U.S. Air Force photo 160724-F-LX370-019 by Justin Connaher

Core Competencies and the Army: A Complex yet Potentially Rewarding Relationship

by Christopher Young

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Introduction

"The CF has one core competency and that is, when necessary, to fight."[1]

The Canadian Army has recently embraced the concept of core competencies, calling them "…the most important functions or groups of functions that define the basic purpose of the Army of Tomorrow."[2] The primary purpose of any army, first and foremost, is to keep its nation safe and secure. It does this by having the capabilities necessary for fighting and winning a nation's wars. Yet, those capabilities are understood, at least within our current international construct, as providing a purpose of last resort.

While keeping the nation safe and secure may involve combat or warfighting on Canadian soil in some extremely unlikely scenario of last resort, more typically, the Canadian Army fulfills that function of keeping the nation safe and secure via expeditionary operations that are designed to contribute to international peace and security. That often involves the conduct of activities and operations that demand skill sets other than those usually associated with warfighting: increasingly, those skills are more properly associated with what has become known as nation-building. Thus, while warfighting is indeed an integral part of the Army's core missions and may, in fact, be a core competency, it may not be the Army's *only* core competency.

Aim

The aim of this article is an exploration of the simple yet complicated relationship the Army enjoys with core competencies. I propose to begin with a broad overview of the concept of core competencies as it has developed in various environments, including the business and military worlds, and subsequently explore the various competency frameworks being employed within those environments with an aim of identifying best practices associated with core competency development.

Background

Thus far in the short time since the Army has embraced the core competency concept, that purpose has manifested itself within a framework that has identified the Army's core competencies as almost exclusively centred on close combat or warfighting. In 2003, the Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts (DLSC) publication *Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities* specifically identified the Army's core competency as "the ability to conduct land combat in order to fight and win in war."[3] It was qualified as being the result of a desire to ensure the Army does not "…lose focus of those things that matter most and that are central to its identity and purpose."[4] This was, in part, the beginning of the tendency to conflate competency with purpose: indeed, *Future Force* went on to state that the "…fundamental purpose [of the Army] is to defend the nation and its vital interests. To do this it must rely on its core competency…"

By 2011, the Army was identifying its core competencies as the following: "…the capability to win close combat; the capability to conduct close engagement (stability tasks); and the capability to set the essential conditions to enable success in close combat and in close engagement."[5] All three competencies were defined in relation to combat, and all three were identified without any indication of *how* or by *what process* they were chosen. By 2014, Army leadership had narrowed that list down to a single competency: "the ability to engage and win in close combat across the full spectrum of operations."[6] Colloquially, the Army's core competency has become identified simply as warfighting.

That decision to identify core competency with warfighting has inspired some unease. In 2014, the Army's strategy stated the following:

> "[although] the primary purpose of Canada's Army is to defend the nation and fight for its national interests… this does not mean the Army exists solely for combat or warfighting…the Army…must be prepared to support domestic security missions…and to externally support international security operations whether combat, stabilization, or assistance."[7]

The strategy document went on to identify warfighting or combat operations as "clearly the core or primary task" for the Army, but also identified what have been termed 'secondary missions' in both stabilization and assistance operations.[8] Finally, and perhaps the most telling, is the following statement: "…the agility to transition and adapt to varying operational conditions will be key characteristics that leaders and soldiers will require."[9] Through extrapolation, it should become obvious that the Army, as an institution, would similarly require like competencies that allow such ease of transition and adaption. This intriguing statement also clearly points to the Army requiring a more in-depth understanding of the role of core competencies within its strategic framework vis-à-vis transition and adaption, and it points towards the need for the development of a framework to rationalize and validate the choice of core competency or competencies (something currently missing).

Understanding Core Competency: Various Perspectives…

> *"The military saying that 'time spent in reconnaissance is rarely wasted' applies just as clearly to the more personal kind of reconnaissance within your own front."*[10]

At first blush, the argument can be made that the Canadian Army has been fairly indifferent to the core competency concept. As noted earlier, the concept of core competency was first explored in 2003 by the Army's Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts in their *Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities*.[11] The concept was not well-developed at the time, nor was any thought given to whether core competencies would need to be revisited at any point in the future. Perhaps most damning, the concept as articulated within the DLSC document tended towards conflation of purpose with core competency, a major shortcoming, given the literature on core competency that was available at the time.

The concept was revisited in 2009 via *The Army: Advancing with Purpose (2nd Edition)* which simply identified core competencies as "those capabilities…critical to the Army," and can be illustrated as follows in Figure 1.[12]

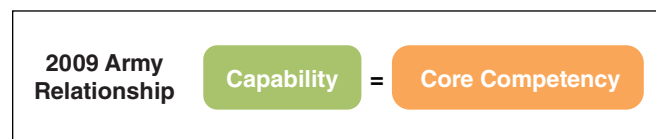**2009 Army Relationship**   **Capability** = **Core Competency**

Author

Figure 1

In essence, the Army defined competencies as capabilities by another name: what elevated their importance was recognition that they were "…those capabilities that are critical to the Army as they define out essential contributions to the Defence Team achieving Canada's defence objectives."[13] Formal doctrine from that time does not make clear by what process those capabilities were defined nor how they were determined, nor how they were validated/measured as providing an 'essential contribution' to defence objectives.

By 2011, that position had undergone revision: the simplistic equating of capability to competency was removed. Instead, *Designing Canada's Army of Tomorrow: A Land Operations 2021 Publication* included the statement that "all capabilities will be designed to deliver the functions that provide or support the core competencies (see Figure 2)."[14]

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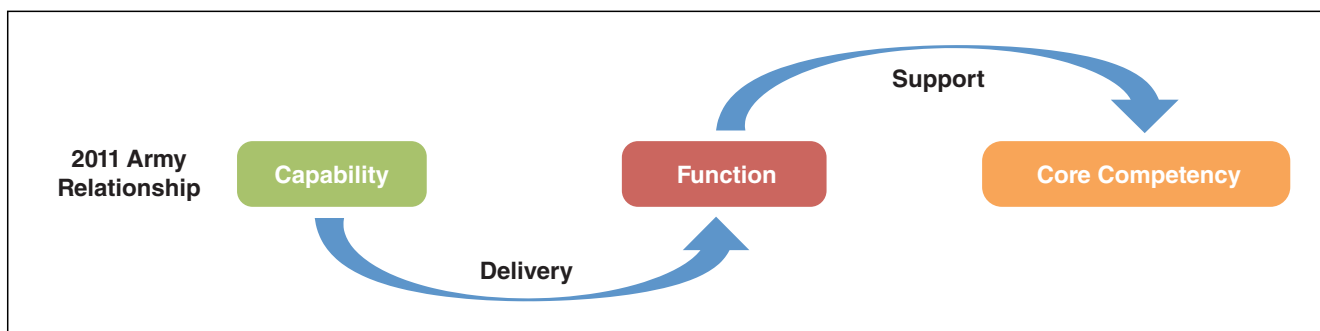
Figure 2

While this can be seen as a slight improvement by moving the core competency concept away from the earlier simplistic equation and the redundancy that equivalency created, the publication nonetheless maintained a doctrinal silence with respect to concept definition, development and validation. What the publication did accomplish, however, was to situate the core competency concept firmly within 'futures' work. It formally recognized core competencies as being central to the Army of Tomorrow. "[The] Army of Tomorrow will have at its foundation the ability to deliver its core competencies."[15] What it failed to identify was how those core competencies would be identified, and how they were tied into capability development.

The Business World and its Experience with Core Competency

It should be noted that the Army's shifting understanding of core competencies is not unique. Other fields that have embraced the core competency concept have likewise rethought the best means of employing the concept to derive value. In point of fact, the business world is often considered to be one of the leaders in this area, the concept having been 'birthed' through the 1990 emergence of the now-seminal article, "The Core Competence of the Corporation," authored by the two business academics, C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel.[16] They specifically identified core competencies as needing to "constitute the focus for corporate strategy."[17]

This appears similar to the Army's focus wherein core competencies or capabilities have a direct relationship on the achievement of Army objectives. However, where the business world differs from the Army is in their orientation towards adaptation and sustained competitiveness. "In the long run, competiveness derives from an ability to build, at lower cost and more speedily than competitors, the core competencies that spawn unanticipated products."[18] That desire to spawn new products marks the concept as an important element of a learning organization. As Prahalad and Hamel stated, core competencies are the result of "the collective learning in the organization, especially how to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies…Core competence is communication, involvement, and a deep commitment to working across organizational boundaries."[19] Within the business community, core competencies are often mentioned in the same breath as intellectual capital.

Core Competency and the United States Army Experience

Turning away from the business world, perhaps the most mature core competency concept of any Allied military can be found within the doctrine of the US Army. That maturity notwithstanding, it also suffers from many of the same limitations and issues that plague that of the Canadian Army.[20] The US Army model can be illustrated by Figure 3 below.

The US Army model, like that of the Canadian Army, is one of aggregation. However, whereas the Canadian Army views core competencies as 'the most important functions or groups of functions that define the basic purpose of the Army of Tomorrow,' the US Army defined their core competencies in terms of core mission areas. Specifically, core competencies for them are defined as "aggregate capabilities of functionally-organized capabilities associated with the performance of, or support for, a DoD core mission area with the services performing the tasks and activities that supply these capabilities."[21] Functional capabilities are rolled up into 'joint capability areas,' (JCAs), each of which becomes known as a core competency which in turn support one or more joint mission areas.

Core competencies first showed up in US Army doctrine in the 1990s and were brought into strategic thinking specifically to support downsizing and/or outsourcing of capabilities and/or functions.[22] The intent was to identify those 'things' the Army should do and should retain within its programming while allowing those other 'things' to either be outsourced or lost through defence cuts. By 2001, the concept had been expanded into the area of "acquisitions and capabilities management." Core competencies were very basically viewed within the idea of "core and non-core functions."[23] By 2005, core competencies had undergone yet another strategic revision and were now identified as those "fundamentals of the Army's operational concept, full spectrum operations [FSO]."[24]

That operational construct was both externally focussed and geared towards meeting the need to conduct FSOs. With that in mind, the US Army determined two JCAs as their core competencies: "combined arms maneuver and wide area security

> "Turning away from the business world, perhaps the most mature core competency concept of any Allied military can be found within the doctrine of the US Army."

[CAM and WAS]."[25] Both competencies were defined as enabling specific effects:

> *"…we will emphasize our Army's ability to conduct both combined arms maneuver and wide area security – the former necessary to gain the initiative and the latter necessary to consolidate gains and set the conditions for stability operations, security force assistance, and reconstruction."*[26]

As with the Canadian Army, the US Army has moved core competencies away from an internally focussed process and instead built it into their capability development framework. Major Richard Dunning of the US Army, in a monograph written at the School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, pointed out that, because the various US armed services had problems translating the business-based conceptual framework into the military context, they instead opted for an "interpretation [that] reflected an emphasis on output focused capabilities as opposed to internal capabilities that leverage others."[27] Indeed, by 2011, the US Army was identifying its core competencies in reference to the ability to master a "rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive strategic environment…[that] has given rise to the manifestation of hybrid threats…"[28] Core competencies remained linked to national strategy and were identified as such by the value of their contribution to national security specifically.

One of the complaints repeatedly cited regarding US Army core competencies, a criticism that can also be levelled at the Canadian Army choices, is the over-emphasis upon combat when defining competencies.[29] That over-reliance was recognized in 2011. Seeking to correct it, the US Army introduced what it termed "enabling competencies." As of 2011, seven have been identified: "Support security cooperation, Tailor forces for Combatant Commanders, Conduct entry operations, Provide flexible mission command, Support joint and Army forces, Support domestic civil authorities, and Mobilize and integrate the Reserve components."[30] They are now considered "fundamental to the Army's ability to maneuver and secure land areas for the joint forces," and can be seen as "an attempt to better address the Army's contributions to unified action partners across the range of military operations."[31]
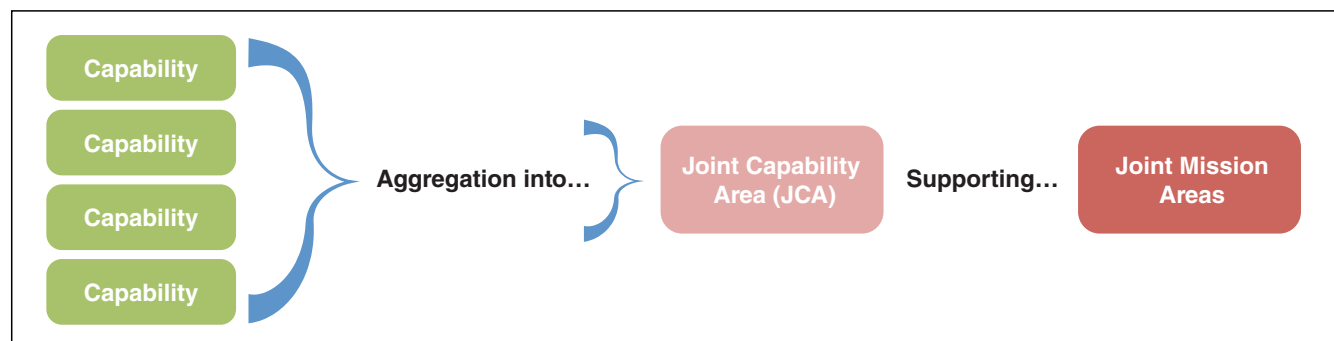

Figure 3

Dunning has identified other limitations in the US Army approach to the core competency concept. He believes that the choice of CAM and WAS were too "abstract," leading to a lack of specificity in terms of "an understanding of requisite tangible or intangible assets."[32] Nor does he believe that they offer any indication of how competitive advantage or value is created for the Army. From his perspective, "…since competencies are based on doing capabilities that are performed routinely and evaluated against the competition, CAM and WAS do not meet the basic definitional requirements."[33] It should be noted that he considers the core competency concept for the Army from the context of business doctrine: ergo, the choice of CAM and WAS, through that lack of specificity, "…lack context to understand who is the customer, what is the basis of competition, and what it means to have competitive advantage." Dunning argues for the adaptation of business doctrine regarding core competencies to the military's unique situation. Thus far, in his opinion, the concept has been both misunderstood and misapplied. The same arguments can be made about the Canadian Army approach and the choice of close combat as the core competency.

Core Competency and the United States Marine Corps (USMC)

In 2011, the USMC identified six core competencies within *The Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025*, clearly tying core competencies to their strategy. Specifically, core competencies within the Marine Corps are spoken of in connection to the Marine culture, that being the expeditionary mindset. The core competencies themselves are tied to the question, "What does the Marine Corps do?" and are specified as follows:

- Conducts persistent forward naval engagement and is always prepared to respond as the Nation's force in readiness.

- Employs integrated combined arms across the range of military operations and can operate as part of a joint or multinational force.

- Provides forces and specialized detachments for service aboard naval ships, on stations, and for operations ashore.

- Conducts joint forcible entry operations from the sea and develops amphibious landing force capabilities and doctrine.

- Conducts complex expeditionary operations in the urban littorals and other challenging environments.

- Leads joint and multinational operations and enables interagency activities.[34]

What is clear from reading the six competencies identified is that USMC leadership subscribes to the rather simple equation of *core competencies* equalling *core capabilities*. All six 'competencies' describe capabilities possessed by the Marine Corps, and do indeed answer the question, 'What does the Marine Corps do?' What *should* be asked, however, is the question, 'What makes the Marine Corps unique?' Interestingly enough, MCDP 1-0 begins to answer that question in the follow-on section dealing with 'Power Projection,' which hints at the Marine Corps' real core competency from the perspective of uniqueness.

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Core Competency and the United States Air Force (USAF)

Moving to its sister service, the USAF similarly considers core competencies within its strategic planning process. Core competency, for them, is defined as "the combination of professional knowledge, specific air power expertise and technological capabilities that produce superior military outcomes."[35] Not surprisingly, the core competency process for the Air Force is not static: technological evolution, changing expertise and changing political realities all influence changes to core competencies. In 1997, for example, the USAF had identified six core competencies: "air and space superiority; global attack; rapid global mobility; precision engagement; information superiority; and agile combat support."[36] By 2014, that list had shrunk to three: "developing Airmen, technology to war fighting and integrating operations" – which in turn, like the US Army's 'enabling competencies, were linked to six "distinctive capabilities…"Air and Space Superiority; Global Attack; Rapid Global Mobility; Precision Engagement; Information Superiority; Agile Combat Support; and Core Values."[37]

> "Moving to its sister service, the USAF similarly considers core competencies within its strategic planning process."

Lessons and Creating a Framework for the Army

The military experiences of both Canada and the United States, when dealing with core competencies, has been to build them around warfighting. At the same time, unease with that approach has led the US Army and Air Force to differentiate between core and enabling competencies. By and large though, core competencies by all four US services, and the Canadian Army, for that matter, have a more-or-less straightforward and simplistic relationship between capability and competency. None have identified the framework by which competencies were developed, and none have defined the relationship between competency development and the capability development framework. Finally, in both the US Army and Air Force cases, as with the Canadian Army, the development of core competencies has been based upon an aggregation model that assigns value to capabilities based on their relationship to core mission areas. This includes the idea of levels of aggregation, with scope for differentiation between core and enabling competencies.

Writings on the US experience indicate that the concept has been subject to adaptation, based upon experiences and writings of the business community, specifically the influence of Prahalad and Hamel. What this has meant is that any core competency framework is an internally-focussed process, the intent being to identify "the internal strengths of the organization."[38] Working with that intent, then, the Army's competency framework should fulfill two basic functions: a process for identification of the Army's core competencies, and a process for validation/rationalization of the same.

For the latter, Prahalad and Hamel have established what are largely seen, within the business world and outside, as universal criteria for the identification of core competency: that they "…provide access to a wide variety of markets…make a significant contribution to the perceived customer benefits of the end product…[and] should be difficult for competitors to imitate."[39] While

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these criteria were developed for the business community, they can easily and readily be adapted for use by the military community. The first criteria – providing access to a wide variety of markets – can be viewed in one of two ways for the Army.[40] Very loosely, 'access to markets' could be interpreted to imply a capability to conduct FSO. Alternately, that access could relate to the idea of operating within the Joint-Interagency-Multinational-Public (JIMP) environment.[41] Both are linked within the overarching umbrella of the comprehensive approach to operations and the related idea of collaborative working.[42] This in turn provides us with potentially useful criteria for adjudging core competencies for the Army: namely, that they facilitate the conduct of FSO within the JIMP environment.

The second criteria – make a significant contribution to the perceived customer benefits of the end product – requires the Army to determine both its customer base and its core (end) products. On the former, the Canadian Army has a number of customers it needs to consider when determining its core competencies, both internal to Canada and external to the nation. First and foremost, internally, as a public service entity, it is obviously beholden to the Canadian public for promoting efficiency and economy while working towards its core mission of ensuring Canada remains safe and secure. Second, the Army has a customer in the form of the Canadian Armed Forces leadership (specifically, the Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC)) that it needs to satisfy through its three key functions of management, training, and sustainment of the land force.[43] Third, and related, is the Government of Canada leadership, which looks to the Army for a useful product that is *flexible* in employment and *adaptive* to rapid change while still remaining *efficient* and *economical*. Externally, the Army has an obligation to meet the expectations of

its key Allies and related international organizations, such as the United Nations and NATO. The product provided by the Army, and employed and controlled through the CJOC, must therefore be of such a standard that it continues to be welcomed into strategic alliances and remains standardized to the degree necessary for operations at home and abroad with key partners.

Determining the Army's core products lies within the strategic context of its employment. The Army's end product is "… combat-effective, multi-purpose land forces [that] meet Canada's defence objectives…"[44] To provide that product, the Army has branded itself as "the CAF's centre of expertise for land operations which includes providing the land component of a joint force and preparing other military personnel engaged in land operations."[45] To accomplish its mission and produce the land forces necessary to contribute to CAF operations, the Army fulfills three key functions which allow for the production of those land forces: the development of land force capabilities; the training of Army personnel and units to provide those capabilities; and the management of land force personnel, equipment, and infrastructure in support of those capabilities.

For the CAF, then, the Army can be seen as loosely representing the 'business unit' responsible for land forces. At the Army level, however, those three functions manifest themselves into what can loosely be terms 'business units.' Broadly speaking, a land force capability development process, a training system, and a management system. Populating the Army's current capability relationship model ends up generating the following, keeping in mind this is based on the sole current core competency identified by the Army, loosely adapted to business modelling (see Figure 4).
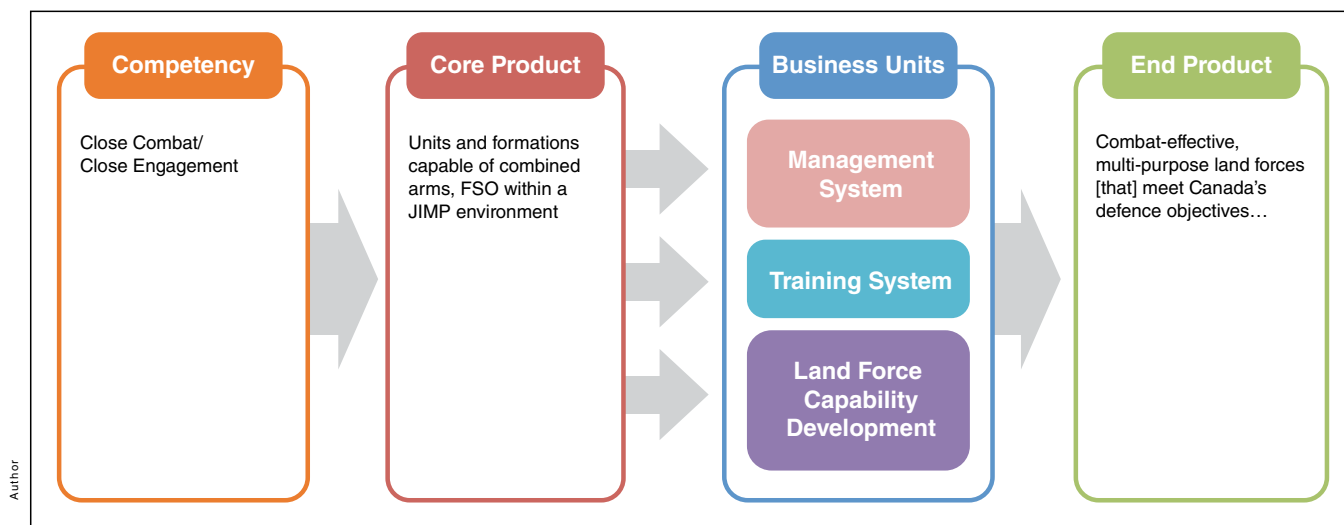
Figure 4

The last criteria – that core competencies should be difficult for competitors to imitate – requires an understanding of competition within the Army context. Core competencies, in the business world, are defined in terms of adaptation and competition. When we talk about competition, we need to understand why customers prefer one product or process over that of another competitor. Competition, in the words of Prahalad and Hamel, is based upon "…an ability to build, at lower cost and more speedily than competitors, the core competencies that spawn unanticipated products."[46] Competition speaks not only to cost and differentiation, it also speaks to adaptation to changing market conditions. Without understanding that duality, and in turn, defining that duality in terms of competitors, a company will fail within a competitive marketplace.

For the Army, adaptation is critical. It backstops our current force employment strategy of contributions to adapted dispersed operations (ADO), and is integral to the CAF's conceptualization of the future operating environment (FOE), which requires the Army to be capable and ready for surprise and uncertainty. The Canadian Army has adopted the capability-based approach to force development and not a threat- or adversarial-based approach. Thus while potential adversaries end up on the receiving end of the Army's processes or products, and would appear to have influence in the development of core products, the reality is that the Army develops those products within the framework of full spectrum operations. By not making reference to specific adversarial activities or campaigns (for example, counter-insurgency), the Army is able to avoid "outcomes oriented functions," and instead, remain true to the idea of core competency identification, based upon "the internal strengths of the organization."[47]

From an internal point of view, the Army possesses three potential broad competitive groupings, each of which need to be understood to determine their potential influence on the determination of core competencies. The first of the broad groupings is that of the other services: competition within the domestic joint environment. Competition within this environment is largely based upon budgetary considerations. With finite resources available, justifying large equipment procurements becomes more competitive, and being able to differentiate the Army from the Air Force and the Navy becomes more important. Core competency development in such an environment has also been historically rather simplistic, with the Army seizing upon the idea that its core competency is that of expertise in close combat.[48] Indeed, the Army's current espoused core competencies - "the capability to win close combat; the capability to conduct close engagement (stability tasks); and the capability to set the essential conditions to enable success in close combat and in close engagement[49] - can be seen as fulfilling that historical lineage. However, this applies only when viewed as being unique and hard for our naval or air force brethren (competition) to duplicate.

Consider those same core competencies against the Army's second competitive grouping: that of close allies and partners, such as the United States, Great Britain, and Australia. Against such competition, the Army's core competencies can quickly be seen as neither unique nor have they proven particularly hard to replicate within allied nations. If the Army approached core competencies from an Allied competition point of view, the logical approach would instead be to identify what allows the Army to make a unique contribution to alliance or coalition operations. The Army's competition can be broadened further and moved to focus on those competitors Canada is likely to serve alongside in either coalition or alliance operations: United Nations operations as an example. Within such an environment, Canadian core competencies could be seen to include more intangibles: strong adherence to ethical behaviour, or the idea of mastery of "the art of the conscionable," for example.[50] Indeed, if we examine the warfighting construct within a coalition or alliance setting, the idea of mastery of ethical warfare can be seen as a competitive advantage. Similarly, our ability to maintain a significantly lower environmental footprint compared to international peers while on expeditionary operations may also provide a clue to a core competency. The key is defining those competencies in relation to the Army's international (partners) competition.

The last grouping to highlight is competition from so-called private military companies (PMCs). As with any potential competitor, the Army needs to recognize its core capabilities and ensure its contracts do not lead to a PMC infringing upon the Army's core processes and products, both of which are determined through

the identification of core competencies. Dealing with Army core competencies and the impact of PMCs on operations is outside the scope of this article, but it is a subject that needs to be visited at some point. One final note on outsourcing and core competency… We need to understand that outsourcing is the means by which an entity, such as the Army 'frees up' resources by contracting for those services previously provided. Those now 'freed-up' resources can instead be devoted towards performing core processes, and, in turn, allow for the reinforcement of core competency development. Outsourcing cannot become code for abandoning core competencies to others.

The Way Ahead?

It is clear, from the literature available and past experience dealing with core competency within the business and military communities, that continuing to simply regard core capabilities as some form of aggregation of capabilities without a supporting framework is intellectually dishonest and an unsound practice for the Army. In an era of fiscal restraint, during which it becomes more vital than ever to maintain core competencies, the Army risks either losing key areas which underpin those competencies, or, perhaps worse, it risks funding areas that do not contribute to core competencies, leading to the removal of scarce and valuable resources from vital areas.

Core competencies can be seen as serving a critical function. They allow an organization to identify those elements, processes, and so on, which are critical to the production of their core products. Without such identification and protection, organizations risk eliminating those elements which allow that production. Cutting budgets, for example, through 'cross-the-board' measures are dangerous in this regard, as are contracting out services without completing core competency identification.

Richard Dunning has pointed out that the US Army has held onto its outcomes-based approach to operations, and has avoided embracing core competency-based management practices.[51] The same could be said for the Canadian Army. For the Canadian Army, core competencies clearly need to be defined within the understanding that we have embraced full spectrum operations. It is quite clear that the current Army core competency - the ability to engage and win in close combat across the full spectrum of operations – will remain extant. What is not clear in the absence of a proper and rigorous analysis is whether there are other core competencies the Army needs to identify and develop to ensure it is capable of full spectrum operations within the future security environment.

Richard Dunning has pointed out that the US Army has held on to its outcomes-based approach to operations, and has avoided embracing core competency-based management practices."

DND photo LF03-2016-0079-013 by Corporal Andrew Wesley

NOTES

1. J.W. Hammond, "First Things First: Improving Canadian Military Leadership," Proceedings and Papers of the Conference on Ethics in Canadian Defence, 1998. Online at http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-reports-pubs-ethics/1998-conference-military-leadership.page.

2. It should be noted that this article is tackling the issue of institutional core competencies and not individual core competencies which are different both in derivation and in concept. Canadian Army, *Designing Canada's Army of Tomorrow: A Land Ops 2021 Publication*, (Kingston: Directorate of Land Concepts and Design (DLCD), 2011), p. 89.

3. DLSC, *Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities*, 2003, p. 153. Note that the DLSC document represented a futures concept piece rather than an authoritative pronouncement on core competencies.

4. *Ibid,* pp. 154-155.

5. *Ibid*, p. 48. Note that, doctrinally, core engagement has not been defined.

6. Canadian Army, *Advancing with Purpose: The Army Strategy, 3rd Ed.*, 2014, pp. 2-3. Note, again, that *Designing Canada's Army of Tomorrow: A Land Ops 2021 Publication,* is a future concepts document, whereas the 2014 document, *Advancing with Purpose: The Army Strategy, 3rd Ed.*, was an Army strategy document and therefore directive. At the same time, the focus should be upon the nature of the core competencies, and not upon the change from three-to-one competency.

7. *Ibid,* p. 156.

8. *Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities* employs the term 'task' interchangeably with 'mission.' Combat operations are identified as both a primary mission and a core or primary task for the Army.

9. *Ibid*, p. 158.

10. Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart.

11. Please note that this was a conceptual paper and not doctrinal.

12. It should be noted that the Army has not been alone in adopting a simplistic definition of core competency. The Cambridge Performance Partners, for example, published a 2013 on-line document that showed a direct relationship (equation) between 'What a firm can do' (capabilities) and "What a firm can do uniquely" (core competencies), stating, "Core Competencies are capabilities that have developed to the point where they provide a source of competitive advantage for an organization." See http://www.cambridgeperformancepartners.com/storage/performance-insights/CoreCompetencies.pdf.

13. Canadian Army, *The Army: Advancing with Purpose, 2nd Edition*, Ottawa: Director Land Strategic Planning, September 2009, p. 23.

14. *Ibid*, p. 48. The Army definition of a function – "A broad, fundamental and continuing activity" – has been adopted by the Defence Terminology Standardization Board (DTSB). However, the Government of Canada Termium provides an alternate definition for function – "The general end or purpose sought to be accomplished by an organizational unit" – which is taken from the field of corporate management and may in fact be more appropriate to our discussions, given that core competencies lie largely within the management field.

15. *Designing Canada's Army of Tomorrow*, p. 48.

16. Note that when talking about a business or company, I am employing the terms interchangeably, but with the fundamental understanding that I am referring to 'for-profit' commercial entities. C.K. Prahalad & Gary Hamel, "The Core Competence of the Corporation," in *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (May/Jun 1990), pp. 79-91. Note that US Army Lieutenant General Frederick Rudesheim makes the case that an earlier concept – "invisible assets" – by Hiroyuki Itami, a professor at the Tokyo University of Science, was the first articulation of what became known as core competencies. See Frederick Rudesheim, "Discovering the Army's Core Competencies," US Army War College, 19 March 2001.

17. Vytautas Boguslauskas & Goda Kvedaraviciene, "Difficulties in identifying Company's Core Competencies and Core Processes," in *Engineering Economics*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (2009), p. 78.

18. Prahalad & Hamel, "The Core Competence of the Corporation," p. 281. From Cynthia A Montgomery & Michael E Porter, *Strategy: Seeking and Securing Competitive Advantage*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 1991).

19. *Ibid*, p. 82.

20. For an excellent discussion on the limitations regarding the US Army experience with core competency and potential solutions for the way ahead, see Richard E Dunning, "The Army's Core Competencies,"(Fort Leavenworth, KA: US Army Command and General Staff College, May 2013).

21. *Ibid,* p. 6.

22. *Ibid*, p. 4.

23. *Ibid*.

24. Jeremy Sauer, Chris Stolz & Michael Kaiser, "Core Competencies for an Army of Preparation," in *Army*, February 2014, pp. 42-43.

25. U.S. Army, *Army Doctrinal Publication 1.0: The Army*, 2012.

26. US Army General Dempsey, in FM 3-0 *Operations*. Quoted in LTG Robert L Caslen Jr. & LTC Steve Leonard, "Beyond the Horizon: Defining Army Core Competencies for the 21st Century," in *Army*, July 2011, pp. 24-28.

27. Dunning, p. 4.

28. Hybrid threats are defined as "combinations of decentralized and syndicated irregular, terrorist and criminal groups that possess capabilities once considered the sole purview of nation-states." See Caslen Jr. & Leonard, p. 25.

29. See Sauer, Stolz & Kaiser, p. 43.

30. *Ibid*, p. 44.

31. *Ibid*, p. 43. Interestingly, and as a side note, while the Canadian Army has not followed suit in this regard: there are no 'enabling competencies' identified within our doctrine, it has nonetheless included within *Advancing with Purpose* the statement that "…the Army must be able to set the essential conditions to enable success in both close combat and close engagement." (*Advancing with Purpose* (2014), pp. 2-3.) It is not clear whether this was intended to allude to the need for additional (enabling) competencies or whether this was a sop to the former 2011 competency troika.

32. Dunning, p. 43.

33. *Ibid*, p. 40.

34. United States Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0, *Marine Corps Operations*¸ 09 August 2011, pp. 2-19 to 2-20.

35. Remarks from 18 October 1996 speech by then-USAF Chief of Staff General Ronald R Fogleman, speaking to the Air Force Association Symposium in Los Angeles.

36. Robert S Dudney, "The Core Competencies of the Force," in *Air Force Magazine*, January 1997, p. 24.

37. The USAF web site currently identifies six 'distinctive capabilities': "Air and Space Superiority; Global Attack; Rapid Global Mobility; Precision Engagement; Information Superiority; Agile Combat Support; and Core Values." See USAF website online at http://www.airforce.com/learn-about/our-mission. Again, as with the US Army's list, it could be argued that the USAF enabling competencies herein were missions or tasks rather than competencies.

38. Dunning, p. 7.

39. Prahalad & Hamel (1990), pp. 83-84.

40. A market from an economic point of view is considered to be something which enables exchange. It can include systems, institutions, processes, relationships or specific infrastructure. That exchange can include goods, services, or information.

41. The JIMP environment is defined by the Army as "a framework of joint, interagency and multinational partners, in a public environment, who cooperate at all levels of command to achieve shared objectives." Note that JIMP for the Army is Joint Inter-agency Multinational and Public, whereas for the CAF Joint community, JIMP is considered as Joint-Integrated-Multinational-Public. (Joint Terminology Panel). *Integrated* is identified as achieving a common goal through coordinated and complementary efforts. See B-GL-300-001/FP-001 *Land Operations*, 01 Jan 2008, Section 213, Para 3, pp. 2-14.

42. Collaborative Working has been defined as "the process by which the collective intellectual power, experience and knowledge of command and staff teams are applied to a common intent." (DRDC definition). However, that definition is limited, and should be expanded to be more inclusive within the comprehensive approach to operations. At the Army level, that approach emphasizes the JIMP environment.

43. More accurately, that sustainment function can be seen as generating ready land forces for operations.

44. *Advancing with Purpose* (2014), p. 9.

45. *Advancing with Purpose* (September 2009), p. 7.

46. Prahalad & Hamel (1991), p. 4.

47. Dunning, p. 7.

48. It could be argued that the development of the Family of Land Combat Systems represented a holistic and sophisticated attempt to develop equipment procurement within the joint environment, but it has been the exception rather than the rule.

49. *Designing Canada's Army of Tomorrow,* p. 48.

50. Such consideration moves the discussion of core competencies firmly into the realm of mixing tangible and intangible, which, surprisingly, is exactly what should happen (and all too frequently does not). Considerations, for example, of Canadian cultural values of tolerance and multiculturalism need to be factored into core competencies like our Army training system. Jim Storr, "Neither Art nor Science – Towards a Discipline of Warfare," in RUSI Journal, April 2001, p. 42.

51. Dunning, p. 51.