

Technical Evaluation Report: Collaboration in a Comprehensive Approach to Operations

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ABSTRACT

The comprehensive approach is viewed as vital to mission success. However, many problems have been identified that negatively affect collaboration between organisations during missions. In the workshop research on collaboration in the comprehensive approach was presented and discussed. The results showed that the field is developing, but systematic knowledge and theoretical underpinning is lacking. Based on these findings a number of recommendations for further research have been suggested

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive approach² (CA) involves a variety of governmental departments, non-governmental organisations, first responders, members of the private sector, and members of local communities working together to meet an overarching mission goal. The comprehensive approach is rooted in the belief that most operations reflect a complexity that is beyond the ability of one governmental department to address and in the conviction that it will provide the most effective and efficient responses, leveraging on the strengths of each contributor and also allowing for important synergies to emerge. Accordingly, teams of diverse partners contribute distinct yet complementary expertise, skills, and resources to achieve wider effects and objectives.

Although the potential benefits of the comprehensive approach are viewed as vital to mission success, many challenges to achieving this state of collaboration exist. These include goal ambiguity, high uncertainty with rapidly evolving events on the ground, time pressure, and high risk. Other barriers include disparate mandates or goals, organisational cultures, operational styles, and oversight mechanisms. All of these factors provide challenges to forming, leading, aligning, and collaborating in comprehensive environments. As these comprehensive teams form and prepare for deployed operations, it is critical that they rapidly build working procedures, a common understanding of requirements and tasks, trust, and an operating framework to ensure effective collaboration. Thus, there is a great need to understand the various factors that can facilitate or hinder the development and optimal effectiveness of collaborative relationships within a comprehensive context.

Given the centrality of the comprehensive approach to current and anticipated future NATO operations, NATO RTO HFM (HFM 204) organised a Workshop on “Collaboration In A Comprehensive Approach to Operations,” the goal of which was to address the human dimension of collaboration in comprehensive approaches to expeditionary and domestic operations. This workshop sought to bring together the latest research in relevant areas, integrating diverse disciplines, and combining those insights with actual operational experiences. The focus was on answers to the critical issues of collaboration in comprehensive approaches, or at least on how to appropriately address these issues in order to derive answers, rather than simply a statement of current challenges. In particular the following goals were set:

- To identify the current realities, challenges, and benefits of comprehensive approaches to missions based on operational experiences;

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² The concept refers to involvement of multiple parties including non-military entities and appears under diverse labels, such as Integrated Approach; JIMP –(joint, inter-agency, multi-national, public); Whole of Government Approach; and Defence, Diplomacy, and Development (3D).

- To identify critical research issues, including knowledge gaps, CA-relevant theoretical models (Complexity Theory; Collective Effort Model, etc.), and measurement/ methodological issues;
- To identify relevant measures of effectiveness in comprehensive operations;
- To identify opportunities for further collaboration.

The set-up of the program in the form of intensive information exchange and focused discussions on collaboration in a comprehensive approach was intended to lead to a research agenda with the ultimate goal of enhancing the capability of the NATO Research and Technology community to respond adequately to the military requirements of NATO in this area. The immediate product of the Workshop would be an RTO publication of the meeting proceedings, with selected papers to be included in a subsequent book publication.

This Technical Evaluation Report on the Workshop summarises what has been presented and discussed during the workshop and hence gives an overview of what is presently known and what research is being conducted in the field of collaboration in a comprehensive approach to operations. Furthermore, the report draws conclusions about research that has not been done yet but is important in order to improve our knowledge on collaboration in the comprehensive approach.

The evaluation starts with a review of a workshop that took place 10 years ago. This workshop on The Human in Command can be seen as a predecessor of the present workshop. After that, selected other doctrinal and research developments are briefly presented, followed by an extensive description of the present workshop. Following that description some conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further studies are presented.

2.0 PRECEDING RESEARCH AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

In June 2000, a workshop was organised in Breda, The Netherlands, on the topic of the Human in Command. In fact, this workshop can be seen as a distant precursor of the present workshop. The workshop in Breda focused on the lessons that could be learned with respect to military leadership from the peacekeeping missions in the 1990s. In those early years after the Cold War most armed forces began to realise that peace support operations (PSO) had become core business for military organisations, resulting in a growing amount of studies that addressed PSOs and the commander's role in those operations. In the June 2000 workshop scholars and officers gathered to discuss these developments.

In the proceedings of this workshop a number of issues were formulated as points of attention for commanders in peace support missions (Vogelaar & Essens, 2001, p. 419). These issues were categorised in four broad themes (see Table 1).

- *Mission and circumstances*: What are the challenges for commanders of peace support operations and the circumstances in which these operations take place and what is required to meet these challenges in terms of selection, training, and development of commanders? The most important conclusion was that commanders should have a broader view than only their military mission. They should be aware of the non-military objectives of the mission, and also think through the non-military consequences of their actions. They should be aware that they are only a small part in a larger project to build up a host country and not to frustrate positive developments by their military intervention. Furthermore, they should develop an awareness of the culture of partners with whom they should collaborate and of the local population in order to build mutual trust. Also, it was discussed that they have to build a common vision with other partners on what should be attained by the mission. In short, these findings ask for a relatively broad education of military leaders. They should not only be educated and trained for their military tasks, but also as diplomats and managers.

**Table 18 - 1: Issues in peace support operations formulated as points of attention for commanders
(Vogelaar & Essens, 2001, p. 419)**

<p>Issues in PSO – Mission and Circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the non-military objectives of the mission, based on broad education • Assess the political and non-military consequences of actions • Develop awareness of local cultures and organisations in the operation area • Develop awareness of cultures of coalition partners (NGOs, police, etc.) • Foster mutual trust between possible coalition partners • Disseminate a unified vision on the mission • Minimise need for coordination and external communication • Maximise opportunities for internal communication
<p>Issues in PSO – Preparation and structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine combat with non-combat skills and attitudes • Use realistic scenarios with high and low levels of stress and ambiguity • Provide information on background and cultural aspects of the mission • Foster mutual trust within the unit and between (international) units • Decentralise command to lower levels, but stay in the loop for backing up • Stimulate initiative and taking responsibility by mutual trust and respect • Develop a team climate with high levels of participation and commitment • Establish a link to a trusted person as a sounding board for tough decisions
<p>Issues in PSO – Processes during mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously monitor level of motivation, morale, and team climate • Provide rule clarity; address mission relevance; foster personal control • Maintain team relations, social support, and cohesion • Control workload by redistributing tasks or creating extra tasks • Combine tactical problemsolving with human interrelation and communication competence (high accessibility) • Foster and support positive feedback and team critique

Issues in PSO – Effectiveness of the unit

- Identify levels of expectations, their stakeholders, and related criteria
 - Analyse contradictory demands and clarify tradeoffs
 - Identify risk factors in mission, circumstances, command structure, trainedness, attitudes, unit cohesion, technical limitations
 - Match possible intentions of warring factions with level of force required
 - Maintain legitimacy with local population and warring parties by obtaining and maintaining consent, keeping impartiality, and by limited use of force
 - Approach problems with “contact skills” – constabulary intervention, mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and conciliation
- *Preparation and structure:* For what tasks and circumstances should commanders prepare their units and how should they structure their unit adequately for a specific mission? The results of the workshop showed that commanders should combine combat with non-combat skills and attitudes. They should not only be trained as warriors – as was suggested by many proponents – but also as peacekeepers. Furthermore, they should provide information on the background and on cultural aspects of the mission to their personnel. They should also decentralise command to lower levels and stimulate initiatives to be taken at these lower levels in order to facilitate that subordinate commanders are able to work together with other partners.
 - *Processes during the mission:* What should commanders do to keep their unit motivated and focused on the mission? This category of issues focused solely on internal team processes and not on collaboration.
 - *Effectiveness of the unit:* What can commanders do to improve criteria of effectiveness such as task performance, efficiency, morale, security, and alignment during missions? In this theme it was accentuated that different stakeholders expect different decisions and activities of the peacekeeping unit and that these stakeholders should be identified in order to learn what they expect. Furthermore, it was stated that it is important to preserve the legitimacy of the mission towards the local population and that problems should preferably be dealt with by means of words instead of by means of power.

The issues that had been formulated as a consequence of the 2000 workshop can be perceived as issues that fit within the comprehensive approach that was the focus of the 2010 workshop in Toronto, although the term comprehensive approach for peace support operations had not been invented by then. However, the issues had been formulated only from the perspective of the tactical military commander “on the ground” in the host country and not from a comprehensive perspective. Perspectives from other parties obviously did not count in the military sciences by then. Also, empirical data had been lacking. Since then, many developments have been important for the thinking on collaborative relations in military missions.

There is an abundance of studies on civil-military cooperation (e.g., Rietjens & Bollen, 2008), where collaboration between military and civilian partners is described. Most of these studies observe that military and civilian partners have a hard time collaborating because of many differences that do exist between the parties.

There is also growing attention for cultural aspects in a mission. Many studies have been conducted on differences between collaboration partners (e.g., Febbraro, McKee, & Riedel, 2008), supporting the idea that differences in cultures of organisations or countries that contribute to a peace support operation may influence the effectiveness of the operation.

One of the ways to improve collaboration between organisations is to include representatives from several parties in a team. Military and civilian representatives can be part of such a team. In team leadership the focus is on the leader of the team who involves his or her team members as much as possible in leadership activities such as providing shared objectives that inspires commitment by team members; organising, planning, scheduling team activities, and monitoring progress and performance; helping to maintain internal cohesiveness and facilitating open communication; and external spanning in order to keep group decisions compatible with the needs of stakeholders outside the team (e.g., Yukl, 2010).

These and other behaviours have been included in a command team effectiveness (CTEF) model (Essens et al., 2005, 2008). The model has been developed for military command teams, but it can also be used for teams of military and civilian partners.

Although the team perspective is viable for studying cooperation, the team members also represent other organisations with possibly conflicting interests, goals, expertise, and capacities, which could influence the system's effectiveness. The approach that is better equipped to accommodate these conflicting qualities of partners is called multi-team systems (Mathieu et al, 2001). Multi-team systems are composed of "two or more teams that interface directly and interdependently in response to environmental contingencies towards the accomplishments of collective goals" (p. 290). This perspective clarifies that the performance of multiple teams heavily depends on the effectiveness of both within-team (intra-team) and between-team (inter-team) processes.

Both the team perspective as well as the multi-team perspective can be used to study the effectiveness of collaboration between different partners.

Also, doctrinal developments such as the Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) and technical developments that provide Network Enabling Capabilities (NEC) are conducive to the comprehensive approach. The technology that enables NEC makes it possible for several nodes in a network to connect and cooperate more efficiently. The concept of EBAO provides the opportunity to keep the network focussed on overarching goals.

3.0 EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Fifty-two defence scientists, academics, as well as military, governmental, and non-governmental representatives with recent operational experience were invited to participate in the workshop in order to facilitate discussion on issues of collaboration between parties having various degrees of interdependence within the comprehensive approach, to determine what scientific knowledge is available to bring to bear upon this issue, and to determine the focus of future research directions for NATO and national ministries or departments of defence.

The workshop had the following program:

- 1) Opening address
- 2) Three keynote speakers
- 3) Fourteen presentations
- 4) Discussion sessions in four separate working groups, followed by presentations
- 5) Review of the meeting by technical evaluator
- 6) Closure

3.1 OPENING ADDRESS

In his opening speech Dr. Peter Essens addressed the expectations for the workshop. It was stressed that the workshop did **not** intend to look for the best model of integrated planning or concepts of organisational structures, protocols, or technologies. Instead, the focus should be more on emerging concepts of ad hoc organisations, dynamics of interactions, and responsibility as part of a system. Furthermore, the workshop should be searching for underlying mechanisms, competencies, abilities, and capacities, and developing approaches for tackling problems that are encountered in the practice of the comprehensive approach. The discussion of all these topics should lead to a research agenda.

3.2 THREE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The keynote speakers of the workshop had been strategically chosen to represent the military perspective of collaborative operations (Brigadier-General Stephen Bowes, Canada), the civilian perspective (Mr. Michel Rentenaar, diplomat, The Netherlands), and the academic perspective (Prof. dr. John Hollenbeck, the United States).

General Bowes served in ISAF as the first Commander of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. He described a number of problems that had to be dealt with in Afghanistan, such as:

- -bad governmental leadership in Afghanistan itself;
- -harmful practices by the coalition forces, such as helping the wrong people, neglecting cultural requirements, lacking unity of effort, inflicting casualties among the population, failing to hold each other accountable, neglecting to synchronise 3D, mismanaging international aid, being detached from the population, and applying Western or universal solutions;
- -insurgents breeding doubt about conditions and intentions, emphasising security gaps, and intimidating the population.

He described measures that were taken to deal with the problems, but he admitted that still a lot of challenges in the cooperation between several partners in the field had to be addressed, such as unity of command and effort, commitment, and situational understanding. He concluded by saying that “we have come a long way but still a lot needs to be done.”

Mr. Rentenaar was director of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan and commanded as a civilian (together with a one-star army general) the Dutch Task Force Uruzgan VII in Afghanistan in a dual command structure. Together they ran the operation in the province of Uruzgan. According to Mr. Rentenaar the dual command structure was well chosen because both the military aspects of the operation and the diplomatic and developmental parts of the operation had to have the attention of command: “80 percent of the orders were non-kinetic.” In his presentation he addressed many problems that had to be dealt with in the operation, such as good governance problems, rule of law, and developmental issues. He also pointed at many aspects that had been improved between 2006 (the year that Dutch forces deployed in Uruzgan) and 2009 (the year that Mr. Rentenaar had served there). He concluded that the comprehensive approach is no guarantee for success, but that the absence of a comprehensive approach is certainly a guarantee for failure.

The presentations of General Bowes and Mr. Rentenaar set the stage for the workshop. At many points in time these presentations were referred to by other presenters and discussants.

The third keynote presentation by Dr. Hollenbeck dealt with collaboration between several teams from an academic perspective. The underlying concepts were derived from multi-team systems theory. He presented his research on groups of Air Force captains playing a multi-team system game as part of their training

program. Each group consisted of 14 captains that were assigned to one of the 14 roles in the game that was designed by the researchers. The teams had to collaborate in order to perform as effectively as possible as a multi-team system. The study showed that intra-team and vertical team coordination are positive for multi-team effectiveness, but that inter-team coordination (people from different executing teams coordinating their efforts with each other) is counterproductive.

Whether these results are generalisable to the operational context remains to be seen. One can ask if coordination between people at executive levels actually having to work with each other in the field is also counterproductive. In a comprehensive setting with high uncertainty, interactions between people at all levels may be relevant for correctly interpreting situations, discussing options, and considering effects.

3.3 FOURTEEN PRESENTATIONS

The presenters addressed the following themes:

- What does the comprehensive approach mean in practice?
- Specific differences, problems, and challenges between coalition partners (bilaterally)
- Structural problems in collaboration
- Implementing the comprehensive approach in different phases in the operation
- Intervention techniques and models
- Effect measures
- Multi-team systems

3.3.1 Comprehensive Approach in Practice

Presentations in this category were in line with the presentations by General Bowes and Mr. Rentenaar. Lieutenant-Colonel Dwayne Hobbs (DRDC Toronto), Mr. Patrick Ulrich, and Mr. Kevin Rex (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada) presented their experiences regarding the comprehensive approach in several operations.

One of the issues that came forward is how to deal with all kinds of NGOs and other organisations in the operational area when there is such a huge diversity of organisations or groups in the area. There are large differences in size, focus of operation, background, attitude towards military forces, and so on, between the organisations or groups. One of the ideas that came forward in the discussion is to categorise these groups or organisations in one way or another in order to develop more insight in specific categories and develop ways to deal with the different categories. One of the differences that was discussed during the workshop was that for the armed forces it is easier to work with developmental NGOs than with humanitarian NGOs.

During the presentations another issue that was raised was the diversity of tradeoffs in goals and means that the international community had to deal with, such as the pursuance of stability versus host nation legitimacy, expediency versus sustainability, and meeting needs versus building capacity. The conclusion was drawn that there are often inherent conflicts between objectives and therefore concessions are required.

One interesting question that came up after one of the presentations was whether the underlying assumption was valid that coherence and coordination among different parties are by definition effective. This question was raised in several forms a number of times during the workshop.

3.3.2 Specific Differences, Problems, and Challenges Between Coalition Partners (Mostly Studied Bilaterally)

Several presentations addressed the differences between the military and civilian partners and the resulting problems that occur when the military have to collaborate with these civilian partners in a mission. Dr. David Smith (DRDC Toronto) compared the Canadian Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Dr. Tara Holton (DRDC Toronto) elaborated the differences between the Canadian Forces and NGOs. Ms. Adrienne Turnbull (DRDC CORA) gave a briefing on military and civilian cooperation in Kandahar. The results of these studies show a lot of differences between the armed forces and other partners with respect to organisational structure, culture, ways of operating, training and education, focus on individual versus group, operational flexibility, mandates, perspectives on timelines in the operational area, communication, and use of acronyms and language.

With respect to the missions abroad a number of recommendations have been suggested, such as transparency of motivation between different partners, coordination without hierarchy, education and training that needs to reflect the reality of what is experienced in theatre, and an annual national conference founded by a neutral party on neutral ground, which has to be visited by the armed forces, NGOs, governmental organisations, and so on.

Ms. Heather Hrychuk and Mr. Peter Gizewski (DRDC CORA) undertook a different approach. They brought forward that much could be learned from historical cases. They studied CIMIC in the Bosnian conflict from 1995 onwards, using open sources and reports. They found out that there have been many misunderstandings between military and civilian partners, but also that there have been different CIMIC approaches by different militaries, resulting in confusion. The analysis was very illuminating, but because the case is somewhat older, a number of their conclusions have already been addressed in doctrines and operations.

3.3.3 Structural Problems in Collaboration

Dr. Hrach Gregorian (University of Calgary) distinguished four levels in organisations that are involved in what he called multi-dimensional peace operations and concluded that at all these levels real coordination between several partners lags behind. He mentioned that political as well as organisational factors could explain the blocks in cooperation. He made a plea for innovative research and novel approaches to address the many questions and dilemmas that were raised in his presentation.

3.3.4 Implementing the Comprehensive Approach in Different Phases in the Operation

A particular insight was provided by Ms. Cecilia Hull (FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency). She introduced the term Comprehensive Intervention. The idea is that in an operation several phases can be discerned that differ in the activities that have to take place in order to align humanitarian, political, developmental, and defence programs. In the Analysis phase there has to be understanding of the environment from diverse perspectives and, therefore, care should be taken that everyone's voice is heard. In the Planning phase agreement on the ends, ways, and means among central actors should be sought. In the Implementation phase many coordination mechanisms should be in place. Finally, in the Monitoring and Evaluation phase it is important that comprehensive monitoring and evaluation takes place in order to ensure similar interpretations of objectives and actions that should lead to these objectives.

3.3.5 Intervention Techniques and Models

A number of presentations showed models that had been developed to improve the working of (aspects) of the comprehensive approach.

Mr. Steve Fritz-Millett (Calian Technologies) presented a three-step model towards understanding each other's culture. The model consists of identifying differences in interests between several parties and after that identifying which engagement strategy to adopt. In the process to accomplish this, negotiation skills have to be institutionalised.

Ms. Josephine van Meer-Sassen (TNO Soesterberg, The Netherlands) shortly described three projects that may be of help in improving collaborative approach qualities. The first project aims at describing and operationalising the leadership competencies of task force commanders and other commanders who are involved in a comprehensive approach. In the second project a game was developed that could function as a sort of pressure cooker for the creation of ad hoc teams. The third project focused on changing the mindset of military commanders in order to prepare them better for working in a collaborative approach. This latter project brought forward some interesting questions from the audience regarding whether it is necessary that military commanders should be able to “do everything.” Perhaps they should stick to their areas of strength and just know who has the right expertise to negotiate with other partners. That is an interesting idea that could be dwelt on further.

Dr. John Boiney (MITRE Corporation, United States) gave a presentation on human social culture behaviour modelling. The programs that are run study different aspects of collaboration, such as understanding concepts, ethics, decision making, and training for socio-cultural skills. Although the work has not been intended explicitly for comprehensive approaches, the tools that are being developed can provide small steps towards fruitful collaboration in a comprehensive approach environment.

3.3.6 Effect Measures

There was one presentation on the measuring of effects. Maj. John Leahy (1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group) stated that the data for the measures that were traditionally used to measure effectiveness were relatively easy to get, but did not give insight into what really mattered. A new framework was developed to measure behavioural and attitudinal change at the community level throughout the different stages of community stabilisation operations. This approach is important because it measures the extent to which interventions (either in a comprehensive way or not) have the effects that were intended. However, the problem of different perceptions or opinions between the actors in the field on which effects are relevant and should be measured was not addressed.

3.3.7 Multi-Team Systems

There were two presentations on multi-team systems. The first one was given by Prof. Hollenbeck in his keynote address (previously discussed) and the second one was given by Dr. Lesley DeChurch (University of Central Florida). She presented two experimental studies that have been conducted for the Army Research Institute. In the first study it was found that leader centrality had a positive effect on MTS-performance, which may be an interesting finding for comprehensive operations, in which central leadership is often lacking. In the second study it was found that there is an interaction between trust and decentralisation. In a decentralised environment trust is necessary. Also there was an interaction effect between leadership arrangement and centralisation. Vertical leadership is better under high centralisation and collective leadership is better in a decentralised structure. Finally, it was found that trust has a negative effect on the MTS level. As a result of this finding the question was raised as to whether it could perhaps be more productive (in some instances) if organisations compete with each other instead of only collaborate.

3.4 WORKING GROUPS RESULTS

After all presentations had been delivered, the audience was split into four working groups that each had to address a specific topic. Each group spent in total 5 hours on the discussions and preparation of the Working Group presentation.

3.4.1 Group 1: State of the Art in the Comprehensive Approach

- What are the gaps in CA knowledge?

- What do we know, based on the data in this workshop?
- What don't we know yet?
- What data are needed?

Group 1 came up with a long list of gaps. They categorised gaps in knowledge, gaps in capabilities, and gaps in data. Examples of these gaps are:

- Knowledge gaps: What is the way to proceed with CA? What does every actor at his/her level need to know about CA? How do you select, train, and empower "boundary spanners"? How do you sell the benefit of CA to potential stakeholders? How do you balance the desire to act right now as opposed to long-term consequences?
- Capability gaps: Unclear mandates at the highest levels; rotations cause discontinuity and a drain of knowledge; different terminology, procedures, and languages are used.
- Data gaps: What does the collaborative approach really mean to people working daily in a CA environment? What happens at different levels? What other methods could be used other than interviews to gather systematic data?

3.4.2 Group 2: Theories and Models for the Comprehensive Approach

- What theories and models are relevant to apply and understand CA? (e.g. Multi-team systems, social exchange theories)
 - Why are they relevant?
 - How to apply them?
 - Do we need a new approach?

Group 2 warned that there are different aspects to consider when applying theory to the field. For instance, it is important to consider how the problem space is defined: in terms of conflicts, dynamism, interdependence, uncertainty, and so on. The theories that can be used should fit the problem space. Furthermore, the Working Group constructed a multi-level framework in which several levels at which collaboration takes place could be distinguished and studied. At the micro-level, teams and individuals are studied who have to work together. At the meso-level, coupled systems, networks, and multi-team systems are the object of research. Finally, at the macro-level nations and organisations are the focus of attention. Many theories have been brought up that could fit with the different levels. The working group made a plea for studying the meso-level, because this level bridges the space that integrates the micro- and macro-levels of analysis.

3.4.3 Group 3: Measuring the Comprehensive Approach

- How can we measure CA processes in the field?
 - Which processes?
 - What to look at?
 - How to do it?
 - How to standardize measurement?

Group 3 began their presentation with the statement that the comprehensive approach is a kind of philosophy that aims to provide positive organisational outcomes. Measuring CA will have to be context-specific and multi-layered. A combination of several methodologies should be used. Measuring could take place before the mission when people are trained and selected, but it also has to take place during the mission. Both processes and outcomes should be taken into account.

3.4.4 Group 4: Development of the Comprehensive Approach

- How to achieve transformation toward effective CA?
- How to better train and prepare for CA and involve all actors?
- What competencies are relevant and how these be developed?

Group 4 came up with seven “pillars” that could be used to develop the comprehensive approach.

- 1) Lessons learned are everywhere and should be found and used.
- 2) Concept development: what exactly is the comprehensive approach?
- 3) Doctrine development: how should the comprehensive approach be implemented in future operations?
- 4) Training and education: the comprehensive approach could be disseminated by a number of measures (integrate civilians in training and exercises of the military and use them as co-designers, training audience, and evaluators).
- 5) Staff selection/competencies: create staff that collectively has all the relevant competencies for CA.
- 6) Organisation structure: What structure supports the comprehensive approach in the specific situation? Enable flexible “mission command” organisation structures; look for structures that work instead of the traditional structures (e.g., strategic corporal, all-female platoons, stabilisation company or mission teams).
- 7) The first six pillars are focused on what can be done internally in the military organisation. The seventh pillar is focused on the actual interaction with civilian partners. It is suggested that different modes of civil-military interaction apply: in some cases it is better to just de-conflict with other parties, in other cases to coordinate, in still other cases to cooperate, and in some cases to integrate. The particular choices that are made have consequences for the operation.

3.5 REVIEW OF THE MEETING BY THE TECHNICAL EVALUATOR

In the presentation, the first impressions, findings, and recommendations were given by the Technical Evaluator, as presented in this chapter.

3.6 FINAL REMARKS

The organisers of the workshop presented the timeline and the procedure for submitting and reviewing the papers for the Workshop Proceedings. They also announced the possibility of a follow-on book to build on the work of the Workshop.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

Participants of the workshop were military (16), defence scientists and academics (29), and GO/IO/NGO representatives (7) from a total of six countries (Canada, Netherlands, United States, Belgium, Finland, and Sweden), and representatives from NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

The workshop was productive by its combination of plenary presentations and breakout working groups, each discussing one of four themes. The presentations gave an overview of the state of the art on research on collaboration in a comprehensive approach to operations. The themes of the discussion sessions were formulated on a number of topics that were felt needed further elaboration.

The workshop showed that large steps had been made since the Human in Command workshop of 2000. The most important gain is the attitude change on the comprehensive approach. The presentations and the discussions showed that the participants at the workshop had adopted the idea of the comprehensive approach as a worthy concept for peace support operations. Actually, they saw no alternative.

However, despite its relevance, it was shown that the collaboration of the armed forces with other organisations – be it police, NGOs, or governmental organisations – still raises a lot of challenges in practice. The same kinds of problems were found in several studies. Only a few studies tried to formulate answers to the challenges of collaboration.

Therefore, the general conclusion can be that the international community has made a lot of progress regarding the comprehensive approach, but that a lot still has to be learned and developed. When the findings and discussions of the Toronto workshop are compared with those of the workshop 10 years ago, we can see that the conceptual development and the thinking on the comprehensive approach has progressed a great deal. What was new and perhaps controversial in 2000 is taken for granted today. Furthermore, a substantial amount of research has been conducted since then. However, several topics need further investigation.

In the next section a number of issues will be addressed that must be dealt with in order to improve and deepen our knowledge of the comprehensive approach.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CLEAR DEFINITION AND OPERATIONALISATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Although definitions exist about the comprehensive approach, it is far from clear what is actually meant by the approach, its scope, and focus. A number of questions came up in the discussions.

- Is the comprehensive approach just a philosophy of working, an attitude or mindset that should be adopted by (members of) organisations who operate in areas with multiple actors, or does the concept stand for the actual collaboration between a specific number of partners who should be working together?
- Is there a director of the comprehensive approach or is it just an accidental coalition of the willing, or as a participant during the workshop stated: “those parties or people who show up in the area of operations”?
- Is there a customer of the comprehensive approach and if so, who can be defined as such?
- When are we talking about the comprehensive approach? Is that approach just meant for the rebuilding of a failed state or also for crisis operations that are organised in the wake of a disaster? It will be clear that these are very different kinds of missions with large differences regarding time scope, explicitness of the goals, and kinds of organisations that are involved in the collaboration.

Many other questions could be added.

5.2 SPECIFICATION OF OBJECT OF STUDY

Many partners have been identified that are working in a failed state: military organisations from several countries and services, governmental partners, international organisations, NGOs, host nation organisations, the press, and so on. All these organisations have different organisational levels that are involved: people on the ground, headquarters in the operational area, and parent organisations giving directions to their people in the operational area, among others.

Furthermore, there are many kinds of NGOs working in the area, varying in size (from small groups of people to large multi-national organisations), in goals (humanitarian organisations, developmental organisations), and in attitudes towards the armed forces.

An important question that should be addressed is how all these parties should fit in the idea of collaboration in a comprehensive approach to operations. Furthermore, if the processes and the results of the collaboration in the comprehensive approach are studied, what exactly is the object of study? What kinds of organisations should be involved in the study (and what kind of organisations not) and what levels of these organisations should be studied?

5.3 DIVERSE LEVELS OF COOPERATION

The comprehensive approach seems to imply that all organisations have to collaborate in order to be effective. The question is whether that assumption is always true. For some organisations it can be assumed that it is indeed necessary to closely ally with each other in their efforts to improve the situation, because they are dependent on each other. That is for instance the case when members of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) organise talks with local authorities about future projects. It is important that they organise these talks in close collaboration with the military because these talks have to fit within the security situation of the area and, furthermore, the members of the PRT have to be protected by the military going to and being in the village where the talks take place. For other organisations, it is just enough to coordinate their actions. When military partners from several countries have their own areas of responsibility, they should actively coordinate their way of working and their actions with their colleagues in other areas, because spill-over effects to other areas are possible. For still other organisations it may be just necessary to de-conflict their activities. If some NGOs would like to set up a project in a certain village, then they should know that the military is not planning some “kinetic” action in order to close with an enemy in that same village.

It is important to be specific on what kinds of cooperation are aimed at between what partners in the comprehensive approach.

5.4 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

A major weakness of the research that has been conducted so far seems to be the lack of theoretical underpinning of the studies of the comprehensive approach. Hardly any of the studies that are conducted in relation to the comprehensive approach used theories. As has been made clear during the workshop, there exist many theories that are waiting to be applied. Theories could be used to clarify and explain the behaviour, attitudes, and cooperation of individuals and teams working in the field with individuals and teams from other organisations. Other theories may explain how personnel from different organisations can become stuck in conflicts between what their own organisation wants them to do and what in their opinion is needed for the benefit of the operation. Still other theories may explain what kind of leadership is needed in order to commit different organisations to common goals and how conflicting goals can be merged into overall goals.

As has been convincingly found at the workshop by one of the working groups, many theories may be relevant to further our knowledge of the comprehensive approach.

5.5 MORE DATA ARE NEEDED

Most studies that have been conducted base themselves upon interviews with members that have been working in a collaborative relationship with other organisations, mostly asking for differences, problems, or challenges in collaboration. It is important to complement this kind of research with studies using other methods, such as:

- Observations of people or teams actually working together;
- Recording what people actually do by letting them make notes on a daily basis about some items that are needed to get insight in the cooperation;
- Asking people about their attitudes towards working with other organisations during the operation by means of large-scale surveys;
- Field experiments in order to test whether suggested interventions really improve collaborative working in practice;
- Longitudinal data, in order to study whether progress over time or as a consequence of specific interventions can be documented.

These methods could give more systematic insight into the processes that are occurring within and between teams of participants that take part in the comprehensive approach: What actually happens within and between groups and organisations that are involved in the rebuilding work? How do they cope with the problems that they encounter? Who is actually communicating with whom and about what? What are the immediate results of these communications? These data are needed in order to develop ideas about how the comprehensive approach actually works.

5.6 IMPACT OF EFFECTS HORIZONS

Operations in failed states take a long time to reach an objective “end state.” It may take 30 years or more for a country like Afghanistan to become safe and prosperous. The comprehensive approach should ultimately be focused on that end state. However, the end state is necessarily vague and abstract. Also, the relation between the efforts of the organisations that are doing their work and the end state is very indirect. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate goals that are more proximal to what the organisations are doing and that also have a relationship with the longer-term end state. However, there are many problems in the process of operationalisation of the effects that are aimed at.

- Different parties may disagree about the end state: For example, what does democracy mean in such a state? How should the state be built and governed in the end?
- When parties diverge on the perception of the end state, also the more proximal steps that should be taken towards the end state may diverge.
- And even if parties agree on the goals that should be aimed at, they may disagree about the effects of their actions in attaining these goals. Militaries from different countries have different perceptions about how the military should conduct their operations: For example, should they be firm and decisive or more tolerant? Should they negotiate with people with a criminal past or not?

Studies are needed that identify what criteria should be aimed at on a short-term and medium-term basis and – more importantly - how these criteria could be improved by the coordinated efforts of the international community, without creating unwanted side effects.

5.7 FOLLOW-UP

The workshop brought together people that are directly or indirectly involved in the study and application of collaboration in a comprehensive approach to operations. The studies that were presented represented a selection of what exists in the international community. Considering the the of countries that took part in the workshop, there may be many other initiatives and studies being conducted in the world that were not discussed at the workshop. An overview of the studies that have been conducted elsewhere would contribute to knowledge on and the development of the comprehensive approach. Besides that, the workshop brought up many ideas that need further exploration, study, and, finally, implementation.

Therefore, as a Technical Evaluator, I would like to recommend the establishment of a follow-up activity that should investigate what research is being done on the comprehensive approach, what further research is needed, what underpinning science can be developed, and how ideas to improve the comprehensive approach could be implemented.

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