

Warfighting and Peacekeeping Missions:  
Implications for Leadership

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30 April 2002

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Our understandings of warfighting and ‘operations other than war’ have profound effects on our idea of leadership. Most of the leadership heritage and legacy in the CF (and other militaries) is founded on a modern, heroic conceptualisation of war. Leadership in peace operations is barely theorised. It is assumed that either what works in war must also work in peace, or that peace operations are not worthy of a separate body of leadership theory. Increasingly, however, discrete and distinct visions of conflict are unsatisfactory. Complex missions in places like Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda have posed challenges leaders have found daunting. Leaders involved in highly ambiguous and stressful operating contexts have been left to adapt and apply their leadership methods and approaches ‘on the fly’. An examination of The ‘Debrief the Leaders’ Report illustrates the frustrations and difficulties that leaders face on ‘peace operations’ deployments.

Several implications for leader development arise from a more dynamic view of conflict and an examination of the documentary case: primarily, it can be seen that while some leadership fundamentals seem to apply across contexts, there is no universal ‘one size fits all’ leadership model. Contingent and sensitive models of training and leadership development are required. However, before solutions to leadership models and approaches may be entertained, a formalisation of reflective organisation learning must be established, that sees leadership as a topic of investigation. Without the ability to identify leadership weaknesses, no corrective regime of leadership development can be created. All leadership training (and all training should be seen as leadership training) needs to be as ‘realistic’ as possible, engaging with the complications and frustrations posed by peace support operations. This entails, however, giving leaders the proper tools to deal with high levels of ambiguity. Two primary tools are education and confidence; the first should be wide-ranging and wide spread, while the second is the

product of trust and experience. With these tools leaders will be better able to adopt their chief role as the person responsible for translating the complexities of difficult mission scenarios into meaningful and achievable objectives. Old notions of ‘war is easy and peace is boring’ must be dispelled. This is probably best achieved through exposure to the expectations and leadership functions that leaders will face in complex emergency situations. In essence, peace support mission training needs to be ‘mainstreamed’ not reserved for three-month pre-deployment periods. In all of this, it is vitally important not to lose sight of the fact that peace support and humanitarian missions are not necessarily replacing warfighting, simply augmenting it.

According, the principles of combat leadership, built on the experiences of war, cannot be tossed aside, but must form the core of the leadership methods employed by the Canadian Forces.

However, retention of the core cannot be allowed to mean 'ghettoisation' of the remainder.

#### The Characteristics of War and Peace

*“You may not be interested in war, but war is certainly interested in you.” Trotsky*

Since the beginning of the modern era, war has been theorised in a particular, rational way. Clausewitz was able to declare it “a mere continuation of policy by other means” (1939, 9). Martial thinkers and political philosophers, therefore, saw war as a means to an end, and in no way a bad thing. Hegel stated, “war is not to be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external accident...or...something or other that ought not to be” (Curtis 1981, 101). Weber, in his observations concerning the modernisation of the Western state commented that war develops discipline in society, and this discipline helps create a climate of effective, impersonal bureaucracy (1948: 255). Observations such as these meant that war could and should be studied, and laws or lessons extracted. Perhaps a recipe was impossible, but broad fundamental characteristics and principles could be derived and observed. These characteristics have been

distilled over the years and continue to be presented in a Canadian military context today (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Canadian Characteristics of War (Source: Canada 1997)**

<b>Characteristics of War</b>
Friction
Uncertainty
Ceaseless change
Violence
Human Dimension

Additionally, others have observed certain “ineluctable features” of warfare:

- a. to engage in war demands that soldiers seek victory;
- b. [there is a] desire...to control the battlefield and reduce its uncertainties. (Reid 1998, 15-17)

Because such wisdom can be divined, we gain the impression that war is a rational, and in some cases, perhaps even a desirable state of affairs. It is an instrumental way of achieving grand political objectives, whether those objectives are territorial expansion or the policing of the world order.<sup>1</sup>

*“War is like winter—it may come late, it may be mild, but sooner or later, in one form or another, it will arrive.” Mandelbaum*

Of course, as the events of the 1990s have so clearly demonstrated, not all cultures or groups view war as instrumental action at all. In several contexts, from the protracted wars in West Africa to the terrorist attacks in the US in September 2001, war can be seen as expressive, not a means but perhaps an end in and of itself.<sup>2</sup> This non-standard perspective on what war truly is and what purposes it might serve, can cause difficulties for Western military leaders. The dream of a world without war (or at least one marked by predictability and populated by a host of ‘rational actors’) fuelled by the improvements in the behaviour of some countries in the developed world is far from a reality. As Cooper intones, states “who have friendly, law-abiding

neighbours should not forget that in other parts of the world the law of the jungle reigns...” (2000: 39). Given this reality, the seemingly pessimistic warning that “a major war is unlikely but not unthinkable” (Mandelbaum 1998-9: 20) has been translated into prudent policy: Robertson in the most recent *CF Military Assessment* coolly remarks, “the incidence of conflict is unlikely to decline significantly” (2000, 4).<sup>3</sup>

The realisation that all war may not resemble the set-piece battles or large but contained campaigns of modern Western history may influence the way the concept itself is perceived. Another key distinction that colours the way in which we react to the phenomenon is the extent to which we believe war to be unique. Even in the West, there is debate over whether or not war is actually the continuation of anything at all, let alone rational politics. Obviously, if war is unique, then unique strategies and procedures need to be established to deal with it. If, on the other hand, it is different only in degree (i.e. if it is merely the ‘highest form’ of conflict) then mechanisms learned in its exercise might be applicable in other circumstances too.

### **War is unique.**

In asserting that war is unique, two schools of thought exist. One is aimed at policy-makers and it attempts to discourage any tendency to resort lightly to war. John Keegan represents this tradition well when he tries to break the continuum that posits war as ‘just another policy option.’ He states that “war is wholly unlike diplomacy or politics...war is not the continuation of policy by other means” (1994: xvi, 3). It is an aberration, a pathological state of affairs that should be avoided, not viewed as a means to anything but misery and death. Perhaps a reaction to ‘humanitarian intervention’ or ‘wars of principles’, this school of thought seeks to discourage the waging of war for anything less than ‘national interests’, however they might be defined (see Cooper 2000: 39). Any notions of war as clinical, surgical, or risk-free should be

discarded. War is nasty, violent, and brutal: attempts at humanising it would be dangerous exercises of self-delusion (Coker 2001 and 2002).

The other ‘unique’ school of thought can be seen to emphasise the corollary to the perspective that sees war as a differentiated endeavour; it perceives peace operations to indeed be operations *other than* war. Peacekeeping and other forms of peace support, including those with robust applications of force, as long as they are short of all-out war, are distinct. They have their own characteristics and principles that set them apart from wars (see Tables 2, 3, and 4).

**Table 2: Canadian Characteristics of OOTW (Source: Canada 1997)**

<b>Characteristics of Operations Other Than War</b>
Rapid development
Vague
Many actors
Long-term

**Table 3: Canadian Principles of OOTW (Source: Canada 1997)**

<b>Principles of Operations Other Than War</b>
Legitimacy
Credibility
Non Use of Force
Transparency

An examination of these principles reveals a fundamental difference between war and other operations. Notions of legitimacy and transparency, for example, hold no sway in a traditional warfighting environment. So marked is the difference between war and peacekeeping, that some believe having soldiers conduct such operations represents a “irreconcilable paradox” as it means “combat-trained soldiers are asked to act as non-combatant soldiers and to perform duties which go against their training, and more importantly, their vocation” (Tripodi 2001, 160). To those

who believe that warfighting and other operations bear no likeness to one another, war is hell, while peace support operations are something altogether different.

### **War is A Form of Conflict.**

On the other hand, there are those who see war as nothing more than one particular form of conflict, *primes inter pares* perhaps, but not entirely set apart. Rather than a discrete phenomenon, war forms one end of the spectrum of possible military operations. Accordingly it can be said to be “essentially a subset of conflict and not an isolated state [and that] the distinction between [war and] conflict other than war will be blurred” (Canada 1997). Because war and peace operations are really just waypoints on a scale, there is no need to draw sharp lines between them; the real distinctions need to be made between military operations and non-military operations, not between warfighting and peacekeeping (Breakwell and Spacie 1997, 4). Indeed, instead of uniqueness and difference, we see in this school of thought the idea of similarity, and therefore, the notion that lessons learned in one mode of conflict can be applied in others (Lester 2001, 7).

### **Reality is not so absolute.**

Perhaps worrying about ideal-types of conflict is of little utility at all. If combat operations are occurring and military personnel are engaged in the application of deadly violence, perhaps the distinction between war and ‘not-war’ is academic. As the United States Marine Corps remarks in its keystone document, FMFM-1 *Warfighting*, “Absolute war and peace rarely exist in practice. Rather, they are extremes between which exist the relations among most nations. The need to resort military force of some kind may arise at any point within these extremes, even during periods of relative peace” (USMC 1989, Chapter 3, page 4). Therefore, there is little benefit to sticking with conventional understandings of the terms ‘war’ and



‘operations other than war’, or even the “traditional models of warfare” (Freedman 1998-9, 39-40).

One of the key ‘lessons affirmed’ over the topsy-turvy course of the 1990s is that uncertainty, rather than clarity, will be the hallmark of the international security environment. Robertson stresses “Canada must prepare for uncertainty as the contradictory tendencies of the post-Cold War era—globalisation and fragmentation, peace and conflict, prosperity and poverty—play themselves out in the new century” (2000, 3). In reaction to these contradictions, “military activity” will continue to be “spasmodic and variable” (Freedman 1998-9, 40). In fact, individual military units find themselves unsure of their environment even after they deploy (Lester 2001, 7)—confrontations such as those in the Medak Pocket in Croatia, for example, occurred on a peacekeeping mission, but involved intense combat operations at the sub-unit level and below. Labels applied to missions may fit well at breakfast, but be tragically irrelevant by lunch. Mileham characterises these hybrid missions as fraught with “subtleties, paradoxes, ambiguities, and internal contradictions” (1999, 36; see also Seiple 1996, esp. 5-15). The events of September 11, 2001 have confused matters even more. The British Ministry of Defence, for example, decided to conduct a follow-on to their substantial Strategic Defence Review in light of the terrorist attacks in the United States. It concluded that since the lines between forms of conflict were becoming hazy, its strategy for dealing with international terrorism would run the gamut of prevention, deterrence, coercion, disruption, and destruction. Nowhere does it bother to define which of these strategies might indicate a state of war; it is as if the notion of war or ‘not war’ was beside the point (UK 2002, 3).<sup>4</sup> Military analysts in the US believe “future wars may resemble Bosnia rather than Desert Storm” (p. 265). The US Marine Corps characterises this ‘new world’ as “politically and militarily messy” (United States 1999, 274).

In response to the emergence of an untidy world, the British Army developed the concept of Wider Peacekeeping, essentially military doctrine for responding to complex political and humanitarian emergencies. Table 4 illustrates the characteristics of these kinds of situations. It is useful to compare this long list with the relatively short one in Table 2.

**Table 4: Characteristics of Wider Peacekeeping Scenarios (Source: United Kingdom 1995, p. 1-7)**

<b>Characteristics of Wider Peacekeeping Scenarios</b>
Numerous parties
Undisciplined factions
Ineffective ceasefire
The absence of law and order
Gross violations of human rights
Risk of local armed opposition to peacekeeping forces
The presence and involvement of large numbers of civilian organisations
Collapse of civilian infrastructure
Presence of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons
An undefined area of operations

The Wider Peacekeeping characteristics convey a sense of confusion and complexity, rather than trying to differentiate these scenarios from notions of war. Indeed, they combine aspects of violence and chaos, civil and military. Whether or not they are exhaustive, they certainly portray a rich picture of what contemporary military operations face.

### **Implications for Leadership**

With the above understanding of how war and other operations might be viewed, it is possible to turn to the question of how these perspectives might shape the leadership approaches adopted by a military. At a general level, it is possible to conceive of military leadership as a straightforward process of giving orders based on authority, and those orders being dutifully carried out. After all, “soldiers *must* obey their officers” (Wills 1994, 85). There are those who see military leadership as reliant on an almost mechanistic system of discipline. In addition to Weber’s notion of modern armies as exemplars of bureaucratisation, other authors

view military life as determined by regulations, making the issue of obedience a matter of second nature. Gellner states “in a military organisation, discipline is enforced by a proliferation of minor rules and hence additional possible transgressions, the avoidance of which puts a heavy and constant burden on each individual” (1997, 7). This burden, therefore, reduces a leader’s role to one of providing guidance, and invoking punishments to ensure that desired objectives are met. This, however, is a gross underestimation of the complexity of leadership, in any context, war or otherwise. It is too simple a ‘model of leadership’ to pertain in any but the most rudimentary settings (such as periods during basic training, perhaps).

Despite the obvious flaws in the model outlined above, military leadership, like most leadership, does tend to be built on “convention and conventional wisdom” (Barker 2001, 473). The experiences, rituals, and routines that form the foundation of leadership may be untested and untried in contexts different to those in which they were created. Obviously, there may be some enduring truths that need not be altered from situation to situation, but without actively challenging the assumptions of such received theories armed forces run the risk of leading inappropriately. As Mandelbaum warns “practices that no longer serve the purpose for which they were established are nonetheless perpetuated by institutions that depend on them” (1998-9, 25). This *may* be the case with current Canadian leadership approaches. Take for example, this passage from a keystone Army publication<sup>5</sup>:

As proven repeatedly by Canadian units in peace and conflict (including war) well-trained, properly equipped and well-led combat capable forces are flexible enough to adapt to the requirements of non-combat operations (Canada 1997).

At one level, the statement is irrefutable: proper kit, good training, and excellent leadership are always going to be ingredients for success. But what do they mean exactly? Is any training regime, or weapon system, or leadership approach always going

to be flexible enough to allow for unlimited adaptability at an organisational level? This is answered definitively in a further passage:

In preparing for war, the army develops the leadership...discipline, and skills that are applicable to a variety of operations other than war...the same basic principles apply to all types of conflict (Canada 1997).

This paragraph highlights a few inconsistencies that are at the heart of the current study.

First, the applicability of leadership across the spectrum of conflict cannot be determined by definitional fiat. Empirical evidence to back up these assertions has not been assembled: Pinch notes, for example, that “the necessity of combat training for all...remains a perception, not a proven fact” (2000, 176). Second, while the document states that basic principles apply across the spectrum, it acknowledges elsewhere that operations other than war have distinct characteristics and principles (see Tables 2 and 3). Is it reasonable to assume that an activity marked by different fundamentals can be lead with no appreciable change in method?

#### **A Case Study: Debrief the Leaders**

Questions and contradictions like these are not easily resolved and leave a tension at the centre of contemporary military leadership culture. If we examine what have been described as the “core qualities of military leadership” (Table 4), we again see that, while extremely important, they are generic enough to be almost universally accepted. However, in the actual operations which commanders are finding themselves, they may be less than helpful. At the very least, these principles, derived from years of experience, only tell a part of the story. By themselves they do not provide enough guidance.

**Table 5: Core Qualities of Military Leadership (Source: Canada 1998)**

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Core Qualities of Military Leadership
Integrity
Courage
Loyalty
Selflessness
Self-discipline

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The “Debrief the Leaders Report” (Canada 2001a) is the result of a series of surveys and interviews conducted on officers who have served in leadership positions across a variety of international operations over the course of the 1990s. Its findings indicate that a large number of officers found themselves unprepared for the challenges they faced on these missions. Based on this and other discoveries, the author of the report goes so far as to conclude, “the nature of the profession of arms in Canada needs to be reformulated” (p. i).

Officers found themselves questioning the very fundamentals of leadership. The priorities of ‘mission, men, self’ “does not fit comfortably [with] experiences over the past 10 years” (Canada 2001a, 11). Perhaps counter-intuitively, it is not the notion of ‘self’ that enjoyed a change in status, but ‘mission’. Because “it was hard to identify any national interest in a given operation” commanders decided that the safety and well-being of their men deserved primary attention: “safety is at least both clear and simple” (p. 11). This reordering of priorities could have profound affects on mission completion, and could mean military forces are less effective in the discharge of their assigned duties.<sup>6</sup>

It is possible to observe then a significant degree of cognitive dissonance or *Weldschmerz*, whereby the expectations (based on training and experience) of military commanders were in variance with the reality they faced on operations. Officers were overwhelmed by the extent to which “there is no black and white in peace operations.

There is a heck of a lot of grey” (p. 18). What is significant is not so much that the world is confusing, but that military leaders expected it to be any different. Clearly, training and reality were not properly aligned. Commanders deployed with expectations that were predicated on scenarios developed during the Cold War, where bipolar antagonism, latent but relatively static, created an impression of ‘black and white’. Sadly, it was only once this vision was challenged in the missions of the Balkans and Africa in the 1990s that its inadequacy became apparent. The Report believes that the military can no longer adhere to such “classic” notions of effectiveness (p. i). It is logical to postulate that this move away from martial classicism could include a reformulation of the essence of military leadership.

### **Leadership Development**

If the nature of conflict is bound to be chaotic and unpredictable, and if it can be agreed that the current paradigm of leadership is under stress, what arises is the need for the creation of an effective leadership development program within the military. This program cannot be one that relies upon old leadership habits, or one that centres on the premise that ‘leadership is contagious’. Officers and non-commissioned members must be introduced to the kinds of philosophical perspectives that will allow them to become the flexible leaders required on contemporary and future operations. The first ingredient in this recipe, though, is to identify and heed the kinds of challenges illustrated in The Debrief the Leaders Report. That is most effectively achieved through a systemic adoption of organisational learning that not only values experience, but also understands that raw experience needs processing in order for it to be of any real use. The second component, following on from this approach, is to organise leadership

training into all aspects of military activity, to acknowledge and emphasise the kinds of demands that leaders will face, rather than dismissing them as anomalies or ‘one-off’ occurrences.

### **Organisational Learning.**

At the very highest level, organisational learning (OL) means learning *and* applying lessons within an organisation (Fowler 1997, 64). There are many definitions of OL, but taken as a whole they stress five key features:

1. dialogue between individuals, an organisation and its stakeholders (Bradbury and March 2001; Minnet 1999; Britton 1998)
2. reflection that often leads to the challenging of assumptions (Bradbury and March 2001; Keegan and Turner 2000)
3. institutionalising experience into routines (Levitt and March 1988; Keegan and Turner 2000)
4. combining experience and knowledge (Britton 1998)
5. it affects an organisation’s capacity to adapt and change (Minnet 1999; Hudson 1999).

An organisation ‘learns’ by means of its organisational (or corporate) memory. The information stored in this collective memory is kept in the form of ‘routines’, which are actually “encoded inferences from history...that guide behaviour” (Levitt and March 1988, 320). The lessons of history (however that ‘history’ might be learned<sup>7</sup>) are institutionalised in an organisation. Furthermore, since routines are based on ‘inferences’, a series of factors can affect the kinds of routines that are formed, including assumptions, core beliefs and values, founders’ visions, donors’ pressures, or hidden agendas of different parts of the organisation. Therefore, in any organisation “action stems from a logic of appropriateness or legitimacy more than from a logic of consequentiality or intention...It involves matching procedures to situations more than it does calculating choices” (Levitt and March 1988, 320). The kind of leadership an organisation adopts, therefore, is not necessarily ‘best practice’ but rather ‘most suitable practice from a set list of alternatives’.

Organisations receive their ‘history’ in two ways: *directly* (from experience) and *indirectly* (from the experience of others). Each way has its own set of pitfalls. Levitt and March describe those relating to direct experience as “paucity, redundancy, and complexity” (1988, 321); organisations tend not to have a great deal of experience, what they do have is based on doing the same things over and over, and the experience they do have can be confusing and not commonly understood. Given this, it is not difficult to see how the military might fail to learn from its own history.

Learning from the experience of others might be assumed to be a superior method by which an organisation might learn, but it too can prove problematic. Depending on the manner in which the information is diffused—coercively (borrowed procedures are imposed), mimetically (copying of others) or normatively (through formal education or publications)—the indirect experience is met with a variety of reactions from resistance to faddish (but misunderstood) compliance (Levitt and March 1988, 330).

Due to the challenges in choosing the right history to learn from and the best method of gaining this new knowledge, a fundamental factor in successful organisational learning is reflection. Whether expressed as Bradbury and Mainemelis’s organisational *praxis* (“dialogic reflection on past action for creating a desired future”) (2001, 340) or as Minnet’s “internal evaluation” (1999, 353), some kind of appreciation of what has happened must occur if ‘history as experience’ is to prove useful. As Keegan and Turner note, in busy organisations “teams deliver and deliver and deliver without reflection. And without reflection there is scarcely time to discuss, capture or share learning experience that might...yield genuine value” (2000, 25). This delivery focus can certainly be seen to exist in today’s military, with high levels of operational tempo and an ever-widening range of operations and duties performed. One of the



significant outcomes of reflection is a challenging of fundamental beliefs and organisational underpinnings (Britton 1998; Minnet 1999). However, to be truly effective reflection must be “shared reflection” (that is, conducted by as much of the organisation as possible, not by a central ‘reflection czar’ or ghettoised in a ‘lessons learned’ organisation or an ethics and leadership directorate and forgotten) and “part of the job itself”—ongoing and continuous, not an afterthought (Minnet 1999, 354).

Effective OL cannot occur in a vacuum. It is the product of considerable leadership commitment and nurturing. Minnet stresses that OL requires personnel to be given access to relevant information and “encouraged to reflect on their own values, beliefs, and assumptions” (1999, 353) while Britton advocates rewarding people for their contributions and providing “support from the highest level to give learning a recognised priority in an organisation” (1998, 5 and 10). If a military wants to improve its leader development program, it must foster organisational learning and recognise that leadership is a valid field of enquiry in the acquisition of ‘lessons learned’.

### **Application and Reinforcement of the Lessons.**

Once the lessons of leadership in operations of peace support and war are learned, the challenge becomes passing them on. Traditional approaches to leader development tend to involve formal instruction in checklists of fundamentals and principles in the early stages of someone’s career. This formal education is often marked with studies of “great men”<sup>8</sup> and their leadership exploits. After an initial period of instruction, however, most leadership training is facilitated ‘on the job’: leadership is developed through practice and observation of superiors. Experience is the vehicle through which leaders hone their skills.

The most significant problem that this model poses is that it is a victim of the pitfalls described by Levitt and March above (i.e. paucity, redundancy, and complexity). Leaders need a great deal of experience that is varied and understood. Simple repetition is unlikely to prove fruitful. Therefore, broad steps should be taken to refine a comprehensive leadership development program within the CF.

1. Introduce Complexity. As The Debrief the Leaders Report indicates, despite being listed as a characteristic of war, complexity of operations causes frustration and stress. In their study of commanders in the Falklands War, the Gulf War, and the Balkans, Breakwell and Spacie observe

Military officers are familiar with, and expect, a rigid hierarchical structure...and can find the removal of predictable, precise direction from higher in the chain of command acts as a stressor...Being asked to decide, sometimes alone and without support, how to achieve designated objectives (rather than simply to implement a plan for action) is experienced as problematic...not purely because the objective might be intrinsically difficult to achieve, but also because this level of autonomy is not expected, *on the basis of previous training and the erstwhile dominant ethos and doctrine of command*" (1997, 8; emphasis added)<sup>9</sup>.

If the cause of at least some of the discomfort with complexity can be said to be previous training, it might hold that its resolution be linked to *future* training. Training should incorporate ambiguity to better prepare leaders for the 'real world' of operations. Rather than presenting 'set piece' exercises that serve as rehearsals, leaders should be presented with opportunities to develop their own initiative and autonomy<sup>10</sup>. If this becomes the way in which leaders are accustomed, then it may make the resultant leadership approaches more applicable in operational settings. Hayes and Sands suggest that during peace support operations, military efforts need to be directed at eleven sectors, or aspects of the complex emergency (see Table 6) if they are likely to succeed. Each sector needs

to be addressed and its specific needs or challenges overcome if the overall mission is to have any lasting effectiveness.

**Table 6: Operational Sectors (Source: Hayes and Sands 1997, 838)**

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<b>Operational Sectors</b>
Diplomacy
Internal politics and leadership
Cultural awareness
Public information
Military
Law and order
Education
Humanitarian assistance
Social development and Human Rights
Infrastructure
Economic Development

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In creating leaders capable of complicated operations, the military could do worse than to start by ensuring that elements of these sectors are included in training scenarios and leadership development programmes. For instance, as has been highlighted in the findings of The Debrief the Leaders report, understanding the culture of those party to the conflict (and indeed the cultures of the other members of the peacekeeping and humanitarian communities) is crucial (Canada 2001a, 16).<sup>11</sup> Training in ‘ideal conditions’ should be reserved for periods of basic instruction, and elements of friction, confusion, and imprecision should colour all other training.

In order to deal with such vagueness, though, leaders need two things: education and confidence. Education can help expose military leaders to a variety of potential scenarios, whereas training helps to develop responses to specific situations. Education can illustrate that not all problems have solutions, at least not clear cut or simple ones (Lester 2001, 7). If the sectoral approach advocated by Hayes and Sands is to be realistic, education will need to be wide and varied. Leaders would benefit from a liberal

exposure to all the education relevant to all sectors, while specialists in single factors (such as law or social development) might come from the military or civilian agency. Nevertheless, military leaders need to have an appreciation of these aspects of their missions, and understand the capabilities and limitations of each field.

Confidence is the result of trust: knowing that in the exercise of leadership in confusing and uncertain circumstances one has the support of the wider organisation and the chain of command. In order for confidence to develop (confidence of the leader in the system, and confidence of the system in individual leaders), ‘complexity training’ should not be reserved for high-ranking commanders. As the former Commandant of the British Joint Services Command and Staff College notes, “the challenge...is not only to provide suitably educated leaders for the future but also to equip those at the intermediate levels with the tools by which to operate in the present” (Burrige 2001, xi). Going even further, in the day and age of the ‘strategic corporal’, all leaders must be prepared for autonomous action and complex operational contexts (Canada 2001a, 23). Lester believes “the traditional command-and-control bureaucracy...will not work in operations other than war...a key element to this type of leadership is effective decentralisation” (2001, 6). However, diffusion of responsibility is not without its risks. Many feel, as Weber does, that “an all around weakening of discipline usually accompanies any kind of decentralised military establishment” (1948, 259). However, the fact that leaders find themselves having to make decisions without explicit direction, compounded by the reality that many of these leaders occupy rank levels unaccustomed to such responsibility, means that decentralised operations cannot be ignored, or wished away. Indeed “split second judgements, with a minimum of practical guidance, require degrees

of self-control and self-discipline, military virtues, both practical and philosophical, of the highest order” (Mileham 1999, 36). The challenge, then, will be to balance confidence, trust, and discipline in the conduct of complex operations. How will leaders rise to this challenge?

The role of the leader needs increasingly to be one of ‘meaning maker’. As defined by Higham and Paquet, this means “making sense of people’s experience by putting it into a larger context: providing a sense of purpose, a story of why people do what they do, and shaping the organisation by building a shared vision...appropriate to the demands of the new situations.” (2000, 4). If some personnel are finding it difficult to understand the overall mission, it is not only the ‘habit of certitude’ that is to blame. Leaders have a responsibility to ‘get the message out’ and make themselves, and the wider context, understood: “peace support leaders must be able to clearly communicated their mission to all concerned. They must be able to set goals and objectives and make sure they are understood by all involved” (Lester 2001, 3-4). Indeed, some academic leadership theory believes that

subordinates can be presumed to be seeking answers to one or more of the four basic questions:

1. Where am I going?
2. How am I going to get there?
3. Who will I be when I arrive?
4. Can I feel good about myself in the process? (Zierdan 1984, 149; see also Bass 1997).

Given the needs of followers and the level of ambiguity extant in operational environments, it can be said that leaders are burdened by a double-edged dilemma: they must learn to act in situations where they are not fully aware of what is happening and, nevertheless, they must rapidly and accurately make sense of this confusion for their

subordinates. Leadership is all about reducing the anxiety and stress associated with the search for answers to questions like those above (Zierdan 1984, 150).

2. De-stigmatise Operations Other Than War. Militaries are increasingly finding themselves faced with a dilemma. Their *raison d'etre* has traditionally been to fight wars, but the call for this role is rare, while the frequency of 'secondary tasks', such as peace support operations, aid to civil authorities, and humanitarian assistance, is on the rise. Despite the amount of experience military personnel are accumulating in the execution of these tasks, they are still regarded as less important and distracting (Janet Weber 1997, 1). Somehow, war has become lionised as straightforward and uncomplicated--perhaps physically more demanding, but clear and easy to understand. As one respondent in the Debrief the Leaders Report put it, "running the war is easy. What is difficult is dealing with the complexities and ambiguities of multinational peace operations" (Canada 1997, 20). This peculiar view cannot be allowed to dominate military thinking, especially among the leadership. Again, this attitude may be the result of lack of exposure. Sorfleet states "in most nations, military officers training and education, whether conducted in a classroom or in the 'field' in exercises, has focussed on the actual conduct of battle...Simply put, the 'war' ending is rarely exercised" (2001, 50). If operations in the midst of 'war endings' are on the rise, then preparing for them, and in so doing, developing leaders who can successively command forces assigned to these missions, is of vital importance. By treating operations other than war as integral components of military activity, worth studying and training for in their own right, it may be possible to alter "the traditional warrior ethic [with its] comments of 'wasting...time with peacekeeping' or dissatisfaction with 'fighting for the cause of foreign cultures'"

(Canada 1997, 23). Put succinctly, peace support operations must be mainstreamed into regular military training. This will allow for increased comfort with chaos and foster the development of coping mechanisms and appropriate leadership approaches.

3. Augment, rather than abandon, functioning models. None of what has been said so far means that leadership styles, approaches and models, even if based on lessons from ‘long ago’, be abandoned. What works should be retained. The principle of leadership by example, for instance, is as applicable in a peace support operation, as it might be in commanding a submarine, or leading a squadron of Hercules transport aircraft. However, doggedly remaining wedded to heroic notions of leadership is irresponsible. LGen Romeo D’Allaire believes that the CF will be dragged “kicking and screaming into a realm where the old concepts and doctrines are becoming more and more ineffective. That doesn’t mean for a moment that we can in any way put aside or abrogate our responsibilities as a military force, skilled and experienced in warfighting...[It means] no more debate between ‘train up’ and ‘train down’ for conflict resolution and peacekeeping” (2001, 17). As attrition-based warfare will no longer constitute the entire range of military operations, leader development must take other possibilities into account: “to instruct future generations of officers that they must destroy enemy forces through relentless attack as a prelude to victory is simply an error. Real operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will not comply with such easy formulations” (Robert Leonard, cited in Canada 2001a). Traditional leadership tenets must be examined and revamped if necessary, in light of the fluid and non-discrete operational world that leaders find themselves in today.

## Conclusion

*It is not the noblest call that gets answered, but the answerable call. Wills*

These prescriptions are not easy medicine. Confusion and romanticism over the nature of war and other operations have led to frustration and feelings of helplessness. Not only are the missions puzzling, the practice of peacekeeping itself “deals with the manifestations of problems but fails to address their causes and may even become part of the problem by prolonging conflict” (Pugh 1997, 193). Leadership in these situations cannot be taken for granted. In fact, the kind of leadership required to provide meaning, instil confidence, and keep a decentralised organisation together might be termed ‘SuperLeadership’, where “leaders...lead others to lead themselves” (Manz and Simms 1997, 412). There is no option to hide or avoid operations other than war any more than there is an option to avoid war itself. The military will continue to be called upon to perform a variety of tasks; some may be disliked, but that is not a reason to denigrate or ignore them. Leadership, therefore, cannot be intrinsically linked to heroic notions of gallantry on the battlefield. No less of a ‘warfighter’ than General Nash, the commander of the American 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division in Bosnia, understood this point well: engaging in all aspects of peacekeeping operations, including those unfamiliar ones, such as dealing with civilians “is not mission creep—it’ mission” (cited in Hayes and Sands 1997, 840). Getting leaders prepared for these new missions is of paramount importance, for “if the personnel charged with exercising the armed force is itself conflicted, uncertain of its tasks, and unaware of its limitations, the chances of effective applications of coercive force are further diminished” (Rosenau 1994, 55). Leadership, then, must be marked by the realisation that operating in and explaining ambiguity are part of the job of a leader. Leadership, after all, must be appropriate, not idealised.



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## **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> See Carlisle 1995 for an examination of the continuing relevance of Clausewitzian theory.

<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth look at 'non-rational' war, see Bedal and Keen (1997), Coker (1998), Keen (1998), and Kaldor (1999).

<sup>3</sup> Some have gone further in their dismal forecasts. Australian Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Chris Barrie warned his parliament "There are some key analysts in the United States, and there are analysts in this country who are forecasting the prospect of a third world war". (Madigan and Dickens 2002). The parliamentarians, it must be said, were less than convinced.

<sup>4</sup> In this light, it is instructive to note that the UK had elements of its forces engaged in both warfighting and peacekeeping aspects of coalition operations in Afghanistan in the Spring of 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Although the publication cited originates from the Army, similar propositions are to be found in the doctrine of the other services. See, for example, Canada 2001b.

<sup>6</sup> Dutch military forces were accused of putting their safety ahead of the implementation of their mandate in the massacre of Srebrenica. When a report was released making these charges, the government of the day in Holland resigned. [<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62601-2002Apr16.html>; accessed 20 April 2002]. See also English elements of the report [<http://www.srebrenica.nl/en/index.htm>].

<sup>7</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the particular difficulties historical learning poses for militaries, see Ankersen 1998.

<sup>8</sup> The fact that most leadership studies revolve around masculine 'role models' is an area that requires further study, especially given the increased numbers of female personnel in the CF. It is beyond the scope of this paper to do so.

<sup>9</sup> The idea of a rigid 'military mind' was first introduced by Samuel Huntington (1986).

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of this matter in the specific context of the Canadian Army, see Ankersen 2001.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the need for military leaders to become more sensitive to culture and to engage in diplomacy, see Janowitz (1994, 125) and Moskos (1994, 137).

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