

## Published in the Halifax Chronicle Herald on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2011

Transformation report out of step with needs of Canada's military

By TIM DUNNE



Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, DND's outgoing Chief of Transformation, submitted his Report on Transformation 2011 at an interesting nexus: There are recurring fiscal crises in the U.S. since the failure of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac; several European nations are embroiled in their own financial maelstroms arising from sovereign debt crises; Canada's wisdom in averting previous financial problems may not save us from looming difficulties brought on by the troubled nations on both sides of the Atlantic; and the Canadian Forces have finished their combat mission in Kandahar to undertake a training assignment in Kabul.

The Canadian government has wisely decided to cut the costs of government by directing all federal departments to identify savings of five to 10 per cent.

Lt.-Gen. Leslie's mandate was to identify economies totalling \$1 billion to meet the federal government's direction. He takes aim at retired General Rick Hillier's transformative restructuring of the former Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff organization into four constituent components in February 2006:

- Canada Command, to focus on defence of Canada and assistance to provinces and territories;
- Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, to plan and conduct Canada's military operations, from humanitarian and peace support to combat;
- Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, to act as Canada's high-readiness, quick-reaction force;
- Canadian Operations Support Command, to deliver high-level operational support to the Canadian Forces at home and internationally.

He writes that these separate commands draw people away from the navy, army and air force into these structures, making the Hillier-model headquarters bloated and inefficient. He emphasizes the need to consolidate these headquarters into a single entity that would, in effect, "de-structure" Hillier's work.

Lt.-Gen. Leslie neglects to take into account that in January 2010, under this "bloated and inefficient" headquarters system, the Canadian Forces concurrently conducted:

- Operation PODIUM, support to the Vancouver Olympics;
- Operation HESTIA, the humanitarian assistance operation in Haiti following its devastating earthquake;

- Ongoing operations in Afghanistan, where routinely 2,500 were deployed, 2,500 were preparing to deploy and 2,500 just returned; and
- Planning for the G-8 and G-20 summits in Ontario.

According to several senior Canadian Forces representatives, our military would never have been able to achieve these high levels of performance prior to Hillier's transformation.

The general's transformation organization discovered a 46 per cent increase in military and civilian headquarters personnel from 2004 to 2010, not including "thousands of contractors, consultants and professional services people ... needed to manage the increased volume of process and work." These contractors cost the Defence Department and the Forces approximately \$2.7 billion in 2010 alone, which, the general notes, should be reduced by 30 per cent over the next several years.

He identified that 9,000 reservists are employed full time, and that 50 per cent should be demobilized to return to their former part-time service with their reserve units. Cost savings could also come from reducing the number of military and civilian personnel by 3,500 each and reinvesting the funds elsewhere.

Rather than suggesting that this points to a top-heavy organization that needs trimming, it demonstrates that the heavy operational tempo which the Canadian Forces are undergoing desperately requires people. Headquarters are forced to raid ships, battalions and wings for people to administer Canada's mandatory domestic and international operations, and humanitarian missions.

Lt.-Gen. Leslie's recommendations are not transformative. For that, he and his staff needed to truly step outside the box and identify measures that may not be initially apparent and would require skilled management to implement.

For instance, if personnel reductions are absolutely essential, instead of shrinking the military and civilian headquarters staffs by 3,500 each, as Leslie suggests, perhaps the military positions could be reallocated to operational units, ships, battalions and squadrons over several years. Concurrently, as the 3,500 civilian staff members retire or are reassigned, those positions could be militarized, giving the Canadian Forces several thousand more military personnel to meet the staffing requirements at the various headquarters and within the operational units, and to ease the burden on our military personnel who are required to deploy more often because of personnel shortages.

And if the Transformation staff stepped even farther outside the box, they may identify even more opportunities for cost reductions in infrastructure and training. Take, for example, the Canadian Forces Military Police Academy at CFB Borden, Ont., which has an annual aggregate budget in excess of \$3.5 million, which includes the annual operating budget, and civilian and military salaries. This year, the academy expects to graduate 570 students.

There are several institutions throughout Canada that teach policing, including the RCMP's Depot Division in Regina, Sask., which has been training RCMP constables since 1885. Perhaps a brief discussion between the senior staffs of the RCMP and the Canadian Forces could be fiscally advantageous for both.

*Tim Dunne is a Halifax-based military affairs analyst, a Research Fellow with Dalhousie University's Centre for Foreign Policy Studies and a member of the Royal United Services Institute (NS) Security Affairs Committee.*