest in making their system the norm and helping countries free themselves from nationalism and extremism." This plank includes devoting attention to such initiatives as the Alliance for Multilateralism and the Ottawa Group. The second plank would seek "to establish direct diplomatic and political relations with the public majorities and democratic forces in countries whose government have slid into dark places—if necessary, entirely bypassing governments that



Prime Minister Stephen Harper visits the troops at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan, 9 May 2009.

have gone beyond the pale. This is controversial and risky"—no exaggeration there—"but it's not unprecedented." Initiatives such as the Lima Group figure prominently in the second plank.

The third plank—and the one most relevant to defence—envisages the 'beefing up' of a decidedly diverse array of national capacities and capabilities. "Most of the foreign- policy frustrations experienced by Mr. Trudeau, Mr. Harper and their predecessors are reducible to a single fact: Canada, despite being a highly successful medium-sized country, lacks the clout in economic output, military resources, fiscal base, infrastructure or size and scope of public and private institutions to make a decisive difference without the assistance of other, larger countries." Canada cannot go it alone—"nor would it want to"—but "circumstances are forcing Canada to rely far more heavily upon its own resources. The dramatic decline of economic globalization after 2008, and the trade punishments meted out by China and the United States in recent years, have shown us weaknesses in our domestic markets. The inability of Ottawa to handle more than two major international crises at a time has shown how thin and underresouced our government departments are. And Mr. Trump's threats to NATO and other international military alliances, and our inability to maintain more than a token peacekeeping role, have shown that we need to devote more to defence (and end the inefficient practice of procuring ships and vehicles from domestic suppliers.) We need to build up our cities and infrastructure, our universities and institutions, our population and knowledge centres, to make Canada a place that can lead rather than merely join."

"[Even] if the current crisis in liberal democracy proves temporary and short-lived, we know that it can recur—and likely will. If the institutions of 1945 no longer work and the doctrines of 2015 have failed to have an effect, we should develop new ones that will keep Canada connected to the better parts of the world for the rest of the century."

Reaction to the Saunders analysis was predictably swift. Writing in the *National Post* of 9 July 2019, Matt Gurney agreed that the early foreign policy assumptions of the Trudeau government had

President Donald Trump at a NATO press conference in Brussels, 12 July 2018.

when, as *Strong, Secure, Engaged* noted in 2017, the three traditional geographic lines of Canadian defence "are becoming more and more intertwined."

It is conceivable that *Strong, Secure, Engaged*—which provided a reasonably solid roadmap for Canadian defence policy and the Canadian Forces, albeit with question marks surrounding the timely availability of adequate capital funding—could be modified and adapted to meet the needs of a more self-reliant approach to defence. The net result, arguably, could be something akin—but certainly not identical—to the self-reliance posture that informs and shapes contemporary Australian force structure. The Trudeau government inherited some noteworthy self-reliance-enhancing capabilities from the government of Stephen Harper—strategic airlift in the form of the CC-177A *Globemaster* constituting one of the primary examples—and plans to acquire other capabilities with

been "basically shattered" in the years since, but wondered when the lengthy analysis by Saunders would "get around to making the obvious point that Canada is going to have to defend itself or"—emphasis added—*"at least much more so than we're used to even contemplating."* Saunders "…gets there, eventually. But only barely—it's a half-sentence in the second-last paragraph. But the conclusion is still right: Saunders says that we're going to have to start spending more on defence. But spend it where?" While positing that "we need more of everything," Gurney argues that "in the interim, adding more [army] reservists is a cost-effective way to bulk up, quickly, the Canadian military." Equally predictably, an op-ed writer in the *National Post*, Arthur James, promptly took issue with this assertion, arguing that a substantial expansion of the Army Reserve was "simply not credible" and instead promoting a rebuilt, "well-equipped and highly trained Regular Army."

If one accepts Saunders' core hypothesis and his concomitant call for a beefed up, more self-reliant approach—not only to Canadian foreign and defence policy, but to a potentially vast panoply of other public policy arenas and other Canadian national capabilities—what might be the potential implications for the defence of the realm? Could *Strong, Secure, Engaged*—still scarcely more than two years old—be modified and adapted (thereby producing *Strong, Secure, Engaged Two*) to the new and more troubling international environment or would a sweeping reappraisal of Canadian defence policy be required? How might existing defence priorities be modified, jettisoned or added to? What force structure and defence procurement adjustments and initiatives would be required to adapt to a Saunders-like model? How might the army, navy and air force fare in such a realignment? Would the prospects for the reserves be enhanced or diminished if Canada seeks a greater degree of self-reliance in defence? In geographic terms, how the domestic, continental and international lines and commitments would be drawn—particularly at a time

A Royal Canadian Air Force CC-177 *Globemaster* III on approach for landing at CFB Cold Lake during Exercise *Maple Flag*, 31 May 2016.

relevance to enhanced self-reliance and 'beefing up,' most notably 15 Type 26 multi-role frigates (which would thereby produce a Type 26 fleet larger than that currently envisaged for the Royal Navy) and 88 fighter aircraft. The latter would produce a noticeably larger fighter fleet than that envisaged by the Harper government (i.e., 65 aircraft) and, if the F-35A is ultimately selected, a fleet with particularly impressive intelligence-gathering capabilities. The pursuit of enhanced self-reliance would require additional acquisitions. Arguably, these should include credible successors (both qualitatively and quantitatively) to the CP-140M *Aurora* and the CC-150 *Polaris*, three Joint Support Ship-equivalents and successor submarines equipped with Air Independent Propulsion (AIP), and force structure and capital enhancements to the army that would most likely exceed those envisaged by *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. The disaster relief capabilities, both domestic and international, of all three services also require enhancements.

The principle of enhanced self-reliance could also be applied to the next round of NORAD modernization, partly for reasons of national security and partly for reasons of national sovereignty. More broadly, an enhanced Canadian military presence in the Arctic could prove prudent in terms of security, sovereignty and stewardship as well

Artist's concept of the Type 26 Frigate.

only Canada's defence-industrial base but its overall industrial and technological capabilities. Although one can posit that 'made-in-Canada' defence procurement is "inefficient," the irony, particularly in the context of Saunders' over-arching message of self-reliance and 'beefing up,' is that the expanded use of off-the-shelf procurement would weaken self-reliance in defence and, at least indirectly, in other areas of national import.

In the final analysis, the vision of a more self-reliant and 'beefed up' approach to Canadian foreign and defence policy—and, indeed, to Canada's national capabilities and capacities in a diverse array of public policy fields—is most intriguing. That said, some sceptics will doubtless point out that funding for a enhanced defence establishment would inevitably compete with enhancements in the myriad other fields identified by Doug Saunders, and that defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, as per Canadian tradition, would lose out.

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as be consistent with heightened notions of enhanced self-reliance. This need not amount to the 'militarization' of the Canadian Arctic but something more expansive than, for example, CFS Alert and the very modest training and refuelling facilities initiated by the Harper government, would appear both prudent and necessary. The Trudeau government's 2018 decision—partly for reasons of maritime sovereignty and security and partly to help provide continuity of shipyard employment until construction of the new frigates is underway—to procure a sixth *Harry DeWolf*-Class Arctic and offshore patrol vessel for the RCN is most welcome, but it does not exhaust the list of needed capability enhancements in the Arctic. The beefing up of Canada's defence capabilities and enhanced self-reliance could generate a higher profile within NATO as well. The Trudeau government has already partially corrected the Harper government's shortsighted decision to abandon the NATO AWACS operation, but a full (or at least fuller) restoration of the Canadian AWACS role would again be prudent. Benefits also could accrue to Canada's participation in peacekeeping although some might wonder whether "our inability to maintain more than a token peacekeeping role," as characterized by Saunders, is more a reflection of political will (or lack thereof) than of actual military capabilities. The officially stated technical, operational and equipment rationales for not extending Canada's UN helicopter commitment in Mali, as outlined in an April 2019 report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, have been found less than compelling by some observers and will no doubt prompt further debate.

Saunders' call to "end the inefficient practice of procuring ships and vehicles from domestic suppliers" traverses familiar terrain, one customarily anchored by the argument that off-the-shelf procurement saves money and expedites the delivery of military hardware. The customary counter-argument posits that off-the-shelf procurement reduces or eliminates domestic employment (thereby weakening both political and public support for defence procurement), cripples or eliminates the ability of domestic industry to provide life-cycle support and severely damages not



An RCAF CP-140 *Aurora* from 14 Wing Greenwood, Nova Scotia, lands at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay on 23 July 2012.



An RCAF CC-150 *Polaris* arrives in Kuwait as part of Operation *Impact*, 29 October 2014.

# Scattering Chaff: Canadian Air Power and Censorship during the Kosovo War

**by Bob Bergen**

**Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2019**

**330 pages, $34.99**

**ISBN: 978-1-77385-030-6**

**Reviewed by Steven Bright**

Long-time readers of the *Canadian Military Journal* will be familiar with the actions and nuances of the Kosovo air strikes in the late-1990s. An article by Dave Bashow [and others – Ed.] in the very first edition of the *Journal* covered the then-recent NATO situation in which Canada played a key role. A more general audience, however, would be very hard-pressed to remember anything about that demonstration of Canadian air power, let alone appreciate any of its salient details or implications. That's where *Scattering Chaff* by Bob Bergen comes into play. A former journalist, Bergen navigates readers through a behind-the-scenes investigation into the 78-day air war in March and June 1999, plus events during preceding and subsequent months, in a book stemming from his Ph. D dissertation at the University of Calgary.

Bergen's book sets out to do three things in a narrative drawing heavily upon interviews *of* and first-person recollections *by* several key players. First, he paints a vivid picture of what Bagotville and Cold Lake-based personnel underwent at a personal level in *preparing for* and *executing* their roles within the newly-formed Task Force Aviano, established in August 1998 and operating under the aegis of Operation *Echo* for combat missions over Serbia and Kosovo. Consider his first-hand descriptions (Pages 62-63) of the daily commutes the pilots and ground crew took from their quarters at the ski resort of Piancavallo to the base in Aviano. Tales of harrowing drives up windy switchback roads to the air base for a full day's work, then back down again, are poignant reminders that it takes countless hours of on-ground effort to support and fly in air missions, to say nothing of the sheer fatigue that sets in after an endless series of very long days.

Shortcomings with respect to accommodation are part and parcel of the more problematic commitment-capability gaps Bergen exposes in his fascinating book. Canadian pilots did not have proper night vision goggles, and their bombs were too small to have any material effect. Quoting Lieutenant-Colonel 'Billie' Flynn of Cold Lake's 441 Tactical Fighter Squadron, Bergen says: "[w]e have a 500-pound bomb that doesn't knock the paint off the buildings you're trying to bomb." (Page 105) Stories regarding inadequate search-and-rescue radios, forcing the need to purchase proper systems from the Americans on a credit card (page 227), further illustrate the point.

In setting out to achieve his first objective, which he does brilliantly, Bergen seeks to achieve a second objective. Specifically, he argues: "Canadians who fought there (i.e., Kosovo) deserve a warrior's honour for risking their lives in military operations mandated by the Canadian government, even though it was *(sic)* long been denied to them." (Page 9) Their roles in Kosovo have been largely forgotten, a memory Bergen re-animates through his rapid-fire and colourful storytelling.
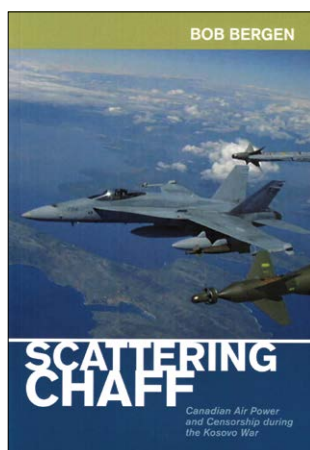
As illustrative as they are, these pictures and stories are also blunt instruments in helping Bergen achieve his third, and indeed, his primary objective – to flag and excoriate repeated obfuscations by civilian and military censors that not only denied those Canadians their warrior's honour, but also damaged democracy in this country. Specifically, Bergen contends that willful suppression of key information prevented Canadians from knowing more about what was really going on in Kosovo. It is in writing about censorship and democracy that Bergen's opinions are most stridently proffered. A restrained rage simmers just under the surface, as seen in assertions that several top players – politicians and senior Canadian Forces officers alike – were effectively lying to the Canadian public. To wit, he claims that on at least four occasions (Pages 156, 161, and twice on Page 176) that responses by Lieutenant-General Raymond Henault were effectively untrue, and that protestations by Defence Minister Art Eggleton that our pilots were well-trained "were misleading" (Page 204). It all makes for compelling, 'inside the cockpit' reading.

A delicate balancing act sits at the core of Bergen's argument here. Indeed, balancing national security and personal privacy – two reasons given by officials for not telling Canadians more about what was happening in Kosovo – with public disclosure of said activities is rarely an easy equilibrium to find. Expressed through the force of first-hand accounts, Access to Information research, and his own robust opinions, Bergen clearly feels that this balance was never struck, that Canadian pilots and crews were ill-served by their employer and their government more broadly, and that democracy was diminished by senior officials intent upon selected disclosure. Bergen is angry, and perhaps rightly so. It is not surprising, then, that his narrative approach is often akin to someone intent upon settling a vendetta on behalf of others.

In terms of layout, one may wonder why this book did not have any useful maps or charts to help illustrate the scope and impact of Canadian sorties, of which 678 were conducted on 224 missions (Page 232). This editing oversight is somewhat ironic and unfortunate, given that the content itself speaks passionately about how Canadians were not given adequate information about the warriors of Task Force Aviano.

All in all, Bergen's book would appeal to a number of people, and its bibliography is a helpful reference for those who want to delve in more deeply. Readers who *work in* – or at least have an *appreciation for* – the broader public affairs dynamics of any given operation will find it particularly interesting.

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## The Hall of Mirrors: War and Warfare in the Twentieth Century

**by Jim Storr**

Warwick, UK: Helion & Company, 2018

311 pages, $39.01

ISBN: 978-1-912390-85-4

### Reviewed by Cole Petersen

"What can we learn from war, and warfare, in the 20th Century?" Jim Storr asks the reader in the opening to his latest book, *The Hall of Mirrors*. A big question, and one that all members of the profession of arms should reflect upon for, despite all the discussion on how 21st Century warfare is changing, a survey of the last century of conflict can provide valuable insight into tomorrow's wars. Storr, a retired British Army lieutenant-colonel, professor, and defence analyst, is no stranger to asking big questions and answering with clear, and sometimes brutally frank, insight. His previous work of military analysis, *The Human Face of War* (2009), looked at military theory and he has long been a prolific contributor to professional journals.

The thesis of *The Hall of Mirrors* is that by studying the conduct of war and warfare, we can gain useful insight into what worked and didn't work in the past "…through accurate and deep understanding." This, Storr argues, is critical to the military professional as "…armed forces do not get paid to come second, so insight into thing which allow a protagonist to win will be an important area of discussion." Storr's book begins with a chronological sweep through war in the 20th Century, starting with the Boer War and the Philippine Insurrection, moving through the World Wars, and then looking at the conflicts associated with the Cold War period, and the efforts taken to prepare for an outbreak of another global conflict. However, the real value of the book comes after the chorological review of 20th Century warfare, with four chapters looking at land warfare, counter-insurgency, air warfare, and naval warfare. These chapters take the insight distilled from the preceding ten chapters of historical review, and attempt to distill useful lessons and observations, most of which are still applicable today. From Storr's observations of 20th Century conflict, he maintains that success in land warfare comes from a commander's ability to balance when to *fight* and when to *march*, while success at sea never won any wars, but could greatly influence future success on land.

Storr digs deeply into perceptions and the discourse of air warfare, arguing that "strategic air warfare" suffered repeatedly from over-promising and under-delivering, that they were largely ineffective efforts of "persistent raiding," and that the air forces of a military are proven to be most effective when supporting the operational efforts on land and at sea. His call to disband air forces to assign the flying assets to navies and armies is likely to raise eyebrows, but it is worth considering, based upon the analysis leading to this conclusion.

Another interesting contribution provided by *The Hall of Mirrors* is Storr's use of 'counter-factual' vignettes to illustrate how events transpired in the manner they did. These are sprinkled throughout the book, and will likely catch the reader off guard as they tended to be inserted without warning. In describing Operation *Market Garden*, for example, Storr describes how XXX British Corps crossed the Rhine at Arnhem and quickly reached the Zuider Zee, trapping the German Fifteenth Army in the Netherlands and leaving an uncontested advance for Patton to the Rhine, ending the war in the west by December. "Clearly that did not happen," Storr states in the next paragraph, and then guides the reader through *why* events really happened as they did, what *could* have been, and why decisions and events unfolded the way that they did. These vignettes are a thought-provoking (and entertaining) way of gaining insight into *how*, and *why*, events occurred.
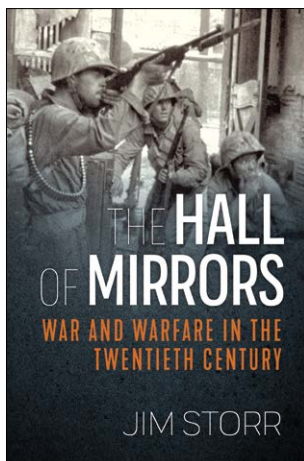
This book also provides value to the professional through its precision, both in the use of terminology, and in the examination of quantitative data. "Collective armed conflict has a taxonomy," and Storr is careful to provide sharp definitions in terminology to ensure concepts are discussed in proper terms. In today's professional discourse, ridden with buzzwords and ill-defined concepts, such clarity in terminology is helpful to the reader to put different aspects of conflict in the proper context. Storr's use of data is also illuminating, amounting to "showing the money." He attempts to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the Allied Combined Bomber Offensive by comparing monthly totals of Allied bombs dropped against German war production figures. He deflates the notion that the Soviets were tactical or operational masters through careful analysis of Soviet operations and casualty levels that are often 'airbrushed' in the historical record. The use of precision in terminology and quantitative data throughout the book is useful for dispelling common myths and misperceptions related to the conduct of war.

Storr's book is a useful read for a member of the profession of arms. It is a reflective work that will present facts and force the reader to challenge his or her perceptions. It is not for the casual reader of history. Covering a century of war in relatively-few 200 pages is an ambitious undertaking, and Storr's quick summarization of most conflicts assumes the reader has a grasp of the general historical record. He also presents facts and events with no footnoting, so a reader has to undertake their own exploration of the professional literature to understand from where Storr is drawing much of his material. He makes it clear in his introduction that he is not interested in "closely-argued academic argumentation" that results in little actual useful output, and presents a detailed list and thorough bibliography of the material he used to analyze the 20th Century's wars.

In the end, Storr makes a useful contribution to the professional literature, and arms the reader with useful insights into 20th Century conflict. While the reader may not agree with all of his assertions, they certainly will gain value from examining the facts and events he uses to craft his arguments. There is something for every sort of military professional, whether it be an examination of land tactics, and understanding of how air operations contribute to campaigns, or what methods have proven most successful in counter-insurgency efforts. At just over 300 pages in total length, the book is easy to explore, and it makes a worthwhile addition to the modern leader's library.

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