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# CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL



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# Guidelines for the Submission of Manuscripts

**The Canadian Military Journal is the independent flagship quarterly publication of the Profession of Arms in Canada. The Journal publishes professional and scholarly articles, commentaries, opinion pieces, book review essays, and book reviews, as well as select Letters to the Editor.**

It welcomes submission of manuscripts on topics of broad relevance to Canadian defence and the Defence Team, including, but not limited to, the profession of arms, security and defence policy, strategy, doctrine, operations, force generation, force employment and force structure, technology, procurement, military history, leadership, training and military ethics, institutional culture, recruitment, diversity, etc. Forward-looking pieces that present original concepts or ideas, new approaches to old problems and fresh interpretation are especially welcome.

The Journal welcomes submissions from members across all uniformed ranks. The Deputy Minister and Chief of the Defence Staff have delegated authority to approve manuscripts for publication in the Canadian Military Journal to the Journal's Editor-in-Chief, acting on recommendations of the Editorial Board. Serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department of National Defence need not and should not obtain prior clearance from their superior when submitting a manuscript.

In return, the Journal follows a rigorous double-blind peer review processes that draws on both uniformed and civilian expertise to ascertain suitability of submissions. Manuscripts will be assessed on originality and quality of the argument or discussion, relevance and timeliness of the topic, and quality of the writing style. Unless otherwise agreed upon, the Canadian Military Journal insists upon right of first publication of any given submission. Submissions should not be under review by any other publication while under consideration by the Journal.

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- Manuscripts may be submitted in either of Canada's official languages;
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- Manuscripts should conform to standard academic style, using Oxford English or Petit Robert spelling, with endnotes rather than footnotes.
- Endnotes should be embedded and not attached. Full bibliographic references are to be contained in the endnotes. Consult recent editions for examples of appropriate formatting.
- Acronyms and military abbreviations should be used sparingly, but, if unavoidable, they may be used in the body of the text provided that the term is written out in full the first time it is used, followed by the abbreviated form in brackets. Military jargon and slang terms should be avoided: all manuscripts should be readily intelligible to a general informed public readership.

## Retraction Policy

The Canadian Military Journal is committed to integrity in publication. In consultation with the Editorial and Advisory boards, the Editor reserves the right to correct the record by publishing a subsequent correction or retraction. Retraction is based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines. That is, for an article to meet consideration for retraction, the article must have: unreliable findings (due to major error or falsification), plagiarism, copyright infringement, cases of redundant publication without full disclosure, failure to disclose competing or conflicting interests, substantiated reports of unethical research, or at the Editor's discretion should it turn out that content violates the Journal's ethical, professional, scholarly and other expectations.

# CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL



Tuzla Resurrection

Photo: Master Warrant Officer (retired) Robert Bradley



Photo details on page 58.



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



CH-146 Griffon after a landing on top of a mountain as part of a flight training, North of Whitehorse Cadet Training Center as part of OP NANOOK-TAKUNIQ 2025, Yukon Territory, on 11 March 2025.

Photo: 8 Wing Imaging, Canadian Armed Forces

## Note from the Editorial Team

**This year, the Canadian Military Journal marks its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In celebration, the CMJ has begun the year with two special issues: the first on character-based leadership and the second featuring articles on human security. Aside from being CMJ's first special issue on human security, the 25.2 issue was also a milestone because it was the first CMJ issue created by an entirely woman-led team: the acting Editor-in-Chief, publication manager, web developer, special issue guest editors, and layout team were all women. This issue, delivered in CMJ's 25<sup>th</sup> year, is representative of the Journal's evolution and growth.**

These publications are the latest of a series of special issues, each representing topics relevant to the defence team: Canadian Military Colleges, climate security, the RCAF centennial issue, reservists in the CAF, character-based leadership, and human security. Some readers might think that these special issues have been a departure from the content CMJ first started releasing 25 years ago. But, these topics were a concern in the very first issues. Issue 1.2 featured an article by Paul Heinbecker, Assistant

Deputy Minister Global and Security Policy, at what was then DFAIT, titled "Human Security: the Hard Edge" and "Ethics and Military Corporation" by Captain Donald A. Neill. While many of the earlier issues dedicated much space to traditional military topics such as missile defence, mechanization, military doctrine, and the revolution of military affairs, these contemporary defence issues were present at the beginning, too. There is room for both traditional and contemporary topics in the Canadian Military Journal.

“As Russia seeks territorial expansion, populism rises, and we see significant economic and political instability, several world and thought leaders emphasize the importance of revisiting historical precedents. This call to reflect on the lessons offered by history is rooted in the belief that past events can help us to avoid similar mistakes.”

This issue, 25.3, offers an array of articles on topics becoming increasingly relevant to the Canadian public and the defence team. As I write this note, in March of 2025, Canadian sovereignty, relationships with allies, the Arctic, and the importance of recognizing historical patterns in present politics have consistently been in the news, discussed at conference panels, and are at the forefront of mind for several Canadians. These topics are all present in this issue.

The issue opens with Dr. Mathieu Landriault's article, "Canadian Public Opinion on Arctic Issues: Competition and Pessimism Ahead." Canada's North has been a more pressing issue as of late, as Minister Joly announced the Arctic Foreign Policy in December of 2024, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced funding for the North, and the Conservative party proposed investing in more icebreakers and a permanent base in Iqaluit. Dr. Landriault's article is a welcome insight into how the Canadian public's perception of the Arctic has changed. Using data from July-August 2024, he writes that Canadians perceive that Canadians believe that competition and conflict are likely in the region, an increase from previous polls.

CMJ has also dedicated a second section of this issue to human security following the success of the 25.2 special issue. In their respective articles, Dr. Marion Laurence and Dr. David Hughes discuss the challenges of enforcing international human rights law and human security on the ground. In "Mission Impossible? Protection Dilemmas and the Future of Human Rights Due Diligence in UN Peace Operations," Dr. Laurence provides an in-depth analysis of the dilemma UN peacekeepers face when

they deploy to protect civilians and provide support to host state security forces, while that host state might also be a perpetrator of human rights abuses. In response to this dilemma, the UN developed a Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) to regulate cooperation between UN personnel and non-UN forces. Dr. Laurence discusses the broader implications of this policy for the Canadian Armed Forces. In a similar vein, in his article "International Human Rights Law and Human Security: Still An Incomplete Relationship?" Dr. Hughes argues that human security and human rights law are conceptually and rhetorically linked, and that international human rights law can be a strong foundation for human security policy. Countries that struggle to adhere to human rights laws will logically also struggle with human security.

As Russia seeks territorial expansion, populism rises, and we see significant economic and political instability, several world and thought leaders emphasize the importance of revisiting historical precedents. This call to reflect on the lessons offered by history is rooted in the belief that past events can help us to avoid similar mistakes. This is also the premise of the article "History Matters" by Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Richard Bowes. In his article, he argues that "history matters and that history is back with a vengeance." He provides three historical insights to guide contemporary decision-making: the power of nationalism and realism, the uncertainty of war, and the fact that wars are always costlier, more complex, and longer than initially expected. Similarly, the authors of "Our Shared History and Sacrifice: The Legacy of Canada, Pakistan, and India in World War I" look to the First World War and how the British Empire's decisions shaped modern Pakistan, India, and Canada.

In the same section, Lieutenant (N) (retired) L.J.W. Cole references the 2023 destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in the Kherson Oblast in Ukraine. He revisits how water and flooding have historically been used to deny territorial expansion, destroy resources and industry, and introduce diseases.

The following section, featuring articles "Retirement Long Overdue: The RCAF Snowbirds" by Lieutenant-Colonel Kim Wilton and "The Jeune École Redux: Ukraine and Armed Resistance at Sea" by Juan-Camilo Castillo are a logical progression from the last section about lessons learned, and ask how we might (or should) apply older technologies or theories to a modern context. In her article, Lieutenant-Colonel Kim Wilton suggests that given the current personnel shortages, pressures, and lack of government policy prioritization for the asset, it is time to retire the 431 AD Squadron and the Snowbird air demonstration team. Wilton considers other military air demonstration capabilities, the Snowbird aircraft, and reconstitution challenges to support her conclusion. This topic is especially relevant given the recent uncertainty surrounding the future of the Snowbirds following the Department of National Defence's 2024 discussions about retiring older equipment.

In “A Moment of Meditation Inside a MIG-Jet Hangar: Bosnia at War,” Dr. S.K. Moore revisits a memory from his time as a deployed Padre providing Easter service in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993. Moore recounts his experience holding a service in an operational environment using green hessian from a spool as an altar cloth, a rain barrel as an altar, army cots as pews, and holding service on Monday instead of Sunday. Years after the war, he would recount that experience during an online COVID service, replicating the Tuzla service. Artist Robert Bradley was watching the service and later contacted Dr. Moore to inquire about using the linen. As a retired Master Warrant Officer and field engineer, he had painful memories of the war in the former Yugoslavia and had experienced art therapy as part of his recovery. The service inspired Mr. Bradley, who built a frame to stretch the green linen as a canvas. Applying coats of gesso to create a surface, he painted his imagining of the Tuzla service, naming it *Tuzla Resurrection*. That painting is currently undergoing the acquisition process at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, and Mr. Bradley has graciously donated it to this issue’s cover photo. Robert Bradley was first introduced to art by a residential treatment centre for PTSD and addictions and started with art therapy. The art therapist initially asked participants to paint their spirituality. Having lost his belief in religion in Croatia in 1992 but found spiritual peace during three separate missions to Nepal, Bradley first painted a Buddhist Stupa and was pleased with its expression. A firefighter from the group donated a French easel, and Bradley used it to paint from his hospital bed. He has continued

his artistic work since and pursued art school which lead him to the Centennial Flame Restoration Project. Since then, he has continued to bring beauty to the forgotten, and rebuilt an abandoned home in Chelsea, Quebec, where he continues to create. The Canadian Military Journal thanks Mr. Bradley for sharing his story and for donating *Tuzla Resurrection* for this issue’s cover.

This issue closes with Joel Watson’s review of Lawrence Freedman’s *Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine*, released in 2022. This book is often recommended for readers interested in how militaries can be used to implement government policies and how those policies are enacted through chains of command. The topic is especially relevant following January 6, 2022, and recent controversies surrounding the alleged misuse of militaries and military figures. Watson found Freedman’s use of fifteen historical case studies, ranging from democracies to dictators, to be a helpful explanation for the nature of command relationships instead of falling prey to theoretical disputes. However, these scenarios are not tied together using a thematic framework, and so the reader is left to infer connections.

In closing, we hope you enjoy this issue of the Canadian Military Journal and encourage you to write to us.

Alexandra Green  
Acting Editor-in-Chief  
Canadian Military Journal



Ukrainian recruits practice their skills on the PVS-14 Night Vision Monocular, during Operation UNIFIER in the United Kingdom, on January 26, 2023.

Photo: Corporal Eric Greico, Canadian Armed Forces Photo



A CC-177 Globemaster arrives in Resolute Bay, Nunavut with 112 members from 38 Canadian Brigade Group participating in Exercise ARCTIC RAM on February 13, 2016.

Photo: MCpl Louis Brunet, Canadian Army Public Affairs

# Canadian Public Opinion on Arctic Issues: Competition and Pessimism Ahead

**MATHIEU LANDRIAULT**

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**The Arctic has an important place in Canadian identity. Federal politicians have used the region to garner support nationally and the Canadian public has reacted emotionally when perceived threats to the Canadian Arctic emerged.**

Unfortunately, very few opinion polls have been conducted to understand how Canadians perceive the Arctic region on security and geopolitical matters: competition and cooperation, nature of threats and solutions to secure the Canadian Arctic. The last credible one, Rethinking the Top of the World (RTW), was led by the Gordon Foundation and the Munk-Gordon Arctic security Program in 2015<sup>1</sup> (a previous iteration was also conducted in 2010). The region and global geopolitics substantially changed since then. As a result, the Observatoire de la politique et la sécurité de l'Arctique decided to spearhead a new survey. The poll was conducted by SOM and surveyed 2081 Canadian adults from July 30 to August 13 2024. The poll was conducted online among a representative randomized sample. The typical margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.2%.

This inquiry leaves us with the impression of a Canadian public pessimistic about the future of cooperation in the Arctic

region but also supportive of recent measures passed by the federal government.

## On Arctic competition and cooperation

Canadians feel anxiety about the status of the Canadian Arctic. In the past, the idea that Canada could lose part of its Arctic region if the country was not present enough was popular, encapsulated by the catchy "use it or lose it". The expression was often relayed in media outlets<sup>2</sup> and elected representatives, such as Prime Minister Stephen Harper, made it a central part of its Arctic messaging during the 2000s.<sup>3</sup> Although this idea has often been questioned since,<sup>4</sup> it is still popular among the Canadian populace: 73% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement, with only 10% disagreeing (see figure 1).

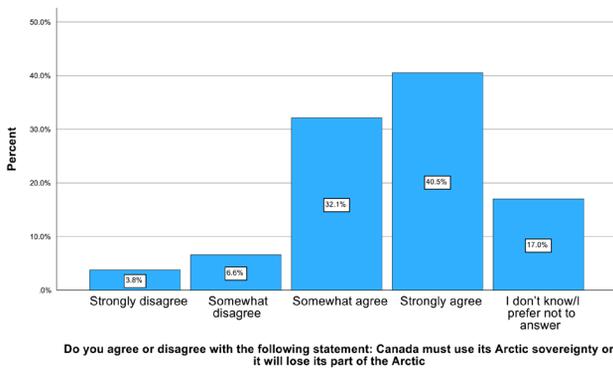


Figure 1: support for the “use it or lose it” idea.

This gloomy outlook coincides with support for similar pessimistic assessments. For example, a majority of respondents (54%) believe that conflict will dominate the region in the future (see figure 2).

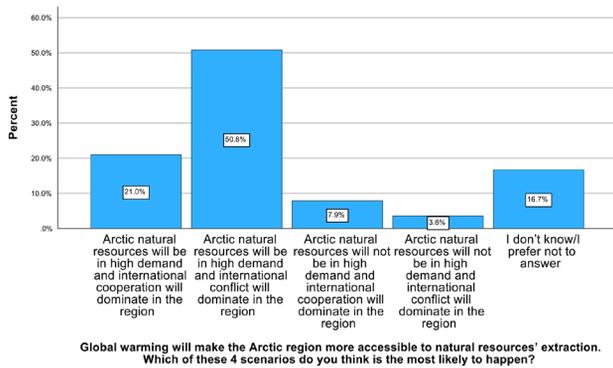


Figure 2: assessments of respondents about Arctic natural resources.

Additionally, attitudes of confrontation are perceived as necessary by Canadians, arriving as the preferred approach by respondents, far in front of more cooperative stances (figure 3).

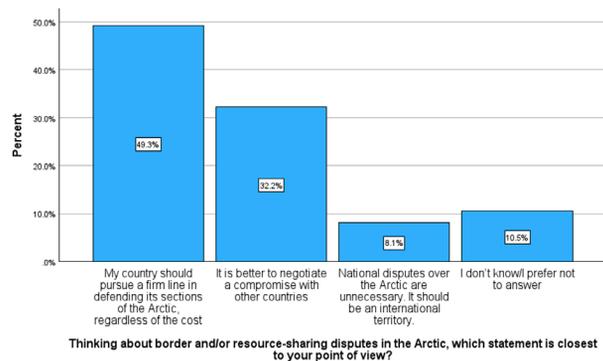


Figure 3: public support for preferred approach to Arctic disputes.

Levels of support displayed in figure 3 mark a significant departure from past surveys. This same question was asked in the 2010 and 2015 iterations of the RTW polls focusing on Arctic issues. The “firm line” option received the support of 43% of respondents in 2010 and 35% in 2015, while attracting 49% of respondents in our inquiry. This shift fits in a broader context that sees Canadians being more supportive of more assertive approaches, including spending more for defence.<sup>5</sup>

This shift is reflected in how the Arctic region is dominantly perceived by Canadians. Traditionally, environmental protection considerations dominated Canadian public perceptions of the Arctic. For example, in the 2015 RTW poll, environment security (“protecting the land, air, water, people and wildlife from environmental threats like climate change and industrial accidents such as oil spills”) was considered important by 90% of respondents, while national security (“protection from threats posed by other countries and individuals”) was considered important by only 58% of Canadian respondents.

This large divide between environmental protection and border/military protection could not be deciphered in the survey that we conducted. When asked which issues should be Canada’s top priority in the North, environmental protection and border protection are virtually tied, with border protection holding a slight edge.

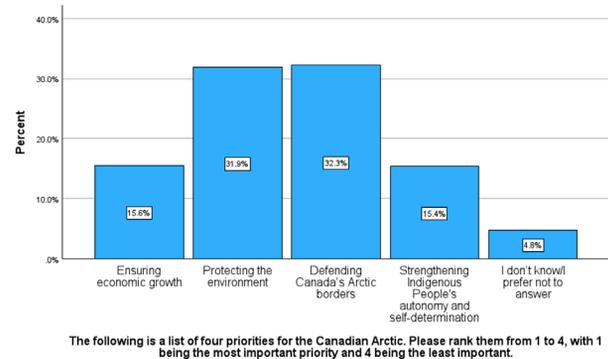


Figure 4: opinions of Canadians on the top priority for the Canadian Arctic.

Unsurprisingly, initiatives and investments seeking to bolster Canada’s presence in the Arctic are assessed positively. For example, the recent announcement by the federal government to purchase two new polar icebreakers is supported by 80% of respondents while the Arctic-specific investments included in the recent Defence policy update were opposed by a mere 19%: 56% assessed that these investments were either just right or they would have liked the federal government to invest more in this domain.

## Threats and partners

Similar realignment can be observed when looking at the nature of threats looming over the Canadian Arctic. Respondents in our 2024 survey ranked Russia as the most serious threat to the Canadian Arctic, followed in order by China, United States and finally Denmark. Historically, the United States was perceived as a threat to Canada's Arctic sovereignty due to the countries' divergent positions on the status of the Northwest Passage.<sup>6</sup> Canada had an historical dispute with Denmark over the ownership of Hans Island (resolved in 2022) and both nations have overlapping claims over the continental shelf in the Arctic region.

However, in this current geopolitical environment, the United States is in a distant third position and Denmark fourth. The closer partnership between Russia and China, and their antagonistic foreign policies towards the West have impacted the perceptions of Canadians. For example, positive perceptions of China nosedived after 2020.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, strong majorities of Canadians favor refusing to cooperate with these countries on Arctic issues. For example, only 15% of respondents indicated that Canada and Russia should resume its Arctic cooperation now while almost double (28%) favoured never resuming such cooperation and an additional 33% chose to resume Canada-Russia Arctic cooperation only after the end of the Ukraine-Russia war, a prospect calculated in terms of years, not months (see figure 5).

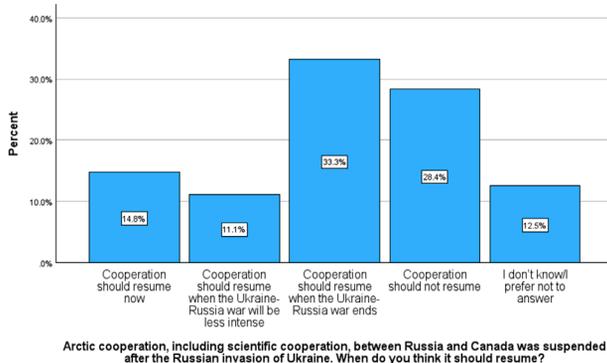


Figure 5: opinions of Canadians on resuming Canada-Russia Arctic cooperation.

China has recently courted Northerners, with China's ambassador to Canada visiting Nunavut to explore possibilities to tap into the territory's mineral sector.<sup>8</sup> This type of initiative encounters broad skepticism in the Canadian population at large, with Canadians being adamant about keeping China out of the Canadian Arctic. For example, when asked if they agree or disagree with the 2020 decision to block the sale of a Northern gold mine to a Chinese company, a decisive 83% of Canadians somewhat or strongly agree with this decision (figure 6).

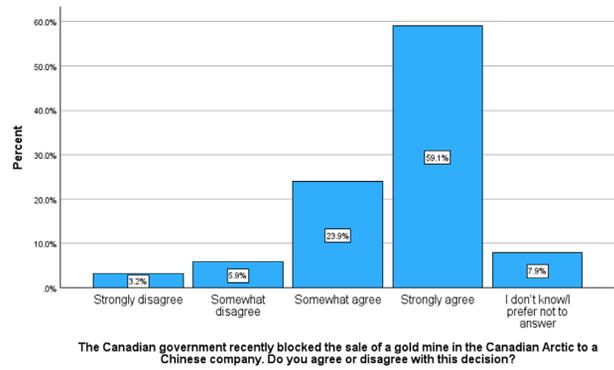


Figure 6: opinions of Canadians on refusing the sale of a Northern gold mine to a Chinese company.

Canadians also expressed skepticism towards resource development in the Canadian Arctic, whether conducted by foreign or domestic companies. A strong majority (65%) agreed with the prohibition banning oil and gas exploration in the Canadian Arctic. Additionally, a plurality of respondents (43%) thought mining projects in the Canadian Arctic had more negative consequences (environment, Indigenous customs) than positive outcomes (jobs, revenues). The only exception has to do with building infrastructures with other nations: a majority of respondents (51%) agreed that Canada should partner up with other countries to build infrastructures in the Canadian Arctic. The vagueness of the assertion (which infrastructure, where, how, with whom?) makes this a weak measure of cooperation. That this is the only indicator pointing towards cooperation is in itself reflective of the gloomy outlook that most Canadians share on the future of their Arctic region.

## Back to 2010

Taken together, these findings point towards a different public mood than the one that prevailed in the mid-2010s. If gloomier security assessments globally emerged in the early 2000s, in the aftermath of the September 11 2001 attacks, we had to wait until the second half of the 2000s to see emerged the notion that the Canadian Arctic was at risk. The opinions captured by the 2010 Rethinking the Top of the World (RTW) poll were tilting in this direction: the Arctic was at risk, Canada had to invest in Arctic military capabilities and the country had to be more present to send an assertive message to other countries.

By the 2015 RTW poll, this attitude had shifted and cooperation was perceived as a possible avenue to develop the Arctic region. The alarmism of the 2007-2009 period dissolved, and the pessimistic predictions of a region on the cusp of competition and conflict did not materialize. Canadian public opinion in 2015 was more optimistic.

“Of course, this does not mean that Canadian public opinion dictates decisions to governments or that public preferences translate automatically into policies. It is however part of a broader context that supports firmer actions and more antagonistic measures against our rivals.”

The findings present in our 2024 survey are hinting at a return to the pessimism of the late 2000s-early 2010s. This time, the main culprit is global: recent norm-breaking by powerful states and the expansionist and antagonist strategies of authoritarian regimes, with Russia and China as leaders, have significantly influenced Canadian public opinion.

Of course, this does not mean that Canadian public opinion dictates decisions to governments or that public preferences translate automatically into policies. It is however part of a broader context that supports firmer actions and more antagonistic measures against our rivals. This could become an important factor if provocations are registered in the Canadian Arctic or if rivals are testing Canada's resolve in the High North. An associated corollary is that Arctic investments and measures received considerable support in the Canadian populace. Here, public support intersects with policy common sense, for a region in dire needs of investments in infrastructures and capabilities.



HMCS BRANSON sits just outside the area of Juneau Alaska, as the ship supports divers from Fleet Diving Unit Pacific while they conduct mine countermeasure missions on the ocean floor during Exercise ARCTIC EDGE 2022 on March 8, 2022.

Photo: Master Sailor Dan Bard Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces photo



A member of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) moves to higher ground prior to conducting a relief in place with members of the Arctic Response Company Group during Exercise ARCTIC RAM 16 near Resolute Bay, Nunavut on February 14, 2016

Photo: MCpl Brandon O'Connell, 3 CDN DIV PA

## Notes

- 1 The Gordon Foundation, "Rethinking the Top of the World: Arctic Public Opinion Survey, vol. 2.", 2015, [online], URL: <https://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/rethinking-the-top-of-the-world-arctic-public-opinion-survey-vol-2/> (accessed September 17 2024).
- 2 Mathieu Landriault, "Interest in and public perceptions of Canadian Arctic Sovereignty: Evidence from editorials, 2000-2014", *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 54 (1), 2016: 5-25.
- 3 Government of Canada, "The Call for the North - Address by the Prime Minister Stephen Harper", August 17 2006, [online], URL: <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2006/08/call-north-address-prime-minister-stephen-harper.html> (accessed September 17 2024).
- 4 Kristin Bartenstein, "Use it or lose it": An appropriate and wise slogan?", July 1 2010, [online], URL: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/immigration-jobs-and-canadas-future/use-it-or-lose-it-an-appropriate-and-wise-slogan/> (accessed September 17 2024).
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Members of the community of Tiburon, in Haiti, look with curiosity at the landing of the Sea-king Helicopter transporting bags of rice.

Photo: MCpl Eduardo Mora Pineda

# Mission Impossible? Protection Dilemmas and the Future of Human Rights Due Diligence in UN Peace Operations

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In 2008 and 2009, the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) came under fire from human rights advocates for providing financial, logistical, and operational support to the Congolese military.<sup>1</sup> The mission was mandated to assist Congolese security forces in their campaign against non-state armed groups in the eastern part of the country. Yet some Congolese troops were accused of carrying out arbitrary executions, rape, torture, and engaging in other forms of cruel and degrading treatment. At one point, peacekeepers were supporting operations with Bosco Ntaganda—a rebel-leader-turned-officer in the Congolese army—while he was facing arrest by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>2</sup> The public outcry that ensued was not surprising. All UN missions must uphold international humanitarian law, and MONUC was also tasked with protecting civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.<sup>3</sup> Two of the mission's mandated tasks were therefore in tension with one another. Peacekeepers were under orders to protect civilians, but they were also supposed to

**carry out joint patrols with state security forces who were responsible for serious, recurring attacks on civilians. This dual purpose forced peacekeepers to make difficult decisions about how, and whether, different parts of their mandate could be reconciled in practice.**

The Ntaganda case provides a particularly vivid illustration, but these dilemmas—defined here as *protection dilemmas*—are not unique to MONUC or the Congo. More recently, the UN Security Council has provided similar mandates for MONUSCO, the mission that replaced MONUC in 2010; MINUSMA, the UN mission in Mali; and MINUSCA, the UN peace operation deployed in the Central African Republic (CAR). These mandates combine protection of civilians (POC) with support for host state security forces under conditions of ongoing conflict, and similar problems have arisen in all three missions.<sup>4</sup> According to one UN-based military expert, such mandates are “impossible” because of their conflicting goals and the intractable dilemmas they create for peacekeepers.<sup>5</sup>

Recognizing that protection dilemmas are products of complex, contradictory mandates is important, but it does little to assist the military personnel who must grapple with them on a day-to-day basis. To provide practical guidance, the UN Secretariat developed a Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) that regulates cooperation between UN personnel and non-UN security forces. Released in 2011, the HRDDP has two main goals. First, it seeks to mitigate the possibility of cooperation with partner forces who violate human rights. Second, it promotes dialogue with non-UN actors to encourage respect for international humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee law.<sup>6</sup> An HRDDP guidance note released in 2015 includes advice on how blue helmets should communicate with national partners, assess and mitigate risk, monitor the provision of support, and intervene when grave violations are committed.<sup>7</sup> Still, more than a decade after it was introduced, knowledge about the HRDDP and understanding of its impact continue to evolve. What are the policy’s strengths and limitations from a practical perspective?

“To provide practical guidance, the UN Secretariat developed a Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) that regulates cooperation between UN personnel and non-UN security forces.”

What broader implications does it have for the Government of Canada and members of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Existing research focuses on the policy’s origins and challenges associated with implementation (e.g., Hirschmann, 2020; Labuda, 2020). This article builds on earlier work by synthesizing those findings, developing the concept of protection dilemmas, analyzing the HRDDP’s relevance for Canada, and reflecting on the future of human rights due diligence in UN peace operations. Drawing on evidence from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, and the Central African Republic (CAR)—countries where protection dilemmas have proven acute—this article argues that the HRDDP provides useful tools for managing these dilemmas, but it also has significant limitations. The policy provides a concrete framework for negotiating how, when, and under what conditions the UN can provide support to host state security forces. In doing so, it provides mechanisms to improve accountability over the short term, and it creates incentives that contribute to the professionalization of non-UN security forces over the long term. While developed in a UN context, the HRDDP framework also provides transferable lessons about human rights due diligence that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Government of Canada, and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) could use to manage similar dilemmas elsewhere (e.g., security force assistance in Iraq or Ukraine). Yet full implementation of the HRDDP is hampered by inadequate resources for risk assessments and monitoring, access restrictions that make it difficult to investigate alleged violations, and pushback from field-level actors who disagree with the policy’s requirements, challenges that could easily arise in non-UN settings as well.

The article proceeds as follows. First, it discusses the origins of protection dilemmas and assesses the effectiveness of the HRDDP in responding to these dilemmas. Section 2 considers implications for the CAF, including lessons learned that could inform decision-making for a wider range of military operations, not just UN missions. Section 3 considers the future of human rights due diligence in UN peace operations, along with changes that could improve implementation of the HRDDP and prevent protection dilemmas before they arise.

## Understanding and Addressing Protection Dilemmas

Protection dilemmas arise when peacekeepers’ POC responsibilities are directly in tension with orders to support and cooperate with non-UN security forces. In places like the DRC, Mali, and the CAR, peacekeepers operate under POC mandates. In keeping with doctrine for “robust” peacekeeping, the Security Council has



United Nations soldiers from 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment and Brazilian Army participate in an Independence Day of Brazil parade during Operation HAMLET in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on September 6, 2013.

Photo: MCpl Marc-André Gaudreault, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

established these missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and authorizes peacekeepers to use force to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, these missions are deployed with “stabilization” mandates that call for peacekeepers to support the extension of host state authority.<sup>9</sup> Stabilization operations are not formally defined in UN doctrine, but in practice they involve direct support for host state security forces under conditions of ongoing conflict, including activities that verge on counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.<sup>10</sup> Yet local security forces are often responsible for serious human rights violations, including attacks on civilians, as they seek to re-establish control of areas held by non-state armed groups. In the DRC, Mali, and the CAR, human rights groups have documented many egregious violations, including torture, summary executions, rape, and sometimes mass killings, and they have presented credible evidence showing that local security forces are responsible.<sup>11</sup> This creates thorny dilemmas for blue helmets. They are mandated to protect civilians, but they are also tasked with supporting the security forces that carry out these attacks.

The reasons behind these contradictory imperatives are well known. Peacekeeping mandates are products of a messy political process in which members of the Security Council

weigh competing material and normative pressures.<sup>12</sup> Often, they overcome political deadlock by mandating a long list of disparate tasks without articulating the relationship between them, explaining how they should be prioritized, or allocating sufficient resources to achieve them.<sup>13</sup> This allows member states to sidestep difficult questions about how, and whether, different parts of a mission’s mandate can actually be reconciled at the field level. This ambiguity is politically useful, but it creates myriad challenges at the operational and tactical levels, where protection dilemmas are felt most acutely.<sup>14</sup> According to the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), “threats to civilians posed by elements of state security forces or their proxies” are currently one of the biggest challenges faced by UN missions.<sup>15</sup> For example, MINUSMA struggled to reshape its relationship with Malian security forces in the wake of grave human rights violations, two *coups d’état*—one in August 2020 and the other in May 2021—and deepening cooperation between Malian troops and Russian-backed mercenaries from the Wagner Group who are accused of committing atrocities against Malian civilians.<sup>16</sup>

The UN’s Human Rights Due Diligence Policy was developed to manage these types of dilemmas. It begins with an assertion that support for non-UN security forces must be consistent with the

principles articulated in the UN Charter. These include obligations to uphold, promote, and encourage respect for international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law. The policy further notes that, “such support should help recipients to attain a stage where compliance with these principles and bodies of law become the norm, ensured by the rule of law.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, the policy has two aims: first, to prevent UN personnel from being implicated in grave human rights abuses through their association with non-UN security forces; and second, to promote respect for international humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee law among those forces. The policy relies on a relatively broad definition of support, one that includes joint operations in addition to other types of support, such as training or provision of food, fuel, and equipment.<sup>18</sup>

The HRDDP is implemented across four phases: 1) communication with national authorities and other partners; 2) risk assessments and, if necessary, mitigatory measures; 3) monitoring; and 4) intervention when grave violations are committed.<sup>19</sup> The first phase is aimed at ensuring that all parties understand what the HRDDP requires and take proactive steps to ensure compliance. During the risk assessment phase, UN personnel must gather information and evaluate how likely it is (e.g., low, medium, or high risk) that non-UN forces will commit grave violations of international humanitarian, human rights, or refugee law while receiving UN support.<sup>20</sup> Where necessary, UN personnel must identify mitigatory measures that could help minimize the risk of violations and ensure that mechanisms are in place to address any violations that do occur. Mitigatory measures may include capacity building and training, accountability and corrective measures, joint planning, regular reporting, changes to existing rules, policies, and procedures, or the exclusion of units or individuals that do not pass a UN vetting process.<sup>21</sup> Given that patterns of state violence against civilians are often being linked to specific units, the HRDDP screening process—which includes vetting for specific units and individuals—is one example of how mitigatory measures can help ensure that UN missions do not provide unconditional support for perpetrators of abuse.<sup>22</sup>

The monitoring phase of implementation involves “proactively observing the behaviour of the recipient in terms of its human rights obligations,” collecting and compiling information about alleged violations, and engaging with recipients to discuss allegations and how they can be addressed.<sup>23</sup> Monitoring also creates opportunities for civil society actors and human rights groups to raise concerns about the actions of non-UN security forces. According to Levine-Spound, this sometimes happens through formal *Comités de suivi*, local committees that improve accountability by allowing community members to bring violations directly to the attention of commanders and request remedial actions.<sup>24</sup> The final phase calls for UN intervention when grave violations are committed. UN entities must have pre-established procedures that specify which staff person will intervene,

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when, and with which national counterpart. If necessary, more senior staff can escalate concerns to more senior levels.<sup>25</sup> Taken together, these steps provide a useful framework for improving accountability and establishing structural incentives and disincentives that contribute to the long-term professionalization of non-UN security forces.<sup>26</sup>

Despite helping to alleviate protection dilemmas, HRDDP implementation also comes with significant challenges. Three of the most common, according to existing research, include a lack of information needed to carry out risk assessments, difficulties related to monitoring, and pushback from field-level actors—both within and outside the mission—who worry that HRDDP implementation makes it harder to achieve other goals. I examine each of these limitations in turn. In Sections 2 and 3, the article builds on earlier work by analyzing implications for Canada and reflecting on the future of human rights due diligence going forward.

First, a risk assessment is only as good as the information on which it is based, and many UN missions struggle to gather adequate and timely information about non-UN security forces. For example, Levine-Spound finds that host states are often reluctant to share lists of beneficiary units and their commanders, operational plans, or explanations of how support will be used. Without this information, the HRDDP does not allow for the provision of support.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, UN missions maintain databases with information about past human rights violations, but they need to be continually updated and this does not always happen when time and resources are limited.<sup>28</sup>

Second, it can be difficult to monitor HRDDP implementation and the effects of mitigatory measures. A mission’s civilian human rights component—such as MINUSMA’s Human Rights and Protection Division, which has a designated HRDDP Unit—typically

takes the lead in HRDDP implementation with assistance from internal and external partners.<sup>29</sup> However, these units may only have a small number of personnel dedicated to HRDDP monitoring. Without a presence in all field locations, they must rely on other peacekeepers, including military personnel, and external partners to gather and communicate the necessary information. This requires significant effort and commitment from partners, and this dependence on others can potentially undermine the integrity of an investigation. In Mali, for example, one study shows that UN investigators sometimes relied on Malian troops to provide security escorts. When allegations are levied against those same forces, their presence during field investigations raises questions about the credibility of the process.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, some mitigatory measures (e.g., the provision of training) are easier to monitor than others; it is time consuming and logistically difficult to confirm whether supplies like fuel or bullets are being used in accordance with HRDDP requirements, especially when those best positioned to do so have many other responsibilities.<sup>31</sup> These challenges make it difficult to fully assess risks and make informed decisions about the provision of support.

Finally, HRDDP implementation is sometimes hampered by active resistance. One of the most obvious examples is when host states push back against UN efforts to modify the behaviour of local security forces. For instance, the government of Mali has asked MINUSMA to prioritize the security dimensions of its mandate and support the Malian Armed Forces by providing fuel, food rations, medical and casualty evacuations, transportation and logistics, rehabilitation of military infrastructure, and intelligence to the Malian military.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the Malian authorities have demanded that MINUSMA refrain from “politicizing and instrumentalizing the human rights issue,” actions that it believes are “detrimental” to national unity and social cohesion.<sup>33</sup> Under these conditions, HRDDP restrictions and mitigatory measures can easily create tensions between peacekeepers, members of host state security forces, and residents of communities under threat, who may view the policy as an excuse for inaction.<sup>34</sup> These tensions make it even more difficult to gather the information necessary for HRDDP implementation. According to Labuda, the policy can also be a source of frustration for blue helmets themselves, especially when uniformed and civilian personnel lack a



A Sea-king helicopter onboard of HMCS St John's, takes off for Chardonniere, in Haiti, with her load of 1000 kilograms of corn soya blend, on September 15, 2008

Photo: MCpl Eduardo Mora Pineda

common vision for cooperation with non-UN security forces.<sup>35</sup> Uniformed peacekeepers who work closely with the security sector may view the policy as an obstacle to effective relationship building. Some might argue, for example, that refusing to transport local security forces on UN flights can erode goodwill and make it harder to build trust, provide mentorship, and achieve a mission's overarching goals.<sup>36</sup>

These challenges show that implementation of the HRDDP is by no means straightforward. The policy can be a useful tool to improve accountability and foster longer-term professionalization of non-UN security forces. Still, its impact depends on local conflict dynamics and a host of other factors, like a mission's capacity for effective monitoring. It also places significant demands on UN personnel, who must learn what the HRDDP requires, clearly communicate those requirements to a range of partners, develop the knowledge required to conduct risk assessments and propose mitigatory measures, gather the information needed for effective monitoring, and intervene appropriately when violations do occur. While staff with special expertise may take the lead, thorough implementation depends on buy-in from all parts of a UN mission.

## Implications for the Canadian Armed Forces

The protection dilemmas that arise in UN peace operations are not unique. Historically, CAF members have often been deployed in settings where protecting civilians is a core objective. Similar dilemmas can arise in any operation where CAF members are deployed abroad in support of non-Canadian security forces while also working to protect civilians and uphold human rights. Indeed, CAF members already receive training on how to comply with the Law of Armed Conflict, the Geneva Conventions, the Hague Conventions, Core Human Rights Law instruments, other related agreements, and on how to identify breaches, support partners, and Allies in upholding these laws.<sup>37</sup> That said, protection dilemmas are most acute when support involves military cooperation amid ongoing conflict, and they are most common when security forces have a history of corruption and abuse, a trait that often contributes to armed conflict in the first place. It is also important to note the link between protection dilemmas and moral injury—another area of focus in the Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security's ongoing research program. Institutional failures to anticipate and mitigate protection dilemmas will place CAF members in very challenging ethical situations and could easily create conditions that are conducive to moral injury.

The contours of protection dilemmas will vary based on the mandate under which CAF members deploy. The UN is unique in the degree to which it has institutionalized protection of civilians within its peacekeeping infrastructure. POC has been a thematic priority for the Security Council since 2001, and the Secretariat has produced a variety of handbooks, policies, and

other guidance documents related to POC.<sup>38</sup> Still, NATO also has a Protection of Civilians Policy—formally endorsed by member states in 2016—and POC has emerged as a central pillar of the organization's nascent Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, NATO has a history of working with local security forces to promote peace and stability in places like Kosovo and Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup> It is therefore possible that similar protection dilemmas will arise in CAF deployments with NATO. Moreover, whenever CAF members deploy in conflict settings, they are bound to uphold a variety of international legal obligations, including International Humanitarian Law. In this respect, the HRDDP is rooted in international legal obligations that long predate the policy itself.<sup>41</sup>

So, while the HRDDP clearly applies to CAF members serving in UN peace operations, lessons from HRDDP implementation can also inform decision-making for a wider range of CAF activities. They could, for example, help the Government of Canada pre-empt controversies like the one that arose when CAF personnel in Iraq were directed to continue training Iraqi security forces, even after the personnel expressed concerns that some trainees had previously committed war crimes.<sup>42</sup> A four-step process like the one outlined in the HRDDP would have provided a clear framework for anticipating and mitigating any harms associated with this type of support. This would supplement existing measures, like the 2017 Ministerial and DM/CDS directives on the *Avoiding Complicity in Mistreatment by Foreign Entities Act*. The directives resemble the HRDDP insofar as they call for Partner Entity Assessments, Country Human Rights Profiles, and Pre-deployment Information Packages aimed at managing risks associated with cooperation with foreign entities. Still, they focus almost exclusively on information-sharing, while the HRDDP covers a much wider range of activities, such as training and joint operations, and provides more multifaceted guidance as a result.<sup>43</sup> A framework like the HRDDP could also be relevant for Canada's provision of training and equipment to Ukrainian troops. While the Russian military is responsible for most of the grave human rights violations related to its invasion of Ukraine, it is only prudent to anticipate situations in which Ukrainian forces—a unit like the Azov brigade, for example—are credibly accused of human rights violations.<sup>44</sup> Understanding the strengths and limitations of the HRDDP in UN missions can help the Government of Canada and DND/CAF strengthen existing human rights safeguards, so they are better prepared to deal with protection dilemmas that arise in non-UN settings.

Three transferable lessons stand out. First, a risk assessment is not particularly useful if it is based on outdated or incomplete information. Yet gathering timely and reliable information requires significant resources. In order to carry out meaningful due diligence, a mission must be able to gather sufficient information, analyze it in a timely fashion, and use it to provide actionable recommendations for military personnel that make

sense within their operational environment.<sup>45</sup> This could be particularly challenging in non-UN missions that do not have a dedicated human rights component, but this function could potentially be rolled into another component's responsibilities. Second, meaningful due diligence also requires monitoring of mitigatory measures and their effects. This is another labour-intensive process that cannot proceed without support from a wide range of stakeholders. When support to partner forces includes the provision of food, fuel, or ammunition, for example, one cannot easily track how they are being used from a central location.<sup>46</sup> Successful monitoring depends on close working relationships with tactical-level personnel who can provide a nuanced assessment of whether mitigatory measures are having the desired impact. Finally, and relatedly, effective due diligence requires buy-in from a variety of internal and external partners. Resistance can come from host states that do not wish to have their activities monitored or curtailed, but internal partners may also have concerns about the unintended knock-on effects of a policy like the HRDDP. Within-mission objections should not be dismissed out of hand. They often spring from a genuine commitment to fulfilling other mandated tasks that happen to be in tension with due diligence requirements. This highlights the complex, multidimensional character of many CAF mandates, and it means that frank conversations are necessary about the extent to which due diligence requirements—and protection tasks more generally—are compatible with a mission's other objectives.

## The Future of Human Rights Due Diligence

The UN's experiences with the HRDDP demonstrate how ubiquitous protection dilemmas can be, and how difficult they are to resolve, even with a specialized policy in place. Given the HRDDP's broad definition of support, and the large number of day-to-day interactions between UN personnel and non-UN security forces, there are myriad situations in which dilemmas might arise. These dilemmas are, as discussed above, products of structural conditions; a mission's POC mandate will often include tasks and objectives that pull in other directions. Going forward, several scenarios are possible when contemplating the future of the HRDDP and the dilemmas it aims to address. These scenarios are of interest to Canada and the CAF because Canada helps fund UN peace operations, occasionally contributes personnel, and has historically been a supporter of POC as a thematic priority within the UN Security Council and Secretariat. The evolution of human rights due diligence is also relevant to wider debates in Canada and elsewhere about liberal internationalism and the future of the rules-based international order.<sup>47</sup>

The first scenario is effectively the status quo. Mandates would still combine population-centric POC tasks with state-centric stabilization tasks. In places where resources are limited and security conditions limit peacekeeper mobility, it will be challenging for blue helmets to fully realize the HRDDP's

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mitigatory potential. Over time, this could lead to public mistrust and disenchantment among groups that believe a UN mission is supporting predatory governments at their expense. Anti-UN protests suggest this may already be occurring in places like the DRC.<sup>48</sup> The second scenario would involve similar mandates and tasks but would combine them with more robust implementation of the HRDDP. More personnel and resources would be available to assess risk, develop mitigatory measures, monitor implementation, and intervene where necessary in response to alleged human rights violations. This would allow peacekeepers to gather information more effectively, maintain more political and logistical “distance” from host states, and expand their use of the HRDDP as a point of leverage to advance POC objectives in their interactions with state institutions. It is important to recognize, however, that more robust HRDDP measures could sour relations with some host states and make it harder to achieve other mandated tasks.<sup>49</sup>

The third scenario would be a return to mandates resembling the multidimensional peacekeeping mandates of the early 2000s. Peacekeepers would still be assigned POC tasks, and they would still work closely with host states, but cooperation would be more circumscribed. The HRDDP would still be relevant in these settings, but the protection dilemmas facing blue helmets would be less acute. More emphasis would also be placed on transforming state institutions over the long term and engaging with civil society and non-state actors in a less state-centric peacebuilding process.<sup>50</sup>

The final scenario would effectively be a return to “traditional” peacekeeping—to the practice of sending lightly armed peacekeepers to observe ceasefires and monitor implementation

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of peace agreements.<sup>51</sup> This would mean a retreat from POC tasks as well as stabilization tasks, making the HRDDP largely obsolete. The policy would still apply to work with other partner forces (e.g., French or African Union troops deployed alongside UN entities) but moving away from both POC and direct support for host state security forces would eliminate many of the protection dilemmas that currently confront blue helmets. Doing so, however, could endanger civilians by signaling that blue helmets will not respond to threats against them. Given that host state consent is a core tenet of UN peacekeeping, protection dilemmas are, to some extent, the price that must be paid for a sustained commitment to POC in peace operations.

These scenarios are not mutually exclusive. One scenario might unfold in a given mission, while another scenario unfolds elsewhere. Extrapolating from these scenarios is also useful to gauge the applicability of human rights due diligence in non-UN missions. The odds that protection dilemmas will arise, and the prospects for effective implementation of due diligence policies, will depend on the tasks assigned to a non-UN mission, the partners it is supposed to work with, local security conditions, and the resources available to support the extensive work associated with meaningful due diligence.

## Conclusion

Managing cooperation between blue helmets and host state security forces that commit human rights violations is, according to one military expert, currently one of the biggest concerns among the states who authorize, fund, and staff UN peace operations.<sup>52</sup> The rise of Security Council mandates that combine POC with “stabilization” activities—especially direct support for host state security forces under conditions of ongoing conflict—have created myriad situations in which peacekeepers are confronted with protection dilemmas. They must make difficult decisions about

how, and whether, different parts of their mandate can be reconciled in practice. How can they protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence while working closely with security forces that are responsible for serious, recurring attacks on civilians? Troop-contributing countries, whose personnel bear the brunt of navigating protection dilemmas, are particularly aware of how acute these conflicting pressures can be.<sup>53</sup> Protection dilemmas are also a concern for Canada and the CAF because of the country’s longstanding commitment to POC and human security, the fact that HRDDP yields transferable lessons for non-UN settings, and because of their potential implications vis-à-vis moral injury among CAF members.

The UN’s Human Rights Due Diligence Policy has gone some way towards clarifying what steps should be taken to mitigate protection dilemmas, improve accountability, and foster the long-term professionalization of non-UN forces, all while protecting the UN’s reputation. Yet implementation of the HRDDP is not straightforward. Gathering sufficient information to carry out risks assessments requires significant time and resources, as does the monitoring required to gauge the impact of mitigatory measures. Both are also dependent on cooperation among a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including local security forces, civil society groups, and different uniformed and civilian components of a mission.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, implementation of the HRDDP is often hampered by active resistance. Sometimes this comes from host governments that wish to escape scrutiny, but it may also come from mission personnel who believe the policy makes it harder to achieve other mandated tasks, especially ones that depend on building trust with local security forces.

Protection dilemmas are products of conflicting impulses within UN peacekeeping mandates. Section 3 examines the future of human rights due diligence in light of these dynamics in the Security Council, outlining four possible scenarios for future UN missions. Yet many lessons from UN peace operations can also be applied to non-UN missions, making them even more relevant for CAF/DND. Protection dilemmas can arise in any setting where CAF members are deployed abroad in support of non-Canadian security forces while also working to protect civilians and uphold human rights, and they are even more likely to arise now that NATO has formally adopted a POC policy.<sup>55</sup> The HRDDP provides a useful template for mitigating and responding to protection dilemmas in non-UN missions. Its shortcomings can also be used to anticipate challenges that are likely to arise in non-UN settings, especially missions that lack a designated human rights component. In both respects, Canadian policy makers can leverage the UN’s experience with the HRDDP to prepare CAF members well in advance and make sure they have the tools required to manage protection dilemmas in ways that are both ethical and effective.

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## Notes

- 1 This article was accepted for publication in November 2023. It was not possible to make substantive changes to the text after that time. The dates and events cited in the article, as well as the analysis, reflect that timeline.
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United Nation soldiers from 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment get slowed down by traffic during a presence patrol in the streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti during Operation HAMLET on September 13, 2013.

Photo: MCpl Marc-Andre Gaudreault, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

## International Human Rights Law and Human Security: Still an Incomplete Relationship?

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*Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,*

*Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.*

**Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948**

*A common understanding on the notion of human security includes the following:*

*The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.*

**UN General Assembly Resolution 66/290, 2012**

Human security and international human rights law inhabit the same conceptual ground. They purport to centre the individual within their respective projects, profess a similar normative orientation, and trace their antecedents to the same post-war moment. Yet early efforts to develop human security policies have advanced with only a rhetorical nod to the relevancy of international human rights law.<sup>1</sup> This lack of conceptual curiosity has been evident since human security's formal origins. The United Nations Development Programme's 1994 *Human Development Report*, so often cited as the genesis of the human security concept, fails to make a single reference to international human rights law.<sup>2</sup> While the concept of human security emerged in the early 1990s to disrupt prevailing, state-centric notions of security, it has more recently been the subject of international renewal. These subsequent efforts to develop human security policies now offer at least cursory references to the relevancy of international human rights law. Yet the resulting efforts to develop human security policies are again devoid of substantive

international legal consideration about how existing legal frameworks affect, and are affected by, the advancement of human security policies. When, for example, the UN General Assembly adopted *Resolution 66/290*, the "common understanding" of human security that achieved approval simply noted that "human security does not entail additional legal obligations on the part of states."<sup>3</sup> Whether and how human security affects *existing* legal obligations goes unremarked.

Similarly, at the 2022 Madrid Summit, NATO cited human security's centrality to the Alliance. The accompanying *2022 Strategic Concept* notes the importance of investing in human security and states that it will be promoted across all of NATO's core tasks.<sup>4</sup> The *Madrid Summit Declaration* that was adopted by the NATO Heads of State and Government reiterated the "centrality of human security" and stated that the Alliance is working to ensure "that human security principles are integrated into our three core tasks."<sup>5</sup> The *Summit Declaration* also notes NATO's joint commitment to human rights and its adherence to international law, including the purposes and principles of the *UN Charter*, but does not expound on the relationship between its pre-existing legal commitments and its evolving human security policy.<sup>6</sup>

A 2022 Special Report from the United Nations Development Programme, titled *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity*, purports to "update the concept of human security to reflect [a] new reality."<sup>7</sup> The report embraces the language of human rights, describing various emerging threats, such as those to the environment and biodiversity as human rights violations, and reaffirming commitment to, and the linkages between, human security and human rights. Poignantly, the report states that "it is imperative to ... reaffirm the principles of the founding documents of the United Nations, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *UN Charter*, which are also the central ideas underpinning the concept of human security."<sup>8</sup> Yet this important recognition of the co-dependent relationship between human security and human rights does not expand to detail how the formal adoption of a human security policy is or should be influenced by existing legal commitments derived from international human rights law.

These trends repeat at the state level. The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence has perhaps the most developed human security policy for military operations. *Joint Service Publication 985* provides comprehensive guidance to implement the UK's human security approach. Importantly, this begins by recognizing that the "Human Security approach is governed by international and domestic law and is underpinned by United Nations Security Council Resolutions, NATO policies and the *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*."<sup>9</sup> While this acknowledges the relevance of international human rights law (along with international humanitarian law) to the activities that come under the scope of the UK's human security policy, it simply notes that

“legal and policy advice should be sought routinely in respect of the application of international and domestic legal obligations for specific operations or activities.”<sup>10</sup> Further elucidation is not provided.

Whether and how the human security policies that are now being adopted by NATO, the UN, and certain states implicate legal obligations receives only cursory consideration in the respective policy formulation. This article suggests that such neglect is problematic. It argues that the successful development and implementation of a human security policy should be predicated on international human rights law and limited by the *UN Charter’s* prohibition on the use of force. Inherent in this claim are three assumptions: (i) that international human rights law is not subordinate to human security policy; (ii) that the capacity of a human security policy to enhance existing rights-based protections is diminished if the human security policy is not premised on expansive understandings of international human rights law; and (iii) that human security does not facilitate military intervention. The article addresses each assumption in turn.

## 1. International Human Rights Law is not Subordinate to Human Security

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that “assigning a legal definition to human security would be counterproductive since [human security] is both an operational and policy framework.”<sup>11</sup> The skepticism with which states from the Global South have received the concept of human security, and the reluctance of other states to assume additional legal obligations may well

““ The successful development and implementation of a human security policy should be predicated on international human rights law and limited by the UN Charter’s prohibition on the use of force.”

have precluded agreement on such a legal definition.<sup>12</sup> However, the Secretary-General’s reasoning implied that because human security constituted an operational or policy framework, it was unburdened by international legal considerations. This reasoning results in the conceptual siloing of human security and international human rights law. And this purposeful division

has implications for the realization of the common objectives of centring the individual as a primary unit of moral standing and enhancing the resulting rights-based protections that both human security and human rights profess.

The nature of these implications varies. The concept of human security remains mired in definitional debates about its meaning. These debates stretch from narrow accounts that emphasize the realization of basic rights, to humanitarian approaches that present human security as a series of positive obligations to redress atrocity crimes, to broad accounts linking human security to international development agendas.<sup>13</sup> This has long prompted suggestions that the prioritization of a human security discourse, premised upon freedom from fear or freedom from want, risks narrowing the scope of existing protections that international human rights law already provides.<sup>14</sup> Yet regardless of the vision of human security that informs a tangible policy proposal, emphasizing human security while neglecting existing international human rights law prioritizes a policy approach that lacks broad international agreement and that suffers from definitional, even ontological, uncertainty.

International human rights law offers a degree of consensus that is absent from discourses about human security. As Gerd Oberleitner observes, while human security and human rights both attempt to explain and secure the place of individuals in international affairs, international human rights law offers a considerably more mature and experienced framework with which to do so.<sup>15</sup> International human rights law predates the formal emergence of human security by nearly half a century. The existing international legal framework offers the strength of a binding legal vocabulary, decades of codification, interpretation, and international consensus.<sup>16</sup> Currently, 173 states are party to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and 171 states are party to the *International Covenant of Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights*. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* boasts near universal ratification. These are only some of the legal documents that directly address the panoply of issues that are of concern to human security-focused approaches. While emerging human security policies vie for normative influence and state support, existing legal frameworks already possess it.

The advancement of a human security approach that, as the former Secretary-General implied, distinguishes the approach’s policy focus from existing legal frameworks, risks diluting the very legal substance that is derived from the more developed history of international human rights law. This concern is captured by suggestions that the precision and legality of a human rights framework could suffer if “rights-talk” were replaced by “policy-talk.”<sup>17</sup> When an entity like NATO identifies common themes that then become the focus of its human security policy, these themes constitute a choice to prioritize certain issues above others. Contrary to the universality and formal indivisibility of human rights, the resulting prioritization process provides actors with

the ability to “pick and choose” the aspects of human dignity that they wish to elevate.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, the international actor that seeks to shirk certain human rights obligations can draw upon the preferential tone of the security discourse to gradually replace the language of *what we must do* with the language of *what we should, could, or might do*.<sup>19</sup>

Ensuring that a human security policy does not facilitate choosing one right over another on the grounds that such prioritization is necessary to ensure “security” requires affirming that human rights considerations are not subordinate to human security priorities.<sup>20</sup> If, as Barry Buzan warns, we advance a human security policy that reconstructs human rights as human security, we risk entrenching “security” as the desired end.<sup>21</sup> This weakens the established values of human rights: determinacy, consensus, consent, and the binding legal nature of human rights norms which collectively constitute that which (virtually) all have agreed applies to humanity and serves to elevate the moral case for universalist interests above that which the state deems preferential. Collectively, this undermines the common purpose of both a human rights and human security approach—ensuring that the individual is a referent object.

## 2. The Need to Advance Encompassing Interpretations of International Human Rights Law

The legal character of international human rights law can provide a foundation upon which to build a human security agenda. However, if a human security policy is to provide added value to pre-existing legal frameworks, it must do more than offer rhetorical appeals to the “centrality of human rights” and the necessity of international law. Such rhetorical appeals can most obviously be undermined by state behaviour. The state that routinely violates human rights law cannot credibly advance a human security policy and will be no more likely to respect individual rights if those rights are articulated through a human security approach.<sup>22</sup> But equally, though perhaps less patently, the legal frameworks that provide the foundation for human security policies are also weakened if the state only favours reductive or minimalist interpretations of its commitment to international human rights law under those frameworks.

Canada, for example, possesses strong domestic mechanisms to ensure human rights guarantees. It positions itself internationally as a “consistently strong voice for the protection of human rights” and boasts of its “central role” in the drafting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.<sup>23</sup> The federal government notes that it is a party to all the major international human rights conventions and that it regularly encourages other countries that have not made similar commitments to do so.<sup>24</sup> However, Canada’s commitment to international human rights law is undermined by its decision not to recognize the extraterritorial

application of the very international human rights treaties that it regularly references. Canadian officials continue to insist that human rights obligations derived from international treaties only apply to the actions of Canadian officials within Canada’s national boundaries.<sup>25</sup> They insist that Canada is unburdened by these rights-based obligations when Canadian officials are operating abroad.<sup>26</sup> In an increasingly interconnected world where officials from the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service are regularly and increasingly required to operate in foreign territories to fulfil their mandates, this matters.<sup>27</sup>

This view is also at odds with contemporary interpretations of international human rights law. The initial emphasis of human rights law was to make the relationship between the state and its citizens the subject of international obligations. Yet almost immediately after the series of international agreements that structured this relationship were drafted, human rights advocates began to ask what obligations these agreements imposed on extraterritorial state conduct.<sup>28</sup> While the purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive overview of the extraterritorial application of human rights treaties—this work has already been done—it is worth noting Oona Hathaway *et al.*’s comparative survey of contemporary practice which found that nearly every foreign and international entity studied acknowledges that states exercising some form of formal control over territory or person must observe basic human rights obligations derived from its treaty-based commitments.<sup>29</sup> This essentially means that if a state’s officials are operating abroad within a situation where their state exerts some demonstrable level of control over a foreign jurisdiction or individuals within that jurisdiction, they are bound by human rights treaty commitments. Such an interpretation was initially affirmed by the International Court of Justice in its *Wall Advisory Opinion*. The Court held that although “the jurisdiction of States is primarily territorial, it may sometimes be exercised outside the national territory. Considering the object and purpose of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, it would seem natural that, even when such is the case, States parties to the Covenant should be bound to comply with its provisions.”<sup>30</sup>

The Court would reiterate this position in subsequent decisions.<sup>31</sup> Various human rights treaty bodies, like the UN Human Rights Committee,<sup>32</sup> the Committee Against Torture,<sup>33</sup> and the Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>34</sup> have all reached similar conclusions.<sup>35</sup> Notwithstanding slight divergences in how these interpretive bodies have recognized the extraterritorial scope of international human rights law, underlying the assertion that a state’s treaty-based commitments apply beyond the state’s borders is the reasoning that human rights demands universality and that such universality is undermined if it is unduly limited by territoriality.<sup>36</sup>



Canadian LAV III (light armoured vehicles) at sunrise at Camp Julien, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Photo: Sergeant Frank Hudec

Such minimalist interpretations of international human rights law limit the capacity of states and other actors to build human security policies that derive normative support from existing legal frameworks while also advancing the efficacy of these frameworks. It also has notable implications for an entity like the CAF whose engagement with human security is likely to be outwardly focused. While the CAF does, of course, operate in domestic contexts, most of its activities, whether in armed conflicts, non-conflict emergency situations, or a formal peace-keeping capacity, occur abroad. If international human rights law is, as Canada stated back in 1999, to provide “the normative framework on which [a] human security approach is based,”<sup>37</sup> then that foundation needs to support the scope of operations that it purports to influence. A commitment to international human rights law that does not apply extraterritorially cannot effectively support a human security policy that frequently travels beyond the state’s borders.

Accordingly, the advancement of human security requires broad recognition of human rights obligations. Such interpretative acknowledgement is as much a political choice as it is a legal one. If human security and human rights are to “reinforce each other” in pursuit of shared objectives, human security policies should begin by clearly delineating that which amounts to a political commitment and that which amounts to a legal obligation, while also recognizing that legal enforcement always requires political will.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. Human Security Does Not Facilitate Military Intervention

The political will to enforce human rights obligations by advancing a human security agenda must not, however, weaken existing

prohibitions on the use of force. Since the *UN Charter* was signed in 1945, states may only use force for individual and collective self-defence or with Security Council approval under Chapter VII in response to a “threat to peace, breach of peace and act of aggression.” Yet despite the broad prohibition on the use of force, certain iterations of a human security approach—most notably those framed as humanitarian approaches and linked to the prevention of atrocity crimes—favour expansive exceptions to the legal regime that limits the instances of when a state may use force.

Perhaps the most prominent example of this alternative vision of human security came from Canada’s former Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, one of human security’s earliest champions, who directly linked human security and military intervention to justify NATO actions in southeastern Europe. Frustrated by Security Council inaction, Axworthy stated that “the crisis in Kosovo, and NATO’s response to it, is a concrete expression of the human security dynamic at work.”<sup>39</sup> This interventionist vision of human security was further grounded in Canadian foreign policy. A 2003 report by what was then the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade titled *Freedom from Fear: Canada’s Foreign Policy for Human Security* stated that, “When states are externally aggressive, internally repressive, or too weak to govern effectively, human security suffers. In such cases, the international community will hear calls for intervention and humanitarian necessity may ultimately outweigh arguments of sovereignty.”<sup>40</sup> Subsequent criticisms of the so-called “Canadian approach” to human security regularly noted its interventionist inclinations and linkages to the responsibility to protect doctrine.<sup>41</sup>

Providing further fodder to the suggestion that human security facilitates intervention, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, another staunch advocate of human security, would similarly reference “a developing international norm in favour of intervention

to protect civilians from wholesale slaughter and suffering and violence.”<sup>42</sup> International law does not recognize the existence of such a norm and continues to limit the instances in which force may be used to those exceptions distilled in the *UN Charter*.<sup>43</sup> The legitimacy deficit that human security experiences, particularly in the Global South, stems from the perception that human security is merely a guise for Western-led interventionism. Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh and Anuradha Chenoy explain that much of the G77 views human security discourse as yet another ethnocentric paradigm that emphasizes selective values that serve to reinforce the Global North’s economic interests.<sup>44</sup> As has played out in various General Assembly debates, this bloc of Global South states fear that as with earlier iterations of humanitarian intervention like the responsibility to protect doctrine, human security will be used to justify Western-led interventions.<sup>45</sup>

This fear is not hypothetical. Varying forms of humanitarian discourse were presented in partial justification of the US-led coalition’s invasion of Iraq.<sup>46</sup> The invocation of the responsibility to protect doctrine justified NATO’s efforts in Libya, purporting to prevent the commission of atrocity crimes before quickly pivoting to regime change.<sup>47</sup> The Russian Federation mirrored the language of Western interventionism when attempting to legitimize its military action in Georgia and then, more recently, when (falsely) claiming to have entered Ukraine to prevent the genocide of ethnic Russians in the Donbas.<sup>48</sup>

The discontent with which humanitarian intervention is now received reflects a history of misuse, power politics, and self-interest. This discontent is coupled with the ongoing weakening of the rules-based international order pertaining to the use of force, and for a human security policy to maintain credibility, it must make clear that it does not purport to alter these rules by providing a novel means for international intervention. A template for this exists. When the General Assembly sought to advance a “common understanding” of human security in Resolution 66/290, it declared that human security is distinct from the responsibility to protect and that it does not entail the threat or use of force.<sup>49</sup>

The moral case for humanitarian intervention may be clear. Claims that the rules governing the use of force require amendment to effectively regulate contemporary challenges may be persuasive. However, efforts to amend these rules require broad international consensus. While such consensus may not prove possible at this moment, unilateral impulses should be checked. Proponents of human security policies should acknowledge why much of the world resists having change externally imposed and accept that, to date, the rule prohibiting the use of force, that which serves as the cornerstone of the rules-based international order, is threatened not only by gross violations but also by the narrow assertion of exceptions.

## Conclusion

Human security is not a standalone concept. It is conceptually and rhetorically linked to human rights law. International human rights law can provide an established normative foundation upon which human security policies may be advanced but the strength of that foundation matters and the way that it is constructed will affect how respective articulations of human security proceed. This short article has argued that the neglect of human rights law by formal accounts of human security is problematic and that mere cursory references to the relevancy of international legal considerations are insufficient. While linkages between human rights and human security are apparent, much about the nature and intricacies of this relationship still needs to be understood, especially by those states and entities that are actively moving to advance formal human security policies.

At the most general level, human security proponents need to explain how their preferred policy approach fits within existing international legal frameworks. Replies to this question must go beyond simple affirmations of the law’s centrality and consider how human security and human rights law intersect, where they depart, and the consequences that the independent advancement of one carries for the other. Observe, for example, NATO’s emerging human security approach which groups its policies on combatting human trafficking, children in armed conflict, conflict-related sexual violence, the protection of civilians, and the protection of cultural property. What does it mean that each of these themes is already the subject of extensive, protection-based, legal regimes? Practically, what consequences are likely if a state opts to implement NATO’s human security policy at the national level or uses aspects of this policy to inform its military doctrine? If the dictates of the resulting human security policy contradict or omit existing human rights obligations, how will these tensions be resolved?

Furthermore, and as alluded to above, while there is clear doctrinal guidance affirming human security’s non-interventionist character, more must be understood about whether and how human security threatens to disrupt other bedrock legal principles. This is because, as Shireen Daft has aptly noted, law is both the primary framework through which security is sought and the provision of security is a central purpose of any legal system.<sup>50</sup> If the transformative nature of a human security agenda seeks to shift international priorities around such codified legal principles like non-interference or territorial integrity, then this carries significant implications for the functioning of the international legal system. Pledging to ensure a limited vision of human security within a military operation can serve to emphasize humanitarian interpretations of the rules governing armed conflict. But the implications of broader articulations, like that of NATO’s *2022 Strategic Concept*, which endorses the practice of human security in all the Alliance’s core tasks which include crisis prevention and management and cooperative security, also need to be understood.

As long as human security policy articulations remain vague, it is difficult to fully grasp the consequences of the co-effecting relationship between human security and international law. But pending specificity, questions should be posed as to whether the vision of human security that is being advanced is intended to reinforce the existing rules-based international order or to work around it. Human security can enhance the capacity of international law to improve individual well-being, to continue its move from a purely statist project to one that centres the individual, and to help identify emerging threats and areas of collective interest that have yet to be subject to legal codification. But for an effective human security policy to move beyond the identification of threats so as to aid in addressing those threats, the proponents of the human security approach must announce their priors, better appreciate the relationship between human security and international law, and build upon this if they are to advance what the preamble to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* described as the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.

## Addendum

On 18 September 2023, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced in the House of Commons that Canada believed that “agents of the Indian government” were linked to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.<sup>51</sup> Gunned down months earlier outside a Sikh temple in British Columbia, Nijjar, a Canadian and prominent Sikh nationalist, had been labelled a terrorist by India due to his alleged leadership of a militant Khalistan separatist group.<sup>52</sup> India’s Ministry of External Affairs immediately denied Trudeau’s accusation.<sup>53</sup> A series of diplomatic escalations followed.<sup>54</sup> But largely lost amidst the public debate that accompanied the mounting tensions between Canada and India was the specific wording that Trudeau’s remarks contained. Addressing all Canadians, the Prime Minister noted that “any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty. It is contrary to the

fundamental rules by which free, open and democratic societies conduct themselves.”<sup>55</sup>

Writing on the international law blog, *EJIL: Talk!*, Marko Milanovic noted that Trudeau’s statement, replete with references to Canadian sovereignty, only accused India of having violated the rights of the Canadian state (i.e., *any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty*).<sup>56</sup> Absent was any reference to the human rights implications of what the Prime Minister was accusing Indian officials of having done, a targeted killing or assassination. International human rights law (IHRL) is clear that a targeted killing or assassination constitutes a violation of the right to life unless all other means have been exhausted and the action is necessary and proportionate for recognized purposes under IHRL, such as self-defence, the defence of others, or the prevention of serious crimes involving a grave threat to life or serious injury.<sup>57</sup>

The purpose here is not to assess whether India’s alleged actions amount to a violation of Nijjar’s human rights (though if Nijjar’s killing can in fact be attributed to Indian officials, then it almost certainly would). Instead, it is to note how the failure to recognize IHRL’s extraterritorial application limits the state’s capacity to articulate a human security approach. Canada could not claim that India’s alleged actions constituted a violation of the right to life, contained most prominently in Article 6 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* because, as Milanovic correctly observed, that would implicate Canada’s “own position on when the right to life, and other human rights, apply abroad.”<sup>58</sup> Canada’s response to India could, therefore, only be conveyed through the more abstract language of sovereignty. Lacking the moral purchase of a human rights claim, the Canadian response entirely neglected the irreparable harm and violation suffered by the individual. It elevated and articulated a traditional conception of state security, while completely neglecting human security considerations. If Canada truly intends to move towards a credible human security approach, it must begin by removing the self-imposed impediments to its realization.

## Notes

- 1 See, Rhonda E. Howard-Hassmann, “Human Security: Undermining Human Rights?” *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (2012): 101 (noting the lack of engagement with international human rights law by proponents of human security).
- 2 United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 1994).
- 3 United Nations General Assembly, “Follow-up to Paragraph 143 on Human Security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome,” UN Document A/RES/66/290 (2012).
- 4 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Strategic Concept* (2022).

- 5 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Madrid Summit Declaration,” NATO press release, June 29, 2022.
- 6 NATO, “Madrid Summit Declaration.”
- 7 United Nations Development Programme, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2022).
- 8 UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security*.
- 9 United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, *Joint Service Publication 985: Human Security in Defence: Incorporating Security in the Way We Operate, Volume 1* (December 2021).
- 10 UK MOD, *Joint Service Publication 985*.

- 11 United Nations General Assembly, “Report of the Secretary General: Follow-up to General Assembly Resolution 64/291 on Human Security,” 66<sup>th</sup> Session, Agenda Item 14 and 117, UN Document A/68/685 (April 5, 2012).
- 12 For accounts of how academics and policymakers from the Global South have received human security, see Amitav Acharya, “Human Security: East versus West,” *International Journal* 56, no. 3 (2001): 457; Maiken Gelardi, “Blurring Borders: Investigating the Western/Global South Identity of Human Security,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 45, no. 3 (2020): 143.

- 13 Christine Chinkin and Mary Kaldor, *International Law and New Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 487; Gerd Oberleitner, "Porcupines in Love: The Intricate Convergence of Human Rights and Human Security," *European Human Rights Law Review* 6 (2005): 588.
- 14 Rhonda E. Howard-Hassmann, "Human Security: Undermining Human Rights?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (2012): 93 (describing the reductive effect of human security when significant sections of the world's population experienced a "freedom from fear" or a "freedom from want" while still not realizing full human rights).
- 15 Chinkin and Kaldor, *International Law and New Wars*.
- 16 See, Rhonda E. Howard-Hassmann, "Human Security: Undermining Human Rights?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (2012): 93 (noting the high levels of ratification enjoyed by several of the major international human rights treaties).
- 17 Chinkin and Kaldor, *International Law and New Wars*; David Petrusek, "Human Rights 'Lite'? Thoughts on Human Security," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 1 (2004): 59.
- 18 Oberleitner, "Porcupines in Love."
- 19 See, Rhonda E. Howard-Hassmann, "Human Security: Undermining Human Rights?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (2012): 95 (emphasizing that the fulfillment of human rights are not policy choices and that states may not pick and choose which rights to protect).
- 20 Oberleitner, "Porcupines in Love."
- 21 Barry Buzan, "A Reductionist, Idealistic Notion that Adds Little Analytical Value," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 370.
- 22 Rhonda E. Howard-Hassmann, "Human Security: Undermining Human Rights?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (2012): 100 (making a similar claim that a state that fails to protect its citizens from human rights abuses is no more likely to protect citizens if those same abuses are framed as security violations).
- 23 "Canada's Approach to Advancing Human Rights," Government of Canada, last modified April 3, 2023, [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/developement-enjeux\\_developpement/human\\_rights-droits\\_homme/advancing\\_rights-promouvoir\\_droits.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/developement-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/advancing_rights-promouvoir_droits.aspx?lang=eng).
- 24 Government of Canada, "Advancing Human Rights."
- 25 It is difficult to locate a formal articulation of the Federal Government's position regarding the extraterritorial application of its human rights commitments. However, the factum that the Government submitted to the Supreme Court in *Canada (Prime Minister) v. Khadr* explicitly rejects the extraterritorial reach of Canada's international human rights obligations. Specifically, it notes: "These obligations are limited to Canada's territorial jurisdiction. Article 2(l) of the Convention against Torture and Article 2(l) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child expressly provide that Canada's obligations under these instruments only extend to 'any territory under its jurisdiction' or 'child within its jurisdiction' respectively. As this Court recognized in *Hape*, Canada cannot exercise jurisdiction over persons outside its territory except with the consent of the host state." See Appellants' Factum in *Canada (Prime Minister) v. Khadr*, 2010 SCC 3 at para. 55.
- 26 *Canada (PM) v. Khadr*.
- 27 Leah West, "Canada Stands Alone: A Comparative Analysis of the Extraterritorial Reach of State Human Rights Obligations," *UBC Law Review* 55, no. 3 (2022).
- 28 Oona A. Hathaway et al. "Human Rights Abroad: When Do Human Rights Treaty Obligations Apply Extraterritorially?" *Arizona State Law Journal* 43 (2011): 389.
- 29 Hathaway et al., "Human Rights Abroad," 395.
- 30 International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion, Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2004 ICJ 136, para. 109 (July 9).
- 31 See International Court of Justice, Case Concerning Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (DRC v. Uganda), 2005 ICJ 116 (Dec. 19), at paras 216-17; International Court of Justice, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Georgia v. Russian Federation) Order Indicating Provisional Measures (Georgia v. Russia Provisional Measures), paras 109 and 149. (Oct. 15, 2008).
- 32 The Human Rights Committee notes that as per Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that states parties are required to: "respect and to ensure the Covenant rights to all persons who may be within their territory and to all persons subject to their jurisdiction. This means that a State party must respect and ensure the rights laid down in the Covenant to anyone within the power or effective control of that State Party, even if not situated within the territory of the State Party." See United Nations Human Rights Committee, "General Comment No. 31: The Nature of the General Legal Obligation Imposed on States Parties to the Covenant," UN Document C/PR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13 (2004).
- 33 The UN Committee Against Torture stated in relation to the meaning of Article 2 of the Convention Against Torture which requires that states take effective measures to prevent acts of torture "in any area under its jurisdiction" that: Article 2, paragraph 1, requires that each State party shall take effective measures to prevent acts of torture not only in its sovereign territory but also "in any territory under its jurisdiction." The Committee has recognized that "any territory" includes all areas where the State party exercises, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, de jure or de facto effective control, in accordance with international law. The reference to any territory "... refers to prohibited acts committed not only on board a ship or aircraft registered by a State party, but also during military occupation or peacekeeping operations and in such places as embassies, military bases, detention facilities, or other areas over which a State exercises factual or effective control." See United Nations Committee Against Torture, "General Comment No. 2: Implementation of Article 2 by States Parties," UN Document CAT/C/GC/2 (2007).
- 34 The Committee on the Rights of the Child acknowledged the extraterritorial application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to Israel's military activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Southern Lebanon. See Committee on the Rights of the Child, "Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Israel," UN Document CRC/C/15/Add.195, 4, paras 2, 5, 57-58 (Oct. 4, 2002); Marko Milanovic, *Extraterritorial Application of Human Rights Treaties: Law, Principles, and Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 128.
- 35 See generally Hathaway et al., "Human Rights Abroad."
- 36 Milanovic, *Extraterritorial Application*, 10.
- 37 John Packer and Slava Balan, "Situating the Relationship between Human Security and International Law" (unpublished paper, on file with the author).
- 38 See generally Wolfgang Benedek, "Human Rights and Human Security," in *Research Handbook on International Law and Human Security*, ed. Gerd Oberleitner (Elgar Publishing, 2022), 170.
- 39 Lloyd Axworthy, "NATO's New Security Vocation," *NATO Review* 47, no. 4 (1999).
- 40 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2002), 2.
- 41 Gerd Oberleitner, "Introduction," in *Research Handbook on International Law and Human Security*, ed. Gerd Oberleitner (Elgar Publishing, 2022), 2-3.
- 42 Kofi Annan, "Speech of the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly," speech, United Nations General Assembly, 1999.
- 43 Kevin Jon Heller, "The Illegality of 'Genuine' Unilateral Humanitarian Intervention," *European Journal of International Law* 32, no. 2 (2021): 613.
- 44 Shahrbano Tadjbakhsh and Anuradha M. Chenoy, *Human Security: Concepts and Implications* (Routledge, 2007), 36.
- 45 Shireen Daft, *The Relationship Between Human Security Discourse and International Law: A Principled Approach* (Routledge, 2018), 118.
- 46 Terry M. Neal, "Bush Reverts to Liberal Rationale for Iraq War; Critics Still Oppose War Despite Hussein's Human Rights Record," *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2003.
- 47 Ramesh Thakur, "Libya and the Responsibility to Protect: Between Opportunistic Humanitarianism and Value-Free Pragmatism," *Security Challenges* 7, no. 4 (2011): 13.
- 48 Ardi Imseis, "Reflections on the Ukraine Moment and Western Selectivity: A Response to Ingrid (Wuerth) Brunk and Monica Hakimi," *CIL Blog*, March 27, 2023.
- 49 A/RES/66/290, para. 3 (d) & (e).
- 50 Daft, *Human Security Discourse and International Law*, 5.
- 51 John Paul Tasker, "Trudeau Accuses India's Government of Involvement in Killing of Canadian Sikh Leader," CBC, September 18, 2023.
- 52 Norimitsu Onishi, "Rising Separatism, and a Killing, at a Sikh Temple in Canada," *New York Times*, September 21, 2023.
- 53 John Paul Tasker, "Trudeau Accuses India's Government of Involvement in Killing of Canadian Sikh Leader," CBC, September 18, 2023.
- 54 Brian Platt and Laura Dhillon Kane, "Canada in Talks with India Over Diplomats as Dispute Grows," Bloomberg, October 3, 2023.
- 55 John Paul Tasker, "Trudeau Accuses India's Government of Involvement in Killing of Canadian Sikh Leader," CBC, September 18, 2023.
- 56 Marko Milanovic, "Targeted Killings: New Allegations Against India and Ukraine," EJIL: Talk!, September 19, 2023.
- 57 See UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Philip Alston, UN Doc. A/HRC/14/24/Add.6 at paras. 32-33, May 28, 2010.
- 58 Marko Milanovic, "Targeted Killings: New Allegations Against India and Ukraine," EJIL: Talk!, September 19, 2023.



Instructors from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment provide last minute advice to Ukrainian Armed Forces as they prepare to repel a simulated attack during a defensive live fire range during Operation UNIFIER in Starychi, Ukraine on June 30, 2016.

Photo: Joint Task Force Ukraine

# History Matters

## LIEUTENANT-COLONEL (RETIRED) RICHARD BOWES

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Today, the West<sup>1</sup> sits at a geopolitical inflection point. To paraphrase former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson, ours is a “meaner and messier world” compared to the relative geopolitical stability of the past three decades.<sup>2</sup> A revanchist Russia has turned Eastern Ukraine into an obscure wasteland. In the name of *Russkiy Mir*,<sup>3</sup> Russia, it seems, is bent on a murky revanchist ideology in which ethnicity, religion, and heritage are the driving aspirations. Over the past two decades, an increasingly belligerent China has gradually and resolutely enacted economic, military,

**and diplomatic actions globally and in its region to counter what it perceives as 'Western Containment.' And the Middle East is once again embroiled in a brutal sectarian and ethnic conflict, this time in Gaza and Lebanon. Add to this the global impact of climate change, mass migration, state-sponsored cyber-attacks, mis/disinformation campaigns, and election interference in many democracies, the 'Rules-Based Order' and the 'Unipolar Moment' that was heralded at the end of the Cold War is moribund.**

Much has changed over a short thirty years. Capturing the *zeitgeist* of those heady days immediately following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the rapid accession of many Central and Eastern European countries into Western economic, political, and military alliances in the immediate Post-Cold War era, Francis Fukuyama's article entitled "The End of History"<sup>4</sup> argued that history should be viewed as an evolutionary and progressive process and that the end of history, as was being conceded at the time, meant that liberal democracy is the final, aspirational form of government for all nations. The 'endism' thesis, as championed by Fukuyama, was not universally accepted and was viewed by many as flawed.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, the Post-Cold War Western approach to geopolitics was based upon a normative paradigm: the permanence and progression of democracy within a world converging on free enterprise, individual rights, and civil liberties. It was the inevitable destiny of humankind—a one-way street. The globalization of trade would make the world more prosperous, democratic, and more at peace. In fact, the more prosperous, democratic, and peaceful the world became, the more that war was thought to become economically and socially irrational.

Yet this idea of the end of history is not without precedence. In 1911, Norman Angell published *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to their Economic and Social Advantage*.<sup>6</sup> To Angell, it seemed unfathomable that nations would resort to war to further their gains as the resulting economic

costs for all would be too great. The period 1870 to 1913 was a Golden Age for the major European Powers in which their respective empires stretched across the globe and during which the world witnessed the birth of the first era of trade globalization. Yet, they went to war with the expectation that victory would bring about a better world. Through the Great War to Vietnam, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed a colossal clash of empires driven solely by the dictates and exigencies of defending and/or pursuing perceived vital national interests with consequences for the international system that continue to resonate today.

A century later, we seemed to have collectively cast from our memories all that went before us through the calamitous 20<sup>th</sup> Century. When the actual and proverbial walls came crashing down in the 1990s, Thomas Friedman, in his bestselling *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, argued that through globalization, countries that have made strong economic and trading ties with one another have too many at stake to ever go to war. No author of the last thirty years has better described that beacon of hope—that normative paradigm—than Friedman. It was all a little bit too optimistic, as Robert Kagan counter-argues.<sup>7</sup> In matters of war and peace, the lessons of history are as relevant today as they have been in the past.

The crucial point of this paper is that history matters, and it is back with a vengeance. For policymakers and strategic-level military leaders, there is enduring and professional value in revisiting military and diplomatic history, a truism as relevant today as it has been in the past. While historical study and analysis do not, and cannot, provide policymakers and military leaders with simple menus of options for actions or reactions given certain geopolitical and military circumstances, history can provide some general yet profound insights that can guide policymakers and military leaders as they look to manage the geopolitical challenges they face. This paper offers three.

The first insight is that nationalism and realism have always trumped liberalism in matters of war and peace.<sup>8,9</sup> With the ending of the Cold War, progressive liberal foreign policy became the norm among Western nations. It is no coincidence that the high-water mark of international peacekeeping occurred during the 1990s. Led by Western nations, blue-helmeted forces would lead the way into every conflict, aspiring to establish the conditions by which the warring parties would and could start down the road toward liberal democracy. Indeed, the United Nations adopted the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine mandating that the international community had a legal and moral obligation to intervene militarily when human rights are violated.

“ Francis Fukuyama's article entitled "The End of History" argued that history should be viewed as an evolutionary and progressive process and that the end of history, as was being conceded at the time, meant that liberal democracy is the final, aspirational form of government for all nations.”

Yet, the Rwandan Genocide (1994) and the Srebrenica Massacre (1995) were stark reminders that liberal democratic values are not universally accepted. A liberal foreign policy is not a formula for cooperation and peace but for instability and conflict, as it is disconnected from history. Indeed, the very impetus for NSC-68<sup>10</sup> during the early days of the Cold War recognized implicitly that to contain the Soviet Union and the international spread of Communism, the sustained application of military force could not be bound by the constraints of liberal values and applied in the pursuit of establishing liberal democracies abroad. Then, as now, the animosities at play in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and the South China Sea cut across deep ethnic, racial, religious, nationalist, and cultural lines. These lines go back centuries and, in some cases, millennia. Imposing Western notions of liberal democracy and human rights on societies and polities without due regard to these lines has historically proven disruptive and disastrous in terms of blood and treasure for all parties.<sup>11</sup>

The second insight is that the outcomes of war are not pre-ordained and have intended and non-intended consequences.<sup>12</sup> Consider the Argentine invasion of The Falkland Islands—or, from their perspective, the Malvinas—in 1982. The outcomes of the war for Argentina were not as they had envisioned, with the actual outcome being the removal of General Galtieri from power and his subsequent incarceration while democracy was restored to Argentina. Also consider the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). Napoleon III declared war on Prussia, confident that victory would result in outcomes restoring his declining popularity in France and assuring France and the House of Bonaparte as the preeminent power in Europe. Instead, after French forces suffered a series of defeats at Gravelotte, Sedan, and Metz, and with Paris being placed under siege, the French government collapsed, leading to the establishment of the Third Republic and the fall of Napoleon III.

The third insight is that wars are always more complex, costlier, and longer to fight than expected. An idiom attributed to the Taliban and popular during the war in Afghanistan, “You have the watches, but we have the time,” lays bare a strategic paradox in matters of war and peace. Put simply, possessing the overwhelming advantage of military and economic means and capabilities to wage and win wars means nothing if the ends to be achieved are not tied to vital national interests. This is acutely pertinent for liberal democracies. In a recent National Post op-ed, Canadian author and journalist Terry Glavin asserts on the second anniversary of the abrupt and ignominious withdrawal by American and NATO forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, “The civilized world was not defeated by the Taliban two years ago. The civilized world surrendered, and no post-facto rationalizations can change that.”<sup>13</sup> In the immediate days and months after the 9/11 attacks, there was a consensus that American, and by extension, Western vital security interests had been directly attacked. The early expenditure in blood and treasure by American and coalition forces to neutralize the Taliban in Afghanistan was a

“Nationalism, sovereignty, self-determination (in the case of the Palestinians), and the nation-state’s security are the predominant driving factors.”

legitimate campaign to eliminate a clear and present danger. Strategically, it seemed that the West had clarity of purpose and, thereby, the willingness to endure the human and financial costs of waging an unexpectedly protracted military campaign on the other side of the globe. But as the campaign wore on, and the financial and human costs continued to mount, a gradual shift in political and military goals and objectives came to be as the realization set in that the Taliban could only be contained and not neutralized. Enhancing security and stability through a new focus on humanitarian projects, protecting human rights, economic development, and reconstruction became the norm. No longer tied to discernible vital interests, American and Western polities and policymakers began to question the high costs of mounting casualties and never-ending financial expenditures. It was no longer worth it. It was time to get out.

Such insights might seem obvious, but recognizing and applying them requires an equal acknowledgement that history has never gone away in matters of war and peace. This recognition and balancing of all the factors at play when contemplating military action are crucial for the present day.

At the time of writing, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Ukrainian counter-offensives are in their third year. The Israeli campaign to eliminate Hamas in Gaza is equally set to be protracted with unforeseen outcomes for Israel, Hamas, and the people of Gaza that will affect the entire region for decades to come. Both wars will continue to be costly and lengthy, with outcomes that are far from certain. But what is certain is that history is alive and well. Nationalism, sovereignty, self-determination (in the case of the Palestinians), and the nation-state’s security are the predominant driving factors. Likewise, China continues its game of brinkmanship in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. China continually ratchets up its military and economic actions in the region as a critical pillar of the nation’s great “rejuvenation” or restoring its historic position, wealth, authority, and influence as Asia’s dominant power. Indeed, Chinese leaders have come to perceive the chain of American bases and alliances in the region as a cage containing the country’s rightful rise as Asia’s premier hegemon.<sup>14</sup> The balance of power in the Pacific will ultimately be determined as much by political will as by weapons systems.

So here is where history matters. The direct actors in each theatre play by the rulebook of hard power politics in which nationalism and realism in pursuing or defending vital interests are the sole guiding framework for action. The outcomes in each of the theatres are far from transparent or predictable at this point. So, will the West have the fortitude and strategic patience to preserve the balance of power in Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific? This is a tough question for many Western governments to answer, yet one that can only be answered through a thorough examination of vital national interests by each nation that is inevitably informed by historical insight. Each nation will have differing answers, portending a less-than-unified West. For example, recent signals and rhetoric emanating from representatives of the US Republican Party seem to indicate that continued support for Ukraine is not a given. A common refrain is, "Why should Ukraine keep getting a blank cheque? What does a victory look like?" The Prime Minister of Canada recently promised, perhaps rhetorically, to support Ukraine "for as long as it takes"

against Russia's invasion, a position for which he apparently has cross-party support.<sup>15</sup> Poland, on the other hand, recently announced it would no longer send arms to Ukraine as a trade dispute between the neighbouring states escalates, and there is a growing weariness in Polish society with the large numbers of refugees pouring in from Ukraine.<sup>16</sup>

History matters in the affairs of war and peace. For policy-makers and strategic-level military leaders, there is enduring and professional value in continually revisiting military and diplomatic history, a truism as relevant today as it has been in the past. Nationalism and realism have always trumped liberalism in matters of war and peace; the total outcomes of wars could never be predicted, and wars are always harder, costlier, and longer to fight than expected. An understanding and appreciation of military and diplomatic history is a bulwark against the notion that matters of war and peace can be resolved by means other than military and economic preparedness.



Canadian Army instructors discuss mechanized infantry defence tactics with their Ukrainian Armed Forces colleagues during Exercise RAPID TRIDENT in Starychi, Ukraine on June 30, 2016.

Photo: Joint Task Force Ukraine

## Notes

- 1 For the purposes of this paper, the “West” is defined as those groups of nation-states in the regions of Australasia, Europe, and the Americas that are liberal democracies characterized by a liberal political ideology and a form of government in which representative democracy operates under the principles of classical liberalism. It is characterized by elections between multiple distinct political parties, a separation of powers into different branches of government, the rule of law in everyday life as part of an open society, a market economy with private property and the equal protection of human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, and political freedoms for all people. To define the system in practice, liberal democracies often draw upon a constitution to delineate the powers of government and enshrine the social contract.
- 2 Summary of Colin Robertson’s remarks to the House Standing Committee on National Defence, 14 February 2022. Colin Robertson is a former Canadian diplomat and current Senior Advisor and Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute
- 3 The “Russian world” concept has become the basis of a crusade against the West’s liberal culture, and this has resulted into a “new Russian cult of war”. Putin’s regime has particularly debased the “Russian world” concept with a mixture of obscurantism, Orthodox dogma, anti-West sentiment, nationalism, conspiracy theory and security-state Stalinism. (See “*The new Russian cult of war.*” *The Economist*. 26 March 2022.)
- 4 Fukuyama, Francis. “*The End of History?*”. *The National Interest* (16): 3-18. *History*, in the context of Fukuyama’s article, is seen as viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism that had been prominent in the international system prior to the ‘triumph of the West’ and the ‘total exhaustion’ of these alternatives in the face of Western liberalism.
- 5 Representative of the criticism received by Fukuyama at the time was an essay by Paul Hirst published originally in the *London Review of Books*, Vol.11, No.22, on November 23, 1989 entitled “Endism” in which Hirst, in discussing the appeal of the End of History thesis posits that “Americans can, therefore, feel confident in the future whilst they hold to the ideals of democracy and the free market. No wonder ‘Endism’ has gone down so well: it has provided a sophisticated rationale for the commonplaces of American political life. But almost everything else in the [Fukuyama] essay is sheer chutzpa.”
- 6 Angell, Norman. *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to their Economic and Social Advantage*, (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s & Sons, 1911)
- 7 Kagan, Robert. *The Return of History and The End of Dreams* (New York, Vintage Books, 2008)
- 8 The basis for this theme comes from Mearsheimer, John. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*, (Newhaven, Yale University Press, 2018), and Kagan, *op. cit.*
- 9 For the purposes of this paper, nationalism is defined as the identification with one’s own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations (Oxford Dictionary). Realism is defined as an abiding pattern of interaction in an international system lacking a centralized political authority. That condition of anarchy means that the logic of international politics often differs from that of domestic politics, which is regulated by a sovereign power (See Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics* (Reading MA, Addison-Wesley, 1979). Finally, liberalism is a school of thought within international relations theory that is individualistic at its core and assigns significant importance to the concepts on inalienable rights. It assumes those rights are universal and is what motivates adherents to pursue liberal foreign policies (Mearsheimer, pp 8-9). Liberalism evolves around three interrelated principles: Rejection of power politics, questioning the security/warfare principles of realism; and valuing the mutual benefits and international cooperation.
- 10 United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, better known as NSC 68, was a 66-page top secret National Security Council (NSC) policy paper drafted by the Department of State and Department of Defense and presented to President Harry S. Truman on 7 April 1950. It was one of the most important American policy statements of the Cold War. NSC-68 concluded that the only plausible way to deter the Soviet Union was for President Harry Truman to support a massive build-up of both conventional and nuclear arms.
- 11 Henry Kissinger argues this point throughout his book *Diplomacy* (New York, Simon and Shuster, 1994).
- 12 The basis for this theme comes from O’Hanlon, Michael E. *Military History for the Modern Strategist: America’s Major Wars Since 1861* (Washington, Brookings Institute Press, 15 February 2023)
- 13 Glavin, Terry. *The Taliban didn’t win. The civilized world surrendered.* (National Post, 9 August 2023)
- 14 Schuman, Michael. “China Could Soon Be the Dominant Military Power in Asia,” *The Atlantic*, 4 May 2023
- 15 Waterhouse, James. “Ukraine war: How Zelensky is grappling with Western war fatigue,” *BBC News*, 25 September 2023
- 16 Gera, Vanessa “Poland is done sending arms to Ukraine, Polish leader says as trade dispute escalates,” *AP News*, 21 September 2023. Poland is but one European nation finding themselves in this situation. Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia have also continued to block or limit agricultural exports from Ukraine in an effort to protect their own domestic industries. See <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/five-european-countries-will-extend-ban-on-ukraines-grain>.



Subadar Khudadad Khan VC (1888-1971), 10<sup>th</sup> Baluch Regiment, 1952

Photo: Image Courtesy of the National Army Museum, London

# Our Shared History and Sacrifice: The Legacy of Canada, Pakistan, and India in World War I

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Over one hundred years have passed since the end of the First World War, the first truly global conflict which caused unprecedented death and destruction. Despite casualties on a massive scale, the combined efforts of the British Empire and the Allied Powers prevailed to carry the day. It remains crucial to commemorate the sacrifices of those soldiers who gave their youth in support of King and Empire. Most saw it as a call to duty, others as a chance for glory or adventure, but they all fought for freedom in support of the British Empire, which spanned much of the world at that time. Ironically, it was this very commitment to the British Empire which allowed a fledgling Canada to mature and develop into a free and sovereign nation. In much the same way, the British Empire in South Asia played a significant role in the First World War, which paved the way for the eventual independence of the modern nations of Pakistan and India.

### Canada and the British Indian Empire on the Frontlines

The Great War of 1914-1918 was then referred to as the “war to end all wars.”<sup>1</sup> It uniquely changed the political landscape of the world. While heralding the collapse of the outmoded Empires of Czarist Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and Imperial Germany, the First World War saw the birth of new nations and hastened the decline of colonialism. It is often said that Canada became a nation due to the sacrifices made in the Great War. Over 650,000 men and women from Canada and Newfoundland volunteered themselves to fight for King and Country.<sup>2</sup> Around 66,000 soldiers died in the fields and trenches of Europe and a further 172,000 were wounded.<sup>3</sup>

This remarkable contribution from a nation of only 7.4 million during World War I resulted in Canada being granted the extraordinary honour of having one of its own representatives independently sign the Treaty of Versailles at the end of hostilities. At the outset of the war, Canada had automatically entered the conflict as a British Dominion. The initial Canadian contingents had upwards of seventy percent British-born troops sharing a strong sense of duty towards the mother country and Imperial family. However, over the course of the war, greater numbers of native-born Canadian soldiers entered the conflict serving in Canadian units. These Canadian units distinguished themselves in the carnage as shock troops with a knack for late night raids against enemy lines. Moreover, Canadian officers developed new

“ The South Asian contribution to World War I, which, all told, provided more men than all these 5 British Dominions combined, deserves similar acknowledgement.”

tactics and improved upon the “creeping barrage” of artillery fire coordinated with advancing infantry prior to frontal attacks.<sup>4</sup> Notably, the victory at Vimy Ridge in April 1917 is credited to Canadian innovation in tactics.<sup>5</sup> All told, the Canadian experience in the Great War helped shape Canadian identity and consciousness. This period of upheaval provides a great opportunity to reflect and learn about the parallels of shared history within the British Empire.

British Empire troops, including those from Canada, played a crucial role in World War I. The role and sacrifices made by Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia, and Australia and New Zealand (ANZACs), with over 1.2 million soldiers fighting in the Great War, have been well documented by historians. However, the South Asian contribution to World War I, which, all told, provided more men than all these 5 British Dominions combined, deserves similar acknowledgement. Over 1.5 million men from South Asia fought alongside the British and their fellow Imperial soldiers in all of the major theatres of war on land, air, and sea.<sup>6-8</sup> Similarly, the contribution of British Indian Muslim soldiers has received only passing praise as part of a larger army, despite the fact that the majority of combatants in the British Indian Army were Muslims.<sup>9</sup> These Muslims were overwhelmingly recruited from the provinces of Punjab, the Frontier, Sind, Baluchistan, and Kashmir, all of which make up current-day Pakistan. These forefathers of Pakistan fought valiantly and, in many cases, paid the ultimate price by dying for the British Empire in the far-off fields of Western Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, forming an important part of our shared history. The original divisions

sent to support the front, the Baluch Regiment, Wilde's Rifles, and the Punjab and Frontier Force continue to this day as Army regiments in Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> Punjabi Muslims were the backbone of the British Indian Army and made up its dominant fighting force, the Pathans, its most fearsome warriors and the Sikhs, its most formidable soldiers.<sup>11</sup> Some 120,773 British Indian Army personnel were reported dead, wounded, or missing at the end of the war, and many were decorated for their wartime efforts.<sup>12</sup>

The British Indian Empire encompassed what we now refer to as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Burma.<sup>13</sup> The colony was a collection of disparate cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups that inhabited South Asia. The concept of statehood was not yet rooted in the subcontinent, where people did not identify as belonging to any nation state. The First World War and the sacrifices made by South Asian soldiers hastened their desire for independence. For the first time in history, these groups were forged together in the colonial amalgamation known as the British Raj. Prior to the arrival of the British, South Asia was ruled by various dynasties, the last of which was the Muslim Mughal Empire. This was supplanted by the British East India Company and direct Imperial rule after the Mutiny of 1857. For the first time in history, the entire subcontinent was under the control of a singular administrative government as part of the British Empire. As Winston Churchill noted, "India is not a country or a nation; it is rather a continent inhabited by many nations. The unity of this colony arises entirely through the centralized British Government."<sup>14</sup> With the withdrawal of the British in 1947, decentralization of the British Colony created the modern countries of Pakistan and India, which had hitherto entirely contributed to the unified army of British India.

The British Indian army drew its recruits from the many nations that made up South Asia and responded with bravery and gallantry when called to war. This army consisted of 45% Muslims, 40% Hindus, and 15% Sikhs.<sup>15</sup> This translates to 700,000 Muslims, 600,000 Hindus, and 120,000 Sikhs hailing primarily from present-day Pakistan and Northern India. Fighting alongside Allied soldiers, they earned awards for valour and gallantry in all battles that are etched indelibly in the Canadian psyche. Battles such as Neuve Chappelle, Ypres, Somme, Flanders, Hill 70, Vimy Ridge, and Passchendaele all involved the significant participation of troops from South Asia.

The British Indian Army was the largest volunteer army every recruited in history.<sup>16</sup> The colony of British India was the proverbial "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire and the province of Punjab was termed the "Sword Arm," providing more than half

“ The British Indian Army was the largest volunteer army every recruited in history.”

of all British Indian Army's serving soldiers.<sup>17</sup> Of those Punjabi recruits, the majority, 53%, were Muslim, 25% were Sikhs, and 22% were Hindu, all of whom heeded the call of the Empire.<sup>18</sup> Punjabi Muslims were the single largest class of recruits to the British Indian Army.<sup>19</sup> The province of Punjab alone provided an astounding 340,000 Muslim troops, 100,000 Sikhs, and 200,000 Hindus.<sup>20</sup>

## Martial Race Theory and Military Recruitment in British India

The British evolved a preference for military recruitment among particular groups in the British Indian Colony in keeping with what was coined the "martial race theory."<sup>21</sup> Fundamental to the martial race theory was the belief that men from distinct regions, religions, and ethnicities were better suited for active military duty due to their "innate physical and moral characteristics which made them the best fighters."<sup>22</sup> This ideology classified Punjabi Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, Muslim Pathans and Baluchis, and Hindu Jats, Dogras, Gurkhas, Rajputs, and Garhwals as among the groups regarded as "martial."<sup>23</sup>

As early as 1879, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of British India, decided to set up an official commission to organize the Army. It was led by Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. The Eden Commission Report, as it was called, declared that "the Punjab is the home of the most martial races of British Colonial India and is the nursery of our best soldiers."<sup>24</sup> As a result, recruitment in the army shifted to favour the "martial" races of the North-West. The British predilection for what they termed "tall broad-shouldered peasant types" among the South Asian races is decidedly out of step with present-day sensitivities, but we must remember that such racialized assumptions were common in Europe at the time. The martial race theory was not only applied to South Asia, but also to Britain, where the Scottish Highlanders were defined as "martial," and to East Africa, where the Kamba were similarly regarded as a "martial race."<sup>25</sup>

Key recruiting grounds for the British Indian Army were from the Punjab and adjacent Frontier provinces of current-day Pakistan, heavily centered around the cities of Jhelum, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar. That these areas provided the lion's share of troops for the British Indian Army is reflected in the army's composition at the outset of the war. Well over 70% of British Indian soldiers came from the Punjab and the Frontier region.<sup>26</sup>

## Dulmial Village Recruits

A corollary of the martial race theory meant the virtual enlistment of all eligible men in entire villages. Such is the case with the village of Dulmial in the rural area of the Chakwal District in Punjab, Pakistan. This village provided 460 men to the war effort. The contribution is particularly remarkable given that the total number of men in this village was only 879, including

“All infantry and cavalry, regardless of whether they were Muslim, Sikh, or Hindu, wore a turban.”

the elderly and children.<sup>27</sup> Essentially, every single able-bodied man from the ages of 17 to 45 volunteered for the war effort. The singular sacrifice of this village was the largest sacrifice of manpower given across all the British colonies in World War I.<sup>28</sup> The remarkable contribution of this Muslim village to the Imperial Army was commemorated by the British Government in 1925. The highest-ranking soldier of the village, Captain Malik, chose to have the village's contribution recognized with the presentation of a twelve-pounder cannon, which was placed at the village's entrance in memory of the significant service and sacrifice rendered by its native sons. In Pakistan today, Dulmial is known as the “village with the gun.”

### Preservation Of Izzat, Dignity, And Honour

Native soldiers in the British Indian Army, termed “sepoys,” belonged to tribes that fought for their Izzat. The word Izzat is commonly used in the vernacular of Pakistan and northern India. It is deeply held sentiment of one's dignity, honour, reputation, and social rank. Correspondence from British Indian soldiers during World War I observed that “the soldiers fought, above all, to gain or preserve Izzat—their honour, reputation, and prestige.”<sup>29,30</sup>

The uniforms and turbans reflecting native dress in South Asia were modified for soldiers to help foster unit cohesion. The turban was worn with enthusiasm as the traditional headdress in South Asia. All infantry and cavalry, regardless of whether they were Muslim, Sikh, or Hindu, wore a turban. There were two main variations, with or without the kul. The kul, a triangular cone at the centre of the turban was wrapped around by the pagri, with occasionally a shamla—a cloth-like flourish. It was easy to distinguish Muslim from non-Muslim soldiers based on the triangular kul. The Emperor, King George the V, chose to wear the Muslim-style turban complete with kul and shamla. This particular turban remains part of the common dress of rural folk in Pakistan to this day, and the Sikh pagri is considered a defining feature for Sikhs.

### British Indian Army

At the outbreak of World War I on August 4, 1914, Britain was ill prepared to take on the German army. With the implementation of the Schlieffen Plan, the Germans advanced quickly, tearing through the northwest of continental Europe and inflicting heavy casualties on the British army. The British Expeditionary Force

(BEF) was on a desperate 200-mile retreat under German attack from Mons in Belgium back into northeastern France, on the flank of the French Army.<sup>31</sup> There was a significant chance that the flanking movement of the German army would take it to the coast and secure the coastal ports of Nieuwpoort, Calais, Dunkirk, and Boulogne-sur-Mer. This was the supply, communications, and troop transport lifeline for the entire British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in Europe. With losses mounting and an inability to replenish Empire forces with fresh troops, the call was answered by the British Indian Army. Their appearance in those early days of the war effectively contained the German advance and saved the vital channel ports, which, if captured by the Germans, would have altered the entire course of history in World War I.<sup>32</sup>

The British Indian Army had one of the largest standing armies at the outbreak of hostilities, numbering almost 240,000 soldiers.<sup>33</sup> The soldiers were quickly mobilized to Europe and landed in Marseille by September of 1914. They were feted as the bulwark by which Germany and its allies would be defeated. The sepoys were rapidly processed and filled the gaps in the defensive line set up by the British High Command, such that by September of 1914, the British Indian army contributed one third of the entire British Expeditionary Force in Belgium and France.<sup>34</sup>

At the commencement of hostilities, Germany had eighty-seven mobilized divisions at its disposal. In comparison, Great Britain only had three active divisions available for combat. In response to the call for help, British India responded by providing over twenty infantry and cavalry divisions.<sup>35</sup>

### Battle Readiness of Indian Expeditionary Force A

Indian Expeditionary Force A (IEF A) was the designation given to those troops from the British Indian Army assigned to the Western Front in Europe. It was comprised of soldiers that belonged to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lahore Infantry Division, the 7<sup>th</sup> Meerut Infantry Division, and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> British Indian Cavalry Divisions.<sup>36</sup> These troops were rapidly mobilized and attached to the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) under the command of General Sir James Willcocks.<sup>37</sup> Indian Expeditionary Force A (IEF A) reached Marseille, France on September 26, 1914.<sup>38</sup> Jubilant French crowds greeted and welcomed the troops as savours in their fight against the militarism of the Central Powers. As the novelist Maurice Barres stated, “these strangers from a distant land astound us by standing shoulder to shoulder with us in the defence of French soil.”<sup>39</sup>

The first British Indian Army regiment to land in France was the all-Muslim Duke of Connaught's Own 129<sup>th</sup> Baluchis, made up of four companies of North-West Frontier Pathan Muslims, 2 companies of Muslim Hill Baluchis, and 2 companies of Punjabi Muslims. They were part of the Ferozepore Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Lahore) Infantry Division. The 57<sup>th</sup> Wilde's Rifles (Frontier Force) were also part of the Ferozepore Brigade and were comprised of

2 companies of Punjabi Muslims, 2 companies of Afridi Muslims, 2 companies of Sikhs, and 2 companies of Dogras. The 58<sup>th</sup> Vaughan's Rifles (Frontier Force) had a class composition of 3 companies each of Pathan Muslims and Sikhs, and one company each of Punjabi Muslims and Dogras. They were joined by the Connaught Rangers, an Irish line infantry regiment of the British Army that deployed from India as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> (Ferozepore) Brigade in the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Lahore) Division.<sup>40</sup>

The deployment of these troops was immediate, unlike those troops from Canada. Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who was responsible for British operations in the west, had given the mobilized Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) arriving in England a 6-month training period on Salisbury Plain. The Canadian Cavalry Brigade arrived in England in December of 1914 and did not see fighting until the Battle of Festubert in May of 1915.<sup>41</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> British Indian Cavalry division incorporated the Canadian Cavalry Brigade in its order of battle at that time. This included the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Lord Strathcona's Horse, Fort Garry Horse, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, and the Canadian Cavalry Brigade Machine Gun Squadron. They distinguished themselves together in the Battle of the Somme, Bazentin Ridge, Fleurs-Courcellette, the Hindenburg Line, and the Battle of Cambrai.

Lord Kitchener pointedly decided not to grant this similar time frame to British Indian Army troops because he felt that their pre-war training and battle experiences had primed them to go straight into battle.<sup>42</sup>

The first British Indian troops from Expeditionary Force A to enter the trenches were from the 57<sup>th</sup> Wilde's Rifles (Frontier Force).<sup>43</sup> The Afridi Muslim company led by Subedar Major Arsal Khan and Captain Ronald Stuart Gordon, the newly married Scotsman, were the vanguard of the British Indian Army and its formal entry into World War I.

Interestingly, at that time in history, there were more Muslims living in the British Empire than in any other empire or countries in the world. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, is quoted as saying, "The British Empire was the greatest Muslim power in the world."<sup>44</sup>

This fact was not ignored by Britain's adversaries in the Great War. Attempts by the Kaiser in Germany to undermine the loyalty of Britain's Muslim subjects failed spectacularly despite considerable effort and clandestine missions to stir up pan-Islamic sentiment and revolt against the British Crown. Importantly for the war effort, Muslim sepoys serving in the British Indian Army were not swayed by calls to abandon their cause or to mutiny. The Ottoman Turks, allied with Imperial Germany, were similarly disappointed that their co-religionists in the British Indian Army did not abandon their oath of service, despite knowing the Ottoman Sultan was the titular Caliph and spiritual head of the Muslim world. In fact, the defeat of Ottoman Forces in Mesopotamia and Palestine involved Muslim sepoys of the

“ The First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, is quoted as saying, “The British Empire was the greatest Muslim power in the world.”

British Indian Army. This included soldiers such as Shahahmad Khan of Rawalpindi, Punjab of the 89<sup>th</sup> Punjab Regiment, who won the Victoria Cross in April of 1916 during the British Operation to break the siege of Kut al Amara in Iraq.

Over a three-hour period, he and two belt feeders repulsed repeated counter-attacks by Ottoman Turkish forces on British lines, preventing a collapse of his section of the line. This career soldier's service mirrors the contribution of many sepoys in that he served in all theatres of combat including Gallipoli, Egypt, the European Front, and Iraq and Palestine.

## Duke Of Connaught and Strathearn

Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, was the third son of Queen Victoria and the only British prince to serve as the Governor General of Canada from 1911 to 1916. During the Duke of Connaught's term of office, Sir Robert Borden was Prime Minister. World War I gave Canada one of its greatest challenges, which taxed Canada's human and physical resources. The Duke of Connaught, having served in the British Army for almost 40 years, seeing service in all corners of the British Empire, stressed the importance of Canadian military preparedness and contributions to the war effort.<sup>45</sup> The military career of Prince Arthur included formal education at the British Royal Military College, followed by service in South Africa, Egypt, British India, Ireland, and Canada. Prince Arthur lived in British India for many years prior to his appointment as Governor General of Canada, and in 1883 was appointed Colonel-in-Chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baluchi Battalion of the British Indian Army. It was designated as the 129<sup>th</sup> Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis in 1903 and continues to exist to this day as the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Baloch Regiment of the Pakistan Army.<sup>46</sup> The regiment that carried the namesake of the Duke of Connaught would go on to play a prominent role in key battles of the war.

The 129<sup>th</sup> saw early action and its bravery, sacrifice, and valour became renowned to both the British Indian Army and its British Army counterparts. The 129<sup>th</sup> Baluchis fought well and hard in Flanders. Their departure from Europe after 12 months' service in the trenches, with only 4 British and 5 Indian officers and around 20 sepoys from the original contingent of 818 men, is testament to their sacrifices. One of those surviving men, Khudadad

Khan, a 26-year-old from Jhelum, Punjab Province (current-day Pakistan), would soldier on and become the first Muslim, the first Punjabi, and the first British Indian Army recipient of the Victoria Cross by King George V, the British Empire's most prestigious decoration for bravery.<sup>47</sup>

## Khudadad Khan, First Victoria Cross

Khudadad Khan was born on October 26, 1888, in Jhelum, Punjab Province of current-day Pakistan. He was recruited into the 129<sup>th</sup> Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis. The gallantry and sacrifice that Khudadad Khan displayed were emblematic of Muslim soldiers in particular, and of the British Indian Army as a whole during World War I.

During the First Battle of Ypres, fighting was raging all along the front line. The 129<sup>th</sup> Baluchis were deployed around the Belgian village of Hollebeke. The Germans launched an intense attack with the goal of breaking through to the English Channel, dividing the British Expeditionary Force and capturing the ports of Boulogne in France and Nieuwpoort in Belgium. Early on October 31, 1914, Khudadad Khan's battalion was overpowered by the Germans' advance. The regiment lost one machine gun post by enemy fire, but the second was manned by Khudadad Khan. Despite being wounded, he continued firing at the advancing Germans while shells rained down on his 6-man crew. One by one, Havildar Ghulam Mohamed, Sepoy Lal Sher, Sepoy Said Ahmed, Sepoy Kassib, and Sepoy Afsar Khan were killed by enemy fire.<sup>48</sup>

Before his position was finally overrun by the Germans, Khan put his Maxim machine gun out of action so that the much-prized weapon did not fall into enemy hands. As the Germans continued their advance, he initially feigned death until the opportunity availed itself to crawl back to the British defensive line.

Khudadad Khan was severely wounded and received medical care after being repatriated to England. During the battle, 164 troops of the 129<sup>th</sup> Baluchis were killed or wounded, and 64 others were missing in action out of a total of 818 of all ranks.<sup>49</sup> The perseverance and determination of Khan and his regiment held off the Germans long enough for the British army to bring in reinforcements, holding the line and ultimately saving their ports from falling into enemy hands.

Khudadad Khan survived the war and in 1919, he was promoted to Subedar, his final rank. He retired from the military in 1921 and returned to his village as a hero. His Victoria Cross was on proud display at his ancestral home in the village of Dab, Chakwal District, Punjab in Pakistan. He died on March 8, 1971, aged eighty-two and is buried at Rukhan Tehsil cemetery, Punjab, Pakistan. Khudadad Khan is honoured in Pakistan, where his statue stands guard at the entry of the Army Museum in Rawalpindi. His name is also engraved on the Memorial Gates, Hyde Park Corner in London, and a commemorative stone at the National Memorial Arboretum in England was unveiled in his honour. The Victoria

Cross of Khudadad Khan was recently purchased by Lord Ashcroft and is now on permanent display at the Imperial War Museum.

Khudadad Khan was initially too weak to attend his planned investiture, but he was eventually decorated with the Victoria Cross by King George V himself on January 26, 1915. Khudadad Khan was famously quoted as saying, "To die on the battlefield is glory," echoing the feeling among many Muslim soldiers that war brought the opportunity for heroism on the battlefield and the chance to gain honour. The concept of Izzat (honour) was an appeal that was used to recruit Muslim men throughout the empire and so important was their contribution that Churchill wrote, "We must not on any account break with the Muslims who represent 100 million people and the main army elements which we must rely on for the immediate fighting."<sup>50</sup>

Countless British and Empire troops displayed bold acts of courage and bravery in battle. These are too many to describe, but their names and sacrifices will always be remembered. As part of the centenary commemoration of the outbreak of World War I, the people of the United Kingdom marked their gratitude to troops of the British Indian Army by presenting memorial plaques to Pakistan and India, inscribed with the names of Victoria Cross recipients.

Just as Khudadad Khan, the first Victoria Cross recipient was honoured for his brave sacrifice in the Great War, it is imperative that the contributions of the 1.5 million other British Indian soldiers that fought for the freedoms that we enjoy today are never forgotten.

## Canadian and British Indian Troops Join Hands in Battle

The Canadian connection to the British Indian Army is an important point in history. Throughout WWI, the Chiefs of the General Staff were Canadians. Lieutenant General Sir Percy Lake had a distinguished military record. He served as the Chief Staff Officer for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps, Chief of the Canadian General Staff, and Inspector General of the Canadian Militia, introducing several reforms. He went on to become General Officer Commanding 7<sup>th</sup> (Meerut) Division in British India in 1911 and Chief of the General Staff in India from 1912 to 1916. He was instrumental in the regimental makeup of the various fighting units in the BIA.<sup>51</sup>

General Sir George Macaulay Kirkpatrick was a Canadian soldier who served with the British Army in South Africa, Canada, India, Australia, and China. He became one of only a handful of Canadians to reach the rank of full general. He was born in Kingston, Ontario and attended the Royal Military College. Kirkpatrick was commissioned into the Royal Engineers as a lieutenant and steadily rose in the ranks after serving in the Boer War. He served in World War I as Director of Military Operations in British India from 1914 to 1916, and became Chief of the General Staff in India from 1916 and 1920. These two Canadian generals were responsible for the effective deployment, recruitment,

organization, and overall integration of the combat capabilities of the British Indian Army throughout the war.<sup>52</sup>

There were several pivotal battles in which Canadian and British Indian soldiers fought and died side by side. The Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March of 1915 provided the Canadian Expeditionary Force with their first exposure to war against their German adversaries. The 18,000 Canadian soldiers of the First Canadian Division joined forces with British India's 3<sup>rd</sup> Lahore and 7<sup>th</sup> Meerut Divisions in support of British Allied Forces, to break through the German trenches in northern France. The British Indian Army comprised half the attacking force in this engagement. Initially, the British Forces appeared to rapidly advance through German-held territory, but due to a lack of communication and equipment, they subsequently bogged down, suffering massive losses. The British advanced a mere two kilometres at the cost of 11,000 lives, over 4,500 from the Indian Corps. The 129<sup>th</sup> Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis fought in several battles during the First World War, including at Neuve Chapelle. This regiment suffered a devastating 3585 casualties out of the 4447 men who served, but succeeded in capturing vital sections of the German Line. The Neuve-Chapelle Memorial now stands in France to commemorate the over 4,742 British Indian soldiers—with no known graves and thousands of miles from their homes—who lost their lives on the Western Front during the horrific trench warfare of the Great War.<sup>53</sup>

The Second Battle of Ypres, which started on April 22, 1915, is remembered for being the first successful use of chemical gas in modern warfare. However, it is particularly significant for Canadians, as it was one of their first major contributions in the First World War. Canadians, alongside the Lahore Division of the British Indian Army, fought in this battle. The town of Ypres provided the Allies with vital roads and rail links to ship resources and with communications. Because of its importance, the Allies sacrificed over 10,000 troops to maintain their positions. Countless young men died or were permanently disabled during the horrors of the suffocating gas attacks of April 1915. Among the first to fall victim and sacrifice their lives were Sepoy Sardar Khan, Sepoy Sharif Khan, and Sepoy Elahi Muhammad of the Lahore Division, all Muslim soldiers from what is now Pakistan.<sup>54</sup>

In May of 1915, the Canadian 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigades combined with the Meerut Division of the British Indian Army in the Battle of Festubert. The combined forces launched several frontal assaults, but the attacking infantry were cut down by well-positioned enemy machine guns. The Canadians made small gains over a week of fighting but incurred 2,468 casualties in a series of largely unsuccessful attacks. The Meerut division failed to break through the German lines, but the Canadians were able to deploy and hold their positions. On May 20, 1915, the 2 armies made a further series of complementary attacks, but they failed in achieving their objectives.

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June of 1915 brought the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Givenchy. The Canadians were heavily involved in this action with contributions from the Lahore Division of the British Indian Army. This battle saw some of the most brutal and intense fighting of the war. The battle started with heavy artillery fire on the German machine gun posts and mine detonation under the German line. The attack went well but the mine detonated prematurely and inflicted heavy casualties in a friendly fire incident. The gains were not maintained and despite further frontal assaults, the battle ended with significant losses for the British, Canadian, and British Indian troops.<sup>55</sup>

## Gallantry Awards

The army of British India responded with bravery and gallantry when called to war. A total of 53,486 of these brave soldiers died during the war, 64,350 were wounded, and 2,937 went missing in action, for a total of 120,773 casualties.<sup>56</sup> Many of them, who were unaccustomed to the climate, conditions, and horrors of fighting in the trenches of Europe, nevertheless distinguished themselves as brave soldiers. Seventeen of these soldiers were awarded with the British military's highest decoration, the Victoria Cross, presented to soldiers who displayed exceptional gallantry and self-sacrifice.

In recognition of his actions, the first gallantry decoration was awarded on October 23, 1914, to a British Indian Army soldier in World War I, Sepoy Usman Khan, an Afridi from the Northwest Frontier province of current day Pakistan.<sup>57</sup> He engaged in the intense fighting at Wytschaete, Belgium. While others in his group were killed, he refused to leave his post and continued to fire at the Germans despite being injured twice by rifle fire. Thereafter, a shell splinter blew away part of his legs, before he was dragged off the field of battle against his wishes. His dedication earned him the Distinguished Service Medal.

The first Victoria Cross granted to a British Indian Army officer was to Lieutenant Frank de Pass of the 34<sup>th</sup> Prince Albert

Victor's Own Poona Horse. While serving in the trenches near Festubert, Lieutenant de Pass volunteered to crawl out of their trench to ascertain the enemy's position. The Jewish De Pass along with his Muslims comrades, Sowar Fateh Khan and Firman Shah, destroyed a German sap. The same day, De Pass, under heavy fire, rescued a wounded sepoy of the 58<sup>th</sup> Vaughan's Rifles who was lying exposed in the open. Unfortunately, he was killed the next day by a sniper in another attack on the German sap after it was reoccupied. For his bravery and calm under fire, Frank de Pass was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, becoming not only the first Jewish recipient of this prestigious award, but also the first officer of the British Indian Army to be granted it.

During the Second Battle of Ypres in April of 1915, Mir Dast of the 55<sup>th</sup> Coke's Rifles, Frontier Force, rose to the occasion when all his British officers were lost. He was injured extricating eight wounded officers before being carried off the battlefield. Mir Dast, who was an ethnic Pashtun from Waziristan of present-day Pakistan, is a representative of the second-largest group of soldiers to serve in the British Indian Army. This Muslim Pashtun soldier was invested with his Victoria Cross by King George at the Royal Pavilion Military Hospital where he had been sent for treatment.

## Conclusion

The "war to end all wars" is replete with countless stories of individual bravery and gallantry which stand out from the carnage and suffering of this momentous conflict. The distinction and dedication shown by Canadian and British troops was matched by the lesser-known contribution of millions of native troops from Pakistan and India as members of the British Empire. Over 1.5 million men from the far-off provinces of South Asia fought alongside the British and their fellow Empire comrades in all of the major theatres of war, on land, air, and sea.

These troops fought and died alongside fellow British, Canadian, and Imperial soldiers to protect the freedoms that we enjoy today. Over 120,000 British Indian soldiers were casualties in the First World War and for too long, their stories of bravery have been overshadowed by those of their European counterparts. The British Indian Army contributed 20 Infantry and Cavalry divisions and brigades to the Western Front, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, North Africa, and East Africa. In Europe, British Indian soldiers were among the first victims to suffer the horrors of the trenches and chemical warfare. They were killed in droves before the war was into its second year and withstood the worst German offensives. It was British Indian soldiers who were thrown into the cauldron of war in 1914 to buttress the Western Front when the German advance had reached within thirty miles of Paris. During that crucial period, when they were needed most, the South Asian soldiers manned one third of the entire defensive line on the Western Front, thereby preventing the Germans from flanking the Allied Line and taking the vital Channel ports. It was the British Indian soldiers who stopped the relentless German advances at Ypres

“ The distinction and dedication shown by Canadian and British troops was matched by the lesser-known contribution of millions of native troops from Pakistan and India as members of the British Empire.”

while the British Imperial Forces, including those of Canada, were still in the process of recruiting and training.

The first gallantry award to a British Indian Soldier was awarded to a Muslim sepoy, Usman Khan, as was the first Victoria Cross to Khudadad Khan, both of whom are from what is now Pakistan.<sup>58</sup> Lieutenant Frank de Pass was the first Jewish recipient of the Victoria Cross (VC) and the first British Indian Army officer to be awarded this distinction in the First World War. The names of these soldiers should never be forgotten. A collective ownership of the history of Allied efforts in the Great War is in order and deserves to be woven into the national fabric that reveals the common bonds that span the distant corners of our world. On deeper introspection, the First World War connects almost every family in Canada. It is time to remember the ancestors of those Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu soldiers, as well as their European counterparts, who over one hundred years ago did their duty as part of His Majesty's forces, helping to win the First World War and shape our modern world. One hundred years ago, diverse communities and religious groups came together for a common cause, and by promoting a greater good, they succeeded in achieving that goal. The contributions and sacrifices of Canada and those soldiers from Pakistan and India deserve an enduring recognition, lest we forget.

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Devastation to the community caused by flooding near the town of Abbotsford, British Columbia on November 21, 2021.

Photo: MCpl Nicolas Alonso, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces

## Using Water as a Weapon: A Study of the Use of Deliberate Flooding During the Second World War

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The Second World War was a war defined by the use of modern weapons, mobile operations, operations that spanned continents, and mass mobilization of the industrial base. Interestingly, on multiple occasions, the intentional use of flooding was used to combat the enemy. The issue of whether this was a useful tactic depends heavily on the level of flexibility of the force being attacked, the strategic situation, and the intended outcome of the flood. As seen in multiple examples, flooding had limited use on the battlefield and was more effective when targeting static infrastructure rather than mobile combat units.

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Although 1938 falls outside the normally accepted years of the Second World War, this year's purposes will be considered for this paper. In June 1938, the Chinese Nationalist Army, in a desperate bid to halt the advancing Imperial Japanese Army, flooded the plains around the Huang He (Yellow River). Unable to directly counter the Imperial Japanese Army in the field of battle, the Nationalists resorted to using flooding in a defensive manner.

For millennia, Chinese rulers had been attempting to control the Yellow River as part of their land reclamation efforts to increase agricultural production by eliminating flooding and allowing for controlled water usage in the plains. The river would swell rapidly during the monsoon season between June and August. Combined with the massive amounts of silt it would pick up upstream; it was prone to overflowing its banks and flooding the surrounding lowlands. China relied on constant human labour to construct and maintain its food-producing lands using dams, canals, ditches and dykes. As these dykes were built to control the river and prevent flooding, they would deposit more silt on the riverbed, increasing its height relative to the surrounding lands and necessitating even higher dykes.<sup>1</sup> Even though the Yellow River had breached its dykes and changed course throughout history, the river was nonetheless critical to supporting the agriculture of Henan Province, a particularly fertile area which contributed heavily to Chinese grain production.<sup>2</sup>

The Japanese Army invaded and captured Manchuria in 1932 and immediately began grabbing small amounts of Chinese territory. Peking, now known as Beijing, was surrounded on three sides by 1937, and in July, a firefight just outside Peking escalated into what the Chinese call the Resistance War. The Nationalist Army was quickly pushed back in the north of the country, retreating westward and southward in the face of the well-trained and equipped Imperial Army.<sup>3</sup> Beijing fell in that year, followed by Nanking in December of that same year. The beginning of 1938 began with a series of victories for the Nationalists, with the Nationalists holding onto the city of Xuzhou until May. By this point, the Nationalist Army was depleted, and the Imperial Army was in the process of encircling the city and its defenders.<sup>4</sup> The Nationalist government used the Chinese tradition of trading

space for time; unfortunately, they misjudged Japanese expansionist ideology. China lacked the industrial capacity needed to field a modern military, and with no foreign support, the Nationalist forces relied heavily on their conscript soldiers. With no forces left north of the more southern Yangzi River able to actively counter the Imperial Army, Nationalist leaders decided to trade space and civilian lives for time to regroup.<sup>5</sup>

For the Chinese, the easiest method to try to stop the Japanese was to “use water in place of soldiers”, breaching the dykes that hemmed in the Yellow River during its approximately 5 000 km journey to the sea.<sup>6</sup> In June of 1938, just west of the critical rail junction of Zhengzhou, the dykes were breached. After attempts to use explosives failed, the dyke walls were breached by hand on June 9. Water began flowing into the plain, moving southeast towards the Yellow Sea. The waters advanced quickly, with one estimate stating the river moved at 8km per hour. Thousands of villages and farms stood in its path; these plains

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were some of the most populated areas in China. Making matters worse, the plains were almost completely flat, meaning there were few places of refuge for those fleeing the floods. Refuge was sought in the few areas of higher ground, such as local cities or the dykes themselves.<sup>7</sup> Critical agricultural output was also reduced, as the area was either covered in feet of silt or flood waters. Farmers attempted to continue farming the land with limited success, trying to harvest before the flood waters rose annually in June.<sup>8</sup>

Militarily, the intentional flooding had limited results. While the Imperial Army did not capture Zhengzhou until April 1944,<sup>9</sup> They managed to capture their objectives south of that city by attacking northwest from their foothold in Shanghai, reaching their objective of Wuhan in October of 1938. As an obstacle to the Japanese, it was largely only a local success. The only real help the flooding gave to the Chinese was time to recuperate from the early 1938 battles, and only for the forces immediately south of

the flooded area, where the Japanese could no longer advance through. Overall, the Japanese were able to outmaneuver the Chinese forces due to their strategic mobility around the flooding area and overall operational situation. Critically, the Japanese forces did not suffer large losses of soldiers or equipment, allowing them to safely regroup on the north bank of the river to redeploy for their campaigns in other locations.<sup>10</sup>

For the civilians of Henan province, the flooding was a catastrophe. Estimates vary; however, most sources indicate approximately 800,000 civilian deaths directly from the flooding, with the possibility that the number was much higher. However, a confluence of factors led to an even greater death toll on the population. Ironically in 1942-1943, a drought struck Henan, crippling grain production in the precious few months that were available before the summer floods and led to a crop 22 percent the size of prewar levels. The area was further ravaged by locusts who bred in the dried-up river deltas, now made much larger due to the flooding of the plains. The flood waters returned earlier than expected, reducing the harvest. Lastly, both the Japanese and Chinese armies operating in the area applied grain levies to support their war effort, leaving little for the civilian population. Estimates of civilian deaths range from 2 to 3 million as a result of the Henan Famine of 1942-1943.<sup>11</sup> Chinese sources state that 12 million civilians were directly affected by the flooding.<sup>12</sup>

Between the deaths, mass evacuations, and forced conscription, local officials no longer had the labour available to effectively sustain farming and rebuild the infrastructure to keep the floods at bay. It would not be until 1947, and with considerable help from the UN, that the breaches were closed. A final unintended consequence of the breaches was Northern China's discontent with the Nationalist government and the consequent boost in support for the Chinese Communists.<sup>13</sup>

Flooding during the Second World War was not caused only to act as an obstacle to enemy forces. Following the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943 and its subsequent drive north towards Rome, the German forces in Italy began efforts to flood the previously reclaimed Pontine Marshes. Unlike the Chinese efforts with the Yellow River, the German main effort was not just creating an obstacle but creating conditions that would affect the health of the advancing Allied armies.

Historically, the Pontine Marshes have been a source of frustration for those who inhabit the area surrounding Rome. Covering 75,000 hectares, the Marshes were a breeding ground for the *Anopheles* mosquito, which acted as a vector for malaria. Efforts to control and reclaim the Marshes date back to the Romans; unfortunately, all those who attempted reclamation failed.<sup>14</sup> Prior to the commencement of the reclamation, the town of Sermoneta had a death rate of almost 41 per 1000 inhabitants due strictly to malaria. Beginning in 1930, the fascist regime began extensive reclamation work to increase agricultural production and demonstrate to the Italian population that the fascist

regime was a powerful and capable force. They used a combination of levees, pumps, and drainage canals to control water flow into and out of the marshes. In an interesting effort, eucalyptus trees were imported from Australia and planted in the marsh due to their natural ability to absorb water in large quantities.<sup>15</sup> This dried out the marshes, reducing the breeding grounds for mosquitoes while enabling the Italian population to reclaim the land for agricultural use.<sup>16</sup> The fascist regime also began a campaign of public health protection, using chemicals in efforts to kill mosquitoes and destroy their breeding grounds, as well as creating hospitals in an effort to improve the care provided to those who were sick. Ultimately, the efforts were successful; Sermoneta saw a reduction in its death rate down to 20 per 1000 deaths due to malaria.<sup>17</sup>

On October 9, 1943, the German Army took over the office of the *Consortio de Latina*. Now, with access to the plans for the entire marsh reclamation project, the Germans began to destroy much of the critical infrastructure, including the levees, water pumps, and canals.<sup>18</sup> Although some of the flooding's effects were on the mobility of the Allied armies—half a meter of water is plenty difficult to move an army through—a major part of the German intention was to turn the Pontine into a mosquito breeding ground.<sup>19</sup> Knowing that water with a small salt content was an excellent mosquito larva habitat, seawater was allowed to return to the marsh. Complicit in this action was Italian malariologist Alberto Missiroli. He would later play a role in eradicating malaria from Italy: at that point, he maintained ties with his German counterparts. He stood by as they began dismantling the work of the Italian fascist regime, knowing that the re-flooding of the Pontine would cause a resurgence of malarial infection rates. Ultimately, by June of 1944, the Allies had pushed through and taken Rome, relegating the Pontine Marshes to an engineering and health problem for the units in the area as opposed to one for combat units to deal with.<sup>20</sup>

To overcome the engineering difficulties of moving through the Marshes, the US Army deployed engineers to maintain or rebuild roads through the area. Although there was much work to do, backfilling and bridging the routes, they were able to maintain the routes, which were used in the march on Rome.<sup>21</sup> Malaria was a more persistent problem. The US Army soldiers operating near the Marshes during the winter and spring of 1943-1944 as part of the Anzio bridgehead were at the greatest risk of contracting malaria due to their proximity adjacent to the Marshes. Fortunately for the Allies, what could have been an epidemic of malaria was controlled through scientific health measures. Atabrine, a synthetic version of quinine, and the new DDT were used to keep malaria in check until the siege ended in May of 1944.<sup>22</sup> In 1944, Missiroli quickly began calling for the use of DDT to halt the outbreak of malaria that was beginning. Having seen the effectiveness of its use against the lice responsible for spreading typhus in Naples during the winter of 1943-1944, he

quickly began using it in the newly liberated Tiber Delta and saw immediate results, with a reduction of malaria cases.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, a continuation of these chemical and reclamation efforts started by the fascist regime led to the suppression of malaria in Italy by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Destruction of infrastructure was also used in an offensive capacity. Unlike the Yellow River flood and the Pontine Marshes, the Ruhr and Eder valleys were not on the front lines of combat at the time of their flooding. The two valleys, specifically the Ruhr, were key German industrial centers that heavily supported the war effort. Carpet bombing efforts by the Allies had been ineffective, and plans were developed to destroy the German war industry through alternative means.<sup>24</sup>

The Ruhr Valley was one of the centers of German war production, producing war materials such as eighty percent of Germany's coal, synthetic oils, and heavy industry.<sup>25</sup> These industries were heavily reliant on dams for electricity and power production, as well as for water for the population living in the valley as the workforce. The prevailing view within the RAF was that the destruction of the dams would result in physical damage to the area as well as farther-reaching second-order effects from the loss of power and water.<sup>26</sup>

The alternative means being developed to destroy the dams varied during the planning period and included ideas such as using torpedoes, armour-piercing munitions, and even a radio-controlled anti-aircraft target loaded with explosives. For various reasons, these concepts never left the planning stage.<sup>27</sup> However, the industrious work of Barnes Wallis led to a breakthrough for the RAF. With the development of larger bombers capable of carrying larger payloads, Wallis could realize his efforts to destroy the dams. After much experimentation, he designed a barrel-shaped bomb that, when rotated backwards, would skip along the water's surface much farther than a conventional conically nosed bomb. The drop height and distance from the dams needed to be exact, and as such, a specialized squadron was stood up to train and conduct the attack. No. 617 Squadron was formed, with pilots and aircrew pulled out of units from throughout the RAF based on experience. They quickly began night-time low-level training in the British countryside, as well as mock bomb runs of various reservoirs and lakes in order to perfect their skills.<sup>28</sup> Creative methods were devised to ensure the aircraft was at the correct height and distance from the target: two spotlights aimed at the water below would converge when the aircraft was sixty feet above the ground, and a board with two nails would mark the correct distance to drop when the nails lined up with the towers built into the dams.<sup>29</sup>

The raid, named Operation Chastise, was conducted during the night of May 16, 1943. Nineteen modified Lancasters took off into the night, loaded with the 9000-pound bombs designed by Wallis. By the next morning, eight of those aircraft had been shot down, with fifty-six crew members losing their lives out of

“ An estimated 971 houses were destroyed in areas downstream of the Möhne dam, and the area below the Eder also experienced extensive damage.”

a total of 133 aviators.<sup>30</sup> Their efforts had led to the immediate destruction of the Möhne and Eder dams and the Sorpe dam's damage. In all, 270 million cubic meters of water were released into the Eder and Ruhr Valleys. According to German figures, the flood caused by the destruction of the Möhne dam destroyed twelve factories producing war materials with damage to another ninety-one, destroyed 2822 hectares of farmland, and killed 6300 cattle and swine. In these reports, it is stated that approximately 1300 people were killed, of which many were foreign workers brought to Germany as slave labour in the factories. Railroad and road bridges were damaged or destroyed as far as sixty miles downstream of the dam, for a total of twenty-five.<sup>31</sup> Damage below the Eder Dam was spread over 140km; fortunately for those living in the valley, only forty-seven were killed by the wall of water. The valley was not an industrial center like the Ruhr, it was more of an agricultural area. Following the release of the Eder dam, the flood waters spread over a large area, destroying that year's harvest.<sup>32</sup> One of the primary objectives of the operation was successful; power generation plants throughout the valleys were damaged or destroyed. The power plants at Herdecke and Dortmund were severely damaged, eliminating a combined 182,000 kW of power generation from the industrial basin.<sup>33</sup> The area's inhabitants were also affected. An estimated 971 houses were destroyed in areas downstream of the Möhne dam, and the area below the Eder also experienced extensive damage.<sup>34</sup>

Albert Speer, the Minister of Armament and War Production, immediately began to move workers into the area to begin reconstruction. In the months after the attack, the valley was again flooded, though not with water but with people. Speer removed 7000 workers from their work on the Atlantic Wall- the planned defences against a seaborne invasion of the European mainland- to the battered Ruhr. A further 20,000 to 50,000 workers were brought in soon thereafter, further reducing the manning pool from which Germany drew for its major defence projects.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, large amounts of German capital were spent on reconstruction.<sup>36</sup> Production losses are hard to access, as the German industrial war effort was not at peak production at the time of the attack and was still increasing in capacity. Coal and gas production was halved, and steel production decreased by 300 percent.<sup>37</sup> Within five months, through constant work and

stripping resources from throughout Germany, Speer's workers rebuilt the dams and most of the factories. Soon after, production began increasing and eventually rose above pre-attack levels. However, production was halted at just the wrong time for Germany. That summer, during the Battle of Kursk, the Wehrmacht was running low on ammunition and armoured vehicles due to the damage in the Ruhr factories, and the Luftwaffe was having challenges maintaining aircraft production to replace losses. The invasion of Sicily also occurred at this time, further stretching Germany's military forces, which suffered shortages due to the dams being breached.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the reduction of the Atlantic Wall workforce led to slowed construction of its defences. This may have had an effect later during the war, as had these workers not been requisitioned for reconstruction, the wall may have been more fortified in the region of Normandy. The increased defences given to the dams also reduced the wall's capabilities, as the equivalent of a full division of troops was spread around the major dams of Germany, unable to respond to any invasions. This may well have had an impact on the outcome of the liberation of Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Similarly to the Chinese populace surrounding the Yellow River, the people of the Dutch province of Zeeland (Sealand in English) have been reclaiming and protecting their lands from water for centuries. Beginning in 1000 AD, communities and then large organizations built dykes in the archipelago at the mouths of the rivers Meuse, Rhine, and Scheldt Rivers. Already an area of fertile soil, the populace gradually reclaimed more land from the ocean, creating and connecting islands while increasing agricultural production. However, much of this land was susceptible to flooding. Unlike the seasonal flooding in Henan, in the low-lying Zeeland, the flooding was tide and storm-based. The dykes kept seawater out but did not change the elevation of the fields themselves; they were below high tide, to begin with, and with use, were compressed to be permanently below even low tide, forming what is known as a polder. If the dykes broke, vast tracts of Zeeland would be underwater until the dykes were rebuilt: there was no seasonal respite.<sup>40</sup>

And so, in 1944, as the Allies continued the slow march north toward Germany, the First Canadian Army cleared the left flank of the Allied advance. In a similar situation faced by the Chinese Nationalist Army in 1938, the Wehrmacht was faced with the question of how to delay a numerically and logistically superior opposition. Those Allied logistics were facing challenges; with the advances moving the front lines further from the functioning ports in the Normandy Region and with the liberated ports along the coast having been destroyed by the Germans or Allied bombing, the Allies had increasingly lengthy supply lines. The capture of the port of Antwerp in Belgium was the best solution to these issues, and Antwerp was indeed liberated intact on September 4 by the British 11<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, any ships docking at Antwerp had to transit through the Scheldt Estuary,

“ To further improve their defences, the Germans began a series of controlled flood, primarily using fresh water, to hinder the Allies' maneuverability.”

through minefields and within range of the German artillery positioned in the yet unliberated Zeeland. The task of clearing the Scheldt was given to the First Canadian Army. The commencement of the clearing operations was delayed primarily due to resources being allocated to Operation Market Garden. Due to this delay, the Germans could reconstitute their rather small forces in the Netherlands with reinforcements, nine divisions in all, having recognized the importance of limiting access to the intact port of Antwerp.<sup>42</sup>

To further improve their defences, the Germans began a series of controlled flood, primarily using fresh water, to hinder the Allies' maneuverability. Once the polders were flooded, much like in China, the only navigable land was the dykes.<sup>43</sup> Similar to tunnelling in urban combat, the Germans limited the directions of attack and allowed them to concentrate their firepower on small areas by forcing the Allies to use the dykes to advance. With the dykes being such narrow, low, and barren strips of land, the infantry and armoured forces were highly exposed; silhouetted atop the dykes with little to hide behind, they were easy targets for direct and indirect fire. Even artillery was at greater risk, unable to be situated in the polders; they too would sit vulnerable to counter-battery fire atop the dykes.<sup>44</sup>

And so, facing stiff German resistance and challenging terrain, the First Canadian Army took on the task of clearing the Scheldt. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division was ordered to clear the Breskens Pocket first, as it was the Southernmost part of the Netherlands and, once cleared, would allow protected access to the waters of the Scheldt. On October 6, the 3<sup>rd</sup> CID began offensive operations, crossing the Leopold Canal. As expected, the flooded terrain hampered the Canadians. The water-filled polders caused infantry and armour to concentrate on the exposed higher dykes, providing limited cover themselves while providing an almost literal shooting gallery for the entrenched Germans.<sup>45</sup> Due to the lack of protection afforded by the topography, the Canadian Army attempted to remedy it with massive artillery and air support.<sup>46</sup> And like the rest of the campaigning the Scheldt, the soldiers in the field had to contend with the flooding on a personal level; troops were always wet, cold and muddy, from wading through waist-deep water to stay off the top of the dykes or sitting in slit trenches that constantly filled due to the high

water table. The polders' thick clay mud constantly bogged down equipment and supplies.<sup>47</sup>

Clearing at the northern banks of the Scheldt had been viewed by First Army HQ as the more difficult area to clear. Even after the heavy fighting in the Breskens Pocket, the island of Walcheren stood out as a cornerstone in German defence, a veritable fortress with well-dug-in troops and large coastal batteries. In an example of the offensive use of flooding on an operational and tactical level, Lt-Gen Guy Simonds (then acting commander 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army) ordered the destruction of the dykes and purposeful flooding of the island as part of Operation Infatuate. He intended to displace and destroy German emplacements, take away their operational mobility, and force them to unprepared high ground where they would be vulnerable to artillery and air attack. There was immediate concern with this plan; the air forces didn't believe it would be feasible by heavy bombers, his senior engineers did not believe that the ground would actually flood, and there were misgivings about the damage and death that would be forced on the Dutch population in the area even while the Dutch representatives were disregarded or not informed.<sup>48</sup> However, in the calculus of war, it was determined that flooding Walcheren would save the lives of the assaulting forces sufficiently to justify the costs borne by the Dutch. Therefore on October 3, following a leaflet drop urging civilians to leave the island immediately, over 200 heavy bombers destroyed much of the western dyke. After proving it was feasible, further raids destroyed the three other major dykes. By the end of the campaign, over 16,000 hectares of almost 19,000 were flooded with seawater. Of a prewar population of approximately 70,000, over 150 were killed outright by the flooding, and the vast majority lost their homes and farms.<sup>49</sup>

Following the near completion of operations by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division in the Breskens Pocket, the focus was shifted to the northern arm, specifically Walcheren. With a large number of German fortifications already destroyed and evacuated

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Flooding causes inaccessible roadways near the town of Abbotsford, British Columbia on November 21, 2021.

Photo: MCpl Nicolas Alonso, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces

due to flooding, the job of the Allies was to clear out the remaining pockets of resistance and silence the gun batteries. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division attempted to force a crossing of a 1.2km causeway linking the island to the mainland as a form of diversion, British seaborne assaults occurred on different portions of the island in rapid succession.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately for the Canadians, the costly diversion was, in some respects, futile. The idea that they would draw in and pin down German troops was negated by the flooding that the Allies had caused. By cutting off and isolating the German garrisons in largely unprepared positions through the use of flooding, they could be effectively subjugated by artillery and commando operations.<sup>51</sup> On November 8, Walcheren was cleared, and following minesweeping operations, the first ship, the Canadian steamer *Fort Cataragui*, arrived in Antwerp on November 28 to begin unloading vital supplies.<sup>52</sup>

The campaign to clear the Scheldt had shown that even with a capable defensive force making good use of the natural topography and artificial flooding, it was not possible to hold back a mobile and well-supplied adversary that could attack from multiple axes with air superiority. Similarly to the Japanese Army

“ The military usage of flooding during the Second World War was highly varied and varied highly in its usefulness. As seen in China, at the cost of 800,000 civilians and millions of refugees, the Nationalist Army was only able to temporarily delay the Japanese advance, and then only in the areas immediately south of the flooded regions.”

in China, the Canadian Army used its mobility to attack in advantageous locations, such as on the island of Walcheren, where amphibious assaults quickly eliminated the remaining forces threatening the Scheldt Estuary. What the flooded topography did allow the German Army was to focus their combat power more effectively, knowing that the polders were impassable compared to the solid plains of the rest of Western Europe, and therefore incurring substantial casualties on the attacking forces by canalizing them on the exposed dykes. In terms of flooding for conducting offensives, Walcheren's flooding showed that floods could destroy and disrupt enemy defensive operations as long as they were static, such as artillery emplacements, instead of mobile army groups that could be reoriented to the changing landscape.

The military usage of flooding during the Second World War was highly varied and varied highly in its usefulness. As seen in China, at the cost of 800,000 civilians and millions of refugees, the Nationalist Army was only able to temporarily delay the Japanese advance, and then only in the areas immediately south of the flooded regions. This was due to Japan's strategic mobility in the area of operations: Nationalist leaders did not prepare for

the Japanese to use their foothold south of the Yellow River to bypass the floods, and it also allowed the Japanese to regroup their forces safely on the north side of the river before moving on to other targets. The US Army showed that flooding can also be ineffective in combat if a force has highly skilled and supplied engineering forces that can work to provide tactical mobility on the battlefield. By building roads through the marshes, the Allies could advance through as opposed to around the Pontine, which incidentally also made it harder for the Germans to attempt to disrupt the traffic flow on the roads. From a health perspective, the Allies were fortunate that, unlike past armies, they had access to effective preventative medicines and new insecticides that effectively eliminated the malaria vector. Instances where flooding worked effectively were not against mobile forces but on static infrastructure on the battlefield or industrial areas behind the lines. While combat units are generally well prepared to face obstacles and have the mobility to move wherever necessary, units tied to fixed positions were vulnerable to flooding that could damage or destroy built infrastructure, as seen during Operation Infatuate. Additionally, industrial targets such as power generation plants and factories are even more challenging to move quickly. Operation Chastise exhibited that a well-planned flood against industrial targets can temporarily reduce the enemy's production capacity. Although the goal of destroying the industry of the Ruhr Valley was not realized, the disruptions to Germany's war-making capacity came at an inopportune time for the Germans due to their planned offensive and forced the Ministry of Armaments to strip resources away from other projects.

Intentional flooding during the Second World War produced interesting results. As a result of improving technology, soldiers were able to move around or through areas which would have previously been inaccessible due to the water. This reduced the effectiveness of flooding as an area-denial tool at the tactical or operational level. While it can still impede an enemy force's mobility, it does not completely deny the enemy movement. Ironically, this improved technology allowed combatants to target industrial centers far from the front lines. These centers were less prepared for flooding, as they were all based on fixed factories that had to be close to a power source; in the case of the Ruhr, it was the vulnerable dams. The increase in striking distance had further opened up a new target population, one more vulnerable than combat soldiers.

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The Snowbirds aircrafts (CT-114 Tutor) stand on the tarmac while sun sets over the 8 Wing / CFB Trenton Canadian Forces and Air Display Weekend.

Photo: Corporal Igor Loutsiouk

## Retirement Long Overdue: The RCAF Snowbirds

### LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KIM WILTON

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The Snowbirds have been the Royal Canadian Air Forces (RCAF) air demonstration team since 1970, for over fifty years. There were several teams before the Snowbirds, and there will likely be other teams after the Snowbirds retire. Teams have often been retired once the training aircraft they flew was decommissioned, and none have been in existence for the same length of time as the Snowbirds or on the same airframe as the current team. The platform that the Snowbirds currently fly has not been used for training since 2000. Furthermore, the RCAF's current air demonstration team is not aligned with other national air display teams in terms of resources or mandates. In a comparison of over 30 countries, Canada is the only country with a full-time team flying a nine-ship formation with an airframe that is not used for any other purpose. The RCAF currently struggles with a shortage of pilots and technicians at all units. These shortages affect all RCAF units, including the 431 Air Demonstration (AD) Squadron and the Snowbird unit.

Given the current challenges regarding personnel shortages and pressures on the RCAF to fulfill multiple new capabilities, it is time to retire the 431 AD Squadron and the Snowbird air demonstration team. While the Snowbirds have a long history, no government policy prioritizes this role. If the federal government does not declare that the Snowbirds are an integral part of the Canadian identity or a key recruitment tool for the Canadian Armed Forces, the resources required to maintain the unit are unsustainable for the RCAF. Instead, the RCAF needs to mirror peer nations by returning to a training fleet crewed by instructors, with air demonstration being a secondary duty to instruction. The reduced team size would perform at key events in Canada over the summer months, flying aircraft that are used in training, with aircrew fulfilling an instructor role most of the time. This paper will review the history of air demonstration in Canada, how peer nations fulfill the air demonstration role, the airframe, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) reconstitution plan, staffing, recruiting, symbolism, and government priorities. The RCAF can no longer justify prioritizing 431 AD Squadron, given the Government's and the CAF's current capabilities and priorities.

## History

For most Canadians, the only military air demonstration team they have ever known is the Snowbirds, who have been flying the Tutor aircraft since 1970. However, the RCAF has a more layered history regarding air demonstration teams. Past teams have existed on several platforms, from the Golden Muskets to the Red Green Gophers to the Golden Hawks, Gimli Smokers, Skylarks, and Dragonflies.<sup>1</sup> Most teams were temporary, created for regional airshows using training aircraft, whereas some were formed for specific anniversaries, for the country, or the RCAF. Each team came and went based on interest and airframe availability. The teams were usually made up of qualified flight instructors (QFIs) who flew training aircraft, a duty secondary to their primary teaching role.

The first Canadian air demonstration team was the Siskins, a three-ship team of Armstrong Whitworth Siskin biplanes.<sup>2</sup> They flew over 100 shows from 1929 to 1932 but were disbanded due to RCAF cutbacks during the Great Depression.<sup>3</sup> The Golden Hawks were active from 1959 to 1964 and were the first team dedicated solely to air demonstration in Canada.<sup>4</sup> They were the predecessors of the Snowbirds and were formed in anticipation of the RCAF's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of powered flight in Canada.<sup>5</sup> Their initial mandate was for one year only, and they fell under the command of training for the Air Force.<sup>6</sup> QFIs from the



The Snowbirds, Canada's air demonstration team from 431 Squadron Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, perform the Maple Split over Parliament Hill as part of the Canada Day festivities held in Ottawa, Canada, July 1, 2008.

Photo: Master Corporal Robert Bottrill and Captain Martine Goulet

Operational Training Unit flew six Sabre aircraft.<sup>7</sup> While it started as a seven-ship team, they flew performances as a four-ship formation due to fatal accidents in their work-up training.<sup>8</sup> In 1960, they were established as a full-time team, and while their routine was popular, several factors, including military cutbacks and the retiring of the Sabre, led to the team being disbanded in 1964.<sup>9</sup>

Following the Golden Hawks were the Golden Centennaires. This team flew the Tutors for Canada's 100<sup>th</sup>-anniversary celebration. In 1967, the eight-ship Tutor team flew 112 shows, including the opening of Expo 67 in Montreal.<sup>10</sup> The Centennaires were disbanded immediately after their last show in 1967.<sup>11</sup> This same platform was used in creating the Snowbirds in 1970, a nine-ship team based in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan (SK). Eventually, 431 Squadron was resurrected in 1977 to give the team a permanent home.<sup>12</sup> The Snowbirds have become the longest-serving air demonstration team, but they have not been the only one, and history allows one to see that there will likely be future iterations of the concept.

## Air Demonstration in Other Militaries

There are three types of military air demonstration teams around the world based on the platforms they fly: fighter aircraft, training aircraft, or dedicated aerobatic planes. The fighter aircraft category includes teams like the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds in the United States or Singapore's Black Knights.<sup>13</sup> These teams fly high-performance jet aircraft that are used by front-line fighter units. The training aircraft category is the largest and the one to which the Snowbirds belonged until the Tutor was retired from training in 2000. These teams use the same aircraft that their countries employ to train pilots to wing standards; examples of teams in this category range from the Australian Roulettes to the Red Arrows with the Royal Air Force.<sup>14</sup> The final category, dedicated aerobatic planes, is flown in three countries: Chile, Morocco,

and Jordan.<sup>15</sup> These teams fly small turboprop aircraft that are not high-performance, ejection-seat aircraft like the Tutor. The 431 AD Squadron team initially fit into the second category. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, it is now the only military air demonstration team flying an aircraft that has been retired from all other Air Force roles.<sup>16</sup>

When the Snowbirds were established in 1970, they were classified as training aircraft, with pilots coming from an instructor background and the aircraft being maintained by the school at 2 Canadian Forces Flight Training School (2 CFFTS) in Moose Jaw.<sup>17</sup> When the RCAF switched training platforms in 2000 from the Tutor to a mixed training fleet of Harvard II and Hawk aircraft, there was no mirrored shift of the AD team to either of these fleets.<sup>18</sup> Typically when a fleet is retired from its role, the associated AD team is either retired or transitioned to a newer platform. That transition is evident when reviewing multiple teams around the world or even Canada's history of air demonstration.<sup>19</sup>

The number of aircraft that the Snowbirds fly is also an anomaly. Only three other countries fly nine-ship formations: India, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, with Italy flying ten.<sup>20</sup> The average military team size worldwide is five to six aircraft.<sup>21</sup> Larger teams have greater risks, higher maintenance costs, and personnel requirements to support and fly these extra aircraft.

Many countries do not have personnel dedicated to a team for a sole duty. It is common for team members to fulfill an instructor role and fly airshows as a secondary responsibility. Some countries that use such a model are Singapore, Australia, Denmark, Israel, Pakistan, and New Zealand.<sup>22</sup> For countries that elect this model, the team completes work-up training before the airshow season due to the advanced and dangerous flying. They maintain some level of instruction during the show season. Once the show season is complete, they return to full-time instruction.<sup>23</sup> This flexibility allows these air forces to fulfill the airshow tasking with a reduced staffing requirement. In these countries, teams are always made up of senior instructors.<sup>24</sup> This organizational structure also means that these countries do not have a dedicated squadron for the airshow team.

In other countries, such as Canada, the personnel fulfill this role on a full-time basis; the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan are some other examples.<sup>25</sup> A tour on the team is two to three years, with the pool of candidates usually coming from the instructor cadre.<sup>26</sup> All countries with a dedicated full-time team have larger militaries and populations than Canada.

Finally, several air forces have abandoned air demonstrations entirely: Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden are some examples.<sup>27</sup> Other countries such as Norway, however, have never fielded a team.<sup>28</sup> Retiring air demonstration teams has generally been due to flight accidents or costs to maintain the capability.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that having a demonstration team is not an indicator of a military's capability.

While Canada is not alone in having a dedicated air demonstration team, the way the Snowbirds are structured is different

from that of most of its peers. Two examples of their distinction from the structures used by other nations include using a stand-alone aircraft and nearly double the number of aircraft. Having military members posted to an independent unit and flying airshows as their primary duty demonstrates how Canada puts more resources into this tasking than its peers.

## Aircraft

DND purchased 190 Tutor aircraft in 1961 as the primary training aircraft at 2 CFFTS in Moose Jaw, SK.<sup>30</sup> It is a single-engine, turbojet-powered, low-wing aircraft with a side-by-side cockpit arrangement.<sup>31</sup> For forty years, this aircraft was the RCAF's main trainer, before being replaced in 2000. The twenty-year contract at 2 CFFTS was awarded in 1998 to the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program, a public-private partnership.<sup>32</sup> The contractor commenced training in 2000 on 24 Harvard and 18 Hawk aircraft.<sup>33</sup> This shift to contracted training would have several ramifications for 2CFFTS and 431 AD Squadron.

For 431 AD Squadron, it has meant a greater separation from the training school as maintaining an air demonstration team was not part of the NFTC contract, and contractor requirements regarding supporting air demonstrations are addressed in the Flight Operations Manual. It states that "the nature of the contracts necessitates careful consideration before decisions are made to use the assets for non-training activities."<sup>34</sup> This direction ensures that the contractual obligations for training will be met and liability coverage through contractor insurance will be considered.<sup>35</sup> The RCAF works with the contractor and cannot accept tasking or risk without the contractor's support. These restrictions are nearly a moot point given the significantly smaller fleet of training aircraft; the initial purchase of Tutors in 1961 was for 190 aircraft, while the aircraft supporting NFTC was only 42. There were also additional challenges in setting up NFTC, where the expectation was to produce 81 Harvard sorties daily on a five-wave program.<sup>36</sup> This requirement needed between 17 to 21 aircraft to be serviced each day, thus leaving no excess capabilities for the air demonstration role.

The RCAF elected to maintain the Tutor fleet rather than retire the Snowbird Team in 2000 when NFTC began operations. However, the only units operating the Tutor from that point forward were 431 AD Squadron and Aerospace Engineering Test Establishment (AETE) in Cold Lake, Alberta. AETE initially had five Tutor aircraft, but gradually decreased their number to zero by 2020.<sup>37</sup> Maintaining the team on a different platform was a shift from what had been done historically when a training airframe was retired from service.

Once it was decided to retain the Tutor fleet for the Snowbirds, the plan was to retire the Tutor aircraft in 2010, ten years after the RCAF ceased using it for training.<sup>38</sup> That date was extended another ten years to 2020, despite an internal 2003 report that warned of escalating technical, safety and

financial risks and urged the fleet be replaced immediately.”<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, as Lee Berthiaume stated, “in 2008, the Canadian Forces examined options for replacing the Tutors in either 2015 or 2020. But officials decided on the 2020 date because of concerns about the cost of purchasing new planes.”<sup>40</sup> Defence Minister Peter MacKay commented that “although extending to the CT114 to 2020 will be technically challenging, overall it can be achieved with minimal risk and at a significantly lower cost when compared against a new aircraft acquisition.”<sup>41</sup> Other options, such as leasing or substituting the CF-188 Hornet fighter aircraft, were not pursued due to costs.<sup>42</sup>

The Snowbird Aircraft Replacement Project (SARP) was created and linked to the Tutor life extension to 2020.<sup>43</sup> SARP also considered linking the Tutor to the new NFTC contract expected in 2020. This link was obviously desirable given that the estimated cost of replacing the Tutor was between \$500 million and \$1.5 billion.<sup>44</sup> While the Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) program to replace NFTC discussed attaching the Snowbird requirements to this contract, it was not pursued, nor was leasing aircraft for the team. The awarding of the FAcT contract will take place in 2023 and is currently only focused on aircrew training and not air demonstration.<sup>45</sup> SARP is currently inactive, and the Tutor fleet has again been extended to 2030. “Pushing the retirement planes to 2030 would make some of them roughly 67 years old.”<sup>46</sup> The NFTC contract has also been extended from 2020 to 2027.<sup>47</sup>

This most recent extension of the Tutor to 2030 comes at a high cost due to the upgrades—that will permit it to continue flying in airspace—that have significantly more avionics requirements than those that existed in the 1970s. “Public Services and Procurement Canada awarded a \$26-million contract to L3 Harris on March 11 [2021] for the upgrade that will see the development of a new avionics suite for the aerobatic planes.”<sup>48</sup> In addition, “Another contract will be put in place to install the avionics equipment, bringing the total project cost to \$30 million.”<sup>49</sup> This avionics upgrade is in addition to overdue upgrades to the ejection seat system. Projections for all modernization projects are between \$50 and \$99 million.<sup>50</sup>

These costs and extensions confirm that “it is increasingly challenging to keep older platforms airworthy, and that challenge becomes more expensive with age.”<sup>51</sup> It is clear why air forces around the world prefer to fly aircraft that are used either in training or in an operational role to help justify the cost and ease the burden of maintaining a completely separate platform for air demonstration. Given what peer nations do and what the RCAF has done in the past, tying the air demonstration role to the training fleet would be a more affordable way forward.

## Reconstitution/Staffing

The CAF has yet to reach the desired staffing levels directed in Strong Secure Engaged of 71,500 regular force members.<sup>52</sup> More recent reporting shows that the CAF is short 7,600 members

from the more realistic target of 65,000 regular members.<sup>53</sup> Recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the gap, with recruiting only at one third of its regular rates.<sup>54</sup> The shortage is further compounded when considering attrition, where the CAF has lost 2300 regular force members.<sup>55</sup> “Compounding this issue is the challenge of the ‘missing middle’—nearly 10,000 vacant CAF positions, many of which are empty Sr NCO [Senior Non-Commissioned Members], junior officer, and senior leadership billets.”<sup>56</sup>

Due to these shortfalls, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) issued a Planning Directive for the Canadian Armed Forces Reconstitution in July 2021. The objective of this directive is to separate “the discretionary from the essential. Focus on entry-level training. Prioritize staffing at schools to ensure personnel generation objectives are met while also reducing the requirements for incremental augmentation.”<sup>57</sup> As 431 AD Squadron is neither training—Force Generation (FG), nor operational—Force Employment (FE), it reports to 1 Canadian Air Division, which controls FE for the RCAF, during the show season and to 2 Canadian Air Division, responsible for FG during the offseason.<sup>58</sup> Thus, when the CDS prioritizes school staffing, 431 AD Squadron is not a training establishment and, therefore, not a main effort for the Reconstitution plan. However, the staffing levels at 431 AD Squadron are robust, with 89 of 91 positions filled.<sup>59</sup>

The occupational health of the pilot trade is currently at 90%, with 1396 trained pilots.<sup>60</sup> The forecasted occupational health is 84% in 2025 and 80% in 2029.<sup>61</sup> The trade forecasting is currently down due to the reduced number of students graduating. There are many factors contributing to low production, but the primary reason is the shortage of QFIs at training establishments. In addition, the RCAF cannot train enough pilots to make up for those released from the institution. The typical attrition rate for the pilot trade is 6%, which equates to approximately 84 personnel per year,<sup>62</sup> while 2 CFFTS is expected to produce 115 Phase II graduates each year.<sup>63</sup> The current forecast is at 60, with the shortage of QFIs being one of the most significant factors for the reduced production.<sup>64</sup> This gap of 24 between pilots being created and pilots being released is causing overall occupational health to have a forecasted downward trend.

Most applicants to Snowbird tryouts each year are provided by 2 CFFTS. However, the staffing levels of 2 CFFTS are below the RCAF average. Of the 76 Captain pilot positions, only 53 (70%) are filled.<sup>65</sup> Of those, only 32 (42%) are fully trained QFIs.<sup>66</sup> The rest has not completed the Flight Instructor Course, are medically grounded, or are on parental leave.<sup>67</sup> Several factors have led the school to reach unhealthy staffing levels, significantly reducing the number of pilots graduating to half the number expected by the RCAF. In addition, 2 CFFTS QFIs who have experience on the Tutor aircraft have assisted 431 AD Squadron during tryouts, further exacerbating shortages at the school.<sup>68</sup>

The aircraft maintenance trades are also in dire health, with an occupational health considered red at 90% in February 2022, and on a downward trend due to reductions in enrolment during the pandemic.<sup>69</sup> In addition, the actual trade health is 80% when considering who is fully qualified to do the job.<sup>70</sup> Since 431 AD Squadron has a small maintenance footprint, it is not considered a Training Establishment; it does not receive apprentice technicians to fill vacancies, but rather qualified journeymen from other fleets, mainly the CF188. Air Maintenance Technician health is forecasted to be on a downward trend until 2025.<sup>71</sup> This reduction is primarily because training during the pandemic did not keep pace with attrition and is exacerbated by the addition of several new fleets to the RCAF, such as Manned Airborne Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (MAISR) and Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS).

Attracting qualified candidates has become a significant challenge since the RCAF stopped using the Tutor as its training aircraft in 2000. Candidates no longer have experience flying the Tutor as all pilots in the past 22 years have trained on the Harvard. Historically, the expectation for applicants was 1300 hours of military jet time.<sup>72</sup> The most recent solicitation message states, "1000 hours flying time and two years of operational flying. Preference will be given to those candidates with a tour on the ejection seat aircraft."<sup>73</sup> To address the shortfall of candidates, the unit "will now seek applications direct from the multi-engine and rotary-wing communities. Pilots applying from those communities should expect to spend one year with 431 AD Squadron in training before being placed in a numbered show team position."<sup>74</sup> Thus the number of pilots posted to 431 AD Squadron will increase above what would typically be posted as they try to allow candidates time to build Tutor experience before trying out for the team.

A further example of the lack of desirability of the unit can also be seen in the most recent solicitation message. It states, "Those successful candidates who complete their tour obligations with 431 AD Squadron will be given their choice of follow-on postings to the Capability Advisory Group (CAG) or geographical location of their choice."<sup>75</sup> Such promises of postings are not offered to any others in the CAF. A further sign of the difficulty of garnering applicants is the recent addition to the solicitation message "Unit COs [Commanding Officers] are expected to be actively involved in searching for skilled and professional candidates for this tremendous opportunity."<sup>76</sup> This direction stresses the low interest and the pressures put on all communities to fulfill this remit even though all communities feel the current shortage of personnel.

Tryouts are held each autumn and allow up to eight personnel to audition for up to four positions. In recent years, 431 AD Squadron has had as few as six applicants try out for these four positions.<sup>77</sup> The unit has extended tours of successful applicants from three years to four or five years to ensure the team remains fully staffed.<sup>78</sup> Filling the 431 AD Squadron billets

is proving to be more difficult each year, due to overall staffing levels in the RCAF as well as the required experience needed to be a member of the team.

## Recruiting Tool/Symbolism

The Snowbirds state they are "serving as ambassadors of the CAF" who "inspire the pursuit of excellence wherever they go in North America."<sup>79</sup> There is no doubt that over their 52-year history, they have become a Canadian symbol. However, no data support any link between Snowbird performances and increased CAF recruitment. Nor does their mandate include foreign relations, yet 20-35% of their annual shows are in the United States.<sup>80</sup> This high number of airshows outside Canada also means that the costs spent on this capability are only in support of 40 to 48 Canadian events per year.

Given that there is no evidence that the team has a positive impact on recruiting, that it has no foreign relations mandate, and that one third of its shows are not in Canada, what military role is it fulfilling for the CAF? While the Snowbirds are a symbolic entity that the Government has leaned on, most recently with OPERATION INSPIRATION during the pandemic, their prioritization by both the RCAF and the Government warrants reconsideration.<sup>81</sup> At a minimum, the Snowbirds should be part of the CAF's strategic approach to marketing and recruiting.<sup>82</sup>

## Government Priorities

The Government released Strong Secure Engaged (SSE) in 2017 to provide a long-term vision of Canada's defence policy.<sup>83</sup> This 113-page document goes into detail about priorities for the CAF and the planned procurement projects for the institution. Recruiting and retention are mentioned, but there is no reference to the Snowbirds, their role, or an upgrade to the fleet.

The Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) program is in the process of being contracted out by the RCAF. "The program will include delivery of pilot training, as well as aircrew training for air combat systems officers and airborne electronic sensor operators."<sup>84</sup> The Request for Proposal (RFP) has been provided to qualified suppliers. This contract is significant as it will combine contracts for training in Moose Jaw, Southport, and Winnipeg for three trades. The awarding of the contract is planned for 2023.<sup>85</sup> FAcT will replace the Harvard and Hawk fleets in Moose Jaw. There is no requirement in the RFP to support an air demonstration capability.

Fighter Lead in Training (FLIT) is the flying program that fills the gap between pilots who obtain their wings on the training fleets in Moose Jaw and those that are streamed to fly jets, currently the CF-188 Hornet. The FLIT program is presently under the NFTC program that expires with the current contract and is not included in the FAcT program. Industry Engagement began for the FFLIT (Future FLIT) replacement contract in June 2021, and the

project is currently in the Options Analysis Phase with a planned definition summer of 2024.<sup>86</sup> The Strategic Context Document does not include air demonstration as a requirement.<sup>87</sup> The RCAF has moved towards a contracted solution for pilot training and has not defined air demonstration as a requirement or priority in either program now being finalized. Given the link between training fleets and air demonstration for most air forces, and given the shift to contracting for training fleets, the RCAF needs to be clear in either including air demonstration as part of the requirements in future contracts, or initiating the process for fleet replacement more traditionally if air demonstration is to continue to be a tasking to be fulfilled.

An added complication is that 431 AD Squadron is on the 15 Wing Base in Moose Jaw, where portions of the FACt and FFLIT contracts will be implemented. These contracts also include infrastructure for the school but not for 431 AD Squadron. With no concrete plan other than the current airframe being used until 2030, the requirement for updated facilities will also need to be considered if this is a continued role that the RCAF feels warrants the investment.

## Conclusion

Given the current challenges regarding personnel shortages and pressures on the RCAF to fulfill multiple new capabilities, it is time to retire 431 AD Squadron and the Snowbird air demonstration team. Canada has had several different air demonstration teams over the years. When the Tutor was retired from training, it should have been retired from air demonstration, but the RCAF elected to do otherwise. No other peer nation flies a nine-ship team full-time on an aircraft with no other role in their air force.

The RCAF needs to prioritize FG and FE over entertainment. The Snowbirds are a luxury from another era, flying an aircraft that ceased being used for training in 2000, with team members having no other role but to perform. The extravagance of having a unit of 100 personnel dedicated to air demonstration is long past. The staffing levels of the RCAF show this, and the difficulties that 431 Squadron has at recruiting potential candidates reflect this.

Once the contracts are awarded for FACt and FFLIT, the RCAF can assess if one of these airframes would be appropriate for a smaller team of up to five who perform at Canadian events as a secondary duty to instructing. This contract amendment could include additional aircraft and services to support this role. With the RCAF increasing airframes and capabilities while also struggling with attrition, the institution needs to reduce or remove air demonstration.

The Snowbirds celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021; that would have been an ideal time to retire the team and commence efforts to look forward to what comes next for the country regarding air demonstration. The RCAF will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024. At that point, the Tutor will have been flying for 64 years. By then, the FACt contract will have been awarded, and FFLIT RFI will be complete. An analysis will be possible of the feasibility of using one of the future training platforms for air demonstration. The RCAF anniversary seems like another ideal opportunity to celebrate and finally close the chapter on the Snowbird team. Termination does not mean Canada is quitting air demonstration, nor is it an indicator of how the team has conducted itself. There have been many teams before the Snowbirds; there is no reason to believe there will not be again. It is time for the RCAF to make the hard decisions that staffing and priorities demand.

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Members of HMCS CALGARY conduct counter-smuggling operations in the Arabian Sea during OPERATION ARTEMIS and as part of Combined Task Force 150, on June 6, 2021.

Photo: Captain Jeffery Klassen, Public Affairs Officer, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

## The *Jeune École* Redux: Ukraine and Armed Resistance at Sea

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Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally changed the context in which global powers consider conflicts and crises. After the Cold War, Western nations mainly paid attention to threats like civil conflicts within states, terrorism, and transnational crime, among other non-state security issues. Nevertheless, Russia's actions, leading to the first major conflict between states in Europe this century, have caused Western countries to re-evaluate their approach to handling and opposing states with an adversarial disposition.<sup>1</sup>

This applies not only in Europe but also in other regions such as Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, as other state actors may follow Russia's approach.<sup>2</sup> Tragically, the conflict in Ukraine has led to immense human suffering. Russian military attacks have demolished cities and civilian areas; the disruption in Ukraine has led to food supply issues in some of the world's most at-risk nations and has made global energy markets more unstable.<sup>3</sup> The high human cost that the ongoing war is incurring is a stark reminder of how adversarial powers can disrupt international peace and stability. Despite the severe negative impacts, the conflict has also offered a chance for Western analysts and planners to learn from the Ukrainian experience. These insights can guide efforts to prevent or respond to aggressive actions in various international disputes, crises, and conflicts.

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Ukraine's whole-of-society approach to defence has found ways to challenge a much larger enemy, which in equipment, personnel, and presence standards is far superior. Well-documented examples of this include the use of small commercial unmanned air systems (UAS) for tactical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); the use of UAS to deliver small munitions against a variety of static and mobile targets; the development of situational awareness management software accessible to tactical units; the modification of weapon systems such as anti-ship and anti-radiation missiles so they can be deployed from alternative platforms such as ground vehicles; and, the effective use of social media to conduct information operations.<sup>4</sup> This adaptability and overall asymmetric strategic approach have sought to even the playing field against a much larger adversary across a variety of domains, including the maritime domain. Some of the most

salient actions have been taken at sea. This includes the sinking of the missile cruiser *Movska*, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, attacks against critical infrastructure in Crimea, and the capture of offshore platforms occupied by Russian forces.<sup>5</sup> Ukraine has accomplished all these actions without standing naval forces comparable to what Russia has deployed in the same area of operations. Nevertheless, this has not stopped the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF), and in particular the Ukrainian Navy, from delivering significant operational and strategic effects against Russia. The naval dimension of this asymmetric approach has become reminiscent of the paradigms of the *Jeune École*, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century French naval warfare theory that proposed using speed, stealth, and dispersion against navies with large capital ships, which at the time were the key operational asset behind naval supremacy.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, the purpose of this article is to discuss how the current naval strategy being employed by Ukraine against Russia reflects a contemporary implementation of the principles advanced by the *Jeune École*, as an asymmetric approach to warfare at sea. Mainly, it will be argued that the Ukrainian naval forces, in a similar manner to the French strategic thinking of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are using technological innovation as a solution to address the challenge of confronting an enemy with broader and more robust capabilities in the maritime domain. To accomplish this, this article will revisit the tenets behind the paradigm and how these are integrated into a broader asymmetric strategic warfare to inter-state conflict. Subsequently, the article will assess some of the salient naval operations undertaken by Ukraine and determine how these are measured as a contemporary interpretation of the *Jeune École*. Finally, the article concludes with some considerations and lessons learned for Western naval and joint forces to ponder as the tempo of geopolitical competition, crisis, and conflict increases. Ultimately, just as the war in Ukraine has marked a major shift in the international security environment, it has also offered the West an opportunity to assess which operational and tactical approaches are effective against near-peer adversaries. The war in Ukraine is being fought across various domains: land, air, sea, cyber, and cognitive space, allowing observers to see how innovations interact across domains while also enabling deeper dives into domain-specific experimentation.

### Revisiting the *Jeune École*

The *Jeune École* was a theory of naval warfare that emphasized the application of new technologies as an approach through which weaker naval forces could confront much larger adversaries by gaining an indirect comparative advantage. Its theoretical foundations can be traced back to a 19<sup>th</sup>-century French strategic dilemma linked to how to address capability gaps vis-à-vis peer competitors at the time. During this period, geopolitical competition among European powers was rife as countries not

only sought to consolidate their spheres of influence across the continent but also to project power abroad as the race for empire was at its height. Indeed, the *Jeune École* emerged from the collaboration of various like-minded military thinkers and policymakers who shared views on how to break the status quo of competition and warfare at sea. A French naval officer, Captain Richild Grivel, was the first one to assert that, based on decades of operational experience in the 1800s, a confrontation between conventional navies would always result in victory for the larger and better-equipped force. Thus, the British Royal Navy could exercise dominance against weaker peer adversaries.<sup>7</sup> For Grivel, an indirect approach to attack supply networks and vulnerable civilian shipping offered a better opportunity to challenge the Royal Navy by focusing on Great Britain's vulnerability at sea.<sup>8</sup> The overall notion proposed by Grivel resonated with Vice Admiral Hyacinthe Laurent Théophile Aube, a senior French naval officer who had been intellectually dedicated to finding innovative ways to increase the strategic effects that could be delivered by French naval forces abroad. For Aube, the critical aspect was to identify strategic centers of gravity which naval forces could affect, rather than focusing on decisive battles at sea. For the context and perceived adversary of the time, this meant targeting the country's wealth by attacking commercial shipping, or what Aube saw as the lifeline of an insular Great Britain.<sup>9</sup> With a defined strategic effect, the question for Aube became how to achieve this, especially when a key factor was to avoid scenarios leading to major sea battles, and as such, the answer from his perspective lay on technological innovation. The focus of this innovation was the torpedo along with its delivery platform, the torpedo boat, which in turn was a small, fast, and maneuverable vessel that could carry a payload sufficient to destroy or damage larger targets.<sup>10</sup> These boats, in squadrons of up to twenty, would be in theory supported by larger ships such as gunboats, cruisers, and larger coastal defence vessels that could provide additional support when confronting an enemy fleet made of larger vessels, as might be expected from other European powers.<sup>11</sup>

The value proposition offered by the torpedo boat, according to Aube and other officials who shared his views, was that it would bring mobility, speed, and lethality at sea, challenging existing tactical approaches such as naval blockades and convoys by much larger ships. The number of torpedo boats in each squadron would also mean that, while on the offensive, several axes of attack could be used, using something similar to a hit-and-run approach, which would make the heavy weaponry and higher tonnage of larger ships a significant disadvantage.<sup>12</sup> This would also place a major strategic dilemma on the larger fleet, since if it were to protect its vital commercial and naval supply lines, questions would arise as to where to concentrate naval forces across the vast ocean.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, the torpedo boat force could quickly make areas inaccessible to commercial shipping by exploiting the limited resources of the opposing force. When

looking at the larger system identified by Aube, the routes used by commercial shipping were not the only ones to constitute a strategic target. A journalist and close associate of Aube by the name of Gabriel Charmes identified another element of this indirect approach to naval warfare: Targeting the critical maritime infrastructure that is essential to ensure that the commodities and goods being transported by sea reach the metropolis on the mainland.<sup>14</sup> To this end, Charmes saw gunboats and coastal defence vessels as an important part of his proposed strategy, as they could be used to attack coastal targets.<sup>15</sup> In principle, these boats would share some of the mobility and speed of torpedo boats (compared to traditional larger vessels of the time), but would possess the capability to inflict damage on littoral zones, based on the range of the weapon systems they carried.

The end of the century saw a struggle between the approach proposed by Aube, Grivel, Charmes, and other writers and naval officers, who became known as the *Jeune École*, versus traditionalists that still advocated superiority through decisive battles between much larger capital ships. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the *Jeune École* ideas gained some traction, and as such were tried out with mixed results due to technological gaps and subsequent operational problem sets, such as the operational range of smaller vessels or the actual effectiveness of weapon systems for the effects desired i.e., the kinetic effect delivered by small gunboats on land-based targets.<sup>16</sup> This debate continued throughout the turn of the century, and as new technologies emerged, such as submarines, some of these propositions continued to resonate among military thinkers, even though they never reached a level of acceptance that would have propelled this paradigm in the central tenet behind French naval doctrine in the *fin-de-siècle era*.<sup>17</sup> More importantly for contemporary observers, the *Jeune École* offers an initial probe into the application of asymmetric warfare through technological innovation in the maritime domain.

## An Asymmetric Approach to Naval Warfare

As alluded to in the previous section, the strategic concept advocated by Aube and others shares some core principles consistent with asymmetric warfare, creating an entry point for its application in the maritime domain. A useful definition provided by Breen and Getzel describes an asymmetric approach to warfare as the ability to transform an adversary's perceived source of strength or strategic superiority into a vulnerability.<sup>18</sup> Both go on to suggest that such an approach is actor agnostic in the sense that it can be used by both strong and weak actors, whether states or violent non-state entities, against equal, weaker, or stronger adversaries. This challenges the common view that asymmetric warfare is ontologically reserved only for actors deemed weak fighting a better-resourced adversary such as an insurgency.<sup>19</sup> As early as in the late 1990s, Bennett, Twomey, and Treverton saw asymmetric strategies as an approach that could be used by state actors seeking to challenge a far more powerful

adversary by targeting unperceived vulnerabilities, through tools generated by technological, operational, and informational innovation in all phases of war.<sup>20</sup> To some extent, this is consistent with Lidell Harts' indirect approach, where the focus of a strategy should be on targeting the key enablers of military strength, such as "morale, control and supply" rather than directly confronting their military capabilities.<sup>21</sup>

These paradigms help elucidate the principles that the *Jeune École* advanced that would allow the French Navy to challenge or counter stronger adversaries. Moreover, this would be done in such a way that one of the belligerents avoids a confrontation between equal capabilities through a cost-effective comparative advantage that can be developed, sustained, and ultimately, used to increase its overall chances of success. The key problem is to achieve desired politico-military effects and outcomes in a context where an adversary has superior capabilities in terms of resources, including materiel, technology, personnel, and others. To this end, the inability of fleets with large capital ships, the perceived strength of navies at the time to hold ground due to the nature of the maritime environment, as well as limitations in speed and placement, were opportunities seen by the theorists behind the *Jeune École* that should be exploited. This could be done by employing new tools, tactics, and approaches that would seek to target what were seen as the pillars of naval strength. From this perspective, it is helpful to assess how some of the operational characteristics of asymmetric warfare measure up to the underlying ideas that the *Jeune École* and its proponents developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Bennett et al. highlighted three types of operational actions that are characteristic of asymmetric warfare, which in turn can be used to support specific strategic effects against the stronger adversary.<sup>22</sup> These operational actions include (i) military and/or economic denial (ii) military disruption, and (iii) political and/or economic disruption.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of denial operations, the proponents of the *Jeune École* were quick to recognize that maritime denial was feasible through the mobility and speed that could be achieved by applying new military technologies. Aube, Chambers, and others saw the use of torpedo boats, gunboats, and eventually submarines as tactical tools that would prohibit the use of blockades by traditional warships.<sup>24</sup> This, along with the dispersal of ports, would challenge one of the common tactics of maritime nations with large navies by taking advantage of the speed, manoeuvrability, and stealth of smaller vessels that were still capable of delivering a significant payload to larger sitting targets.<sup>25</sup> Later proponents of the *Jeune École* also argued that denial operations could be brought into the enemy's harbours thanks to the advent of submarines, creating uncertainty by targeting large ships leaving port.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on avoiding decisive battles meant that the application of new military technology would focus on hit-and-run



Members of HMCS CALGARY's embarked Naval Tactical Operations Group team conduct counter-smuggling operations in the Arabian Sea during Operation ARTEMIS and as part of Combined Task Force 150, on May 12, 2021.

Photo: Captain Jeffery Klassen, Public Affairs Officer, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

tactics, sequencing the dispersion and concentration of naval forces and taking advantage of the speed of smaller vessels and the lighter logistics support required to enable such vessels.<sup>27</sup> At the heart of Aube's strategic approach, however, was political and economic disruption through commercial raiding, which he identified as the centre of gravity of naval powers such as Great Britain at the time.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, the *Jeune École* embodied the concept of asymmetric warfare by using innovation as a tool to turn adversarial strength into vulnerability. While the approach was limited by the technological and political constraints of the time, the current situation in Ukraine has become a case study in which military necessity has led to the implementation of strategies compatible with the concepts proposed by Aube and other proponents of the *Jeune École*.

## Ukraine as a Case Study

The maritime dimension of Ukraine's ongoing resistance against Russia's illegal full-scale invasion brought forward the *Jeune École*'s core theoretical foundations dating back more than a century ago, primarily the manner in which technological innovations can be used to conduct asymmetric warfare at sea against an enemy with larger naval capabilities such as Russia. This is evident in the overall concept of applying technological innovation to asymmetric warfare at sea against a much stronger adversary. Between 2014 and the start of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine sought to revamp its Navy after it was cannibalized by Russian forces following the illegal seizure of Crimea.<sup>29</sup> This not only included seeking to build its surface fleet but also to develop capabilities that could be better adapted to fight a much larger Russian naval force that was in the process of building up even further.<sup>30</sup> By the time of the invasion, the Russian Black Sea Fleet had approximately 58 vessels, including six submarines and six

“ Ukraine was left with a post-2014 navy that included 22 vessels, with only one surface combatant that was sunk by the Ukrainian Navy to prevent its capture by the Russians, as well as a 6000-strong naval infantry and naval aviation force, which mainly possesses rotary wing assets.”

surface combatants, as well as one naval infantry corps and two naval aviation regiments (fixed-wing and rotary wing).<sup>31</sup> By contrast, Ukraine was left with a post-2014 navy that included 22 vessels, with only one surface combatant that was sunk by the Ukrainian Navy to prevent its capture by the Russians, as well as a 6000-strong naval infantry and naval aviation force, which mainly possesses rotary wing assets.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, during this time the Ukrainian Navy started developing capabilities aligned with recent technological innovations, such as the TB-2 Bayraktar unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) capable of carrying anti-ship payloads, as well as the development of an indigenous long-range cruise missile, the R-360 Neptune.<sup>33</sup> The relative imbalance of sea power between Ukraine and Russia became apparent during the initial stages of the full-scale invasion, as Russia sought to quickly dominate the maritime domain by controlling “key terrain,” such as Ukrainian islands and oil rigs in its littoral zone, using long-range fires from maritime assets, and attempting to carry out a naval blockade of the remaining Ukrainian ports. Nevertheless, Ukraine has been able to seize the initiative and, with its limited resources, has dominated the Black Sea by adopting, developing, and applying a naval strategy that has turned Russian strength into exploitable conditions for the Ukrainian Navy and armed forces. These can be looked at through the lenses of military denial, military disruption, and political/economic disruption that are present in both the paradigms behind the *Jeune École* and asymmetric warfare.

The use of denial maritime operations through the application of new technologies has been a staple of Ukraine’s naval strategy in the Black Sea. In the same way that Aube and Charmes had envisioned the use of torpedo boats and gunboats as disruptors that could prevent navies with larger ships from exercising blockades and other forms of naval control, the Ukrainian Navy

has extensively used a variety of innovative tools, including unmanned surface vessels (USV), better known as naval drones. These ingeniously developed naval drones can carry out “kamikaze” type missions, which have limited the capacity of the Russian Black Fleet to launch sea-based cruise missiles against Ukrainian targets, by creating a stand-off area where they can hit and sink all kinds of crewed vessels, including surface combatants.<sup>34</sup> These uncrewed vessels are cheap to produce, are designed to be fast, have a low profile, and can deliver the same effect as an expensive anti-ship munition. Given their overall success in area denial and offensive operations, the Ukrainian Navy has created a specialized unit to operate naval drones, the 385<sup>th</sup> Separate Brigade, which currently has a variety of surface and subsurface drones at its disposal that are produced locally.<sup>35</sup> In addition to these drones, the Ukrainian Navy has also integrated the use of other tools, including the Neptune and Harpoon anti-ship missiles that are launched from shore-based platforms, dissuading Russian vessels from coming within range of these weapon systems.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the use of UCAS has been integrated as part of the maritime denial strategy and has allegedly enabled the support of the sinking of the *Movska* by providing ISR support to the Ukrainian Neptune missile strikes that delivered the final blow to the Russian cruiser.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the development, application, and use of new naval warfare technologies, in addition to the necessary doctrine and tactics to do so, have placed the Ukrainian naval and joint forces in a position where they can deny Russian supremacy in the Black Sea, regardless of the size of its fleet in the area of operations.

Furthermore, these same capabilities have been used to carry out disruption operations across the Black Sea, particularly in occupied Crimea. Naval drones have been the tool of choice to attack Russian naval bases and ships on and around the peninsula, including in Sevastopol, the home of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, thus discouraging vessels from exposing themselves by being outside the range of port defences.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, attacks on vessels (including a missile-carrying corvette and a submarine), air defence systems, airfields, and shore-based command and control nodes have also been utilized effectively with anti-ship missiles in a more forward offensive role.<sup>39</sup> These strikes have also seen the extensive use of UAS to provide reconnaissance and act as decoys in support of the incoming missiles.<sup>40</sup> Adding to the operational toolkit, amphibious raiding teams have played a key role in the ongoing Ukrainian asymmetric naval efforts to control ground and harass Russian occupying forces in littoral areas. Amphibious raids were used to retake Snake Island, which had been lost to Russian troops despite staunch resistance from Ukrainian border guards stationed there; recapture gas drilling platforms near Crimea, which Russia had been using as sea-based radar stations; and more daringly, to conduct hit-and-run raids on the peninsula, used to sabotage military equipment near the coast and challenge Moscow’s sense of control over the

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territory.<sup>41</sup> The orchestrated, integrated use of these various operational tools in Crimea has been key in not only limiting Russian naval operations in the Black Sea but also setting conditions to disrupt land operations, given that the peninsula is a key logistics and support hub for the Russian army units operating in southern Ukraine.<sup>42</sup> Beyond the military dimension, the Ukrainian asymmetric approach to naval warfare in Crimea has also been used to deliver political and economic disruption effects. This has been achieved by conducting operations against politically valuable targets such as the Kerch Bridge, which has been attacked using a variety of means including naval drones, cruise missiles, and air strikes.<sup>43</sup> The bridge is a key lifeline between Crimea and the Russian mainland, and it is a prestige project erected by the Kremlin after the annexation of the peninsula.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the consistent rate of attacks against Crimea has also impacted key industries such as tourism and has defied the image of absolute control that Moscow wanted to portray since its annexation in 2014.

From an operational perspective, the ongoing sea campaign conducted by Ukraine's asymmetric naval capabilities has lifted some of the pressure that was being applied by the Black Sea Fleet. Successful Ukrainian attacks have pushed Russian naval forces to operate across the eastern section of the Black Sea, which has limited the capacity to use cruise missiles as the distance allows for early warning, civilian preparation, and air defence response.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Ukraine has been able to resume maritime trade, which had been disrupted by Russian naval forces, to the point that between August 2023 and February 2024, it was able to export 26 million tons of goods through the Black Sea, which according to Ukrainian authorities is close to pre-war levels.<sup>46</sup> On the military side, open-source information indicates that approximately 21 to 24 surface vessels plus a submarine have been destroyed by the Ukrainians, without counting small

auxiliary vessels and strikes against shore-based infrastructure.<sup>47</sup> The tempo of the attacks is also worth noting, with various sources reporting that between January and December 2023, approximately 184 attacks were carried out using USV, UAS, and long-range missiles against the Black Sea Fleet and targets in Crimea.<sup>48</sup> While current operating conditions may change and Russia may find ways to counteract these various capabilities as of 2024, the approach has been to minimize exposure of the Ukrainian fleet, while targets in Crimea remain vulnerable as long as Ukraine can sustain the current naval asymmetric capabilities.

## Conclusion

Faced with an adversary with greater maritime capabilities in terms of materiel, personnel, and resources, the Ukrainian Navy has adopted an asymmetric approach to naval warfare that seeks, through technical innovation, to exploit the weaknesses that emerge from Russia's perceived position of strength. This strategic approach draws strong parallels with the theoretical approach behind the *Jeune École* that appeared in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gained some traction up until the turn of the century. This approach sought to address the strategic problem set of defeating large navies, which based their strength on the number of capital ships, through an indirect approach based on technological and tactical innovations. At the time, the idea was focused on countering firepower with speed, stealth, numbers, and mobility using smaller yet faster vessels that could employ new weapon systems, such as torpedo boats or, later on, submarines. Moreover, such an approach in itself represents a manifestation of asymmetric warfare in the maritime domain, by seeking to turn an adversarial strength into a weakness through denial and disruption. By looking at the current Ukrainian context, it is possible to see how the overall principles of the *Jeune École* are being applied in a live scenario. Instead of fast torpedo boats and gunboats, we see the use of emerging technologies mainly in the form of drones, both USV and UCAS, as well as the use of surface-to-surface missiles repurposed to be deployed from diverse platforms and to strike a variety of targets.

These innovative approaches are used through an indirect approach that seeks to deny and disrupt, capitalizing on the limitations that large naval formations, such as the Russian Black Sea Fleet, have. For students of strategic studies as well as policy and military professionals, this offers an opportunity to gather lessons learned that can be applied in other contexts. On one hand, it opens the question of how Western countries, even the ones with large navies, could employ an asymmetric approach to naval warfare, either directly or working with partners, to deny an adversary control over the maritime domain. Western naval forces should consider making targeted investments to develop low-cost yet technologically driven capabilities, such as USVs and UASs, and even updating old weapon systems with new targeting technologies. Specialized dedicated units could focus on

the testing and eventual operationalization of these capabilities in the short to medium term. The investments themselves can be small but targeted in efforts to pilot the application of new technologies while maintaining a low-cost approach that can be scaled up once key capabilities are identified, developed, and ready for operationalization. Once these reach an operational point, the capabilities would work as force multipliers to existing investments, such as updated surface combatants and patrol vessels that remain the backbone of allied naval forces. This is especially relevant if the commitment of key and resource-intensive naval assets such as surface combatants is to be avoided. On the other hand, the Ukrainian context is also a warning to

the West and its naval forces on potential vulnerabilities that can be exploited by both state and non-state actors through an asymmetric approach in other theatres of operation. Especially in the Middle East, it has been seen how adversaries such as Iran and its proxies in Iraq and Yemen have quickly mastered the development application of drone and ballistic missile capabilities using accessible technology and low-cost components. In the end, this is an opportunity to explore ways in which the principles of the *Jeune École* can be applied in the current strategic environment in efforts to increase overall capacity and reduce potential risks in the maritime domain.

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Members of HMCS William Hall with support from the St. Kitts and Nevis Defence Force, help conduct renovations and repairs to the Conaree Community Center during a Community Relations event as the ship is alongside in Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis, during Operation CARIBBE on 05 June 2025.

Photo: Canadian Armed Forces Imagery Technician

## Testing the Efficacy of S.P.A.C.E: A Mindfulness and Character-Based Intervention

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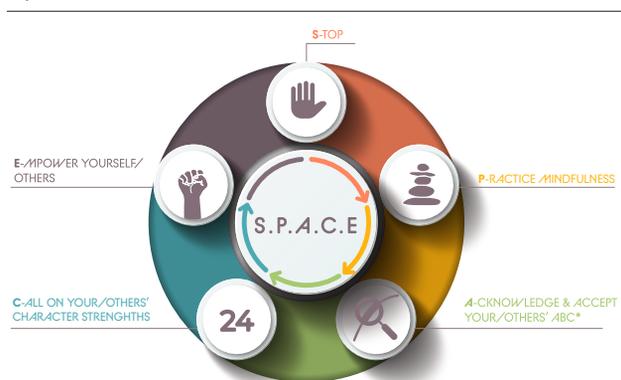
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Positive Psychology Interventions (PPI) have garnered significant attention in recent years as effective approaches for enhancing psychological well-being and resilience.<sup>1</sup> With the increasing rise in unprecedented mental health challenges, PPI aim to improve individuals' overall well-being and ability to cope with adversity.<sup>2</sup> One such intervention is the S.P.A.C.E intervention,<sup>3</sup> a Mindfulness and Character-Based Intervention (MCBI) that integrates various evidence-based techniques to promote resilience and enhance one's response to stress. It aligns with the principles of positive psychology and offers practical strategies for individuals to navigate challenges more effectively.

Viktor E. Frankl's quote, "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response," captures the essence of human agency. Unlike many non-human animals whose reactions are instinctual, humans can respond consciously. This ability to elongate the space between stimulus and response defines our humanity, allowing us to make thoughtful choices and cultivate better outcomes. According to the science of stress appraisal, reactions to stimuli are often instinctive and impulsive, driven by emotions and the fight-or-flight response in our brains. In contrast, responses involve a more thoughtful process involving cognitive appraisal and problem-solving.<sup>4</sup> While impulsive reactions ensured survival in our evolutionary history, modern threats require rational responses that engage the prefrontal cortex to regulate our thoughts and actions.<sup>5</sup>

The S.P.A.C.E MCBI, developed by Chérif and Wood,<sup>6</sup> outlines a structured PPI comprising five steps designed to disrupt and transform the habitual stimulus-response cycle. This intervention is grounded in several well-established psychological theories and evidence-based practices. Specifically, it integrates the principles of mindfulness,<sup>7</sup> which emphasizes present-moment awareness; the cognitive triangle from cognitive-behavioral therapy,<sup>8</sup> which highlights the interplay between emotions, behaviors, and thoughts; and psychological flexibility, a core component of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy,<sup>9</sup> to promote adaptive responses to stress. Additionally, the S.P.A.C.E MCBI incorporates character strengths<sup>10</sup> to reinforce resilience and enhance one's response to stress.

**Figure 1: S.P.A.C.E: A Mindfulness and Character-Based Intervention**



Steps of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI include the following:

**1. Stop:**

The first step in the S.P.A.C.E. model emphasizes pausing to recognize the challenge or activating event. This crucial pause allows for initial awareness of the situation, disengagement from automatic reactions, and the creation of mental space to observe the event clearly.

Our fast-paced lives make it easy to get entangled in past regrets or future worries. By simply stopping and recognizing the challenge in the present moment, we can create distance from the automatic emotional or cognitive responses that often accompany stressful situations. This step provides the foundation for the subsequent phases of intentional action.

**2. Practice Mindfulness:**

Once we have stopped and recognized the activating event, the next step is to practice mindfulness to manage our emotional and physiological responses. Mindfulness involves cultivating two essential qualities: awareness (the ability to focus on the present moment) and acceptance (an open, non-judgmental attitude toward one's experiences).<sup>11</sup> By fostering these qualities, individuals can increase their psychological flexibility<sup>12</sup> and better navigate stressors.

Mindfulness can be practiced through various techniques, including body scanning, meditation, guided imagery, and focused breathing exercises. One of the most effective breathing techniques is tactical breathing<sup>13</sup>—also known as combat breathing or box breathing—which involves a structured pattern designed to regulate stress, reduce anxiety, and enhance focus. This method is particularly effective in shifting the body from a heightened sympathetic (fight-or-flight) state to a calmer parasympathetic state, allowing individuals to regain control and maintain composure during stressful moments.

In high-stress scenarios, such as those faced by elite military units, athletes, or emergency responders, tactical breathing helps regulate the body's response by stimulating the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS), thereby reducing the physiological impact of stress. By practicing tactical breathing, we can regain composure and focus, mitigating the detrimental effects of stress on both mind and body.

This practice also draws on the ancient yogic technique of pranayama,<sup>14</sup> a method of controlled breathing that serves as a bridge between mind and body and promotes holistic healing. In contemporary therapeutic approaches, such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), breath awareness is a crucial strategy for emotional regulation and stress management.

The physiological benefits of tactical breathing include:

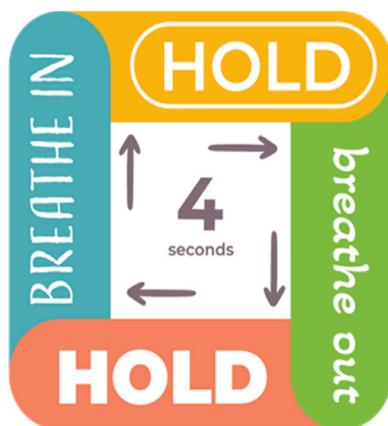
- **Activation of the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS):** Slow, deep breaths trigger the PNS, reducing heart rate and promoting relaxation.<sup>15</sup>
- **Regulation of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS):** Tactical breathing counteracts the body's stress response, restoring balance.
- **Reduction of Stress Hormones:** It decreases the release of cortisol and adrenaline, helping to manage stress levels.
- **Improved Heart Rate Variability (HRV):** Tactical breathing enhances HRV, which is linked to improved stress resilience.
  - **Regulation of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS):** Tactical breathing helps counteract the effects of the SNS, bringing the body back to equilibrium.
  - **Reduction of Stress Hormones:** Tactical breathing reduces the release of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline.
  - **Improved Heart Rate Variability (HRV):** Higher HRV, associated with better stress resilience, can be enhanced through tactical breathing.

Tactical breathing can be performed using these four basic steps:

- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four or four seconds.
- Hold your breath for a count of four.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of four.

Repeat this cycle as necessary until you feel more relaxed and focused. Engaging in this controlled and rhythmic breathing pattern is a mindfulness practice that diminishes stress and anxiety.<sup>16</sup>

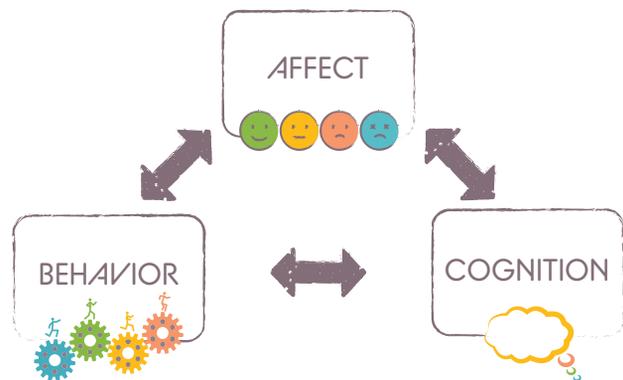
Figure 2: Tactical Breathing Cycle



### 3. Acknowledge and Accept Your/Others' Affects, Behaviour, and Cognition (ABC):

This step emphasizes the importance of recognizing and accepting the emotions, behaviours, and thoughts of oneself and others. Acceptance—central to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)—involves fully experiencing thoughts and feelings without attempting to suppress, avoid, or change them. Rather than resisting discomfort, acceptance creates space to engage with these internal experiences mindfully. The ABC model, also foundational to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), highlights how affects (emotions), behaviours (actions), and cognitions (thoughts) interact, shaping our responses to challenges.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 3: The ABC Triangle: Interplay of Affect, Behaviour, and Cognition



**Affects:** Recognizing and accepting emotions. Ask: What am I/are they feeling? Can I/they name the emotions? Naming emotions without judgment is the first step toward emotional intelligence and growth. Emotional intelligence involves recognizing, labelling, understanding, and regulating emotions in oneself and others. It is crucial for personal growth and effective social interactions. Emotional intelligence consists of four key domains:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to recognize one's emotions and understand their impact on thoughts and behavior.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate emotional responses and manage actions to avoid impulsive behaviors.
- **Social awareness:** The ability to perceive others' emotions, show empathy, and understand social cues.
- **Relationship management:** The ability to communicate clearly, resolve conflict, and sustain positive relationships.

**Behaviour:** Observing and accepting actions. Reflect on: How am I/are they reacting? How are my emotions influencing my/their behaviour? Are my actions aligned with my core values? Behaviours are often influenced by habits, which operate

automatically. The Habit Loop<sup>18</sup> (cue, routine, reward) helps explain how behaviours are triggered and maintained. Awareness of the cues and rewards associated with habitual behaviours enables more intentional choices about which habits to change or maintain. Self-regulation, a key part of emotional intelligence, enables individuals to manage their behaviours in a way that supports long-term goals rather than being driven by impulsive reactions.

Figure 4: The Habit Loop



**Cognition:** Becoming aware of and accepting thoughts. Ask: What thoughts are occurring—are they positive, neutral, or negative? How valid or distorted are these thoughts? Cognitive distortions, such as all-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralization, or catastrophizing, can perpetuate negative thought patterns. By accepting thoughts as they are—without judgment or the need to change them—we create space for more intentional, value-driven actions.

Acceptance involves experiencing our and others' ABCs— affects, behaviours, and cognitions—without judgment or the need to change them. This aligns with ACT's focus on psychological flexibility, which reduces internal struggle and enhances resilience. ACT encourages non-judgmental reflection on how these experiences align with personal values, enabling more intentional adjustments when necessary.

The ACT principle of defusion is essential here. Defusion involves observing thoughts and emotions as transient mental events rather than absolute truths or instructions. By recognizing the temporary nature of thoughts and feelings, individuals can reduce their influence on behaviour, allowing for more mindful, value-based actions. Defusion techniques, such as visualizing thoughts and emotions as clouds passing in the sky, help create distance from unhelpful thoughts and reduce their impact.

We can better understand how emotions and thoughts shape our behaviours by integrating emotional intelligence—focusing on self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy—and habit awareness. The combination of defusion from ACT and cognitive restructuring from CBT offers tools to reframe negative thoughts and foster healthier responses to life's challenges. This

nonjudgmental approach cultivates greater psychological flexibility, fostering a compassionate understanding of oneself and others and allowing for more adaptable, value-driven behaviour in difficult situations.

#### 4. Call on Your/Others' Character Strengths:

Identify and leverage your and others' character strengths to navigate situations effectively. Peterson and Seligman outline the six virtues and 24 character strengths as a robust framework for fostering personal growth and resilience. By recognizing and using both your own and others' strengths, you can approach challenges more effectively and align actions with core values.

- **Wisdom:** Creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, and perspective.
- **Courage:** Bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest.
- **Humanity:** Love, kindness, and social intelligence.
- **Justice:** Teamwork, fairness, and leadership.
- **Temperance:** Forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-regulation.
- **Transcendence:** Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, and spirituality.

Each of these strengths can be called upon in specific situations. For example, using Brown's mapping of 87 human emotions and experiences,<sup>19</sup> we suggest the following mapping to connect the character strengths with the specific emotions effectively:

<b>Stress, Overwhelm, Anxiety, Worry, Avoidance, Excitement, Dread, Fear, Vulnerability</b>	<b>Bravery:</b> Facing fears, not shrinking from threats or challenges.	<b>Perseverance:</b> Overcoming obstacles, persistence.
	<b>Curiosity:</b> Openness to experience, exploring new possibilities.	<b>Self-Regulation:</b> Managing impulses and emotions.
	<b>Hope:</b> Optimism, positive future-mindedness.	
<b>Anguish, Hopelessness, Despair, Sadness, Grief</b>	<b>Hope:</b> Optimism, expecting the best and working to achieve it.	<b>Gratitude:</b> Thankfulness, expressing thanks.
	<b>Love:</b> Valuing close relationships, warmth.	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, providing wise counsel.
	<b>Kindness:</b> Generosity, compassion.	
<b>Joy, Happiness, Calm, Contentment, Gratitude, Foreboding Joy, Relief, Tranquility</b>	<b>Zest:</b> Vitality, enthusiasm for life.	<b>Love:</b> Genuine warmth, close relations.
	<b>Humor:</b> Playfulness, bringing smiles to others.	<b>Gratitude:</b> Feeling blessed.
	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, providing wise counsel.	

<b>Boredom, Disappointment, Expectations, Regret, Discouragement, Resignation, Frustration</b>	<b>Perseverance:</b> Finishing what one starts.	<b>Hope:</b> Expecting the best and working to achieve it.
	<b>Curiosity:</b> Seeking novelty and exploration.	<b>Judgment:</b> Critical thinking, thinking through all sides.
	<b>Creativity:</b> Seeing and doing things in different ways.	
<b>Shame, Self-Compassion, Perfectionism, Guilt, Humiliation, Embarrassment</b>	<b>Humility:</b> Modesty, letting accomplishments speak for themselves.	<b>Forgiveness:</b> Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings
	<b>Honesty:</b> Authenticity, being true to oneself.	<b>Kindness:</b> Generosity, compassion.
	<b>Self-Regulation:</b> Managing impulses and emotions.	
<b>Pride, Hubris, Humility</b>	<b>Humility:</b> Modesty, letting accomplishments speak for themselves.	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, providing wise counsel.
	<b>Gratitude:</b> Thankfulness, expressing thanks.	<b>Honesty:</b> Sincerity without pretense.
	<b>Self-Regulation:</b> Managing impulses and emotions.	
<b>Comparison, Admiration, Reverence, Envy, Jealousy, Resentment, Schadenfreude, Freudenfreude</b>	<b>Gratitude:</b> Admiration for skill and moral greatness.	<b>Humility:</b> Avoiding arrogance.
	<b>Social Intelligence:</b> Awareness of motives and feelings.	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, taking the big picture view.
	<b>Kindness:</b> Generosity, care.	
<b>Compassion, Pity, Empathy, Sympathy, Boundaries, Comparative Suffering</b>	<b>Kindness:</b> Generosity, care, compassion.	<b>Love:</b> Valuing close relations, genuine warmth.
	<b>Social Intelligence:</b> Knowing what makes others tick.	<b>Forgiveness:</b> Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings.
	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, providing wise counsel	
<b>Anger, Contempt, Disgust, Dehumanization, Hate, Self-Righteousness</b>	<b>Forgiveness:</b> Letting go of hurt.	<b>Self-Regulation:</b> Managing impulses and emotions.
	<b>Fairness:</b> Adhering to principles of justice.	<b>Humility:</b> Modesty, avoiding arrogance.
	<b>Bravery:</b> Speaking up for what's right.	

<b>Awe, Wonder, Confusion, Curiosity, Interest, Surprise</b>	<b>Curiosity:</b> Exploration, openness to experience.	<b>Love of Learning:</b> Mastering new skills and topics.
	<b>Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence:</b> Awe and wonder for beauty.	<b>Creativity:</b> Seeing and doing things in different ways.
	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, providing wise counsel.	
<b>Belonging, Fitting In, Connection, Disconnection, Insecurity, Invisibility, Loneliness</b>	<b>Love:</b> Valuing close relationships, warmth.	<b>Social Intelligence:</b> Awareness of feelings of oneself and others
	<b>Kindness:</b> Generosity, care.	<b>Gratitude:</b> Thankfulness, expressing thanks.
	<b>Teamwork:</b> Contributing to a group effort, loyalty.	
<b>Amusement, Bittersweetness, Nostalgia, Cognitive Dissonance, Paradox, Irony, Sarcasm</b>	<b>Humor:</b> Playfulness, bringing smiles to others.	<b>Perspective:</b> Wisdom, taking the big picture view.
	<b>Curiosity:</b> Interest and exploration.	<b>Creativity:</b> Seeing and doing things in different ways.
	<b>Zest:</b> Vitality, enthusiasm for life.	
<b>Love, Lovelessness, Heartbreak, Trust, Self-Trust, Betrayal, Defensiveness, Flooding, Hurt</b>	<b>Love:</b> Both loving and being loved.	<b>Honesty:</b> Being true to oneself, integrity.
	<b>Forgiveness:</b> Accepting others' shortcomings.	<b>Hope:</b> Optimism, expecting the best.
	<b>Bravery:</b> Facing emotional challenges.	

**5. Empower Yourself/Others:**

This step focuses on what can be controlled, encouraging proactive steps to manage stressors. Rather than fixating on limitations, it emphasizes optimizing situations by concentrating on actionable solutions. Cultivating a sense of control, confidence, and optimism is crucial for effectively managing stress and enhancing resilience.<sup>20</sup>

**The S.P.A.C.E MCBI for Naval Officer Cadets**

In this context, we designed a single-session intervention to enhance psychological resilience and stress management among Naval Officer Cadets. The intervention was delivered in groups and lasted 90 minutes. We named the session "Becoming Antifragile by Creating S.P.A.C.E," emphasizing the practical, structured nature of the intervention, which focuses on personal growth and resilience in the face of challenges.

## The Present Study

The present study aimed to pilot the S.P.A.C.E MCBI among Naval Officer Cadets to assess its effectiveness in enhancing resilience and stress management skills. Specifically, the goals were to (1) evaluate the feasibility of integrating the S.P.A.C.E MCBI into Naval Officer Cadets' training programs, (2) gather participant feedback, and (3) explore potential future developments of the intervention.

## Methodology

### Participants

82 Naval Officer Cadets (56 first-year and 26 third-year) from the Portuguese Naval Academy participated in the study. The majority were male (86.6%), with a smaller proportion of female cadets (13.4%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 33 years.

### Procedure

The study was conducted in three phases: pre-test, intervention, and post-test. In the pretest phase, participants were informed of the study's purpose and provided a letter of information and consent form. They were then asked to complete two questionnaires: the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and the Response to Stressful Experience Scale (RSES).

Following the pretest, participants attended a 90-minute training session, during which they were introduced to and practiced the S.P.A.C.E MCBI. Although participation in the training was mandatory as part of their military training, ethical considerations were carefully observed, and participants were free to skip survey questions or withdraw from the study without penalty.

In the post-test phase, participants completed the same surveys as in Phase One to assess changes in resilience and stress responses.

### Measures

- **Resilience:** Assessed using the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), which consists of six items (e.g., "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times"). Participants rated items on a five-point scale from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree.' The BRS showed a good reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = 0.893).
- **Response to Stress:** Measured using the Response to Stressful Experience Scale (RSES), a 22-item instrument assessing five resilience factors: meaning-making and restoration, active coping, cognitive flexibility, spirituality, and self-efficacy. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale from "exactly like me" (4) to "not at all like me" (0). The RSES demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.949).

### Data analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted using R (R Core Team) and RStudio (RStudio Team). The tidyverse package in R was used to clean the data, and the rstatix package was used to validate model assumptions and conduct the repeated measures ANOVA on the average BRS and RSES scores (averaged across subjects).

### Results

Before conducting our main analyses, we assessed correlations among BRS and RSES scores for all three assessments. T0 BRS scores were strongly correlated with T1,  $r(80) = 0.70, p < .001$ , and T2 scores,  $r(80) = 0.67, p < .001$ , and T1 scores were strongly correlated with T2 scores,  $r(80) = 0.84, p < .001$ . Moreover, T0 RSES scores were strongly correlated with T1,  $r(80) = 0.79, p < .001$ , and T2 scores,  $r(80) = 0.72, p < .001$ , and T1 scores were strongly correlated with T3 scores,  $r(80) = 0.86, p < .001$ .

To test the effectiveness of our S.P.A.C.E MCBI (i.e., whether a group of individuals attending a S.P.A.C.E MCBI training session would report improved BRS and RSES scores over time), we conducted two repeated measures analyses of variance: one on BRS scores and the other on RSES scores as the outcome variables. After identifying outliers (9 in the BRS study and 2 in the RSES study), they were excluded from the analysis. For the remaining participants, there was no statistically significant difference in BRS scores across time,  $F(2, 150) = 1.165, p = .315, \eta^2 = .004$ . However, there was a statistically significant difference in RSES scores across time,  $F(2, 158) = 7.89, p < .01, \eta^2 = .013$ . Mauchly's test did not support the assumption of sphericity, but a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to account for violations of this assumption. Post hoc repeated measures *t*-tests with Bonferroni corrections revealed a main effect in response to stress, indicating an overall increase in coping and well-being, as shown by the RSES scores between T0 ( $M = 3.80, SD = 0.42$ ) and T2 ( $M = 3.92, SD = 0.46$ ).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for stress response as a function of time.

Time	M	SD	n
T0	3.80	0.42	80
T1	3.87	0.44	80
T2	3.92	0.46	80

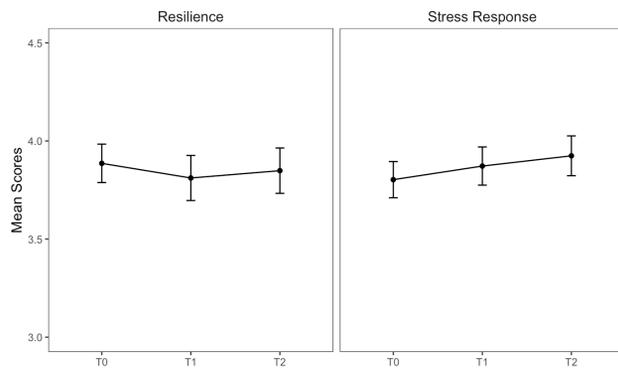
Note. *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for resilience as a function of time.

Time	M	SD	n
T0	3.89	0.44	76
T1	3.81	0.51	76
T2	3.85	0.51	76

Note. *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

Figure 5. Mean resilience and stress response as a function of time.



## Discussion:

This pilot study, involving 82 Naval Officer Cadets from the Portuguese Naval Academy, provided valuable insights into the impact of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI intervention. As part of the intervention, participants underwent a standardized 90-minute training session. Feedback was collected from both participants and facilitators to evaluate its effectiveness alongside data on resilience and well-being. These measures assessed the clarity of the intervention content, the suitability of session activities, and the overall effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing resilience and reducing stress.

The S.P.A.C.E MCBI yielded significant improvements in participants' stress responses, suggesting its potential efficacy in enhancing psychological well-being and resilience. These findings align with existing research on the individual components of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI—namely, mindfulness, acceptance of affect, behaviour, and actions, emotional intelligence, psychological flexibility, and character strengths—which have been shown to positively influence resilience, well-being, and stress management in prior studies.

**Mindfulness:** The mindfulness component of S.P.A.C.E, which involves being present and accepting the moment as it is, has been widely recognized for its benefits in reducing stress and enhancing well-being. Mindfulness practices help individuals develop greater awareness and acceptance of their thoughts and

“ The S.P.A.C.E MCBI yielded significant improvements in participants' stress responses, suggesting its potential efficacy in enhancing psychological well-being and resilience.”

emotions, improving psychological flexibility and resilience.<sup>21</sup> Research has shown that mindfulness-based interventions can effectively reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress while also promoting emotional regulation and overall well-being.<sup>22</sup>

**Cognitive Triangle:** The cognitive triangle model, which addresses the interplay between thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, is a foundational element of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This model helps individuals identify and challenge negative thought patterns, leading to more adaptive emotional and behavioural responses.<sup>23</sup> Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CBT in treating a wide range of psychological issues, including stress and anxiety, by promoting cognitive restructuring and healthier coping mechanisms.<sup>24</sup>

Emotional intelligence (EI) involves recognizing, understanding, and managing our own emotions and recognizing, understanding, and influencing the emotions of others.<sup>25</sup> The S.P.A.C.E intervention incorporates components that enhance EI, such as self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Higher emotional intelligence is associated with better stress management, improved mental health, and greater resilience.<sup>26</sup> By developing EI through practices like mindfulness, cognitive awareness, and leveraging character strengths, individuals can enhance their capacity to handle stress and maintain well-being.

**Psychological Flexibility:** Psychological flexibility, emphasized in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), involves staying present and engaged in meaningful activities despite experiencing difficult thoughts and emotions.<sup>27</sup> This approach encourages individuals to accept their internal experiences rather than avoiding them, fostering resilience and enhancing overall well-being. Research has shown that higher levels of psychological flexibility are associated with lower stress levels and greater psychological health.<sup>28</sup>

**Character Strengths:** The focus on character strengths in the S.P.A.C.E intervention aligns with positive psychology principles, highlighting the importance of leveraging individual strengths to promote well-being and resilience.<sup>29</sup> Identifying and using personal strengths can help individuals navigate challenges more effectively and contribute to greater life satisfaction and psychological health. Studies have shown that interventions promoting the use of character strengths lead to significant improvements in well-being and reductions in stress.<sup>30</sup>

## Future Research Directions

To further assess the efficacy of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI, a randomized controlled trial (RCT) is proposed. Participants will be randomly assigned to either the intervention group (S.P.A.C.E MBSI training) or a control group (Communication Skills workshop), ensuring an unbiased comparison between the two conditions. This RCT will follow a rigorous methodological approach, measuring outcomes at multiple time points to provide robust insights into the

intervention's efficacy. By incorporating comprehensive feedback from participants and facilitators and refining the intervention based on findings from the pilot study, this future research aims to validate and extend the practical applications of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI across diverse populations.

Additionally, minor revisions were made to the intervention to improve its clarity and effectiveness. These revisions include a more detailed explanation of key concepts and the inclusion of additional practical exercises at each stage of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI training. These exercises will allow participants to practice and internalize the techniques, facilitating their integration into daily life.

A comprehensive participant booklet was also developed to enhance engagement with the intervention. The booklet includes detailed summaries of each component of the S.P.A.C.E MCBI, along with journaling prompts designed to guide participants' reflections over the four weeks following the training. These prompts aim to facilitate the ongoing integration of S.P.A.C.E MCBI into participants' daily routines. Participants will be encouraged to regularly document their experiences using S.P.A.C.E MCBI during the post-workshop period. Personalized written feedback, based on participants' journal entries, will be provided to reinforce their understanding and application of the intervention. This feedback will offer individualized guidance and support, helping participants deepen their engagement with S.P.A.C.E MCBI.

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Tuzla Resurrection

Photo: Master Warrant Officer (retired) Robert Bradley

## A Moment of Meditation Inside a MIG-Jet Hangar: Bosnia at War

### MAJOR (RETIRED) S.K. MOORE

*S.K. (Steve) Moore, PhD served as a Padre with the CAF during the war in Bosnia (1993) and conducted doctoral research in Afghanistan (2006) resulting in the creation of the chaplain operational capability Religious Leader Engagement (RLE), now Policy (Jan 2013) with the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service and Doctrine Note (July 2013) with the Canadian Army (CA); CAF RLE Joint Doctrine in progress.*

*He lectured at the United Nations Training School Ireland (Dublin: 2011-2014); participated with the Understand to Prevent initiative comprised of military and civilian researches from 13 NATO and NATO-Partner nations (UK based: 2015-2017), contributing to the U2P Handbook (2017). In 2018 he was a keynote speaker and Panelist at the Commonwealth Conference, the Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.*

*Moore published Military Chaplains as Agents of Peace: Religious Leader Engagement in Conflict and Post-conflict Environments with Rowman and Littlefield (Lexington Books, 2013).*

***In reference to the 25.3 cover art: Tuzla Resurrection, a painting by MWO (retired) Robert Bradley—his interpretation of a communion service administered by Padre S.K. Moore, Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1993.***

I first came to know Robert Bradley through his painting and sculpture on exhibit at the Fritz Gallery at the Great Canadian Theatre Company, Ottawa. My partner, Deborah Moore, who is also making war art, was immediately taken with his work as it

conveyed a message of someone working through their personal experiences of war via the medium of art.

The inspiration for *Tuzla Resurrection* came to Bradley while watching me replicate online an Easter Sunday communion service that I held with CAF troops during the Bosnian war. COVID had struck in early 2020, leaving us no choice but to discontinue with public worship at Southminster United Church in downtown Ottawa. I began holding Sunday morning worship services online from my living room. Robert Bradley joined us from his Chelsea, Québec studio for Easter Sunday worship on 12 April 2020. While preparing my makeshift altar, inclusive of my CAF field communion kit, I introduced my online parishioners to life in the Bosnian theatre of war.

In the fall of 1992, I deployed to the former Yugoslavia with the 2RCR Battle Group, OP CAVALIER under the auspices of United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR). In the spring of 1993, Golf Company (roughly 120 troops and vehicles) had been tasked to breach Serbian lines to fly the UN flag in the Muslim enclave of *Srebrenica*, which fell two years later to Serbian Forces. (A massacre of more than 8,000 men and boys occurred as a result).<sup>1</sup> Golf Company was encamped on a JNA Base (Yugoslav People's Army) in Tuzla, BiH, a base that had been commandeered by a British mechanized infantry battalion.

I arrived in Tuzla, an hour north of Srebrenica, with a resupply convoy on Easter weekend, an arduous journey through mountainous terrain. I came prepared to hold worship and administer the sacrament to the troops. Golf Company had been given an abandoned MIG Jet hangar as an assembly area. The hangar was built into a hillside so as not to be observed from the air with a concrete runway leading to the tarmac. It had not operated in some years, its neglect quite evident. Two large doors on rails and pulleys served as the entrance to the hangar, sufficient in height and width to accommodate a fighter jet. Without electricity we generated our own power and light. Completely concrete, the hangar was cold and dark with the constant drip of water from the soil-covered roof, pooling in a far corner. It seeped through the cracked concrete floor but it never flooded the hangar. Personnel slept inside the hangar, as did I. The dampness from the wet concrete radiated up, making sleep difficult. I spent most of the night talking with soldiers on picket duty standing around a wood-burning barrel that was continuously fed scraps of anything combustible.

I held my Easter Sunday worship service on Easter Monday morning, the only available time in the midst of preparations to move into Srebrenica. As Padres in operational environments, one learns to adapt to whatever the situation presents. I found a 45-gallon drum and a few planks that formed the basis of an altar. A section of the ubiquitous green hessian from off of the large spool served as an altar cloth. After aligning the army cots so as to serve as pews, I unpacked my field communion kit and made final preparations for my Easter Sunday communion service ...on

“As Padres in operational environments, one learns to adapt to whatever the situation presents.”

Monday. My homily was on the resurrection from what seemed like “being inside the tomb itself” ...light shining into humanity's darkness...an appropriate theme for the time.

Bradley was watching online as I rolled a rain barrel into position, placed planks on top and arranged a large piece of green linen over the planks as an altar cloth. I used the very same field communion kit and proceeded to share the story as I celebrated the Lord's Supper with my online congregation.

Robert immediately contacted me to ask for the green linen. He had an idea. He built a frame, stretched the linen over it as a canvas and applied a number of coats of gesso to create the surface and painted his vision of the service in the hangar. Presently, *Tuzla Resurrection* is in the acquisition process at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, as its being considered for the General Collection.

However, what is truly remarkable about this entire experience is Robert Bradley's personal journey. A retired Master Warrant Officer and field engineer, his most painful memories are of the war in the former Yugoslavia. Like so many others, his numerous missions have had a cumulative effect having been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder in May of 2012. As part of his recovery, he was introduced to art therapy. He had never held a brush or a chisel for an artistic pursuit of any sort in his entire life. In his own words, Bradley states:

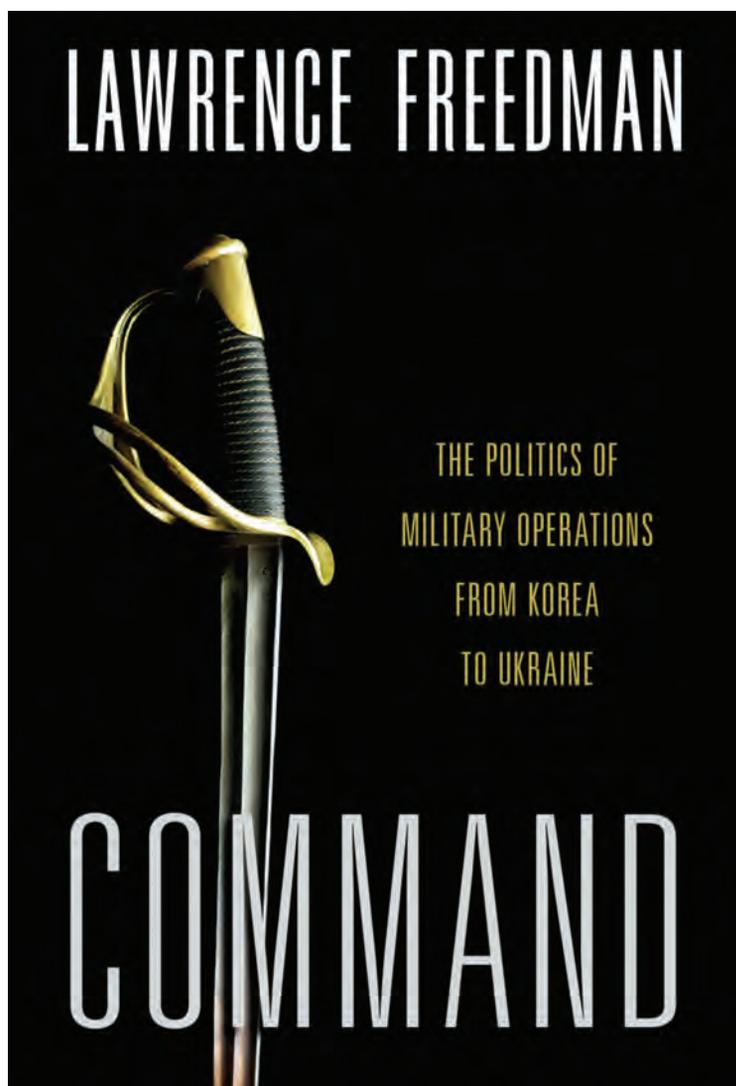
“It was a great distraction from my reality, when I paint and sculpt. I kind of focus on what I'm doing. I'm not stressed about anything else; I'm just in a really nice place and producing something that expresses what I feel.”<sup>2</sup>

A graduate of their three-year program at the Ottawa School of Art, he is now a full-time professional artist in Chelsea,<sup>3</sup> painting, sculpting and exhibiting regularly.<sup>4</sup>

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## Notes

- 1 Encyclopedia Britannica, “Identifying the Victims in Srebrenica Genocide,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified February 14, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Srebrenica-genocide/identifying-the-victims>.
- 2 See “Art Helps former soldier overcome horrors of Yugoslav wars,” <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/veteran-art-therapy-ptsd-1.4571503>, accessed 16 Dec 2024
- 3 [https://www.instagram.com/hobbit\\_studios/](https://www.instagram.com/hobbit_studios/)
- 4 <https://toutculture.ca/en/event/perspective-by-robert-bradley-671d26ff0171050063733107/>



Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine.

Photo: Oxford University Press

## Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine

Lawrence Freedman, *Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022)

589 pages ISBN 978-0-19-754067.

### REVIEWED BY JOEL WATSON

Joel Watson is a PhD Candidate at the Royal Military College and Research Assistant at the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society at the University of New Brunswick. Joel is a former army officer and Director of Legal Services for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Joel has practiced law for nearly 30 years in both the private and public sectors.

**An eminent scholar on military affairs, Lawrence Freedman is Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King's College London, official historian of the Falklands campaign, and a member of the Iraq Inquiry. His book, *Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine*, is recommended for those concerned about how militaries are used to implement government policies and how militaries implement these policies through their own chains of command. Civil-military issues came surprisingly to the fore because of the violent events of January 6, 2022, in the United States over the Congressional certification of the Presidential election. Controversy has also arisen over the alleged misuse of militaries for social experiments by other governments.**

Disappointingly, Freedman does not clearly revisit Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* and/or Peter Feaver's *Armed Servants* in the context of the modern era.<sup>1</sup> To be fair, Freedman does not state that is his intention, and only refers to Feaver's journal articles, not *Armed Servants*, but it is difficult to understand why he did not take a more deliberate approach, given that not only does Freedman start *Command* with President Truman and end with President Trump, but concludes on pages 512 and 515 that:

*"[O]bedience to the Commander-in-Chief has its limits ...*

*Those issuing the orders should have the authority that brings the respect of colleagues and subordinates. Authority is something to be earned, not taken for granted—and that goes for the civilians as well as the generals."*

These statements and Freedman's argument that both political and military actors need to demonstrate "political sensibility," significantly challenge Feaver's "civilian right to be wrong" thesis. Freedman's reference to political sensibilities is closer to that of the pragmatists described in Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Freedman only briefly refers to H.R. McMaster's condemnation of the failure of the command relationship leading to America's debacle in Vietnam in *Dereliction of Duty*, where the "right to be wrong" was contorted in such a way that the President and his civilian advisors deliberately did not seek military advice, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff went along rather than offer their best advice—an issue that remains unresolved between Feaver's absolutist theoretical approach and McMaster's historical analysis, but remains very relevant.<sup>3</sup> Freedman's failure to expressly challenge Huntington's and Feaver's social science orthodoxies (which ironically, like Robert McNamara's "Whiz Kids," prefer theoretical abstractions over actual experience and empirical observation) is unfortunate because, as evidenced in part by recent works such as Michael Robinson's *Dangerous Instrument: Political Polarization and US Civil-Military Relations* and James Mattis and Kori Schake's *Warriors and Citizens: American Views of Our Military*, many are concerned that western militaries and western politicians are drifting apart.<sup>4</sup> This perceived dissonance demands a response and while Freedman does provide one, it's more implicit than explicit.

“ In *Command*, Freedman uses fifteen diverse historical case studies to demonstrate command dysfunction between civil and military authorities and within militaries themselves.”

In *Command*, Freedman uses fifteen diverse historical case studies to demonstrate command dysfunction between civil and military authorities and within militaries themselves. He outlines the changes to warfare, and thus command relationships, caused by the use of nuclear weapons, which may eliminate winning at all costs as an option, the rise of irregular and cyber warfare, nation building, jihad, colonialism, and the changed identity of war fighters themselves, so that most soldiers, sailors, and aircrews in the west see themselves as professionals, even as their civilian peers move further and further away from the citizen soldiers of the World Wars.

Importantly, the very interesting case studies range from western democracies to communist revolutionaries and Middle Eastern dictators, thus using a broad spectrum of historical evidence to speak to the nature of command relationships themselves, rather than being hostage to theoretical disputes between social scientists burdened by conservative or progressive world views in a purely American environment. Unfortunately, however, Freedman does not clearly state his argument that successful command relations, both civil-military and within militaries themselves, most often involves a partnership that requires trust, familiarity, and discussion rather than a rigid theoretical abstraction or dictatorial rule. He could have been much more explicit, for example, that Saddam Hussein's or Vladimir Putin's dictatorial rule is the mirror image of Feaver's "right to be wrong," but the connection, and the weaknesses that such absolutist dynamic creates, is left to be inferred.<sup>5</sup>

Freeman's use of diverse scenarios in the absence of a thematic framework, not to be confused with a theoretical

framework, leaves the analysis disjointed because he does not expressly establish the connections but leaves the reader to infer them. The lack of thematic connections, the diverse scenarios, and the conflation of command dysfunction within military hierarchies and civil-military command dysfunction, threatens to obscure Freedman's very important but belated main argument that successful civil-military command is never absolute.

In contrast to the useful examination of command relationships from a global perspective, Freedman chronologically limits his historical analysis to the post-Korea period. Perhaps he should have traced civil-military relationships further back in history and turned to Russell Wigley's "The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell" to place the MacArthur, McNamara, Clinton, and McChrystal episodes in broader context.<sup>6</sup> He has thus lost the opportunity to further focus on the relationships themselves rather than being caught up in partisan defence of a particular President or General, as some of the other scholars appear to be doing. Had he done so, perhaps Freedman would not have written that the acceptance of civil authority was so embedded that the prospect of a coup, " ... was not a serious issue in the United States until the presidency of Donald Trump." A more historical perspective would have noted that much of American constitutional subordination of the military to the civil authority is derived from a revolution led by George Washington, an American officer who served with the British, and that Robert E. Lee famously refused command of the Union Army to lead the secessionist Confederates. Military defiance is not so rare as some would have it, but perhaps context is everything.

Unfortunately, none of this historical context or concern for the present moment is apparent in the opening pages of *Command*. Instead, Freedman clutters his introduction with discussions of "orders," "coup d'oeil," and General Dwight Eisenhower's superiority for overall command as compared to approaches of traditional military favourites, Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery and General George Patten. All of which is interesting, but he does not tie these issues together to clearly distinguish good command relationships from bad. One infers that operational and tactical brilliance is not always accompanied by political acumen, and that operational decisions are often constrained by political and economic necessity: however, it should have been made clearer, and examples of leaders who possessed both, such as Wellington, would have been helpful. Freedman does speak to the importance of "political sensibility," after all, notably without citing Janowitz who rightfully demanded it of military officers. He briefly touches on the distinction between "high" and "low" politics, about which there could be much more written, as partisan politics, policy politics, and constitutional politics each have different implications and restrictions for military professionals, including not participating in the former. He then mundanely writes: "This book explores the issues raised by

the interplay between these political and operational considerations by examining a series of command decisions taken in the period after 1945 [...]," which does nothing to alert the reader to the threat of revolution, coup, or military debacle if civil-military "interplay" misfunctions. He is understated again when he writes:

*"The unavoidable political nature of operational decisions has provided this book's core theme. That does not mean that the institutional separation of armed forces from governments is either unimportant or irrelevant ... The best policy is likely to emerge from a readiness by the government to have a vigorous debate ... In modern warfare, there is a complex interplay between political objectives and military options, which requires discussion of a range of possible strategies ..."*

It should seem obvious that civilian and military authorities need open discussion of Clausewitz's use of force as a means, among others, to achieve political ends and Freedman's case studies do demonstrate that lack of communication is a significant problem. However, Freedman waits until the conclusion to argue that "command" is not simply a top-down direction by two institutions supreme within their own spheres, one exercising hierarchical objective control, but rather that "command" is an interdependent consensus in an increasingly complex world, where political leaders cannot become distanced from their militaries and military professionals cannot isolate themselves as if they are members of some purist warrior caste, untainted by political realities.

Freedman does not provide a road map for the reader in the introduction, and his argument is made by inferences buried in the rich detail of the individual case studies, so that the intended lesson is unclear until the end. The jarring sentence, "Obedience to the Commander-in-Chief has its limits" does not appear until Freedman's conclusion, where he discusses General Mark Milley's refusal to become embroiled in President Donald Trump's denial of election results, and retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn's call for "martial law to rerun the election." The casual reader might think, "Of course, it's Trump," but Freedman in fact sets up this problem 464 pages earlier, when discussing President Harry Truman's sacking of General Douglas MacArthur. In that instance, Freedman, is not clear whether he is thinking about Trump or Truman when he discusses the problem of what to do when military leaders disagree with "a particular President," and he asks the question, "what was an officer supposed to do when the chain of command demanded behaviour which was illegal, contradicted core values, or was otherwise unconscionable? It is a question to which we will return throughout this book."

The problem is that in the introduction, Freedman is discussing Truman, not Trump, and Truman was doing nothing illegal, but he had to relieve MacArthur of his command after his repeated and open insubordination and his repeated failures on

the battlefield, which threatened a world war on a larger scale. Leaving the reader in the Trump and Truman conflation, Freedman does not really get back to that main question until page 512, where he confronts the reader with the observation that Milley's refusal of Trump's instigation of a coup on the basis that the military took its oath to the Constitution, not the President, is nearly the same argument General Douglas MacArthur made in chapter 1 when disobeying Truman. Context and the Constitution are complex, but in between introduction and conclusion, Freedman only barely alludes to the question of contradictory values throughout the book, even when discussing President Nixon's frustration with his generals in Vietnam, President Hussein's neutering of his generals in Iraq's wars, and the rebellion in France caused by the military's rejection of civilian control in Algeria.

The civil-military relationship is an issue that needs revisiting. Both Huntington and Janowitz wrote about this decades ago. Feaver's "working and shirking" and "agency" theoretical abstractions crack under empirical scrutiny and the "right to be wrong" needs clarification, particularly in a republic where checks and balances were to prevent any form of absolute rule. Additionally, as Freedman and other scholars have rightly pointed out, changing perspectives on collateral damage, loss of civic militarism in the West, evolving societal values and culture, polarization, the difficulties of combatting insurgencies in the Middle East and elsewhere, and changes in technology have made civil-military relationships more complex. Technological innovation provides one clear example of the need for better understanding of who is responsible for what. When Freedman refers to the images of President Obama and his national security team watching the special forces conduct the raid on Osama bin Laden, one wonders what Winston Churchill would have made of such a capability. Given, the future prospect of a Churchill with drones, or a Trump with Johnson's Joint Chiefs of Staff, means *Command* is a book that must be read. That said, the reader would be well advised to read the first chapter and the conclusion before the introduction and the rest of the book.

In summary, Freedman misses a significant opportunity with *Command* to move beyond the American social science theories of Huntington and Feaver and provide evidence-based guidance on how "command," both within military hierarchies and between civilian and military leadership, can be effective at a time when warfare itself has become much more complex and when political and military actors increasingly come from different parts of society. Freedman's case studies demonstrate that mutual trust and understanding, whether as part of mission command or geopolitical strategy, needs to supplement theoretical concepts of absolute command that is unquestioned, but unfortunately, one can't see the forest for the trees.

“ In summary, Freedman misses a significant opportunity with *Command* to move beyond the American social science theories of Huntington and Feaver and provide evidence-based guidance on how “command,” both within military hierarchies and between civilian and military leadership, can be effective at a time when warfare itself has become much more complex and when political and military actors increasingly come from different parts of society.”

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## Notes

- 1 Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory of Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957). Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- 2 Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1960).
- 3 H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997).
- 4 Michael A. Robinson, *Dangerous Instrument: Political Polarization and US Civil-Military Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023). Kori Schake & Jim Mattis, eds., *Warriors & Citizens: American Views of Our Military* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2016).
- 5 Subject to free elections, of course, but that may be of little solace in the moment.
- 6 Russell F. Weigley, "The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell," *The Journal of Military History*, 57 (October 1993) 5.