

A CF Strategic Capability Planning Process

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The Canadian Forces (CF) is presently without either a coherent force development process or a logical and transparent mechanism through which to determine priorities and assess force structure options. The introduction of a Strategic Capability Planning (SCP) process into Headquarters would provide a methodology for force development, and in turn identify those capabilities that will enable the CF to execute its present and future missions and tasks most effectively. The proposed SCP is a product, and continuation, of a renewed focus on future strategic thinking in the Department of National Defence (DND) and the CF. Linking work on the SCP to national policy as well as drawing on insights from current DND/CF documents such as *Defence Strategy 2020*, the *1999 Strategic Overview*, and *Canadian Defence Beyond 2010*, ensures that the process is policy compliant and inclusive. In short, a SCP would provide a mechanism to investigate and identify, in a sequential and equitable fashion, future capabilities that the CF will require to successfully carry out its missions and tasks.

The objective of the SCP and force development process is to ensure that coherent capability choices are made to match ends with means. The process should consist of a series of evaluations, assessments and judgements about future defence trends and how these trends might affect the ability of the CF to execute national policy. For maximum effectiveness the SCP must provide a mechanism through which all of the work done on force development throughout DND and the CF can be brought together and assessed for forces-wide utility. At present, we suffer from an ad hoc approach that takes too long to generate capability and offers no overarching model through which to map current capabilities against future demands. This weakness is partially due to the demise (1994) of the Force Development Steering Group and the Force Development Working Group, which left the Department and the CF with no comprehensive means to address cross-cutting, long-term CF force development issues.

The force development which does occur is done through business planning—the DPG. This practice constrains force development and capability assessment, as the DPG's real time horizon is out one to a maximum of two years (the next Federal budget). Admittedly the DPG does provide direction to the senior leadership on capabilities they are expected to deliver, but this direction is restricted to one to two years forward. This reality results in DND/CF's inability to determine the long-term effects of the capabilities it retains and the ones it plans to acquire. In short, conducting force development through the DPG makes it almost impossible to plan for the future. As the SCP goes out five to thirty years this shortfall will be resolved. The SCP will also improve the CF's ability to work in conceptual planning and assist it in implementing approaches that demand changes in culture. Although *Defence Strategy 2020* has in part addressed the problem of long-range forecasting, it does not provide a mechanism for measuring future capability requirements against projected missions.

Identifying the need for a CF SCP is relatively easy. Formulating a SCP will take considerably more effort. There are presently a number of challenges in the international and domestic arena that must be factored into any work in future capability and force planning. Challenges such as the unpredictability of the future security environment, the pace of technological change, and

evolving government policy, all make determining both the type of capabilities needed by the CF and their corresponding implementation time-lines and resource investment problematic. Forecasting 5 to 30 years into the future the SCP must be able to identify and describe capabilities essential to meet stated objectives in terms of operating, sustaining and supporting forces. Success in this endeavour requires that attention be paid to the future security environment, domestic imperatives, and developments in technology and in military art.

Today, planning for the future is made difficult by an evolving and unpredictable future security environment (FSE). The FSE will be marked by such factors as cyber operations, crisis overlap, and an increasing number of complex operations (i.e., urban). The increase in peace making/keeping operations with multiple agency and news networks' involvement requires that militaries expand their training and engagement practices (i.e., USMC's Urban Warrior program). The speed at which local conflicts can turn into regional security crises increases the demand for militaries to be rapidly deployable in a variety of configurations (i.e., peace support to warfighting forces). Weapons of mass destruction and their spread resulting from the ease of technology transfer (i.e., via the Internet), further complicates the future security environment that defence planners must prepare their militaries for.

Another characteristic of the future security environment will be a renewed emphasis on asymmetric counters and operations. Sun Tzu defined asymmetric warfare as "throwing something odd and unaccountable in [an enemy's] way." However one defines it, asymmetric counters, although not new, have been made increasingly problematic due to our sensitivities to casualties, our cultural aversion to targeting women and children and the often restrictive nature of our rules of engagement—ROE's not adhered to, and often exploited, by our enemies. As central as asymmetric counters may become to future military operations, the CF cannot conclude that a conflict along the lines of a Gulf War scenario will never take place. Although unlikely, the CF must still prepare for the possibility of participation in a conventional war. This demands that the CF train and equip itself for what NATO has termed as View 1—a conventional state vs. state conflict—and View 2 warfare—a non-state or intra state conflict. In sum, global stability remains elusive and consequently the CF must prepare for a variety of peace keeping to warfighting contingencies.

In identifying and developing capabilities for the CF any planning process must factor in a number of domestic considerations. These include Canada's tradition of a small standing armed forces during peace, an intolerance for casualties (that seemingly will only increase), a desire to maintain pace with technological change, and Canadian's desire to contribute to international security. A final domestic factor to consider is that funding levels for DND/CF will likely remain relatively stable. To successfully meet the demands of the future security environment and domestic imperatives the CF must look for opportunities to "strengthen [its] military to military relationships with [its] principal allies ensuring interoperable forces, doctrine and C4ISR." (*Strategy 2020*) As it is recognized that the CF will operate internationally as a member of a coalition, pursuing these opportunities is beneficial. Due to the variety of domestic and international crises that the CF might face, work towards improving interoperability with other government departments (OGD) must also be undertaken. Improving the CF's deployability is another key to meeting future challenges. The SCP process would enable the CF leadership to determine the best means by which lift could be acquired to efficiently deploy Canada's military

forces. One consideration arising from the above is that defence planners might want to focus on adaptable forces rather than either light or heavy forces.

Many of the new security challenges and opportunities are a result of developments in technology and military art, which are most readily identified through examining the twin revolutions in information and military affairs. The Information Revolution (IR)—the democratization of technology, finance, and information—has fostered the interconnectedness of financial markets, governments and individuals, a trend which some term as globalization. This reality has exacerbated the unpredictability of the FSE by empowering non-state actors with the ability to precipitate international crises that may lead state actors to employ military solutions.

The second revolution underway is in military affairs (RMA). Through the utilization of emerging technologies the RMA, partially a result of the IR, is re-shaping the battle-space and warfighting practices. An RMA is defined as the application of new technologies in combination with changes in military organizational concepts and doctrine that together fundamentally alter warfighting. *Canadian Defence Beyond 2010* provides an explanation:

In each of these elements [technological change, doctrinal innovation and organizational adaptation], there have been significant advances in recent years. The rapid advancement of information technology and information systems holds forth the prospect of dramatically altering command and control of forces. Coupled with major advances in precision, lethality and miniaturization, to name but three, this fact might alter significantly the way armed forces operate across the spectrum of conflict. Doctrinal and organizational changes currently under consideration seek to capitalize on the technological advances to effectively change the way militaries would apply force.

The RMA's impact on warfighting is most clearly seen in the changes to inter-state conflicts. Whereas prior to the onset of the current RMA (post Gulf War [1990]) inter-state war was marked by such characteristics as sequential operations, attrition oriented attacks and massive logistical support operations, future inter-state wars will be characterized by non-linear, simultaneous operations, rapid and highly lethal attacks and just-on-time logistic support. The United States has undertaken the most work in adapting their armed forces to the realities of the RMA as well as leveraging the opportunities that it offers. The CF has begun to investigate the RMA and to seek leverage in this area from domestic developments in our high technology sector and also through cooperation with the US in information exchanges and participation in combined exercises and joint experimentation. These activities will help to inform our strategic capability planning process and may need to be expanded.

The task of determining the type of capabilities needed by the CF and their corresponding implementation time-lines will be made somewhat easier by utilizing the *Defence Planning Guide 2000's* (DPG) conceptual horizons, the eleven Departmental Force Planning Scenarios and through the adoption of a Universal Joint Task List (UJTL). The DPG outlines three conceptual horizons to ensure that force planning "decisions made today are taken with a view to the impact on force structure and operational capabilities for the future." (*DPG 2000*)

Horizon 1: This planning horizon is focused on the enhancement and maintenance of our current, most mature capabilities and are the closest to the execution phase where core capabilities are managed and sustained through the use of National Procurement, capital and Operations and Maintenance. Planning must be focused on achieving efficiency while minimizing risk. Outputs associated with this horizon include business plans, operations and budgets. Horizon 1 normally has a three to five year view;

Horizon 2: This planning horizon focuses on enhancing or replacing current capabilities. A higher degree of risk is acceptable because resourcing initiatives to develop modernized capabilities are not necessarily directly connected to current budget issues. Outputs include capability building strategies with investment/capital plans detailing future budget impacts. Horizon 2 has a 10-15 year view; and

Horizon 3: This planning horizon focuses on acquiring new capabilities. The intent is to seed capability options and test those that are considered viable to determine the best capability for the future. The emphasis will be on experimenting and exploring new ideas with a planning focus of new concepts. Outputs include the decision to explore new concepts, initial plans of action and option analysis. This horizon can have a 10-30 year view depending on the nature of the capability and degree of technological change.

The proposed SCP will focus on Horizon 2 and 3 issues—the replacement of current capabilities and the acquisition of new capabilities. The eleven Departmental Force Planning Scenarios that "will continuously evolve to ensure they reflect the strategic environment and Canada's defence perspectives," provide the CF with a mechanism through which to "assess risk, describe operational considerations, resource requirements, and other influencing factors; and rationalize capability requirements." (*DPG 2000*) Basically the eleven Scenarios provide the CF with a defined set of missions and tasks through which capabilities can be assessed for utility and relevance. Finally, the adoption of a UJTL will, in conjunction with the 11 Scenarios, allow for the provision of a common force development language and a hierarchical framework through which to better identify where capabilities might be needed. Within the UJTL there are three levels of tasks: strategic, operational and tactical. The UJTL's hierarchical nature enables tasks to be prioritized and subsequently traced through the hierarchy to determine its contribution to higher level tasks and to overall mission success. The UJTL also allows the three services to put forth equipment acquisition for evaluation against future requirements envisioned by the SCP.

Before discussing the type of future capabilities the CF may need and looking at existing DND/CF documents that will facilitate determining the right ones, it is useful to look at a definition of what a capability is. The UK Directorate of Land Warfare describes a military capability in the following way:

A military capability is the combination of a number of force elements from one or more components (national and/or multinational) at designated readiness for employment on operations in order to achieve tactical and/or operational and strategic effect against an enemy. Military capability must sit within a framework of force preparation, deployability, sustainability, operations and command. Internally, such capabilities include a robust mix of

people, training, equipment, logistics and structure, all working under the principle of unity of effect using battle winning concepts and doctrine to deliver fighting power.

With a notion of what a capability is, we can now turn to what precise capabilities the CF may require. Fundamentally the CF must be able to operate in international and coalition operations while making a significant contribution. Canada's armed forces must possess an information and intelligence capability that includes a surveillance and reconnaissance capability. A national command and control capability will complement the CF's C⁴ISR. Other capabilities must include the means to quickly deploy forces and ensure that they receive requisite in-theatre logistics and support. Through the use of the common framework that the SCP provides, CF defence planners will avoid the confusion inherent in the current system where each study produces its own logic and fails to connect its findings to the overall picture. Further assisting in identifying and developing capabilities for the CF will be the use of operational research tools, which will provide insight into capability analysis and a systemic process of decision making.

It is evident that long range strategic capability thinking and planning is required for the CF, and that this is not achievable through the existing approach taken to force development. The strategic capability planning process described in this paper will allow for the integration of government policy and ongoing internal assessments and studies into a process that will focus capability identification and generation. Augmenting the utility of the SCP, which would periodically capture the most significant aspects of the internal assessments and studies, would be a Long Term Capability Plan (LTCP—formerly the Long Term Capital Plan), where the requirement for long term capabilities and their attendant skill sets will be identified. The SCP will provide the link—presently missing—between the White Paper and the LTCP. In generating capabilities for the CF, the UJTL would first be employed to determine what exact capabilities were required. The logical starting point for determining these capabilities is at the tactical level of the UJTL, as it is here that the elements of the CF most often operate together to achieve results in both domestic and international operations. The eleven Force Planning Scenarios would provide the background against which evaluations for each project and concept would be done.

The merging of factors from the future security environment, domestic imperatives and developments in technology and military art have thrust the CF into an international environment fraught with new challenges and opportunities. To best address these factors, capability generation within DND/CF needs to be focused and measured against the full range of missions that Canada's armed forces may be called upon to undertake. The proposed SCP provides the mechanism by which ongoing efforts in the force development arena can be integrated into a process that would focus and guide in a recurring manner, force development efforts. The SCP would also facilitate a conceptual approach to capability planning as opposed to re-creating the current force in the future. To continue force development efforts through the present mechanism—the DPG—risks generating capabilities that are not multi-purpose, that may be eclipsed by unaccounted for (due to the DPG's short horizon) future technologies and that do little to address the need to replace current capabilities and acquire new ones. The SCP would resolve these problems through providing a methodological capability analysis framework and projecting out to the 30 year mark. The SCP represents the logical culmination of the trend in

strategic thinking that DND/CF has recently engaged in, as well as mechanism by which the CF can ensure its future relevance.