

**The Nature of the Civil-Military Relationship in Canada and its Impact on the Leadership
Role of the Officer Corps**

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“It is very difficult for a nation to create an army when it has not already a body of officers and non-commissioned officers to serve as a nucleus...” Napoleon

Introduction

Civil control of the Canadian Forces (CF) has developed over time through the use of customs and norms as well as certain explicit laws and regulations. This control mechanism is designed to both protect society from the CF and from any attempt by the government to use the CF for partisan purposes. Thus, a situation has emerged whereby politicians and military officers have developed management and monitoring systems where they perform different, but complementary, roles and tasks in planning for national defence and, ultimately, controlling the CF.

According to the legal framework governing the military, politicians have control over matters affecting the creation, provision, and use of the CF, while officers are allowed, under the direction of the Minister of National Defence, to control matters relating to the day-to-day operations of the military establishment. In wartime, the roles and responsibilities are obvious for both the military and civilian government. However, during peacetime the distinction between military and civilian roles and responsibilities is often ambiguous. The peacetime condition has been characterized by the use of the CF in national disaster responses, such as the recent ones in Manitoba and Quebec, or by peace support operations throughout the world. It is within these contexts that the civil-military relationship – that is to say, the relationship between the military, the civilian leadership and the population as a whole – is less clearly defined. What is also apparent is that there is some confusion, both in terms of official policy and public opinion, as to how this relationship should be defined. After decades of peace support operations, this lack of clarity has now blurred the traditional war-fighting role of the CF, which,

in turn, has blurred the civil-military relationship in Canada. Ultimately, this has had a definite impact on the role of leaders within the CF.

Perhaps the biggest problem in terms of defining the appropriate civil-military relationship in the Canadian context is the widespread ignorance of both our elected officials and the public more generally about the role and operations of the CF. There is a clear lack of understanding. As the Morton Report noted, “like other Canadians, most new Ministers of National Defence know little about the Canadian Forces, beyond media myths, old war movies and inherited memories from relatives who once served.”¹ Furthermore, as LGen (ret’d) Charles Belzile remarked, “less than one percent of elected federal officials in Canada have any national service, no wonder there is little useful communication and understanding between the hierarchy of the military and the government.”² Consequently, the problems facing the development of a professional leadership within the CF, namely those relating to civil control and, by default, the civil-military relationship in Canada, begin at the top and work their way down from the civilian bureaucrats in the Department of National Defence (DND) to the private soldier in basic training.

This situation has an enormous impact on how leadership roles are defined within the context of the civil-military relationship and how civil control of the military is imposed. In turn, these issues cross the boundaries of not just national defence, but also security and foreign policy. One aspect of this is represented by peacekeeping and has also been enshrined in various

¹ Desmond Morton. “Morton Report: What to Tell the Minister” Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/eng/min/reports/Morton/MORTON1e.htm#introduction [Nov 15, 2002].

² Fourth Annual Graduate Student Symposium, *The Conference of Defence Associations Institute*, Ottawa November 2001.

defence documents and foreign policy white papers.³ Yet, while much has been said about the nature of these relationships, little has been written about how this impacts leadership roles within the CF.

Part of this problem originates from a doctrinal perspective where the term civil-military co-operation (CIMIC) has usurped the term civil-military relations, creating some confusion as to the appropriate role of the CF and, as a corollary, the role its leaders have domestically and/or internationally. This, in turn, has created a clear void between the military leadership and its political masters. The ‘civilianization’ process imposed on the CF over the past 30 years has only served to compound this factor. The impact has manifested itself in the form of ‘officer bloat,’ which has broken down some of the traditional leadership relationships within the CF.

This paper begins by undertaking a review of the relevant literature related to the concept of civil-military relations. We will clarify the confusion surrounding civil-military relations by examining the various definitions of civil control, civil-military relations and the evolving concept of CIMIC. In doing so, we will discuss how these concepts/doctrines relate to leadership roles in the CF. Our aim will be to offer a concrete proposal for modifying the civil-military relationship in Canada to go beyond the existing definitions and, as a result, potentially modify notions of leadership and professionalism in the CF.

We then explore the existing reality of elected and civilian ignorance of the role and operations of the CF with the aim of offering some solutions for building a more constructive relationship. Specifically, we will identify those instances where the senior officer corps can show leadership and guidance to the civil authorities in matters relating to the CF and defence

³ For example, see *Leadmark: The Navy’s Strategy for 2020-A Summer*, DND, 2001 or *Canada in the World: Government Statement*, DFAIT, 1995.

policy more generally. Furthermore, suggestions will be offered as to how the CF can modify its public relations to enhance public awareness of CF operations, be they good or bad.

In the final section of the paper we address the issue of “officer bloat” in the CF and how it has had a fundamental impact on the perception of the leadership of the officer corps by both its civilian counterparts in DND and within the CF. To our minds, this is the most critical issue facing the CF at the start of the twenty-first century because it is a manifestation of the ailing condition of the present civil-military relationship in Canada.

Understanding the Civil-Military Relationship: Civil-Military Relations, Civil Control and CIMIC

In the post-Cold War era, the nature of civil-military relations has been fundamentally altered by the polarization of power in the democratized states of the west. The net result has been a change in the terminology used to explain the relationship between government and the military establishment. Therefore, before changes to the civil-military relationship and its impact on leadership can be reviewed, there is a need to define it and the related concepts of civil control and CIMIC.

There are numerous models and definitions of the concept of civil-military relations/the civil-military relationship (conceptually these are the same). For example, the Somalia Commission of Inquiry defined the Canadian civil-military relationship as:

The control of the armed forces by civilians elected to Parliament acting in accordance with statutes passed by that legislative body. This principle is distinctly and conceptually different from the notion of *civilian control* of the military, which may mean control by anyone not enrolled in the armed forces, such as public servants.⁴

⁴ Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry. Available online at www.dnd.ca/somalia/voll/v1c6e.htm [March 12, 2000]. Emphasis is ours.

Douglas Bland has offered another interpretation of civil-military relations: “civil control of the military is managed and maintained through the sharing of responsibility for control between civilian leaders and military officers.”⁵ Obviously, there is a subtle difference between these two definitions. As Bland observes, “not only does ‘the study of civil-military relations suffer from too little theorizing,’ but many theories seem inconsistent with reality and thus have been forthrightly criticized.”⁶ From the review of the existing literature, it is clear that terms such as civil relations, CIMIC and Civil Military Affairs (CMA) have been used interchangeably when referring to issues relating to civil-military relations.

Therefore, there is a need for greater conceptual clarity, especially with regard to the use of terminology in CF doctrinal documents. The terms CIMIC and CMA, both of which are doctrines,⁷ are supposed refer to the relationship that develops between militaries, governmental organizations (GOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies involved in peace-support, humanitarian, and aid to civil power operations at both the domestic and international level. The British, New Zealand and Australian militaries predominantly use the term CMA, while the US has replaced the term CMA with CIMIC. In older parlance, CIMIC is the near equivalent of the ‘hearts and minds’⁸ programs used in such conflicts as Algeria and Vietnam.

⁵ Doug Bland. “A Unified Theory of Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Fall 1999, p. 9.

⁶ Douglas Bland. “Patterns in Liberal Democratic Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 27, No. 4. Summer 2001, p. 527. Refer to Bland’s original notes for a full listing of listed supporting articles.

⁷ Canadian CIMIC is based on US and NATO doctrine. Though a greater discussion on doctrine is out of scope of this paper, it should be noted that military doctrine is neither mandatory nor is it meant to be dogmatic.

⁸ That is to say, civil action, support and pacification programs.

The Canadian Army Lessons Learned Centre noted, “CIMIC has generally the same meaning for both international and domestic operations. It includes the resources and the arrangements that support the relationship between commanders and non-military agencies.”⁹ Canada has developed CIMIC doctrine as a mechanism to allow for the “formaliz[ing of] civil-military co-operation activities, operations and force structure by CF elements, moving away from strict reliance on ad hoc arrangements.”¹⁰ Essentially, the military has developed a doctrine to formally co-ordinate its military support of civilian activities with local authorities, NGOs and GOs during its peacekeeping and war-fighting operations. Clearly, CIMIC is not civil-military relations – and it is not intended to be. It is also apparent that a doctrine, like CIMIC, cannot be representative of a larger structural relationship between a government and its military establishment.

However, there is a problem with respect to the use of terminology in the CF. Without any apparent underlying rationale, since the Somalia Inquiry the term CIMIC has now officially replaced the term civil-military relations.¹¹ Given the previous discussion on the definitions of CIMIC and civil-military relations, the change in definition creates a serious policy contradiction in that we have a doctrine that is now functionally acting as a political relationship. CIMIC, as outlined by the CF, simply does not fill the role of civil-military relations as previously defined.¹² At the very least, this situation creates uncertainty as to the actual purpose of CIMIC; more importantly, it also reduces Canada’s defence and foreign policy goals to a state of

⁹ The Army Lessons Learned Centre, “Lessons Learned in Civil-Military Co-operation,” *Dispatches: Lessons Learned for Soldiers*. Vol. 5, No. 3, Feb 1999, p. 3.

¹⁰ DND, B-GG-005-004/AF-023, *Civil-Military Co-operation in Peace, Emergencies, Crisis and War*, p. 5, Sec 2. Ottawa, DND, 1998.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 1-14, 1-15.

confusion. Without a concise and clear understanding and definition of the terms, the CF has been used in an ad-hoc manner when deployed on missions. Mission objectives have become blurred and have suffered from ‘mission creep,’ as evidenced by such missions as Somalia, Eritrea and the so-called ‘bungle in the jungle’ in central Africa.¹³

This has a direct impact on how the senior military leadership perceives the role of the CF and, as a corollary, the leadership role that they assume. At the heart of this definitional confusion is the *de facto* role of the CF: is the CF a war-fighting entity or something else? If the CF is not a war-fighting entity, then how does this reflect on the true nature of the civil-military relationship? In other words, we must ask whether the role of the military leader is to be a warrior or, alternatively, the military equivalent of an aid agency worker.

Presently, all indicators suggest that there has been little acknowledgement of this issue, but as CIMIC becomes more prominent in Canadian foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the Human Security Agenda, then there will be greater pressure on senior military leaders to fulfill a leadership role for which they are neither aware exists nor prepared to assume. While there is clearly a movement afoot to enhance the role of CIMIC within Canada’s foreign policy,¹⁴ the military seems to be oblivious to such overtures. For example, in a recent conversation with the head of CIMIC for the CF, it was clear his organization was not cognizant of all CIMIC policy-related activities occurring within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

¹² Ibid, p. 1-15.

¹³ See such sources as the Somalia Commission of enquiry, post-action reports, and Stornoway Productions TV series (and books produced by Dundurn Press) “A Question of Honour,” aired on the ‘I Channel,’ March 2003.

¹⁴ The inventory of papers and reports at the Canadian Centre of Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD), within DFAIT, is one example of this. CIDA has also made linkages with CIMIC and aid.

even though they were working with policy analysts from the Department.¹⁵ Undoubtedly, civil-military relations is not CIMIC.

We now must examine the concept of civil control of the military. Again, we are left wanting for conceptual clarity: both civil control and civil-military relations are used interchangeably in the literature.¹⁶ Based on the brief examples of the of definitions offered by the Somalia Commission and Douglas Bland, the term civil control and civil-military relations essentially refer to the same concept, which is the control of the military by a civilian authority. However, neither term is to be confused with the concept (as defined by the Somalia Commission) of *civilian* control of the military, which refers to control of the military by anyone not enrolled in the armed forces.

One subtlety does exist, however, when referring to the meaning of civil control as opposed to civil-military relations, namely that the “mechanisms of the civil control strongly depend on a level of political decision making.”¹⁷ Hence, for the concept of civil control to function appropriately, politicians must understand the nature of the military establishment, the military arts and defence policy. If these conditions can be met, then it is possible to develop laws and norms, which set the boundaries and structures for the civil control of the military.

Should a normative case be developed for the above, then a question arises as to how the soldiers fit in to the larger picture. Moreover, consideration must be given as to how they and, more specifically, the senior commanders, express their opinions and viewpoints within the

¹⁵ Personal communication with Lt. Col. Carr on January 9, 2003.

¹⁶ See, for example, the Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry: Civil-Military Relations, p. 1-2. Available online at www.dnd.ca/somalia/vol1/vlc6e.htm [Jan 15,2003].

¹⁷ “Civil Control of the Military and Officers in Democratic Societies” Project – Workshop (1 May 1998) Title: “The Civil Control of the Military in Democratic Societies, Status and Ways of Development,” Prague, 1 - 2 May

context of civil control and defence policy. In other words, what role does leadership assume in this situation?

The reality is that the post-Cold War era has seen a significant rise in the deployment of military forces across the globe in contexts other than war. These types of roles have had a significant impact on both fiscal and governance policies for those states committing their military forces. Therefore, given the present global environment, the traditional view of civil-military relations must go “beyond the traditional notion of subordination of the armed institution to elected civilian leaders.”¹⁸ Consequently, we need to expand on the definition offered by Bland. The concept of civil-military relations must be broadened to include not just the relationship between the military and the state, but also issues regarding military law and the constitution, public opinion and the media, the rights of women and minorities, and the civilian component of the military-industrial complex. Research institutes such as the Centre for Defence and International Security Studies at the University of Lancaster are already developing this sort of expanded framework for examining the civil-military relationship.¹⁹ This is an important distinction to make because all these factors have a direct bearing on the nature of leadership within the CF.

Before proceeding with our discussion of leadership roles within the military, it is important to clearly define our understanding of civil control, civil-military relations and civil-military co-operation. Civil control refers to the political relationship between the elected

1998, RESDEL- Res De Seguridad Y Defensa De America Latina. Available online at www.resdal.org/Archivo/pr-work.htm [Jan 16, 2003].

¹⁸ Johanna Mendelson Forman. “Promoting Civil Society in Good Governance: Lessons For The Security Sector” Working Paper Series No. 29, Geneva Centre For The Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva, July 2002, p. 2.

¹⁹ See the Centre’s website at www.cdiss.org/cmr_1.htm.

government officials and bureaucrats and the military establishment within the context of an executive legislative body acting in accordance with statutes passed by that legislative body. From our perspective, civil-military relations is the management and maintenance of the military establishment through the sharing of responsibility and control between civilian leaders and military officers, which is inclusive of military law and the constitution, public opinion and the media, the rights of women and minorities, and the civilian component of the military-industrial complex. Finally, civil-military co-operation refers to the resources and arrangements that support the relationship between commanders and non-military agencies during domestic and international operations, be they war or other-than-war scenarios.

The Nature of the Civil-Military Relationship

As was previously noted, it is important that the term civil-military relations be broadened to include not just the relationship between the military and the state, but also issues regarding military law and the constitution, public opinion and the media, the rights of women and minorities and the civilian component of the military-industrial complex. By doing so, it is possible to illuminate the relationship between the military and civil society. In this context “civil society is taken to be those political, social and cultural organizations that are separate from the state but larger than the individual or family.”²⁰ Those non-state organizations that have the greatest influence on civil-military relations are academic institutions, NGOs and the media, each of which will be examined in turn.

²⁰ BGen (Ret'd) Dick Baly. “Promoting Civil Society in Good Governance: Lessons For The Security Sector – A Donor Perspective,” Working Paper Series No. 33, Geneva Centre For The Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva, July 2002.

I. The Impact of Academia

Education and research activities undertaken at academic institutions have long had an impact on the civil-military relations discourse. In theory, this was to be the role of the Security and Defence Forum (SDF), established by the government in 1967 to “develop a domestic competence in security and defence issues of current and future relevance to Canada’s national security.”²¹ The key objectives of the SDF are as follows: develop and support Canadian competence in contemporary security and defence issues; foster informed public discussion and commentary; and enhance communication between the DND, the CF and the academic community. The SDF has developed a number of so-called ‘Centres of Excellence’ in major universities across Canada to operationalize its key objectives.²² These centres produce first-rate work and their associated academics make up the key body of analysts employed by DND and other government departments and agencies. However, two key points must be kept in mind: first, these Centres are funded by DND, which may affect the neutrality of their research; and second, it is unclear if the academic products they produce go beyond their limited circle of academics and related publications and conferences. The obvious concern is whether these academics are truly able to maintain their autonomy within the context of the civil-military relationship given the direct funding links to DND.

²¹ Security and Defence Forum 1999-2000 Annual Report, Directorate of Public Policy, DND, p. 1.

²² These Centres include the following: Institute of International Relations, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC; Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS; Institut québécois des hautes études internationales, Université Laval, PQ; Centre for International Relations, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON; Centre for International and Security Studies, York University, Toronto, ON; Research Group in International Security/Groupe d’étude et de recherche sur la sécurité internationale, McGill University / Université de Montréal, Montréal, PQ; Centre for Security and Defence Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON; Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB; Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON; Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; Military and Strategic Studies Program, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB; Centre d’études des politiques étrangères et de sécurité, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, PQ.

Furthermore, various think tanks, institutes and key individual scholars within the broader academic community have a direct impact on our understanding of the civil-military relationship. Within Canada this has been reflected recently by the spate of major reports produced by such entities as the Royal Canadian Military Institute (RCMI), the Council of Canadians for Security in the 21st Century (CCS21), and the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA). The reports produced by these and other organizations have opened up the debate on the deplorable state of the CF and the questionable defence policies of the government. The publication of various reports since 2001 has brought forth the debate about the CF into the public forum.²³ Although the response to date has been rather tepid, these reports have nonetheless forced the government and the leadership of the CF to respond both privately and publicly to the critiques contained therein. However, more needs to be done. As Dr. Robert Farrelly, Executive Director of the RCMI, noted, “unfortunately, there is little evidence that the government will provide much leadership...For the sake of Canada and our people, we must surely demand more than this.”²⁴

Furthermore, individual academics have contributed to the evolving concept of the civil-military relationship as a result of their consulting work for DND, the publication of academic papers, reports and books, and public statements on defence issues and defence policy. The work of scholars like Jack Granatstein, David Bercuson and Desmond Morton abound in the relevant

²³ See the following as recent examples of reports: RCMI, *A Wake Up Call for Canada: The Need for a New Military*; CDA, *Caught in the Middle: An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the CF and A Nation at Risk: The Decline of the CF*; CCS21, *The People's Defence Review and Canadian Defence and Security in the 21st Century: To Secure A Nation*; C.D. Howe Institute, *Canada-U.S. Defence Relations, Past Present and Future*; The Federation of Military and United Services Institutes in Canada- *Canada's Strategic Security XXI*.

²⁴ Robert Farrelly. “O Canada, Can We Stand On Guard for Thee?” *SITREP*, Vol. 62, No. 9, Nov 2002, p. 13.

literature.²⁵ Within this academic sphere there are also a number of journals and magazines, such as *Esprit-de-Corps*, *The Canadian Military Journal* and *The Canadian Defence Review*, that have also impacted the larger debate.

Recently, the public debate has widened further to include the report of the ‘underground royal commission’ report, a private organization composed of various media (the ‘i channel,’ Stornoway Productions, and the Breakout Educational Network), academic, and private interests. However, it is clear that to date the overall impact of the academic world with regard to the civil-military relationship has been less than positive.²⁶ The present condition of the CF is proof enough of this. However, there still is an opportunity for the commanders of the CF to take a key leadership role by promoting or at least supporting academic perspectives to government that benefit the CF and its personnel.

In effect, the advent of the ‘underground royal commission’ has created a nexus of civil society interests, which leads us to the next sphere in civil society that must be considered – the NGO community. NGOs have an influence on foreign and defence policy through their aid and development activities as well as their direct lobbying of government and relevant decision makers.

²⁵ For example, see their various reports to DND in the late 1990s, including “Morton Report: What to Tell the Minister” Available: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/eng/min/reports/Morton/MORTON1e.htm#introduction> [Nov 15, 2002]), or their numerous works on the Canadian military: Jack Granatstein, *Canada’s Army Waging War and Keeping the Peace*; Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to Kosovo*; David Burcusion, *Significant Incident: Canada Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia*).

²⁶ This is not to say there has not been an impact. Such issues as ‘civilianization,’ modern management and unification have all come from the academic milieu. However, they have all had a negative impact, over the long-term on the civil-military relationship and, ultimately, military leadership. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider this point in detail.

II. NGOs

What is clear from the extraordinary proliferation of NGOs since the end of the Cold War is that the global aid and development environment has dramatically changed. In this environment, NGOs have become more involved in global issues revolving around the appropriate role of civil society in global governance.

It is also apparent that the NGO community is very diverse; there are discernable differences between NGOs, including ideologies, objectives, organizational structures, size, national ties, quantity and origin of resources, focus of activities, availability of technology, and the skill and training of personnel. There is little doubt that the massive growth of NGOs and the diversity they engender has allowed these organizations to become a major influence globally, particularly with respect to national and international public policy. As Krut notes:

NGOs, in their traditional lobbying role, can use international events to pursue their ongoing domestic efforts to affect their own governments' activities and take advantage of the ease of access to senior government officials away from their capitals. This extension of domestic democratic activity can often pay dividends in framing or influencing the acceptance of compromises that arise during negotiations and in creating increased access for NGOs to their respective government officials after the international conference.²⁷

Regardless of their diverse backgrounds and agendas, NGOs all have one factor in common – their need to influence decision makers in government. This is accomplished in two general ways. First, NGOs target decision makers' preferences on relevant issues by making them centre stage in the eyes of the media and the public. The banning of the Canadian seal hunt in the 1970s is a perfect example. By showing the 'horror' of the hunt and implying the government did not care, the anti-seal-hunt movement influenced government decision makers

²⁷ Riva Krut. "Globalization and Civil Society: NGO Influence in International Decision-Making," Discussion Paper No. 83, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, April 1997. See Section 4: "Strategies and Impact."

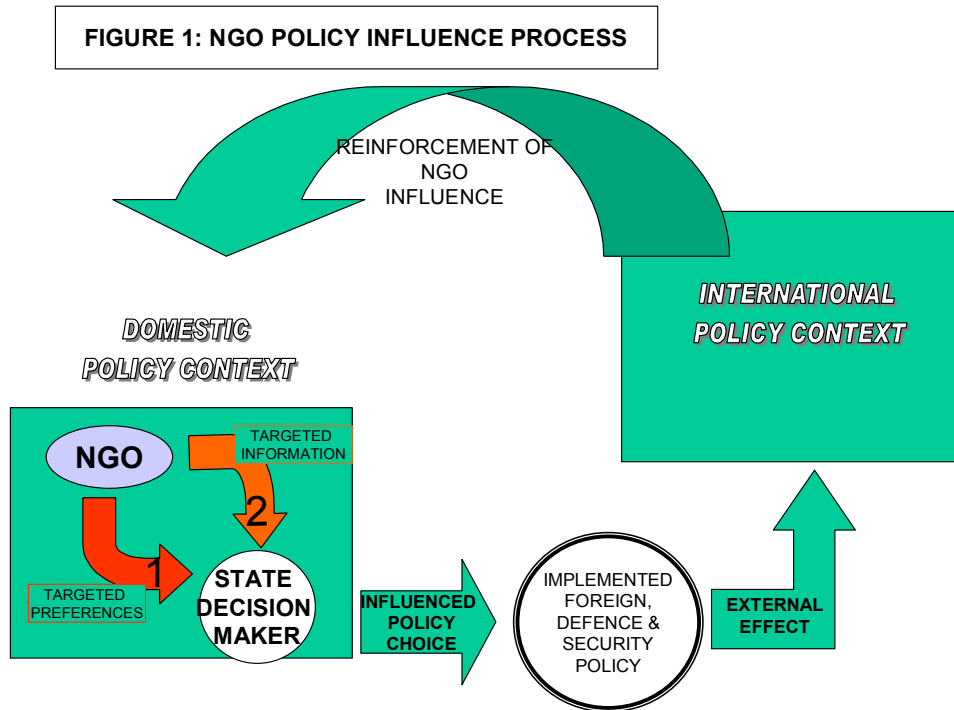
into action. Second, they use targeted information to influence decision makers. In other words, NGOs, due to their highly specialized fields of interest, can gather relevant information and target decision makers with data that is highly focused on one policy option. The key to this is the impact on a decision maker who has to review numerous policy options, all of which generally lack deep analysis. In this context, NGOs can provide decision makers with three types of information: “technical information involving the facts of the issue, including causation; political information about public opinion and the preferences of other decision makers; and normative information about how this issue accords with international or domestic norms or the decision-maker’s personal philosophy.”²⁸ A prime example of this process in action would be the Canadian anti-smoking lobby.

Figure 1 offers a visual representation of the NGO influence process. A key aspect of this process is the reality that in order to gain any real influence on decision makers, NGOs must work within the boundaries of state institutions. In Canada, this process is influenced by two key factors: (1) the fact that the Canadian political system is highly centralized, which limits the types of access NGOs have to decision makers; and (2) the level of funding received by NGOs from government sources. Canadian NGOs and Grassroots Organizations (GROs) receive a significant portion of their funding directly from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It has been estimated that as much as 70% of their funding originates from this source.²⁹ NGOs have had little choice but to secure government support to remain active as

²⁸ Elizabeth Bloodgood. “Influential Information: NGOs’ Role in Foreign Policy Making,” A Paper Prepared for the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 2001, p.6.

²⁹ Ian Smillie and Henny Hemlich (eds). *Non-Governmental Organizations: Stakeholders for Development*, OECD, Paris, 1993, p. 13.

funding from private sources has been on the decline.³⁰ This financial reality clearly undermines the ideological dogma that many of these organizations perpetuate amongst their members, namely that of neutrality and non-governmental influence.



The funding and centralized governmental control dilemmas aside, both influence factors, as depicted in Figure 1, have an effect on how an NGO can approach the decision maker. In this process, if an NGO can gain some decision making influence and its activities are seen in a positive light, then its influence will be reinforced with the decision maker within the domestic policy context.

However, with respect to government involvement, NGOs have raised some serious concerns, one of which is the sense that a relationship with a military establishment undercuts their non-governmental status, especially “when NGOs become extensions of government policy

³⁰ Ibid, p. 22.

and power.”³¹ By default, this leads to the ‘politicization’ of humanitarian actions, which in theory can reduce the effectiveness of NGOs. ‘Military influence’ is reflected on the ground by CIMIC doctrine. It is within this context of the civil-military relationship *vis-à-vis* the use of CIMIC doctrine that military leaders can work with NGOs at a strategic decision making level. Presently, however, CIMIC has only been used as a tactical level doctrine.³²

Regardless of the previous concerns, NGOs have a level of influence on government policy making as a result of their ability to influence decision makers. Conversely, the military can work with NGOs by dealing with the NGO neutrality dilemma through the use of a formalized policy in regard to CIMIC operations. With a transparent and cohesive policy towards the role of NGOs, there would be no concern over the role and objectives of the government and support from government. It would be up to the NGO to then decide where its organizational priorities lay, that is to say aid and support or ideological goals.

The present civil society relationship leaves much room for military leaders to influence the decision making process by working in co-ordination with NGOs in areas of mutual policy interest. At the very least, an open dialogue will alleviate some of the existing mistrust between the NGO community and the military due to their differing organizational cultures.

Another area where the NGOs excel is bringing their story to the public through the media, which is something the CF has failed to do. This leads to the third area of influence that civil society has on the civil-military relationship. Arguably, in the digital age, the news media can be seen as the most important factor in the civil-military relationship. We have all heard about and seen the ‘CNN effect’ on military operations and leaders.

³¹ “NATO and NGOs During the Kosovo Crisis,” NATO Policy Dialogue VI, December 13, 1999, p. 2.

³² Sunil Ram. “Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC): A Foreign and Defence Policy Tool,” A Policy Paper developed for DFAIT through the CCFPD, Ottawa 2003.

III. News Media

It is obvious, based on the proffered definition of civil-military relations, that parliamentarians have a legitimate role to play in monitoring defence and security management, both in terms of financial accountability and with regard to behavior. Similarly, the news media, like NGOs and other organizations, are able to monitor the conduct of security representatives and to raise issues of concern either in the public domain or through government channels. Therefore, the increased reliance upon the news media in the process of outlining the public agenda has become a matter of concern. This is especially true given the clear linkages between news media coverage of events and the decision of nations to act in response to such coverage. An example of this is the media reporting of the February 1994 marketplace mortar attack in Sarajevo, which resulted in decisive NATO action.

There is no question that the media is all-pervasive in the digital/Information Age. In an environment of instant access to news, military leaders must understand the media and recognize that the media is the primary conduit that they have to the Canadian public. However, this relationship is a two-way street; the media can also represent or misrepresent the CF and its leadership to the public. This relationship has often been a love-hate affair, which has always led to a level of conflict between the military and the media.

The greatest disagreement that occurs between the military and the news media is over information that both parties perceive as being vitally important and interesting or newsworthy. Conflict typically arises over differing judgments as to how this information should be used or disseminated. The news media demands immediate release of information based on the argument that the public has a right to know through the freedom of the press, while the military tends to

inhibit or stop the release of such information due to concerns ranging from national or operational security to potential embarrassment of the military or the government.

The media, through its reporting of events, can have a massive influence on policy makers, the public and military leaders. Take, for example, the Somalia debacle.³³ As David Bercuson rather sarcastically observed, “from the moment that news of Arone’s death broke, politicians, bureaucrats, and senior officers scurried to find culprits, any culprits but themselves.”³⁴ All these factors have a direct influence on how a military leader reacts to a given defence policy or military decision. One recent and prominent example was Major General Lewis McKenzie’s statements during his tenure as commander of UNPROFOR. As the CBC’s, Carol Off, noted, “McKenzie’s bosses in Ottawa were becoming uncomfortable with their superstar’s pronouncements and found he was wandering into policy areas that were usually off limits for Department of National Defence staff.”³⁵ Other examples include General Jean Boyle’s prevaricating and obvious obstruction during the Somalia enquiry³⁶ or Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire’s dilemma in Rwanda. By using the news media and NGOs in Rwanda, Dallaire tried to shame the world into acting.³⁷

³³ The initial cover-up of the murder of Somali teenager, Shidane Arone, led to the Somalia Commission of Inquiry, which resulted in the disbanding of the Airborne Regiment and the public embarrassment of two Canadian governments.

³⁴ David Bercuson. *Significant Incident: Canada’s Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart), 1996.

³⁵ Carol Off. *The Lion, The Fox, and the Eagle: A Story of Generals and Justice in Rwanda and Yugoslavia*. (Toronto: Random House), 2000, p. 210.

³⁶ See Somalia Commission of Inquiry transcripts and footage as aired on C-PAC.

³⁷ Off, *The Lion, The Fox, and the Eagle*, pp. 67-68.

From the military perspective, there has been both a direct and indirect approach to dealing with the media.³⁸ Public Affairs (PA) is the direct approach, while information operations (IO) or information warfare (IW) represents the indirect approach. In theory, but not necessarily in practice, PA efforts are intended to be a direct approach to the dissemination of information into the public domain without creating a breach of national security, while one area that IO is concerned with is the dissemination of deceptive information into the public domain, where misinformation and disinformation are key objectives.

There is clearly a problem in this approach, as any type of deceptive activity represents a test of the ability of the media to act and report freely. As the former Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Maurice Baril, commented regarding the CF's involvement in Kosovo, "there is a great deal of difference between not releasing information and telling the truth. We're telling the truth, we are just not releasing some information."³⁹

General Baril's response is representative of the type of comment that tends to perpetuate the mistrust and conflict between the media and the military. This situation is further exacerbated when the military engages in retrospective dialogue in an effort to justify past decisions or actions. The events surrounding the suicide attempt by MCpl Clayton Matchee in Somalia, and the subsequent discovery by the news media of what amounted to a cover-up on the part of the CF and DND, clearly illustrates this point.

³⁸ Col. R.M. Williams. "The Truth, the Whole Truth or Nothing: A Media Strategy for the Military in the Information Age," *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Autumn 2002, p.13.

³⁹ Gen. J.M.G. Baril. "Canada on the Attack: Canada's Military Role," Quoted on CBC News, June 14, 1999, Available online at <http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/canadaattack/military.html> [January 2, 2003].

The military rationalizes withholding certain information because it has generally held the view that the media lacks a true understanding of military matters as well as objectivity and integrity. Irrespective of whether this is true or not, it is the perception that matters.

This situation amplifies the problem related to the freedom of the press. When one considers the globalization of media interests, the competition between media outlets, and the private agendas of these outlets, it is difficult not to question the extent to which the media provide objective news accounts. This has been exemplified by the so-called ‘CNN effect,’ which now influences what is considered to be news, how it is acquired and processed and where and how it is redistributed. Therefore, a clear mistrust has developed between the media and the military when it comes to news stories relating to defence and security issues. As DND notes in its future vision of the CF in 2020, “finally, the media, with their own agenda and information sources, play an increasingly influential role in military operations. They can govern public awareness and they can colour public expectations about CF performance.”⁴⁰

Thus, in the above context, it is critical that the different institutional perspectives are understood. This is especially true from a command and leadership perspective. It is obvious to even the most uninformed observer that reporters increasingly “see themselves as participants in the events they cover, not merely as chroniclers of those experiences.”⁴¹ The reporting of Scud missile attacks by Arthur Kent in Israel during the 1991 Gulf War exemplifies this phenomenon. Kent became known by the moniker ‘the Scud Stud.’ At the same time, the reports of Peter Arnett of CNN from Baghdad during the US air raids became prime time material. Both

⁴⁰ “What is the anticipated operational context of 2020?” Chapter 5 - HR : The Development of Human Capability, *Creating the CF of 2020*, Director Defence Analysis, DND, 1 Nov 2000. Available online at www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/dda/symp/cde/chap5_e.asp [February 7, 2003].

⁴¹ Charles W. Ricks. “The Military-News Media Relationship: Thinking Forward,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 1, 1993, p. 11.

reporters gained celebrity status, as did Lewis MacKenzie, who now charges \$10,000 for public appearances.

When it comes to the CF, however, the problem about truth and freedom of speech falls at the doorstep of the military. If the military wishes to be treated fairly by the media, then it must tell the truth; it must not cover-up potentially embarrassing incidents, and it must not pander to political whims of governments. However, this is more easily said than done. The underlying problem that faces military leaders in the CF is that their hands are officially tied by Queen's Regulations and Orders (QR&Os). Members of the CF, but more specifically the officer ranks, are simply not allowed to talk openly about the military. Sections 19.36 – Disclosure of Information or Opinion, 19.37 – Permission to Communicate Information and 19.375 – Communications to News Agencies simply do not allow for an open dialogue with the public and the news media. This is especially true when there is criticism of policy or the military establishment. Paragraph 2 of Section 19.375 is worth reviewing in its entirety:

An officer commanding a command, formation, base, unit or element may make communications to the press or other news agencies when they concern or affect only the command, formation, base, unit or element under the officer's command and do not involve enunciation, defence or criticism, expressed or implied, of service, departmental or government policy.⁴²

As is clear from this directive, officers are severely curtailed in their ability to communicate openly about military activities.

In referring to MGen Lewis MacKenzie's role in the Balkans, Carol Off noted, "as MacKenzie became a media superstar, Ottawa developed misgivings...DND never likes it when

⁴² Queen's Regulations and Orders, Chapter 19, Section 19.375 – Communications to News Agencies, Paragraph 2. Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/admfincs/subjects/qr_o/vol1/ch019_e.asp [February 1, 2003].

soldiers stand out in a crowd, and MacKenzie was becoming quite conspicuous.”⁴³ This is especially true in light of the existing limitations imposed by the QR&Os.

From this brief discussion, it is clear that the media has influence in society as a whole. Within the context of leadership in the CF, this is exemplified by the fact that the Minister of National Defence, like his colleagues in Cabinet, begins his day by reviewing news clips. Thus, one can infer that the media rather than policies sets the Minister’s agenda, and ultimately it is setting the agenda that matters in the civil-military relationship. Hence, it is imperative that senior commanders show clear leadership in this matter.

In this respect, four key strategies can be adopted to allow military leaders to take a proactive stand in the military-media relationship in terms of civil society:

- (1) Completely modify QR&Os to reflect the reality of the military-media relationship in the 21st century.

Presently, the objectives of QR&O directives represent a Cold War mentality, and imply that military personnel are incapable of using common sense. It is also arguable that the present requirement for CF personnel to keep quiet is a potential breach of the Constitution Act, especially in reference to *Fundamental Freedoms*, *Mobility Rights*, and possibly even *Equality Rights*. Given the existing mistrust in the media, both the media and the public will perceive this as a mechanism to keep senior commanders and the government officials safe from embarrassment. As Dr. Denis Stairs of Dalhousie University observed, “the military’s leadership is seen as passing the buck to the lower ranks, demonstrating a lack of courage [or leadership].”⁴⁴ Furthermore, it is important to

⁴³ Off, *The Lion, The Fox, and the Eagle*, 2000, p. 195.

⁴⁴ Cited in Michael Croft, Sharon Hobson, and Dean Oliver, “Information Warfare: Media-Military Relations In Canada,” *Workshop Report*, Occasional Paper No. 20 – 1999, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, p.3.

keep in mind that the National Secrets Act and the Privacy Act preclude officers from making statements that would affect national security or divulge private information.

(2) From the military perspective, there must be a unified approach to media relations. This is achieved by the development of public affairs guidance that assists the entire chain of command in communicating dependable and credible information. Only then will trust be built up with the media, and this will only occur over time.

(3) Effective command information programs must be developed to ensure that everyone likely to encounter journalists will know what is happening and understand what aspects of a mission or defence matter will be of interest to reporters.

In this way the Minister, the CDS, and the rest of the senior leadership of the CF and DND can avoid such embarrassing events like Somalia and images of JTF2 with captured Al Qaida members.

(4) Within the context of the role of the future CF and the various 2020 initiatives, to be successful in media relations, leaders must be forward looking in a historical, operational, and geographical context.

At the strategic level, what this means is that commanders and their staff have to be able to assess the intensity of news media interest in all military topics. They must take a proactive stance, rather than a reactive one, towards the dissemination of information to the media. At the mission (tactical) level, the military must be able “to anticipate the personnel, communications, transportation, and deployment requirements necessary to communicate through the news media during every stage of an operation.”⁴⁵

If these strategies are not considered and ultimately implemented, then there is a going to be a persistent problem and the military will always come out the loser in the civil-military relationship. As was observed in a recent symposium on the military-media relationship in

⁴⁵ Ricks, “The Military-News Media Relationship,” p. 9 (PDF version).

Canada, Dr. Heidi Studer, “cited the Airborne hazing videos as an example of an ugly event that was made worse by the military’s bad handling. She said if explanations are not forthcoming, then journalists will not look for them and the public will not expect them. As a result, the level of debate, coverage, and understanding goes down.”⁴⁶

IV. Less Obvious Factors in the Civil-Military Relationship

In the case of Canada, as elsewhere in the western world where the military is a purely volunteer force, there has been a recruitment and retention crisis. This crisis has numerous sources, including changing social values, demographic changes and an aging population. In the case of Canada, this crisis has become acute. Thus, there has to be a clear initiative on the part of government and military leaders to draw on all sectors of society to fill the ranks of the military. Despite the efforts to integrate women and minorities into the CF, in 2003 it still remains predominantly the preserve of young, Caucasian, Judeo-Christian males with French or English ethnic backgrounds, who have a secondary school education, and predominantly originate from the lower middle to working classes.⁴⁷ As David Bercuson observed, if an army does not reflect the values and composition of the larger society that nurtures it, it invariably loses the support and allegiance of that society.”⁴⁸

This is not particularly surprising because the Canadian military, since its inception, has represented an institution where one could raise his or her social standing in society. What has changed is the ethnic makeup of Canada with a corresponding change in basic values. Most of the immigrants who have come to Canada in the past thirty years have typically left societies that

⁴⁶ Cited in Croft, Hobson and Dean, “Information Warfare,” 1999, p.13.

⁴⁷ Various DND sources beginning with the 1992 “Canadian Forces Applicant Profile Project,” CFPARU.

⁴⁸ Bercuson, *Significant Incident*, 1996, p. 41.

do not greatly value military service. Thus, serving in the Canadian military is not seen as a particularly honorable profession.⁴⁹ A great deal of additional effort has to be undertaken by the CF and DND to change this attitude.

Although the CF has tried to bring more women into the military in the late 1990s, a major gap still remains between the number of women needed in the forces and the number of applicants. Furthermore, while the integration of roles for women has been mandated, there still remains a great deal of unofficial internal resistance in the CF, especially within the combat arms branches.⁵⁰

One of the larger forces that impact the civil-military relationship is the military-industrial complex. Although this term has fallen out of favour amongst the military and academic intelligentsia, it is nonetheless a reality. The impact is profound in the western European NATO states and especially in the US. While it is much less important in Canada, in no way can it be completely dismissed.

Canada, through numerous bilateral agreements, provides a vast array of military goods and services to the US. The problem that affects the civil-military relationship is twofold. First, at the present time there is no formal way to track these transactions. Therefore, it is unclear to what extent Canadian firms are providing dual use, components, and finished systems to the US and other clients. The second point, which is of greater significance, is the extent to which former CF personnel are involved in this trade. Anecdotal evidence appears to suggest that a

⁴⁹ Sunil Ram. "How to Diversify the CF for the New Millennium in Terms of Developing Multi-Cultural/Racial, Gender and Minority Representation," A Paper Prepared for the Canadian Alliance for Visible Minorities, Ottawa 1998.

⁵⁰ "Women in the CF," Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=936 [February 12, 2003]. See also commentaries from the Davis Report, available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/Minister/eng/cls-gis/sep-2.htm.

large number of senior officers eventually work for many of these corporations in positions that are more related to using their former connections and rank to lobby government than any particular expertise that they bring to the job. Furthermore, the nature of the procurement process at DND lends itself to political lobbying at the provincial and federal levels. There is a need for further study, as there are limited sources and most details are private.⁵¹ Obviously, this area cannot be discounted when considering leadership decision making within the CF and DND.

The Impact of Civil-Society

These previous concerns aside, given the nature of the forces described, their varying agendas, ideologies and interests all tend to both diverge and constrain their ability to work together. However, should there be a confluence of these forces in civil society, then the ‘voice of the people’ can have a great influence on domestic policy regarding the military. This must be recognized by the military leadership and acted upon.

There is no question that within the context of civil-military relations, civil society must be part of the defence debate, which by default includes members of the military establishment. Hence, the senior leadership of the CF must take proactively extend the policy discourse beyond government. In fact, they must take their case to the people, because only through engaging civil society can true democratic leadership be exhibited in the evolving nature of the civil-military relationship in the 21st century.

Should the leadership of the CF engage civil society in dialogue, then civil society can, in turn, become an effective and powerful lobbying force for the CF. Engaging civil society at the community level, *vis-à-vis* the enlargement of the Reserves and fully developing their role in

⁵¹ See CBC Radio “The Current” Interview by Carol Off with Sunil Ram. Available online at http://media.cbc.ca:8080/ramgen/cbc.ca/thecurrent/media/200212/20021203thecurrent_sec7.mp3.

Canadian defence matters, can enhance the image and footprint of the CF. The final and most important role that civil society can play is in monitoring the conduct of military forces both in terms of adherence to national laws and human rights. While this may not be a pressing issue in Canada, it certainly has been one on peace support operations as exemplified by the Somalia incident and events in the Balkans.

Clearly, western militaries have been used more in the post-Cold War era in other-than-war operations. This has certainly been the case in Canada, where the CF has been deployed on more missions in the past thirteen years than it had in the previous forty. These missions, although predominantly characterized as other-than-war scenarios, have included specific war-fighting mandates. All this activity, when put in context of Canadian foreign policy, indicates a discernable 'politicization' of military affairs.

Statements made by the Prime Minister and Defence and Foreign Affairs Ministers since the early 1990s further reinforce this point. Many of these statements are enshrined in Canada foreign and defence policy documents, which all unmistakably show that the military has become an instrument of an integrated national foreign policy. This is partly due to the nature of the military missions the CF has engaged in – missions conducted within broad international coalitions that are highly dependent on compromises, negotiations, and to some extent public opinion. This is very evident when one reviews the choices made by Canada during the 1990s in terms of the types of peace support operations the CF was involved with.

Ana Bolin of the Department of Leadership Studies, National Defence College in Stockholm, Sweden, identifies three factors that cause 'politicization' to occur:

First, there is the complexity of military missions, with various different actors involved. Second, the foreign policy stakes are several and dominant. Third, and maybe the most significant, in making military affairs and missions highly political is the use of the military instrument in situations other than those where

fundamental national interests are threatened. Military interventions in the form of peace-support operations are certainly defined as protecting and contributing to the national interest, but it is still not a question of defending the national survival, which is quite different.⁵²

Bolin's factors certainly can be applied to the case of the CF, especially the third factor outlined. It is this new type of defence environment that requires the need for a different type of relationship and interaction between the politicians, bureaucrats and the military establishment. As Bolin notes, "[this] also means new prerequisites for civilian political control over the military. In sum, the new defence environment may be argued to contribute to the forming of a new interface between politics and politicians on the one hand, and national armed forces on the other."⁵³

A key prerequisite needed for this type of relationship to function is an increasingly active political leadership in defence and military affairs, which in turn demands greater participation of civilians. In this context, civilians and politicians alike require a rigorous knowledge of military and defence issues. Moreover, this situation demands a military leadership that is more politically and socially aware. It similarly requires a leadership that recognizes the effect of change on the military and is willing to foster the appropriate change within the organization.

For the civil-military relationship to function at an optimal level, politicians must provide definitive leadership to the military through directions or guidance. This provides the framework within which the military leadership must operate. On the other hand, if the political leadership is deficient, which is often the case when there is a lack of expertise in military affairs amongst

⁵² Ana Bolin. "Democratic Control of Armed Forces: Lessons Learned and Upcoming Research Issues," Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Working Paper Series -No. 48, Geneva July 2000, p. 6.

⁵³ Ibid.

elected officials (the present situation in Canada), then civilian decision-makers are ill equipped to handle current and future defence and military circumstances and issues. The Standing Committee on Defence, which reviews, but has no authority to approve or reject defence estimates, policies or programs, exemplifies this problem. It has been noted that “the nature of the system is not such as to encourage members of Parliament to acquire an appropriate insight into and understanding of issues of national defence policy, strategy, military organization, and their proper control by the legislature.”⁵⁴ Harkening back to the comments of LGen Belzile, this situation is then exacerbated by the lack of elected officials or bureaucrats who have any military background.

There is an even more fundamental issue that must be addressed, namely the lack of a true depth of understanding about defence-related issues amongst both government and opposition MPs. This situation allows the government to make policy that affects the CF without a full understanding of the consequences. As Roy Rempel notes, “the ad hoc and reactive culture of Parliament means that researchers are often not consulted on policy initiatives or on questions being asked in Parliament.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, the nature of the Canadian parliamentary system allows majority governments to dictate policy, especially from the PMO, without any real oversight as to the consequences of their generally ill-informed decisions.⁵⁶

This, then, has a direct impact on the nature of the military leadership. Military leaders essentially have two choices: they can either ignore the situation or take a more proactive role in

⁵⁴ Gerry Theriault. “Democratic Civil-Military Relations: A Canadian View,” in Hanson, J. & McNish, S. (Eds), *The Canadian Strategic Forecast 1996: The Military in Modern Democratic Society*, Toronto, CISS, 1996, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Roy Rempel. *The Chatter Box: An Insider’s Account of the Irrelevance of Parliament in the Making of Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy*, Toronto, Dundurn Press, 2002, p. 184.

⁵⁶ See Donald Savoie. *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1999.

such matters. At present, the latter option could be problematic within the general construct of the civil-military relationship in Canada (the military culture in Canada dissuades officers from acting proactively where their actions cross into political territory), especially if there is a need for active political leadership and initiative on the part of the officer corps.

This latter problem poses a major challenge for any government, unless the civilian and military leadership are able to develop a common vision of the future (which is hard if the military leadership does not challenge the civilian bureaucrats) and an understanding of what the military should be. If this were the case, then there would be little confusion as to the civil-military relationship and the role of military leaders within it.

Furthermore, in the complex environment of other-than-war operations that the CF has been engaged in, the multiplicity of actors that are involved requires co-ordination and co-operation between the military and non-military actors in different political contexts and at different political levels. At the ground level, this is represented by CIMIC doctrine. Yet, there is a similar need at the higher strategic decision-making level where continuous communication and co-ordination is required between the highest military leaders and the political decision-makers. Thus, in this broader context of the civil-military relationship through the greater integration of foreign policy objectives, there is a clear need for a greater political and social awareness within the armed forces, especially amongst its leadership cadre.

This, of course, flies in the face of the accepted paradigm offered by thinkers such as Samuel Huntington, who has argued that only a clear-cut civil-military separation allows the subordination of the military under civil control. This is the separation model.⁵⁷ However, given the types of scenarios discussed, Renate Schiff's concordance model offers an alternative

perspective. According to this viewpoint, effective civil control of the armed forces is better guaranteed if there is a consensus sought between the civil and military elites and the citizenry to develop a form of political-military culture.⁵⁸ Morris Janowitz offers a similar line of reasoning.⁵⁹ Obviously, this type of scenario would fundamentally change the nature of leadership within the CF.

Changes to the civil-military relationship are occurring. The very fact that numerous senior officers have publicly stated that the CF can no longer fulfill its mandate and that the CF as a whole is in crisis has shown that there is a perception amongst some senior officers that something must be done to change the status quo. However, the extent of the change has thus far been minimal. At the end of the day, few commanders have put their careers or pensions on the line for the sake of truly effecting change in the CF, DND or the government more generally.⁶⁰ Few have resigned in protest. As Dr. William Glover, former Research Officer on the staff to the Special Advisor to the CDS (PD) observes, “resignation is a powerful tool that has been eschewed by Canadian officers. One must ask if moral courage [to resign] is not lacking, how do they continue to serve.”⁶¹

⁵⁷ Samuel P. Huntington. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. (Cambridge: Belnap Press of Harvard University Press), 1957.

⁵⁸ R. Schiff. “Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance,” *Armed Forces & Society*, Fall 1995, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 7-24.

⁵⁹ Peter D. Feaver. “The Civil-Military Problematique: [Samuel] Huntington, [Morris] Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control,” *Armed Forces & Society*. 23 (Winter 1996), pp. 149-78. See also, Morris Janowitz. *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. (New York: The Free Press), 1960.

⁶⁰ Alex Morrison. “The Role of a Military in a Democratic Society,” *Defence Policy Review*, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 3, p.6.

⁶¹ LCol (Ret’d) William Glover. “We reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage and Integrity... The Officer Corps of 2020,” in B. Horn. *Contemporary Issues in Officership: A Canadian Perspective*, Toronto, CISS 2000, p. 57.

From the leadership perspective, the civil-military relationship can be organized into four broad categories. Military leaders must be prepared to take a more proactive role in each of these contexts:

1. The relationship that exists between the political decision makers and the military leadership, where political authority will always prevail.
2. The relationship between civilian and military experts in the planning and execution of defense policy at the level of defence ministries.
3. The relationship between the military and the public at large. This involves ensuring the public has sufficient information about the military and that the public, in turn, accepts and supports the military. NGOs constitute a specific sub-group in this particular relationship.
4. The relationship between the media and the military.⁶²

As the CDS noted in his 2001 annual report, “put simply, communications is a leadership responsibility, and it is up to the chain of command to lead the way in reinforcing our relationship with Canadians and with CF members on an ongoing basis.”⁶³ If General Henault’s comments are to be taken to heart, then the burden of the responsibility for communications falls on the shoulders of the officer corps. However, there is a fundamental stumbling block to the successful execution of this dictate: the issue of officer bloat.

Officer Bloat

A critical, but less obvious, aspect of the civil-military relationship is what might be described as ‘officer bloat,’ a situation whereby, from a practical military position, there are statistically too many officers for the number of non-commissioned officers (NCOs)⁶⁴ and

⁶² List based on Janos Matus. “Civil-Military Relations and Decision-Making on Defense: New Developments in Civil-Military Relations in the United States,” Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Working Paper Series -No. 60, Geneva July 2002, pp. 13-14.

⁶³ Chief of the Defence Staff. *Annual Report 2001-2002*, “Priority 3: Ensuring modern management through effective communications,” Available online at www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/anrpt2002/priority3_e.asp [January 31, 2003].

⁶⁴ In Canada this is non-commissioned member (NCM).

soldiers in the military. Traditionally, in a modern military, officer numbers represented between 5 to 10 percent of the total military force strength. In the case of the German military in WWII, it functioned well at a level of 5 percent officer strength even in combat.

Given the ideal size of the officer corps should be no more than 5 to 10 percent of the military, this begs the question as to why the ratio of officers and NCMs to soldiers is as high as 20 to 25 percent in the CF.⁶⁵ Also, we must ask why there is a disproportionate number of Captains/ Lieutenants (Naval) and generals/flag officers in the CF.

In defence of such high numbers, it can be argued that the CF cannot use economies of scale in terms of officer manpower. In other words, the CF, unlike the US military, cannot assume that there will always be a body of officer recruits available due to the small size of Canada's population and demographic make-up. Also, it has been suggested that in peacetime there is a need for a higher officer ratio to make up for replacement training time in future conflicts, which is compounded by the apparent need to make pilots officers (which creates a disproportionate number of officers in the air force). Finally, it can be argued, given the present recruiting and retention crisis, that a large pool of officers means the CF has a solid cadre of leaders available over the long-term. Frankly, from our perspective, all these reasons are bureaucratic smoke and mirrors. Moreover, these arguments do not make sense from a management perspective, especially when one takes into account the present managerialism ethos of DND.

⁶⁵ On 30 November 1996, 13,991 of the 63,704 members of the regular CF (1,474 of the 6,393 serving women, or 23 per cent), or 22 percent, held or sought the Queen's Commission. As of 1998, one in five CF members is an officer; one in four NCMs is a senior NCO. See Desmond Morton. *What to Tell the Minister-* "Introduction-How to get effective forces," Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/Minister/eng/Morton/MORTON1e.htm [February 15, 2003].

Without a doubt, rank clearly defines one's leadership within the military.⁶⁶ Rank is also an explicit recognition of professional skill, technical knowledge and, in some cases, long tenure of service. However, in the CF this is no longer the case. Due to the 'civilianization' process over the past three decades, there has been massive rank inflation amongst both the NCM and officer ranks, which created part of the foundation of the bloat scenario. In the case of officers, as Desmond Morton observes, this "Officer bloat fosters 'ticket-punching' careerism, lower-rank contempt for superiors, high personnel costs and a familiar combination of over-supervision and lack of responsibility."⁶⁷

Bloat has moved the CF from a traditional pyramidal organizational structure to an egg-shaped profile. The 1997/8 *Morton Report* indicated that:

[The CF has] 6573 regular force captains and only 4559 privates. There is an admiral or general for every 723 lower ranks. Bloat extends to the non-commissioned ranks, with a senior NCO (sergeant or above) for 3.33 lower ranks. Each Chief Warrant Officer can find 71 subordinates.⁶⁸

The above scenario is even worse in reserve and militia units where officers and NCM can represent up to 50 percent of the unit strength. The officer bloat situation, aside from being costly, creates an environment, or at least a perception, of a self-serving hierarchy that is only interested in its own well being in the form of self-employment and promotion.

Functionally, when there are too many 'chiefs,' especially in a highly structured organization like the military, the authority given by rank is diluted. Within the officer corps,

⁶⁶ Although, as has been argued elsewhere, while rank may *de facto* make an officer a leader, it does not necessarily mean that this individual will be an effective leader. See Tim A. Mau and Alexander Wooley, "Leadership Development in the Canadian Forces: Towards an Integrative Model of Military Leadership" (Kingston: CFLI, 2003).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. See "Officer Bloat and Shrinking the Ranks," Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/Minister/eng/Morton/MORTON2e.htm [Feb 15, 2003].

promotion up to the rank of Captain/Lieutenant (N) is almost automatic. Therefore, if it is shown that promotion is not earned, but an automatic event, how does this affect the reality of leadership? From anecdotal evidence, it is clear that many CF personnel see promotion as a right, rather than an earned privilege. When it comes to the most senior officers (Colonel and higher) promotion is a function of the government appointment process. Therefore, leadership, professionalism, and military skill are of little concern in attaining senior positions; rather, you must be a good bureaucrat and possess sound political acumen.

The massive number of officers present in units also dilutes the authority of the Queen's Commission. Again, from anecdotal evidence, the presence of too many officers clearly undermines their authority as troops become far too used to seeing them and subsequently begin to resent their all-pervasive presence. As Desmond Morton observes, "the number of officers and senior non-commissioned officers has grown too large for rank to be identified with leadership and responsibility."⁶⁹

As of 1998, there were still some 66 (plus two secondments) general and flag officers. This is down from a high of 122 in the 1980s.⁷⁰ Even though there has been a reduction in general and flag officer numbers since the 1980s, the number of these types of officers does not fit the rank grade in terms of unit formation size (see Figure 2 for example of army formations). Based on the lower end of the scale in figure 2, at best, the CF might need at most 30 to 31 general or flag officers, and only if all the reserves are included.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Minister's Monitoring Committee on the Change in the Department of National Defence and the CF (Interim report 1998). See Chapter 9: Other issues, Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/reports/Changes/Eng/other_e.htm [February 12, 2003].

Figure 2: General Officer Rank and Formation Size

RANK	FORMATION	NUMBER OF TROOPS COMMANDED
GENERAL	ARMY	200,000 TO 400,000
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL	CORPS	50,000 TO 100,000
MAJOR-GENERAL	DIVISION	10,000 TO 25,000
BRIGADIER-GENERAL	BRIGADE	3,000 TO 6,000
Generally speaking, 2 Brigades make 1 Division, 2-5 Divisions comprise a Corps, and 2-5 Corps form an Army. Given that the total paper strength of the regulars is 60,000 troops and the reserves is 30,000 troops, the maximum strength of the CF is 90,000 personnel (this does not consider the supplementary reserve force). Therefore, there is a requirement of 1 General, 2 Lt. Generals, 9 Maj. Generals, and 18 Brig. Generals.		

If the senior officer corps were serious about the reduction of officer bloat, a substantive ratio change would have been seen within its own ranks, but nothing has really happened. In the mid-1980s, the ratio was approximately 1 to 700, while in 2001 the ratio was 1 to 882. When looking at Figure 2, it is obvious that there can be no justification for so many general or flag officers. As the Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces noted:

We have observed that at least part of the reason for the sometimes tenuous link between decision and activity is the combination of uncertainty about the status of ministerial directives, the lack of centralized, strategic guidance for the program and the tendency to re-interpret the meaning and intent of accepted recommendations so as to fit within the pattern of current activities or accommodate some assumed constraints on achieving change. This is particularly evident in areas such as: the mandated reductions in the size of the general officer corps...⁷¹

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that officer bloat has manifested itself in the most critical area of the civil-military relationship in Canada – National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ). There are close to 6000 uniformed (some 10 percent of the CF) personnel at NDHQ,

⁷¹ Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces. *Interim Report*, 1999. Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/reports/monitor_com/eng/intro_e.htm [February 13, 2003].

the majority of which are officers.⁷² NDHQ has become the breeding ground of the dysfunction within the larger context of the civil-military relationship in Canada. Officer bloat is merely the obvious manifestation of the larger problem regarding the role of leadership to change the CF in the context of the civil-military relationship. The critique of former CDS, General Gerry Theriault, is telling:

Little understood by civilians and military alike, however, is the large degree to which the military has become institutionalized and bureaucratized; and the ways in which culture and corporate nature, compounded by the intensive manner in which it socializes and develops its people, act to undermine its capacity for objectivity, critical self-study and renewal.⁷³

The senior officers seemingly have a vested interest to not allow a ratio reduction in their ranks. Therefore, there must be a cultural change at the highest level of leadership within the CF to change this situation. As the Minister's Monitoring Committee further noted:

The Committee believes firmly that a successful renewal program depends first and foremost on dynamic leadership to drive the necessary transition in attitude and culture among the current defence team and to instill it among those who will be the leaders of the future. This is particularly true, although not exclusively so, of the officer corps and civilian management.⁷⁴

Within the larger framework of this paper, it is evident that the solutions to many of the problems facing the CF in terms of a healthy civil-military relationship lay in the hands of the generals and admirals. So why does it seem they are resistant to a change in the status quo? The answer lies, in part, in the fact that in many cases the quality of the leadership at this level is lacking.

⁷² Sunil Ram. "All that we can be?" *Globe and Mail*, February 22, 2001, p. A13.

⁷³ Gen Gerry Theriault "Democratic Civil-Military Relations: A Canadian View," in Hanson Jim & Susan McNish, *The Military in Modern Democratic Society*, Toronto, CISS, 1996, pp. 9-10.

⁷⁴ Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces-*Interim Report*, 1999. Available online at www.forces.gc.ca/site/reports/monitor_com/eng/intro_e.htm [February 13, 2003].

Part of the unstated reasoning for officer bloat is that the CF remains one of the least educated militaries in the western world. Until recently, while a university degree may have been desirable, officers were not required to hold any post-secondary education. These basic standards were not in line with an environment that required technological expertise, professionalism, managerial skills, the ability to deal with politically complex and fluid situations and cultural and ethnic sensitivity. CF standards effectively remained entrenched, until the late 1990s, at a level acceptable for the 1960s. However, by DND's own admission, it will be at least a decade before the nature and level of education in the CF changes to reflect the present geo-political and policy reality.⁷⁵ Therefore, in regard to the larger paradigm of the civil-military relationship, if the officer corps is seen to be bloated and uneducated, then how is it going to be able to effectively explain and defend the military to its civilian masters?

Research done in 1997 by the historian, Jack Granatstein, from data provided by the DND shows that only some fifty percent of officers had a university degree, while those holding graduate degrees amounted to only six percent. In comparison, in the US, almost all officers have an undergraduate degree, and in the US Air Force a graduate degree is required for promotion to the rank of major. Some ninety percent of generals have post graduate degrees. While commenting on the state of education amongst officers in the CF, Granatstein refers to the "...anti-intellectualism of the brass."⁷⁶ Therefore, it is easy to understand why recruiting standards had not been raised until recently to reflect the reality of the 21st century. Although the

⁷⁵ *Report to the Minister on the Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces*, Ottawa, DND, 1997. Based on the general context of the document.

⁷⁶ Ram, Sunil. "All that we can be?" *Globe and Mail*, Feb 22, 2001, p. A 13. Based on comments of Prof. Jack Granatstein in "A diary of the defense review, 1997," *International Journal*, Vol. LII, No.3, Summer 1997. p.525.

CF indicates that by 2010, “almost all officers will have one undergraduate degree,”⁷⁷ this seems a rather unclear statement and is also a slow pace of change during a period of such rapid geopolitical and technological transformation. This is particularly true given the CF’s emphasis on the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).

What can be inferred from the above is that the lack of education amongst officers may be a symptom of long-term decay that is being reflected by officer bloat. An uneducated senior officer corps within the closed military culture is always inclined to re-create itself. Therefore, it is also inclined to promote the least qualified and cause those who are qualified to leave the military service. As John English, Professor of Strategy at the US Naval War College, observed about the CF:

Many who could never possibly have gained entry to Staff College in Simond’s time were given the opportunity to attend. As staff college graduation was also a prerequisite for promotion, numbers of these less qualified officers went on to attain senior rank, some rising as high as lieutenant-general.⁷⁸

Furthermore, the level of cynicism and ‘anti-intellectualism’ of ‘the brass’ is reflected in the way educating non-degree officers was approached to achieve the 2010 timeframe. Instead of sending officers for a formal university education, the CF mounted a ‘ticket punching’ exercise from degree mill institutions to attempt to fulfill the 2010 mandate.⁷⁹ In addition, the Canadian Forces College (CFC) presently uses Staff College courses plus some extra work to give officers a Master of Defence Studies Degree from the Royal Military College (RMC). Jack Granatstein argues that “the course is in no way a graduate program by any standard, and RMC ought to

⁷⁷ *Defence Performance and Outlook 2000*, Ottawa, DND, p. 23.

⁷⁸ John English. *Lament for an Army: The Decline of Canadian Military Professionalism*. (Toronto: Irwin Publishing), 1998, pp. 53-54.

⁷⁹ Comments made at the 1999 Military History Colloquium, Ottawa, January 27, 1999.

know this.”⁸⁰ He previously commented that if he had realized at the time that the CF would take such an approach, he and his colleague would never have made the recommendation for education in the first place.⁸¹

From this brief discussion, it is clear that there has to be further study done on the issue of officer bloat within the CF and its impact on the larger civil-military relationship. To date, there has been no substantial work done in this area. What can be inferred at this point is that if the rank and file of the CF recognizes a problem, then the rest of civil society must have some sense of the issue. This certainly becomes evident when one reviews the officer to NCM ratios in reserve units, units that have the largest military footprint in local communities.

Officer bloat represents a fundamental collapse of the military structure. The institution of the CF has become far too top heavy, as reflected through rank inflation, to be sustainable. Both Granatstein and Morton have offered solutions, but little to no action has been taken to rectify this underlying structural problem that ultimately skews the larger civil-military relationship in Canada.

Conclusion

Through this brief discussion of the civil-military relationship and its impact on military leadership, the following conclusions can be made:

- (1) For any substantial change to occur in the present relationship, there must be a re-evaluation of the role of senior officers. In short, they can no longer take a passive stand on defence-related matters.
- (2) The military establishment must take a proactive role in taking the CF’s message to Canadians, by adopting a transparent and non-adversarial approach to the media, academia and relevant NGOs.

⁸⁰ Personal email communication regarding education standards in the CF on February 18, 2003.

⁸¹ Comments made at the 1999 Military History Colloquium, Ottawa, January 27, 1999.

- (3) Something must be done about the problem of officer bloat. Further study on this topic needs to be undertaken, but the solutions would seem to be easy: there should be an immediate reduction in senior officer ranks and rank deflation across the CF. Of all the recommendations, this is perhaps the most important because officer bloat is a manifestation of the ailing condition of the present civil-military relationship in Canada.

It is clear that if officers, and more specifically senior officers, want to show leadership then they must take action to change the nature of the existing civil-military relationship in Canada. Sun Pin, the great-grandson of Sun Tzu, offers a warning for those senior officers who remain passive: “A general who is hampered (by the ruler) will not be victorious. One who does not know the Tao⁸² will not be victorious. A perverse⁸³ general will not be victorious...One who does not gain the masses will not be victorious.”⁸⁴ It is a warning our Canadian military leaders would be wise to heed.

⁸² Sun Pin’s meaning goes beyond the Tao (understanding) of the military arts, but encompasses the Tao of government, of the understanding of people, and in general an understanding of one’s overall environment.

⁸³ Perverse as Sun Pin uses it, is in context of the Tao, in that it represents a leader who has lost touch with reality and has thus distanced himself from the normative world.

⁸⁴ Sun Pin, “Military Methods,” translated by Ralph Sawyer.