

WEBVTT

00:00:06.100 --> 00:00:20.800

<v SPEAKER_1>In this Triple Helix episode of the podcast, which was recorded August 25th, 2025, I'm sitting down and talking to Vice Admiral Retired Ron Lloyd, one of our fellows, to discuss his new policy perspective titled Nine Actionable Decisions for the Prime Minister to Best Posture Defence.

00:00:20.800 --> 00:00:46.440

<v SPEAKER_1>We talk about the thrust of his paper, as well as some specific recommendations, and it essentially boils down to an argument for a need to make changes to the underlying small p policy set rule set in the Government of Canada, if you want to achieve big p, capital p policy outcomes like are we strong and free, or implementing the current government's commitment to reach 2% of GDP spending this year on defence and a target of 3.5% or 5% of GDP later.

00:00:46.440 --> 00:00:53.460

<v SPEAKER_1>We also had a chance to preview our Digital Transformation Conference, which will be held on the 16th of September, titled Charting Canada's Digital Ambition.

00:00:53.460 --> 00:00:58.740

<v SPEAKER_1>So if you don't have tickets for that already, you can register online on the CGAI website.

00:00:58.740 --> 00:01:04.040

<v SPEAKER_1>Also, as a note, we're now providing transcripts for our episodes of the podcast, which will be available on the website.

00:01:04.040 --> 00:01:06.240

<v SPEAKER_1>So check them out if that's of interest.

00:01:09.360 --> 00:01:11.700

<v SPEAKER_1>Ron, welcome back to Defence Deconstructed.

00:01:11.700 --> 00:01:12.220

<v SPEAKER_2>Thanks, David.

00:01:12.220 --> 00:01:14.020

<v SPEAKER_2>Pleasure to be back.

00:01:14.020 --> 00:01:27.020

<v SPEAKER_1>So we're having you on today to talk about a paper that you just published, of considerations for leveraging fully the digital ambition that the current government and Prime Minister Carney has outlined thus far.

00:01:27.020 --> 00:01:37.060

<v SPEAKER_1>It's a great setup to our conference on digitizing the Government of Canada, Digitizing Defence, which is going to be held September 16th in Ottawa at the West End.

00:01:37.060 --> 00:01:42.320

<v SPEAKER_1>For those that haven't had a chance to go ahead and register, you can do so on our website.

00:01:42.320 --> 00:01:49.000

<v SPEAKER_1>We're going to get into the guts of the paper, but maybe just take a quick second, Ron, and talk about because you've been taking the lead in doing some of the organization on the conference.

00:01:49.000 --> 00:01:55.040

<v SPEAKER_1>What are some of the key things that folks want to come and sit in and attend and participate on the 16th of September?

00:01:55.040 --> 00:01:58.160

<v SPEAKER_1>They're going to hear on the conference floor.

00:01:58.160 --> 00:02:05.460

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, I think first off, let me applaud you for your leadership on the conference and for enabling this to come to fruition.

00:02:05.460 --> 00:02:07.640

<v SPEAKER_2>There'll be a couple of keynotes at the conference.

00:02:07.640 --> 00:02:24.080

<v SPEAKER_2>The first one will hopefully set up the importance of digital for the government and just how integral that will be to realize the vision and the strategic capabilities that we're trying to put in place for the new realities in which we find ourselves as a nation.

00:02:24.080 --> 00:02:26.260

<v SPEAKER_2>And so that's keynote number one.

00:02:26.460 --> 00:02:34.360

<v SPEAKER_2>And then with that as a sort of a vision, a destination, I think the first panel is going to take a look like, OK, if that's the destination, where are we today?

00:02:34.480 --> 00:02:40.160

<v SPEAKER_2>And how well postured are we digitally to actually realize that ambition?

00:02:40.160 --> 00:02:48.420

<v SPEAKER_2>And so we're looking forward to having a good panel represented by public sector and in industry and inside the

government.

00:02:49.080 --> 00:02:57.360

<v SPEAKER_2>Panel two will be, OK, that's how we're postured in the public sector, how we're postured in Canada with other no-fail organizations.

00:02:57.360 --> 00:03:00.520

<v SPEAKER_2>And how are they doing relative to the rest of the world?

00:03:00.520 --> 00:03:09.820

<v SPEAKER_2>And so I think we'll get some really good insights in how other no-fail Canadian organizations are probably better postured than the public sector today.

00:03:09.820 --> 00:03:20.820

<v SPEAKER_2>The second keynote at lunch, we're going to be very, very, you know, impressed with everything that Lieutenant General Steve Boivin, Commander Joint Operations Command, is going to share with us.

00:03:20.820 --> 00:03:25.080

<v SPEAKER_2>And so I think that in and of itself will be the price, worth the price of admission.

00:03:25.080 --> 00:03:34.960

<v SPEAKER_2>And so very happy that Steve will be joining us and providing sort of a snapshot of where defence is today and where Steve and the team want to take defence into the future.

00:03:34.960 --> 00:03:40.040

<v SPEAKER_2>And then the last panel, panel three will be seizing the opportunity.

00:03:40.040 --> 00:03:52.100

<v SPEAKER_2>So with that as context, what is it that we think we can do in order to put wind in those sails to actually realise and make sure we arrive at the destination that the government's articulated.

00:03:52.100 --> 00:04:07.600

<v SPEAKER_2>And then finally, the fireside chat between you and Bill Matthews, I think will be really insightful in terms of getting a sense of the challenges and what's taking place inside government at this juncture in terms of some of the new ways of governing and the like.

00:04:07.600 --> 00:04:12.160

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think that'll be a fascinating fireside chat as well.

00:04:12.160 --> 00:04:20.700

<v SPEAKER_2>And then in order to have a deliverable or an outcome, I'm really happy that you're going to get three young academics to sort of take notes during the day.

00:04:20.700 --> 00:04:31.500

<v SPEAKER_2>And then we'll come up with sort of a deliverable, a report of proceedings, if you will, in terms of what was discussed, what we heard, and what could be actually put on paper for those who participated.

00:04:31.500 --> 00:04:45.520

<v SPEAKER_2>And equally, if not more important, those who were not able to participate to get a sense of how the day unfolded and where it is that we could hopefully help government to reach that vision that they'll circulate in Keynote 1.

00:04:45.520 --> 00:04:51.360

<v SPEAKER_2>So that's sort of the thumbnail sketch of the day, and really looking forward to participating in it.

00:04:51.360 --> 00:04:52.080

<v SPEAKER_1>Okay, perfect.

00:04:52.080 --> 00:04:52.720

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for that.

00:04:52.720 --> 00:04:58.740

<v SPEAKER_1>And for those that don't have a ticket yet, you can get one on the events page of the cgai.ca website.

00:04:58.740 --> 00:05:04.580

<v SPEAKER_1>If you haven't gotten your seat already, get that in place before the end of this episode.

00:05:04.580 --> 00:05:17.580

<v SPEAKER_1>For the episode, Ron, he had a great setup again with the paper in terms of some of these themes, which I think really speaks to that piece you mentioned early on in your sketch of the conference of where are we today and what you need to do to move forward.

00:05:17.580 --> 00:05:25.440

<v SPEAKER_1>So in this paper, you talk about nine decisions that the Prime Minister could take that would enable a wider set of change initiatives.

00:05:25.440 --> 00:06:03.340

<v SPEAKER_1>I'm going to ask you to walk through here, but I guess my take is basically that drawing on your experience and being involved in a couple of different change initiatives during your time and the

employee of Her Majesty at the time, that there's a number of different building block mechanisms, small P policies, as you articulated, short of the capital P policy set that gets announced and gets put into a bright and colorful PDF and gets announced, that are really the fundamental way that the Government of Canada operates today and without recognizing how that small P policy architecture operates, constrains limits, sets boundaries, guides risk tolerance.

00:06:03.800 --> 00:06:16.700

<v SPEAKER_1>You can make a whole number of flashy policy changes at the top, but you got to figure out some of the changes and adaptations to the plumbing and wiring of how the Government of Canada operates to be able to actually get to where you want to go.

00:06:16.700 --> 00:06:19.260

<v SPEAKER_1>Is that as a high level, is that a fair take?

00:06:19.260 --> 00:06:27.100

<v SPEAKER_2>That's exactly it, Dave, you know, and so some of the challenges, and so this is why it's important that people say policy can't be done policy.

00:06:27.200 --> 00:06:36.920

<v SPEAKER_2>And so you need to have that differentiation between a capital P policy, which is what most people think as opposed to the small P policies.

00:06:36.920 --> 00:06:40.100

<v SPEAKER_2>And when I say small P policies, it's not just a policy.

00:06:40.100 --> 00:06:43.020

<v SPEAKER_2>Like in that case, I'm talking about guidelines.

00:06:43.020 --> 00:06:47.260

<v SPEAKER_2>I'm talking about, you know, project complexity risk assessment tools policy.

00:06:47.260 --> 00:06:50.280

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, there's ITSGs, ITSPs.

00:06:50.280 --> 00:06:58.340

<v SPEAKER_2>There is a plethora of small P policies out there that departments must deliver their mandates within.

00:06:58.920 --> 00:07:03.060

<v SPEAKER_2>And that is really what gives them a left and right of arc.

00:07:03.060 --> 00:07:09.720

<v SPEAKER_2>And so when departments say, I can't do it because of

policy, more often than not, it's not internal to that department.

00:07:09.720 --> 00:07:11.180
<v SPEAKER_2>It's external.

00:07:11.180 --> 00:07:16.720
<v SPEAKER_2>And then there's this belief that it's a misinterpretation of these small P policies.

00:07:16.720 --> 00:07:21.080
<v SPEAKER_2>Well, I can tell you there are misinterpretations of small P policy.

00:07:21.080 --> 00:07:39.700
<v SPEAKER_2>But at central agencies, you know, if there's misinterpretation out there, you need to tighten up the policy so that there's no misinterpretation because in the in the risk adverse culture that exists because of these small P policies, this isn't a reflection of individuals.

00:07:39.700 --> 00:07:46.140
<v SPEAKER_2>This is a reflection of a small P policy paradigm that drives leaders down these paths.

00:07:46.140 --> 00:07:49.140
<v SPEAKER_2>As innovative as they would like to be, they can't.

00:07:49.140 --> 00:07:51.740
<v SPEAKER_2>As much as they're prepared to accept risk, they can't.

00:07:51.740 --> 00:07:57.660
<v SPEAKER_2>So this isn't a reflection of the tremendous leaders in the public service, the Canadian Armed Forces and Department of National Defence.

00:07:57.660 --> 00:08:02.840
<v SPEAKER_2>This is a reflection of that small P policy paradigm within which you're referring to.

00:08:02.840 --> 00:08:13.200
<v SPEAKER_1>So one thing you talked to here that at least in my travels, you talk about authorities, responsibilities, accountabilities, ARAs, which is something that folks in government live and breathe and die by.

00:08:13.200 --> 00:08:17.840
<v SPEAKER_1>But for folks like me is a little bit more opaque and more difficult to understand.

00:08:17.840 --> 00:08:29.260

<v SPEAKER_1>Given that this kind of transcends a lot of what you're talking about, just sketch out the importance of making sure that ARAs align with capital P policy direction.

00:08:29.260 --> 00:08:29.700

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:08:29.700 --> 00:08:38.020

<v SPEAKER_2>And so a capital P policy will come out and they'll say, here's the digital ambition for the Government of Canada.

00:08:38.020 --> 00:08:46.080

<v SPEAKER_2>And then there's three components that affect almost all processes in modern government.

00:08:46.080 --> 00:08:46.740

<v SPEAKER_2>Okay.

00:08:46.740 --> 00:08:47.900

<v SPEAKER_2>The first one is security.

00:08:49.260 --> 00:08:53.220

<v SPEAKER_2>Second one is the risk management.

00:08:53.220 --> 00:08:59.360

<v SPEAKER_2>And then the third one is because we're in a digital world, there's a digital implication associated with that.

00:08:59.360 --> 00:09:03.920

<v SPEAKER_2>So all processes in government have those three components.

00:09:05.080 --> 00:09:11.400

<v SPEAKER_2>Security Classification Framework was adopted in Canada over 40 years ago.

00:09:11.400 --> 00:09:15.460

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's the authority of Treasury Board sets that.

00:09:16.680 --> 00:09:23.140

<v SPEAKER_2>You then have other authorities for physical and digital security, for example, the RCMP and CSE.

00:09:23.140 --> 00:09:36.260

<v SPEAKER_2>And they set those security requirements through the Harmonized Threat and Risk Assessment document of 2007, that is 20 years old now and is long past its best before date.

00:09:36.260 --> 00:09:37.620

<v SPEAKER_2>And then you have the departments.

00:09:37.660 --> 00:09:49.500

<v SPEAKER_2>So inside Defence, as Commander of the Navy, when it came to security, we were struggling because of some of the systems wouldn't meet the digital security requirements.

00:09:49.500 --> 00:10:02.300

<v SPEAKER_2>And so I can remember going to CSE at the time and saying, hey, why don't we just change the standard between confidential and protected B so that I can actually leverage these systems as opposed to having to bump it up to secret?

00:10:02.300 --> 00:10:06.860

<v SPEAKER_2>At the time, I had no idea that the cause was a flawed classification framework.

00:10:07.020 --> 00:10:12.120

<v SPEAKER_2>I felt the symptoms of it, but I didn't understand the root cause.

00:10:12.120 --> 00:10:19.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And it wasn't until I actually retired and started going through all these policies and reading them that I went, you got to be kidding me.

00:10:19.200 --> 00:10:46.320

<v SPEAKER_2>We have the same level of injury for personal information that we do, you know, by personal information, talking tax returns and, you know, my personal appraisal that you get every year, your PER, is apparently, if that's divulged, that's the same level of risk as life and death decisions that are made in Latvia or planning and the like.

00:10:46.320 --> 00:10:50.880

<v SPEAKER_2>And so once I realized that, I said, you know, this is problematic.

00:10:51.160 --> 00:10:54.380

<v SPEAKER_2>We're the only nation that I've been able to find in the world.

00:10:54.560 --> 00:10:57.640

<v SPEAKER_2>In my papers, I say NATO because I can say that authoritatively.

00:10:57.640 --> 00:11:01.600

<v SPEAKER_2>There may be other countries that have this, but none that I'm aware of.

00:11:01.600 --> 00:11:09.220

<v SPEAKER_2>And so we need to recalibrate that security classification framework because that articulates the level of injury.

00:11:09.220 --> 00:11:18.320

<v SPEAKER_2>The Harmonized Threat and Risk Assessment, the Bible of risk management, has got to be replaced because that flows from that.

00:11:18.320 --> 00:11:30.520

<v SPEAKER_2>And then all of our digital security baselines that are in ITSG 33 and then there's other ones for cloud, but that's the on-prem and cloud, those all flow from this flawed paradigm.

00:11:30.520 --> 00:11:38.120

<v SPEAKER_2>And so this is why our digital security baselines in Canada, believe it or not, are more excessive than our peers and allies.

00:11:38.120 --> 00:11:43.640

<v SPEAKER_2>This is why it's problematic from a whole bunch of different factors, including interoperability.

00:11:43.640 --> 00:11:46.580

<v SPEAKER_2>We're paying more for it, additional security clearances.

00:11:46.580 --> 00:11:57.460

<v SPEAKER_2>Like I believe we're probably paying hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars more, between public sector and industry as a result of this flawed security classification framework.

00:11:57.460 --> 00:12:01.460

<v SPEAKER_1>And so one of the recommendations you put in here is to revisit that.

00:12:01.460 --> 00:12:25.720

<v SPEAKER_1>And I guess in part, drawing out both that it's demonstrably not fit for purpose in today's environment, as well as it's not fit for purpose to enable the kind of forward-looking vision the government's articulated, in part because, as you mentioned, a bunch of these instruments were drafted just at the dawn of the smartphone era, which now underpins the functioning of all of our economies.

00:12:25.720 --> 00:12:27.320

<v SPEAKER_2>No, absolutely correct, Dave.

00:12:29.460 --> 00:12:47.560

<v SPEAKER_2>And so I say that in order to be able to leverage these, then you go to the policy instrument where Shared Services Canada was introduced in 2014, a small P policy, and they're going to be responsible for delivering services for all departments.

00:12:47.820 --> 00:13:01.880

<v SPEAKER_2>And for the Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence to be able to move at the pace of technology today, they can't have an intermediary determining what is going to be acceptable or not for them.

00:13:02.000 --> 00:13:18.520

<v SPEAKER_2>You can't take the construct that applies to every other government department and say, we're going to use that same methodology and those same processes in order to be able to make sure we're able to keep pace with our allies, partners and our adversaries.

00:13:20.100 --> 00:13:25.340

<v SPEAKER_2>My thesis is that defence is not sufficiently agile at this point.

00:13:25.340 --> 00:13:30.860

<v SPEAKER_2>You've heard it from the commanders in a number of conferences that you've been at where we continue to fall behind.

00:13:30.860 --> 00:13:46.420

<v SPEAKER_2>In 2014, when it made sense that Shared Services Canada provide some of these, I think we need to enable defence, if they actually own the national security and defence risk, to be responsible for the ability to procure and leverage technology at pace and scale.

00:13:46.420 --> 00:13:49.060

<v SPEAKER_2>Because if they don't, I think it's going to be problematic.

00:13:49.060 --> 00:13:58.580

<v SPEAKER_2>I believe it undermines their digital readiness, which ultimately leads to a poor force posture and readiness going forward.

00:13:58.600 --> 00:14:18.680

<v SPEAKER_2>And so I think that's another one of the recommendations there, is that we need to enable the Chief of Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister to be accountable, you know, ARAs for procuring the services that can enable their Sailor, Soldiers, Aviators and Special Forces operators to be successful in the 21st century.

00:14:18.680 --> 00:14:29.380

<v SPEAKER_1>And so essentially, it's in part recognizing that a digital framework that might work for Parks Canada is probably not necessarily well suited to troops that have to operate somewhere in the Indo-Pacific.

00:14:29.380 --> 00:14:30.980

<v SPEAKER_2>Exactly.

00:14:30.980 --> 00:14:44.380

<v SPEAKER_1>So, part of another one of the things you suggest is that there's an alignment between the need to do this generally and with specific applications on some of the unique defence applications like the ones you were just discussing.

00:14:44.440 --> 00:14:55.980

<v SPEAKER_1>But more broadly, part of what the current government's articulated is an intent on focusing more on results, moving away from process, which is not a new theme.

00:14:55.980 --> 00:15:06.200

<v SPEAKER_1>I'm old enough to remember when the previous Prime Minister was very enthused about deliverology as a different mechanism of getting towards the same types of outcomes.

00:15:06.200 --> 00:15:26.780

<v SPEAKER_1>But you make the point that actually aligning some of those small policy contracts is the effective mechanism by which you would actually change some of the risk tolerance and calibration in the public service to get to a more results-oriented approach to governing, or sorry, at least administering the government of Canada.

00:15:26.780 --> 00:15:27.420

<v SPEAKER_2>Absolutely.

00:15:27.420 --> 00:15:30.720

<v SPEAKER_2>And so once again, I go back to those three documents.

00:15:30.720 --> 00:15:36.460

<v SPEAKER_2>They essentially set the real stat for risk tolerance in government.

00:15:37.300 --> 00:15:42.580

<v SPEAKER_2>Security Classification Framework, TRA 1 and ITST 33.

00:15:42.580 --> 00:15:51.100

<v SPEAKER_2>You modify those small P policies, you now have an opportunity to recalibrate the entire small P policy paradigm going forward.

00:15:51.100 --> 00:16:02.600

<v SPEAKER_2>Because if you change the Security Classification Framework, I believe you actually have to go and change hundreds of policies at the central agency level to reflect that.

00:16:02.600 --> 00:16:12.920

<v SPEAKER_2>And if you change TRA 1 and ITST 33, you now have to force the government to change thousands of small P policies.

00:16:12.920 --> 00:16:25.920

<v SPEAKER_2>And so if you really want to get after the culture of the public service, if you actually want to enable them and get away with a lot of that process, that process is all being directed by these small P policies.

00:16:25.920 --> 00:16:32.560

<v SPEAKER_2>And back to accountability, you can't hold the process to account.

00:16:33.860 --> 00:16:45.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And so our Deputy Ministers and our Senior Executives in Government aren't empowered because they're one of several empowered stakeholders in this process.

00:16:45.200 --> 00:16:53.380

<v SPEAKER_2>And so in my paper, I say, you know, the nations that are going to be successful in the 21st century are those that are going to be able to operate at the speed of trust.

00:16:53.380 --> 00:16:55.420

<v SPEAKER_2>Process does not operate at the speed of trust.

00:16:55.420 --> 00:17:00.220

<v SPEAKER_2>You're supposed to trust the process, which is 180 degrees out of phase with that construct.

00:17:00.740 --> 00:17:11.220

<v SPEAKER_2>And so for governments, you know, whether it's deliverology, the way to do that, I think, is to do an end-to-end mapping of the as-is process.

00:17:11.220 --> 00:17:25.560

<v SPEAKER_2>I'm not sure if you're aware, Dave, but has anyone mapped the procurement process for government and specifically defence from the, you know, the articulation of a requirement through to the delivery of a capability?

00:17:25.560 --> 00:17:26.660

<v SPEAKER_2>And I'm not aware of that.

00:17:26.660 --> 00:17:33.060

<v SPEAKER_2>Like, I'm aware of it being done defence a number of times and every time we do that, we add more process.

00:17:33.060 --> 00:17:42.460

<v SPEAKER_2>And then we don't include the, you know, that's the PAD, the Project Approval Directive, or the PAD, the Project Approval Guide, can never keep track of whatever they're calling it these days.

00:17:42.460 --> 00:17:47.360

<v SPEAKER_2>But then that's not to be confused with the PAM, you know, the Procurement Administration Manual.

00:17:47.360 --> 00:18:03.600

<v SPEAKER_2>And so if you did an end-to-end as-is mapping from Treasury Board all the way through SSC and PSBC and into defence, I think you'd be able to cut in half the process approval timeline.

00:18:03.600 --> 00:18:14.900

<v SPEAKER_2>And I've said, you know, you should aspire to reduce it by 75% because I think there's a real opportunity to get away with process and empower, give those ARAs to individuals.

00:18:14.900 --> 00:18:29.040

<v SPEAKER_2>Because currently I think in this current construct, the Prime Minister and the Clerk could go to hold DMs accountable and they're going to be hard pressed to because of this overlapping web of ARAs that exist as a result of all these small p-policies, if that's helpful.

00:18:30.600 --> 00:18:36.560

<v SPEAKER_1>This episode of Defence Deconstructed is brought to you by Irving Shipbuilding, Canada's national shipbuilder is currently hiring.

00:18:36.560 --> 00:18:44.980

<v SPEAKER_1>For more information on the many jobs and opportunities currently available, please visit www.shipsforkanada.ca/careers.

00:18:47.140 --> 00:18:49.280

<v SPEAKER_1>I think a couple of things you mentioned there.

00:18:49.280 --> 00:18:56.020

<v SPEAKER_1>The need to move at the speed of trust when the existing process construct we have now basically assumes a complete lack of trust.

00:18:56.020 --> 00:19:08.500

<v SPEAKER_1>Because rather than relying on an oversight mechanism more akin to how we operate our tax regime of assuming most people are innocent, and then doing some audits to see whether or not people have fallen outside of them.

00:19:09.120 --> 00:19:24.080

<v SPEAKER_1>We have a process that's set up to double and triple or quadruple check everybody's homework on the assumption that they're all making mistakes, and we're just going to systematically go through and remove them, rather than assuming that people can go and be

trusted to actually do the right thing.

00:19:24.080 --> 00:19:26.600

<v SPEAKER_1>We operate on the reverse premise.

00:19:26.800 --> 00:19:48.740

<v SPEAKER_1>In terms of the process mapping, I think just to add one thing, I don't know what your reflection is at your time in senior leadership levels, but in my observation, one of the difficulties we have now is that senior leadership is not able to maintain visibility on exactly what all of the intricacies of these smaller P policy constructs are leading people to be directed to do.

00:19:48.740 --> 00:20:03.680

<v SPEAKER_1>And so there's a misalignment between what senior parts of the public service, government, the CAF, wherever, want to do and what people down at the working levels are actually being held accountable with the existing set on what they must do according to the construct of their job.

00:20:03.680 --> 00:20:14.180

<v SPEAKER_1>And people at higher levels don't actually have visibility into the hundreds and hundreds of pages worth of directives that come out of the PAM, the PAD, et cetera.

00:20:14.180 --> 00:20:24.080

<v SPEAKER_1>And that leads to both extra time, but also frustration and a lack of understanding about why it is that things can't be done better, faster, et cetera.

00:20:24.080 --> 00:20:25.140

<v SPEAKER_2>Well said.

00:20:26.460 --> 00:20:34.460

<v SPEAKER_2>And, you know, if you bring in that to your boss, these small people policies, they say, I don't need that detail.

00:20:35.260 --> 00:20:38.220

<v SPEAKER_2>And the reality of is, you do need the detail.

00:20:38.220 --> 00:20:42.320

<v SPEAKER_2>And this is why I've written five papers now.

00:20:42.320 --> 00:20:43.480

<v SPEAKER_2>A, are they long?

00:20:43.480 --> 00:20:45.040

<v SPEAKER_2>Yes, they're long.

00:20:45.040 --> 00:20:53.400

<v SPEAKER_2>But they're sufficiently short that a senior executive should be able to roll up their sleeves and get into the paper and say, are you kidding me?

00:20:53.400 --> 00:20:55.600

<v SPEAKER_2>This is really what's taking place down there?

00:20:55.600 --> 00:20:58.140

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, no wonder we're not getting her done.

00:20:58.140 --> 00:21:08.780

<v SPEAKER_2>And this other thing that I introduce in my papers is that, you know, there are phenomenal leaders in the public sector, and they are prepared to accept risk.

00:21:08.780 --> 00:21:20.220

<v SPEAKER_2>They are prepared to, you know, lean into what it is that they've been given a mandate for, but they're in handcuffs because of these small people policies.

00:21:21.280 --> 00:21:26.460

<v SPEAKER_2>And it's not fully appreciated that a lot of the handcuffs are from central agencies.

00:21:26.460 --> 00:21:31.780

<v SPEAKER_2>And I'm not saying central agencies are trying to be, you know, difficult or problematic.

00:21:31.960 --> 00:21:36.020

<v SPEAKER_2>Like they're doing it with the view that they're trying to be helpful.

00:21:36.020 --> 00:21:41.080

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, what might have been helpful 20 years ago is not helpful today.

00:21:41.080 --> 00:21:44.920

<v SPEAKER_2>And it's this understanding of these.

00:21:44.920 --> 00:21:50.860

<v SPEAKER_2>And let's be clear, like, OAG audits don't help, you know, Arrive Can didn't help.

00:21:51.640 --> 00:22:06.500

<v SPEAKER_2>And what's actually frustrating for me on the other side looking in is that some of the extra oversight that they're putting in is actually reinforcing the status quo at a time when we're getting killed by the status quo.

00:22:06.500 --> 00:22:11.280

<v SPEAKER_2>And so how is it that we can adopt these new models of governing like that?

00:22:11.280 --> 00:22:16.420

<v SPEAKER_2>The Prime Minister said in his mandate later, like we need to adopt new ways of governing.

00:22:16.420 --> 00:22:23.400

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, if governing is these small P policies within which departments Massasbury, like that's where that red, what do you call it?

00:22:23.400 --> 00:22:28.440

<v SPEAKER_2>The red tape reduction review needs to start.

00:22:28.440 --> 00:22:36.660

<v SPEAKER_2>Like if you want to start with understanding which policies to look at, like those are where you need to start and everything will flow from that.

00:22:36.660 --> 00:22:37.960

<v SPEAKER_2>Form follows function.

00:22:37.960 --> 00:22:47.440

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, if you don't understand the functions that these different departments and agencies are going to be required to do, then doing anything in an organizational construct is foolish.

00:22:47.540 --> 00:22:50.460

<v SPEAKER_2>It's like moving deck chairs on the Titanic.

00:22:50.460 --> 00:22:59.140

<v SPEAKER_2>You need to actually change the destination in terms of what's going on as opposed to just organization change for organization change's sake.

00:22:59.140 --> 00:23:02.440

<v SPEAKER_2>Like that's going to lead to a bad outcome.

00:23:02.440 --> 00:23:17.680

<v SPEAKER_1>So that's part of why you make the recommendation that you need to actually look at that underpinning Small P Foundation before proposing any kind of sophisticated organizational change because otherwise you will be just configuring the deck chairs in a different location on the Titanic.

00:23:17.680 --> 00:23:18.520

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:23:18.520 --> 00:23:28.240

<v SPEAKER_2>It's unfortunate but true because the departments that will be implicated will still have to maneuver inside that Small P Policy Construct.

00:23:28.240 --> 00:23:36.860

<v SPEAKER_2>So absent changing that Small P Policy Construct, how could you reasonably expect anything else but the same outcome?

00:23:36.980 --> 00:23:39.000

<v SPEAKER_2>And I use Afghanistan.

00:23:39.000 --> 00:23:42.260

<v SPEAKER_2>There was success in Afghanistan, two or three.

00:23:42.260 --> 00:23:48.060

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, but that was because we made allowances to go around the process.

00:23:48.060 --> 00:23:50.940

<v SPEAKER_2>We made allowances but they weren't codified.

00:23:50.940 --> 00:23:53.680

<v SPEAKER_2>During the pandemic, there were successes.

00:23:53.680 --> 00:23:57.640

<v SPEAKER_2>But once again, we super pressurized the system.

00:23:57.700 --> 00:24:04.480

<v SPEAKER_2>People did it work in weekends and nights and, and, you know, leveraging shortcuts at the time.

00:24:04.480 --> 00:24:16.260

<v SPEAKER_2>But quick as a flash, after a war, three policy updates and a pandemic, the fundamental small P policy paradigm that has been in place is still in place today.

00:24:16.260 --> 00:24:26.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And until you change it, any success that this government has, I believe are going to be like those of the war in Afghanistan, those of the pandemic, and they're going to be false positives.

00:24:26.640 --> 00:24:50.140

<v SPEAKER_2>They're going to give you that illusion that things have changed when in reality they haven't, and what will happen is we'll snap back to that status quo construct when they find that this is unsustainable as it was during the war, as it was during the pandemic, and as it will be no matter how much the government wants a new results focused orientation by the public sector.

00:24:51.240 --> 00:25:03.760

<v SPEAKER_1>So to get towards the forward-looking agenda part of this, you said it suggests that if we can get to the point where you do the internal work to understand how things are currently working before you start envisioning the future.

00:25:05.000 --> 00:25:15.480

<v SPEAKER_1>With that done, you're also suggesting to develop an integrated implementation plan to actually keep more eyes on and more focus on how these changes will be carried forward.

00:25:15.480 --> 00:25:19.080

<v SPEAKER_1>You just talk a little bit about that and why you think that that element is important.

00:25:19.080 --> 00:25:30.300

<v SPEAKER_1>And I guess maybe reflect a little bit because you've been involved in some of these complex exchange initiatives during your time in government, but why the absence of one is problematic if you don't have it.

00:25:32.680 --> 00:25:37.020

<v SPEAKER_2>So PIMA is my favourite acronym, Plan, Execute, Measure, Adjust.

00:25:37.020 --> 00:25:44.520

<v SPEAKER_2>And I can remember being a fleet commander and saying to my deputy at the time, I say, you know, plan, execute, plan, execute.

00:25:44.520 --> 00:25:45.860

<v SPEAKER_2>That seems to be all we ever do.

00:25:45.860 --> 00:25:48.260

<v SPEAKER_2>We never seem to measure and adjust.

00:25:48.260 --> 00:25:50.260

<v SPEAKER_2>He goes, yeah, we don't plan that well either.

00:25:50.700 --> 00:25:54.920

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, and so, so execute, execute, execute.

00:25:55.140 --> 00:26:03.580

<v SPEAKER_2>And so, you know, CAF is great at executing, government's great at executing, but seldom do we plan, execute, measure and adjust.

00:26:03.580 --> 00:26:05.340

<v SPEAKER_2>And the P and P is for plan.

00:26:05.340 --> 00:26:06.880

<v SPEAKER_2>It's not for PowerPoint.

00:26:06.880 --> 00:26:08.260
<v SPEAKER_2>It's not for policy.

00:26:08.260 --> 00:26:15.660
<v SPEAKER_2>OK, and far too often that's what you will get is a PowerPoint slide and or policy as a plan.

00:26:15.780 --> 00:26:16.960
<v SPEAKER_2>And that's not a plan.

00:26:17.740 --> 00:26:19.240
<v SPEAKER_2>And so think about it.

00:26:19.240 --> 00:26:22.700
<v SPEAKER_2>You're about to change the Security Architecture Framework of the nation.

00:26:22.700 --> 00:26:23.460
<v SPEAKER_2>You're about to change.

00:26:34.831 --> 00:26:51.151
<v SPEAKER_2>If that's not phased and sequenced in an implementation plan, and then the hundreds and thousands of small P policies aligned to that phasing and synchronizing, then you're going to be in a world of hurt, and you're basically not going to be able to get to where it is you need to go.

00:26:51.151 --> 00:27:00.131
<v SPEAKER_2>So that implementation plan will be very detailed, and it will have to be very comprehensive to outline those ARAs.

00:27:00.131 --> 00:27:06.271
<v SPEAKER_2>Who's got the authority to do this, who's got the responsibility for doing this, and who's accountable for this.

00:27:06.271 --> 00:27:09.351
<v SPEAKER_2>And so I think that will be really, really important.

00:27:09.351 --> 00:27:28.731
<v SPEAKER_2>As you implement changes as we did in the Navy, I found that from the time I gave direction to the team, to the next time we got back together, whether it was a week or two weeks, we diverged in what it is I had given them direction for, and what they came up against as inertia, trying to follow all these small p-policies.

00:27:28.731 --> 00:27:30.831
<v SPEAKER_2>Oh, we can't do this, boss, because of this policy.

00:27:30.831 --> 00:27:32.371

<v SPEAKER_2>We can't do this, boss, because of this policy.

00:27:32.791 --> 00:27:33.851

<v SPEAKER_2>We'll change the policy.

00:27:33.851 --> 00:27:35.451

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, boss, we don't own the policy.

00:27:35.451 --> 00:27:37.771

<v SPEAKER_2>Oh, you do own that policy, you can change that one.

00:27:37.771 --> 00:27:40.151

<v SPEAKER_2>Okay, but that don't want to get us so far.

00:27:40.151 --> 00:27:48.871

<v SPEAKER_2>And so as they get into the execution phase, they're going to come up against all these challenges in terms of other small p-policies that they don't own.

00:27:48.871 --> 00:27:52.251

<v SPEAKER_2>And so this measure piece is what I call is governance.

00:27:52.251 --> 00:27:58.771

<v SPEAKER_2>And when I say governance, I don't refer to the governance that is, you know, the CAF and DND are a wash in governance.

00:27:58.771 --> 00:28:00.251

<v SPEAKER_2>Unfortunately, it's not good governance.

00:28:00.711 --> 00:28:09.211

<v SPEAKER_2>It's what I refer to as staff governance, which is bottom up as opposed to strategic, effective strategic governance, which is going to be top down.

00:28:09.211 --> 00:28:11.011

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, the agenda is set by the boss.

00:28:11.011 --> 00:28:15.171

<v SPEAKER_2>It's coming to, as opposed to this construct where, you know, the staff will come together.

00:28:15.171 --> 00:28:17.271

<v SPEAKER_2>And the staff are doing the best they can.

00:28:17.271 --> 00:28:18.991

<v SPEAKER_2>But you know, you need to get on the agenda.

00:28:18.991 --> 00:28:20.151

<v SPEAKER_2>You need to go through staff.

00:28:20.151 --> 00:28:23.351

<v SPEAKER_2>Oh, we have, you know, it's not, there's a big dissonance there.

00:28:23.351 --> 00:28:26.751

<v SPEAKER_2>Okay, well, let's not put in the agenda till all the stakeholders are aligned.

00:28:26.751 --> 00:28:32.911

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, as soon as you start having that type of governance, you're going to be weeks and months and years getting decisions, unfortunately.

00:28:32.911 --> 00:28:50.311

<v SPEAKER_2>And so this has got to be the measuring from an effective strategic governance that are sufficiently empowered that if a central agency policy is a problematic, is a barrier, that they've got the authority to direct that central agency to adjust the policy to reflect the prime minister's intent.

00:28:50.311 --> 00:29:00.711

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's why I say it's got to go to the prime minister, because the intractable challenges with some of these policies between ministers, like you don't want ministers scrapping it out.

00:29:00.711 --> 00:29:02.311

<v SPEAKER_2>And so who's going to beat the tie?

00:29:02.311 --> 00:29:08.591

<v SPEAKER_2>Unfortunately, it's going to be the prime minister, unless you power someone else to be able to do that on his behalf.

00:29:08.591 --> 00:29:34.191

<v SPEAKER_2>But that's where I think you'll get a good sense of the scope and scale of the risks that governments prepare to assume, and then you're going to be able to document it and make sure that those outcomes remain completely aligned, because if not, essentially, the inertia of the status quo will prevail as it has for the last 40 years, unfortunately, when it comes to the security classification construct.

00:29:34.711 --> 00:29:39.291

<v SPEAKER_1>The last point you make, last recommendation is to simply accept transition risk.

00:29:39.291 --> 00:29:41.531

<v SPEAKER_1>Can you talk a little bit about what you mean there?

00:29:41.531 --> 00:29:44.591

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:29:44.591 --> 00:29:52.291

<v SPEAKER_2>The prime minister's mandate letter, and everything that the government is trying to accomplish today is to get after real world risk.

00:29:53.631 --> 00:29:58.711

<v SPEAKER_2>Real world risk, we're not well postured right now digitally from the Canadian Armed Forces.

00:29:58.711 --> 00:30:09.251

<v SPEAKER_2>We need to fundamentally realign ourselves in NATO based on the fact that our old relationship with the United States will not be what it used to be.

00:30:09.251 --> 00:30:13.331

<v SPEAKER_2>These are all real world risks that the government is trying to deal with.

00:30:13.331 --> 00:30:25.331

<v SPEAKER_2>Unfortunately, in order to get to a posture that will effectively deal with these real world risks, the status quo policy paradigm will see that as too risky.

00:30:25.331 --> 00:30:34.591

<v SPEAKER_2>And so as a result, the public sector will focus on, public service will focus on implementation risk.

00:30:34.591 --> 00:30:36.991

<v SPEAKER_2>Oh, we can't do that because we got to change these five policies.

00:30:36.991 --> 00:30:38.171

<v SPEAKER_2>Oh, geez, you know, what about this?

00:30:38.171 --> 00:30:39.731

<v SPEAKER_2>What about that?

00:30:39.731 --> 00:30:42.311

<v SPEAKER_2>And so, but that's policy risk.

00:30:42.311 --> 00:30:43.671

<v SPEAKER_2>Like who cares?

00:30:43.671 --> 00:30:48.851

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, like at some juncture here, we're going to still hopefully make sure that people are held accountable.

00:30:49.551 --> 00:30:59.851

<v SPEAKER_2>Back to your statement, we don't need four staffs checking each other's homework to make sure that there's somebody held accountable because in that world, split accountability equals no accountability.

00:30:59.851 --> 00:31:09.771

<v SPEAKER_2>So we find ourselves in this odd space where there's split accountability equals no accountability, and we need to trust in the process which no one has trusted.

00:31:09.771 --> 00:31:13.731

<v SPEAKER_2>And so what has to happen is we have to get over ourselves.

00:31:13.731 --> 00:31:20.931

<v SPEAKER_2>We have to accept some transition risk, some implementation risk, and the fact that we might get some policies wrong.

00:31:20.931 --> 00:31:34.011

<v SPEAKER_2>But I can guarantee you that in that world, we're going to more effectively mitigate these real world risks than if we just continue to do it the way we've done in the past, and that will enable the status quo, unfortunately, to continue to prevail.

00:31:34.011 --> 00:31:47.831

<v SPEAKER_2>And so we need to focus on the real world risks that we're facing as a nation, as opposed to these, what I would suggest, are inconsequential implementation, transition and policy risks that, to be frank, Canadian citizens don't care about.

00:31:47.831 --> 00:32:09.751

<v SPEAKER_2>They care about it when the Auditor General comes up with a report, but once again, if there's someone held to account, I think you'll have less negative Auditor General reports because there's actually someone who has to sit at the table and take responsibility for that in an empowered ARA construct that hopefully will be the outcome of some of these recommendations.

00:32:09.751 --> 00:32:10.251

<v SPEAKER_1>Okay.

00:32:10.251 --> 00:32:15.011

<v SPEAKER_1>Well, Ron, thanks very much for coming to join in talking about Nine Decisions for Digital Transformation.

00:32:15.011 --> 00:32:25.291

<v SPEAKER_1>That paper we've just got published with you as a good setup to our conference on September 16th, registration available on

the CGAI website for those that haven't signed up yet.

00:32:25.291 --> 00:32:31.551

<v SPEAKER_1>Ron, the last question to you, we're basically summer is already over now, but what's the last part of your summer reading list that you're checking through?

00:32:31.551 --> 00:32:33.631

<v SPEAKER_1>What are you reading these days?

00:32:37.251 --> 00:32:49.571

<v SPEAKER_2>How to get big things done is what I'm currently reading, and it's that whole, you need to go slow to go fast is what I've been reading.

00:32:49.771 --> 00:32:53.691

<v SPEAKER_2>That's very much what recommendation one for me is, you need to go slow.

00:32:53.691 --> 00:32:55.631

<v SPEAKER_2>Let's not rush to failure here.

00:32:55.971 --> 00:33:01.591

<v SPEAKER_2>Let's make sure that we do the necessary homework to be able to go fast.

00:33:02.691 --> 00:33:12.031

<v SPEAKER_2>I think if you take the time to adopt these nine decisions, that yes, it might be going slow initially, but at the end of the day, you're going to be able to go fast.

00:33:12.031 --> 00:33:21.771

<v SPEAKER_2>Because Dave, in the world in which we find ourselves, if we're not going to be able to go fast, I'm not liking what the future holds in store for Canada.

00:33:21.771 --> 00:33:22.871

<v SPEAKER_1>Okay.

00:33:22.871 --> 00:33:25.311

<v SPEAKER_1>Ron, thanks again for joining us on Defence Deconstructed.

00:33:25.311 --> 00:33:26.411

<v SPEAKER_2>No, thanks Dave for having me.

00:33:26.411 --> 00:33:28.391

<v SPEAKER_2>My real pleasure.

00:33:28.391 --> 00:33:30.111

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for listening to Defence Deconstructed.

00:33:30.611 --> 00:33:36.071

<v SPEAKER_1>For more of our work, go to cgai.ca or follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.

00:33:36.071 --> 00:33:42.651

<v SPEAKER_1>If you like what we do and want to keep us going, think of donating to us at cgai.ca slash support.

00:33:42.651 --> 00:33:45.271

<v SPEAKER_1>Defence Deconstructed is brought to you by our team in Ottawa.

00:33:45.271 --> 00:33:48.911

<v SPEAKER_1>Use the credits to go to Drew Phillips and this episode was produced by Jordyn Carroll.