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### Guest Editor's Introductory Note

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# Guest Editor's Introductory Note

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Diversity and security have long had an uneasy co-existence in politics across the British Commonwealth. The relationship between diversity and security is often portrayed as a dichotomy with a troubled history. Conventionally, diversity is posited as 'the problem' to which security is 'the solution'. Disciples of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, however, readily admit that self-reflexivity has shattered the modernist faith in linear thinking where there is a solution to every problem. The dialectic between diversity and security is emblematic of this claim. Owing to demographic change, the changing nature of the security environment, and the transnational diffusion of the democratic norms of freedom, equality, and justice, diversity and security actually turn out to be different sides of the same coin. The purpose of this special issue is to articulate that this is not merely a normative claim but rather an empirical one. Treating various aspects and dimensions of diversity as the independent variable allows the articles in this special issue to shed a different light on the defence and security sector.

To gauge the scope of the argument – that, contrary to the conventional wisdom of decades gone by, there are good reasons why, in the twenty-first century, diversity is at the very heart of the defence and security sector – it has to be falsifiable. One way to broach falsification is by thinking of counter-factuals. An examination of the issue of diversity in the context of the defence and security sector has the methodological advantage of actually being replete with cases where the defence and security sector has resisted diversity. By and large, the articles attest to the security and defence

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sector's relatively poor record on diversity. Yet, they also show that the winds of change are blowing. In many cases, it is actually more akin to a sudden storm that is catching the defence and security establishment off-guard. Precisely because the pace of change is so rapid, there is a great deal of uncertainty in the air. Uncertainty tends to make soldiers and police officers apprehensive. After all, their profession is fraught with danger: imperilling the organisation's integrity not only undermines the capacity to carry out its mission effectively but may also put lives at risk unnecessarily. Ultimately, it is in every citizen's interest that the functional imperative of these organisations be preserved and those who serve in the profession of arms respected as they have volunteered for the (unenviable) task of dedicating themselves to protecting our values and way of life. Notwithstanding the limits on operationalising diversity in these professions, the articles in this volume substantiate empirically the many benefits that accrue to diversity while the costs of failing to diversify grow exponentially. Although the issue falls short of covering all relevant countries and groups (which is neither its design nor purpose), the cumulative evidence from Canada, Guyana the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United Kingdom as presented in this issue in support of the core thesis is compelling.

This issue starts with contributions by Al Okros and David Last that lay out and clarify conceptual issues as they affect the armed forces in particular as a profession and the security sector more broadly. This conceptual and theoretical background sets the stage for three country case studies by, respectively, David Mason and Christopher Dandeker, Victoria Basham, and Karen Davis, to shed light on the glacial pace at which racialised minorities, sexual minorities and women have been making inroads into the defence establishment and the drivers of diversity in the United Kingdom and Canada. Whether under-represented racialised groups actually have an interest at all in joining the armed forces, the drivers of their (dis)interest and the conditions under which the armed forces might become an employer of choice are examined by Jelle van den Berg and Rudy Richardson in the context of the Netherlands. The subsequent contributions deal with the tenuous balance between the functional imperative and diversity. How diversity plays out while deployed in the field on expeditionary missions is the subject of the contributions that follow. Liora Sion's case study of the Dutch deployment to the Balkans illustrates the perceived liability of women to the mission and its manifestation. Anne Irwin goes on to deconstruct this kind of misperception to show that it is based on confusion between the attributes that are deemed to matter and those that actually matter for the purpose of operational effectiveness. The adverse implications for the operational effectiveness of addressing issues of diversity in an adequate and timely fashion are exemplified in Joan Mars's study of Guyana. Conversely, Lindy Heinecken and Noëlle van

der Waag-Cowling show that diversity has its limits: social engineering can indeed compromise the institution's ability to carry out its functional imperative. Finally, Donna Winslow's contribution examines the manifestation of diversity in the form of international norms and their diffusion.

Initial versions of the articles that comprise this special issue were spawned by a workshop on diversity in the armed forces that was held in Kingston, Canada in November 2007, underwritten by the Queen's Centre for International Relations (QCIR) in collaboration with the Royal Military College of Canada and the International Political Science Association's Research Committee 16 on Socio-Economic Pluralism. Additional subventions came from the University of California Santa Barbara's Palm Center, and the Special Project Fund maintained by the Security and Defence Forum of Canada's Department of National Defence which for more than 40 years has been a steadfast supporter of informed and impartial research relevant to the mission of the Canadian Forces. The articles have since undergone substantial revision in response to feedback, including from the editors of *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* and its reviewers to whom I am greatly indebted. Many people labour behind the scenes without whom an endeavour such as this would not have come to pass. They include Maureen Bartram's impeccable attention to detail in her capacity as the QCIR's administrative assistant and Shelley Barry at the publisher's end who skilfully turned these articles into the publication you have before you.