

"INSTITUTIONALIZING AMBIGUITY:
THE MANAGEMENT REVIEW GROUP AND
THE RESHAPING OF THE DEFENCE
POLICY PROCESS IN CANADA"

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Introduction

The Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CF) have been subject to a number of "studies" since 1947 intended to bring more coherence to, and elicit a better return from, defence efforts. Few of these studies have been at all comprehensive. Some have been functionally oriented or aimed at reviewing a particular component or policy of the military structure. The 1964 Suttie Report on the Reserves and the 1981 Review of Unification are examples.

More commonly studies have been directed towards the administrative or management aspects of defence policies, with particular reference to the central defence establishment in Ottawa. The 1948 "Wood and Gorden Report" and the 1962 Special Area study of the Royal Commission on Government Organization (Glassco) both addressed these issues of defence management. Each helped to fashion attitudes and concepts about defence administration, but their direct influence was limited.

In his 1971 White Paper, Defence in the 70s, Donald Macdonald introduced a new study team that would once again subject DND and the CF to an examination of administrative methods aimed at "ensuring maximum effectiveness." The Management Review Group (MRG), led by John Pennefather, completed its work in June 1972; its recommendations were to have a far-reaching impact on DND and the CF. The report, or decisions stemming from it, changed the entire administrative structure of DND, introduced new concepts for management, and clearly shifted the power structure of the central bureaucracy. By the end of 1972, DND and the CF had a new set of principal actors, a new administrative structure, and a new policy process. To some the changes were even more significant than those introduced previously by Paul Hellyer's 1966 unification reforms.

The MRG Report stands in sharp contract to other studies that have examined the administration of defence policy in Canada because it has not been readily available to officials, scholars, or the public. Yet, an awareness of the concepts that underlie the recommendations of the MRG is fundamental to understanding why National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) exists and functions as it does today and why some issues hold sway over others. Even though some may contend that the report was not officially accepted there can be no doubt that the MRG Report provided the instrument for redefining the problems facing DND and the CF in 1972.

Concepts form the basis for policies and their administration, and no analysis of either can be complete unless one understands their conceptual context. Accordingly, the following analysis of the Management Review Group, and its report, will pay special heed to the search for concepts about defence administration as they were expressed by the consultants and carried into DND.

Defence in the 70s

A new defence policy era began on 3 April 1969 when Prime Minister Trudeau delivered a speech setting out guidelines intended to "repatriate" Canadian defence policy. In harmony with his views on foreign policy for Canadians, the Prime Minister's defence objectives were intended to contribute to the maintenance of world peace and "to add to our own sense of purpose as a nation." While acknowledging the need to remain in NATO, the new policy directed the CF to a "wide range of activities" involving the defence of Canada, supplementing civil authorities, and contributing to national development.

The reordering of emphasis was to be substantial. This was particularly so with regard to European commitments where the Government intended "to take early steps to bring about a planned and phased reduction of the size of the Canadian Forces in Europe." Relations with the United States and defence agreements in North America would also be subject to review with the aim of endeavouring to "have the activities within Canada which are essential to North American defence performed by Canadian Forces." The policy statement concluded that:

We shall maintain appropriate defence forces which will be designed to undertake the following roles:

- (a) the surveillance of our own territory and coast lines, i.e. the protection of our sovereignty;
- (b) the defence of North America in co-operation with United States forces;
- (c) the fulfilment of such NATO commitments as may be agreed upon; and
- (d) the performance of such international peacekeeping roles as we may, from time to time, assume.(1)

The precise tasks the CF were expected to perform to meet these objectives and their relative priorities have been a source of confusion and argument ever since they were declared. Were they intended to be sacrosanct "priorities" to which resources were to be allocated in descending order? Or were they guidelines intended to reassure Canadians that each task was to be considered by defence planners and that the defence of Canada was not being sacrificed to others' needs? The answers were not clear from the statement alone. Nor, in fact, had they been adequately considered before the statement was made.

In the autumn of 1971 an article appeared in the Canadian Defence Quarterly throwing into the open the difficulties defence planners had had with Trudeau's bare-bones statement of defence policy. Two influential DND public

servants, J.C. Arnell and J.F. Anderson, wrote this of their experiences gaining inter-departmental agreement concerning the meaning of the Prime Minister's statement:

...[T]he statement left unsettled the question of the amount of effort to be devoted to each role and, apart from the decision to reduce the strength of the Canadian forces stationed in Europe, the question of the balance to be struck between the roles.

The policy statement of April 3, 1969, in identifying the first military role, did not address the problem of the appropriate relationship between the responsibilities of the Minister of National Defence and of the Canadian Armed Forces for the protection of sovereignty, and the responsibilities vested by statute in other ministers and in the departments and agencies reporting to them. These, too, look after the protection of a wide variety of Canadian national interests; the regulation of foreign activity on Canadian territory and in other areas of Canadian national jurisdictions; and the enforcement of Canadian laws and regulations in such areas.

The first attempts to prepare a new program responsive to the requirements of the new defence policy tended to take the understandable course of interpreting the role accorded first priority by the Government very broadly, and of stating requirements for allocating to it the greater part of the available military resources. In the process, the statutory responsibilities of other ministers, and the work already being done by other government departments and agencies, tended to be overlooked or to be discounted. The end result, had this approach been continued, would have been an effort that would have looked excessive when measured against the foreseeable physical challenges to Canada's national sovereignty and jurisdiction.(2)

The "steps" necessary to interpret the meaning of the Prime Minister's statement required the formation of a complex inter-department working group. This group included members from the Privy Council Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat, and the civilian and military "sides" of DND. The long and involved sorting out of the first role was not continued for the other tasks.

This episode reveals two intriguing aspects of Trudeau's policy process. First, it would appear that his policy statement was hastily developed in the Prime Minister's office without reference to departmental advice. This

conclusion is supported by the Management Review Group Report that states that DND "failed to contribute significantly to the formation of general Government policy positions such as those enunciated by the Prime Minister on 3 April 1969."³ Coordination and even a survey of statutes followed after the policy was made.

Second, the inability of defence officials and others to deal with the roles as described may indicate the shallowness of thought behind defence assessments of that period. The roles described by the Prime Minister were neither new nor particularly difficult to interpret. Neither did they require, on the basis of military or foreign policy assessments, much change in the way business was done by the CF. These roles, sometimes stated differently, had been Canadian defence objectives since at least 1947. Indeed it is hard to understand how the roles of the CF could be otherwise or differently listed.

No government could, or ever did, place the defence of Canada after other objectives. Nor could or did any government ever place the defence of North America in cooperation with the United States in any other order. One might try to place peacekeeping ahead of NATO regional-security needs but that is hardly likely to be more than a symbolic exercise. The point is, a natural order has always existed. What apparently confuses some observers is that resources expenditures do not automatically follow the policy orders.

What must be remembered, however, is that resource allocation is not determined solely by defence objectives per se. If all other things were equal, then resource allocation might follow the so-called priority list. (The "other things" in this case include traditional security measurements such as geographic relationships, threats, our capabilities and those of our opponents, and so on.) To allocate all resources first to "the protection of our sovereignty" without

assessing these other things would be tantamount to guarding the back door while thieves were breaking in the front door. For officers and officials charged with implementing defence policy the application of resources to the Atlantic and to Europe was a rational interpretation of Trudeau's policy based on their assessments of needs and available resources and not an attempt to subvert that policy. A major failure in defence administration in the early Trudeau period was the inability of officials to convincingly explain this rationale.

Skeptics in Control

Defence in the '70s was prepared "to indicate the main thrust of the Government's policy thinking for the years ahead." It was not surprising that the White Paper had a decidedly nationalistic bent. Both Trudeau's policy statement of 1969 and Donald Macdonald's own interests indicated that defence matters, especially regarding NATO, were to be reassessed in order to reduce defence demands on more important social welfare issues.⁴

The White Paper spelled out in more detail the rationale for withdrawal from NATO, and reflected the optimistic world view of Trudeau and others. It also introduced some ideas about defence administration that were to dog the footsteps of defence planners for the next fifteen years. The White Paper continued the trend of developing defence policy outside the Department and without military advice. The essential parts of the policy statement were either dictated by Macdonald or prepared for him by special aides. So testy did the atmosphere become in the Department and Canadian Forces Headquarters (CFHQ) that Macdonald is reported to have stated that the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and others were to accept the draft White Paper as final and not to

change a single word without "direct and personal" reference to the Minister.⁵ It was not an auspicious beginning.

The Minister's attitude towards defence administration and policy formulation was evident in the White Paper. In his view, the "changing environment" made it "a particularly difficult moment for long-range planning." This environmental problem was compounded by "increasing skepticism about the traditional roles of the Armed Forces," and "when national social and economic needs are considerable, there is substantial pressure to cut defence expenditures."⁶

The paper began traditionally by canvassing the world situation. This review was optimistic; the world, it was thought, was growing more harmonious, the nuclear stalemate offered hope for détente, the Western European nations were increasingly prosperous, and the Third World appeared ready to embrace western democratic ideals. The threat and the defence requirement were, it stood to reason, diminished. Under these conditions it was natural to search for some peacetime utility for the forces. Chief among these new responsibilities would be those related to sovereignty and independence, especially in coastal waters and the north, national development, and other socially useful tasks. NATO, NORAD, and peacekeeping commitments, however, were to continue.

The heart of the document and its most important elements were placed well to the rear and subtly arranged. Particularly important were the six small paragraphs called "Defence Budget." The section containing these paragraphs introduced or reinforced several concepts that had been developing through the years.

A decision on the appropriate size of the defence budget can be made only in the context of the Government's national priorities and in the light of its consequent programs.

It is not possible simply to state "defence requirements", and call that the defence budget. There is no obvious level for defence expenditures in Canada. ...The Canadian Government believes a judgment must be made on proposed defence activities in relation to other Government programs.(7)

Determining defence needs and requirements thus took a unique and radical turn. Because "there is no obvious level for defence expenditures," such expenditures would be based on assessments that had little to do with the traditional approach used in the past to determine these expenditures. Rather than basing defence needs on threats, tactical (and NATO) doctrines, technological changes, political balances and influences, and geopolitical analysis, the "judgement" would be predicated on the outcome of social policy decisions.

The consequences for defence administrators, and especially the military profession, were perplexing. The military's only constitutional, ethical, and professional responsibilities in the national policy process involve providing traditional assessments of defence and in the designing and employment of forces to accommodate these needs. The argument that, in fact, social needs have always determined how much is available for Canada's defence (at least in peacetime) never negated the assumption of military officers that allocations to military needs would be determined as a consequence of political negotiation and arbitration between competing needs and values. After Defence in the 70s this assumption of "fair hearing" was problematic at best. When the needs were to be determined a priori on the basis of domestic social values, military commanders and the staff structure became virtually irrelevant to the policy process.

The problem that Macdonald faced almost immediately, and that other Ministers and governments have faced since this policy was announced, inheres

in the first premise, that "there is no obvious level for defence expenditure in Canada"; this simply does not stand the test of reality. First, there is some level of forces below which the government cannot fulfil its constitutional responsibilities. The CDS under the National Defence Act (NDA) is required to provide troops to Aid the Civil Authority in the provinces irrespective of the authority of the Minister or the Prime Minister.⁸ He is required by law to respond to such requests; therefore, there is at least some minimal level of forces required to do this task. Thus there is some knowable level, irrespective of other domestic programs, that establishes a floor for defence expenditures. Second, even if one ignored purely domestic needs and responsibilities, including the government's own objective, "the protection of our sovereignty," the premise is only true up to but not beyond the point where governments accept external defence commitments. Having taken such commitments, which in the case of NATO and NORAD have implications for the security of other nations, the government is obliged to determine some obvious defence expenditure in relation to these commitments. It can be argued that an absolute or perfect answer as to those needs cannot be "objectively" determined but it is also true that a very close determination can be made based on traditional methods of making such judgements.

The real dilemma of the government need and resources was that they had established defence objectives from which they could not escape but which they did not wish to honour, at least in the way their professional advisors recommended was necessary. They attributed their difficulty to many things but mainly to a recalcitrant system of administration in DND and the CF that kept placing the dilemma before their eyes. A main thrust of the White Paper, therefore, was administrative. In particular, Macdonald intended to discipline

the management system in order to gain control of the policy options offered to the Minister. The instruments for this task were to be an enhanced "politically sensitive" Deputy Minister and a thoroughgoing Management Review.

To ensure maximum effectiveness, the Minister of National Defence has appointed a Management Review Group to examine the organization and management of the entire Department. This Group has taken over the study of ship procurement which was announced last February.

The Management Review Group is evaluating the present relationships between the military, civil and research organizations of the Department and will make recommendations to ensure there exists effective planning and control. Other areas which will be evaluated include: the relationship between Canadian Forces Headquarters and its subordinate commands; logistics and acquisition policies and associated practices in relation to time, cost and performance objectives; and the proportion of defence resources devoted to support activities.

The Group will also examine areas of inter-related responsibility with other government departments. ...It is particularly important that proper arrangements exist within the Government as a whole for the Department of National Defence to exercise its responsibility for ensuring adequate surveillance and control of Canadian territory.

The Management Review Group will report directly to the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Pennefather's Team

The Management Review Group (MRG) was appointed in June 1971. It went about its task diligently and honestly with the view that efficiency in management could overcome resources inadequacies and make the "sharp end sharper". After months of detailed work the MRG issued its findings to the Minister in June 1972. The report was promptly locked away, all reference to it was classified, and the military members were warned to make no reference to the Report in their other official duties.¹⁰

The MRG was chaired by John B. Pennefather, then Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board, I.A.C. Limited. He was assisted by five members:

John D. Campbell, Chairman of the Board (retired),
Canadian Westinghouse Ltd.

Henry de Puyjalon, Vice President, Planning and Marketing,
Telesat Canada

John D. Harbron, Foreign Affairs Analyst,
Thomson Newspapers Ltd.

Kenneth A. McLeod, Director General, Engineering-Construction,
Department of National Defence

Major-General Hugh McLachlan, Commander, Air Transport Command,
Canadian Armed Forces

These men were assisted by 31 task group workers, of whom twelve were serving officers ranked from Lieutenant Colonel to Brigadier General. In addition, special assistants were used occasionally, including amongst others Gordon Smith, reported author of the White Paper. A secretariat of sixteen individuals was headed by John Killick, from the Treasury Board.

The MRG travelled widely, visiting military and civilian establishments across Canada and in Europe. They held meetings and were briefed by senior staff officers on a wide range of management issues and projects. They conducted some unique seminars with junior officers and other ranks during which free-flowing opinions ranged over a wide variety of questions and grievances. In the end, the MRG produced nine "staff studies" and a final report for the Minister.

The staff reports are themselves worthy of detailed analysis not only because of the ideas and assumptions they contain but also because they provide an interesting reflection on some aspects of the Canadian Forces in the winter

1971-72. Because this paper will concentrate on the Final Report, only a brief description of its parts will be made in this paper.

The Staff Reports are listed alphabetically and include:

Staff Report A: Terms of Reference for Senior Management."

This report also outlines the revised function of the Defence Council, the new Defence Management Committee, and the Defence Research Board.

Staff Report B: "Strategic Studies Planning and Policy Development." In 87 papers, this report describes planning "in the context of the top decision-making framework of DND."

Staff Report C: "Command and Control: Total Resources Management in the CF."

Rather than dealing with "Command and Control" as understood in military terms, this report describes, in fact, materiel support for the CF.

Staff Report D: "Military Support Services."

This is a logistics report but its focus is entirely on peacetime needs and issues.

Staff Report E: "Research Engineering and Procurement."

Today this report still has some value to researchers because it is, in fact, a series of procurement case studies from the 1960s. Of particular interest is the ship replacement "DDH 280" project report.

Staff Report F: "An Integrated Logistic System."

Another logistics study that addresses the continuing difficulty DND had in developing a unified supply system.

Staff Report G: "Financial Information for Management Purposes."

A report recommending the development of a peacetime business-oriented financial management system.

Staff Report H: "The Personnel Function in DND."

This 110 page study is a valuable example of the difficulties the MRG members had in coming to terms with unification and management needs in war and peace.

Staff Report J: "A Study of Military Identity of the CF."

By looking at military values under stress in a modern peaceful society, the author of this study exposed many crucial problems that still are central to civil-military administration in DND today.

The Report of the Management Review Group

The Report to the Minister prepared by the MRG entitled "Management of Defence in Canada" was completed and delivered to Minister of National Defence Edgar Benson in July 1972. The analysis and recommendations of the consultants were aimed at all aspects of defence management so as to ensure that DND "has an effective management system able to respond to the changing environment."¹¹ The result was a rebuke to Hellyer's concept of unification and to those who had designed the system for the administration of defence policy in the post-Hellyer period.

The consultants organized their report around several basic themes. Beginning with a review of what they saw as a "changing context of Defence Management" the MRG identified basic inadequacies, and a need to reorient higher management. They proposed from their individual studies a new organization for defence management, the chief aspect of which was a radical

realignment of the relationships among the MND, DM, and CDS. As well, the MRG recognized a need to develop certain specialized management areas. Finally, they advised the Minister as to how he might go about making the necessary "evolutionary" changes.

When reviewing the work of the MRG, it is important to recall the background of the consultants. Most were business leaders. Successful though they undoubtedly were in their own enterprises, few of them had experience particularly relevant to defence studies. This was not an oversight on the part of the Minister who appointed them; rather it was an indication of what he thought of both the problem and its solution. It was an article of faith with the authors of the report that the correction of "management deficiencies" would "in turn correspondingly improve the Departmental end product, ...the operational readiness and effectiveness of the Canadian Forces."¹² This somewhat monocausal assessment of the undisputed lack of operational readiness of the CF in the face of an equally undisputed disparity between defence means and ends is remarkable.

The report begins by attempting to set the management of defence in context. The basic management problem is identified as being "in the main a direct result of the Department not having adapted either its basic organization or its management to the 'changing environment'." The changing environment had been ignored because of ambiguities in responsibilities of senior management; continued service, as opposed to unified, loyalties; an overly rigid hierarchy of command; and a supposed tendency on the part of the Services to isolate themselves from the rest of Canada. These problems had developed in senior managers who were said to possess a lack of "sensitivity to political attitudes." The MRG would return to this theme time and again.

In their review of the changing environment the consultants depended heavily on the findings of the 1962 Glassco Commission. They recall several aspects of that report and unfortunately repeat a serious misapprehension raised by Glassco. This was the assumption that "the principal function of the headquarters organization is one of support rather than operational command."¹³ They noted also that the DM's role was "at times too narrowly circumscribed," but they also repeated Glassco's warning that "civilians...should not be looked upon as having any duty to control or check Service activities."

The White Paper of 1964 was cited to recall the promise to give the DM greater responsibility for Departmental reviews of administration. But the MRG repeated Glassco's conclusion that the need for a strong civilian staff group to coordinate three Services for the MND had disappeared with unification in 1966. The MRG was correct, however, in stating that the integration and unification policies of 1964 and 1966 had not prompted any reassessment of the DM's duties or those of his staff.

The reduction in the size of the CF and the curtailing of its roles were also noted as important new elements in the management of defence policy. Even so, the consultants criticized the tendency on the part of defence staff to demand more than the Government intended to provide: "Erroneous though it may be there still exists a belief that the assigned roles actually require much more in the way of operational and capital expenditures than is being made available."¹⁴ Herein, of course, lay the critical and fundamental difference in approaches to calculating defence needs. The military believed that the ends to be achieved were the starting point in the policy process and that a reconciliation with the means available would inevitably come later. The MND and the MRG insisted that the military find ways to make the reconciliation in advance of an

assessment of needs. It is precisely this tension between trying to institutionalize the Minister's approach and the realities and imperatives of long-ranged defence planning that raised great frustrations in the Minister's office and the defence establishment and is chiefly responsible for the eccentric and random nature of today's policy process.

Three themes run through the MRG analysis of the history of existing deficiencies. First was the need to depend on civilians, public and private, to manage defence issues. Second was a faith that modern management techniques would significantly improve outputs and outcomes, even in circumstances of declining budgets. Finally, and most disturbingly, was the consultants' propensity to shift political decision-making and risk-taking to civil servants or, perhaps worse, to military officers.

Given these three themes, the problems and their solutions fell into a not-too-surprising pattern. Part II of the MRG Report concentrates on "Basic Inadequacies in Present Management and Organization." This portion of the Report identified symptoms of managerial problems, basic inadequacies in management and organization underlying the symptoms, and a group of questionable norms and values deeply ingrained in the defence establishment.¹⁵

There were six major symptoms, related by the MRG to the actors, the policy process, and the structure of the department. The "most obvious symptom" inhered in the "excessive demands of the existing system on the MND." They noted the various duties of the MND and his companion political responsibilities and needs. The consultants seemed to believe that the officials in the Department were diverting the Minister from "issues of fundamental and critical importance to him in the exercise of his political responsibilities." They attributed the problem to "the ambiguous position" of the DM and the CDS,

which meant that the Minister "by default [had] been forced to become the operating head as well as the political head" of DND. The lack of a systematic process to arrive at options had forced the Minister "to resort to outside sources" in order to find acceptable policies.

The second symptom was reflected in the idea that the Department "lacked political sensitivity." The Department was criticized for its slow reaction to supposed changing priorities and values in Canada, as mainly evidenced by the Department's inability to translate into meaningful terms the policies the Government outlined in the Prime Minister's statement on defence, and in the 1971 White Paper. Significantly, the consultants acknowledged such real-world changes as the 1968-70 reduction of troops in Europe, but they faulted a lack of corresponding changes in "attitudes and social values."

Poor working relationships with other departments were reported to be endemic in DND. The consultants were provided a "litany of specific and substantial criticisms" from all the important departments and agencies of government. In particular, the other departments and agencies were concerned with the quality of advice received from DND. The fault was attributed to ignorance.

The misuse, or inappropriate allocation, of resources was also noted. This symptom of mismanagement ranged through all activities, from major projects (e.g. the DDH280 ship program) to such minor issues as which conferences deserved most support.

The fifth and sixth symptoms dealt with a lack of flexibility and initiative on the part of officials. The image conveyed was that of a rigid hierarchy indisposed to new methods and bogged down by procedures and conformity.

From its categorization of the symptoms, the MRG proceeded to identify "five basic inadequacies in the management and organization of the Department," which were felt to be at the root of the symptoms:

1) failure to articulate a clear and credible rationale for the Department's existence;

2) lack of an adequate Departmental planning facility to cast Government policy into clear operational goals and management objectives;

3) lack of unity of purpose within the Department, due to a high degree of parallelism and duplication of management responsibility;

4) failure to manage human, matériel and financial resources efficiently; and

5) inadequate understanding of the jurisdiction and roles of the central agencies and other departments concerned with aspects of defence management, resulting, in some instances, "in an abdication of responsibility by those within the Department."¹⁶

The MRG were surprised and dismayed to note that the Department was not sufficiently organized to be involved in policy formulation. They felt that many problems could be resolved in the early stages of the policy process if DND officials were more active in the development of policy from the beginning. The MRG Reports confirmed the long-suspected view that DND did not make significant contributions to the Government's recent defence policy and noted especially the lack of any DND contributions to either the statement of 3 April 1969 or the 1971 White Paper.

The consultants were in some sense unfair when they criticized DND for not undertaking wider defence and security responsibilities. Noting the growing interrelationship between departments and the need to frame defence plans in a

wider context, the MRG decried the lack of inter-departmental consultation. Some, however, would note that it is the responsibility of Cabinet not DND to head this consultation.

By far the most important deficiency in the eye of the MRG was the ambiguity in responsibilities of the senior officers of the department:

We found that the basic management system and allocation of responsibilities among the four senior officers in the present organization - and among their respective staffs - is characterized by a functional duplication which, in many instances, results in similar responsibilities and activities being exercised in parallel under their separate and largely independent auspices.(17)

The essence of the problem for the MRG was the need to clarify and confirm the superior position of the DM in the Department. It was the opinion of the consultants, certainly one not shared by all analysts, that the ambiguity was traceable to a conflict between the Interpretation Act and the National Defence Act. They stated in part that the DM "is by virtue of his office the senior official of the Department and is responsible for its general administration." They went on to note that the CDS under the NDA "is also charged with the responsibility for 'the control and administration of the Canadian Forces'". These responsibilities, however, are only ambiguous if one assumes that the Department of National Defence is intended by those who passed the statutes to include the CF. Absent such an inclusion and the separate responsibilities of the two officials become clearer. However, from their determination of ambiguity the consultants saw problems being spread up and down the chain of authority.

The duality bred an operational parallelism that seemed positively wasteful (if, that is, the duality was not required). Worse, according to the MRG, the DM and CDS caused problems for the Minister. In the MRG's view, the Minister's

"first and foremost need" was for a staff that would help him make best use of his time -- time that was needed both for Departmental and political duties. For the MRG, reality indicated that departments need "operating heads" who can "act on the Minister's behalf in resolving the majority of issues of both substance and administration that arise possibly in conflicting form from within the Department." In DND no "operating head" was seen to exist.

Poor resource management was attributable to organization anomalies, as well as to personalities. With a parallel organization (DND-CF), no overall departmental view could be maintained. In addition, there was a tendency for the number of senior officials and general officers to increase despite the decrease in the size of the forces. It appeared to the consultants that this was occasioned more by "tradition or practice as distinct from functional need" and "may have been a desire within the Forces to have officers of ranks equal to those of officers from other countries with whom they meet." No figures or other evidence were offered to support these rather serious allegations. The effect, in any case, of this bureaucratic burgeoning was to encourage centralization of decision-making and to slow the entire process, as rank searched for like rank to whom it could pass orders.

Finally, to be even-handed, the consultants openly criticized other departments and agencies for encumbering procedures relating to DND. They cited ambiguities in jurisdictions, terms of reference, procurement, and so on. The use of military resources for civilian or para-military activities raised problems of cost recovery and authority. Clearly, the problems in DND management were not all home grown.

The norms and values that "adversely affect the quality of Canada's defence management" usually were attributed to military as opposed to civilian

ways of doing things. The MRG questioned, for instance, the propriety of allowing the operational classifications of the Forces to dominate the administrative and technical services:

[O]perational (i.e. land, sea and air) and functional loyalties are often maintained at the expense of loyalty to the organization as a whole;...and the firmly held belief that operationally experienced military officers without appropriate technical knowledge or experience are competent to manage in specialist fields, and, therefore, to be employed intermittently for career development purposes in what are, by nature, highly technical and specialized administrative tasks, goes counter to the professional needs and necessary continuity in such appointments.(18)

At times the consultants demonstrated annoyance at the enduring aspect of pre-unification ways: "the persistent use of Naval ranks, to this day, was widely represented to us as a fundamental irritant," though it was never clear exactly who was irritated. They cited this tendency as evidence of a "lack of primary identification with a commitment to the Department," an observation that is hardly surprising, given that no sailor ever enrolled in the Department.

More serious was the consultants' challenge to command responsibility. "The myth that a few most senior officers can be held personally accountable lacks credibility or acceptance in today's milieu." The MRG dismissed command responsibility, which they regarded only as an "acceptable myth in terms of Canadian constitutional tradition," because no incidents of serious corrective action had ever been taken against assumed military offenders. But even if officers were not being called to account for errors, this hardly constitutes a credible reason to give up the basis for all discipline in military forces, in peace or war. The consultants failed to provide an alternate answer as to where responsibility should rest if it did not rest with commanders, at all levels, as custom, developed from the nature of war, and the law required.

The "Needed Reorientation of Higher Management" is the title of the third and most important section of the MRG report. This section drew together the ideas sketched in the first sections and set the rationale for the recommended organization.

It began by attacking as inappropriate the attitudes and concepts that had guided defence managers up to 1972. The MRG called for a "fundamental and comprehensive reorientation of higher management," especially as it concerned the principal actors. The rationale for the consolidation of the Department into a single entity is important:

The Management Review Group concluded that the first step toward a better, more effective and efficient defence establishment must be its restructuring as a single entity. Before reaching a specific conclusion as to form, we considered three possible philosophies as follows:

- the civil authority would equip, manage, control and maintain the Armed Force. The Force would be given the minimum of administrative apparatus necessary to the performance of its operational responsibilities;
- the Force would be equipped to discharge all Departmental administrative as well as operational responsibilities, while the civil authority would retain control through financial and policy limitations; or
- the civil authority and the Force would each have a more or less complete array of administrative services, and, in addition, the Force would have its operational responsibilities.

The Management Review Group unanimously agreed that a management structure based on the first of these alternatives is the most appropriate and most effective for Canada and so recommends.(19)

Herein lay the main concepts and confusions:

- a) Civilian authority was confused with Parliamentary authority, something fundamentally distinct and applicable to public servants as well as soldiers;
- b) The command of field forces was separated from responsibility for their logistic support;

c) The Deputy Minister was elevated above all others to a position where he would exercise for the MND all his separate responsibilities under various statutes; and,

d) Civilian and military staff officers were considered to be interchangeable, and as such able to be assigned to any "appropriate position".

The consultants built a radical structure on this conceptual framework--a framework that did not once mention war or field operations. Nevertheless, they conceded that "keeping the sharp end sharp is the sole reason for the existence of the rest of the Department." However, "we are convinced" that the "very existence and function of any administrative apparatus within the Forces' own structure other than for command and control....tends to dilute this emphasis!" They concluded, therefore, that in order to enhance operational units they should "remove from direct military management as much of the administrative support apparatus as is realistically possible." All such support was to be placed under Assistant Deputy Ministers in Ottawa. This retrogression to pre-Crimean support concepts was advanced in part because the maintenance of a "traditional" self-sufficient force "does not take account of current social and economic developments in Canada and of the resources and services now readily available [for war?] in the private sector."²⁰

With astonishing volte-face the MRG in its next set of recommendations encouraged and demanded the delegation of more authority and responsibility to field commanders. The consultants flay the centralized managers in Ottawa for layered bureaucracies, endless reviews, and a reduction in the sense of responsibility of line managers. Their good idea of delegating authority to those on the line "in the best position to exercise good judgement" is incompatible, to

say the least, with their curious recommendations that would effectively strip such authorities of resources commensurate with their responsibilities.

The recommended "Organization for the Higher Management of Defence" began with a brave attempt to eliminate the classic policy-administration dichotomy that had been observed in the MND, CDS, DM relationship. It would do this through the device of an "Office of the Minister that would fuse the present dichotomy between political responsibility vested in the Minister's office with an enhanced administration and control responsibility now vested (with limitations) in the DM." This office--the ultimate point of Departmental authority--was intended to twin the political staff of the Minister with the DM's staff, all operating routinely under the direction of the DM.

There was absolutely no doubt in the minds of the MRG that the DM was the superior official in the Department. In the Office of the Minister, the DM would make decisions "in the name of the Minister, who assumes responsibility for them." All officials reporting to the Office of the Minister "would be fully responsive to the directions given by the DM." Officials in this sense are taken to mean everyone military and civilian coming under the MND. The unification of the two offices was to be so complete that reference to the DM's office was to cease to have validity.

In turning their attention to the CDS the MRG was no less forthright. The CDS was to be subordinated to the DM. The Minister, it was assumed, would expect the CDS to bring directly to the Minister advice concerning "military issues" when "in his judgement the military capability of the country may be endangered or when emerging or actual circumstances may require a military response." These were not likely to be daily occurrences. So as not to be misunderstood, the MRG emphasized that "in the normal course of events"

policy should be established and activities undertaken "in concert by the CDS and the ADMs under the coordination and direction of the DM."²¹

The MRG correctly identified the need to amend the NDA to accomplish these reforms. But the consequences of these amendments, in terms of constitutional and federal-provincial niceties and the political firestorms they would likely have ignited, may have escaped the notice of the consultants; they presumably were not lost on the politicians and their Public Service advisors.

The CDS, to be renamed the Chief of the Defence Force (raising perhaps constitutional problems with the Queen of Canada who is the Commander-in-Chief), was kept separate from the Office of the Minister for four basic reasons. First, including the CDS in the Office of the Minister would only have continued the apparent ambiguity by not clearly separating the MND, DM and the CDS. Secondly, the distinct Office of the Minister was thought to enhance the delegation of authority to the Forces, i.e. by enhancing the authority of the DM over the CDS. Thirdly, "of key importance" was the need to illustrate the new distinction in the CDS role as having only control of operations "rather than involvement in the more general political and administrative direction of defence policy." Finally, the consultants acknowledged the need to enhance the "apolitical" nature of the CDS's position. This could only be credibly accomplished if the CDS were outside the decidedly political Office of the Minister.

The MRG thought to complete its institution of a functional concept over a command concept of organization within the CF, and the separation of the CDS from control of the administration of the CF, by interposing functional Assistant Deputy Ministers between him and his field commanders. This, too, would require significant amendments to the NDA:

Further, in order to preserve the operational integrity of the Canadian Armed Forces in carrying out its responsibilities and to ensure that the Chief of the Defence Forces can be held fully accountable to the Office of the Minister, we also recommend a clarification, by Order-in-Council, of the present requirement under the provisions of the National Defence Act so that, subject to directions from the Governor-in-Council, all orders and instructions to the Canadian Armed Forces regarding operational matters be issued by or through his office. At the same time such clarification should allow the Assistant Deputy Ministers with functional responsibilities to provide instructions and guidance directly to operational entities of the Canadian Armed Forces as may be necessary in their specialized areas of management.(22)

While again professing not to be trying to reduce the status of the CDS, the MRG recommended that all responsibilities for strategic planning, personnel policy, financial services, engineering, and procurement -- "presently carried out by senior staff officers" -- be consolidated under four ADMs. These ADMs "will usually be filled by civilians." They recommend, however, that each branch be staffed by both military and civilian officers and that the ADMs be given as a token "second-in-command" (a curious term, since civilians can command nothing under the law) a military officer to lend "impetus and stature" to the concept.

This whole structure was to report to a new set of management committees. The Defence Council was considered too ineffective and overburdened to be of any use to the Minister. (Hellyer had considered it under-burdened, but then he intended the MND to be the "operating head" of DND.) It was to be reshaped into a "small highly confidential advisory or briefing forum for the exchange of views, opinions, and information between the Minister and certain senior officials." It was not to become a decision-taking body. The Defence Council would include the MND, DM, CDS, Chief of Staff to the CDS (a new office), a scientific advisor, and the ADM for Strategic Policy and Plans.

Real power in the Department was to be further consolidated in the hands of the DM by the establishment of a Management Committee to be composed of

the DM, CDS, his Chief of Staff, and the four ADMs. This committee was "to serve as the major instrument of the DM." Like the Defence Council, the Management Committee was not to be considered a decision-making body. Rather, it was intended "primarily to provide the DM with the information and advice he requires for making decisions on behalf of the Minister." In this way the Committee was seen to be a major step in "screening issues" before they were referred to the Minister and "in reducing demands on the Minister's time." The system had the potential of rendering the Minister effectively unemployed.

The remainder of the recommended organization held no real surprises. There were to be essentially functional organizations. The officials reporting to the Office of the Minister (the DM) included the CDS, the four ADMs, and a Chief of Evaluation Services, considered by the MRG to be "absolutely essential." Interestingly the recommended candidate for this position was to have a comprehensive knowledge of both the substance of defence policy and problems relating to its management, as well as of the wider discipline of organizational behaviour and management being developed in other departments of Government and in the private sector. To guard against "possible conflicts of interest and loyalties," the consultants recommended against the appointment of a serving officer of the Forces or a civilian official of the Department.

Of the four ADMs, the mooted Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy and Plans was considered by far to be the most important. His position was intended to bond the "fragmented state of strategic studies and planning in Canada's defence establishment."

...the challenge is to provide those at the highest levels of management within the Department and the Government with an appropriate facility to utilize the full potential of strategic studies and planning in the formulation of defence policy.(23)

The MRG concept of strategic studies was very broad. It included all threats that might fall under a heading of "national security" rather than a more limited "national defence." In their view the department should be the centre for all threat assessments, not just military ones. The synonymous use of the terms national defence and national security is a characteristic of Canadian defence administration. Here again it may have caused the consultants to overstep the boundaries of DND's field of interest. Notwithstanding that they recognized a valid public policy need, does not the responsibility to coordinate "national security in the broadest sense" properly belong to Cabinet, or at least to an interdepartmental national security council directly responsible to Cabinet?

The three remaining branches, one each for finance, personnel, and research, engineering and procurement, were intended to be concerned, as their titles imply, with specific managerial functions.

Personnel management under the MRG concepts was to be totally reoriented in order to put more emphasis on people and to ensure appropriate delegation of authority. Noting that "military identity is becoming blurred" and that traditional values were being questioned, the MRG recommended that managers be reminded that "personnel policies are one of the major vehicles through which basic values, attitudes, and feelings find sanction and expression."

To overcome the process that had become "uncoordinated, insufficient and poorly adapted to the need of the Department," the MRG made specific corrective recommendations. A new ADM Personnel Policy was to be organized and to function "under the auspices of the CDS." At the same time the new ADM was to remain "responsible to the Office of the Minister" for the development of personnel policies for the whole department, including both

military and civilian members. This perhaps unintentional confusion aside, the recommendations were evidently designed to ensure that "policy" would be set in Ottawa but that the administration of people would be executed by managers in the field. This recommendation was made in response to an observation that "the usual roles of immediate supervisors in the management of people have been pre-empted by the emphasis on centralized personnel services."²⁴

Logistics planning and coordination problems in the Department stem, in the view of the MRG, from problems of inter-departmental and internal coordination, jurisdiction, accountability, and the management of financial and technological risk. Recommendations intended by the MRG to solve the problems included the development of an ADM Research Engineering and Procurement, (Materiel), whose responsibilities would be on the procurement and development end of the logistics spectrum, reflecting the MRG's tendency to emphasize the central management issues and to ignore practical operational considerations.

Another typical recommendation of the MRG was the one intended to centralize all defence-procurement activities in DND, in this case at the expense of the Department of Supply and Services (DSS). Although common items of supply would continue to be procured for DND by DSS, everything apart from soap and soup perhaps would be transferred to DND. The new ADM (Material) would become the focal point for Departmental management incorporating "the most complex" business of DND. The procurement and private business emphasis of the ADM's responsibilities indicated to the consultants that the new office must be filled by "a civilian with an extensive background and proven capabilities in the management of engineering and procurement - preferably in industry."

To overcome the obvious gap in their recommendations pertaining to consumer or field logistics, the MRG fell back on their concept of a logistics-operations split. Although they found "that the Canadian Armed Forces are generally capable of executing operations effectively," a singular judgement at the time, they were critical of resource allocation and utilization. "The major challenge in terms of management relating to command and control within the Forces is the need for headquarters and commands to effectively manage their total assigned resources....the capability of the Forces has been seriously diminished by deficiencies of headquarters and commands in this respect."²⁵ The consultants were at a loss to explain how one was to ensure that the right resources in the correct amounts were to be at the right place on time. They might have found comfort if they had been aware that this fundamental military difficulty, which at times also taxed such notables as Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon, Rommel, and Patton, inter alios, was amenable to solutions derived from military concepts of logistics.

In any case, the solution, in their view, to the "unresponsive" nature of the supply system lay in "the obvious need to reorient the supply system and purchasing arrangements to make them more responsive to operational needs." Notwithstanding their earlier recommendations to organize a logistics branch that was intended not to address the needs of "sharp end" activities, the MRG believed that centralized administration would ensure that the "Department will have a common output and, therefore, be responsive to operational requirements." The link between organization and output does not strike me as being all that obvious. "Common output" can only come, unless one is inordinately lucky, from common goals. Common goals do not necessarily derive from a centralized organization, especially when the field units have distinctly

different requirements. Indeed, the recommendations, while tending to concentrate authority in the hands of the DM, also tended to drive a serious wedge between the policy planners and the field commanders.²⁶

The MRG, in the section of the Report dealing with "Implementing Changes in Defence Management," noted that their recommendations "in toto constitute a recommendation for a fundamental and comprehensive adjustment of defence management." They were correct in every sense. The changes in concepts for administering defence policy that followed -- albeit not always consistently -- from the MRG Report were in most regards more important than either the 1964 integration of the headquarters or the 1966 unification of the Forces. Under the MRG review a fundamental transfer of power did take place in DND. Entirely new concepts, long in incubation, at last came into being. The new systems that attended the appearance of these concepts radically altered and perhaps curtailed Parliamentary control of Canadian military activities and obscured operational readiness and command responsibilities.

The MRG consultants did not intend this to happen. They advised an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary implementation of their ideas. They expected "ministerial leadership"; indeed it was considered "essential" to any future success. They asked for widespread consideration of their review. "We can think of no clearer case for this (the need for communications) than the need to fully and frankly inform all those in the Department of the findings and recommendations of the Management Review Group" and "the specific intentions as to the extent to which the recommendations will be implemented."²⁷

Finally, the MRG emphasized that the successful implementation of their recommendations could not be effected without quickly changing existing legislation.

...to redefine more explicitly both the title and responsibilities of the proposed Chief of the Defence Forces and the composition and responsibilities of the Defence Research Board; clarification by Order-in-Council of the channels for communicating functional directives to the Canadian Armed Forces.(28)

The main problem to be resolved concerned the ambiguity of personal responsibilities. The issue could be resolved by changing the law to reflect new responsibilities, as indeed was recommended. But it could also be resolved by strongly endorsing and making obvious the responsibilities spelt out in law as it existed. To do neither, or to fall between the stools, would be the most inappropriate response, for this would merely institutionalize ambiguity. Characteristically, perhaps, the "defective" management system chose the latter response.

Aftermath

By the time the MRG Report was completed in July 1972, Donald Macdonald had left DND and had been replaced by Edgar Benson, who was regarded as a caretaker MND. Just two months after assuming his appointment as Minister, and prior to the issuance of the MRG Report, Benson in fact began to act to make DND and the CF a single entity in deed, if not in law. Under the impact of an "interim report," the civilian and military elements of DND and CFHQ were integrated into a new National Defence Headquarters. Civilian ADMs were appointed and the Defence Management Committee headed by the DM was formed. The Minister unveiled the new NDHQ organization to the Parliamentary Subcommittee on External Affairs and National Defence (SCEAND) on 28 March 1972, introducing changes in roles, functions, reporting channels, and responsibilities unlike anything seen in Canada since the 1947 development of a unified defence department.

Trouble followed immediately, especially as Benson tried to explain to skeptical Parliamentary Defence Sub-Committee members the emerging relationship between the DM and the CDS. In one exchange a Progressive Conservative Committee member addressed the organization chart used during Benson's presentation, complaining that the relationships between the MND, CDS, and DM, had not been explained as they appeared on the chart.

Mr. Benson: -- the Minister of National Defence is at the top of the department; the Deputy Minister and the Chief of the Defence Staff are in equal positions as far as access to the minister is concerned.

Mr. Forrestall: Through the deputy minister?

Mr. Benson: No, not through the deputy minister. Directly. Those two perhaps could be turned on end better, but it prints better this way

In April the Minister sent Jack Arnell, Special Assistant to the DM, to explain the relationship once again:

Dr. Arnell: The real relationship between the Deputy and the Chief, if you want to probe it in law, is one that I am sure lawyers would enjoy discussing to their hearts' content. A Deputy Minister's responsibilities stems from the Interpretation Act, which in fact gives the Deputy Minister authority to do everything that a Minister can do in his role as head of a department, not in his role as a cabinet minister, and therefore a Deputy is the alter ego of the Minister who is administering.

In the case of the National Defence Act, some very specific responsibilities are assigned to both the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Chairman of the Defence Research Board. Until such time as that act is changed or some other statutory process takes place, those are the stated responsibilities. One can worry about the relationships, but they are really as they are written in the law.(29)

One may assume that Arnell's lighthearted remarks about the law was only meant to enliven the SCEAND meeting. More to the point, perhaps, was his admission that the reorganization had no basis in law "until such time as the Act is changed." Yet he went on to suggest that the Minister had in some

respects disregarded the NDA by failing to acknowledge that the CDS was in fact a separate entity responsible for the "control and administration" of the Canadian Forces. It is important to note that the NDA has never been amended to reflect the organization now described and in operation in DND.

In any event the new structure was well established by the time Benson was replaced in late 1972 by James Richardson. The changes had been made and the report locked away. The only significant recommendation of the MRG that had not been acted upon was the one directed at dismembering the Defence Research Board. The decision was made, however, in 1974. No move was made to delegate authority to commanders or to make substantial changes to logistical or personnel policies exposed by the MRG. Instead the changes in Ministers and the CDS, plus the attitude towards DND then prevalent in the Government, encouraged the bureaucracy to consolidate its control over the defence policy process.

It is a major worry that the officials of the Department, including Benson, did not seek to amend the NDA in accordance with the changes they instituted in the Department. Unlike Paul Hellyer, who had toughed out such amendments to the law, the officials in 1972 avoided this difficult experience. The irony is that through all the efforts over so many years to remove the so-called "ambiguity" in the CDS-DM relationship, the reorganization only served to create ambiguity where none had really existed before the law.

In response to the question, "During your time as Minister was the CDS superior to, equal to, or subordinate to the DM?," a MND who held office after 1972 replied: "I didn't know and I couldn't find out." The answer speaks volumes about the politics of defence administration. In such circumstances one might

well be excused for questioning the verity of Parliamentary control of the defence establishment in Canada.

Until 1972 the administration of defence policy in Canada was considered to have two aspects; that is, it was viewed as a command problem to be addressed by military concepts, and as a public administration problem amenable to theories of public management. Two distinct power centres, the CDS and the DM, approached these problems with organizations and processes particular to their aspects of the problem. In this context it was a political responsibility to reconcile differences and risks. After 1972, the administration of defence policy became defined as a managerial problem alone, with the expectation that better management practices could make the "sharp end sharper." This new definition of the defence problem promoted managerial skills over command experience and allowed officials to structure DND and the CF as though they were a single entity.

Even if DND and the CF were better managed today than in the past--and that assertion is problematical at best--it is evident that problems of war planning, command, operational doctrine and systems are not being adequately considered. Public administration and managerial concerns are crowding out these and other issues and problems that are inherent to the administration of defence policy. This failure can only be redressed by promoting a comprehensive view of the entire spectrum of problems that face defence administrators and by developing an organization, a policy process, and a set of clearly defined policy actors to take responsibility for them.

Notes

- ¹Canada Press Release, Office of the Prime Minister, 3 April 1969, Ottawa.
- ²J.C. Arnell, and J. F. Anderson, "Program Management in the Department of National Defence," Canadian Defence Quarterly (Autumn 1971):31-33 (emphasis added).
- ³Report to the Minister on the Management of Defence in Canada, Management Review Group, DND, Ottawa, July 1972, p. 28. (Hereafter cited MRG). Background to the Report includes nine Staff Reports. The documents were "declassified" 23 March 1984. See also Thordarson, Trudeau and Foreign Policy (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 157-62.
- ⁴Paul Martin, A Very Public Life, Vol.II, (Toronto: Bruce Deneau, 1985), p. 460. Also see Thordarson, Trudeau and Foreign Policy, p. 92.
- ⁵Interview, Ottawa, January 1986.
- ⁶Canada, Defence in the '70s, White Paper on Defence. DND, Ottawa, August 1971, Introduction.
- ⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 41-42 (emphasis added).
- ⁸NDA Articles 235 and 236.
- ⁹Defence in the '70s, pp. 42-43.
- ¹⁰Interviews, Kingston, April 1986.
- ¹¹MRG, p. 1.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, p. 119.
- ¹³Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 18 July 1962), vol. 4, Report 20, pp. 65-66.
- ¹⁴MRG, p. 13.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 17-42.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 31.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 42.
- ¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 48.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 52. Also, for an historical explanation of the difficulties and disasters the British Army suffered under this concept and the long, expensive, and bloody education that led to its demise, readers may be interested in

consultating John Sweetman, War and Administration: The Significance of the Crimean War for the British Army (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1984).

²¹MRG, p. 61. So strongly did the MRG feel about this point that while trying to maintain that they did not intend to compromise the status of the CDS they repeated this recommendation on p. 66.

²²Ibid., p. 66. See also NDA Article 18.2.

²³Ibid., pp. 79-80.

²⁴Ibid., p. 94. See also, Canada, Military Manpower Planning 1985 (Ottawa: Auditor General of Canada, 1985).

²⁵MRG, p. 103.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 104-5.

²⁷Ibid., p. 114.

²⁸Ibid., p. 117. The reader might note that it was indicative of changing concepts that the MRG recommended that the NDA be revised to "redefine" the position of the CDS. All earlier recommendations for clarification of the NDA had been aimed at "redefining" the role of the DM.

²⁹SCEAND, 18 April 1972, 18:4:1972 (emphasis added).