

CANSOFCOM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

BETWEEN FAITH AND REALITY

A PRAGMATIC SOCIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF CANADIAN
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES COMMAND'S FUTURE PROSPECTS

COLONEL MIKE ROULEAU



THE CANSOFCOM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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The mission of the Canadian Forces Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) Professional Development Centre (PDC) is to enable professional development within the Command in order to continually develop and enhance the cognitive capacity of CANSOFCOM personnel.

VISION

The vision of the CANSOFCOM PDC is to be a key enabler to CANSOFCOM headquarters, units and Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) as an intellectual centre of excellence for special operations forces (SOF) professional development (PD).

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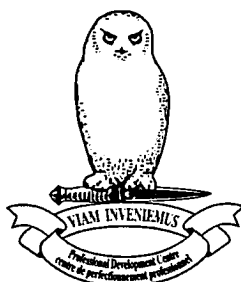
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3. provide additional research capacity;
4. develop educational opportunities and SOF specific courses and professional development materials;
5. record the classified history of CANSOFCOM;
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7. maintain a website that provides up-to-date information on PD opportunities and research materials; and
8. assist with the research of SOF best practices and concepts to ensure that CANSOFCOM remains relevant and progressive so that it maintains its position as the domestic force of last resort and the international force of choice for the Government of Canada.

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FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to introduce *Between Faith and Reality: A Pragmatic Sociological Examination of CANSOFCOM's Future Prospects*. In line with other Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) Professional Development Centre monographs in this series, *Between Faith and Reality* underscores important and relevant issues that the Command is currently facing and likely to face in the future.

In this volume, Colonel Mike Rouleau presents a clear and persuasive argument for the need to critically monitor the development of the nascent Command. Specifically, Rouleau posits that attention must be paid to the normative, regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars as outlined in Institutional Analysis theory. In so doing, CANSOFCOM will be better able to predict and appropriately address both external and internal frictions that arise as the Command grows.

Using the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) as a case study, Rouleau highlights some of normative, regulative and cultural-cognitive challenges that the Command might face while being cognizant of the fact that the American perspective cannot simply be transposed onto the Canadian one. Nonetheless, a study of USSOCOM is still of benefit as it serves to highlight some potential areas of concern.

Informed by this analysis, perhaps most significant in this study, is the prescriptive advice that Rouleau proffers the young Command. While not hiding behind the façade of a panacea, Rouleau's conclusions are sound and his recommendations deserve to be taken seriously. In particular, he posits that in order to continue to develop as a strong institution, CANSOFCOM must address potential internal points of friction, specifically, issues that may be derived from the different growth stages of the various units. After all, in order to

address potential Service rivalries and other external challenges, CANSOFCOM must construct a “bombproof” foundation and this work naturally begins at home. On the positive side, there are many things the young Command has been doing right since its birth in 2006 and, as Rouleau argues, these practices need to continue, regardless of pressures to adopt more conventional methods.

As such, *Between Faith and Reality* provides an interesting view of the Command from a sociological perspective. It provides unique insight into the development of the Command from a strategic perspective that simultaneously addresses tactical and operational concerns. In the end, one of Rouleau’s key precepts is the fact that it is the outstanding characteristics of the men and women who comprise CANSOFCOM that give value to the institution, and everything should be done to maintain and exploit the high calibre of its members.

Dr. Emily Spencer
Monograph Series Editor
CANSOFCOM Professional Development Centre

BETWEEN FAITH AND REALITY: A PRAGMATIC SOCIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES COMMAND'S FUTURE PROSPECTS

The Canadian Forces (CF) is comprised of a mosaic of individuals who represent the diversity within Canada. Through a shared military ethos and sense of purpose, these individuals come together to form a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In order to maintain and continue to build unity within the CF, it is important to understand how and why individual differences are shed in order to establish and maintain organizational and institutional identities. This analysis is particularly true in the case of Special Operations Forces (SOF).

The field of Sociology concerns itself with the study of the collective as a function of understanding how the interactions of many different actors arrive at a shared reality.¹ The premise of this means of inquiry is that pre-existing individually held beliefs are subject to change based on group interaction.² Institutions, for example, are one social vehicle through which aggregate individual perspectives form into a more complex whole. Institutions, which create social stability and attendant inequalities, require justification to remain acceptable to the group.³ Accordingly, legitimacy is crucial to long-term institutional viability. Notably, institutions take time to develop from the many forces at play in a contemporary society as they help to situate individual actors within a collective, complex environment. Organizations, which are comprised of a series of dialogues and interplay between communities of people, represent one of the dominant characteristics of an institution.⁴

Relationships within and between organizations are particularly valid in the military where there exists a long-standing history of exchanges between various constituencies. This has resulted in rich traditions and pride within and between the Services. As such, the importance of understanding the dynamics of individuals working within organizations that comprise institutions is underscored for the military leader whose job it is to ensure the nation is protected against those who threaten its interests. Charged with the well-being of a vital national institution, Canada's military leadership must develop an appreciation for the subtleties of the often invisible interplay between people, processes and structures in the context of internal and external environments.

The CF has changed substantially in the past decade, largely as a result of the terrorist attacks that destroyed the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001 (9/11), an event that altered the national security paradigm and called for refinements to Canada's instruments of national power.⁵ The CF response to these changes has been evident, particularly in relation to the creation of the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM), which was stood up on 1 February 2006.

This monograph seeks to understand the challenges and possibilities CANSOFCOM faces as a new organization within a much older institution. Unfortunately, its relative infancy offers few reference points. Nonetheless, there are alternative means of inquiry. In order to overcome this challenge, *Between Faith and Reality* will assess the American creation of the their Special Operations Command (SOCOM). This monograph will examine SOCOM's experience in order to extrapolate what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats exist for CANSOFCOM and to determine where finite resources should be applied to maximize CANSOFCOM's potential.

Between Faith and Reality will explore the SOCOM experience by applying the sociological *Institutional Analysis* (IA) model as a lens. Designed to understand the implicit role of institutional forces behind decision-making, the monograph will use this lens to examine the tremendous intra-military tensions around the creation, mandate and role of SOCOM, which to some degree persist to this day.⁶ In order to substantiate this claim, IA's framework of regulative, cognitive and normative dimensions, against which institutions justify their actions, will be applied. Next, the SOCOM experience will be set against CANSOFCOM's position in 2011, thereby allowing for a series of deductions and hypotheses to emerge, which may be useful for the future of the Command. This analysis will illustrate that in order to extend its institutional legitimacy, CANSOFCOM must attend to several crucial internal and external challenges which are primarily located in the normative and cultural cognitive domains. Moreover, *Between Faith and Reality* will demonstrate that external conditions are generally favourable toward the maintenance and even growth of CANSOFCOM. Indeed, while the external environment will always require constant attention, the lion's share of near to mid-term focus must be on internal issues in order to cement a foundation of the quality required for CANSOFCOM's long-term success.

In order to defend these arguments, Chapter 1 establishes the context for understanding how the regulative, normative and cognitive dimensions of the *Institutional Analysis* framework help or hamper the development of SOF within a wider military organization. This chapter sets the stage by explaining what SOF are and how they are meant to complement the portfolio of military power available to a government at the strategic and theatre-strategic levels of conflict and war. De-mystifying what constitutes special operations is essential in order to understand how SOF's roles, missions and tasks are assigned and prosecuted in support of wider policy objectives. Indeed, a more nuanced view is

required than simply disaggregating SOF as “unconventional” from conventional forces. Rather, this chapter will provide a refined perspective of SOF by portraying the strategic and operational inter-dependencies that exist across the SOF-conventional continuum of forces. Once having established the philosophical doctrinal differences between conventional forces and SOF, CANSOFCOM will be situated within the Canadian context of this relationship. Next, CANSOFCOM’s internal and external environments will be unpacked to set the stage for understanding how the *Institutional Analysis* model’s competing demands may affect it.

Subsequently, chapter 2 introduces the analytical framework used throughout this monograph: *Institutional Analysis*. It begins by providing a view of organizations and institutions from an historical perspective in order to better situate them in today’s context. It is revealed that large bureaucracies, such as the CF, are complex ecosystems comprised of actors and interests whose capacity for success is challenged by sudden shifts in direction and/or organization. Moreover, an assessment will reveal that neither the organization nor the leader is fully in control of an institution’s future, or as some might describe, destiny. Rather, the organization and the leader are inextricably linked, buffeted by myriad forces that chart a workable path forward, born of compromise between those who lead and those who follow within an institution. In order to better understand the implicit role these forces exert on both the leader and organization, this chapter will break the *Institutional Analysis* model into its constituent parts which are represented by regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars. Recognizing this subtext provides a template to help understand why certain decisions are made, or not, in the face of seemingly obvious choices.

Chapter 2’s theoretical model sets the stage for a practical examination of how SOCOM came into being as part of a major United States (US) Department of Defense (DOD) reform in the 1980s.

As such, Chapter 3 examines the US DOD's Reorganization Act of 1986, also known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA). It begins by situating two previous DOD reorganization efforts in the 20th Century and thereby focusing on the root causes of what drove the GNA to become law. This landmark legislation was designed to improve US military effectiveness by curtailing the power of individual Services toward a more capable joint force. An element of this legislative direction was to mandate the creation of SOCOM but institutional pressures persisted to delay this outcome. The chapter will close with an assessment of SOCOM's evolution against the *Institutional Analysis* model and reveal that the majority of the friction space was internal to DOD and centred on the normative and cultural-cognitive domains. These domains were sufficiently entrenched as to require sweeping regulatory action to alter them toward a more functional path. While careful to avoid any linearity between SOCOM and CANSOFCOM, this chapter establishes the American SOF experience primarily in the context its struggle with big Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps to serve as a harbinger of the type of challenges Canada's special operations community might work toward avoiding in the future.

In Chapter 4, *Between Faith and Reality* explores what all of this analysis might mean for CANSOFCOM. It begins with a look at the external implications and what the Command may focus on as a function of consolidating the CANSOFCOM brand. It then turns to an assessment of the internal workings, highlighting numerous areas for consideration. These internal items, in the aggregate, represent the most urgent area that CANSOFCOM should attend to as a function of setting conditions for externally sustainable legitimacy to take hold. Finally, this chapter offers several observations that are common to both external and internal environments such as the formulation of a defined yet elegantly simplistic strategy to achieve progress, which focuses to some extent on the leader. While there are limits to what a leader can hope to accomplish

within the institutional context, progress is possible. Advancement requires the deliberate selection of a finite number of objectives and attendant strategies and plans to achieve them. Perhaps more important, it requires that the individual exhibit the art of generalship in cultivating strategic relationships across broad constituencies while remaining squarely within the boundaries of a CF institutional leader. Balance, influence and guile superimposed on credibility are all key ingredients for the Commander of CAN-SOFCOM to successfully move the agenda forward. Credibility, like trust, is a fragile yet inherently powerful concept. Without it, the institutional leader is ineffective. This connection is especially strong in SOF owing to their missions' sensitive nature and the reality that failures, on whatever scale, can dampen the will of political leaders and policy-makers to support SOF's employment and progress. While victory has a thousand fathers, failure belongs solely with the leader so it is imperative that CANSOFCOM's institutional leaders recognize the primacy of a maintaining a healthy operational culture. This objective requires personal attention and places an equally important didactic pressure on both leader and organization as a function of maintaining long-term legitimacy and coherent growth.

Between Faith and Reality concludes with the importance of understanding the nuance that underlies how organizations, and their leaders, arrive at certain junctures in history. If life is rarely black and white, this fact is especially true of strategic military affairs where political, social, diplomatic, economic and informational dimensions predominate. CANSOFCOM's overarching situation moving forward is positive, yet its leadership must remain acutely sensitive to the delicate balance that must be struck between remaining recognizable to the wider military community and pursuing unique capability developments in the context of the whole of government (WoG) approach to conflict and war and government directives. The Commander of CANSOFCOM requires

a dual approach that reaches both external and internal members and which is best clarified through a succinct strategy. Nonetheless, this monograph makes the case that he/she must focus more internally than externally. Leaders, and by extension organizations, require highly developed cognitive abilities to see through the strategic mist in order to make sense of competing demands so as to arrive at workable solutions. As such, they must be pragmatic. Institutional leaders not only guide their subordinates, they help to shape the overall organization as well.

CHAPTER 1

Agreeing on a definition of Special Operations Forces (SOF) is a challenge in and of itself.⁷ The search for meaning must be rooted in an appreciation for the nature of contemporary and future threats to national security. To be legitimate, military capabilities must be relevant to the environment. The combined effects of globalization and post-9/11 transnational jihadist terrorist networks call for multifaceted SOF, capable of direct and indirect actions. Robert Martinage, Senior Fellow for the Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, reported to the US House of Representatives House Committee on Armed Services (HSAC) in 2009 that SOF needed to be as capable of manhunting and global disruption operations as they are capacity building in scores of countries around the world.⁸ In the Commander SOCOM's 2010 Posture Statement, Admiral Eric T. Olson offered, "in this 'new normal' in which our forces operate, emerging security challenges to our nation come evermore from agile and elusive adversary networks versus traditional, uniformed military formations." He explained, "Therefore, the value of adaptive special operations forces is at least as much in their mindset as in their skill set."⁹

Two deductions emerge from this statement. First, that SOF are an important component of the military dimension to Western states' instruments of national power, today and into the foreseeable future. Additionally, a logical subset of this deduction is that SOF cannot undertake this work in isolation. They are required to accomplish their missions within a wider governmental policy framework involving other agents who deliver national power. Moreover, militarily, they work within a much larger organization possessing broader capabilities. The second deduction that is derived is that SOF are a unique military tool. While part of the

military, they are seen to have a niche institutional strategic role in countering threats to national security.

Nonetheless, to simply define SOF as “unconventional” is misleading because it implies they are everything conventional forces are not. This is not so. Military leaders make calculated force capability and force mix choices in search of a balanced portfolio to service government policy objectives. Small nations like Canada simply lack certain military capabilities that bigger nations such as the US possess. Moreover, conventional capabilities continue to evolve and sometimes take over what used to be a SOF responsibility.¹⁰ As such, properly defining SOF must assume they *enhance* overall military capabilities; ergo SOF perform missions that conventional forces can do but they do so to a higher degree of fidelity and also execute missions that conventional forces cannot perform.

Understanding how this relationship exists requires a brief look into why warfare is inherently difficult. Carl von Clausewitz’s concept of the frictions of war can be broadly described in three tranches: constraints imposed by human physical and cognitive limits; informational uncertainties that result in unforeseeable differences between perceived and actual reality; and the structural non-linearity of combat processes that give rise to long run unpredictability of results and emergent phenomena.¹¹ In sum, von Clausewitz’s theory accounts for why even the simplest of undertakings in conflict are inherently hard and why every soldier appreciates the adage, “no plan survives contact.”¹²

Importantly, there is a link between overcoming friction on the battlefield and the quality of soldiers as individuals. Author and noted scholar Robert Spulak posits that conventional forces are large in order to contend with attrition due to frictions of war. With SOF selection criteria, however, the “high attribute spread” is much reduced, thereby allowing each individual to better contend

with the unpredictability of warfare and thus generally requiring fewer SOF personnel to accomplish a missions.

As such, SOF provide several advantages in minimizing the negative effects caused by frictions of war. Firstly, the individual qualitative variable is less pronounced within SOF than conventional forces, meaning there is a higher concentration of high attribute troops there than in the conventional force. This concentration accounts for why smaller numbers of men can have disproportionately significant effects. Secondly, because their individual quality is relatively high, SOF are well suited to incorporate more complex technologies into their force. Readily incorporating technology into the organization allows for a positive technological overmatch to occur thereby heightening the probability of successful outcomes. And thirdly, the aggregate of high individual quality allows for greater creativity and agility in the planning, preparation and execution of tasks than in most conventional forces. This reality is important because it creates a competitive advantage against one's opponents at best and, at worst, levels the playing field against well-prepared opponents. In other words, SOF allows for a commander's options space to open up.

Essentially, small numbers of specially trained troops can achieve effects out of all proportion to their size. Former Commander of Australia's Special Operations Command, Major-General Mike Hindmarsh, supports this conclusion positing that SOF offer expanded or alternative options to military leaders and policy-makers and that they often act as national economy-of-force options. He also adds that in order to achieve this effect SOF must be organizationally agile and highly adept at integrating within joint, combined and interagency frameworks.¹³

In light of this discussion, Spulak comes to a useful definition of special operations and SOF. He writes, "Special operations are

missions to accomplish strategic objectives where the use of conventional forces would create unacceptable risks due to Clausewitzian friction.” Spulak explains, “Over-coming these risks requires special operations forces that directly address the ultimate sources of friction through qualities that are the result of the distribution of attributes of SOF personnel.”¹⁴ The value of this definition is rooted in the fact that it correctly centres on people as a function of capability and the mission.

Having established what SOF represents within the military context, it is now time to focus on CANSOFCOM’s place within the CF. Before CANSOFCOM, there was Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2). JTF 2 was created in legislation by the government of Canada (GoC), transferring Canada’s kinetic Counter-Terrorism (CT) responsibilities to the Department of National Defence’s Canadian Forces from then Solicitor General’s Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s Special Emergency Response Team (SERT). JTF 2 began its training to assume the CT mandate in 1992 and was declared operational on 1 April 1993. Masked beneath a significant cloak of operational security, JTF 2 is believed to have deployed on operations in Africa, the Balkans and South America during the 1990s. Following the events of 9/11, the unit deployed to Afghanistan as part of the US-led Task Force K-Bar. For its valiant service, JTF 2 was awarded the United States’ Presidential Unit Citation in 2008.¹⁵ Although a very secretive force, JTF 2 was becoming firmly established as a premier Western SOF unit alongside other Western Special Mission Units. In the aftermath of 9/11, indicating the highest possible level of political and military support, the GoC committed to a significant expansion of JTF 2. In a post-9/11 world, JTF 2 was fast becoming an institution in its own right.

While JTF 2 proved itself, the government and military were also looking for other ways to expand their SOF capability. Shortly after assuming the portfolio of Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) in

December 2004, General Rick Hillier began a CF Transformation process. CANSOFCOM was born of this process, standing up on 1 February 2006 as one of four operational commands in the CF.¹⁶ Its mission is “to provide the CDS and operational commanders with agile, high readiness Special Operations Forces capable of conducting special operations across the spectrum of conflict at home and abroad.”¹⁷

The purpose of creating CANSOFCOM was to enhance SOF effectiveness within the CF. In other words, it aligned various disparate elements and created others under one unified command whose overarching mandate was to deliver integrated SOF effects quickly, wherever they were needed. The internal makeup of CANSOFCOM comprises a formation headquarters with four subordinate units: JTF 2, the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR), The Combined Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU) and 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (427 SOAS).¹⁸

While this change represented a significant step forward in establishing a bona fide SOF entity within the CF, it must be understood as an inherently challenging endeavour within the Command. Moving from JTF 2 to CANSOFCOM would not be without expected teething pains, which will be explored in Chapter 4.

The Command’s external environment is also important to consider in the developmental process. The Command’s external environment begins with the wider CF. One of four operational commands, CANSOFCOM is unique from the others in that it undertakes force development and force generation activities which, in the rest of the CF, are the purview of the Army, Navy and Air Force.¹⁹ Living within a modest CF military structure of approximately 100,000 Regular and Reserve Forces with finite resources, CANSOFCOM navigates the usual people, equipment, readiness and infrastructure pressures that all sub-institutions of

the CF face. A glimpse of CANSOFCOM's posture which reflects its desire to leave the door ajar for further expansion can be found on its website:

...2006 was our launch point to the establishment of what is quickly growing into a robust, coherent strategic tool. Regrouping existing capabilities, enhancing others and creating yet more, CANSOFCOM has quickly developed into a significant actor within the Canadian security and military architecture.²⁰

This quote carefully establishes the Command as a progressive entity but one that is at a point of departure, implicitly leaving open possibility for future expansion. More than that, the quote postures CANSOFCOM beyond the CF into Canada's national security fabric.

The website continues to define CANSOFCOM's strategic contributions through the traditional military defence lens by outlining three core strategic capabilities: first, it acts as the lead for counter-terrorism response, both domestically and abroad; second, it is globally focused and capable of shaping the operational environment; and, third, it does so through rapidly deployable SOTFs.²¹

In acknowledging that CANSOFCOM is rarely able to achieve its objectives unilaterally, it expounds five objectives in conjunction with other elements of the CF:

- To assist, establish and maintain Canadian sovereignty;
- To organize, enable and improve surveillance on marked threats;
- To conduct discrete and overt surveillance;
- To persuade or deter others from inappropriate activity on Canadian territory; and

- Where necessary to disorganize, disrupt, degrade or deny others from inappropriate actions on Canadian territory.²²

These objectives place CANSOFCOM in a unique position as a military command, straddling the defence, security and intelligence domains within Canada's national security architecture. Its operational outcomes seek to destroy or degrade violent extremist networks, limit or deny violent network access to populations and assist in capacity-building of partner nations to do the same.²³

In this sense, CANSOFCOM works closely with GoC special operating agencies of the Department of Public Safety such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), to name few. By extension, such cooperative arrangements require strategic connectivity and relationships with the Privy Council Office which are not traditional for the CF's three Services.

In terms of its external environment, we thus note that CANSOFCOM's mission requires it to be a savvy strategic partner who is but one small element among many, both internal and external to the CF, in the pursuit of the defence and security of Canada. Accordingly, CANSOFCOM must delicately balance its power relationships among a diverse array of military and GoC leaders so as to ensure its actions remain carefully aligned within its governance framework. That CANSOFCOM is so closely connected with national security agencies beyond the CF makes it part of the wider State institution and throws open the door to another layer of potential institutional tensions. It also exacerbates the internal challenges associated with defining what type of military institution CANSOFCOM is. If this identity issue is not carefully managed, it can cause a counter-productive inward dyslexia to take hold.

Moreover, CANSOFCOM's external environment also includes a robust Western SOF network. While there is little Canadian open-source information on how CANSOFCOM formally nests within a wider Western international SOF campaign plan, a look into US sources is revealing. Commander SOCOM, as the designated lead under DOD's Unified Campaign Plan, hosts a Global Synchronization Conference (GSC) bi-annually. Canada's flag appears on that conference's website as one of only three foreign countries and is placed astride those of the United Kingdom and Australia.²⁴ GSC's mandate is to "coordinate and synchronize collaborative network activities to combat the threat of transnational terrorism."²⁵ In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee in 2006, then-SOCOM Commander General Brown stated, "SOCOM forces operate in the only environment that can lead to success, which is the joint interagency combined coalition."²⁶ This quote underscores the underlying emergent US philosophy that security, defence and intelligence cooperation at national and international levels is the *prima facie* requirement to success in the current operating environment. Based upon Canada's early involvement in Afghanistan as part of the US-led Task Force (TF) K-Bar and the information cited above, it is reasonable to conclude that CANSOFCOM maintains a robust network of SOF-related activity with a select group of Western nations who share national interests in various regions of the world.

Nonetheless, exacerbating the challenges of linking into a wide array of stakeholder groups is the fact that CANSOFCOM is a young organization. It is only six short years into the task of creating a unified command from both seasoned and nascent organizations. This task brings with it inherent internal organizational challenges that leaders must contend with. For CANSOFCOM, these issues needed to be worked out while decisively engaged in operations in South West Asia. As such, the requirement to mould a cohesive command culture and climate while allowing sufficient room for

healthy sub-cultures aligned within the dominant culture to form is as necessary as it is challenging.

A further challenge is that the Command is growing as an opportunity cost for other CF elements as CANSOFCOM draws on joint and Service resources. Although currently supported by CF senior leaders who see the Command as a net positive capability to the overall CF portfolio, CANSOFCOM's senior leaders must remain alert to the possibility of internecine resource struggles. Lacking the institutional gravitas of a Service places it in a delicate position. This delicate position is further aggravated by the fact that the Command operation outside the purely traditional defence community and reaches into the wider security and intelligence communities.

To summarize, this chapter has revealed that the CF created CANSOFCOM from modest beginnings as a function of operational relevance and necessity in a post-9/11 environment. Ergo, by definition, the external environment is to some extent inviting toward CANSOFCOM; nonetheless, that does not completely negate the challenges associated with operating this environment. Internally, its relative youth implies both opportunity and risk. Opportunity comes from having a relatively unscripted slate upon which the future can be penned in the best manner possible. This position presents risk as well, however, because CANSOFCOM can ill afford to misstep for fear of losing what precious institutional legitimacy it has garnered over the past half decade or so. As such, CANSOFCOM's internal and external environments are not without significant potential pitfalls if it does not prosecute its duties with great care.

CHAPTER 2

THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

Having briefly looked at the structure and mandate of CANSOFCOM, it is important to look at a more documented example of a special operations entity that has developed and see it through the *Institutional Analysis* framework in order to more fully understand the forces that constrain and propel it forward. Understanding the *Institutional Analysis* framework will allow us to disaggregate these tensions in order to make sense of how and why decisions are made. It is only once we assess USSOCOM's development through the IA framework that we can return to CANSOFCOM and make certain educated organizational and leadership deductions about the future.

As such, this chapter proposes a lens through which we might view the SOCOM experience in order provide hypothesis for CANSOFCOM's evolution and to suggest a best course of action. It begins by describing what organizations are, what defines their identity and how they relate to their environment. This chapter will briefly discuss High Reliability Organizations (HROs) because they are germane to the nature of SOF, especially those charged with national mission force responsibilities. Next this chapter explores institutions, making the case that while not every organization is an institution, once institutional status is attained, the organization embarks on the constant quest for, and struggle to maintain, internal and external legitimacy. Finally we turn to the main focus of the chapter, sociologist Richard Scott's *Institutional Analysis* model which provides the framework to assess SOF in this monograph.

Scott's model will be unpacked to expose his regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars which are central to understanding the implicit role institutional forces exert on decision-making.²⁷ One of the strengths of his model, and most important to this discussion, is its expansiveness which accounts for a range of sociological factors in an effort to understand how they inter-relate to one another. The inherent strength of *Institutional Analysis* is that it does not preference the individual actor but takes a decidedly organic view where "actors in interaction constitute social structures, which in turn constitute actors."²⁸ The chapter will finish by emphasizing legitimacy as an institution's centre of gravity. Without it little is possible and to harness legitimacy is to empower future prospects.

Defining organizations can encompass many facets and, indeed, there are many schools of thought beyond the scope of this monograph. Simply put, conceptually an organization is an entity having a goal or purpose that resides in an environment and is comprised of a physical structure, technology, a social structure and a culture.²⁹ What separates organizations from other collectives is their relatively high formalization and goal specificity.³⁰

Noted organizational theorist Philip Selznick offers that "the most important thing about organizations is that though they are tools, each nevertheless has a life of its own."³¹ Moreover, Selznick accepts rational theorists' views that organizations are rationally ordered entities designed to attain specific goals. Nonetheless, he notes that non-rational factors prevail as well. Specifically, he argues that individual actors do not merely occupy a position but rather, as humans, bring bias and self-interest to the firm every day. Next, Selznick notes that complex informal systems link participants often outside of official boundaries.³² Importantly, he does not suggest that either of these assertions necessarily represents weaknesses – a topic which will be explored further within

the discussion of institutionalization. Rather, they are enduring sociological facts.

These ideas help to explain the context within which organizations reside. Indeed, organizations exist within an overarching environment where many external forces buffet the trajectory toward specific goal attainment. Appreciating this fact acknowledges organizations are permeable, open systems. As such, a useful definition is that “Organizations are congeries of interdependent flows and activities linking shifting coalitions of participants embedded in wider materiel-resource and institutional environments.”³³

Before turning toward a discussion of institutions, it is relevant to the topic of SOF to first explore the case of HROs. HROs are generally defined as organizations that repeatedly perform activities within high hazard environments or with high hazard technologies but who experience very few errors or incidents.³⁴ HROs are characterized by strong social and political pressure not to fail, a high degree of specialization, and feature complex, broad and interactive inter-agent dimensions.³⁵ Certainly, national mission force elements of SOF appear to fit the criteria as HROs.

What is particularly interesting with regard to HRO design is that, by its very nature, it is contradictory. HRO design simultaneously favours high degrees of both centralization and de-centralization in order to achieve high reliability. This paradox is nonetheless relatively easily explained:

*Centralization provides coordinating values and permits the best use of experience in the organization. Thus it is reliable. It is also fast as it provides a way to move beyond a conflict deadlock. On the other hand, decentralization allows sensing of action where problems occur. Thus it is likely to lead to faster response because hierarchy is circumvented.*³⁶

Reliability in an organizational context is normally perceived as being output-related but, in the case of HROs, it is often about what does not happen rather than what does.³⁷ These lack of occurrences are sometimes referred to as “dynamic non-events.”³⁸

As with HROs, SOF failures tend to be viewed seriously from both within and outside of the community. In fact, generally, SOF failures are considered bigger shortcomings than those of conventional forces. This discrepancy is due to the strategic nature of SOF and is expressed in their very *raison d'être*. As SOF represent the last line of defence and security for kinetic resolution to terrorist events, failure can have drastic consequences causing many to question the overall reliability of the organization. This impact underscores the heart of the matter: trust. SOF is trusted by the highest levels of government to always perform well under the most demanding of circumstances.

It is for this reason that CANSOFCOM places a premium on well-developed risk assessments and of clearly articulating the breadth of operational risk factors so senior civilian and military leaders can make well-informed decisions. This trust relationship is especially important given the distributed nature of most contemporary missions. Action-focused HROs are, by definition, “decomposable” sending smaller entities to operate semi-autonomously.³⁹ In that way they are junior leader-centric to some degree.

Furthermore, because of their diverse and often complex situational contexts, it is reasonable to conclude that organizational culture plays an important role in the success of HROs. Participants must willingly shoulder a portion of the organization’s burdens as their own in order to attain organizational success. This distribution in turn dampens the propensity to act out of individual self-interest as one might in a more benign organizational setting. The combination of tight and loose coupling provides for a blend of

comfortable predictability while at the same time allowing for the exercise of low level franchise thus empowering individual actors.

Suffice it to say, SOF are exceedingly sensitive to constantly active pressures around legitimacy as a function of effectiveness, control and dependability. Moreover, this awareness contributes to an acute inward self-conciseness which is driven in large measure by the close attention paid to it by senior State leaders and officials. There exists an unspoken *quid pro quo* arrangement whereby SOF are the benefactors of much largesse in terms of resources, profile and missions but, in return, they feel a deep seated sense of duty to never betray that solemn trust. This relationship places significant pressure upon SOF's leadership at all levels and is important to bear in mind throughout the rest of this analysis.

Having established what constitutes organizations and, specifically HROs, it is important to now look at institutions. Scott defines institutions as "comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life."⁴⁰ Scott goes on to suggest institutions have two major properties: they are generally resistant to change and they transmit across generations.⁴¹ To underscore the institutional organicist perspective, Berger and Luckmann explain that institutions are dead if only represented in objects and verbal designations. Rather, they "are brought to life" on the basis of real human contact.⁴²

Extrapolate this claim to a low-performing, low-achieving institution with an obscure goal against one rife with talented actors charged with a goal central to the nation. It follows that the latter institution would be much more "alive" in every way. It would have a qualitative richness about it as SOF units generally tend to. This could be a force for good, able to be harnessed into creative output, but it could also be potentially bad. Such organizations

possess strongly held beliefs in what is right or wrong, good or bad and these beliefs can sometimes pervert the appropriate level of concern when the wrong inputs are sent into the institution. This problem can be traced back to inward insecurity as well. (Chapter 4 will look more deeply at this issue with respect to CANSOFCOM.)

Scott embraces an integrated view of institutions within his model where any of the three pillars can represent a model in and of itself. He addresses the tension between scholars who preference a structural-cultural institutional view and those who see individual actors as the main agents to institutional outcomes. He qualifies this discrepancy as the debate between control (i.e. the institution bounds actors to act within acceptable arcs) and freedom (i.e. the institution is the vehicle used by individuals to act) and says it is a false choice to make a binary selection.⁴³ In other words, actors are affected by the context of the environment external to the firm but the firm also provides a context in its own right. Each affects the other. The institution is both medium and message in the delicate interplay of a social construct called an institution. This interpretation is sometimes referred to as Scott's Layered Model⁴⁴ and it is important to appreciate how these relationships occur.

The term *structuration* denotes that "social structure involves the patterning of social activities and relations through time and across space. Social structures only exist as patterned social activities, incorporating rules, relations and resources reproduced over time."⁴⁵ Scott establishes four "carriers" which propagate institutional rules, norms and culture forward through time. Symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artefacts all have roles to play in this regard.⁴⁶ But growing an institution requires a jumping off point and maturing it takes time. Scott notes that emergent institutions often displace extant ones, or at least assume part of their market share.⁴⁷ For example, while CANSOFCOM may be a net benefit to the CF, it can be perceived by some as threatening

to individual Services. Scott is also careful to point out that despite the well reasoned rational choices of their designers, institutions have limitations and can carry negative second order consequences.⁴⁸ These limitations exist because the initial assumptions and predictions do not remain linear over time. They, and by extension the institution itself, are elastic in ways that are virtually impossible to map over the long-term.

Although various categories of actors impact institutions it is important for this paper to look at two: professionals and elites. Professionals operate mostly in the cultural-cognitive space by continuously adapting and shaping the conceptual viewpoint using ideas as their catalyst.⁴⁹ One could add to this category what Scott refers to as *institutional entrepreneurs* or actors who have a game-changing role in the institution.⁵⁰ This notion is useful to our discussion of SOF because SOF is often the military entry point for new and emerging technologies and methodologies into the wider field force.⁵¹ SOF are in some ways institutional entrepreneurs for the CF – a fact that can be leveraged to positive effect. Elites in the context of Scott’s definition are corporate in nature. Importantly, some may corporately view SOF as elitist. Internally, CANSOF professionals eschew outright the notion they are elite within the CF. They rather see themselves as masters of their tradecraft. Nonetheless, they could be seen as “soldiers of the elite” – privileged troops within the eyes of State leaders. Should that be the case, and owing to the nature of the roles and missions which give access to very senior military strategic or political leaders, it would follow that CANSOF leaders must be ever careful to delicately balance access and governance so as to maintain institutional integrity and balance with external stakeholders. In other words, overly leveraging “elite” status is a pitfall to be avoided at all costs for it would agitate against institutional credibility. Because of the uniqueness of this paradigm, the CF’s appetite for CANSOFCOM to overplay its hand is limited to incremental adjustments that have

broad-based support beyond the chain of command. As such, it is wise for CANSOFCOM to socialize major initiatives with the Services and other key leaders before going to the boss for approval.

Before turning to the three pillars themselves, one should first look at Selznick's two steps of institutional growth. Selznick situates this process in the context of power relations. For him the first stage is the creation of formal structures as an institutional response to a problem. For CANSOFCOM, this was achieved in 2006 with its creation. The second stage is the "thickening." Thick institutionalization takes place in many different ways. "Familiar examples are: by sanctifying or otherwise hardening rules and procedures; by establishing strongly differentiated organizational units, which then develop vested interests and become centres of power; by creating administrative rituals, symbols and ideologies; by intensifying 'purposiveness,' that is, commitment to unifying objectives; and by embedding the organization in a social environment."⁵² This description accurately portrays the stage in which CANSOFCOM currently finds itself. --

The table is thus set to more deeply examine Scott's three pillars. The next section will unpack the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars which, in aggregate, provide a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the challenges institutions face below the surface of seemingly rational choice. The exploration of the three pillars must be set in the context of an institution operating in an open system struggling to gain, maintain and advance its legitimacy.

The regulative pillar centres on a specific and easily identifiable genre: rule sets. This perspective tends toward explaining individuals and rational choice around three organizing principles: setting of rules and regulations; monitoring their performance; and sanctioning activities.⁵³ That is not to suggest however that rules

cannot bleed into the other pillars. For example, to the extent that rules are generally not all-encompassing there is an interpretive aspect giving rise to judgement which in turn is better assessed in the normative pillar.⁵⁴

The regulative pillar in the context of this paper is seen as the easiest to identify and quantify. It is also the most important in terms of legally establishing and sanctioning a sub-institution within the wider institution that is the CF. But once that important work is done, it resonates less than the other two pillars because it is more individual-actor centric. The mutually supporting relationship the regulatory pillar shares with its normative counterpart is then important to underscore. Nonetheless, the regulative pillar is exceedingly important in our advanced Western parliamentary democracy that places a rightfully disproportionate emphasis on authorities, responsibilities, accountabilities and oversight, especially as it relates to the military instrument of national power.

The normative pillar is about what is good and morally governed as a function of the social obligation individuals and collectives feel toward their societal institutions. Scott defines this pillar as emphasizing the normative rules that create evaluative and obligatory dimensions to the social context. This process revolves around values and norms. Values are seen through a lens of a construction of standards that represents the normative band of behaviours and they are expressed as what is preferred or desirable in that context. Norms dictate how things should be done by defining acceptable means to achieve a valued end.⁵⁵

Normative systems are both constraining and liberating. They impose limits on social behaviour while serving as a vehicle to enable social action.⁵⁶ The normative system is governed not by coercive power as with the regulative pillar, but through self-policing and less formal “group sanction.” Violating social norms often results

in shaming and disgrace while excelling brings pride and honour.⁵⁷ The normative pillar is often seen as that which provides stability and acts as “the basis for social order.”⁵⁸

In SOF, this pillar is expressive of why the chain of command often speaks of a self-regulating environment where every actor bears responsibility to correct misalignments when they are seen. This concept speaks to the higher standard of discipline SOF believe they are held to even if it is manifested outwardly in a different way from conventional forces. Too often this crucial nuance is ignored as the unsophisticated eye glares at relaxed grooming standards, pointing to those as an indication of poor discipline. The professional reality is quite contrary. Indeed, SOF missions depend on superior discipline.

The cultural-cognitive pillar is about what is right; what is culturally supported within a common frame of acceptability based on a shared understanding or perception of the world. “In the cognitive paradigm, what a creature does is, in large part, a function of the creature’s internal representation of its environment.”⁵⁹ In a nod to fellow sociologist Max Weber, Scott notes that action was social only to the extent those involved attached meaning to it. He elaborates explaining that individuals, in objective conditions, continuously make subjective decisions based on their interpretation of multiple stimuli bombarding them in a dynamic and ever-changing milieu.⁶⁰ Interestingly, Scott attaches a binary aspect to the cultural-cognitive pillar where those who align with the dominant culture are reassured and confident whereas those operating outside of it are noticeably regarded as “clueless (or) crazy.”⁶¹

This binary phenomenon is seen in SOF. The selection of individuals is about the fit. Cultural indoctrination following selection is about the tightness of that fit. Lately, the term *enculturation*

has been attached to this stage. In fact, it is not uncommon in SOF for the vast majority of those selected to remain for many years because they self actualize in the environment. However, a small number tend to be ejected relatively early on because they stand out as uniquely incapable of adapting to the environment. Enculturation tends to be a binary proposition, which underscores why it is so vitally important to SOF. Moreover, this process must be tailored to the unique circumstances of the unit involved because the intent is to transmit specific sub-cultures within an overarching SOF culture that itself nests into a dominant CF culture. Enculturation thus needs to start at the lowest sub-level in order to work properly.

As previously mentioned, any institution can be examined solely within one of Scott's three pillars but to do so is to limit one's analytical perspective. Assessing the aggregate provides a richer and more meaningful probe. The three pillars paint a mosaic of institutional forces at play and underscore the interdependencies that exist between them as they sometimes act in concert and at other times pull against each other. The more the three pillars align, the greater the likelihood of institutional success. If one or more is out of phase, an imbalance ensues making change initiatives difficult to stick and/or strategies unworkable in the long run.

Examining institutions through this framework requires the benefit of time however, something that is lacking in an examination of CANSOFCOM. As such, the SOCOM experience is used as a platform upon which to later explore CANSOFCOM. While performing this analysis, one should note that Scott offers a cautionary note to his *Institutional Analysis* framework. He remarks that outcomes may often appear negative and that in reality the three pillars rarely align. He also notes that a high degree of institutional upside exists in contemporary society as social agents militate for enlightened change and progress.⁶² Consequently, before turning

to an analysis of SOCOM one should explore the central feature of legitimacy within *Institutional Analysis*.

Institutions require more than goals and resources to be viable, they need social acceptability and credibility. "Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions."⁶³ Legitimacy is a subjective institutional enabler because it is conferred, reinforced or questioned through the perspectives of different constituencies.

This is especially true in the case of SOF generally and CANSOFCOM in particular because the frame of reference of key leaders is often vague as a function of this relatively nascent capability in Canada's inventory. Many very senior officers did not "grow up alongside deployed SOF" which makes it difficult at times to contextualize.

Notably, a relationship exists between legitimacy and power. The former is reinforced if the institution has access to the latter. Being able to call upon power centres anchors the institution from a social perspective. Researcher Arthur L. Stinchcombe stated that, "A power is legitimate to the degree that, by virtue of the doctrines and norms by which it is justified, the power-holder can call upon sufficient other centres of power, as reserves in case of need, to make his power effective."⁶⁴

Understanding this relationship allows one to comprehend why questions of structure seem to predominate ongoing CF change initiatives. In military hierarchies, where vertical command and control systems are sacrosanct, being buried within structure limits the ability to call on other centres of power. The higher one is placed, the more freedom of action they have to exercise this critical franchise to attain and sustain legitimacy in everyone's eyes. Of course, power in and of itself is never enough. It is only

an enabler. Legitimacy begins and ends with legally sanctioned (regulative), morally governed (normative) and culturally supported (cultural-cognitive) actions. This relationship is why SOF must remain very firmly anchored within the dominant CF across all three pillars. Operating beyond these bounds invites a loss of legitimacy, rendering the institution unsustainable in the long-term.

Having examined Scott's *Institutional Analysis* framework in the context of what organizations are and how institutions emerge from them we can now turn to an examination of the 1987 creation of SOCOM. It is important to keep in mind that the three pillars allow for a broad appreciation of the institutional forces which are constantly at play in an open system where the environment buffets the institution continuously thereby framing and re-framing perspectives as time marches on.

CHAPTER 3

THE US EXPERIENCE: CREATING SOCOM

This chapter dissects SOCOM's creation using the three pillars put forth within Scott's *Institutional Analysis* framework. The Defence Reorganization Act of 1986, also referred to as the Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA), is the seminal piece of legislation that mandated a series of sweeping reform in the DOD, chief among them the creation of SOCOM. Before delving into a detailed analysis of this particular event, however, a series of previous military reforms dating back to 1947 will be mentioned if only to note that substantial change in large military organizations occurs infrequently yet, when it does, it tends to be significant.⁶⁵

The creation of SOCOM is ultimately the story of a struggle for legitimacy. On one hand, there were four independently strong Services (i.e. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps) seeking to preserve their primacy within a weak central military structure and, on the other hand, was a small cabal of political and SOF actors who adamantly held to a view that SOF needed independent standing within DOD to compliment national military objectives. In examining the three pillars, we see how this struggle was waged over nearly a decade.

First, it is necessary to examine the regulative pillar because of its primacy in this case. Ultimately, only regulatory change ordered by civilian authorities could bring about the creation of a unified SOCOM, despite the fact that a general consensus had emerged that this centralization was required in some form. Nonetheless, the strong Service cultures were too pervasive for uniformed leaders to achieve a SOCOM-like joint feat internally.

As noted earlier, the regulative aspect is often more about individuals than collectives. In a nod to the works of DiMaggio, Powell and Scott, this section will show how some strong individual personalities forced innovation and strategic action thereby contributing to major change.

Next, the normative pillar that centres on values and norms will be examined. The four Services felt a social obligation within their own constituencies to resist a joint SOF capability, especially if it was structured with four-star leadership because this would heighten its profile, ergo threat. As the political and backroom military manoeuvring took place, one can note a dramatic relationship between the Services (institutions in their own right) and the environment. Specifically, a joint SOF Command was seen as inappropriate in the eyes of some and wholly appropriate in the eyes of others.

Finally, the cultural-cognitive pillar will be analyzed and it will be shown that SOCOM was an anathema to the military's shared schema that had developed around Service mandates. The absence of a shared worldview in the context of the dominant military entities could not account for a standalone SOF capability. Despite an obvious operational upside, the creation of joint capabilities posed a risk to the *status quo* and was initially vehemently resisted as a result.

This chapter will also provide insights into how difficult it was to create SOCOM within DOD despite several high profile operational failures that all spoke to the need for greater coherence in the joint operations spectrum and SOF in particular. This case study will corroborate the institutional resistance to change and argue that the normative and cultural-cognitive domains would never have permitted SOCOM's creation were it not for the regulative pillar's legislation which effectively ended the debate by foisting SOCOM upon DOD.

First it is important to set the stage for large changes – or lack there of – within the DOD. The Department of Defense had seen reforms in the past. Following the Second World War, the National Security Act of 1947 established the Air Force as a separate Service and created the DOD structure that would largely remain extant into the 1980s.⁶⁶ In the 1950s, the civilian component of DOD was centralized to a greater extent but a major problem persisted whereby strategic planning, force development and combat command were dominated by strong Service interests.⁶⁷ In an effort to curb what he saw as unhealthy inter-Service rivalry, too much Service autonomy and wasteful duplication of spending, then President Eisenhower implemented the DOD Reorganization Act of 1958. This legislation gave greater powers to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) in the hope that a more assertive departmental civilian leader could bring Services to heel.⁶⁸ From the mid-1960s until GNA, there was little change within DOD. A number of significant operational failures would change that.

One major event and five significant incidents over a 15-year span culminated with the US Congress coming to view the US military as incapable of adequately prosecuting military operations. The aggregate effect was that DOD lost its legitimacy. The first and most important event was the Vietnam War (c.1955-1975). The conflict cost the American taxpayer \$150 billion and the military dropped three times the number of bombs than in both theatres of the Second World War. Additionally, it cost 58,000 American lives, two to three million Vietnamese lives and left Vietnam wracked by devastation.⁶⁹ All this toil was for not as America lost to Communist forces in 1975.

Aside from obvious American political failings, the military was roundly criticized for effectively having fought three separate wars: one in the jungles, one in the air and the other at sea. Little

had been done to develop a coherent joint doctrine to synergize mostly stove-piped effects against a determined enemy.⁷⁰

Vietnam was a watershed event for the US military that saw it lose institutional legitimacy in the eyes of US society. The military had lost its vital connection to American society and its elected representatives. In that sense, it embarked on a journey of malleability, primed to be shaped both internally and externally in an effort to regain its legitimacy in the eyes of the American public.

Five separate events further underscored civil-military frictions. The *USS Pueblo*, a US Navy intelligence gathering ship operating off the North Korean coast in the Sea of Japan was seized by North Korean forces on 23 January 1968 on the basis that it had entered territorial waters. The 82 surviving crew members from the action were held captive for eleven months, released only once the US issued a written apology for spying. Post-incident investigations revealed that North Korea's intentions were relayed to US military commanders in Japan but the message had never been conveyed downward in the chain of command thus not reaching the *Pueblo*.

In 1975, a US flagged carrier *The Mayaguez* was seized by Khmer Rouge guerrillas off the Cambodian coast. A US Marine element sent in to rescue the crew suffered heavy casualties and failed in their mission as the crew had long since been moved. More to the point, all US intra-theatre communications outlining the plan between various services was sent in clear on high-frequency radio nets. As a result, the Khmer Rouge waited in ambush aboard the ship downing three helicopters and damaging three more in thwarting the assault. Again, inter-service interoperability was found severely wanting.⁷¹

Perhaps the highest profile operational failure of this era was 24 April 1980's Operation EAGLE CLAW, designed to rescue American hostages held in Tehran, Iran. The Pentagon designed

an exceedingly elaborate plan incorporating every Service. Due to an over-emphasis on operational security, the task force never rehearsed as a full mission package. Doing so would have revealed the fact that radio systems used by constituent elements were incompatible. Seven brave servicemen died in what was widely viewed as an abysmal joint military failure that tarnished America's foreign policy prestige.

The Beirut terrorist bombing of the Marine Corps Barracks in October 1983 revealed yet more troubling command and control fissures. While the Marine Corps generated and subsequently sustained the deployed force, they were force employed through Commander Sixth Fleet to the Commander-in-Chief European Command who ultimately reported to Strategic Allied Commander Europe. Had the command relationships been clearer, it is likely that better intelligence and security information would have been available for key operational decision-makers to allow for adjustments to be made on the ground. Senior commanders in Europe were focused on the Cold War and not small entanglements like the Beirut deployment.

The final example is the Grenada invasion, Operation URGENT FURY, designed to rescue American medical students in October 1983. While the operation itself was largely successful, it was discovered that Army units ashore could not communicate requests for naval gunfire because shore to ship systems were incompatible. Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger perhaps said it best in summing up the totality of these various failings:

In the absence of structural reform I fear that we shall obtain less than is attainable from our expenditures and from our forces. Sound structure will permit the release of energies and of imagination now unduly constrained by the existing arrangements. Without such reform, I fear

*the United States will obtain neither the best military advice nor the effective execution of military plans, nor the provision of military capabilities commensurate with the fiscal resources provided, nor the most advantageous deterrence and defense posture available for the nation.*⁷²

Beyond losing legitimacy in the public's eyes, the totality of these isolated failures created a belief in the minds of US legislators that DOD was broken. It was an overly expensive, stove-piped, under performing collection of Services. The two main critiques were that Service Chiefs had co-opted everything below SECDEF and that the commanders in the field (CINCs) were mini Armies, Navies and Air Forces, beholden to the desires of their Service Chiefs.⁷³ The House Armed Services Committee became engaged in 1982 with hearings "intended to strengthen the authorities of central military institutions within DOD, particularly the powers of elements seen as divorced in some way from the Services."⁷⁴ The question was no longer *if* reform was needed; rather, it was to *what extent* the inevitable reforms would re-shape DOD.

At this time, US Special Operations were in a period of abject crisis. Post-Vietnam resource cuts witnessed a 95 per cent reduction in SOF funding and a 70 per cent manpower decline. The Army contracted from seven Special Forces Groups to three, the Air Force ceased funding for AC-130 Gunships in 1979 and the Chief of Naval Operations recommended in 1975 the dismantling of all SEAL Teams or moving them into the Reserve Force. SOF was a "graveyard of careers"⁷⁵ and on the path to becoming relegated to history as a bona fide military capability.

Regulative Pillar

In the immediate aftermath of Operation EAGLE CLAW, DOD ordered a Commission to examine shortcomings. The Holloway

Commission's findings resulted in the creation of a counter-terrorist joint task force (CTJTF) and a Special Operations Advisory Panel within DOD.⁷⁶ Not satisfied that this construct would resolve the underlying issues, Army Chief of Staff General Edward C. "Shy" Meyer pushed for further joint integration of SOF capabilities. While unsuccessful, in 1982, he consolidated Army SOF elements under one unified command, the 1st Special Operations Command.

Nonetheless this change was an *ad-hoc* effort within one Service. At this stage, SOF leaders were marshalling their intellectual energies behind the scenes and decided that the only route to success was to pressure the Pentagon from the top down. They drew on the support of Noel Koch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and one of very few pro-SOF voices within DOD. He characterized the situation in a 1984 speech stating: "I have discovered in critical areas of the Pentagon, on the subject of special operations forces revitalization, that when they (officials there) say no, they mean no; when they say maybe, they mean no; when they say yes, they mean no, and if they meant anything but no, they wouldn't be there."⁷⁷

Koch's voice was not sufficient to instigate change, however. He lacked general and flag officer support within DOD. To overcome this deficiency, he set conditions for a Special Operations Policy Advisory Group (SOPAG) to report directly to SECDEF.⁷⁸ The aim of this collective of retired General and Flag Officers was to bolster Koch's case for legislative reform and their weapon was institutional credibility. They thus set about marshalling their case.

One key Report, written over the 1983-1985 period by Senate Armed Services Committee professional staffer James Locher, proved instrumental in laying further legislative groundwork. *The Locher Report, Defence Organization: The Need for Change*,

identified 16 problem areas and proposed 91 corrective actions that sought to remedy institutional shortcomings. His main conclusions on SOF revealed the following:

- Conventional forces do not focus on typical SOF threats (counter-terrorism (CT), insurgencies, etc.);
- Conventional forces focus on high intensity threats upon which resource programs are justified and SOF never rise high enough to meet the funding test so they always reside “below the red line”; and
- Innovative defence thinking is required to deal with low intensity conflict threats to national security⁷⁹

Through 1983, it was becoming clear to DOD that legislators on Capital Hill would not abandon the issue, due in large measure to SOPAG’s work behind the scenes. To stave them off, DOD created the Joint Special Operations Agency on 1 January 1984. This pre-emptive attempt to accede militarily to policy-maker concerns lacked the fundamental quality of command authority over Special Operations Forces, however. Accordingly, it had no impact on SOF policies, capabilities or readiness, which remained decentralized under Service Chiefs. Indeed, it was an impotent half-measure at best. Throughout this period, SOPAG members and select other serving SOF leaders appealed to House and Senate leaders, mobilizing, among others, Senator William Cohen. This appeal was reinforced through a vigorous publication and media campaign. This effort culminated in June 1986 with Bill HR 5109 to create a National Special Operations Agency (NSOA). After a period of back and forth between legislators and DOD, the House and Senate passed SOF reform bills in October 1986 which called for a unified four-star command for all SOF, an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC),

a coordinating board for low intensity conflict within the National Security Council and a new Major Force Programme (MFP-11), commonly known as the "SOF chequebook."⁸⁰ Encompassing the policy and resource dimensions, this bill had all the necessary ingredients for success.

While the GNA set conditions for SOCOM to be formally established on 1 June 1987, a more detailed look at some of its ramifications beyond SOF is also instructive. At its foundational level, GNA altered relationships and power centres. It increased civilian control over Service budgets by empowering Service Secretaries and it greatly heightened the power of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). For the first time CJCS had full control of the Joint Staff, the mandate to develop strategic plans and was enshrined as the dominant military leader with a say into resource allocations to the Services. GNA also made the CJCS the principal military advisor to the President. Moreover, it made tours of duty in joint headquarters essential to career progression.⁸¹ All of these changes came to some degree at the expense of the four Services.

Notably, without regulative change in the US military context, substantive reforms are unlikely to occur.⁸² A contemporary anecdote supports this claim. In 2009, Commander SOCOM Admiral Eric Olson moved to gain more control over career management policies of personnel in his Command in order to better align personnel readiness from the Services to SOCOM. He wrote SECDEF that "modifications to Title X...are necessary to codify SOCOM authority as it relates to the personnel management of SOF."⁸³ The four Service Chiefs banded together, "non-concurring" with Olson's proposal and went as far as sending a "16 star letter" to Representative Ike Skelton on the House Armed Services Committee. The CJCS Admiral Mullen reportedly agreed with Olson's request but felt other avenues should be explored short of changing Title X legislation.⁸⁴ One of the staunchest critics was the Air

Force Chief of Staff, General Norton Schwartz, himself a seasoned former Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) veteran. This example is illustrative of ongoing frictions. One plausible explanation for this revolves around the power dynamic.

As noted, Stinchcombe explains that power is legitimized to the extent that power-holders can call on other centres of power to achieve their objectives. In this sense, the Services may have perceived Olson's request as a de-legitimization of their own organizations, a "you win therefore I lose" proposition despite the reality that better policy authority alignment under SOCOM made sense. Moreover, their ability to effectively veto Olson's request validated their legitimacy as powerful constituencies. Power, and the ability to exercise it, is a form of legitimacy unto itself. Banding together as they did was perhaps the Service Chiefs way of expressing that SOCOM needed to remain within its box and it was clearly a position on which the CJCS was not prepared to expend personal political capital.⁸⁵ In this case, an obvious solution had fallen victim to institutional undercurrents.

Analysis of the regulative pillar has demonstrated that individual actors played a key role in advancing the case for SOCOM leading to its creation in 1987. On 1 June of that year, SOCOM gained institutional legitimacy as a four-star command within DOD because the legislation made it so. The GNA formed the basis of its legitimacy, but that was simply the legitimization journey's start point. This case study offers one modest example of a failed initiative by the Service Chiefs to preserve and maintain the institution as it was. Why it failed is as much about competing interests, agency, power and perceptions, either overtly expressed or existing as a subtext, as anything else. To better understand why this failure happened requires a look at the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars.

The Normative Pillar

According to Scott, this pillar centres on the prescriptive and evaluative obligatory dimension to social life. It is difficult to extract specific analytics regarding SOCOM in this pillar. To the extent that it gives rise to the roles of various actors, GNA clearly ascribed force development and force generation roles in their vision of SOCOM. These propositions included aligning the leadership, resources and authorities under a unified functional commander to achieve government policy objectives. SOCOM's duties to the nation were to be carved out of Service structures and mandates. This first stage of the institutionalization process, the creation of a formal structure with explicit goals, rules and coordinating mechanisms began in June 1987 but the second stage, or thickening, would take much longer. SOCOM was birthed as a "cold start," ergo it had little organic legitimacy or specific differentiation. As such, it struggled for several years to become part of the meshed fabric of DOD as an institution in its own right.

In this case study, the instructive normative analysis must be viewed from the top of the military structure. Prior to the GNA, the four Services were the dominant forces within the Joint Staff.⁸⁶ The critique was not that the Services were in-fighting but rather that they were colluding, or logrolling the process to "divvy up the pie."⁸⁷ They had essentially dominated the agenda for thirty plus years, sitting at the pinnacle of Service decision-making individually and joint advice collectively, astride an impotent CJCS. By the early 1980s, the Service Chiefs had spent their entire careers within this paradigm.

That would all change under a GNA-reformed DOD. The Act:

specifically addressed the relationship of the CINCs to the Service Chiefs and that of the combatant commands

to the individual Services. Although GNA allowed the Services to continue their missions of organizing, training and equipping forces for the CINCs, the legislation charged the Service secretaries to assign the CINCs all forces that perform their assigned missions. In addition, it specified that all forces operating within a geographic area assigned to a CINC must be assigned to and under the command of that CINC.⁸⁸

The significance of this quote is in how it relates to norms that had become custom within the Services. The Chiefs had directly or indirectly controlled virtually every aspect along the force development, force generation and force employment continuum until GNA. They had come to see their roles as defined by these broad powers and their “social positions” came with a set of normative powers that became a licence to do as they liked. Moreover, this normative conception would have extended well below the four-star level into subordinate Service commands and staffs. The GNA was purporting to break down this power considerably.

The Navy was particularly dogmatic about its status as it had been an independent Service since the mid 18th Century. Superimposed on this history was a general “distrust” around Special Forces operators and missions. This attitude pervaded even the most even-keeled strategic generals like Colin Powell, ironically the CJCS who would implement much of the GNA change agenda. Powell’s biographer noted, “He had always had an ominous feeling about Special Forces; there was bad blood running through their veins that addicted them to ad hoc operations.” She explained, “He considered them self-important cowboys who threw tried and true military doctrine to the wind, opening the door to catastrophic failure.”⁸⁹ Clearly, SOF lacked military virtue and, by extension legitimacy, in Powell’s view.

In fact, very few senior serving leaders wanted to depart from the *status quo*. Yet one individual stood out from the group and led from a position of power and influence. It was common for CJCS to leave office feeling they had been minimized in their crowning portfolio and General David C. Jones was no exception. In 1982, he penned an article for the *Armed Forces Journal International* entitled, "Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change." Nonetheless, it was only when the Army Chief of Staff, General Edward "Shy" Meyer weighed in one month after the CJCS' article appeared that widespread support began to grow.⁹⁰

Paradoxically, the nation's most senior military officer, the CJCS, had less institutional credibility on the issue than General Meyer. This discrepancy is possibly explained by the fact that Jones had less to lose in the debate. His network ties extended laterally and upward whereas Meyer's network as the Army's Chief of Staff had strength downward. He was the nation's top *Army* Officer. In supporting Jones' article, Meyer positioned himself as a self-appointed arbiter thereby re-framing the debate. His gravitas weakened internal voices of dissent rooted in parochialism and elevated the debate to a more substantive level. His perspective was then "habitualized and reciprocally interpreted" within the Service over time.⁹¹ In short, he undertook a personal estimate and concluded his appropriate role given the situation was to speak out, regardless of extant social expectations held by the majority. This phenomenon can perhaps best be examined using the lens of *Institutional Analysis*. As Scott asserted, "the success of an institutionalization project and the form that the resulting institution takes depends on the relative power of the actors who support, oppose or otherwise strive to influence it... institutionalization as a *process* is profoundly political and reflects the relative power of organized interests and the actors who mobilize around them."⁹²

The Meyer example goes some distance to proving that individual senior institutional leaders can have an effect out of all proportion to other actors and reflects an agent-based view of institutionalization. What Service Chiefs think matters a great deal. It also reflects the structural inability of institutional leaders to separate themselves from politics because the military strategic level necessarily intersects with the political one.

The normative pillar as it relates to professional military forces speaks to the issue of nobility. In fact, it can be argued that it is rooted from the time when Westphalian politics transformed armed gangs under the control of medieval lords into disciplined tools of the State thereby rendering the military enterprise a noble one. Military ideals became those of the State itself. Since State leaders needed to remain legitimate in order to retain power, militaries implicitly understood that their legitimacy was the *prima facie* ingredient to the long run success of their institution.

The current US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, reinforced this element at a recent speech to the 2011 graduating class at West Point where he stated:

*So it is not enough today that we deploy. It is not enough today that we fight. It is not enough today that we serve, unless we serve also the greater cause of American self-government and everything that underpins it.*⁹³

It is important to recognize, however, that SOF, a relatively recent military capability development of the 20th Century, somehow appear to be at odds with this notion of nobility due to the fact that their organization, tactics and normative operating methods differ from those of conventional forces. Indeed, SOF derive many of their strengths because of these differences. Nonetheless, at times, being seen as distinct from the conventional force was (is)

akin to being seen as bad, possessing a roguish disregard for the totems, moors and ways of doing business associated with a noble soldier's profession.

To some extent, such attitudes still persist. This challenge compels SOF leaders to sometimes go too far in addressing this misperception by becoming pseudo-apologists for the fact that SOF are unique in many ways. This apologist stance contributes to breeding an element of internal insecurity within SOF as they are constantly forced to contend with a duality of military relationships: one as a SOF member in the military and the other as a military member who also does the "SOF thing" from time to time. SOF officers and senior enlisted leaders must be like chimeras with one strand of their DNA rooted in conventional military affairs and the other as a SOF operator.

It is in this light that Meyer's actions are important because he lent an air of nobility to the enterprise. Not wishing to overstate the significance of his actions, it was clear from this point forward that the normative pillar was gradually beginning to align with where GNA legislation was being steered on Capitol Hill. It would seem that the inevitability of major change toward a more joint US DOD was becoming clear to all concerned on a normative level.

The Cultural-Cognitive Pillar

This pillar defines the lens through which actors view events and much has already been stated on the fact that a strong Service culture predominated when GNA was being considered. This Service culture supported a federated model of power in the hands of four men vice a strong, central leadership with decentralized joint forces under Unified Combatant Commanders (UCCs). Additionally, there were two other constituencies outside the military also supported the predominant Service culture. The first was comprised

of liberal groups afraid that a centrally controlled military would create a Prussian-like General Staff that would lead to greater militarism in the national psyche. The second was formed from Congressional groups who saw military centralization as a greater concentration of power within the Executive Branch therefore an impediment to their ability to influence military affairs.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, while uniformed officers did not have a monopoly on what they felt was right and culturally supportable, they represented a major constituency.

Perhaps the best reason to explain the reluctance to embrace the joint force needed to meet contemporary and future challenges lies with the concept of legitimacy itself. Scott ascribes an organizational form as “legitimate” to the extent that the relevant actors deem it as a natural way to organize for a specific purpose.⁹⁵ The changes envisioned by GNA were distinctly unnatural to conventional Service thinking at a time when the Cold War still dominated the operating environment. One example stands out. In the lead up to Gulf War I (1990-1991), Marine Corps Commandant General Al Gray, lobbied Commander CENTCOM Norman Schwarzkopf to incorporate a classic Marine force amphibious landing through heavily mined waters into Kuwait City as part of the deliberate plan. Rebuffed by the UCC Schwarzkopf, Gray went directly to the CJCS, General Colin Powell, who also denied the appeal.

In a pre-GNA DOD, it is highly likely this Service Chief would have won his case. General Gray had proposed a historically doctrinal action, the amphibious assault, in part because it was what defined the Marine Corps. For Gray, it was anathema that the Marines would pass on an opportunity to boldly leverage a coastline within an area of operations to deliver kinetic effects from the sea.

But in the context of a joint campaign in Gulf War I, the first true Information War, such a manoeuvre would likely have exacted

a heavy American human toll for dubious military advantage.⁹⁶ Service Chiefs, and indeed large segments of their social network, had yet to embrace a new joint war-fighting schema. The new schema was no longer one that superimposed Service effects onto a campaign plan but rather one that integrated the most appropriate capabilities from a vast spectrum of capabilities under a unified command and control structure. The paradigm had shifted. The calculus was to be the inverse of what had happened for Operation EAGLE CLAW. Many in the Services saw this transformation as an illegitimate use of their capabilities.

As such, the cultural-cognitive pillar reveals much about SOCOM. There were many issues post-GNA in implementing SOCOM. The first was in assigning forces. The Navy refused to relinquish SEAL Teams assigned to the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets, forcing the first SOCOM CINC, General Lindsay, to appeal to SECDEF Weinberger. The Army took a full 18 months before relinquishing Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations elements to SOCOM. From a resource perspective, Deputy SECDEF issued a memorandum on 27 March, 1987 for Services to identify funds for MFP-11 (SOF's "chequebook") but it left these same funds under Service control. Structurally, SOCOM HQ had no staff and precious little experience.⁹⁷ In the final analysis, General Meyer's clearly articulated the potential dismal future of the Command: "There is this continued undercurrent in DOD with regard to resources that will destroy USSOCOM. If the Command has to go to Congress every time and fight the resource problem...to reverse those resource decisions taken by DOD, the Command will never survive."⁹⁸

It was not until Congress intervened with the National Defense Authorization Act 1988-Public Law 100-180 directing that SECDEF shall provide sufficient resources to CINC USSOCOM that the tide began to shift. On 28 September 1988, a frustrated Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman, Sam Nunn, directed that SOCOM

be “staffed with sufficient personnel with the right skills to carry out its Congressionally mandated budget responsibilities.”⁹⁹

Attempting to understand why underlying forces would resist GNA’s reforms after no less than six significant military failures in the decades leading up to 1986 is a paradox in itself. Seasoned and intelligent military officers must have known joint operations were a *prima facie* requirement to successful outcomes moving forward. Did these military professionals recognize the objective conditions necessitating wholesale change? The answer is yes and no. Of course they must have. One could not rationalize Beirut, Vietnam or Operation EAGLE CLAW as anything but failures, nor could one deny the legislative imperative to alter the course. But were their subjective interpretations of the totality of the reforms aligned with this objective reality? The answer is likely no. The reason lies in the process of schema building. Decades of educational and experiential information was encoded, retained, organized, later retrieved and subsequently re-interpreted in a contemporary contextual setting by individuals within a social network.¹⁰⁰ An emergent SOCOM at the expense of little segments of the four Services was not processed as a correct linear reality to the institution that was DOD. According to Berger and Kellner, “Every human institution is, as it were, a sedimentation of meanings or, to vary the image, a crystallization of meanings in objective form.”¹⁰¹

The very wording in this quote infers a fossilization of culturally supportable constructs which take time to change. In this sense, it is reasonable to conclude that the cultural-cognitive pillar is likely the most resistant to change. This pillar is hard to alter because institutionally it lives largely within informal structures. Informal structures cannot be mandated or legislated to change. Moreover, large complex bureaucracies do not adapt well to significant procedural change. This problem is exacerbated in a military context where conservatism and tradition matter. Bold change is often

dangerous change in military affairs where leaders, especially in this Cold War era, were taught the value of large set-piece manoeuvre. The fact that the cultural-cognitive pillar is the hardest to alter reinforces why it is also so essential to get it right in the first instance, especially for a young command.

Concluding Comments on SOCOM's Creation

Examining SOCOM's evolution in the context of GNA provides some interesting conclusions. First, SOCOM came into being as a result of highly committed individual actors. Whether they were staffers like Locher, mid-level leaders like Koch, generals like Meyer and Wilson or elected leaders like Goldwater, Nichols, Nunn, Cohen and Daniel, each of these people was a key element in an integrated whole that set conditions for GNA to be brought into force. For instance, returning to an agent-based perspective, the work of legendary management scholar Henry Mintzberg categorizes a manager's (*leader* in the context of his offering) roles as threefold: interpersonal, informational and decisional. Respectively, he/she is a figurehead/leader, environmental barometer and disturbance handler.¹⁰²

The analysis of institutional leaders within DOD has demonstrated the preponderance of Service Chiefs employed strategies ranging from avoidance to defiance. These strategies appear as poor choices, misaligned as they are with Mintzberg's principles. But at least one, General Meyer, used a combination of manipulation, compromise and acquiescence, to tremendous effect. He initially attempted to placate concerns by establishing interim Army SOF structures, then turned to positively influence perspectives by lending his legitimacy to the contours of emerging GNA reform. Finally, he helped establish a groundswell of normative and cultural-cognitive support for acquiescence to take hold which led to conformity with the regulations. It seems that he effectively

read the environment and used appropriate strategic choices to effect progressive change.

The obvious takeaway is that GNA required civilian intervention and subsequent oversight to bring SOCOM to life. This was not simply to overcome internal DOD tensions but mainly because SOF draws a great deal of its legitimacy from civilian leadership. Military organizations have been described as “perfect bureaucracies” for their hierarchical structure, coercive power and slavish attention to procedural detail as a function of their core technical business lines.¹⁰³ Militaries do not change easily. Defined by Mintzberg as “Missionary Organizations” whose ideologies (or cultures) are richly developed over time and have very deeply rooted values and beliefs, DOD was subject to much internecine political combat.¹⁰⁴

Because of this situation, and as a function of US political organization, civilian political leaders were the only vehicle to implement something of GNA’s magnitude. Indeed, as we have seen, even once signed into law they had to re-double their orders to ensure effective implementation.

The latter observation bleeds into a third, that skilful political manoeuvring by key constituencies was essential. A campaign plan of sorts, with decisive points as intermediate objectives undertaken by specific actors, was required over a decade to realize SOCOM’s creation. There was much gamesmanship on both sides of the debate, some overt but with much reserved for backrooms.

The overarching deduction in analyzing SOCOM’s creation is that the regulatory pillar was the essential first step to establishing the first stages of organizational legitimacy. This step re-grouped extant, disparately organized Special Forces capabilities but, more importantly, transformed the broader institution because of

massive and systemic DOD-level organizational dysfunction that had little to do with SOF *per se*. The normative pillar was vital to the extent a handful of leaders mobilized to action on the basis that a unified SOCOM was the right thing to do for DOD. These key actors felt a social obligation toward the appropriateness of establishing this capability, even if that meant personal risk to their reputations and credibility in the process.

This occurrence was unusual as it is very rare to find people who will take this personal risk. These men saw “nobility” in the SOF cause. Their character speaks volumes and likely had the added effect of conferring upon their crusade a degree of individual and collective legitimacy necessary to realize this ambitious endeavour.

Finally, the cultural-cognitive pillar grew over time, nurtured as it was by certain early events. Key leadership’s endorsement of the reform was crucial as it opened the cultural aperture to accept an emergent institution. Clearly, a cultural tipping point is necessary shortly (in a relative, strategic sense) after initial legitimacy is conferred. This is required to cement a positive script to build upon.

Two short years following SOCOM’s stand up, Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama was executed. It was an unqualified joint success with SOF elements playing a decisive, albeit not widely publicized, role. Just two years later, US SOF elements would be ordered into battle again, this time largely in Iraq’s Western Desert hunting mobile scud missile launchers during Gulf War I. Their daring and competence served a vital strategic role by shielding Israel from Saddam Hussein’s nuisance missile raids. SOF’s success was instrumental in keeping Israel out of the fray thereby maintaining Coalition integrity, especially among Muslim nations.

Even a sceptical General Norman Schwarzkopf later admitted that his affection for SOF had grown as a result. These two “early wins”

provided a cultural-cognitive tipping point toward establishing a culturally supportable perspective of SOF specifically and SOCOM generally. Finally, the GNA provisions attaching primacy to joint tours of duty and professional military education ensured long run success by opening military officers up to the joint experience.

CHAPTER 4

TAKEAWAYS FOR CANSOFCOM

Scott's *Institutional Analysis* framework in the context of SOCOM's creation has demonstrated why seemingly logical choices were not easily adopted by DOD. Complicated underlying institutional forces pushing toward and pulling against each other were at the root of this discontinuity where people, structure and process collided in a messy mosaic of interests. It is against this backdrop that Chapter 4 seeks to extract some meaning as to what this portends for CANSOFCOM. The political nature, scale and context of the American experience are sufficiently distinct that linear correlations between SOCOM and CANSOFCOM are both unwise and unrealistic. But the narrative of an emerging Special Operations Forces command within a wider military organization is instructive.

As such, this chapter presents a series of observations that can for the most part be divided into external and internal groups. It then addresses CANSOFCOM leader's role as the officer who gives form and substance to CANSOFCOM's objectives. In sum, while these observations are all important it is argued that the most important objective to achieve institutional legitimacy revolves around internal consolidation. Achieving internal consolidation will create unassailable conditions to secure the long-term legitimacy that is essential to sustaining the Command.

External to CANSOFCOM

The external environment is critical because of its constant influence on sub-organizations within the GoC, DND and the CF. One must never lose sight of the social dimension to military affairs

in Canada which drives so much of the political imperative. Staying grounded within the Canadian social fabric is therefore of the essence. This leads to a healthy respect of the primacy of policy in military affairs. Policy drives operations – something that is at the core of the instrument of military power in healthy Western democracies. The best performing sub-elements of the institution need more than objectively successful operational outputs to be sustainable in the long run. They also require legitimacy and this achievement takes effort and time to cultivate. In other words, CANSOFCOM needs to be more than operationally effective. It needs to be branded and widely accepted as an indispensable part of the wider defence and security institutions. It needs to expand its power base as well as its access to other centres of power.

Half a decade old, CANSOFCOM must undertake the transition from an organization toward becoming an institution. When the Minister of National Defence signed the Ministerial Organization Order bringing CANSOFCOM into the CF's Order of Battle effective 1 February 2006, it was accorded the formal authorities, structures and communication channels necessary to undertake its mandate. The task now is to "thicken" itself institutionally by bringing definition and texture to its differentiation from other elements of the CF and fidelity to how it nests within a wider CF/DND and GoC national security apparatus. In establishing and consolidating its power centres, administrative rituals, ideologies, unifying objectives, totems and more, it will intensify what Scott refers to as its "purposiveness."

This intensification of purposiveness will anchor CANSOFCOM within wider structures and social milieus.¹⁰⁵ Notably, in helping to accomplish this intensification, CANSOFCOM can attest to being one of the most positive outcomes of General Hillier's CF Transformation efforts. In barely half a decade, it has taken certain mature SOF organizations under its control, created yet others and unified

all these elements delivering integrated SOF effects in Afghanistan and elsewhere. These significant feats can be leveraged to good use as a harbinger of its still vast untapped potential as the Command resides in its nascence. That it was able to accomplish so much in times of perpetual conflict in South West Asia suggests strongly there is even more positive effect to come.

The question is thus how to start harnessing this untapped potential? First, one must comprehend strategic communication, which is defined as “A systemic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences, identifies effective conduits, and develops and promotes ideas and opinions through those conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour.”¹⁰⁶

Strategic communication is thus a paradigm linking information and perceptions whereas strategic communications is “the process and sequencing of information for carefully targeted audiences.”¹⁰⁷ The former is the what, the latter being the how. And effective strategic communication goes to the very heart of legitimacy, as clearly articulated in the U.S. Airforce’s strategic Public Affairs Plan which states, “our institutional reputation depends on our ability to create and foster a positive image.”¹⁰⁸

Arguably, the central role of strategic communication in contemporary military affairs is undervalued by today’s leaders. A separate directed research paper on this topic alone would only scratch the surface of this crucial subject matter, but for the purposes of this monograph, it suffices to say that senior leaders intuitively understand that CANSOFCOM must “connect with Canadians,” but there is little apparent substance to anchor this fact in strategy and a wider military culture which preferences all things operational.

To effectively yield the benefits that strategic communication can derive requires far greater levels of sophistication than we witness in today's environment. Undertaking this otherwise is to leave outcomes to chance. CANSOFCOM should invest in developing a coherent strategic communication approach, without which it will remain underrepresented astride three dominant Services who possess significant institutional profile in their own right. This conclusion is not to advocate a competitive approach, however.

The process begins by identifying the problem space one seeks to influence and disaggregating it into constituent parts that are interconnected to the whole. A target audience analysis would then be undertaken to ascertain appropriate audiences and what processes are best suited to informing them.¹⁰⁹ By defining CANSOFCOM's strategic objectives and interests within its environment and mapping these against key stakeholder constituencies and opportunities, a clearer sense emerges of where strengths and opportunities lay and where weaknesses and threats lurk.

Notably, the path to realizing this undertaking is not an easy one. It requires extensive consultation and debate internal to the command, astride outside expertise in strategic communications and marketing in order to flesh out this paradigm beyond traditional military thinking. Once defined internally, it needs to be coordinated and to some extent de-conflicted with extant CF and Departmental initiatives like the Global Engagement Strategy. Extensive consultation with the chain of command and key functional authorities like Associate Defence Minister (Public Affairs) is necessary to achieve this. Even the process of drawing in leaders and stakeholders around a substantive SOF dialogue would be beneficial.

Strategic communication is all-too-often an afterthought to issues perceived to revolve around operational primacy. Core business, and all activities in direct support of such outputs, tends to

consume the limited time leaders have to contemplate issues. This approach lacks sophistication. A willingness to operate in the high value margins of the environment which affects institutions is essential. CANSOFCOM's environment extends far beyond the CF and DND. Appreciating the direct correlation between how Canadian society perceives it and the effect this perception has on our elected officials is of the essence. Taken internationally the views of allied military leadership *vis à vis* CANSOFCOM contribute directly to its potential to assume key roles and responsibilities in coalition and combined contexts. If efforts are taken to enhance these perceptions, it ultimately creates greater options for military and civilian leadership. Strategic communication is not an adjunct to CANSOFCOM's sustainable development. Rather, it is an essential ingredient to institutional thickening and long run legitimacy.

CANSOFCOM must be, *and be seen to be*, a key contributing partner across the defence and security domains. As a command, it must add value to CF outputs beyond being a niche capability to the overall portfolio. Additionally, the perspective of its contributions must be more nuanced than that. Firstly, CANSOFCOM must enable the CF through the provision of effects that either no one else in the CF can offer or that others might offer but not to the degree of precision that CANSOFCOM can. Reliability and accountability must be its hallmarks in this regard. It must not over-promise on what it can do, but it must always over-deliver on advertised results.

Secondly, CANSOFCOM must add value to the three Services.¹¹⁰ More will be said on interdependencies in the next section, but there is a net benefit for the CF to have "a little more CANSOFCOM" in it. The evolving Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) and Future Security Environment (FSE) portend toward increasingly complex operating environments where

personnel and technology merge with a further distribution of units of action in non-linear operating environments. SOF are uniquely adapted to such environments where their ruthless mission focus, advanced dismounted tactics, techniques and procedures and technological overmatch render the asymmetric battle-space more symmetric. SOF is expert in entering enemy decision-action loops as opposed to being on the receiving end of enemy initiative. Given the departure from industrial warfare employing large-scale military manoeuvre, it is only reasonable to conclude that SOF has something valuable to add to Service portfolios. The benefits will often manifest themselves in the less formal domains where low-level interactions breed shared confidence and mutually reinforcing support within informal power structures.

Thirdly, CANSOFCOM has a role in adding value to a 21st Century national security network. This value-added begins with decisive personal engagement by senior leaders in order to establish a shared understanding of inter-organizational strengths, frictions and limitations. Special Operations officers and senior enlisted leaders are particularly adept at dealing with non-military constituencies because they have refined this skill-set over a career of doing so, both domestically and abroad. Individually, these men and women are bred to view issues beyond the military perspective.

Organizationally, CANSOFCOM can increasingly contribute to global C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance) where the exigent requirement for competent politically-informed military advice exists in order to allow senior leaders to make wise choices under highly dynamic conditions. Beyond that, CANSOFCOM possesses expertise that synergizes very well with other national security partners in the communications and intelligence domains. The addition of SOF allows the GoC a broader cross section of capabilities which can be task-tailored for greater freedom of action to

see, recognize and exploit opportunities earlier than ever before. The secret rests in streamlined reporting and decision-making structures that take advantage of these.

Suffice it to say, CANSOFCOM has a responsibility to spread its excellence far and wide and doing so will enhance not only its credibility and legitimacy, but itself, in the process. By actively engaging, it confers “nobility” onto itself as being comprised of warriors who selflessly achieve the highest order of professional military excellence in the eyes of others. This view also militates directly against the myths of a rogue force populated by blood thirsty killers.¹¹¹

A word of caution on the issue of over-specialization is warranted, however. Over-specialization should be avoided as a function of relevance and value-added. Possessing a tool that is unique and specialized to the point of requiring near perfect conditions to employ it is one that is pointless to maintain. Such a tool would not survive cyclical long-run institutional resource pressures. CANSOFCOM must celebrate its uniqueness but temper this quality within a “specialized SOF generalist” approach to core tradecraft within its units. Moreover, its leaders must avoid being overly doctrinaire on the issue of employing SOF. The fundamentals must be safeguarded but there is plenty of scope beyond doctrinal vital ground to employ SOF.¹¹²

Concerns from some quarters have been voiced in the past to the effect that SOF operations are too secretive and as a result, lack oversight and accountability. I have personally argued to a Member of Parliament that the basic premise of this allegation is flawed. Is there an extraordinary degree of security around SOF operations? Yes, operations security is the lifeblood of successful missions. Does this fact equate to little or no oversight and accountability? The answer is unequivocally, no. The Canadian

experience would illustrate much, much higher levels of oversight that commensurately sized or ranked conventional forces.

That said, the essence of the concerns about transparency and visibility should not be minimized. Quite the opposite, they should be addressed and CANSOFCOM has a leadership role to play in that regard. A professional discussion should occur where lessons, investigations and observations of the past are internalized in the context of contemporary structures and reporting relationships in order to determine if the extant balance is correct. Do the right leaders at various levels of the institution, and government, have access to the correct information? It would be worth exploring America's Nunn-Cohen Amendment of 1986 to understand if it informs a "better way of doing business" as it suggests providing more informative to elected officials and thereby may be in the wider interests of the CF and CANSOFCOM.¹¹³

Clearly, such an endeavour carries risk. Nothing that violates the operational integrity of CANSOFCOM would be acceptable but the sense is there is considerable room to manoeuvre while fully preserving the integrity of the military chain of command. It is worth noting too that in the absence of any information, people's minds venture to dark places, therefore, CANSOFCOM's wider communications approach must account for this reality.

Academia has a role to play in thickening CANSOFCOM's brand as well. Canadian military professionals do not write enough as a function of probing the institution's strengths and weaknesses. We should take a page from the United States in this regard. US officers tend to voraciously debate their institution at the tip of the pen to great effect. CANSOFCOM should foment a greater culture of introspection among its ranks and leverage the untapped market of brilliant thinkers in Canada, not all of whom support SOF.

The stand up of SOCOM tells us there is incredible value in framing issues within professional journals. It is hoped that the recent creation of the CANSOFCOM Professional Development Centre under the stewardship of Colonel Bernd Horn, PhD will stimulate this point. Having looked at the external environment, we now shift to an examination of the internal milieu.

Internal to CANSOFCOM

What flows from the external observations are those considerations internal to the Command. Interdependencies between the two exist across the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive domains. So while shaping the internal environment is by no means an easy undertaking, CANSOFCOM's leadership has access to more of the control mechanisms to make a decisive impact here. This section will offer a series of observations, all of which are linked to the preceding insights.

CANSOFCOM must continue to embrace a climate fostering cognitive conflict at all levels. Candour is as much a force multiplier as rigour of analysis. In fact, they are mutually supporting. This relationship is especially important if one sees CANSOFCOM as a High Reliability Organization where margins-of-error are reduced, tolerances are tight and the consequences of failure are high. CANSOFCOM is a small organization whose outputs are often time-sensitive in nature. Their ultimate purpose is to address low probability, high consequence threats to national security. This heightens the need for agility, quality and responsiveness.

In essence, there is no "workup" period for special mission units or high readiness composite Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs). Immediacy of advertised outcomes is assumed. To the extent this "no fail" reality pervades the organization, it is incumbent on all actors to be forthright and honest with their assessments. Being

economical with downside information may result in adverse national outcomes. A climate conducive to robust internal debate is one vehicle to guaranteeing all viewpoints are aired and given full consideration prior to a decision being taken. True loyalty to the institutions, in the first instance, means speaking truth to power. As Sir Francis Bacon, the seventeenth-century philosopher and jurist, said to a minister to England's King James, "Remember well the great trust you have undertaken; you are as a continual sentinel, always to stand upon your watch to give [the king] true intelligence. If you flatter him, you betray him."¹¹⁴ Clearly, once the debate is closed, loyalty transitions to fully supporting the selected course of action.

Such an environment has a number of secondary positive effects. First, it maximizes the potential of the high-calibre individuals within the Command. Second, it fosters buy-in and commitment as actors understand they have a role to play in outcomes. Third, it makes the whole much greater than the sum of its parts by acknowledging the power of the network over a set of hierarchical decision-makers. All of us tend to be smarter than one of us, as it were. Fourth, SOF operations at the lowest tactical levels tend to carry great risk and such an approach, all the way to the top of the organization, provides an aligned and common narrative on how things are done in SOF.

CANSOFCOM must decide what type of organization it wants to be and it should be ever mindful that growth for its own sake is no metric for success. It can only do so by understanding what options are available, where it has morphed to, and what its strategic vision calls for. While detailed dissections of various types of organizations are beyond the scope of this monograph, it seems that CANSOFCOM has selected a number of characteristics from various models. It is entrepreneurial by dint of its vision and "building" quality as a young organization. It possesses strong

leadership but retains a relatively small “head” and flat design with little mid-level bureaucracy. This model’s potential risk area is an imbalance toward operations at the expense of governance and more routine institutional administration.¹¹⁵

CANSOFCOM borrows from the Diversified Organization Model as well by having diversified, “market-based divisions” (i.e. JTF 2, CSOR, CJIRU and 427 SOAS, and SOTC and SOSU) run relatively decentralized operations. This model can only work if attendant decision-making power is cascaded downward, to the maximum extent tolerable by the environment. CANSOFCOM further exploits this model in what Mintzberg identified as “related product form” diversification where interdependencies exist between various market divisions.¹¹⁶

Depending on the nature of the mission, more than one unit is generally involved in contributing capabilities. This concept blends well with HRO modelling where structures temporarily adapt to best suit the nature of the situation at hand. The benefit to this model is that it distributes risk and minimizes the need for a large headquarters but its downside is it can be less efficient in some cases by creating certain cross-divisional redundancies. There is a price to doing business effectively from an efficiency perspective.

CANSOFCOM has some elements of the Visionary Organizational Model within it to the extent it conforms to a complex adaptive environment with emergent strategies. In that sense it features more of a fluid “adhocracy” than a classic military hierarchy, again depending on the nature of the task at hand.¹¹⁷ The benefit of this model is that it minimizes bureaucratic overhead. Nonetheless and importantly, it can lead to certain social ambiguity for its membership which is particularly relevant in light of Scott’s normative and cultural-cognitive pillars. This attribution is risky. Social actors can

feel less secure in this environment because, by definition, it is less predictable. Certain personality types are distinctly uncomfortable in such settings.

CANSOFCOM also borrows slightly from the missionary organization which has very rich values and beliefs systems along with few formal rules (in comparison to conventional military structures). In this model, members feel a tremendous sense of mission.¹¹⁸ This connection is powerful, yet dangerous if not carefully checked by leaders at every level for it can lead to the development of a counter-culture outside of the dominant CF culture. Another potential pitfall of borrowing from this model is the desire to standardize norms across the organization. Such normative levelling is operationally and organizationally counter-productive because it agitates against the unique qualities, strengths and tailored culture of each unit. Fair does not always mean equal in the realm of military affairs.

Finally, CANSOFCOM borrows only slightly from the Machine Organization Model, which has certain highly specialized processes. Where CANSOF departs from the core of this model is that it is not obsessed with control nor are its communication channels calcified along hierarchical lines. That being said this model has a significant downside to CANSOFCOM, to which it must be attentive. The Machine Model is based on a closed system. It seeks to attain autonomy by controlling its environment growing structure and process to do so. Organizations bent on over-controlling over time lose sight of their core business and become centred on controlling their internal affairs more than external outputs.¹¹⁹ It thus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of survival. This process is a race to the bottom. A specific strength of CANSOF's early career progression model, with JTF 2 operators specifically, was its balance between SOF's needs and interacting with the wider CF community (specifically, the Infantry School and Senior Enlisted

Leader's Academy). Moving toward a pan-SOF trade in some ways plays into the Machine Organization's closed system, one that largely loses touch with its external milieu.

It might be that a SOF Trade with sub-specialties is the correct personnel model, but it is inherently good for CANSOFCOM people to stay closely connected with the CF as they grow within SOF. It is as much to use coursing as a vehicle to expose the CF to SOF quality as it is to have SOF operators refresh their military reference points. SOF operators in a closed system lose crucial perspective and SOF will always be strongest when it maintains robust connectedness with the wider field force.

CANSOFCOM is at a unique juncture as a command because its constituent parts are at varying levels of maturity. This position presents some realities that might help explain some of the normative and cultural-cognitive frictions bound to arise within any new organization. As such, it is important to explore the modern history of SOF in Canada.

Before CANSOFCOM, there was JTF 2, established in 1992 and formally stood up on 1 April 1993. As explained earlier, it had nearly a decade of experience before its coming of age after 9/11. It was very successful in Afghanistan, earning the US Presidential Unit Citation in 2006 for operating as part of Task Force K-Bar. As part of its domestic mandate, it had a relationship with "B" Flight, 427 Sqn (formerly with 450 Sqn until it was stricken from the order of battle in the mid-1990s) and the Joint Nuclear Biological and Radiological Company (JNBC Coy).

That meant that at the time of CANSOFCOM's creation one unit and several components of what would become other CANSOFCOM units already had SOF experience. Quite frankly, by 2006, JTF 2 had grown beyond the introductory stage and was well within its growth stage and nearing the maturity stage.

For their part, CANSOFCOM headquarters (HQ), CSOR, and for all practical purposes the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU), which represents the revamped Joint NBC Company, were created in 2006 and are thus in their introductory stage.

By nature of military affairs, JTF 2 found itself as one of four units beneath a Formation HQ. To set conditions for success, JTF 2 personnel were carefully and deliberately seeded into the HQ, CSOR and CJIRU but by and large, these units grew from conventional officers and troops. It is logical that JTF 2 found itself as a repository of information and resources in the early years but deliberate efforts were taken not to simply export JTF 2 practices, resources, methodologies and culture across the entire Command. Doing so would have ignored the different missions and roles and blurred differentiations which were seen as the eventual strength of CANSOFCOM.

The salient point is CANSOFCOM HQ is growing with units that are generally out of phase with one another. This variance in maturity accounts for the periodic tensions that exist among the different constituencies, often borne as they are from different stages of growth.

Having looked at various facets of different organization models, this monograph argues that adaptability and balance are the keys to success in how SOF sees itself organizationally. It is a distinct capability, different than anything else in the CF albeit not alone in being considerably unique. CANSOFCOM needs to remain balanced between innovative and adaptive models but also recognizable to other CF constituencies. To remain viable and legitimate, it must conform to regulative and normative expectations. Above all, CANSOFCOM has to understand why it has morphed into the organization it is and what the strengths and pitfalls are of future adaptations. As so much of organizational design turns on people, let us now briefly look at that dimension.

The CF population can be expressed as a Bell Curve with the y axis denoting the number of people (up to 100,000 Regular Force and Reserve Force) and the x axis, their quality.¹²⁰ Units within CANSOFCOM all have tailored selection and coursing requirements which vary from unit to unit. For illustrative purposes, JTF 2 will be used as the example. Whether joining as a supporter, operational supporter or assaulter, every member of the Unit is put through screening and a selection of sorts. The supporter is screened, interviewed and chosen among a pool of candidates. Operational supporters are screened and depending on the specific employment, put through a selection process (or interviewed in some cases) and selected. These individuals then undergo up to one year of job-specific training before integrating into operational sub-units. The assaulter is screened, put through a rigorous selection, and if deemed trainable, spends ten months on the Special Operations Assaulter Course. Overall Assaulter attrition runs in the 85 per cent range.

In sum, the vast majority of JTF 2's membership is drawn from the right portion of the CF's Bell Curve in terms of IQ, PQ and IWQ. Once at the Unit, the Bell Curve is re-distributed to resemble the CF graph but every person in that JTF 2 Bell Curve is generally a high achieving individual relative to the CF population.

The same general theory applies across CANSOFCOM's units as they benefit from the ability to screen and select. That is not necessarily the case within CANSOFCOM HQ which is populated in much the same manner as other operational headquarters. This comment is not to suggest CANSOFCOM HQ is replete with underachievers. Quite the opposite is true. Conventional CF operations over the past decade reveal strength across the CF continuum. It does however inform how the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars come into play as different constituencies

possess different lenses through which they view one another and the overall mission.

All wear a tan beret but some have invested significantly greater commitment and personal risk to attain their post within the Command. To ignore this reality is to be surprised that intra-organizational frictions might manifest from time to time. Preconceptions on either side of the divide are not only possible but they should be anticipated as leaders consider the Command climate and culture. The leadership must have a nuanced perspective of this reality in order to foster a team-oriented climate embracing all constituencies without whom CANSOFCOM's success would not be possible.

More to the point, given the reality that the CANSOFCOM community will always need to spread its talent among the wider CF it is unlikely a large SOF-experienced critical mass of experienced officers and senior enlisted leaders will populate CANSOFCOM HQ. Accordingly, it makes sense to see the value in a small headquarters. A small headquarters concentrates on the essential governance functions across the continental staff system and is forced to distribute many force development (FD) and force generation (FG) responsibilities downward. This distribution aligns those core activities with unit-level expertise thereby ensuring continued relevance.

It also remains true to two of General Walt Natynczyk's core change precepts: command centrality (clearly separating command and staff functionality) and mission command (properly distributing execution of responsibilities downward to achieve mission success). Adopting such a philosophy also hedges against placing too much technical responsibility on a headquarters with only a few seasoned SOF members and which would place these individuals in a difficult position. Seeing the value in a small headquarters is

something CANSOFCOM should wear as a badge of honour. Having made the case endorsing a small headquarters, one should question whether there is there a way to better focus a small slice of it directly toward enhancing operational output.

SOCOM's recent creation of a Center for Special Operations (CSO) may be instructive. Freed from administrative functions, this key command and control (C2) node's sole responsibility is planning, synchronizing, supporting and executing SOF missions. It does these tasks by combining the traditional intelligence, operations and planning functions with a joint, interagency coordination group.¹²¹ In effect, CSO "supports the supported command" that SOCOM has become in relation to global pursuit operations. While it is not necessarily prudent at this point to advocate for the direct C2 role CSO plays, the notion of isolating core intelligence, operations and planning staffs alongside interagency experts is worth considering with respect to CANSOFCOM. This construct could require organic leadership at the colonel or brigadier-general level to provide this node timely direction and support across the combined joint interagency task force (CJIATF) network and to effectively form the nucleus of an eventually deployable Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) Headquarters.

This C2 node would free the remainder of CANSOFCOM HQ to focus on the political-military interface and military strategic policy issues. A natural downside would be the creation of another level of C2 structure. Paradoxically, however, it would likely further enable the benefits derived from CANSOFCOM's flat structure by providing smoother information flows and promoting distributed allocation of decision rights within an enhanced, incentive structure.¹²²

Importantly, intra-command uniqueness between different organizational units must be celebrated as a factor that contributes

to the Command's collective strength. In examining the American experience, it was noted that a key group of elected leaders were mobilized to the cause of standing up SOCOM. This rallying was a result of their ability to be persuaded that SOCOM had a competitive advantage to offer the broader military mission set. Indeed, they believed in this idea sufficiently to arm SOCOM's mandate with upstream powers to force develop, set training standards and acquire equipment while limiting downstream effects to synergized SOF outputs under Unified Combatant Commands (UCCs).

In the Canadian context, it is clear that senior military and political leaders see CANSOFCOM's competitive advantage. They structured and grew it appropriately in Hillier's transformation, and indications suggest it will fare well in the 2011 transformation effort. Ergo, the risk is largely an internal one.

One of the most important issues to address is how to mature the Command most effectively. CANSOFCOM's own headquarters, as it increasingly becomes more savvy and capable, must not adopt an egalitarian perspective. They must fundamentally resist the temptation to make easier difficult problems by harmonizing requirements, processes, methodologies and/or viewpoints among units. Doing so would gradually diminish CANSOFCOM's competitive advantage which arises from uniquely selected and trained people under units who fulfill distinct roles. These high grade people confer upon CANSOFCOM the ability to be agile, creative and adaptable which are all forms of competitive advantage in their own right.

This point relates to the regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive domains of Scott's model. At one level, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) make sense for operational planning processes but their rigidity militates against creativity. Their mechanistic nature may lead one to conclude they are useful in

time-compressed planning environments, but this benefit often comes at the cost of shared understanding of second and third order consequences of decisions based on a checklist.

Egalitarianism is a normative crutch designed to minimize tensions between units. The most helpful ingredient to preserving competitive advantage is clear roles, missions and tasks, a regulative piece that sets the table for all ensuing decisions relative to FD, FG and FE. This clarity removes the need for “normative levelling” and contributes to a healthy internal culture where people operate within known and defined boundaries.

Nonetheless, it is important to underscore that CANSOFCOM will generally never fight alone. History tells us that SOF operations require conventional support. The complexity of the contemporary and future security environment suggest this trend will persist and this continuity is especially so in CANSOFCOM’s situation. CANSOFCOM represents a modestly sized SOF community residing within a modernized CF but one that will never have the reach to cover the full spectrum of conflict as the US SOF currently does. Whether this size restraint is a good or bad thing is irrelevant; it is a thing that informs the friendly situation of every estimate CANSOFCOM undertakes. To contend with normative tensions, it is thus imperative that the Command retains a high degree of humility and connectedness in relation to its joint and combined partners.

CANSOFCOM’s leaders would do well to seed a very balanced perspective between its rightfully-earned confidence as a proven strategic resource and a healthy amount of humility that many of those successes would have been impossible to attain were it not for the support of other Services and partner nations. Remaining humble acts as a force multiplier to CANSOFCOM’s institutional credibility because it empowers others to see themselves as

crucial stakeholders to its success. Humility generates a heightened willingness on the part of others to lend support. It also grounds CANSOFCOM personnel to the extent where they do not buy into the myth that SOF are the answer to every intractable problem set. Humility breeds sound professional judgement and a level of quiet confidence which forms the bedrock of how SOF should be seen – as quiet professionals. This image goes to connectedness in the sense that CANSOFCOM must share its people as widely as it can because these highly-talented, culturally-balanced warriors are the best vehicles to securing support. Exposure beyond CANSOF not only benefits the CF and the member but it in turn benefits the command by accruing goodwill and support.

It is in CANSOFCOM's interests to see its senior enlisted leaders and officers gravitate upward in the CF hierarchy. Doing so requires succession planning governance frameworks that nest within the wider CF mechanisms. This process is in progress. Individually, CANSOF personnel need to retain the chimera-like quality about them in order to be effective leaders within the CANSOFCOM community while remaining recognizable, and known, to the wider CF community. They must be adept at integrating within either constituency and be agile enough to not lose their acquired "specialness" in terms of skills, tradecraft and culture in the process. Being able to achieve this flexibility requires that selected individuals be exposed back into conventional forces at key junctures and it also demands that they embrace the challenge and remain abreast of goings on outside CANSOFCOM. This adaptability also speaks to the need to pay close attention to cultural indoctrination, or enculturation, of its membership. While time consuming and resource intensive, this formative training is a crucial early step when new members arrive and must be reinforced through punctual professional development at all levels.

In this section, a number of observations germane to CANSOFCOM's internal environment have been discussed. Creating a culture and climate conducive to cognitive conflict is essential to rigorous debate and long run health. Celebrating the uniqueness of individual units at the expense of harmonized staff solutions is necessary but exceedingly counter-intuitive to many because it agitates against an egalitarian culture which is dominant in the Canadian psyche. In this sense, there is a clear benefit of a small headquarters albeit one which might be reorganized to further enhance operational output. The primacy of the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars was highlighted as a function of long-run institutional health and a case was made to embrace a deliberate balance between humility and confidence while ensuring the Command does not fall prey to becoming institutional apologists in order to garner support. It has too much to be proud of to adopt such a stance.

Having looked at the external and internal imperatives, the next section will address several observations that are common to both and that are seminal to achieving the one thing CANSOFCOM needs most as it grows older: enhanced institutional legitimacy. CANSOFCOM requires a deliberate strategy appropriate to both its external and internal realities. Possessing a succinct yet clearly articulated roadmap of how to connect the future vision of CANSOFCOM with a series of specific achievable and time-bound objectives is as important to the community it seeks to promote as it is for external stakeholders. Strategy is necessary in order to posture the Command within a constantly changing external milieu and an internal one buffeted by growth on various levels.

This strategy need not be overly complex but it does require all actors to view it through a common lens.¹²³ Externally, it should focus on reinforcing its network connectivity and cementing relationships. Designed to "thicken the brand," it would articulate

its space within the CF, DND, GoC and Allied defence and security frameworks and serve as a useful reference point moving ahead. Internally, it should define the path CANSOFCOM must chart to develop an ecosystem with sufficient carrying capacity for its attendant subsystems. Growth is not always good. Under certain conditions, it can prove a setback. This plan would include projecting some of the tradeoffs required to ensure growth in the right areas, consolidation in yet others and the identification of legacy capabilities requiring shedding on the altar of relevance as threats evolve. This strategy would recognize the policy dimension as that which drives SOF operations and be rooted in a quest for enhanced legitimacy. Indeed, the very act of articulating this strategy would enhance legitimacy for it demonstrates the maturity and vision institutions need to develop over time. Preserving and enhancing legitimacy must be at the core of what CANSOFCOM does.

As such, CANSOFCOM's leaders must be imbued with a sense of pragmatism. To embrace the notion of "nudge progress" is to see the strategic level in realistic terms where success is measured by incremental wins which are sometimes not even CANSOFCOM's. Enabling a supporting actor accrues credit that can be expended at a later date. In the Canadian context, an Army, Air Force or Navy strategic resource or capability gain often indirectly benefits CANSOFCOM. An overly competitive approach is destined to fail, especially given the fact that the Commander of CANSOFCOM, despite being a Level 1 CF Commander, is only a brigadier-general.

As such, this leader wears several hats in his portfolio: that of a commander, a strategic resource manager and an institutional leader. Importantly, each role requires subtly different approaches. Accordingly, the CANSOFCOM Commander is uniquely responsible in setting winning relational conditions with other CF/DND Level 1 leaders and must constantly negotiate which files merit his/her finite capacity to advance. In addition to influencing the main

operating space, he/she must engage in the marginal operating space where much of CANSOFCOM's growth and development, particularly with other government departments (OGDs) and Allied partners, occurs. Above all else, the CANSOFCOM Commander must be a pragmatist who eschews maximalist end-states, even if that means alienating key constituencies in the process. A long-term interests-based approach built upon the foundation of credibility and trust is of more use than a short-term one that might achieve one decisive victory at the cost of enduring cooperation.

The CANSOFCOM Commander faces significant challenges in balancing the internal and external pressures of a small formation in high demand and which has near constant attention paid to it by senior military and political leaders. One key to bridging these challenges is to create shared contexts. He/she must induce others to believe, and rightly so, that they have a level of ownership in CANSOFCOM's priorities and objectives. The Commander must make the proverbial tent large enough that many constituencies have space to fit beneath it.

Doing so requires a ready grasp of the essence of any given situation and strong inter-personal skills that foment goodwill and cooperation. The Commander must have the sort of uncommon stamina that every Service Chief possesses to weather the crushing pace imposed on institutional leaders. Being able to access personal reserves of mental agility, resourcefulness and imagination are entry grade criteria if the Commander of this crucial CF capability is to be successful. In the final analysis, a thoughtful blend of determination, balance and pragmatism superimposed on character-based leadership with strong inter-personal skills are the ingredients needed to apply the Art of Generalship. Nothing less should be acceptable to the CDS and the Minister of National Defence (MND).

In the end, this monograph has established that the external environment is generally favourable to CANSOFCOM's development. DND and the CF have set conditions conducive to the Command's stand up and successful employment. The outcome of the 2011 CF Transformation effort will confirm if this trend persists in the face of tough choices. Thus the regulative piece with all its attendant external forces is relatively strong.

While the Commander has a generally well-aligned portfolio of responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities, the job at hand is in consolidating CANSOFCOM's position externally while paying particular attention to its internal environment as a function of long run health and optimization. CANSOFCOM's leaders must be particularly attuned to the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars moving ahead. This focus is required because the Command is now writing its formative history and it is this DNA that will be replicated in the years to come. Moreover, it is doing so during a time of excessive operational demands which makes the task harder in some respects but easier in others. Establishing the correct normative knowledge and expertise, superimposed upon robust cultural values and norms is what will provide CANSOFCOM its impregnable foundation in the future.

Additionally, possessing a healthy cultural-cognitive shared understanding reinforces the Command's internal posture. This feeds back into the normative domain and also reinforces the regulative and cultural pillars. If all three pillars are vibrant and generally aligned, CANSOFCOM will be in balance and well postured to continue its ascent as an institution. This balanced growth will allow it to expand its organic power and legitimacy which in turn will grant it greater access to other centres of power, both institutionally and within government and allied circles.

As such, the following are the twelve most salient recommendations for healthy, balanced ascent as an institution:

- Thicken the brand while consolidating the base;
- Articulate a succinct strategy with internal and external points seen through one lens;
- Embrace a strategic communication culture;
- Be, and be seen to be, a high reliability, value-added National Security partner;
- Promote a culture of cognitive conflict as it acts as a force multiplier;
- Decide what type of organization CANSOFCOM wants to be and celebrate uniqueness;
- See the value in a small headquarters;
- Preference the things that garner Competitive Advantage such as placing people first;
- One size does not fit all and, in fact, it kills Competitive Advantage;
- Remain an open system to the maximum extent possible;
- Stay recognizable yet eschew over-specialization; and
- Stay humble and connected, it generates stakeholder support and power.

CONCLUSION

Sociology concerns itself with the study of collectives. It is a science to the extent that it formulates hypotheses and postulates models that seek to draw deductions which are as objective as possible. Nonetheless, this discipline of inquiry is inherently challenged in the realm of multiple actors who create shared realities that are often divergent from that which is visibly obvious. It is precisely for this reason that *Institutional Analysis* is a useful framework through which to examine institutions. Disaggregating institutions into their regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars goes some way to understanding the institutional subtext behind beliefs and decisions. The interdependencies between these three pillars are unmistakable. They all affect each other and this is particularly true in the military where a large, complex bureaucracy collides with conservative values etched in firmly held beliefs and axioms rooted in history and bloodshed on the battlefield.

As such, military leaders, by virtue of the heady responsibilities entrusted in them to protect the nation, must understand institutional forces. Possessing an appreciation for organizational nuance is crucial to making wise choices in what is invariably a resource constrained environment. Examining the stand up of SOCOM from the GNA perspective that reformed the DOD in the 1980s offers some interesting insights for the nascent CANSOFCOM.

SOCOM would not have come to life were it not for the determination of a select group of military and civilian leaders. The catalyst was a small group of professionals who adamantly believed that unified SOF was the only sustainable strategy. Their normative and cultural ideology was translated through savvy strategic manoeuvring to influential political figures. In turn, they breathed life

into the debate by having civilians decide how defence should be reformed because the defence establishment could not do it for themselves.

This reality is nonetheless paradoxical. The nation's top military leaders were acutely aware of a litany of abject military failures and yet they were prepared to endure future risk of failure to preserve the *status quo*. Only a normative and cultural-cognitive analysis explains why these seemingly contradictory beliefs were adhered to. Service-specific interests trumped substantive joint progress because the latter had no champion with the institutional mandate or power to effect true change. Accordingly, change had to be legislated upon the military and, even then, resistance persisted to the point of obstructionist disloyalty.

Some important lessons for CANSOFCOM can be extrapolated from the American experience. The Canadian political military system is sufficiently distinct from the United States' that direct correlations are not possible. In Canada, the MND holds the power to create or disband formations and units without the sort of checks and balances we find in the United States. Naturally, the MND consults with his or her Cabinet colleagues on far-reaching military decisions. Interestingly, CANSOFCOM's very first unit, JTF 2, was created in 1993 through the will of government and not as a militarily-inspired enterprise. It is logical to conclude however that JTF 2's performance between 1993 and 2006 was sufficiently impressive that it stimulated the desire for more SOF capability both within the GoC and the CF.

Those who led the strategic communication campaign to lobby leaders toward creating a unified SOCOM teach us the importance of cultivating strategic relationships in a deep and methodical way. These SOF pioneers displayed foresight, commitment and audacity in the face of career-ending risks. They spoke truth to power and

when power would not listen, they spoke truth to higher centres of power. This type of tactic does not lend itself to the Canadian context but, suffice it to say, we can draw upon their individual characteristics and ability to organize in order to concentrate minds to the problem at hand.

Once created, SOCOM tasted some early success. They were, and were seen to be, critical ingredients to successful operational outcomes. This image underscores the importance of strategic communication and the requirement to thoughtfully engage in order to accrue institutional goodwill and legitimacy from hard won operations. Saying nothing in the name of operations security incurs opportunity cost in the form of unexploited legitimacy in times of crisis. It is too late to tell good news when negative attention turns on the institution. CANSOFCOM must be a proactive partner in the national security community and this initiative extends to being open to the debate regarding enhanced oversight and governance. All of these avenues are pursued in effort to thicken its legitimacy.

Nonetheless, the largest challenges for CANSOFCOM appear to be internal. CANSOFCOM is growing out of phase, with some elements far more mature than others. Moreover, it borrows from numerous organizational schools in a somewhat non-traditional military sense. Its leaders must be attentive to these differences while ensuring that CANSOFCOM remains recognizable to the wider institution. The Command must also be cognizant as it matures of how it displaces other entities within the CF and GoC. Moreover, however difficult it might be, CANSOFCOM must eschew normative levelling in a “one size fits all” staff reflex driven by regulatory requirements. To do so would erode its competitive advantage in short order.

A number of institutional tensions exist for SOF, particularly in the normative and cultural-cognitive domains. That some in the wider

military persist in seeing SOF as less-than-noble is a fact that will never disappear. But it can be mitigated by first understanding the nature of such tensions and then through a holistic series of passive and active measures. Ultimately, getting the good word out and maximizing the exposure of CANSOFCOM's world-class warriors to the wider field force is the second best hedge against misperceptions.

The best hedge however is to never provide grist for such misperceptions to be turned into practical examples of SOF operating outside the boundaries of a dominant military culture. On this point, generally, SOF leaders must balance their confidence with humility in a way that respects the normative and cultural tension potential without becoming apologists in the process.

Commanders within CANSOFCOM must be of the highest order: expert in the macro understanding of its unique tradecraft, imbued with stamina and intellect and able to positively influence a multitude of stakeholders. Above all, they must be pragmatic, able to see beyond the parapet of purely institutional interests to embrace success on a higher plane. CANSOFCOM can ill afford to run afoul of the dominant Services, ergo a delicate balance is in order to ensure long-run progress.

In CANSOFCOM's context, the regulative pillar is not as crucial for the future as the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars are. The need to create a shared context and clearly defined, unified narrative are of the essence. In order to establish the conditions for long-term success, CANSOFCOM's foundation must be bomb-proof. This work begins at home and it is for this reason that the author suggests internal demands are of a higher order than external ones. The institutional analysis of SOCOM and by extension CANSOFCOM offers some guide posts of where to be watchful. It is by no means a panacea for success but, if it forces its community of interest to pause and take stock, then it is well worth the effort.

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ENDNOTES

1 Dr. Eric Ouellet, "Principle-Based Decision-Making: Institutional Analysis," presentation delivered to JCSP 37 DS 542 Elective, 2010, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, Ontario, 4.

2 *Ibid.*, 5.

3 *Ibid.*, 7.

4 Richard W. Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems Fifth Edition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 3.

5 The instruments of national power are commonly defined by the following pillars: Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic (DIME). A government exerts its domestic and/or foreign policy objectives largely through these four categories of national capability and the more they are in phase, the more powerful the effect a government may bring to bear.

6 Scott, *Organizations*, 8.

7 The terms Special Operations Forces (SOF) and Special Forces (SF) are often used interchangeably. From a purist perspective SF is the broad umbrella comprising forces at the beginning of the "special continuum," where conventional ends and SF begins. US Army Rangers, UK Special Forces Support Group (SFSG) and Canada's Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) are examples of such forces having dual roles to support more precision SOF elements or conduct their own missions. Continuing in the SF band US Army Green Berets and US Navy SEALs are forces designed to complete autonomous missions within the context of broader campaigns. SF are sometimes referred to as "White SOF," denoting a degree of openness and accessibility. SOF further along the right side of the spectrum are sometimes referred to as "Black SOF," denoting an elevated degree of operational security critical to the mission

itself. Alternatively called “National Mission Forces” (NMFs) or “Special Mission Units” (SMUs), examples include Canada’s Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2), the US Army’s Combat Applications Group (CAG), the US Navy’s Special Warfare Development Group (DevGroup), the UK’s 22 Special Air Service Squadron (22 SAS), Australia’s Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) or Israel’s Sayeret Matkal, to name several. These forces are at the right end of the “special continuum” to which national missions (those deemed as politically high risk and directly central to national interests) are conferred and whose capabilities are exceedingly precise.

8 The combination of 9/11’s attacks and a maturing globalization have dispersed and networked terrorist threats in such a manner as to require an adaptive “global man hunting” approach. This approach is predicated on close interagency cooperation and centres on the combination of intelligence and operations in what is often described as “intelligence-led operations.” More specifically, it calls upon the Find, Fix, Finish Exploit and Analyze (F3EA) continuum to neutralize threats. Jihadist militants competently leverage advances in communications and travel within networked structures to elude the reach of Western power. Robert Martinage, *Testimony Before U.S. House of Representatives House Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities* (Washington, D.C., 3 March, 2009).

9 Admiral Eric T. Olson, Commander United States Special Operations Command, *2010 Posture Statement*, 1.

10 Robert G. Spulak, “A Theory of Special Operations,” *Military Technology*, Special Issue, 2009, 23. Spulak makes this contention noting that at one time, fighting at night was the domain of special forces but today’s proliferation of Night Vision Devices (NVDs) allows conventional forces to increasingly do so. The author would point to the CF experience in Afghanistan where today’s infantryman is equipped with laser aiming devices and optical sighting systems and uses certain close quarter battle (CQB) techniques once the domain of SOF. It must be noted that CANSOF has facilitated the cascading of these very technologies, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to field forces through the

provision of Training Assistance Teams (TATs), personnel secondments and more open lines of communication.

11 Ibid., 24.

12 This common military axiom paraphrases 19th Century military theorist and Prussian Field Marshall Helmut von Moltke.

13 Major-General Mike Hindmarsh, Commander Special operations Command Australia, "The Philosophy of Special Operations," *Speech Delivered to the United Service Institute of the ACT at the Australian Defence College*, 9 August, 2006. Hindmarsh's economy-of-force comment suggests that government can commit small SOF forces to send strategic messages in lieu of large conventional commitments. In fairness to Hindmarsh's overall perspective, the author disagrees with the main contention of his cited discourse where he states that what makes SOF distinct is far less about individual comparable soldier qualities than the way in which they are deployed. His premise offers that roles, missions and tasks are the determinant factor in understanding what separates SOF from conventional forces. The author disputes this claim on the ground that organizationally you cannot adopt a SOF Force Employment construct without the foundational strength provided by an elevated degree of aggregate individual quality.

14 Spulak, "A Theory of Special Operations," 26. CANSOFCOM doctrines defines SOF as "organizations containing specially selected personnel that are organized, equipped and trained to conduct high-risk, high value special operations to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives by using special and unique operational methodologies in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas to achieve desired tactical, operational and/or strategic effects in times of peace, conflict or war." Canada, *CANSOFCOM Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2009* (Ottawa: DND, 2009).

15 The citation read that JTF 2 was bestowed this distinguished award for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy during the period 17 October 2001-30 March 2002. Sourced from <<http://www.cdnmilitary.ca/index.php?p=62>>, accessed 26 May 2011.

16 February 2006 was early days in the massive CF Transformation effort. So early in fact that first reports of CANSOFCOM's stand up called it the "Special Operations Group" or SOG. This early acronym was changed however when the first Commander, Colonel Dave Barr petitioned the CDS to go with CANSOFCOM thus posturing it more deliberately alongside other commands. The operational command breakdown sourced at <<http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/commun/ml-fe/article-eng.asp?id=2698>>.

17 CANSOFCOM web site: <<http://www.cansofcom.forces.gc.ca/gi-ig/backgrou-contexte-eng.asp>>, accessed 14 April 2011.

18 <<http://www.cansofcom.forces.gc.ca/gi-ig/cct-tbc-eng.asp>>, accessed 17 April, 2011. JTF 2 is responsible for a broad range of missions which include CT operations and armed assistance to other government departments. JTF 2's mission is defined as providing to Canada a force capable of rendering armed assistance in the resolution of an issue or potential issue that affects national security. While JTF 2's primary role is counter-terrorism, its personnel can be employed in any type of military operations, which include, but are not limited to, surveillance, security advice and close personal protection. Source: <<http://www.jtf2-foi2.forces.gc.ca/index--eng.asp>>, accessed 17 April, 2011. CSOR defines itself as a robust and adaptable weapon in CANSOFCOM's operational arsenal combining firepower and mobility with a host of other skills required to conduct and enable operations at home and abroad. It is also the "public face" of the command as an innovative and cutting-edge SOF element. Source: <<http://www.csor-rosc.forces.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>>. CJIRU, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response (CBRN) capability has as its mission "to provide specialized, timely and agile CBRN response to the GoC". Source: <<http://www.cjiru-uic.forces.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>>, accessed 18 April, 2011. 427 SOAS is an Airforce unit embedded within CANSOFCOM under an Operational Command relationship allowing the Commander of CANSOFCOM to dictate operational missions while core technical authorities remain aligned under the Air Force. 427 SOAS "provides dedicated Special Operations Aviation (SOA) effects as part of high-readiness Special Operations Task

Forces (SOTFs) for domestic and international operations". Source: <http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/427_soas-427eosa/index-eng.asp>, accessed 18 April, 2011. At the time of writing, a Special Operations Training Centre (SOTC) and Special Operations Support Unit (SOSU) are being actively studied for a potential stand up in 2012.

19 Canada Command (CANCOM) and Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) are the CF's two force employers. The normative construct is that the three services force develop capabilities (conceive, design and build in concert with Chief of Force Development (CFD)) and force generate capabilities (raise, train and sustain) to a point to handoff to CANCOM and CEFCOM who direct the employment (deploy, employ and redeploy) of those forces within their stated areas of responsibility. In the case of CANSOFCOM, it both develops and generates forces for CANCOM and CEFCOM. Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM) is the fourth operational command.

20 <<http://www.cansofcom.forces.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>>, accessed 17 April 2011.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 <<http://www.socom.mil/SOCOMHome/Pages/GSC.aspx>>, accessed 19 April 2011.

25 Ibid.

26 General Brown, USSOCOM Commander. Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee 2006. <http://commandocs.house.gov/committees/security/has0677260.000/has067260_0.HTM>, accessed 22 April 2011.

27 Dr. Eric Ouellet, "Principle-Based Decision-Making: Institutional Analysis," 8.

- 28 W. Richard Scott. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests*, Third Edition. (Sage: Stanford University, 2008) 68.
- 29 Mary Jo Hatch. *Organizational Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives*, Second Edition. (London, Oxford University Press, 2006), 19.
- 30 Scott, *Organizations*, 27.
- 31 Philip Selznick cited in *Ibid.*, 69. Selznick's groundbreaking analysis, The Tennessee Valley Study in 1949 showed his propensity to preference the normative aspects of organizations focusing on informal structures and stressing the importance of power processes in how organizations functioned.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid*, 29.
- 34 David Denyer et al. "Developing Design Propositions Through Research Synthesis", *Journal of Organizational Studies*, Vol. 29 (Winter 2008), 400.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 404.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 Paul R. Schulman. "Heroes, Organizations and High Reliability," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 1996), 75. Schulman describes HROs who engage in honouring heroes that achieve great exploits and how the organizations use this recognition of a person for clarifying organizational values and culture and transmitting these from one generation to the next. Alternatively, some HROs eschew individual recognition preferring to create a culture totally built around group success as a function of managing systems that preference prior knowledge and behavioural conformity.
- 38 Denyer, 401.

39 *Ibid.*, 80.

40 Scott. *Institutions and Organizations*, 48.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Ibid.*, 77.

44 Scott, *Organizations*, 107.

45 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 77. The term *structuration* was coined by scholar Anthony Giddens. He saw *structuration* as “a duality of social structure” within an institution which is defined as social structures involving strongly held rules supported by more robust relations and more entrenched resources than those in non-institutions. Giddens’ perspective supports Scott’s ideology because it is decidedly organicist while respecting individual actors as knowledgeable, insightful and capable of reflexive action where they see, monitor, continuously assess outcomes and adapt accordingly.

46 *Ibid.*, 79. These four carriers map differently across Scott’s three pillars. Symbolic systems can be rules, laws, values, expectations, classifications, frames of reference. Relational systems can be governance/power systems, authority systems or identities. Routines revolve around SOPs, protocols, jobs, obedience to duty and scripts. Finally, artefacts might be objects, conventions, standards or objects possessing symbolic value. An excellent example of an artefact would be found within JTF 2’s Mess. A rather large and gaudy photo of Elvis Presley (on an ornate wooden background) hangs high in the Mess (higher than the Queen’s photo, actually) and is flanked by two bejewelled AK-47 assault rifles captured in battle from Al-Qaeda operatives. This arrangement says a great deal about how the Unit membership see themselves: strong and victorious in battle, slightly irreverent (nothing in a Mess is supposed to hang higher than the Queen, but of course Elvis is the King!), and honouring a star who was at the top of his game and ahead of his time, common traits members feel apply to the Unit.

47 Ibid., 95. This displacement theory will account for some of the CANSOFCOM-Service tensions we discuss in Chapter 4. Robert Pitts and David Lei's note four stages in a firm's life cycle; introductory, growth, maturity and decline. Robert Pitts and David Lei, *Strategic Management; Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage* (South Western College Publishing, Ohio: 2000), 122. This is an important piece as we will see in Chapter 4 as CANSOFCOM finds itself growing asymmetrically with units and a HQ at different stages.

48 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 96.

49 Ibid., 100.

50 As we will see in Chapter 3, individuals like Senators Sam Nunn and Barry Goldwater were instrumental in SOCOM's creation. In the case of CANSOFCOM, this would include then CDS General Rick Hiller who spearheaded the CF Transformation initiative and ultimately approved the creation of CANSOFCOM as a standalone operational command. Moreover, in the context of consolidating CANSOFCOM's standing within the CF after an understandably precarious start, then Colonel (now Major-General) D. Michael Day must be seen as one such actor, constantly struggling to carve CANSOF's institutional niche in an environment that was not overly charitable (in some instances) to this initiative. One could also add JTF 2's plank holders (initial operators from the Unit's stand up in 1992) to this category. In many ways, these men (a healthy number of whom remain on active service and now occupy senior positions within the organization) blazed the SOF trail for all who would follow.

51 One useful example is when JTF 2 began operating in Afghanistan in 2001 as part of TF K-Bar. It regrouped disparate functions such as intelligence, signals intercept, geomatics, linguists and analysis under one unified intelligence node called the Special Operations Intelligence Centre or SOIC. This concept would be built upon as conventional forces developed the All Source Intelligence Centres, or ASICs, that proved highly useful supporting Joint Task Force Afghanistan's conventional forces for many years in that theatre.

52 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 124. This is a particularly salient concept for our analysis of CANSOFCOM's internal environment in Chapter 4. Taken to a higher level when looking at government agencies that produce a public good, Terry Moe offers a fascinating perspective on bureaucracies and why they are mired in complexity with seemingly little room to exercise rational choice. He posits that in democracies, civilian authorities can use their coercive powers to design arrangements that serve their ends but because the possibility always exists for competing political parties to do the same if they inherit power, political leaders restrict the discretionary powers of agencies confining them in a web of rules (See Scott, *Organizations*, 114). I would extend this line of reasoning to suggest constant political uncertainty in a healthy democracy is one reason why the bureaucracy itself, in some cases, resists politically-driven change agendas, something that should be anathema to the professional military leader lest we fall victim to accusations of the civil-military problematique.

53 Ibid, 52.

54 In chapter five of his book, *Organizations*, Scott examines strategic choice models and calls upon the work of Axelrod who invited game theorists to assist in examining the best model, primarily for security regimes in real-world settings. Of all game theories, the one found to possess the best outcomes was the "Tit for Tat" theory where leaders would operate on a continuum of behaviour being (a) nice, (b) retaliatory, (c) forgiving and (d) clear. He states: "...Its niceness (never initiating noncooperation) prevents it from getting into unnecessary trouble. Its retaliation discourages the other side from persisting whenever defection is tried. Its forgiveness helps restore mutual cooperation. And its clarity makes it intelligible to the other player, thereby eliciting long-term cooperation." (See Scott, *Organizations*, 117). There is also the question of overarching strategies to deal with external institutional pressures. He calls on the work of Oliver (Ibid.,152) who identifies five strategies: (1) acquiescence (conforming), (2) compromise (balancing and placating), (3) avoidance (concealment and buffering), (4) defiance (publically resisting) and (5) manipulate (co-opting, influencing or controlling). Ibid., 171.

55 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 54.

56 Ibid., 55.

57 Ibid., 56.

58 Ibid.

59 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 57.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., 220.

63 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 59.

64 Arthur L. Stinchcombe cited in Ibid., 61.

65 The term “significant” does not imply that major sweeping structural change occurs every time following a transformation initiative. My choice of language is meant to underscore that such initiatives are internalized by the military as “significant emotional events” despite the fact that changes themselves are often subtle. They may also feature changes in resource allocations, processes and governance to name a few.

66 Paul M. Besson. *The Goldwater-Nichols Act: A Ten Year Report Card* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1998), 5.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid., 15. Besson rightly points out that the US never lost a major battle but tactical success in counter-insurgency warfare bears no correlation to strategic victory.

70 Wayne K. Maynard, “The New American Way of War,” *Military Review*, No. 73 (November 1993), 6.

71 Ibid.

72 James R. Locher III, "Defence Reorganization: A View From the Senate," *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence, Guest Presentations*, Spring 1987, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Program on Information Resources Policy I-88, 1 May 1988), 149.

73 Besson, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act*, 11.

74 Ibid., 6.

75 US Colonel (Retired) Rusty Napier, "The History of USSOCOM," presentation delivered at Special Operations Forces: A National Capability Symposium, 7 December, 2010, Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario.

76 Former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James L. Holloway chaired the commission but its recommendations provided no compelling structural reforms to SOF command and control or budgetary matters. More to the point, the structure provided no high ranking military champion able to compete at the Service level. Source: *History of SOCOM*, available at: <<http://www.socom.mil/socomhome/documents/history6thedition.pdf>>, accessed 1 May 2011.

77 US Colonel (Retired) Rusty Napier, "The History of USSOCOM."

78 All six SOPAG members were retired GOFOs. Chairman Lieutenant-General Sam Wilson was accompanied by Admiral James Holloway, Lieutenant-General Leroy Manner, Lieutenant-General Jim Ahmann, Major-General Richard Secoy and Brigadier-General Don Blackburn.

79 US Colonel (Retired) Rusty Napier, "The History of USSOCOM".

80 *History of SOCOM*, available at: <<http://www.socom.mil/socomhome/documents/history6thedition.pdf>>, accessed 1 May 2011.

81 Besson. *The Goldwater-Nichols Act*, 24. The CJCS assumed greater control over resources through a mandated annual Chairman's Program

Assessment incorporating Unified Combatant Commander's (UCC) requirements into the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee (JROC). JROC is chaired by the Vice CJCS with vices or deputies from the four Services representing. Prior to GNA, resourcing was almost uniquely within the Service's domain. JROC has three main mandates. It sets priorities for military systems and requirements to meet the National Military Strategy. It oversees important national acquisition programs (cost, schedule, performance and alternatives) and finally, it prioritizes military programs to conform with strategic defence planning and resource allocations. Source: Richard M. Meinhart "Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Leadership of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 56 (1st Quarter, 2010). For background, there are now six UCCs: CENTCOM, EUCOM, PACOM, SOUTHCOM, NORTHCOM and AFRICOM and four Functional Commands: SOCOM, TRANSCOM, STRATCOM and JFCOM.

82 The American military system is very different than Canada's (or the UK's for that matter). Canada's Parliamentary democracy, especially in majority government times, is vastly simpler for a CDS to navigate than the United States' Representational System with two houses in the Senate and Congress generally checking the executive powers of the President and his staff. Samuel P. Huntington cited a vignette that speaks to this when U.S. General David Jones, CJCS was conferring with his UK counterpart Admiral Sir Terence Lewin about changes they both felt were needed to strengthen central military authority. "...And Admiral Lawrence went back, wrote up his plan in a memorandum and sent it to the Prime Minister. He got it back two weeks later with "Approved, Margaret Thatcher" written on it. I went back, wrote an article and published it three years ago, and today it is still being debated." Source: Samuel P. Huntington, "Centralization of Authority in Defence Organizations," *Seminaron Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence, Guest Presentations*, Spring 1985 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Program on Information Resources Policy, I-86, February, 1986), 1-3.

83 Sean Naylor. "Spec Ops Standoff," *Army Times* (Monday, 31 August, 2009), 1.

84 Ibid., 2.

85 Gary Johns, makes a compelling case that the impact of context on organizational behaviour is under-represented in understanding why certain decisions are taken. Gary Johns, "The Essential Impact of Context on Organizational Behaviour," *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 386-408. Olson's 2010 request falls squarely within the regulative pillar – personnel management protocols and his desire to better control them. To place SOCOM's evolution in context, its annual budget had grown from \$2.3B in FY 01 to \$10.5B in FY 12. The Air Force's budget in FY 12 is \$24.8B and a slice of these monies contributes to SOCOM by way of major weapons programs, personnel costs, base costs etc. We thus note the largesse of SOCOM's annual budget in comparison to that of the Air Force when compared to overall force structure size and scale of major weapons programs. D. Mark Peterson, Chief Financial Officer USSOCOM presentation: *United States Special Operations Command: Resourcing Special Operations in the New Normal* <http://www.asmconline.org/wp-current/upload/chapters/europeanpdi2011/D2_General_Session_2_Mark_Peterson_USSOCOM_European_PDI_Brief_2.pdf>, accessed 22 May 2011. The point here is that SOCOM's profile and attendant resources had been increasing at a rate far greater than the Services. That context, when taken with Scott's contention that emergent institutions displace extant ones as they grow may help explain why it was that the Service Chiefs marshalled their collective gravitas against Olson's initiative.

86 The "chain of command" prior to GNA (in accordance with the National Security Act of 1958) was from the President to the SECDEF to the Commanders-in-Chief; precursor commanders to UCCs. By Pentagon directive, this line of communication ran "through the Joint Chiefs of Staff" meaning that neither the CJCS nor the JCS could issue orders other than in the name of SECDEF which effectively meant that the Services actually held control. This process is because Service Chiefs, in their role on the JCS were supposed to don a "joint or unified hat" for strategic oversight but parochial bias invariably meant that a true joint perspective was never in play. Besson, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act*, 13.

87 Ibid., 6. Besson offers a summary of the key criticisms: An imbalance between Service and joint interests, inadequate joint military advice, inadequate quality of joint military personnel, imbalance between the responsibilities and command authorities of the CINCs, confused and cumbersome operational chains of command and ineffective strategic planning.

88 Ibid., 13.

89 Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (Random House, New York, 2006), 237. The Powell Doctrine posited that if civilian leaders committed to armed action as an extension of diplomacy, overwhelming force should be applied to ensure a rapid and decisive victory and equally speedy withdrawal of forces. In this context, General Powell was animated by large manoeuvre formations and not drawn to SOF's small unit, Irregular Warfare tactical bent. This may help explain the natural aversion he held toward SOF in general. Powell's Vietnam experience as part of the 4th Infantry "Americal" Division no doubt contributed to his jaded perspective because SOF operated independently of conventional forces in this era. Everyone is a product of their formative experiences to some extent.

90 Besson, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act*, 11.

91 Berger and Luckmann, 1967.

92 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 95.

93 Admiral Mike Mullen's Speech for the West Point Graduating Class of 2011. *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 62 (3rd Quarter, 2011), 3. Vice Admiral Ann E. Rondeau, President of the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. echoed this theme in relation to the Vietnam fallout in a speech she offered entitled *Identity in The Profession of Arms* where she stated, "having lost site of our own beliefs, and maybe adopting some new ones, we were not in a sound position to positively affect the American people's beliefs toward *their* military. It took us a long while to work our way out of that – and to win back the respect and support of the people we serve." Ibid., 11.

94 Besson, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act*, 10.

95 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 138.

96 Gulf War I, Operation DESERT STORM, is generally understood as the first true Information War on two accounts. Firstly, it was reported on live by embedded journalists in the context of 24 hour news coverage with military commanders providing daily media briefings to update coalition progress. Secondly, its prosecution was marked by levels of digitization unseen until this point. Air Tasking Orders (ATOs) detailing up to 3,000 sorties daily were distributed on Local Area Networks (LANs) and in the words of noted command and control scholar, Colonel Allard, "Desert Storm may be better remembered as the first was to demonstrate the means, the methods, and the awesome lethality of combat in the information age. [O]ne of the lasting legacies of Desert Storm will be a continuing by the U.S. defence establishment to exploit the potential of advanced technology and precision weaponry in an emerging paradigm of information warfare." Source: C. Kenneth Allard, "The Future of Command and Control: Toward a Paradigm of Information Warfare," reprinted from *Turning Point: The Gulf War and U.S. Military Strategy*, edited by L. Benjamin Ederington and Michael J. Mazarr (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), 161.

97 US Colonel (Retired) Rusty Napier, "The History of USSOCOM."

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*

100 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 57.

101 *Ibid.*

102 Henry Mintzberg. *Mintzberg on Management* (New York, Macmillan Press: 1989), 16.

103 Another authoritative group of organizational scholars defined militaries as "quintessential bureaucracies" because they were unequivocally coercive, mechanistic in process featuring stark divisions

of labour and power with direction flowing unambiguously from the top downward. Joseph Soeters *et al.*, *Managing Military Organizations: Theory and Practice*.

104 Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management*, 221. Mintzberg espouses four systems that can form the basis of an organization's influence systems: authority (sanctioned power), ideology (widely accepted beliefs), expertise (power that is officially certified) and politics. The latter is neither formal, accepted widely nor is it officially certified. Politics play out through "intricate and subtle, simultaneous and overlapping" games. While a full description is beyond the scope of this analysis, several political games appear to have played out on both sides of the SOCOM/GNA debate. For the SOCOM camp (in varying degrees), the *Insurgency Game* (designed to resist authority in order to enact organizational change and is usually initiated at lower levels), *Sponsorship Game* (played to build a power base using superiors professing loyalty in return), *Expertise Game* (unsanctioned use of expertise to build a power base by exploiting technical skills and knowledge, uniqueness and criticality or "irreplaceability" and the *Strategic Candidates Game* (played to effect change within an organization where preferred strategic change is promoted through political camps). For the Service Chief/anti-SOCOM camp: *Alliance-building Game* (played among peers for each to build power for self-interests), *Empire-building Game* (non-cooperative laterally; usually played with individual subordinate entities), *Budgeting Game* (played overtly similar to Empire-building game with resources as the prize) and the *Lording Game* (lording "legitimate" power over those with less of it or without power altogether).

105 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 124.

106 Dommander S.A. Tatham. "Strategic Communications: A Primer," *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Advanced Research and Assessment Group*. (December 2008), 3.

107 Dr. Lee Rowland and Commander Steve Tatham, RN. "Strategic Communication and Influence operations: Do We Really Get It?" *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom* (London, UK: 2008), 6.

108 U.S. Air Force Office of Public Affairs. *Charting Our Future* (Washington, DC: 2005), 209.

109 Ibid., 4.

110 CANSOFCOM is a unique environment in that it force develops, force generates and, when directed may force employ unique military capabilities in a joint context. The CF will need to engage in the debate as to where CANSOF stands in relation to the Army, Navy and Air Force as a function of overarching CF policy matters (personnel, equipment, readiness and infrastructure) that will increasingly require fidelity as CANSOFCOM matures. The author is not suggesting CANSOFCOM become “the fourth Service” but it will trend more and more in that direction ergo institutional leaders would do well to have a fulsome discussion regarding the CF’s vision on it, and other emerging joint capabilities, moving ahead.

111 It is worth noting JTF 2’s four pillars of its ethos: Relentless pursuit of excellence, shared responsibility, humility and humour in the face of adversity. These all play directly to the author’s point of promoting a notion of legitimacy and nobility by simply opening up where practicable so others can see firsthand the talent, commitment, effectiveness and humility that pervades CANSOFCOM.

112 The traditional acid test for SOF employment is four fold. First: Is the mission appropriate? Generally, is it a SOF task or can it be accomplished by other means? Second: Is the mission feasible? Do the parameters allow for a likelihood of success? Third: Is it justifiable? Are the risks justified by the potential benefits derived? or costs? (On this point, the author would note that a modest loss of lives represents a sizeable proportion of the annual operator intake so metrics of possible FWIA/FKIA as a function of mission planning are SOF-specific). Lastly, is the mission sustainable? Can the small force be adequately resupplied owing to the fact that they generally fight as a light package. The vital ground the author refers to is around command. SOF forces must never be tactically led by officers who possess no SOF-specific expertise. That is not to say the SOF element cannot nest under a conventional C2

structure, but tactical leadership must stem from SOF officers who appreciate the intricacies of the business.

113 The Nunn-Cohen Amendment's objectives were: (1) provide close civilian oversight for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict activities (SOLIC), (2) ensure that genuine expertise and a variety of views are available to the President and SECDEF regarding SOLIC, (3) improve inter-agency planning and coordination for SOLIC, (4) bolster SOF capabilities in such areas as joint doctrine and training, intelligence support, command and control, budgetary authority, personnel management and mission planning. Source: C-3, 39.

114 Robert Gates. "Reflections on Leadership," *Parameters: U.S. Army War College Journal* (Spring 2008), 11.

115 Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management*, xx.

116 *Ibid.*, 157.

117 *Ibid.*, 198.

118 *Ibid.*, 223.

119 *Ibid.*, 136.

120 The Y Axis' Quality can be subdivided in terms of Intellectual Quotient (IQ): relative IQs, mental agility and performance under stress, tolerance for decision making under duress, the Physical Quotient (PQ): motivation and determination, ability to persevere under physical hardship, general fitness and stamina and the Irregular Warfare Quotient (IWQ): adaptability, flexibility, lateral thought processes, ability to take in large, non-linear inputs and arrive at cogent tactical solutions. The concept for this comparative assessment of SOF versus general military populations is borrowed from the work of Dr. Robert G. Spulak Jr. in "A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF," *Military Technology Journal, Special Issue* (2009), 23-28. The IQ, PQ and IWQ is drawn from a visit the author conducted to the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Special Warfare Centre (JFKSWC) in the summer of 2006.

121 Bryan “Doug” Brown. “U.S. Special operations Command: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue No. 40 (1st Quarter 2006), 39.

122 In 2008, the author hosted Commander USSOCOM and this idea was broached in conversation. Admiral Olsen cautioned that creating any additional layers of headquarters was something to very wary of. The model proposed above is not done in this spirit. It should not be seen as a miniaturized Canadian Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) but simply as an internal CANSOFCOM node where staff action elements are deliberately re-organized as a function of the primacy of operations.

123 Stephen Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy* (Washington, D.C. Potomac Books: 2008), xxi. Metz argues that a strategy itself is limited if those who it relates to view it through differing paradigms. A common frame of reference focuses the coherence and predictability that the strategy seeks to impose in the first instance.

CANSOFCOM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE MONOGRAPHS

1. *More Than Meets the Eye: The Invisible Hand of SOF in Afghanistan*
Colonel Bernd Horn, 2011.
2. *Squandering the Capability: Soviet SOF in Afghanistan*
Major Tony Balasevicius, 2011.
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