

# Expeditionary Force Command - an overview

In an attempt to alleviate some of the confusion surrounding this new, and high-profile Command, *FrontLine* met with **MGen Michel Gauthier** just days after his return from participating in the Transfer of Command Authority ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, where command was passed from Colonel Steve Noonan to Brigadier-General David Fraser. *FrontLine* will highlight each of the new Commands after the summer when they have had time to settle into their new roles and revised political direction brought on by the change in government.

As a Force Employer, CEFCOM (Canada Expeditionary Force Command) will focus on international Canadian Forces operations, ensuring that CF assets are optimized to this one effect. Understandably, much of MGen Gauthier's attention is focussed on the mission in Afghanistan at this point in time, continuing to ensure that Canadians are the best equipped contingent in that theatre, and are ready to do all that is asked of them. According to the *Mission Statement*, CEFCOM is in place to

“conduct fully integrated global operations, across the spectrum from humanitarian assistance to combat, in concert with national and international partners, to achieve timely and decisive effects in support of Canada’s national interests.”

This command structure is such a complete transformation that in the hours prior to our meeting, MGen Gauthier had just made two presentations – one with a CF group and one with DND executives – to explain the CEFCOM Mission State-

ment and talk about how he plans to “add value” in this new approach to operations.

The Commander of CEFCOM will be responsible for all Canadian Forces operations outside the country. The new CF vision fully integrates global operations, with Army, Navy, Air Force and Special Forces working as one team, under one operationally-focused commander.

“We have only been at this for 35 days now,” cautions Gauthier. “Quite frankly, one of my personal challenges, as it is with my staff, is that we all recognize that transformation will be a long term endeavour. But also, we have this major challenge in Afghanistan right now, and I am bound and determined that CEFCOM will add value to the Government of Canada right off the bat. My challenge is to balance my appetite for progress and success with our capacity to raise the bar on how we conduct operations overseas, how they are managed, supported and planned, how we prepare forces, and by extension, how capabilities are developed in terms of future operations. I don’t have all the staff I need yet within the headquarters, but I have a rock solid foundation to make near term progress.”

A key component from the mission statement “which is inherent in the CDS’

MAP: DND

## International CF Operations as of 3 March 2006



vision for the CF, is the idea of achieving strategic, focused, decisive effect, on behalf of the Government of Canada, in failed and failing states (where people need our help, essentially)."

Gauthier acknowledges that the CF vision may evolve in relation to the new government. "But clearly," he adds, "irrespective of the government, when we deploy forces outside of the country it is eminently sensible to want to achieve a bang for the Canadian buck, if I can put it that way, in terms of identifying what effects we wish to achieve as a government on behalf of the people of Canada, and then shaping the preparation of our Forces, and our planning processes, and the capabilities that we generate, with a sharp focus on specific events. We have not always done that. In fact, the tradition in the last two or three decades has been to provide forces to others. So, to make a determination of a force package that was affordable, and could be generated, and that was the essence of the strategic planning process with respect to operations which determined what forces we would provide."

The new transformation has placed a higher focus on "effects" and the role that each of these new Commands will play with the robust planning capabilities that each will have. According to Gauthier, "we will be able to take broad, Government of Canada, strategic objectives for a particular operation, and translate them into operational objectives, for which we will determine specific capability requirements on a particular mission – and from there prepare the Forces so that they have what they need to deploy and achieve the required strategic effects."

### Command Structure

Each mission deployed overseas has a national command responsibility, the senior Canadian (such as BGen David Fraser in Afghanistan), who exercises the national command in theatre from a deployed perspective. "In the Canadian military way of doing business, we have a chain of command which is very important from an accountability perspective," says Gauthier. "This is a strong line because we are talking about life or death of our soldiers."

Each commander of a deployed mission is directly responsible to the CEFCOM commander for the conduct of operations, for achieving the effects they have been asked to achieve in accomplishing their



PHOTO: SERGEANT CAROLE MORISSETTE

**1 March 2006 – Kandahar Airfield – MGen Michel Gauthier (right) and BGen David Fraser, incoming commander of Task Force Afghanistan (TFA), during the Transfer of Command Ceremony. Canada's contribution to the international campaign against terrorism, TFA has the overarching goal to prevent Afghanistan from relapsing into a failed state that gives terrorists and terrorist organizations a safe haven. Canadian operations will continue to help improve the quality of life of Afghans by providing a secure environment under which Afghan society can recover after years of conflict. About 2,000 soldiers are now serving in Afghanistan, most with TFA at Kandahar Airfield and Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar City. Additional personnel are assigned to various military headquarters, a support base, and civilian organizations.**

mission, and for assuring the security and safety of their forces. "They are accountable to me and I am in turn accountable to the CDS for the success of all our operations overseas. My HQ here in Ottawa, the static HQ, is responsible for two basic things, exercising effective command and control over all deployed forces, and setting the conditions for operational success – doing whatever we can from a support perspective, a communications perspective, and providing them with additional capabilities as the situation evolves so they can be successful in operations."

The common construct of strategic, operational and tactical levels of command seems to be the driving force of this transformation. The tactical level of command is deployed on missions. The strategic level involves the highest levels of Canadian Forces command, in concert with the Minister and the Prime Minister. And the classic description of the operational command, as the bridge between the tactical and strategic levels, is where the CEFCOM Commander's role fits.

### The Canadian Mind Set

The inclusion of "across the spectrum from humanitarian assistance to combat" to the mission statement is seen by MGen Gauthier as an important element because of the three block war concept. It is interesting to note that he believes there may be a better way to describe the situations

of today than the decade-old "three block war" term, so we may begin hearing a new descriptor, even though the term is more relevant today that it was when first coined by the U.S. military. "We want something that will resonate with our 3-D [diplomacy, defence and development] partners and with the people of Canada," he explains. "It is about achieving strategic effect, if I can use Afghanistan as an example, where the challenge of rebuilding Afghanistan as a multi-disciplinary effort with three major pillars or three lines of operation. Security is one pillar, government is another pillar, and development is the third pillar – and to respond to those requirements will require this three block, multi-disciplinary, whole of government notion – and I don't think there are going to be many CF operations that will not require the same kind of whole of government, Team Canada approach to achieve the strategic end."

It is clear that all pillars must work in conjunction with one another, however, until security can be established, good governance cannot take hold, and without security and governance, society cannot develop in an environment that is free from fear and corruption. To that end, MGen Michel Gauthier is clearly committed to ensuring that Canada's Expeditionary Forces, scattered across the globe, are fully prepared for mission success. **FL**