



DND Photo BK2002-0156-44d by Cpl Grant Rivalin

A Canadian soldier guards the perimeter of a drop-off point for an American Blackhawk helicopter during a Multinational Division South-West exercise in Glamoc, Bosnia, May 2002.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE CANADIAN APPROACH TO JOINT AND COMBINED OPERATIONS AT THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL LEVEL

By Vice-Admiral (ret'd) G.L. Garnett

**D**uring the Cold War, the Canadian Forces (CF), with the exception of units allocated to the defence of North America, were largely assigned to — and, in effect, designed around — collective defence tasks within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Like the United States — NATO's other non-European member — Canada maintained a significant proportion of its forces-in-being on high readiness in Europe, while keeping home-based units available for rapid reaction and augmentation in the event of general war. This force posture was all-encompassing; even West Coast-based ships had an assigned augmentation role.

For most of the Cold War, Canada's operational formations assigned to NATO reported via the Alliance's command and control hierarchy, followed NATO operational plans and doctrine, and took their orders directly from NATO Headquarters. Peacekeeping contingents in this era were under the UN chain of command, similar in nature to NATO. Other than in a domestic context, National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) had virtually no role in the day-to-day operations of the three services.

Additionally, from a national perspective little joint training took place, and no joint doctrine existed or was

even envisioned. Some combined training did occur, albeit outside of the Alliance context, primarily with US and Pacific-based forces (such as the "Rim of the Pacific" series of naval exercises). In hindsight, this should not be surprising as the United States was similarly slow to embrace a joint approach to operations.

With the end of the Cold War and the period of resource reductions and constraints which followed, particularly the search for the elusive 'peace dividend', much attention was focused on reducing the size of the CF and its supporting infrastructure to conform to scaled-back budgets. Little attention was paid to new operating concepts. Consequently, when the Gulf War came along, the CF found itself in uncharted waters, far from the 'comfort zone' evolved over more than forty years of participation in NATO operations and exercises. As a result, the response of the CF to the pressure for change was marred by improvisation and ad-hocery. This trend manifested itself to different degrees across the services. NATO-assigned maritime forces, for example, had considerable experience operating with other Allied and friendly navies, and had no problem adapting to the mission. On the other hand, the need to create an in-theatre joint head-

Vice-Admiral G.L. Garnett is a former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

quarters to command the diverse elements deployed — such as the CF-18 squadron, airfield defence elements, the field hospital and the maritime task force — was met on an ad-hoc basis that depended entirely on the professional abilities and adaptability of those directly involved. There was no doctrinal template to draw on for guidance.

In NDHQ, the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS) operations staff and command and control facilities were quickly overwhelmed. The augmentation of the central

This was the impetus for two major initiatives undertaken by the then-Chief of Force Development: the creation of CF doctrine for joint operations, and the creation of a deployable command and control capability for the CF.

### THE 1994 WHITE PAPER

Although ostensibly the first attempt by government to bring Defence into line with the emerging realities of the post-Cold War world, the 1994 White Paper did not address either command and control issues or the future of joint and combined operations. Indeed, the early post-Cold War era was marked by two trends: confirmation of the continuing need for combat capability — the overriding objective of the White Paper — and the persistent demand for a ‘peace dividend’ by groups such as ‘Canada 21’. While the White Paper concluded that “the Canadian Forces are a unified force of maritime, land and air elements,” and “their structure is based on the Total Force concept that integrates full and part-time military personnel to provide multi-purpose, combat capable armed forces,”<sup>1</sup> it had little to say about fostering ‘jointness’ in order to better adapt to the rapidly-emerging demands of the RMA.

Towards the end of the Cold War, and largely in response to the 1987 White Paper, there had been a growth in the number of headquarters, primarily in the Army, with the creation of

the four Area headquarters distributed across the country to assume responsibility for domestic operations, the creation of 1 Canadian Division Headquarters to command the consolidated NATO land commitment of two brigades for Europe, and a short-lived Task Force Headquarters for Canada-US (CANUS) operations. Prior to the creation of the Area headquarters there had been regional staffs located within other higher-level headquarters distributed throughout the country. The White Paper announced a significant reduction in the number of headquarters, which was to be accomplished largely by folding the three Service Commanders and their staffs into NDHQ Ottawa. At the same time, the number of personnel working in headquarters at the operational and strategic levels was to be reduced by 33 percent.

### THE MANAGEMENT COMMAND AND CONTROL RE-ENGINEERING TEAM (MCCRT)

In order to meet the demands of Defence Expenditure Review (DER) 94 and Program Review (PR) 1, a review of all major NDHQ processes was undertaken and facilitated by a purpose-built group known as the MCCRT Team. One of the goals of senior management was to attempt to stretch the reduction of headquarters up to 50 percent. The result was that for the first time the whole of the headquarters structure at the strategic and operational levels came under scrutiny. Despite discussion of the potential for forming joint headquarters, the single service structure remained intact. The Air

DCDS staff by the environmental staffs was effected under the direction of the Director General Military Plans and Operations (DGMPO) and his team. Improvisation was essential to obtain sufficient expertise in the professional disciplines needed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in order to exercise full command of the deployed forces.

Among the many lessons learned during this period was the urgent need for a dedicated Joint Staff in NDHQ — one independent of the environmental staffs for personnel augmentation, and possessing sufficient expertise to perform at the strategic level and to command anticipated operations. Indeed, change was continual throughout the 1990s. An ever-growing DCDS staff focused initially on the force employment role and the development of doctrine, and later on advocating joint force development.

A review of command and control undertaken by the Chief of Review Services (CRS), published as CRS Report E3/92 in 1994, was key to this evolutionary process. While the Report itself remains classified, its conclusions are sufficiently self-evident that I see nothing inherently prejudicial in citing them. Among the report’s conclusions were two that I consider to be most important:

- first, a need to clarify terminology, especially with respect to joint operations; and
- second, a need to learn how to set up and run a Joint Task Force HQ under a Joint Commander.



A ship's diver from HMCS *Montréal* enters the water during a search and rescue exercise in the Gulf of Oman, November 2002. *Montréal* is in the Arabian Sea as part of Operation "Apollo", Canada's contribution to the international campaign against terrorism.

DND Photo HS025035d12 by Cpl Paz Quillé

Force created 1 Canadian Air Division in Winnipeg out of the existing Fighter, Maritime and Transport Group headquarters, incidentally generating much of the needed reductions. In Halifax, the Land Forces Atlantic Area Headquarters was physically co-located with Maritime Command Atlantic Headquarters, but much was made of not becoming joint.

## EVOLUTION AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

In the early and mid-1990s, the one notable attempt to foster joint and combined training was through the reintroduction of the Maritime Command Operational Training (MARCOT) exercise series on both coasts. These were formation-wide, including the whole of the operational-level headquarters, a wide variety of support services, and the majority of assigned tactical units and elements. Throughout the Cold War these exercises had been used to train the headquarters staffs and to certify tactical formations and units prior to assignment to NATO (in Maritime Command Atlantic).

From 1995, the newly developed Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPP) was adopted for planning MARCOTs. The 1995 East Coast MARCOT included land and air component commanders and a variety of US forces. In 1996, a simulated High Command level was added with the appearance of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre Staff playing the roles related to a United Nations (UN) approved mission. In 1998, the East Coast MARCOT grew to become the largest joint and combined exercise ever held in Canada, when it was combined with the NATO Exercise “Unified Spirit”, eventually involving more than 15,000 personnel and hundreds of Canadian, American and Allied ships and aircraft.

In response to a Chief of Review Services (CRS) report, the Armed Forces Council (AFC), which met in February of 1994, approved a new Command and Control concept. A working group was established under the leadership of the Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS) with the goal of providing “guidance and direction for the development of an implementation plan for a CF command and control organization.”<sup>2</sup> The VCDS C2 Working Group, as this entity came to be known, developed the idea of appointing 1 Canadian Division Headquarters as the backbone for a joint deployable command and control capability for the Canadian Forces. To assist in this evolution, an initial group of maritime and air staff was posted to the Division Headquarters, and it was tasked to develop the capability to become the cadre of any future joint headquarters. As our experience grew, it became obvious that the original construct had substantial weaknesses. A subsequent meeting of the working group in March of 1996 (under the leadership of Vice-Admiral Larry Murray) agreed to continue improvements to enable the Division

Headquarters to perform its joint role. These were specified in NDHQ Action Directive D3/96, which forecast an initial operation capability (IOC) for December 1996.

This measured plan was overtaken by the events surrounding the decision to assume a leadership role in response to the emerging humanitarian disaster in the African Great Lakes region — codenamed Operation “Assurance”. Fortunately, the CF had made sufficient progress in the creation of our deployable command and control capability to at least respond to the situation. This and other operations also served to highlight an emerging difficulty with the concept of double-hatting the Division as a joint headquarters. Instead of being a periodic and relatively infrequent task, this function was becoming the *raison d’être* of the headquarters, imposing a significant burden that was manifestly unfair to the Army.

In the fall of 1997, the Armed Forces Council decided that it was time to increase the emphasis on ‘jointness’ by trying to bring the three environments closer together. It was clear to the mem-

**“The continuing pressure on resources, the increasing frequency and complexity of contingency operations ... and the need to recapitalize the force demanded greater harmonization of the command structure at the operational and strategic levels.”**



Soldiers belonging to the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry on a firing range near Kandahar, Afghanistan, during the unit's tour as part of Operation “Apollo”, July 2002.

bers of AFC that the continuing pressure on resources, the increasing frequency and complexity of contingency operations (and the concomitant pressures on the DCDS organization), as well as the need to recapitalize the force, demanded greater harmonization of the command structure at the operational and strategic levels. The DCDS was therefore directed

to examine the possibility of evolving the Division Headquarters into a new operational-level Joint Headquarters.

As the potential for disaster at the turn of the millennium became apparent, the CF was required, as part of the broader Government of Canada response, to put a contingency plan into place. “Y2K” became the focus of Division Headquarters planning. On completion, it was intended that it would provide the clear point for disbanding the Division and the formation of the new Joint Headquarters.

The planning period for what is now known as the Joint Operations Group (JOG) and its component parts (1 Joint Signals Regiment and the Joint Task Force Headquarters) consumed three years of considerable effort and no little angst. What eventually grew into a combined DCDS/VCDS planning team required considerable direct intervention by AFC to bring about the necessary change. On 1 June 2000, the Joint Operations Group was created, with the following tasks:

- activation and deactivation of operations in a new theatre;
- forming the national command element of the first rotation of a new mission;
- forming the nucleus of the command element of the main contingency force; and
- commanding the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART).

With the JOG firmly established, AFC decided to look at better ways of forming the National Support Element (NSE) for deployed operations. In this case, it was also necessary to involve the Defence Management Committee (DMC). Thus,

a study was begun early in 2000 that eventually led to the creation of a Joint Support Group (JSG) in Kingston assigned to the JOG. It would be given specific roles, similar in nature to the JOG. The cadre of this new headquarters was in place in the summer of 2001, with the aim of providing a deployable

capability by 2003. As a result of the Asymmetric Threat Study, the formation of the new operational-level NBC decontamination unit was assigned to the JSG.

## STRATEGY 2020

In the late 1990s, it became apparent to the senior leadership of the CF that there was an urgent need for a vision-ary document that would give a sense of the long-term direction in which the Department and the Forces were being taken. The White Paper did not serve that purpose; it did not provide the long-term objectives and short-term targets (as one might find, for example, in the US Navy document *From the Sea*). Over the latter half of 1998 and the first half of 1999, the DMC, working at least once a month and using a

classic strategic planning process, produced *Shaping the Future of Canadian Defence: A Strategy for 2020*.

The Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) was one of the pillars of *Strategy 2020*. The Chief of Research and Development (CRAD) and the VCDS had already sponsored a national symposium to consider the challenges the RMA posed to the defence establishment. Along with its obvious technological implications, it was important to accept the notion — as articulated in *Strategy 2020* — that “combined with the dramatic changes in military doctrine and operational concepts [the RMA] fundamentally alters the character and conduct of military operations.”<sup>3</sup> Embedded in the critical attributes of the strategy are:

- **Jointness.** Identify and strengthen those specific capabilities that enable the CF to fulfil Canadian security priorities, deliver a joint capability to deal with weapons of mass destruction, information operations and other asymmetric threats, and form counter-threat partnerships with domestic and international partners.
- **Command and Control.** Foster jointness in command and control, as well as logistics and intelligence, including the development of deployable joint headquarters capable of exercising national command and logistic support of Main Contingency Forces.<sup>4</sup>

Under the heading “Eight Key Strategic Objectives,” two five-year targets were identified which further defined the increasing emphasis on joint and combined operations:

- Complete the introduction of a program of joint experimentation maximizing the effectiveness of new doctrines and systems.
- Expand the joint and combined exercise program to include all environments and exchanges with the US.<sup>5</sup>

## EVOLUTION AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

According to Canadian Forces doctrine, “Military strategic level capabilities are focused on ‘determining the military strategic objectives and desired end state, outlining military action needed, allocating resources and applying constraints directed by political leaders.’”<sup>6</sup>

In a rudimentary fashion, this was the process adopted by NDHQ for contingency operations after the end of the Cold War. However, as described above, no joint staff existed until the latter part of the 1990s to perfect the process. Indeed, it was the reforms imposed by Minister Young in his April 1997 report to the Prime Minister that provided the impetus to do just that. The RMA Symposium of November 1998 (Canadian Defence Beyond 2010) also served to better the understanding of the RMA and its impact upon the CF, and to develop a CF response to the challenges that was sufficiently robust and, at the same time, flexible enough to respond quickly to the emerging global security environment. A follow-on symposium in April 2000 focused on experimentation and simulation (Creating the CF of 2020), led to the acceptance of a tiered approach to concept development and experimentation, and resulted in a decision to create the CF Experimentation Centre, which was formed in May 2001.

“With the end of the Cold War and the accompanying period of resource reductions and constraints ... the response of the CF to the pressure of change was marred by improvisation and ad-hocery. There was no doctrinal template to draw on for guidance.”

Thus, the composition, role and size of the DCDS staff was given a particular focus for several years. This was reflected in the Departmental Performance Report (DPR) 2000-2001, where the resources assigned to the DCDS for joint operations and civil emergency preparedness grew from \$762 million in FY 98-99 to \$1,008.5 million in FY 00-01.<sup>7</sup>

The combination of the development of the Canadian Joint Task List (CJTL) as a force structure planning tool and the threat posed by “Y2K” caused the Forces’ leadership to focus on the actual roles of the DCDS staff. The CJTL clearly demonstrated that for deployed contingency operations, the DCDS staff played both the strategic- and operational-level roles. For “Y2K,” the assignment of 1 Canadian Division Headquarters as the operational level headquarters for domestic contingency response operations provided the practical experience which justified the longer-term requirement to split these two levels for the command of contingency operations. Once “Y2K” was behind us, the JOG was formed and a review of its precise role as an operational-level headquarters was undertaken.

To broaden the discussion about the evolution of the CF command and control concept, two recently retired DCDSs, Vice-Admiral L. Mason and Lieutenant-General R. Crabbe, were commissioned to propose a way forward. The Mason-Crabbe Report was received in January 2001. Among its recommendations were the creation of a new operational-level headquarters for command of deployed contingency operations, and the retention of other operational-level headquarters to exercise command in certain domestic scenarios. Further work continues on this concept under the auspices of the Joint Intelligence and Information Capability Project, where the development of a new capability able to take advantage of the latest technologies — with a strategic-level fusion centre as a centrepiece — is being explored.

In recent years there has also been some movement in terms of joint requirements. As noted above, the DCDS has become the proponent for joint requirements. Many of these joint areas (such as Space and Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Defence) are very important for the future. The need to ensure that every procurement dollar is used as wisely as possible, and that oversight is provided at the highest level, resulted in a new management board being created in 1999. The Joint Capability Requirements Board (JCRB) reviews all major crown or large omnibus Statements of Operational Requirements (SOR), as well as cross-environmental procurements (such as combat clothing), to ensure maximum commonality across the CF. The JCRB is normally chaired by the VCDS, but there is provision for co-chairmanship by the CDS and Deputy Minister where new processes (e.g., the capability planning process) are being adopted for broad use. The JCRB is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the departmental management process.

## THE FUTURE

The CF has taken clear, if often tentative, steps toward an increasingly joint command structure over the last decade. In the beginning, the impetus for change was the need to meet resource reductions by paring both the force structure and the overall size of the CF. Recently, evolving doctrine and a better understanding of the RMA as it relates to the CF have helped to move the Forces more logically toward a growing joint focus at the strategic level. Certainly the evolution of the DCDS as the only ‘force employer’ at the strategic level is well underway.

Running counter to the reduction trend, the increase in DCDS tasks over the past five years has resulted in a parallel growth in DCDS staffing levels. Most notable was the establishment of a new division within the group to focus on joint force development. The DCDS is now responsible for such a large number of tasks that there is concern that the group’s ability to focus on its vitally important force employment role may be impaired. The recent addition of a



Members of HMCS *Montréal*'s naval boarding party watching over the crew of a dhow during a boarding in the Gulf of Oman, October 2002.

Major-General/Rear-Admiral as Assistant DCDS was intended to provide some relief, particularly in the areas of force development and force generation. However, the task imbalance continues, suggesting that an organizational review will be needed in the near future to determine whether an additional general/flag officer position should be established to focus on joint force development, experimentation and simulation, NBC, doctrine development and similar joint areas.



HMCS *Algonquin*, HMCS *St. John's* and HMCS *Protecteur* in the Gulf of Oman as part of Operation "Apollo", September 2002.

The increasing focus on joint and combined operations at the strategic and operational levels demands that joint doctrine continue to be developed and kept up to date as a matter of urgency. This issue should be included in any organizational review of the DCDS Group to ensure that such a vital consideration remains in the forefront when assigning or re-assigning tasks.

Any organizational review should also examine the area of equipment requirements. At present, the vast majority of the requirements staffs belong to the Environmental Chiefs of Staff (ECSs), while at the same time the development of joint requirements falls to the DCDS. With four 'requirements czars' at work in the same headquarters, overlap and redundancy are inevitable. An organizational review should look at whether it might make sense to adopt a requirements model such as that now in use in the UK, wherein all service requirements staffs are centralized in a single joint requirements staff.

At the operational level, further study and resources need to be assigned to determine the optimum way ahead for the command structure. The favored course of action is the creation of a new, distinct Canadian Joint Headquarters (CJHQ) focused solely on force employment, which would report to the DCDS and allow the division of the current joint staff into its

two logical strategic- and operational-level components. This new Joint Headquarters could also serve as a link to US Northern Command (NORTH-COM) Headquarters and likely also incorporate the Canadian NORAD Region, currently in North Bay. The Joint Operations Group and its components would remain as currently structured. The remaining environmental operational-level headquarters would need to be reviewed for any role, likely domestic in nature, beyond that required for force generation.

## CONCLUSION

“The operations that the Canadian Forces will conduct internationally will span the spectrum of conflict and will normally be as part of a coalition or alliance.”<sup>8</sup> Almost certainly, there will be no more ‘Great Lakes expeditions’. A more appropriate example of the type of joint and

combined operations we are likely to see in the future would be the initial deployment of a reconnaissance squadron to Kosovo to be part of a larger UK formation. Operation “Apollo” provides even better examples. The deployment of the 3 PPCLI Battle Group to Afghanistan and the Naval Task Group deployment in support of the US-led war against terrorism are excellent instances of current operational concepts, to wit the dispatch of wholly-Canadian, tactically self-sufficient units capable of making a valuable contribution to a joint and combined operation. The fact that the Canadian Joint Headquarters staff have become the national command element of our contribution to Operation “Enduring Freedom” is testimony to the value of the decisions taken in recent years.<sup>9</sup>

Organizational change is an essential component of how a military force adapts to the pressures imposed by the RMA. A great many studies have been completed, the results have been analyzed exhaustively, and the trends are clear. It is now time to take some of the hard decisions about the pre-eminence of ‘jointness’ and the implications of this for command and control, for DCDS group organization and for joint doctrine. Slow evolutionary progress will no longer satisfy the urgency of the need.



## NOTES

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by Captain (N) Steve King and Major Duncan Milne, both of the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff Group, and Major Don Neill of CAN-MILREP NATO, in preparing this paper.

1. Government of Canada, *1994 Defence White Paper*, Chapter 7, “Total Force.”
2. NDHQ Action Directive D/94 (*sic*) “Command and Control of CF Operations,” 18 March 1994.
3. Government of Canada, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020*, Introduction, p. 6.
4. *Ibid*, “Part Two – Strategy 2020: Canadian Defence into the 21st Century,” p. 9.
5. *Ibid*, p. 10.
6. 1950-1 (DDA 3-2), “Strategic Capability Planning for the Canadian Forces,” 13 June 2000, pp. 24-26.
7. Department of National Defence, *Departmental Performance Report 2001*, p. 33.
8. Department of National Defence, VCDS Group “Capability Based Planning” (DRAFT), February 2002, p. 14.
9. Operation “Enduring Freedom” is itself a singular example of the impact of the RMA, in which an extensive war in central Asia is being commanded from Florida rather than by an in-theatre headquarters.