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Collaboration Amidst Complexity: Enhancing Jointness in Canada's Defence Instrument

by Doug Dempster
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TRENDS AND NEEDS

In an increasingly complex and chaotic world, Canada's defence instrument needs to be adaptive, agile and resilient in order to succeed in its assigned missions. It needs to be able to collaborate across boundaries and innovate faster than adversaries in operations.

The military uses the words *joint*, *combined* and *inter-agency* to describe partnering behaviours among services, states and civilian organizations. Increasingly this language does not cover the full range of real collaboration activities in a knowledge-based society with many different technological and cultural dimensions. Where does the defence policy need to take jointness and collaboration?

From a policy perspective, Canada's military is an instrument of state power, with roles from existential to humanitarian. This instrument is linked to other instruments, most notably diplomacy, international assistance and national security. The military instrument ultimately supports both economic and social policy.

Since World War Two, the long-term trend has been for increasing integration and expanded collaborative capacity. From peace and stability operations through to combat in Afghanistan and Syria, not only has the internal cohesion of the instrument tightened, but its ability to engage with the other national instruments and with allies and non-governmental organizations has increased.

What expectations should the government have of its military instrument in the contemporary context? First, there is a need for the provision of competent advice, situational awareness and options. Second, the instrument must operate with unity of purpose towards the government's policy ends. Third, the instrument needs to succeed in operations while maintaining readiness. Lastly, it has to engage smoothly with external entities of many kinds at home and abroad.

The days of single services operating independently are virtually over. The legal requirements for rules of engagement, the possible consequences of error, operational interdependencies, integrated global connectivity and a 24-hour near real-time news cycle make internal jointness and external collaboration essential.

POLICY OPPORTUNITIES

There are three important policy opportunities that the government may wish to consider in enhancing jointness and collaboration.

First, the jointness culture and role of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) should be recognized and reinforced. Prior to 2007, the former Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) had the responsibility not only for force employment, but also for force generation and force development for the joint 'fourth environment.' This fourth environment included the sensing and command functions, or what militaries call C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance). It also included the deployed logistics functions including theatre activation capabilities. These knowledge age functions, with their competencies, applications and systems, require strategic championship and intense coordination to enable operational success.



JWC Public Affairs Office

These functions are now dispersed across multiple civilian and military organizations within the Department of National Defence (DND). To be an effective instrument, the role of CJOC needs to expand to include the strategic leadership of C4ISR and deployed logistics at the departmental level. CJOC needs the mandate to champion collaborative concepts and doctrine. It needs the means to conduct collective training and experimentation to validate preparedness for complex missions.

Second, joint capabilities should be identified as a priority. The Defence Policy Review has a focus on cyber, space and drones. These are vital technical means that need policy emphasis. In the case of drones the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are lagging. It is indeed curious that the CAF do not yet have any operational drone systems, or the means to counter them in operations.

Also curious after decades of operations among the people, there is a considerable gap in non-kinetic capability. A bright spot is the Peace Support Training Centre in Kingston that trains essential skills. Nonetheless Canada's deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan were ad hoc. The force structure needs a civil affairs deployable capability that incorporates public affairs, psychological operations, public education and health experts and municipal infrastructure know-how. The United Kingdom has recently set up a new 77 Brigade with deployable specialists, both Regular and Reserve, to augment units for stabilization operations. This is an initiative worth emulating.

Such a capability could be a nexus for mobilizing civilian experts from many fields and the linguistic and cultural skills resident in Canada's major cities. Having these connections ahead of time, and leveraging social media to allow them to be voluntarily identified, contracted, deployed and returned safely would lever the strength of Canadian diversity into operations.

Third, the CAF should improve their ability to mesh seamlessly with other organizations. Boundary-spanning is an important technique in addressing complexity. The mandate letter for the Minister of Global Affairs directs that he "ensure a close link between defence policy, foreign



policy and national security.” To this could be added international assistance. Many different staffs today support this cross-connection, however capacity is limited and collaboration is often episodic or limited to specific operations.

How could DND and the CAF contribute to building effective collaboration mechanisms? The Canadian Forces College Toronto has emerged as a knowledge exchange node for national security executives from across government. Could this be connected in some way to a renewed Security and Defence Forum to lever the best academic minds in Canada? Could the college support building better national security community linkages through new programs? The Defence Policy Review should be seen as an opportunity to build collaboration contributions and capacity across the set of policy instruments.

CONCLUSIONS

Canada's military instrument requires increased emphasis on jointness. Collaboration across organizational and cultural boundaries is essential if the military is to be successful in operations. This paper proposes that the leadership role of the Canadian Joint Operations Command be expanded, that joint technical and non-kinetic capabilities be a priority and that new collaboration mechanisms be created to connect the foreign, international assistance and national security functions. Internal jointness and external collaboration are the keys to making the whole of the military instrument greater than the sum of its parts.



CF Operations

► **About the Author**

Major General (Retired) Doug Dempster served as Director General Strategic Planning in the four years following the 9/11 attacks and as NATO Assistant Secretary General for Executive Management from 2005-2010. He is now the Executive Director, Centre for Executive Leadership, at the University of Ottawa.



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The Institute was created to bridge the gap between what Canadians need to know about Canadian international activities and what they do know. Historically Canadians have tended to look abroad out of a search for markets because Canada depends heavily on foreign trade. In the modern post-Cold War world, however, global security and stability have become the bedrocks of global commerce and the free movement of people, goods and ideas across international boundaries. Canada has striven to open the world since the 1930s and was a driving factor behind the adoption of the main structures which underpin globalization such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Trade Organization and emerging free trade networks connecting dozens of international economies. The Canadian Global Affairs Institute recognizes Canada's contribution to a globalized world and aims to inform Canadians about Canada's role in that process and the connection between globalization and security.

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