



DEFENCE AND SECURITY: THE NEXT GENERATION

Douglas L. Bland

The jobs Canada's armed forces traditionally were called upon to do have often been difficult, but were at least reasonably straightforward administratively. Since the Cold War, however, the number of individuals and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, involved in the average mission has increased dramatically. Each case needs to be looked at on its own merits, but neither a completely ad hoc approach nor a permanent national security council would work. What may be needed is an enhanced Department of National Defence.

Dans le passé, les Forces armées canadiennes étaient appelées à exécuter des tâches souvent difficiles, mais à tout le moins raisonnablement claires sur le plan administratif. Depuis la Guerre froide, cependant, le nombre de personnes et d'organismes (gouvernementaux ou non-gouvernementaux) généralement impliqués dans les missions s'est élevé considérablement. Certes, chaque cas doit être examiné au mérite; mais ni la méthode du cas par cas ni la formation d'un Conseil permanent de la sécurité n'en viendront à bout. Il faudra peut-être élargir le rôle du ministère de la Défense.

Recent changes at the Department of National Defence, including changes in responsibility, have greatly enhanced the reputation of the Canadian Forces and the Department. Yet many informed Canadians worry about the seeming disunity in foreign and defence policy and how it might affect field operations. Canadians are also concerned about issues closer to home, like drug trafficking, illicit immigration, terrorist activities and conflicts with native people.

At one time in our history, NATO provided the strategic centre for Canadian commitments and operations and the UN did the same for lesser operations. More important, member states of these organizations had established a framework for deciding the how, what, and where of alliance and UN operations in advance of most crises. So when a crisis arose, officers and officials in Canada could predict and prepare for a collective response with like-minded partners. But since 1990, the main activities of the Canadian Forces and the norms under which officers planned for and conducted operations, especially operations outside Canada, have changed greatly.

These days, international interventions mostly take

place outside the Cold War framework and the Cyprus model of peacekeeping. Coalitions of the willing in Somalia, the Balkans, Africa and East Timor have brought together nations and armed forces who are often strangers. In fact, the one thing that is known about these new types of operations is that not much is known in advance. Few principles or rules or decisions are in place before a crisis occurs, so officers and officials who are strangers are forced to cobble together operating procedures in the midst of a crisis. And because each operation tends to be unique in important ways, these same officials are often forced to define a Canadian position and an operational response in haste at home. They and others have complained repeatedly about the inadequacy of the machinery of government in these circumstances.

Instability in the international community is another important factor challenging Canada's defence and security apparatus. Compared with today's environment, the Cold War was remarkably predictable. Policy and operations planning followed a steady—and usually leisurely—pace year after year. Crises, whether centred in NATO or the UN, were in many respects “incidents”—aberrant episodes in an

otherwise stable environment. Today, however, there is little respite between crises, and overlapping operations and policy decisions reflect a mechanism designed to cope with another time. The fact that dedicated individuals have made the system work—more or less—does not indicate that all is well. The emerging lesson is that in Canada (and elsewhere) internal and international defence and security operations are a major aspect of public administration.

A second major difference between the Cold War and now is the broad inclusion of non-military units and resources in missions. The old system was built to manage traditional instruments of government in traditional defence and security ways. But in the new era, inter-departmental, governmental and non-governmental agencies must be co-ordinated—often in a single team. In turn, they must mesh with a variety of international organizations, each with its particular, if not peculiar, habits and procedures. These new circumstances demand a careful review of how Canada will assess, deploy, and employ national resources in international operations. If Canadians are determined to make worthy contributions to interventions abroad with or without allies or “partners,” then Canada should have a consistent and reliable way to do it.

Much of what can be said about the need for new mechanisms to plan and co-ordinate Canada's international missions also applies to domestic operations. Every significant policy, plan, and operation against terrorists, drug-runners and other criminals demands a co-ordinated national response. These security missions are no longer one-off operations that can be addressed once and then forgotten. In most cases, significant security problems require a co-ordinated response from several departments and agencies of government and, often, the assistance of non-government organizations.

The next generation of the national defence and security organization ought to be based on the following general notions:

- Defence and security operations (abroad and in “aid to the civil power” context) are interwoven activities.
- Many operations (current overseas operations and domestic drug operations, for example) are more or less continuous.
- Many types of operations can't be classified as strictly international or domestic operations and some (like illicit refugee interception, detention, and processing) flow seamlessly into

both areas and many jurisdictions.

- Operations routinely include Canadian Forces units, police forces, governments and departments of governments at various levels, NGOs, international organizations, and, among other things, military, diplomatic, humanitarian, legal, logistical, and intelligence groups.

- No national/federal department or agency has sole responsibility for conducting operations in these circumstances. The traditional departmental division of responsibility for military, foreign policy, police, and domestic and international operations, while perhaps sufficient for generating policy and building forces, is incompatible with and inhibits the development of a department/agency responsible for co-ordinating, and directing continuous operations.

- The federal government ought to build an accountable, continuously functioning mechanism with authority to conduct these types of multi-dimensional security operations.

- The mechanism ought to be concentrated under a single minister to facilitate continuous assessments, co-ordinated action, and clear lines of accountability.

For the most part, government in Canada is built on departments, each of which is more or less expert in its routine responsibilities. Inter-departmental committees, under the helpful eye of the Privy Council Office, co-ordinate the departments. Permanent and ad hoc committees are established as needed. Both types of committees handle defence and security policy, plans, and operations. However, because active operations were rare from 1970 to 1990, planning for operational deployments was handled mainly by ad hoc committees. Once deployments were complete and especially as they assumed a near permanent status, as in Cyprus, National Defence Headquarters took over, and also assumed responsibility for such things as preparing memoranda to Cabinet to extend or change aspects of the mission. As a swooping hawk might temporarily scatter a quiet flock of feeding hens, a new UN mission might cause Ottawa's bureaucrats (in and out of uniform) to scurry about for a short time before settling back into their accustomed places—a comfortable habit, one might note, that can explain much of the debacle that overwhelmed the Canadian Forces deployment to Somalia.

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UN tasks, it is not dependable when crises abound, when mandates, circumstances, and command authority are unclear; when deployments are prolonged and daily events are unpredictable, and when Canada's efforts involve many departments and agencies, as well as national and international NGOs. The departmental system of public administration tends to be unresponsive or ungraceful when asked to manage issues for which no one department is clearly the leader, no matter the skills and dedication of officials. Issues that have no home tend to be orphans, left outside the routine of collective senior management.

National security might be such an orphan. It is fashionable to consider national security as a concept that, depending on one's assumptions and interests, encompasses most facets of national and individual life. “Human security,” defined as safeguarding all aspects of an individual's welfare not only in Canada, but in the entire world, simply overpowers any department's mandate. Neither the Department of National Defence nor the Department of Foreign Affairs has the responsibility or capacity to manage a security policy based on any broad definition of security, let alone human security as it is now understood in government. If, as some ministers profess, “security” must be broadly defined beyond traditional issues of military defence and reaches into many departments of government, then ministers could reasonably be expected to build a departmental structure to manage this new phenomenon.

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In broad terms, the defence and security establishment must direct and manage four related activities.

First, they must see to continual capability maintenance and force development—that is, keeping what they need in good order and renewing or replacing these capabilities over time. In a defence system like Canada's, based on “capability planning” rather than “commitment planning,” it is crucial to select and maintain the right capabilities. The choice of capabilities ought to spring from a clear understanding of the

types of military activities governments expect to face in the future. So, before they can settle on any capabilities, governments face an *a priori* choice from among many types of military operations ranging from high-level interstate warfare to low level paramilitary/police functions.

It's important to point out that governments need help both in making these decisions and in maintaining a consistent policy once decisions have been taken. Generally, today, arguments for or against a given capability unfold inside the federal bureaucracy in a competitive atmosphere between departments and agencies. The principal players—DND, the Department of Finance, DFAIT, and the Treasury Board—bring their own assumptions to the table, but there is no “lead department” that can force a consensus on such a meeting. The PCO might play a deciding role, but not usually until the Cabinet has hinted which direction to follow. Too often the result is incompatible policies, commitments, and capabilities.

Ministers have some influence over such decisions, but they often merely represent their department's view. No one other than the prime minister has the power or place to bring contentious debates to a conclusion or (as in the case of the maritime helicopter purchase) to a non-decision. Decisions concerning major capability are hardly ever final. Even after a decision to build some type of capability has been taken, subsidiary decisions covering a wide range of issues require the continued interaction of departments and agencies and often this process reignites basic arguments. The history of “life-cycle” contracts for major equipment—CF18s, for example—demonstrates this fact.

The second major purpose of the machinery for the higher direction of defence and security is to anticipate needs and events to allow governments to act in a timely, unhurried way to changing circumstances. This function demands the establishment of a central intelligence unit to assemble, collate, and disseminate information to ministers and senior military and police officers and officials. Different departments have their own intelligence units, and so do the Canadian Forces and the RCMP, but no reliable central authority is charged with the production of an overall view of internal and external situations and events. Even military operations, as in Somalia and in Zaire, suffered greatly because Canada had no reliable intelligence system to help commanders in planning the operations or in carrying them out once they were in the field.

Third, officials must have the authority and

tools to change policy declarations into fact. That means they must be able to deploy the right forces to the right place on time and sustain them. These deployments might be very obvious (as in Somalia) or less obvious, as in police surveillance of terrorist groups. However, deployment is not enough. Officials and officers must also be able to continuously manage the employment of forces, especially where circumstances are unusual or changeable.

Canadian officers and officials have not yet found an appropriate place for the new players in the multilateral interventions game—the non-governmental organizations. And neither have the leaders of most NGOs been entirely reasonable in accommodating the government's real concerns and constraints. Nevertheless, both informally and formally, NGOs have become a part of international deployments. Officers and officials should seek ways to use their expertise, whether the NGOs are acting independently, as part of an international organization, or with the Canadian Forces or any other Canadian entity in an operational theatre.

Both sides should work to develop a way to incorporate the NGO in the policy planning process before crises and deployments occur. Unfortunately, no one department or agency is responsible for developing a comprehensive program to take advantage of the skills and expertise NGOs might offer to overseas deployments. Each department tends to find its own ways of dealing with these organizations, and so do the Canadian Forces, but there are surely other more efficient ways to work with them.

Finally, every activity must be carefully recorded to facilitate the audits and accountability that are so important on delivering on Canadians' right to know what is done in their name. Whenever decisions are taken by ad hoc organizations, one outcome is certain: no one will understand who decided what and who is accountable for the actions and decisions of subordinates at the conclusion of the activity. As the Somalia Inquiry demonstrated, even if officials were keen to reveal the facts surrounding their actions and decisions, the process is so convoluted and dispersed that citizens have little chance of understanding with any precision what happened.

These problems evolve out of the functional organization of government departments. No department, including DND, has sole responsibility for selecting and maintaining defence and security capabilities for Canada and this problem is exaggerated whenever DFAIT's view on

Canada's defence and security needs differs from the DND's (as some would argue has been the case over the last seven years at least). The root cause of poor intelligence, lack of co-ordination and planning, and confused lines of accountability is the lack of a central authority to manage defence and security needs and the blind reliance on an ad hoc system of co-ordination once a crisis occurs. One way to redress this difficulty would be to appoint a minister with the authority to develop and maintain a broad defence and security capabilities plan for Canada, but this choice would require a basic reorganization of related departmental and agency responsibilities.

Two models are usually proposed to address the lack of a central authority. These are the ad hoc model and the national security council model. Let us examine each in turn.

According to the ad hoc model, once a crisis occurs that demands the co-ordination of various elements of government, appropriate individuals will be brought together to arrange matters to address the crisis. It might also be called the volunteer fire brigade model. The machinery is dormant (save occasional training exercises), depends on department heads to volunteer "war-tasked assigned" workers, lacks specific expertise, and has little staying power because members have other duties. The system is particularly weak when confronted with prolonged or multiple crises; it rarely produces a well trained or efficient team (leaders promise time for training but other priorities always intervene); and it provides little value in anticipating events or as a consensus-building device. Like individuals in the fire brigade after a difficult event, once the crisis has passed many volunteers move to less stressful assignments and acquired expertise is lost.

The usual arguments for maintaining this system—that it fits our way of organizing public administration; that it has worked well enough in the past; that crises are rare; and so on—may no longer be valid. Defence and security events are not incidental but tend to be prolonged, thus demanding the continuous interaction of several departments. As explained, many defence and security problems require complex co-ordination of many national institutions, departments, and resources, and ad hoc teams rarely have the skills or facilities to cope effectively. But the most critical counter-argument is that experience amply demonstrates that major internal and external operations are failing and that foreign nationals

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and governments see Canada as an easy target for subversive operations. Even so, the system continues to be supported by the bureaucracy—mainly because it enhances the power and interests of the status quo by protecting departments and agencies from any unintended consequences of reorganization.

For its part, the national security council (NSC) model is, as often suggested, loosely based on the American experience. But, on its own, a council of the wise and learned is not a working team and as such cannot fulfil the purposes here described without adequate support staff. So in fact what most people have in mind when they recommend that Canada build a national security council (by whatever name) is a national security staff. The model clearly suffers, because, for instance, it does not fit the Canadian parliamentary system and the usual procedures in government. Some might say that the various “war committees of the Cabinet” that governments have established during major wars and to manage prolonged crisis are similar to the NSC model, and that is true to a degree. But war committees inevitably depended on and are linked to the usual departmental structures. Once the crisis passes, defence and security planning falls into its normal pattern.

Forming a Canadian NSC on the American model would establish another player in the defence and security game and this consequence is often strongly resisted by the PCO and by departments and agencies as simply an additional complication to an already complex game. The most critical weakness of this model, however, is that it would probably not have much executive authority. Even with a staff, a mere council of advisers would have no legal basis for directing operations without new legislation: The powers it would assume are now held by the Cabinet, the clerk of the PCO, the minister of national defence, the chief of the defence staff, the solicitor general and others.

The only way to overcome the weakness of the NSC model would be to create a new department or agency with statutory authority over some or all aspects of defence and security policy and planning. How such a new entity might function given that it would have no direct control over operational resources of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP, for instance, is an organizational mystery that no proponent has yet explained satisfactorily. Most likely, a Canadian NSC would be restricted to policy co-ordination

and excluded from operational matters. Given the problem, which is that defence and security policy and operations always overlap, creating a new agency with but a single focus might only aggravate current difficulties. Indeed, some would argue that the defence branch of the PCO already serves as a pseudo-NSC, although few would suggest that it is consistently effective in this role. Separating this function from the PCO to build a NSC would separate defence and security issues from the focal point of government decision-making.

The effective management of co-ordinated defence and security policy and operations requires ministerial authority and staff support specifically organized for this purpose. Setting up a new portfolio with staff would invite complications that probably would inhibit action rather than propel it. A more promising possibility would be to bring responsibilities now scattered among departments and agencies under the direction of an established portfolio—that is, under the minister of national defence.

Staff would need to be specially trained in several related functions, including intelligence, operational planning, secure communications, command and control of deployed forces, and so on. Such training already exists within some departments and agencies but is concentrated in the Canadian Forces, in public service elements of DND, and in certain branches of the RCMP and DFAIT.

National Defence Headquarters includes an efficient National Defence Operations Centre (NDOC) that is equipped to monitor and co-ordinate the national and worldwide operations of the Canadian Forces. Although the NDOC does not usually co-ordinate operations conducted by other departments or the RCMP, it has the capacity to assist such operations if necessary. With little effort, the NDOC could be redesigned to act as a National Security Operations Centre (NSOC) with responsibility for the control and co-ordination of all national and international defence and security policy. If it were, then Canada might have the mechanism for the higher direction of national security that it needs.

This model attempts to build on existing laws, expertise, organizations, and experience. The proposal is that the Department of National Defence (and essentially NDHQ) be modified to incorporate a national defence and security function to co-ordinate policy planning, contingency planning, and a wide range of security operations

in both domestic and external environments. The main idea is to concentrate under one authority—the minister of national defence—two related responsibilities: the maintenance and development of security capabilities and the co-ordinated planning for and continuous direction of all national defence and security operations.

The minister of national defence would retain his present authority for the “control and management” of the Canadian Forces and DND, but could be given additional responsibilities for security policy and operations. The principal modification to the Department of National Defence should be the appointment by order-in-council of an associate minister of national defence, as allowed under the *National Defence Act*, who would be responsible for the co-ordination of ongoing defence and security operations. In recent times two politicians—Harvie Andre and Mary Collins—were appointed associate ministers of national defence to handle special policies and to place another “defence voice” in the Cabinet, an important motive for re-establishing the office.

The associate minister could be supported by two principals: an associate deputy minister (defence & security operations) and an associate deputy chief of the defence staff (A/DCDS operations). The associate deputy minister would direct a staff that included, for example, a DFAIT liaison team at deputy ambassadorial level, senior solicitor general officials experienced in internal security operations, officials from the Canadian security establishment, defence intelligence officers, defence policy officials, and selected individuals from prominent NGOs. The A/DCDS branch would include military staff officers for operations and logistics, as well as RCMP officers, and technical intelligence officers from various departments. The organization would provide advice on pending situations, manage deployed operations, search-and-rescue operations, and various “aid to the civil powers” and “assistance to the civil authority” operations.

Generally, the associate minister of national defence would have no permanently allocated resources save for the staff. The minister of national defence, on advice from the CDS and the deputy minister, the Department of National Defence, the Commissioner of the RCMP and others, would allocate resources to operations as he does now and gather appropriate resources from other departments and agencies as needed. These resources would then be

“chopped” to an operational commander acting under the direction of the CDS and co-ordinated by NSOC staff, much as is done now. The minister of national defence would retain all his present authority and responsibilities and develop a working arrangement with the associate minister of national defence, as other ministers have in the past.

In time, NDHQ might develop into two closely related segments—the deputy minister’s major element, dedicated to policy development, and procurement and financial management, and an operational element of the headquarters, freed from daily concerns of administration that would direct major operations. Indeed, DND and the Canadian Forces are moving carefully in this direction—in fact, if not as part of a clear design. The CDS would, of course, retain all his authority and responsibilities to control and command units and elements of the Canadian Forces and all decisions of the central staff.

The appointment of an associate minister of national defence would do many things, among them: address criticisms that co-ordination of defence and foreign affairs at the operational level is not well defined; demonstrate a commitment to deal effectively with internal security matters; relieve the minister of national defence from some of the details he now deals with routinely and allow him to concentrate on other issues; and, finally, provide a political head accountable to the public for the co-ordination of serious national defence and security activities. The enhanced model could be built mostly from existing resources and accommodated within present government operating procedures and laws; it could mollify (perhaps) departmental rivalries; and it could address a major and growing public unease about the co-ordination of national security.

The same claims cannot be made for the other models discussed here. The ad hoc model is too much “business as usual” and may appear to the informed public as an inadequate answer to their perception of the problem. The NSC model seems overly complicated and not very responsive. It would needlessly and unrealistically challenge the longstanding authority of ministers, senior officers and officials and the PCO and as such would detract from co-ordinated defence and security policy and operations.

The next generation defence and security structure must direct most of the activities

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war departments, ministries of defence, and departments of security have traditionally directed over many decades. They are now also involved in sundry other exercises and areas that once fell to civil departments or, most often, to no clearly defined authority at all. Whether we identify these activities as “operations other than war,” or “peace-building,” or “humanitarian missions,” to recall but a few current labels, it is evident that these types of operations, conducted both at home or abroad, do not fall nicely into traditional departments. When the Canadian Forces deploys overseas now, soldiers are as likely as not to be joined by diplomats, public servants, civilians, the media, and NGOs, large and small. Yet Canadian public administration has not fully acknowledged the consequences of this important change. A new way of managing may be needed to move Canada into the future world of international interventions and internal security.

It might be useful to begin the planning process, not at its usual starting point, with formed military units and government resources, but by looking at each mission as a singular event—that is, by designing missions according to need and by drawing on a wide

range of Canadian resources, individuals and organizations. The notion is to develop “Team Canada” formations for overseas deployments.

In the future, when military, police, diplomatic, and NGO elements are required for a mission, they should be fashioned, organized, equipped and trained according to a national plan. Each contingent should be assembled in Canada before deployment to allow individuals to prepare a unified Canadian mission. Although some might worry that NGOs wouldn’t want to relinquish their independence by joining a government-sponsored mission, surely governments can offer a combination of incentives to encourage the participation of NGOs in a national effort. Canada cannot advance this or other new ideas if we are locked into departmental structures that seem prone to thwart them. Only by developing the requisite unified bureaucracy first will we be able to move into a different way of looking at and efficiently managing Canada’s national and international security commitments and responsibilities.

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