

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE CANADIAN FORCES

Surmounting today's challenges, while building for tomorrow.

(Presentation to Canadian Defence Associations, February 27th 2004)

Introduction

(SLIDE 1)

Thank you {**name**} for those kind words of introduction. It's a real pleasure for me to be here and have the opportunity to talk about important issues facing the Canadian Forces - issues that I know are of keen interest to the CDA and indeed all of you here today.

As many of you know I have only recently assumed the HR portfolio and can't honestly profess to having mastered it all after less than 2 months in the chair.

However, I know my job will be made easier by the fact that I have a great team, and the fact we are all passionate about what we are doing - not only in terms of dealing with today's challenges head-on, but also in building at the same time the best possible foundation for delivering what is needed tomorrow.

Background

L'année dernière, mon prédécesseur, le lieutenant-général Couture, vous a parlé du développement de la stratégie des Ressources humaines 2020, de notre vision du futur, et aussi du concept de prendre soin de nos gens.

Il a aussi partagé un certain nombre de pensées et de messages autour de la nécessité d'établir un leadership efficace; de mettre au point un équipement approprié et un effectif correspondant au besoin; d'assurer une formation et une éducation adéquates; et de s'occuper de nos gens, autant la Réserve que la Force régulière, au moyen d'une compensation juste et d'un appui social compréhensible.

Ces points sont aussi applicables aujourd'hui qu'ils ne l'étaient il y a un an.

Les gens seront toujours l'élément vital de notre organisation, et ils seront la priorité la plus élevée des Forces canadiennes.

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Today, I am going to talk about how we are building on this foundation.

First, I will give you an appreciation of the very real challenges we are facing at this time in terms of ensuring we have the human and HR capacity to do the job.

Then, I want to talk about the future, and what we are doing to transform how we will go about building that capacity.

Today's Challenges

As with all other Canadian institutions, the CF faces many diverse challenges. However, arguably, owing to the nature and the critical importance of the job we do, those challenges are all the more difficult and complex and all the more important to overcome.

Let me briefly go over some of these challenges which may be broadly categorized into 'external' – impacting upon us from outside the organization and over which we have little power or influence; and 'internal' – specific to the organization and which we can influence, albeit in some cases to only a limited extent.

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EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

So first the external challenges.....

(SLIDE 4)

This chart nicely summarizes some of the main trends we can foresee over the next few decades.

Population Growth/ Decline – We note that within the next twenty years, the Canadian population is forecast to grow to over 36 million, and some say that it will plateau at that level.

Increased urbanization – Almost 80% of Canadians now live in urban areas and this is steadily increasing.

Aging population – The population is aging. Fertility rates have remained at low levels for the past 30 years and, as a result, fewer young people are entering the working-age population to replace individuals in the age group nearing retirement.

Increased life expectancy - By the year 2019, the average male may expect to live until 80 and a female until 85.

Increase in Visible Minority Population - By about 2022, we can expect that Canada's visible minorities will represent over 30% of our population.

More Highly Skilled Population – We know as well from the 2001 Census, that we are becoming a much more highly-skilled population. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of people in the labour force increased by 1.3 million, and almost one half of this growth occurred in highly skilled occupations that normally require university qualifications.

These changes are only the tip of the iceberg, but the examples I have cited give you a sense of what is impacting us externally. So as you can see, our traditional recruiting population is changing dramatically.

(SLIDE 5)

INTERNAL CHALLENGES

Moving now to the internal front, we find there are an equally vast number of factors at play

(SLIDE 6)

Premièrement – PERSTEMPO.

(SLIDE 7)

PERSTEMPO: L'impact de l'augmentation du

tempo opérationnel sur le personnel

Tandis que nous avons essayé de faire notre possible avec moins durant un peu plus de la dernière décennie, la cadence des opérations a augmenté sensiblement – comme il en a été pour nos alliés. Commençant au début des années 90 avec la guerre du Golfe, et continuant tout au long des années 90 et en 2004, les Forces canadiennes ont connu une augmentation des déploiements opérationnels ou encore Opstempo.

Conformé à l'augmentation du tempo opérationnel, nous avons également exigé de notre personnel d'aller sur des déploiements plus nombreux, généralement désignés sous le nom de Perstempo. Cette catégorie inclut le temps loin de la maison sur des opérations internationales et domestiques, la

formation individuelle et collective et aussi, le devoir temporaire. Ces augmentations de Perstempo ont affecté nos membres négativement.

We know that some members are dissatisfied with the amount of time away from family - dissatisfaction that we fear may lead to early attrition. More importantly, about a third of CF members report increased work pressure, and mental health issues are becoming far more prevalent.

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On the whole, members of the Navy spend over 114 days per year, on average, away from home; Army members slightly less, at 104 days per year; and members of the Air force 81 days. For some individual occupations, averages are much higher and time between deployments is growing increasingly shorter. I might also note at this point that some 340 reservists are currently serving on international operations, and reservists often comprise up to 20% of deployed units. In fact, today, we have approximately 19% of the Army Reserve employed on full time service.

Now the figures on this slide include internal and foreign operations, and individual and collective training. It is also common for personnel returning from an operational deployment to spend extensive time away from home either instructing or taking career courses. This underscores why we have a policy of ensuring to the greatest extent possible that members enjoy at least one year on the home-front between major deployments, with no separation from family whatsoever for the first 60 days.

Our ongoing Perstempo research is identifying what impact various levels of absence are having on our members and their families, with a view to ensuring we have the required policies and support in place.

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Recruiting Efforts

Let me now turn to recruiting.....

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As you well know, the population of the military has fallen significantly over the past 30 years, with the really deep slide commencing in the early 1990s when the Cold War ended and Canada was facing a very dire fiscal situation.

The Canadian Forces today have an establishment of approximately 60,000 positions. This number includes all the positions established for units, ships, squadrons, training establishments and headquarters, as well as positions for personnel undergoing initial and advanced training and personnel recovering from medical difficulties.

Although the total Canadian Forces Structure is planned for around 60,000 military positions, about 6000 paid positions are normally occupied by personnel on training, or who are not otherwise immediately and fully employable. Consequently, we currently have approximately 54,000 positions for trained members – and it is this number of positions, or the Trained Effective Establishment, that ideally would be available to support and execute the existing Defence Mission. However, even today we are about 2000 trained personnel short of what we need.

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Now although recruiting is working well in most respects, we are significantly short in such critical areas as health care, aviation – notably pilots, naval officers and a number of other high-tech occupations. And there is a backlog in training; because we cannot hire trained soldiers, sailors and air personnel off the street, we have to grow-our-own, and our highly specialized training means that it takes us anywhere from 2 to 7 years to have someone qualified to deploy to a theatre such as Afghanistan.

What all of this really means, is that we may not be able to close the gap between our requirements and the number of trained people available until 2010.

Fortunately, we have many highly skilled Reservists who are interested in working full time and, as I've already highlighted, it is a good thing they've decided to do so given present circumstances. To enhance the capability of the Land Force Reserves, and as you know, we are increasing their strength and providing them with new roles. And I'm very pleased that to say that we will be introducing the Reserve Force Pension Plan in 2005 – something which is long overdue.

Now that I have described some of the key personnel issues we are facing today, let me turn to what we are doing to sort them out.

(SLIDE 12)

Employer of Choice

The CF is striving and working towards becoming a real employer of choice and, most importantly, for all of Canada's communities. Recruiting efforts are therefore underway to attract a broader section of the Canadian population, and certainly more than the 17 to 24 year old males who have traditionally made up the lion's share of recruits.

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Of note, the average age of recruits has risen to 24; up from days' past when we recruited many in the 17 to 18 year range. Additionally, the average age of the CF has risen to 34 - a substantial aging of our military population. So it's no longer predominantly a young person's game!

What we are witnessing is a real change in the human face of Canada, and we simply must capitalize on these new talent pools if we are to continue delivering the mission and become more reflective of the Canada we serve.

Les recruteurs sont instruits sur l'histoire de l'évolution multiculturelle du Canada. Ils sont également informés sur les différents modes de communication et les avantages offerts par une force militaire multiculturelle. Nous cherchons activement des recruteurs pour les Forces canadiennes provenant de tous les milieux ethniques et culturels et ce, dans les deux genres.

Le recrutement est également allé d'un système de « recrutement juste à temps » à un «recrutement à temps réel » alors que les demandeurs sont enrôlés aussitôt que possible sans nécessairement tenir compte du moment où leur formation de métier débute. Le système de « recrutement à temps réel » a été mis en place parce qu'on l'a cru que beaucoup de demandeurs à l'enrôlement avec un bon potentiel étaient perdus en attendant leur formation professionnelle.

To shave time off the recruiting process and to get people into uniform faster, we will also be conducting a trial with the Militia where we will expedite medical approvals while maintaining our rigorous standards. If successful, the intention is to expand this to include every new enrollee.

To guide recruiting and training efforts, we work from a 3-year Strategic Intake Plan that is updated yearly. This plan, of course, is affected by funds received in any given year and is adjusted accordingly.

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Garder son effectif

Après avoir consacré tout ce temps, de l'argent et des efforts pour le recrutement et l'entraînement de notre personnel, il est critique que nous les gardions aussi longtemps que possible. Ainsi, que faisons-nous pour les attirer à rester dans l'uniforme ?

Bien, les bonnes nouvelles sont que les Forces canadiennes ont un des programmes des plus complets que n'importe quelle organisation canadienne dont la visée est d'améliorer la qualité de la vie de ses soldats, ses marins et le personnel de la force aérienne. Exprimé autrement, nous faisons tous les efforts afin d'accorder la première priorité aux gens, tout en s'assurant que nous pouvons toujours accomplir notre mission.

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So how are we faring at keeping our people? Well, to keep things in perspective, CF attrition has remained fairly constant in the past 5 years, averaging just slightly over 6% of the total CF population. Of note, voluntary attrition has remained below 4% for the past 3 years, which is relatively low compared with the Canadian Public Service and private industry. For the first time in a decade intake is now exceeding attrition; mind you, attrition in some occupations does remain a concern. I might point out that data provided by our allies shows CF attrition percentages are much lower than most.

To better monitor and manage attrition, we have designed and implemented a retention intervention process as a way of identifying attrition problems within specific Military Occupations; to date, 19 occupations have undergone the initial steps in this process.

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Well-Being and Health

As I have alluded, Quality of Life and provision of health services in garrison and during deployment are extremely critical to retaining our personnel. We have a Quality of Life organization that has implemented most of the Standing Committee on Defence and Veteran's Affairs (SCONDVA) recommendations. It is also the organization overseeing research into Perstempo, and will be making recommendations concerning how to mitigate its negative impacts.

We are conducting a major reform of the CF Health Care System – our Rx2000 initiative. Of note, while we face many of the same issues that you hear about at the provincial level, we face requirements that go far beyond those of civilian health care systems. You can well imagine the complexity of overhauling our health care system – the provision of standardized, high-quality health care across all bases in Canada, and ensuring exceptional support to all types of deployed operations - is challenging indeed. I might add that, as part of this reform, and in response to growing mental health concerns, we have invested heavily in mental health and recently opened five operational mental health support centers across the country.

(SLIDE 17)

Learning Organization

The CF is also one of Canada's oldest and well-developed learning organizations. From the time enrollees attend recruit school until they retire, CF members are engaged in career-long learning - in training schools, academic institutions, and on-the-job. Of note, we have expanded subsidized education to our Reserve personnel. There are also comprehensive initiatives aimed at improving guidance for professional development and enhancing how individual training is delivered.

We recently published the CF Profession of Arms manual and will publish new Leadership manuals in the near future. These manuals, which analyze past leadership lessons and apply them to contemporary realities, will support a re-defined and clarified CF leadership doctrine.

Computer based training is being introduced by many training schools and a distance learning project will make it possible for personnel stationed anywhere in the world to undertake studies, and at any time. That being said, the role of the experienced Sergeant in terms of training troops on the ground will still be will us for as far as I can see.

But taken together, everything I have said here today is simply about putting people first and making people our priority. As you are likely aware, retaining our HR capability, while addressing emerging HR challenges and requirements, is not inexpensive. The good news is that these investments are being accorded the highest priority possible and, in that vein, we have seen an additional 460 million dollars directed toward HR challenges over the past three years, and this is over and above my baseline funding. We have used these much needed resources to address critical needs in areas such as health and dental care, professional development and training, and of course recruiting, to name but a few.

I was also delighted by the outstanding Government support we received in terms of introducing the accidental dismemberment legislation, and, more recently, in recognizing the extraordinary service of those veterans who volunteered for Chemical Agent Testing at Suffield and Ottawa during the war years and beyond.

(SLIDE 18)

Building for Tomorrow

So let me now turn briefly to the future....

You have already heard much about how the environment within which military forces must operate is evolving.

Les Forces canadiennes du futur doivent être une organisation flexible et réseautée qui peut s'adapter aux conditions changeantes, en utilisant des technologies modernes et des techniques appropriées de gestion des ressources humaines.

Pour accomplir les missions du futur nous aurons encore besoin du bon nombre de personnes avec les bonnes qualifications.

Pour y arriver, il faut s'engager dans un processus de transformation – réel, et selon un processus de changement stratégique de l'organisation.

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Within the ADM(HR-Military) Group we are undertaking the task of transforming the CF Human Resource system to support and enable the ongoing CF transformation effort. Accordingly, we have identified specific Change Objectives, outlined in this slide, consistent with the vision expressed by the Strategic Objectives of HR 2020, but with quantifiable outcomes that ensure the sustainment of a mission relevant force.

The five Change Objectives are:

§ **HR System Transformation:** That is to enhance the HR system, balancing the needs of our people and the needs and mission of all components of the organization. The focus here will be upon a systems approach leading to integration and coordination across the Group and CF as a whole, and a comprehensive HR performance measurement framework;

§ **Modernize the Military Occupation Structure:** To develop an agile MOS and force structure that meets and supports innovative personnel management practices, and responds to the changing operational, HR and social environment;

§ **Professional Military Culture:** To align CF military culture with military ethos and the profession of arms through the alignment of professional development policies and programs; and

§ **Well Being:** To harmonize wellness policies and programs with the principle of “People First”. Expressed otherwise, developing and aligning personnel support programs to meet operational readiness, address Perstempo and work/life balance, and ensure that the value of service to the Profession of Arms both during and after military service is recognized.

We are currently in the process of developing a campaign plan to address these change objectives - identifying the thrusts, initiatives, priorities and timelines. Indeed, work is already underway on a number of initiatives. For example, The HR System Transformation project recognizes the fact that, over the past decade, the CF HR system has suffered from a lack of long-term, proactive, integrated and strategic planning and, as a result, has become largely reactive to various pressures and issues. While we have focused on and solved many of the individual problems, it has become ever more difficult to manage the overall HR System by means of the increasingly complex matrix of accountabilities for a vast array of responsibilities.

The HR System Transformation project, therefore, is designed to strengthen our ability to provide the CF with integrated, efficient and strategic personnel solutions, and to exercise appropriate control and oversight over Human Resources in the CF, whether delivered centrally or devolved.

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Conclusion

To sum up, we have accomplished a great deal in the recent past on the HR front, but we still have, at the same time, a great deal to do.

But, we are certainly not alone in facing these challenges. Many Allied nations are addressing the very same questions. The Technical Cooperation Panel (TTCP) recently met in Victoria, BC and representatives from the British, American, Australian and New Zealand Armed Forces repeated the same list of issues – changing population profiles; aging populations; increased demands for skilled people; higher expectations; and increased ops and Perstempo. Working in collaboration with our allies we are developing innovative and effective strategies to meet these challenges.

Le Ministre vous a déjà parlé d'une visée et d'une direction renouvelée pour les Forces canadiennes. Il a également mentionné du besoin canadien d'avoir des Forces canadiennes qui sont compétentes, déployables, soutenables et utilisables.

Il y a aucun doute, notre personnel, autant militaire que civil, soutient chacune de ces capacités. Également, l'équipe de la défense est centrale à la vision de transformation des Forces canadiennes tel que décrite par le Chef d'état-major de la Défense.

In that context, my job is to ensure that the priority that we place on people provides the HR capacity to meet the operational demands of the CF. Our collective goal is to deal with these challenges, and to generate and sustain a highly competent, motivated, healthy cadre of CF members, who will meet the demands of deployment in both domestic and international operations.

This means that we must pay attention to the traditional domains of HR such as attraction, recruitment, training, professional development, quality of life and so on, but it also means that we have to develop an HR system that is integrated across the CF to ensure that, as a CF, we are all working toward the same goals in as effective and efficient manner as is humanly possible.

Thank You. Merci.