

# LETTERS to the EDITOR

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

It was disappointing to read LCol Brett Boudreau's all-encompassing attack on the Access to Information Act (ATI) [Vol. 1, No. 2] and those members of the public who use it. I am surprised that the Canadian Military Journal would simply accept at face value his sweeping conclusions which are not only self-serving, but unsupported by the facts.

Boudreau concludes that DND is clearly subject to a significantly higher percentage of ATIs that are more complex and time-consuming than those received by the rest of the federal government. Yet a simple phone call to Treasury Board and the Office of the Information Commissioner, the agencies responsible for overseeing and administering the Act, reveals that neither organization has ever conducted such a wide-sweeping analysis required to make such a statement. It is also obvious from his article that Colonel Boudreau did not analyze all the Access requests federal government departments processed in the period in question. So how can he make such a claim?

Similar problems exist with his other conclusions. Boudreau complains that in his analysis of DND requests from the latter half of 1997 there were few requests for information concerning policy issues of national importance or the operational capability of the CF. He also states that Access requests whose aim seems to attack individuals or the institution accounted for more than half of those received. This is according to whom? LCol Boudreau, of course.

It can easily be argued that an overall review of the media articles from 1998, 1999 and 2000 generated from Access requests shows just how effective the Act can be in informing the public about how their money is being spent by DND. Access requests have generated articles on operational capabilities, SAR and Maritime helicopter replacement programs, reserve restructuring and National Missile Defence among others. These are exactly the types of issues that Colonel Boudreau complains aren't addressed in Access requests. Typical of this type of reporting is a Canadian Press article in December, 1998, describing how DND approved a \$1.2 billion upgrade of its CF-18 fighter aircraft. That article sparked substantial media interest in the upgrade program.

The question to put to Boudreau and his Public Affairs colleagues is why did a journalist have to use the Access Act to get this information in the first place? Doesn't the expenditure of \$1.2 billion of the taxpayer's money even rate a press conference or technical briefing? Obviously not. Until that type of attitude changes at DND, the Access Act will continue to remain one of the

key tools for those who want to examine how and where the Department and the CF spend the public's money.

Perhaps Colonel Boudreau and the other officers he quotes anonymously should accept the fact that, like it or not, ATI is the law of the land and just get on with properly following this legislation.

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## BLOOD ON THE HILLS

In his rebuttal to the book review I wrote [Vol 1, No. 1], the one point Professor Bercuson chooses to take issue with relates to the political decision to hold a defensive line during the cease-fire talks.

Did it, as he argues, "force" UN soldiers to fight a defensive war they were not prepared for? Yes, it did; but eighteen months earlier none of them had been prepared for any kind of war! Did it lead the UN to "shelve" its superior fire power and air supremacy? No, it did not; they were both important components of the defensive strategy, saving many UN lives. And I repeat, to suggest that casualties incurred in defence might be as high, or as unnecessary, as those likely to be inflicted in offensive operations is totally ridiculous. Additionally, I hypothesize another major offensive might well have brought about a full-fledged war with China that would have brought vastly greater casualties and, when losses became unacceptable, the atom bomb.

It is surely no help to his case to now cite Mark Clark and Matthew Ridgeway, neither of whom are listed in his bibliography, neither of whom were particularly bright, and both of whom had axes to grind. Simply because it was handy, however, I checked Rees and could find nothing to support Bercuson's reasoning. I suspect that the same may be true of some of his other cited authors and readers are invited to look for themselves. (They might also like to look at an excellent new book by Colonel Michael Hickey, *The Korean War: The West Confronts Communism, 1950-1953*, London: John Murray, 1999). Hickey pays due attention — not always favourable — to the Canadian contribution.)

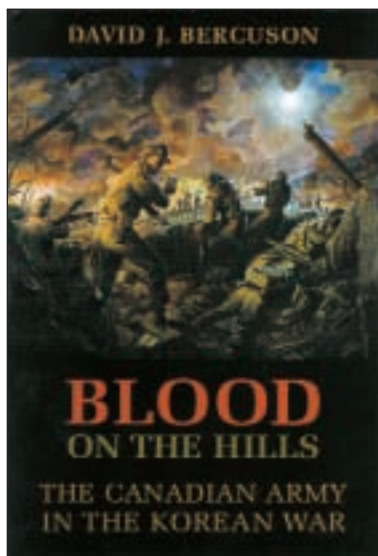
Bercuson finds my review 'flippant.' The Concise Oxford defines 'flippant' as 'lacking in gravity, treating serious things lightly, disrespectful.' I plead 'Not Guilty' to the first two charges and 'Guilty but Justified' to the third.

Brereton Greenhous  
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## BLOOD ON THE HILLS

As a former field historical officer and main author of *Canada's Army in Korea*, I read with special interest both David Bercuson's *Blood on the Hills* and the review by Brereton Greenhous in the Spring 2000 issue. My impression is that the review is somewhat off target in certain respects, and too lenient in others.

Professor Bercuson does not overlook Hong Kong. What he says in his introduction is that the Korean war



was the first Asian conflict into which Canada had knowingly sent troops; on page 39 he reminds us of the despatch of two battalions to reinforce the Hong Kong garrison before the Japanese attack.

A statement by Greenhous that Lord Strathcona's Horse was never the 12<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Regiment is quite correct, but neither he nor Bercuson properly identifies the armoured component of the original

brigade. It was 'A' Squadron, 1st/2nd Armoured Regiment, representing both the Strathconas and the Royal Canadian Dragoons, and, until arrival in Korea, it was equipped with self-propelled anti-tank guns; it then became 'C' Squadron of the Strathconas and was issued Sherman tanks. Why it was not armed with tanks in the first place is not explained either in the official history (*Strange Battleground*) or in Bercuson's book, a point surely worth mentioning in a review.

Bercuson makes invidious comparison between the Special Force infantry battalions, the regular units that succeeded them, and the corresponding third battalions. Greenhous perhaps too readily agrees that the regular infantry battalions were better trained than their predecessors, and with a particular commanding officer's final assessment stating that he "lacked the grip to command a battalion on active operation". Bercuson quotes similar remarks by the Commander of the Commonwealth Division, from a letter to the Chief of the Canadian general staff dated 30 December 1952, about Lieutenant Colonel H.F. Wood of 3 PPCLI; nevertheless, Wood retained his command until early May 1953, and was then relieved on medical grounds. (If by any chance Greenhous was referring to some other battalion commander, he should have corrected Bercuson's error regarding Wood.) Both Bercuson and Greenhous

fail to explain that the third battalions of all three infantry regiments had been sending their better trained people as reinforcements for the first two before eventually relieving those battalions in the field. They also fail to mention that only 1 PPLCI carried out such a relief as a complete unit: the other two first battalions and all three third battalions did so with only two of their four rifle companies, the other two being formed with members of the outgoing battalions who were not yet due for rotation. Under command of 2 PPCLI, a company of 1 PPCLI took part in the last more than company-sized offensive action of the Canadian brigade (Operation "Pepperpot", 23 October 1951, described only very briefly in the official history and not even mentioned by either Bercuson or Greenhous). Bercuson devotes the sixth of eight chapters to the activities of 2 RCR, 2 R22<sup>o</sup>R and 1 PPCLI in November-December 1951. Those of the three first battalions in 1952, 3 PPCLI in late 1952 and 3 RCR and R22<sup>o</sup>R in 1953 are covered, unevenly, in the last two chapters — an imbalance on which Greenhous fails to comment.

Another shortcoming apparently overlooked by the reviewer is a repeated statement by the author, in his own words, to the effect that more than five hundred Canadians fell in the Korean war and a misleading paraphrase of remarks imputed to the official historian. (The correct figure is 312 to 309 army, 3 navy).

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## HUMAN SECURITY: THE HARD EDGE

The article with the title "Human Security: The Hard Edge" [Vol.1, No.1] was a fascinating read and a good 'acid test' of the purpose of the new Journal. The article was a reflection of the government of the day's foreign policy. Policies, by their very nature, tend to blur the distinction between normative and analytical statements. However, most policies rest on sets of assumptions. Many of the assumptions of the policy known as 'human security' are logically faulty and inherently flawed, if not dangerous.

The first unstated assumption in the article was the particular view of history. The policy appears to be based on the 'Onward March of Progress' school of history, which maintains that all events contribute to the betterment of the human condition. Throughout pages 11 and 12, the reader is treated to a synopsis of international history from which it can be inferred that the state-based international system has outlived its utility and is now dying. It claimed that as liberal democracy and its handmaiden, the free press, became more prominent, so too did international law, particularly that

pertaining to conflict. From this, it was concluded that 'human security' was, to date, the pinnacle of these trends. This is not an easy statement with which one can agree, comparing it with the span of human history where consistent progress has not always been the norm. Another assumption was that the nation-state as an organizational unit was on its way to obsolescence, and that the individual would become the replacement. The author claimed that:

The international system is no longer exclusively dominated by states; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), particularly in the humanitarian assistance sector, are growing in importance and number. Called to fill a void left by the reluctance of states to address intrastate conflict, humanitarian NGOs have asserted themselves as powerful and independent actors. Nor are NGOs the only new effective players. Corporations also play a major role. So do drug cartels and terrorist organizations.

This appears to be analytical, but from this statement it can be inferred that the author believes that the state-based international system dating from the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia is disappearing. Earlier in the article, it was noted that the changes in the international system have occurred without subsequent changes in the concept of 'national interest'. This implies that there already has been a fundamental change to the international system. Examining the evidence at hand, one might not reach the same conclusion. The international system has not fundamentally changed since 1648. States remain the central unit of international relations. The growth of non-state actors and international organizations, such as the UN, only means that there are more non-state actors at play in international politics. International organizations and quasi-macro states seem to indicate that if the nation-state is dying, it is the aggregation of states, i.e., the European Union, that seem to have become more prominent. Furthermore, recent spates of demonstrations against organizations such as the Organization of American States and the World Trade Organization could be interpreted as signs that individuals are less 'empowered' and are now resorting to civil disobedience to make their presence felt.

The policy may be unintentionally somewhat anti-democratic. The belief that the nation-state has outlived its purpose and is disappearing comes with the corollary comfort with the individual as the focus of international relations. This is an unusual break with Canadian political culture and is more akin to the American ideal of individual rights reigning supreme. If there is to be no organization akin to the state where the organization has a monopoly of force and maintains a contract with the



Canadian Forces Photo by: MCpl Danielle Bernier

people within that state, then what replaces it? It is suggested that the role of NGOs, corporations and cartels in international politics erodes the power of the state, and that this is not necessarily a bad thing. The statement should be qualified with a caveat to avoid sounding anti-democratic as such organizations are not accountable to the people of such states. In functional liberal democracies, to advocate that NGOs, corporations and cartels should play a greater role in the conduct of policy is anti-democratic. In dysfunctional liberal democracies, dependent on the degree of dysfunction, this may or may not be a positive addition. One must be careful.

It was later stated that the rise of democracy, and advances in information and weapons technologies have given birth to the rise of 'human security' as an organizing principle. This statement does not stand up to rigorous analysis as there is little evidence to sustain the existence of a causal link or an effect. While weapons have become more deadly, and the media an all-pervasive presence, democratization has not, in the short term, led to the rise of 'human security'. This belief seems to emanate from the governments of wealthy western states which have no discernible security threats. It must be noted that many of these states' own roads to democracy which were plagued with episodes of violence and upheaval. One is almost tempted to ask what the outcome would have been if our own states were subject to the same degree of scrutiny that lesser developed countries experienced during the development of democracy. But the implications of that answer are counterfactual at best and abhorrent at worst.

To summarize, 'human security' is a policy which would be better labelled as a doctrine. It is not an organizational principle. The doctrine of 'human security' is a noble effort and not one that should be dismissed out of hand. It has many benefits for Canada and the world. There is no denying that large parts of the world would benefit from greater stability. The confusion of analytical and normative statements makes for a soundbite friendly policy. However, this doctrine is inherently dangerous if it is not more carefully considered. What

may be a useful means of arriving at a solution is an attempt to explore the assumptions of the doctrine. One might be tempted to suggest that this doctrine seems to lack historical perspective, and such a perspective might be the means of examining its assumptions.

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The 1<sup>st</sup> Hussars

## TASK FORCE KOSOVO

As a member of the J4 Logistics staff at NDHQ who was involved with the Kosovo operation from its conception, and now in its closure, I read Colonel Ward's article [Vol. 1, No. 1] with some interest. The challenges and obstacles that any new mission faces are always hard to imagine unless you are either intimately involved or on the ground. The success that Colonel Ward and his contingent achieved is certainly a credit to all the men and women who took part in the operation. His comments and recommendations on strategic lift, communications, interoperability and timeliness of decisions were heartening in that a Commander in the field has now said the same things that the Joint Staff has said for years.

However, in the article there are three statements that I feel I must comment upon.

The first is concerning the timeliness of authorization to expend funds. In this operation, authorization to expend funds on stocking and materiel preparation was given on 8 April 1999, twenty days before the mission was actually



Canadian Forces Photo by Cpl Ken Allan

authorized. This was the first time in recent memory that expenditures were authorized prior to government decision. Thus it was a significant step forward in terms of logistics preparation and anticipating requirements, and it is to be hoped that the practice will continue.

The second statement was the comment that the initial deployment was "the least professional aspect of the

operation." Needless to say, in any movements operation, the probability of aircraft breakdown is present whether it be with military aircraft or commercial carriers. In this case, there were aircraft serviceability difficulties compounded by problems with host nation support, airport congestion, overflight clearance, diplomatic clearance, and others too numerous to detail. My point is that the fact that the deployment was not a catastrophe is attributable to the professionalism and initiative of those involved; lack of professionalism was not the cause of the difficulties.

Third, and last, is the statement: "Despite clear direction, however, loading had not been done in accordance with operational requirements. Consequently the Coyotes were last off, even though they were the most urgently needed capability for early entry into Kosovo." This is the statement that has caused the most concern, because it is certainly not the way to conduct operational movements. Consequently, I searched all the *Op Kinetic* documentation, including all message and email traffic, and contacted the shipping company. Regretfully, I could find no reference to Colonel Ward's clear direction; obviously it never reached the Movement Control Centre so, to him my sincere apologies. However, I should point out for the historical record, that the vessel commenced discharging in Thessaloniki at 2305 hours on 9 June 1999 and was completed at 0515 hours on 10 June (6 hours and 10 minutes in total). In addition, because of their weight and height, all Coyotes were loaded into the lower deck ('D' Deck) of the ship to provide the necessary weight and balance distribution. Furthermore, requirements and constraints in positioning and loading the Griffon helicopters and their requirements on arrival, dictated that they be loaded last and discharged from the vessel first. And lastly, it should be noted that the vehicles had to be marshaled and crewed, moved to the assembly area, and be bombed up and test fired. In short, I do not believe that the positioning of the Coyotes jeopardized or impeded the operation to any extent, nor do I believe that the direction to load them last and discharge them first would have been feasible.

That said, I believe, as Colonel Ward put it so aptly, that this operation was one of the best of professional and operational challenges. I think all involved, whether deployed as part of the contingent or not, should be congratulated and that the lessons learned should be actioned before the next requirement to send Canadian Forces personnel into harm's way.

S. Tighe  
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