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From the Editor

Before introducing the written submissions in this edition, I must first offer thanks to a few important people who have made my transition to the position of Chair, Security Studies (and concomitantly, Editor of SITREP) possible, and relatively painless.

First, I must recognize the dedication, commitment and professionalism of Colonel Chris Corrigan CD, MA (Ret’d) as the outgoing Chair and Editor. Chris, as you are aware, opted to stand down in August following 12 years in those two roles. As such, he was personally responsible for numerous editions of SITREP and, through his efforts, maintained a high profile for the RCMI in various national and international organizations in order to ensure a steady flow of authors eager to have their works published in SITREP. In addition, he led a small team of dedicated volunteers last April and launched a very successful RCMI conference—the first one in our new home. Chris, from everyone at the RCMI, we thank you.

Next, I would be remiss if I did not thank Eric Morse. Eric is the Vice Chair of Security Studies and Chief of Publications for the RCMI. He is ever-present at virtually all RCMI functions, and with camera at the ready, captures excellent photos and video footage at security studies events, social gatherings, speaker’s dinners and other key moments in the life of the RCMI. He single-handedly publishes the very popular Member News, and is instrumental in the design, layout and publication of SITREP. In the interregnum between Chris and myself, Eric published a well-received edition of SITREP and, in anticipation of the appointment of a new Editor, gathered and prepared material and generated author contacts in order to allow for a smooth continuation of operations. I look forward to working with Eric, and to his wise counsel.

Finally, I must thank the RCMI Executive for their confidence in selecting me for this important role. I am aware of the fact that several very well qualified candidates put their names forward, and this level of interest in the position is, I think, a testament to the importance of security studies to the RCMI, and to the larger defence and security community in Canada. While I have been a member of the RCMI for many years, some readers may be unaware of my background.

Briefly, I retired from the Canadian Army in June of this year following 30 years of service in the reserve and regular forces. My military career provided me the opportunity and privilege to serve in leadership, staff and professional military education roles in Canada and internationally, including Afghanistan in 2008. As a “life-long learner” I acquired (over many years) a Bachelor of Arts in political science from York University, a Master of Arts in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada and a Doctorate in Political Science from the National University of Ireland. My final posting in uniform was at the Canadian Forces College as military faculty in the Department of Academics wherein I lectured to, and mentored students in, the Joint Command and Staff and National Security Programs. With respect to my experience at the RCMI, I served on the Board for approximately 10 years, including two as Second Vice President. I was previously the Chair of the Defence and Security Studies Committee (more to follow on this point shortly) and, among other activities, was Chair of the then Long Range Planning Committee and President of the Outdoors Club.

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Core Challenge for the Defence Policy Review: Creating the Right Balance

by Charles Davies

If the present defence policy review accomplishes nothing else, it must correct the serious imbalance in the apportionment of the defence budget to the many elements needed to create and sustain defence capabilities. Fundamentally, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer and others have highlighted, Canada has too much force structure for the amount of funding the government is prepared to allocate to defence. However, this only partly describes the problem. As a direct consequence of the mismatch between funding and structure, National Defence is forced to spend too high a proportion of its budget on personnel costs, and too little on other essential elements that go into the creation and maintenance of defence capability including equipment, infrastructure, training, readiness, and support.

The impact of this is severe and insidious. Severe, in that the force becomes “hollow”—it may look good from the outside but is incapable of doing the job it was designed for due to shortfalls in training, poor equipment condition, shortages of critical supplies and/or many other below-the-surface deficiencies. Insidious, given that these deficiencies may manifest themselves only gradually over time. It is often difficult to pin down the exact point in time when a given capability becomes ineffective.

Even when that point may have been reached or passed, the impact may not seem to matter to some. If there is no pressing need to commit the force to high-intensity combat operations, then one might conclude that the consequences of hollowing out are acceptable. This would be highly irresponsible, wasteful, and short-sighted. Canadian governments cannot predict with any certainty what national security responses may be needed tomorrow, let alone next year, or in five years’ time. As we learned in Afghanistan, fixing deficiencies in defence capabilities takes time, and can be expensive in both financial and human terms.

No country can afford to maintain iron-clad protection against every possible eventuality, but in the Defence Policy Review (DPR), the government needs to take a well-considered and disciplined approach to assessing global and domestic risks to the nation’s security and other interests, now and in the coming five to ten years or more, and allocate the resources necessary for their mitigation and management. This includes determining not only the overall level of defence spending and the military capabilities to be created, maintained, or divested,
but also ensuring the appropriate apportionment of resources to each of the elements that make up those capabilities.

This is a difficult challenge for anyone, but the government has enormously complicated the exercise by making commitments to maintain the previous government's defence spending plans for future years, invest in force improvements to make it more agile and better equipped, maintain the current force size, and retain current base infrastructure. These commitments are fundamentally self-contradictory. The Canadian Armed Forces simply can't be made more agile and better equipped, and keep its current size and infrastructure footprint, all within the current budget plan. Something has to give. As the Parliamentary Budget Officer concluded, either the budget has to go up, or the force structure has to go down, or some combination of the two.

To illustrate the magnitude of the challenge, consider a very simple, rough measure: total annual defence spending per Regular Force member. This provides an aggregate approximation of spending on defence R&D, equipment modernization and maintenance, infrastructure, training, readiness and support using Regular Force size as a per capita denominator. This is clearly an imprecise indicator as naval, land, and air forces, and regular and reserve forces, all have different cost characteristics. However, it does provide a reasonable “big picture” calculation that can be used for comparison purposes.

As I have noted elsewhere, Canada currently spends just under $295,000.00 per Regular Force member. Australia spends the equivalent of $522,000 Canadian dollars. The UK and the US spend a little more than that. We are clearly far out of alignment with key allies and partners with whom we need to be capable of closely interoperating, and this will have increasing consequences the longer the situation is allowed to persist.

To be fair, these numbers are partly mitigated by differences in force structures among the four nations, and this brings us to another area where balance is an issue the Canadian government needs to carefully consider. Naval and air forces are highly capital-intensive, requiring proportionally large investments in capital equipment and infrastructure, and proportionally less in personnel costs, compared to land forces, special operations forces, support organizations and others. Canada's quite low spending per Regular Force member in part reflects the lower proportion of its personnel assigned to naval and air forces – 31.5 percent compared to 48.1 percent for Australia, 45 percent for the UK, and 45.5 percent for the US. This by no means explains all the difference, but it is a factor that has to be acknowledged.

This begs another question, however. Does Canada, with no credible conventional land threat and no legacy colonial responsibilities, but very substantial maritime and air approaches to police and defend, have the proportions right? France's naval and air forces, for example, also make up a relatively low proportion of its military strength, at 38.3 percent, but that country is in a very different geostrategic position from Canada and has substantial post-colonial commitments. It needs proportionally much larger land forces than naval and air.

It very much pains this proud former Canadian Army officer to conclude that this country very probably does not have the right balance. The Canadian Armed Forces have only a few "no-fail" missions. Disaster response at home and, in a supporting role, domestic security are two of them, but these will rarely require significant numbers of well-equipped and highly trained combat-capable forces. They need flexible, well-organized and disciplined troops in adequate numbers, and the means to get them to where they are needed quickly. Two missions that do need well-equipped combat-capable forces are protection of our maritime (surface and sub-surface) and air approaches, and it is a national imperative that we do these tasks well enough to hold the confidence of both ourselves and our US continental defence partners. Most other Canadian military capabilities have to be considered optional, or at least scalable to the level of national ambition. In the context of a pretty clear multi-party political consensus on limiting defence spending to about 1 percent of GDP, this means that appetites for maintaining and employing military forces also have to be limited and governments have to pay close attention to priorities. Capabilities needed to do the nation's "no-fail" missions must be adequately resourced first. What's left is what's available to resource expeditionary capabilities for tasks like international peace operations.

To conclude, it is within this context of hard realities that the DPR is taking place. The outcome of the process needs to be a policy that achieves balance in several key areas: overall force structure and budget; allocation of resources among the many elements that make up defence capabilities; and defining the right force structure for the nation's needs. Over many years, successive governments have created serious imbalances by insisting on maintaining a particular force size and composition but, for the most part, declining to fund it adequately. This has forced National Defence to underfund non-personnel elements of capability, hoping to correct the resulting problems in better times, such as was done during the temporary funding boost provided during the Afghanistan mission.

Senior defence planners and leaders know that this is no way to run a military institution, and it is time that governments realize it as well. The present government has made fact-based, evidence-based decision-making a central tenet of its political approach to the nation's business, and the defence policy review is a good place to “walk that talk” by bringing proper balance back into defence resources planning, allocation, and management.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or its members.
Since 1954, the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA) has worked to bring together a wide variety of members including diplomats, military personnel, academics, politicians, young professionals and students, with the common objective of working towards furthering the goals and values of the North Atlantic Treaty. Through research, training, education opportunities, analyses and dialogue, the ATA strives to promote and strengthen the transatlantic alliance with its members across a variety of avenues and events. The annual General Assembly of the ATA is one event in particular which gives participants the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about issues, world events and political dynamics which have an impact on the interests and goals of the Association, and its members on both sides of the Atlantic. This year’s General Assembly, hosted by the NATO Association of Canada in Toronto, Ontario, did precisely this.

The NATO Association of Canada welcomed participants from over 20 countries to Toronto on October 11 and 12, 2016, to gather for two days of thought-provoking panels, keynotes, and discussion. Beginning with opening speeches and remarks on October 11, keynote addresses raised some common themes and issues, all of which were discussed extensively over the course of the conference. Participants were welcomed by the NATO Association of Canada’s president, Mrs. Julie Lindhout, who introduced the Honourable Hugh Segal, Chairman of the NATO Association of Canada. Mr. Segal expressed his appreciation for a diverse group of participants, and challenged the audience to use the conference as an opportunity to both reflect on the importance of the Transatlantic Alliance, and consider the challenges that the Alliance faces today in a dynamic and uncertain international security landscape.

Following Mr. Segal’s opening remarks, Professor Fabrizio Luciollli, President of the Atlantic Treaty Association, addressed participants. Prof. Luciollli echoed several of Mr. Segal’s remarks, and stressed the importance of reflection and collective efforts in an international security environment characterized by increasingly complex actors, interconnected threats, and persistent challenges. Prof. Luciollli also encouraged conference participants to consider the unique nature of the hybrid threats that challenge international security currently, and how the Alliance might respond to these threats. Finally, Prof. Luciollli discussed the importance of the General Assembly. He highlighted the annual event as a critical opportunity for members of the Euro-Atlantic community to come together to foster cooperative relations, discuss critical policy decisions, and work towards cohesive responses to today’s complex security challenges. Following welcome speeches, keynote addresses were given by three distinguished guests who provided their own reflections on the current state of international security and the transatlantic community’s most pressing challenges.

The Hon. Stéphane Dion, Minister of Global Affairs for Canada, spoke to the audience about Canada’s continued involvement in Alliance activities overseas, and reiterated the importance of the General Assembly as an annual opportunity for reflection and collaboration in addressing present challenges and threats to international security.

John Heffern, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, delivered a keynote address that echoed similar themes to that of Mr. Dion. He highlighted the persistent need for greater collaboration and cohesive planning between parties on both sides of the Atlantic when addressing the realities of an evolving international security environment. Mr. Heffern also identified hybrid threats and the increasingly fragile political situation unfolding across the Middle East region as challenges that would continue to demand careful consideration, and the dedicated hard work of those in positions of leadership during this time.

James Appathurai, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security at NATO, addressed participants on behalf of NATO headquarters in Brussels. He also expressed his appreciation for everyone who had travelled from both sides of the Atlantic to participate in the General Assembly, and encouraged participants to make the most of the event by connecting with attendees from diverse roles and involvements in international security. He highlighted the value of gaining different perspectives from other participants, and challenged the audience to have meaningful, constructive and important dialogue about the pressing issues of international security that will continue to have an impact on the transatlantic community in the future.

Following the keynote addresses, presentations began with the first of four panel-style discussions covering a range of subject matter. Panel one, entitled “Setting The Scene”, was particularly valuable to all conference participants as a primer for topics and subject matter that would be addressed in greater detail during later panels. Moderated by Lieutenant General (Ret’d) Michel Maisonneuve, Academic Director at the Collège Militaire Royal de St-Jean, the panel gave an excellent overview of the types of challenges and threats which will become increasingly relevant to the transatlantic community. Panelists Dr. Christian Leuprecht from the De-

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or its members.
Looking for a sweet peacekeeping spot in Africa? Don’t do it.

by Lew MacKenzie

In the beginning there was UN peacekeeping. Well, not really, but in 1948 the first UN observer mission was deployed to monitor the fragile ceasefire zone between India and Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and shortly thereafter in 1949, a similar mission deployed to assist the UN mediator supervising the truce in Palestine. As an aside, and that’s another story, 66 years later both missions are still there, and the death toll in both mission areas has been high. Go figure.

Shortly thereafter, on the heels of the 1956 Suez crisis, a leading Canadian myth and our love affair with UN peacekeeping was born.

In 1956, Egypt’s President, G. A. Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal (which happened to transit his country), thereby removing its control from the British and the French. It looked as if the price of gas was going to escalate to eight cents a litre from five cents, and destroy the world’s economy. As a result, Israel invaded Egypt by land, and the British and French arrived by parachute to take back control of the Canal. Russia and the US, on opposite sides of the crisis, were highly upset. The situation was a “bit sticky” as two of the protagonists, and two of their supporters, were members of the Security Council’s Permanent Five, which removed the Security Council from the debate over what to do.

Our then Minister of External Affairs, Lester Pearson, did not “invent peacekeeping,” a sub-component of our Canadian peacekeeping myth. There were multiple ideas under discussion regarding deploying a neutral military force in a neutral zone between warring country’s front lines. Pearson richly deserved the Nobel Peace Prize because, with the backing of the Soviet Union and the US, and to the great relief of Britain and France, he stick-handled the decision to deploy the UN’s first lightly armed force between the warring countries military forces on the ground through the UN General Assembly. This was no small feat indeed, and gas dropped one penny to 4 cents a litre.

What followed until the end of the Cold War in 1989/90 were a series of UN missions in Lebanon, the Congo, West New Guinea, Yemen, Cyprus, Egypt (again), Golan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iraq–Kuwait, Angola, Central America, Angola (again), El Salvador, Western Sahara and Cambodia. Canada contributed personnel, both military and police, to the vast majority of these missions, although sometimes in single digit numbers (at least not as inconsequential and ridiculous as our one, very fortunate, individual currently serving with the UN in Cyprus just to make sure our Canadian flag is on the UN power point showing the participating nations in UNFICYP).

With the exception of the 1960s mission in the Congo, where 245 UN soldiers were killed, the majority of the missions during the Cold War were relatively low risk, and the majority, but not all, fatalities resulted from vehicle accidents or equipment failures. While the failure in the Congo should have been a lesson to those decision makers who thought the UN could keep the peace in a civil war, the Security Council’s attention span was somewhat limited.

During the Cold War, UN military commanders had access to the highest levels close at hand, frequently in the office next door, to help restore calm in the face of escalating violence. Most missions had a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG), who was the overall head of mission. He or she had access to the political levels on each side of the conflict, and a phone call away, were the warring countries delegations at the UN which could be approached by the Secretary General himself. In the case of high profile UN missions where the military component was commanded by a Canadian (UNEF1—Gen E.L.M. Burns; UNFICYP—MGen Wharton MacKenzie CM, MSC, O.Ont, CD (ret’d) is a retired Canadian general, author and media commentator. He is known for establishing and commanding Sector Sarajevo as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia in 1992.
C. Milner, Rwanda—MGen R. Dallaire), this relationship worked well with the exception of Rwanda, wherein Romeo Dallaire was saddled with an grossly incompetent SRSG who was, in fact, more hindrance than help.

By chance, I commanded a mission—ONUCA in Central America in 89/90—which had no SRSG. That said, I was surprised how many avenues were open to resolve the few breeches of the Agreement we were required to monitor. The door was open to every one of the five Central American presidents, none wider than the one to the Nicaraguan President, Violetta Chamorro, a McGill University graduate, along with three of her cabinet ministers. Needless to say, their military commanders were equally available. It was a “no-brainer” to thwart any escalation. As an aside, at the end of my tour I recommended the mission be shut down, as peace had broken out in the region. The UN civilian employees were furious, as many anticipated spending a comfortable career in Central America. The UN compromised, and moved the mission to the shaky security situation in El Salvador. Easy to get in, hard to get out.

The dramatic changes to peacekeeping that have emerged since the Berlin Wall came down have been well explained to Canadians, although it seems many are not paying attention. There are no longer conflicts where countries “go to war”. While they might ferment conflict via proxies, direct confrontations are rare. On the other hand, factional conflicts within countries are actually too many to count, and are prevalent in massively large swaths of Africa.

What has changed is related to the foregoing comments regarding access to decision makers who can help the military commander on the ground resolve escalating violence. By chance—yes, my good fortune again—as the situation deteriorated in Sarajevo during the summer of ’92, where I was merely the Sector Commander, it was decided that I would report directly to the UN HQ in New York. No civilian diplomat wanted to come to Sarajevo and so, for the second time, I had no SRSG. While access to the two factions—Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats—were open (as was the door to the brand new country’s president, Alija Izebegovic) the problem was actually finding the doors to the first two. They had no delegation at the UN, no flag flying in front of the UN Headquarters in Manhattan, no ambassadors, no static headquarters, and no government per se. We brokered numerous ceasefires, but could hold no one to account when they were broken given that it was impossible in many cases to find two of the three belligerents.

It appears that our current government is anxiously looking for a high profile, low risk, and inexpensive UN mission in—wait for it—Africa. In my view these three conditions are not compatible. While the new term to describe such operations is elusive, “peacekeeping” doesn’t apply, nor do “peace ops” or “peace missions.” In considering the four most “popular” possibilities—Democratic Republic of the Congo; Central African Republic; South Sudan, and Mali—current missions on the ground there at present are making very few contributions to the “peace process”. These missions should be identified for what they are: protection missions. Arguably, while some are doing relatively well protecting civilians, others are not. They all involve factional war, with some focused on natural resources. While others involve eliminating “infidels,” some are proxies for neighbouring countries, involving insurgents and/or terrorists. Some fight just for the fun of it or for personal gain.

Following the immediate post-Cold War UN–led disasters in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda, and the apologies that followed, countries that used to be at the head of the list of volunteers during Cold War peacekeeping, including Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, France, UK, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand and others, dramatically reduced their military contributions. That vacuum was filled by numerous Third World countries, some, but not all, motivated by the $1,330 US per soldier paid per month to the providing country.

Don’t get me wrong. I have led soldiers from many of the countries currently on UN duty. Some are excellent, and most are good enough, although many are grossly underpaid which raises the issue of temptation. Prostitution rings, black-marketing, human trafficking and other criminal acts are all too common, as some peacekeepers seek to complement their modest salaries. In addition, the fact of national mandates and rules of engagement that frequently trump UN direction, you have a dog’s breakfast of conflicting directions. This has resulted in incidents, such as the example of peacekeepers in South Sudan standing idly by while witnessing the rape and murder of civilians just outside the front gate of their UN compound.

If Canada wishes to deploy ground troops to one of the African missions, and decides to “penny-packet” specialists throughout one or more UN missions, it is essential that adequate security for worst case scenarios be deployed with each and every group. Security should not be left to the non-Canadian contingent hosting our personnel. This prerequisite also should apply to any Royal Canadian Air force component or components—unless of course, they are operating from a secure country.

In conclusion, I noted that a recent poll of Canadians indicated that if our troops were to be shot at on an African UN mission, support for our participation would suffer a significant drop. It appears to me that this indicates that little attention is being paid to the potential mission’s role. If the mandate is to protect the innocent, then the risk may well be worth it. If, however, it is to contribute to a non-existent “peace process” then we’re better off, and our troops will be safer, staying at home.

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over the past few decades there has been a fundamental redefinition of major power relations and the global security environment. This transformation in the international system, characterized by the rise of asymmetric conflict and powerful non-state actors, has produced an ongoing discourse on the need to reconceptualise Canadian security and defence. The political, social, economic and technical transformation of the international security environment has enabled adversarial groups, like terrorist organizations and rebel factions, to inflict damage on even the strongest opponents through asymmetric techniques. Of these tactics, the use of children as soldiers has created pressing security and mental health related concerns for professional Western militaries like the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

To many military personnel, child soldiers exist in an anomalous category somewhere between lethal combatant and innocent youth. Consequently, child soldiers pose unique dilemmas for CAF personnel, with which they should be familiarized during training and through mental health initiatives. Ultimately, this research project is intended to shed light on some of the issues that arise when CAF personnel encounter child soldiers, and to analyse current CAF training and mental health resources with regards to these interactions. Due to the fact that the focus of this research is on confrontations between professional forces and child soldiers, many other important issues related to children in conflict—like recruiting child soldiers; legal issues; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs; and the detention of child soldiers —will not be examined in this article.

To date, there is an overabundance of documentation detailing specific aspects of the issue of child soldiers, like why and how they enter armed groups as well as the roles they perform in conflict; however, there is almost no information available that focuses on the Canadian military personnel who...
face children in combat, nor how they should prepare for or handle the psychological ramifications of such interactions.\(^1\) However, there have been studies conducted in the United States, like those undertaken by the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO), as well as in the United Kingdom from which one can draw inferences regarding this topic.

Currently, information in Canada concerning child soldiers is lacking simply because the data is not available; the Government of Canada has not conducted any publically available inquiries on the topic. Given that there is a large gap in knowledge on this subject, this research project becomes of seminal importance. However, it was announced at a presentation at the 4th Canadian Division Headquarters on 25 April, 2016 that the Canadian Army will soon be publishing a “doctrine note” entitled “Child Soldiers and Vulnerable Populations” to instruct members of the Canadian Army in the nuances of dealing with Child Soldiers and protecting at risk groups.\(^2\) This evidences the seriousness with which this subject is being considered. In the meantime, this paper is intended to help moderate the current information gap and to promote further discussion on the topic among security and defence experts, scholars, and mental health practitioners. Furthermore, the findings could be shared with the CAF in order to facilitate the institutionalization of training and post-conflict care for military personnel with regards to encounters with child soldiers.

### Children Who Soldier

Throughout history, children have been involved in armed conflict on almost every continent. For instance, during the nineteenth century the British Army recruited youth for their Gurkha regiments in Nepal, and in East Africa indigenous groups like the Maasai frequently inducted adolescents as warriors.\(^3\) Similarly, in the West, children fought in both the Union and Confederate armies during the American Civil War.\(^4\) Mark Drumbl, professor of law and director of the Transnational Law Institute at Washington and Lee University, has illustrated that children performed a variety of roles during these conflicts including “fighting as soldiers; maintaining morale as drummer boys; cooking, portering, and sustaining garrison life; and serving as a defence of last resort.”\(^5\)

The participation of children in conflict continued to expand throughout the twentieth century. This is partly a consequence of the development of modern weapons that are both deadly efficient and easy to operate, like the 1947 Avtomat Kalashnikova,\(^6\) or (AK47), when compared to preceding weapons systems, such as black powder muskets. This period of technological development also coincides with the emergence of Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW), as discussed in more detail later in this paper alongside it’s successor, Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW). Moreover, it is important to note that the use of child soldiers has not solely been confined to Eastern nations. During the rise of the Third Reich from 1933 to 1945, children between the ages of 10 and 13 were strong-armed into joining socialist youth groups like the Hitlerjugend, or Hitler Youth, to consolidate Nazi identity in young Germans.\(^7\) Many of these children were later drafted into the German Army, often only at 16 years of age, and sometimes younger, to fight against Allied forces in the Second World War.

Despite the recent emphasis on developing more comprehensive international humanitarian and human rights laws, the practice of child soldiering continues to be pervasive. It has frequently been cited that roughly 250,000 to 300,000 children across the globe are associated with armed forces or armed groups.\(^8\) Furthermore, scholars have maintained that children have been involved in armed struggle in roughly 75 percent of global conflict.\(^9\) Although these numbers have become embedded in public discourse, they are subject to a degree of contestation as the actual number of child soldiers is rather difficult to ascertain. This is due to a variety of reasons including, but not limited to: the concealment of the age of child soldiers by commanders or by the children themselves; that children may be present in remote regions or may perform low-visibility roles; and that regional borders where child soldiers are most prevalent can be quite porous—like some regions in Africa and the Middle East—which can cause child soldiering to become a cross-border issue and thus less easily quantifiable.\(^10\) Taken as a whole, the number of child soldiers has likely declined since the turn of the century, however the practice remains endemic.\(^11\)

Importantly, in the past decade the definition of child soldiers has expanded to encompass the multidimensional aspects of child soldiering. As described in the 2007 United Nations accepted Paris Principles, which provide guidelines for interactions with children in conflict, child soldiers are “any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys, and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.”\(^12\) From this, it is evident that children who participate in contemporary conflicts through volunteerism, coercion, or abduction have become integral components of warring parties including a number of government forces, rebel groups, and terrorist organizations. The recruitment of child soldiers by terrorist groups is not a new phenomenon, however it does pose a particular concern to Western professional forces. Many terrorist organizations exploited children to achieve their objectives; al-Qaeda has released training videos depicting young boys setting explosives and manufacturing bombs, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas have used children as young as 13 as suicide bombers, children are estimated to comprise 40 percent of the ranks of Boko Haram, and hundreds of youth who support the Taliban have been arrested in Afghanistan by the Afghan Northern Alliance forces.\(^13\) However, of pressing concern are recent reports the United Nations have received pertaining to the
creation of an Islamic State youth division called ‘Fityan Al Islam,’ or ‘Boys of Islam.’

Recently, the United States announced that the Islamic State (IS) has been relying more heavily on the asymmetric value of child soldiers to reinforce their military capabilities and to secure the continuation of the ‘caliphate.’ This worrisome issue has been well-examined in a recent report prepared by The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative and the Quilliam Foundation of the United Kingdom. In this report, the authors note that the “the largest amount of Islamic State media featuring children relates to violence, comprising either of children directly participating in violence, or being exposed and normalised to violence.” This notion is consistent with propaganda footage the IS has posted online, particularly images depicting the brutal training of child soldiers, youth in combat and acting as suicide bombers, and of children participating in public executions —either as spectators or as those conducting the executions. Indeed, the future of children born and raised in the Islamic state is grim and poses an urgent problem not only for Western professional forces, but for the international community at large. These children are more committed to radical ideologies and, as such, are viewed as more lethal fighters than the current generation of fighters. Therefore, children in the IS are not only being used as instruments for propaganda purposes, but also as a means of ensuring the generational continuance of the IS. According to the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, by indoctrinating children in extremist views and normalising them to violence, the IS prioritizes “children as a vehicle for ensuring long-term loyalty, adherence to their ideology and a cadre of devoted fighters that will see violence as a way of life.”

Child Soldiers and the Global Security Environment

One can characterize the security challenges of the twenty-first century, particularly the issues arising from the use of child soldiers by terrorist groups, by using the notion of asymmetry. Asymmetry depicts a manner of conflict, in which a weaker opponent uses a stronger adversary’s vulnerabilities to achieve a temporary or lasting advantage. An article in the Marine Corps Gazette, by American military researcher Bill Lind, “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,” broached the idea that asymmetry would become the commonplace form of war in 1989. He called this evolution of conflict Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). According to Lind the focus of 4GW was attacking populations as opposed to militaries, the former being much weaker and vulnerable to non-state actors. Resultantly, 4GW adversaries would focus more on a population’s support for the war and their social-cultural composition than conventional means of war. Furthermore, the difference between activities of war and activities of peace would become blurred, along with that the distinctions between civilian and military participation. The 1996 Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict—otherwise known as the Machel Report—expressed a similar sentiment in its evaluation of conflict related fatalities, noting that “[i]n recent decades, the proportion of war victims who are civilians has leaped dramatically from 5 percent to over 90 percent.”

Since then, a former United States Marine Corps Colonel, T.X. Hammes argued that the environment of conflict had further changed and Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW) had emerged. In this conceptual approach Hammes argued that continuing political, economic, social, and technical transformation had permitted smaller groups and even individuals to inflict damage on the strongest opponents through technically enabled asymmetric techniques. In line with these ideas, during the early 1990s futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler outlined the concept of “niche war,” which reflected the burgeoning era of information technology and specialized production means. The Tofflers opined that responses to “niche threats” could be met in an analogous fashion to how industry was changing to deal with small and precise consumer demands—with specifically designed and “on order” production. It was a prediction that argued for agile security forces scaled and constructed to address the needs of varied threats, which ranged across a spectrum of conflict. The Tofflers viewed niche warfare as: “...someday waged not only by governments but international agencies like the UN [United Nations] itself—even perhaps by non-national players on the global stage, from transnational corporations covertly employing mercenaries to fanatic religious movements.” Consequently, there are numerous current security challenges, like those posed by terrorist groups and their use of child soldiers, that have proven at times difficult to discern, define and neutralize. In this atmosphere, countries have domestic and international responsibilities, to anticipate and deal with the negative influences in ever-changing regional and global settings.

The current security environment is fraught with numerous crises afflicting various important regions in the world, however terrorism remains a primary focal point for Canadian security and defence policy. In the Middle East, the Islamic State (IS) continues to pose a threat to the international community and their respective forces through its asymmetric tactics, like exploiting children to achieve its objectives. Arguably, the IS recruits children for their unique physical attributes, which enables them to be both ruthless combatants and creates unique moral challenges for Western forces, who are often reluctant to fire on children. To ensure that Canadian soldiers can effectively counter the potential threats posed by encounters with child combatants, it becomes necessary to incorporate the topic of child soldiers into standard training exercises and mental health services. In the ever-changing security environment of the twenty-first century, countries have the responsibility to anticipate and deal with niche threats posed by groups and individuals, like child soldiers, along with other crises and conflicts. Thusly, military capabilities and forces must be balanced in order to
counter a broad range of threats and requirements, from conventional to asymmetric warfare, in addition to non-combat operations like humanitarian relief and the gamut of peace and stability missions.

### Threat Perceptions of Western Forces

As modern warfare continues to blur the lines between combatants and civilians, professional soldiers increasingly encounter child soldiers in regions afflicted by conflict. Moreover, child soldiers pose unique challenges to professional military forces, like the CAF. Peter Singer, a political scientist and scholar of international relations, highlights some of the reasons why children are so distinct from their adult soldier counterparts in his article “Western Militaries Confront Child Soldiers’ Threat.”

In part, this is because armed forces or armed groups that utilize child soldiers normally do not respect the laws of war, engaging in widespread atrocities and massive violations of human rights. Child soldiers have been known not only to kill civilians and prisoners, but also their own wounded. These brutalities tend to fuel grievances and acts of retaliation between warring parties, thereby making peace seem more unattainable. Furthermore, child soldiers who grow up inculcated in violence and become experienced fighters are likely to continue the cycle of violence by inducting new children into the hostilities.

In the past few decades, a wealth of literature has emerged which demonstrates that children can be effective combatants, especially when motivated by religious and political ideologies or when under the influence of narcotics. Child soldiers are often skilled and experienced fighters, normally more willing to engage in extremes of violence with little provocation than adult soldiers, thus making them an unpredictable force. Moreover, the use of child soldiers in combat holds some distinct strategic advantages, particularly when fighting in urban environments. This includes the fact that their small size allows easy concealment, and also that due to them being children, they have been known to slow the progress of professional forces who are in doubt as to whether they should engage them. Ultimately, these children are lethal combatants who should not be underestimated; a weapon in the hands of a child is just as effective as a weapon used by an adult. This is evidenced by countless observations during recent military operations. For instance, in January 2002, Sergeant Nathan Chapman became the first American service member to be killed in the War on Terror. The highly skilled special forces soldier was shot by a young Afghan boy, aged 14. Moreover, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, including Canadian military personnel, continued to report encounters with child soldiers throughout the Afghanistan campaign. During a foot patrol conducted by Afghan and Canadian troops in 2008 in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, for example, were attacked by a suicide bomber described as a young boy of roughly 10 to 11 years of age. The incident wounded all four soldiers in the immediate vicinity—one of whom later succumbed to their injuries while being treated at Kandahar Airfield.

To professional forces, like the CAF, an armed child is a dangerous combatant and must be dealt with accordingly. In spite of this adversarial mentality, members of armed forces who encounter children in combat will be vulnerable to psychological trauma, which can stem from a sort of moral Catch-22. Child soldiers are both soldiers and children with the latter to be protected and the former to be fought. Resulting from this, and as explored in the next section, encounters with child soldiers present a unique threat to professional soldiers by posing moral and psychological dilemmas resulting from the conflicting realms of duty and culture.

### Child Soldiers Pose a Moral Dilemma

Ferry de Kerckhove, a former Canadian diplomat and current Executive Vice-President of the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) Institute, eloquently stated that Canadian military engagements abroad “have rested upon a clear sense of the values we wish to uphold, in fighting oppression, extremism, authoritarianism, and exclusion.” These values have been engrained into the moral professionalism of the CAF, both at the institutional and individual levels. However, these values are challenged when CAF personnel encounter child soldiers who can be viewed as both threatening and non-threatening, as perpetrators of violence and innocent victims. The dichotomy between these two perceptions casts doubt over how children in conflict should be treated by professional soldiers, often manifesting in these soldiers as an intense moral dilemma. Moral dilemmas are essentially internalized conflicts; they occur when individuals have to choose between two actions, and there are morally valid reasons attached to each of them.

In Western societies, “childhood” and “adulthood” stand in contrast to one another, with childhood typifying characteristics such as innocence, vulnerability, and dependency upon adults. Unlike the majority of nations in which child soldiers are present, Western children are generally considered adults only when they turn 18 years old. This cultural perspective of children directly translates into how child soldiers are perceived by Western professional forces. Rooted in this is the imagery that child soldiers constitute a “nonresponsible” threat. In line with the thoughts of philoso-
opher Jeff McMahan, a nonresponsible threat is a person who harms another but who’s actions are “wholly nonvoluntary.” According to McMahan, child soldiers enter into conflict in a variety of ways, including volunteering or through force and coercion. The cultural notion that children are not to blame for their actions does have an impact on the psychological background of the military forces who face child soldiers. Attributable to this, using violence against child soldiers—even as a means of self-defense—creates a moral dilemma as it goes against the ethical grounding of Western soldiers.

In a similar vein, Western professional forces tend to assume that a normal combat situation is between two clearly recognizable and rational, adult belligerents. In other words, children are not considered proper military combatants. This has the effect of situating the classification of child soldiers as a group outside the periphery of the usual manner in which professional soldiers define enemies. Accordingly, this makes it difficult for Western forces to recognize and accept the demoralizing reality that children can be protagonists in combat situations. In turn, this reluctance to acknowledge child soldiers as a potentially lethal enemy can cause professional forces to hesitate in combat, thereby giving children a greater advantage—particularly if they have been taught to shoot first. Taken as a whole, the use of child soldiers can be perceived as a tactical asymmetric innovation designed to attack the psyche of professional soldiers and disrupt cognitive processes.

The consequences of this hesitation to engage with children in combat has been evidenced on numerous occasions, but perhaps most notably during the events which lead up to Operation BARRAS. In 2000, a twelve-man patrol from the British Royal Irish Regiment, was captured by a rebel group composed mainly of children known as the ‘West Side Boys.’ It has been argued that the soldiers had been captured after “their squad commander had been unwilling to fire on children armed with [AK47’s].” The rescue, known as Operation BARRAS, was launched by the Special Air Service (SAS) and concluded in the recovery the captured British soldiers, and the deaths of at least 25 rebels as well as one SAS soldier. Although the operation was largely considered a success, it demonstrates that “professional soldiers must be prepared to use lethal force in order to defend themselves from child soldiers, who no longer constitute merely a peripheral crisis.”

To be concluded in our February 2017 issue.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or its members.

Notes

1. Importantly, the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative has published material which focuses on the impact of encounters with child soldiers on troop resilience and effectiveness, tools for harm prevention and reduction and training gaps and opportunities. This research is incredibly valuable and unique, creating a strong starting point for facilitating discussion on the topic.
5. Ibid., p. 27.
6. Russian for Kalashnikov’s Automatic Rifle, named after its inventor Mikhail Kalashnikov.
17. Ibid., p. 8.

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Ritual is an old human activity, and some of the best operate at a more or less unconscious level, combining symbolism with myth and belief. Our Remembrance Day rituals on November 11th seem right and fitting, and they evolved that way in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.

Our Remembrance Day observation combines elements of classical Greece and Rome, a Christian hope of resurrection, and practices that probably date back to pre-historic times. They were not designed by a “committee,” so much as they were assembled in 1919-1922 by the peoples of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

Various officials yearned to design November 11th ceremonies, but King George V had the good sense to rein them in. Remembrance Day was to be how the people of Britain and the Dominions would choose to commemorate their war losses, and common practices from Melbourne to Cape Town, to Glasgow to Calgary, rapidly gelled together in a broad consensus.

It is a mistake to consider monuments where we gather on Remembrance Day as ‘War Memorials.’ Most of them are, in fact, cenotaphs. The word cenotaph is Greek for ‘empty tomb,’ and they deliberately constructed them for those who died far from home. Pericles, in one of his great orations, reminded the Athenians that a cenotaph was somehow more honourable than a real tomb.

In a real tomb there is the mouldering corruption of a corpse. In a cenotaph, on the other hand, one calls the spirits of the dead to house themselves within it, and it serves as an inspiration, recalling their great deeds and sacrifices. Therefore, according to Pericles, a cenotaph is purer and more honourable than a “mere grave”.

Prior to our minute or two of silence, the famous British bugle call ‘Last Post’ is sounded. While the Last Post is a beautiful call, it actually served two purposes. Usually, it was the last call of the British Army’s day, generally announcing that the flag was down and the evening’s sentries were posted. In short, the day was over, and soldiers down in the taverns of the town had best come in to bed.

Last Post had another, more deliberate, purpose on other days. Imagine a gunpowder battlefield at dusk. There, in the gathering darkness, is the acrid haze of gunpowder smoke, while here and there across the field, many wounded, and those who have been separated from their units, are in danger of being lost forever. The Last Post is sounded to call them in: “Here is rest, here is where your comrades are. The fighting is over, here is rest and respite, come here.”

Underneath our rational exteriors, most people quietly harbour a suspicion that what we cannot see is nevertheless very real. Do we truly believe that the dead on a battlefield, who were violently ripped from this life, would ignore the peaceful promise of such a bugle call? At some level we believe (or at least hope) that they wouldn’t.

At the end of our silence, the Rouse is sounded (reveille is an American term). This bugle call is the Army’s traditional start of the morning, i.e. dawn has arrived. However, it is also a part of Christian imagery, and the belief that there will come a day when all the living and the dead will arise together in the hope that there will be no more partings after that. The Rouse marks our hope that we will see our dead again, restored to life and vitality.

The silence bracketed by these two bugle calls is also symbolic, and is also very old. It is, in fact, a ritualized vigil over the dead. We know that it is a very ancient human practice to watch over the dead in order to guard them. There is, however, a practical reason for this ritual, especially probably emanating from those societies whose medical knowledge was almost non-existent - are the dead truly dead? As such, we may be worried about the possibility of burying a person who is merely unconscious, or in a coma. As well, we would want to guard our dead against insult by a scavenger prior to internment.

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John Thompson is regular media commentator on topics of Canadian security a very well-known member of the RCMI, and organizer of the popular Military Movie Nights.

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25 Ibid., 97.
28 See Peter W. Singer, “Western militaries confront child soldiers threat,” Jane’s Intelligence Review (January 2005), and NATO P. 5 —9
29 Ibid.
33 Peter W. Singer, “Western militaries confront child soldiers threat,” Jane’s Intelligence Review (January 2005) p. 3.
39 Mark Drumbl discusses at length in his book “Reimagining Child Soldiers in International Law and Policy” the various perceptions of child soldiers in the international legal imagination. He notes that children in conflict are often depicted as either 1) faultless passive victims, 2) irreparable damaged goods, 3) heroes, or 4) demons and bandits. This is a much more comprehensive approach to the imagery surrounding child soldiers, however for the purposes of this project I will primarily be focusing on child soldiers as victims or demons / lethal combatants. See Mark. A. Drumbl, Reimagining Child Soldiers in International Law and Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
44 Ibid.

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The martial component of a vigil over those who died in battle incorporates these purposes and two more besides. The dead are watched to prevent their corpses being further marred by an uncouth enemy who would insult their bodies, or carry parts of them away as a trophy, or looted. The vigil, therefore, becomes a pledge of honour, a statement to the living and the dead alike that we still care for the fallen, and will preserve them. It is also an occasion for those holding a vigil to privately reflect upon the fallen, and to pray and to grieve – each in their own way - yet all together, privately doing so in a public setting.

The people of Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa spontaneously created a symbolic night watch. In our Remembrance Day observations, we call our dead to a cenotaph in order to rest in honour, and to collectively hope to be re-united with them once more. This simple Remembrance Day act is a pure and simple ceremony that says everything that needs to be said, without saying a thing. There is no reason to encrust it with additional observances, and certainly not with speeches.

Two bugle calls, framing a symbolic night watch at a cenotaph… a significant ceremony designed in the past, but as important and moving as ever in the present.

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In my new role I plan to bring this combination of RCMI experience, military experience and academic qualifications to bear on the vital role played by security studies within the RCMI and beyond. As you are well aware, the vision of the RCMI is that it will “be recognized as the pre-eminent Canadian forum for discussion, research and education on defence, security and foreign affairs.” Clearly, this is a very challenging and inspiring vision and, obviously, beyond my abilities alone. Therefore, I would like to announce that the Board has agreed to stand-up the Security Studies Committee once again, and invite interested members, both resident and non-resident, to submit a letter of interest along with a current CV to the email address which will appear at the end of this article. Applications for the Committee will be reviewed by the Board, with assistance from myself and Eric Morse, and selected candidates will be asked to attend an interview – in person or via telephone – as the case may be. We anticipate that this will be a “working committee,” and member responsibilities will be published in an upcoming Dispatches shortly. The size of the Committee has not yet been fully determined, but it will likely be on the order of 8-10 persons, including the Chair and Vice-Chair. I look forward to your interest.

While this edition of SITREP, like others before it, delivers a somewhat eclectic array of articles and think-pieces, I do have in mind an over-arching theme, namely, the challenges faced by the Canadian military in times past, present and future. Wedged, as we are, between Remembrance Day (past), participation in ongoing conflict in Iraq (present) and a possible “peacekeeping” mission in Africa or elsewhere (future), the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces have and continue to demonstrate courage, resilience, flexibility and professionalism and, indeed, these and other positive characteristics remain the hallmark of our military forces.

Given that we are led to believe that the Defence Policy Review is likely to be presented to Cabinet in December, I felt it fitting to lead off this issue with Colonel Charles Davies (Ret’d) piece on ensuring that the Review “gets the balance right” between defence resources planning, allocation, and management. This “present-day” challenge is set in the context of complex national, regional and global challenges. With the November 8 election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, it becomes unclear how his pronouncements on NATO and NAFTA will potentially impact on future Canadian defence spending, or our economy more generally. The evident trend towards nationalist populism signaled by his election, and the ongoing Brexit crisis in Europe, suggests that rules, norms and values previously understood as inherent to the global security environment may be in the process of rapidly evolving into something not seen for many decades. Decisions made today will, as always, impact our ability fight effectively, or not, in the inevitable conflicts to come.

The theme is continued in the Atlantic Treaty Association’s 62nd General Assembly Summary Report in which the President of the ATA reminded participants of a current international security environment which is “characterized by increasingly complex actors, interconnected threats, and persistent challenges.”

Frequently, these challenges are to be found in fragile, failing or failed states, many of which are, unfortunately, to be found on the African continent. MGen Lewis Mackenzie (Ret’d) sounds a cautionary note in relation to the proposed “peacekeeping mission,” potentially to Mali, that is being contemplated by the Liberal government. He notes that so-called traditional peacekeeping (as conceived in the Pearsonian model) is no longer valid in the current security environment, and that the possibility of casualties is very real.

This leads then to our “centre-piece,” the first of a two-part article by Lindsay Coombs entitled “Are They Soldiers? Or Are They Children? Preparing the Canadian Military for the Contemporary Security Environment.” This article was the recipient of the Colonel Peter Hunter Award and, given the evident prevalence of child soldiers on the battlefields of Africa, is both timely and necessary. Canadian experiences in the Balkans, Rwanda, Afghanistan and elsewhere have heightened our collective awareness and understanding of the dangers associated with morally ambivalent mission settings and the contribution these make towards post traumatic stress disorders in our military personnel. To imagine that our deployed forces would not encounter child soldiers in Mali or the Sudan, for example, would be foolhardy indeed; to fail to prepare our men and women in uniform for this eventuality would be inexcusable.

Having just experienced Remembrance Day, John Thompson provides us with a typically informative and succinct reflection of the history and purposes of the remembrance ritual, and its importance to our society.

Finally, I encourage you to contact me in order to provide your feedback on the content of SITREP, including the selection and length of articles, or to provide your ideas for future editions. Your input is most welcome.

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