A Trainer's Perspective on Research & Development in Support of the Comprehensive Approach

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, many nations (including NATO as an organization and most of its constituent partner nations) have advocated for the adoption of a holistic and integrated approach to military operations in the context of failed and fragile states. This approach is known widely as the "Comprehensive Approach" or simply, "CA." The United Kingdomis well advanced in the production of joint doctrine on the CA and defines it as "Commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation [1]." It is underpinned by four principles, those being a proactive approach, shared understanding, outcome-based thinking and collaborative working [1]. Civilian entities that need to be considered in the CA include, but are not restricted to: governments, international organisations, quasi-governmental organisations, non-government organisations, media, private security companies, and commercial enterprises. The shift in focus from the primarily conventional approach to warfare of the Cold War period to the CA warfare of today (and the future) drives the need for the military to better understand and apply the CA. The application of the CA in the often volatile, uncertain, confusing and ambiguous (VUCA)[2] contemporary and future operating environments suggests the need for further research and development in this area. This paper proposes two Lines of Investigation (LoI) for future research and development (including concept development, operational research and experimentation) in support of improving the effectiveness of the Canadian Forces within a CA context. The LoIs proposed are derived from the author's 7 years of involvement in various aspects of the CA. The two LoIs proposed are "Human Factors Considerations in the CA" and "A Tool to Enhance Military Effectiveness in CA Operations."

INTRODUCTION

"Be Prepared. That's the motto of the Boy Scouts."
"Be prepared for what?" someone once asked Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting,
"Why, for any old thing." said Baden-Powell.

For over 60 years, the Canadian military's focus was primarily on its NATO obligations in the context of preparing for conventional military operations in inter-state conflict with Warsaw Pact countries. The same is largely true for the other militaries that composed NATO during the Cold War. In this setting, equipment, doctrine, training, processes, professional development, education and command preparation and selection were largely based on the need to produce commanders who could fight and win a conventional fight against NATO's Warsaw Pact counterparts. This involved minimal interaction with entities outside the military chain of command. While conventional combat operations are inherently complex, they are constrained to primarily military parameters. Additionally, as a general rule, military commanders were assigned all of the resources that they would need to accomplish their mission. Finally, NATO's integrated command and control structure was largely established, relatively simple and unified with little in the way of national

caveats and other complicating restrictions. As a result, commanders did not need to negotiate for the assets that they required to complete their mission. They simply requested them from their higher commander. The thinking of the day was often "If you can successfully fight a conventional fight, you can easily adapt to lesser intensity operations such as peace keeping, peace support or humanitarian relief operations" [3]. The number of failed missions in the 1990s (e.g., Somalia, Rwanda, Former Republic of Yugoslavia) suggests that this type of thinking was at best simplistic, and at worst, flawed.

1.1   THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

In the post-Cold War period, the complexity of military operations has increased many-fold. Many of the constituent national governments represented within NATO have recognised that in the current and future security environment, ending or limiting conflict in the world's hotspots will require more than the application of pure military force [4]. For a true enduring peace, states may have to be stabilised or, in some cases, extensively reconstructed [5]. The very scope and scale of stabilisation and reconstruction tasks inherent to failed and fragile states drives the requirement to enhance and complement military capabilities with those of civilian actors (people, organisations, groups and movements). This was recognised recently in NATO with its adoption of the CA and the development of CA doctrine by countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), and in operational theatres like Afghanistan by commanders such as former Commander United States (US) Forces – International Security Assitance Force (ISAF), General Stanley McChrystal [6, 7]. Further complexity is generated by a proliferation of intra-state wars and crises in failed and fragile states (and a willingness for governments to get involved in them), increased levels of asymmetric threats, a wide range of agencies and actors who have a stake in these conflicts and an increased desire on the part of national governments to control where, when and how their forces are employed. Furthermore, command and control arrangements are often more fragmented and complex than they were during the Cold War. As a case in point, consider Afghanistan where three separate military chains of command exist in the same area of operations; ISAF (an alliance), Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (a US-led coalition), and the Afghan security forces (indigenous national forces).

1.2   THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH – AN ANALOGY

The completion of a jigsaw puzzle provides a useful analogy for looking at how military campaign planning has changed since the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, military commanders were given most if not all of the pieces they required to complete their "campaign plan jigsaw puzzle." They relied primarily on their intellect, doctrine, training and so forth to put the pieces together. This is not to say that conventional war-fighting was easy. Combat seldom is, but the range of parameters was relatively narrow and largely restricted to military considerations (terrain, enemy forces, meteorological, time, etc). By contrast, implementing a campaign plan for CA operations in a volatile, uncertain, confusing, ambiguous (VUCA)[1] environment is somewhat akin to being given some of the pieces to the puzzle but not all of them. Instead, other pieces are held by entities, both military and non-military, that have their own interests and may not be willing to put their pieces down where and when you want them. Indeed, some entities may remove pieces that have already been put down or put pieces down that do not belong to your puzzle. This simple analogy illustrates some of the complexity inherent to applying the CA in the context of the contemporary and future operating environments.

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[1] The author first heard the "VUCA" term from a retired Australian General (who cannot be named under Chatham House Rules) at the Australian Command and Staff College in Canberra, Australia, in 2003. It had its origin in the US Army in the early 1990s and appears frequently in US Army publications such as the *2004 Strategic Leadership Primer (2ⁿᵈ Edition)* published by the United States Army War College.

1.3   THE NEED FOR R&D IN SUPPORT OF THE CA

The application of the CA pushes the military into new and unfamiliar domains. In response, the Canadian Army has articulated concepts such as "Joint, Interagency, Multinational and Public" (JIMP), which recognises that "an ability to bring to bear all the instruments of national power and coalition power and influence (i.e. diplomatic, economic, military and informational) on a problem in a coordinated, collaborative fashion will be essential to achieving effective results. So too will an ability to address and if possible, effectively engage the views and reactions of the public, both domestic and international as well as the media, as operations unfold [8]." Under this concept, Army organisations able to function in a JIMP environment are described as "JIMP-capable" or "JIMP-enabled." The application of the CA and the JIMPenabled concept in the often VUCA contemporary and future operating environments suggests the need for further research and development in support of the CA. This paper proposes two Lines of Investigation (LoI) for future research and development (R&D), including concept development, operational research and experimentation, in support of the advancement of CA and JIMP concepts. The LoIs proposed are derived from the author's 7 years of involvement in various aspects of the CA.

2.0   LOI #1 - HUMAN FACTORS CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CA

Within the first LoI, it is proposed that fundamental changes to the contemporary operating environment since the end of the Cold War, and anticipated changes in the future operating environment, have resulted in the increased importance of certain skills and aptitudes for military personnel conducting operations in a CA/JIMP environment. From an R&D perspective, this LoI includes proposals for the institutionalisation of negotiation skills within the military, the identification and enhancement of the "Emotional Quotient" or "EQ" in military personnel and the identification of specific training and education strategies to better equip military personnel for the demands of the CA.

2.1   COLD WAR PARADIGM

Within the context of the Cold War, if additional assets were required to ensure mission success, then a persuasive argument and a high mission priority would likely suffice to secure those assets in support of the mission. The assets potentially required were under a single integrated military chain of command (NATO) and the decisions to allocate them to subordinate organizations, even ones of a different nationality, were largely the purview of the military commander who was assigned the assets in the first instance. Finally, the types of assets required to complete a mission were largely of a military nature: troops, helicopters, tanks, mines, and so forth. The Cold War construct was a single chain of command through which missions and resources (predominantly military resources) were pushed down and through which requests were pushed up. It was a system founded on the principle that the military chain of command possessed everything it needed to accomplish its mission. Therefore, the key function of the military was one of allocation, or re-allocation, based on the tasks to be completed.

2.2   POST-COLD WAR PARADIGM

In the contemporary operating environment (and likely in the future operating environment), the system is entirely different. Military commanders will often find themselves operating in areas where there are multiple standalone military chains of command and where multinational forces are hamstrung to some extent by restrictions imposed on them by their respective national governments. Additionally, they will find themselves in situations where mission success is often dependent on securing non-military assets such as governance, reconstruction, development and humanitarian assistance/funding and where there are multiple stakeholders, often setting competing priorities. The Arghandab Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (AIRP) provides one such example. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) initiated the

request for the project and was the approval authority for its implementation (including moving from one stage to another). The majority of funding came from the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Security in the AIRP area was provided by a combination of ISAF, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the Afghan National Police (ANP) and private security firms. Additionally, local stakeholders had to be engaged at every stage to ensure local representatives were on side. Implementation of the AIRP rested primarily with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. This multi-national (Canada-US) organization received priorities from several Canadian and US government departments, the Canadian Forces (CF) national chain of command, Regional Command (South)–NATO chain of command, and of course, the GoIRA. In such circumstances, one cannot simply "order" that something be done.

2.3   NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Within the CA/JIMP environment, aspects of the conventional war paradigm may still be present, but there is an additional requirement for skill sets that will enable commanders to influence others to do what the commander needs to have done. It is increasingly the case that commanders will not have direct control over many of the resources that they will require to complete their "campaign plan puzzle." In order to secure the co-operation of the entities which do control those resources, commanders and staff will need to have well developed and established negotiation and interpersonal skills (this aspect will be examined in section 2.4 EQ vs. IQ). Like many of its NATO partners, the Canadian Army has emphasized negotiation theory and training for operations for many years, as reflected in such publications as "Negotiations During Peace Support Operations," *Dispatches: Lessons Learned for Soldiers*, Vol. 8, No. 2, October 2001. However, most of the theory and training is focussed at the tactical level. Very little work has been done to elevate some of these important negotiation theories and techniques to the higher end of tactical level (formation) and operational level. Interest-based negotiation (IBN) theory is a very good candidate for use as a tool at these levels. A more detailed explanation of IBN is given in section 3.1.2 of this paper. However, IBN is widely used in the CF today by Director General Alternate Dispute Resolution. In the CF, it is principally used in the context of resolution of workplace disputes but could be easily operationalized for employment by NATO in CA/JIMP settings. For Canada, the use of IBN for this purpose has an advantage in that there is already widespread CF institutional familiarity with IBN theory and application. There are four basic questions that should be addressed through R&D regarding the institutionalisation of negotiation skills:

- Which negotiation theory is best suited to NATO military employment in a CA/JIMP environment?

- Which personnel or positions require negotiation skills?

- Which means should be used by the military to instil these skills in those individuals?

- Should there be a "negotiation" capability incorporated into deploying headquarters and units to facilitate CA/JIMP activities, and if so, what would this capability look like?

2.4   EQ VS. IQ

In the Cold War period, what separated a great commander from an average or mediocre one was largely intellect. A commander needed to know the enemy, doctrine, terrain, tactics etcetera, as well as how to effectively communicate instructions to his subordinates and possess a fighting spirit. Commanders were primarily involved with military actors, had clear lines of command and control, and dealt with mainly military resources under military control, and communication was fairly straightforward. Therefore, a commander's success depended largely on his intelligence quotient (IQ) or, simply put, how smart he was in relation to his enemy. Commanders did need to possess certain leadership qualities in their interactions with their subordinates, but the emotional quotient (EQ) was of minor importance to success on the battlefield in comparison to that of the IQ. Indeed, in full-on combat, EQ would have been largely irrelevant. Since the

end of the Cold War, there can be no doubt that commanders need to be smarter in order to deal with the additional complexities inherent in the contemporary and future operating environment. of far greater significance though is the extent to which having a high EQ appears to have risen in importance in the context of conducting military operations in the contemporary and future operating environment. This is shown graphically in Figure 1 (note that this graph is for representational purposes only and is not based on any collected hard data).
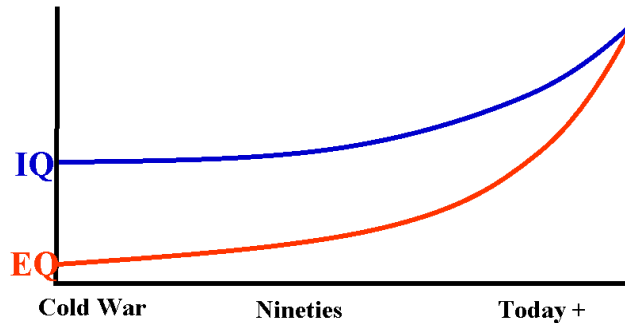
Figure 11 - 1: EQ vs IQ Since the end of the Cold War

The increased importance of the EQ factor is driven by the reality that battlefield commanders today are often required to implement campaign plans that cannot succeed without certain assistance and resources that are not under military control. This could include assistance and resources from groups such as other government departments, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and indeed, the host nation and local populace. To secure the assistance and resources requires both strong negotiation skills (already discussed in sect 2.3) and well developed interpersonal skills (EQ) to convince the other agencies involved to contribute the required missing pieces. Terms like "people person," "schmoozer" and "socialiser" capture some of the essence of what commanders may require in order to be effective in their CA/JIMP efforts. In these settings, Dale Carnegie's 1937 classic "*How to Win Friends and Influence People*" may prove to be as useful in successfully implementing a campaign plan as any doctrinal war fighting publication. In light of the increased need for well developed interpersonal skills or EQ, questions that should be addressed through additional R&D are:

- What are the specific elements of interpersonal skills that are most important in the context of CA/JIMP?

- Are there tools that already exist that could be adopted by the military to better assess and improve the EQ aspect of military personnel?

- What enhancements to educational, professional development and training of military personnel should be made to encourage development of those interpersonal skills?

- Should the EQ aspect of military personnel factor more highly into annual assessments, promotion boards and command selection?

2.5 EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Within the context of the CA, militaries need to both better understand and be more involved in supporting activities of a non-military nature. As a case in point, the NATO forces operating in Afghanistan did not simply execute military missions, or in the modern parlance, "security" missions. They also had involvement with the governance and development pillars of the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS). In the specific case of Canada, at various stages the CF was supporting all three of Canada's signature projects

(AIRP, Education Project and Polio Eradication Project) as well as Canada's other six priorities (Security, Basic Services, Humanitarian Assistance, Border, National Institutions and Reconciliation). While NATO forces were principally interested in the security aspects, they did have to understand how implementing projects would contribute to overall campaign plan success and had responsibility for supporting many of these activities to varying degrees. This suggests that there is a need to focus R&D efforts on education, professional development and training of military personnel (principally, though not exclusively, officers) to determine to what extent the current systems are successful in preparing their candidates for the reality of CA. For example, if a NATO force were conducting operations in the context of CA/JIMP in a fragile or failed state, to what extent would it be beneficial to have selected NATO military personnel with higher education qualifications (diplomas, bachelors, masters, PhDs, etc.) in such domains as electoral reform, agriculture, and reconciliation to name but a few? To what extent would it be beneficial to have NATO military personnel who had served on secondments with some of the civilian agencies that they will work alongside on operations? There are two basic questions that should be addressed through R&D concerning education and professional development:

- What enhancements to educational, professional development and training are most needed and/or beneficial?

- To whom should these education, professional development and training and enhancements be delivered?

3.0 LOI #2 - A TOOL TO ENHANCE MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CA

Architects of the CA have argued amongst other things that there is a requirement for "more conscious, sustained efforts to develop practical tools and metrics capable of ensuring that the implementation and performance of a comprehensive approach is optimised" [9]. This notion is supported by the results of Canadian Army Experiment 10 which concluded: "Various diagram, modelling and discourse capture toolsets need to be incorporated into the Whole-of-Government (WoG) planning approach to complex problem solving. Such toolsets would need to be capable of adaptation to diverse WoG group needs" [10]. Militaries have a long history of developing tools to aid with complex problem solving. Some familiar examples would be the OPP (Operational Planning Process) for planning and JIPB (Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield) for intelligence. In light of such observations, it is proposed that it would be potentially very beneficial to invest R&D effort in developing tools to enhance NATO military CA effectiveness. One such tool is proposed in the following section.

3.1 APPLY-IDENTIFY-ADOPT (AIA) - A TOOL TO ENHANCE THE CF'S CA EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CA

One possible tool that should be the subject of R&D effort is a three-step process, Apply a Model – Identify Interests – Adopt a Strategy (AIA). This tool would potentially enhance the military's ability to work with civilian actors within the context of the CA. It firstly examines an organisation using the McKinsey 7-S Model (or other organizational theoretical model). This paper argues for the adoption of a model, not necessarily for a particular model. The second step is to apply interest-based negotiation theory to identify common interests and then, finally, identify the optimum military engagement strategy for a given civilian actor [11]. The end state would be that the military would have an intentional, methodical and holistic approach to understanding civilian actors, their interests in the mission and the optimal engagement strategy for the military to adopt with each civilian actor. The military would have an enhanced level of understanding of areas of potential co-operation and, just as importantly, areas of potential friction. While it is beyond the scope of this article to address automating such a tool, this would be a logical next step.

3.1.1 Step 1 - Apply an Organizational Culture Model (McKinsey 7-S)

While 7-S was developed for internal analysis of business organisations, its holistic framework of examination renders it potentially useful for the military to examine civilian actors, or in JIMP parlance, the interagency" and "public" players [12]. Understanding the culture of such groups is critical as was noted recently in an Army Lessons Learned Centre report:

> *"WoG Approach. As part of a whole-of-government approach, the Army should develop a better understanding of the organizational cultures of members from the other government agencies. Presentations and briefings are not enough. Multidisciplinary teams should conduct pre-deployment inter-agency training days where current scenarios and case studies are analysed and solutions are developed. This would facilitate a better understanding of the various agencies, their capabilities and culture." [13]*

The 7-S-Model is better known as "McKinsey 7-S". This is because the two people who developed this model, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, were consultants at McKinsey & Co. at that time. McKinsey 7-S was designed as a tool to initiate change processes in business organisations and give them direction. 7-S is based upon the premise that an organization is not just "structure," but consists of seven interrelated elements (see Figure 2). 7-S recognises that a change in one "S" can have an effect on one, some or all other "S's." The seven elements are distinguished as hard S's and soft S's. The hard S's (green circles) are tangible and easy to identify. They can be found in strategy statements, corporate plans, organizational charts and other documentation.

The four soft S's (orange circles) however, are not so easily known. They are difficult to describe since capabilities, values and elements of corporate culture can be continuously developing and changing, or may be "below the horizon" and evident only to those working within that organisation. They are also highly determined by the people who work in the organisation. Often the only way to gain knowledge of these 'S's will be through regular personal and/or professional contact with people who are currently working with these organisations or have worked with them in the past. Although the soft S's are not as visible as the hard S's, they can have as great an impact as the hard S's (Structures, Strategies and Systems) of the organization.
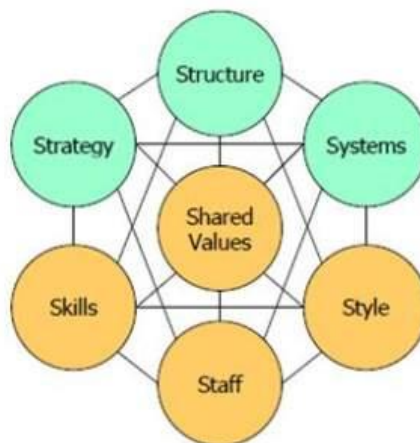

Figure 11 - 2: McKinsey 7-S Model

Once a detailed understanding of a given organisation of interest is achieved using McKinsey 7-S (or other) model as a framework, the second step, identifying common interests between the military and a given civilian organization, can be undertaken. Within the McKinsey construct, the S's of Strategy, Shared Values and Skills should be of particular interest to the military as it is often along these lines where the greatest potential for collaboration exists.

3.1.2   Step 2 – Identify Interest(s)

This step draws extensively from interest-based negotiation theory [14]. One of the key concepts that underpins this theory is that if a common interest(s) can be identified between parties (it could be more than two) in a particular situation, then the common interest(s) could form the basis of an agreement between the parties. Key to this step though is the correct identification of the interest(s) in the first instance. Having applied an organisational theoretical tool like McKinsey 7-S to an organisation, identification of common interests becomes a relatively easy task.

Figure 3 illustrates the theory of "common interest(s)" diagrammatically. The large triangles represent the entirety of a given organisation's interests (Organization #1 is in blue, Organisation #2 is in green). The portions of their respective triangles that overlap represent the common interest (light blue), in other words, that interest that they both share and upon which an agreement might be formed. It is worth noting that in some circumstances, if an agreement can be reached around a common interest, then it may also expand to other areas. In such cases, the achievement of the "common interest" can be the 'carrot' for additional co-operation in areas that aren't common.
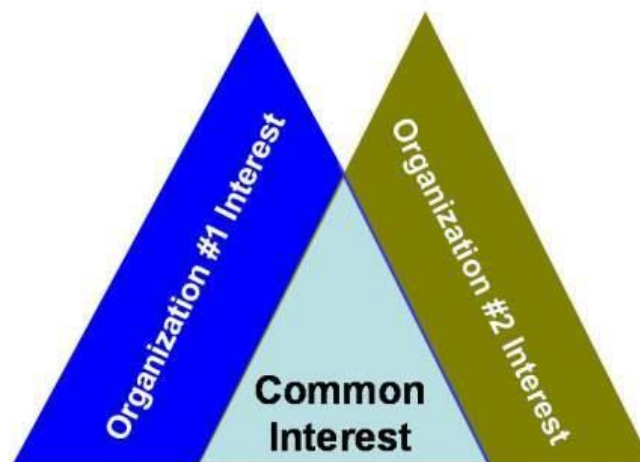
Figure 11 - 3: Schematic of Common Interest Between Two Organisations

A real-life example from Afghanistan illustrates the idea of common interest and is useful because it shows how even two bitter opponents in a struggle can occasionally find areas of common interest. "The anti-polio campaign brings together the Taliban, President Hamid Karzai's central government, Unicef and the World Health Organization in an uneasy but functioning partnership -- one that recognizes the reality of the insurgents' stranglehold over large chunks of the country", writes Wall Street Journal reporter Massimo Berruti [15]. While it may strike some as odd that the Taliban would actually co-operate with the Karzai Government (and vice versa), it does indeed happen regularly in the conduct of the anti-polio campaign. This arrangement is possible because both the Government and the Taliban (and several international organisations) have an area of common interest. The Karzai Government's interest in the anti-polio campaign is likely multi-fold. Firstly, it likely has an interest in sparing Afghan children from the debilitating effects of the disease. There is also likely a public relations interest that could be to establish its legitimacy through its role as the health care provider in Afghanistan. From a Taliban perspective, they have children of their own and have an interest in sparing them from the debilitating effects of the disease. They probably have a public relations interest as well that could be to enhance their legitimacy by demonstrating that they are actually in control of large portions of Afghanistan. The common interest in this case would be the desire to prevent Afghan children from contracting polio. This common interest provides a foundation from which the Karzai Government and the Taliban can cooperate, notwithstanding their competing interest of being seen by the Afghan people as the legitimate authority in Afghanistan. In some instances, working together successfully on an issue of common interest might open the door to engagement in other areas (though this was not likely the case in the preceding polio campaign example from Afghanistan).

Having identified the areas of common interest between the military and various civilian actors, one can proceed to the third and final step in this process.

3.1.3 Step 3 – Adopt the Preferred Engagement Strategy

The specific meaning of words is so important that NATO has developed a list of verbs with standardised definitions that are the only ones to be used in giving missions to subordinates. "Mission task verbs," as they are called, provide clarity, ease of shared understanding and simplicity to the process of superiors giving missions to subordinates. For example, the mission task verb "Clear" is defined as follows: *To Clear - A tactical task to remove all enemy forces from a specific location, area, or zone*. Unfortunately, no comparable system exists for the military to define its interactions with civilian actors. The challenge this poses is that words mean different things to different people and different people groups. In the context of recent discussions on the CA, words like "coordinate," "cooperate," and "collaborate" are being used rather liberally and often without any clear explanation of what they actually mean, or what is intended. The danger here is that various parties that are looking at working together on something may not have a shared understanding of what these words mean, and this in turn can lead to confusion, miscommunication and, ultimately, disagreement. It is not being suggested that the military would tell civilian actors what the nature of their mutual engagement would be; rather, it would be used and understood internally by the military.

To resolve this issue, it is proposed that the military adopt a standard list of terms that describe different levels of interaction that might be applied in engaging with a particular civilian organisation. This is demonstrated in a linear format in Figure 4 with increasingly positive interaction as one moves from left to right. In this case, from a CF perspective in the context of Afghanistan, the approach to the Taliban might be "Competing," that with UNAMA "Cooperating," and with CIDA (and other Canadian WoG partners), "Collaborating." Definitions are not provided here but would also need to be developed and standardised. This list could be developed with input from all the relevant non-military players, recognizing that a consensus is neither likely nor essential. It is key that various military actors have a common understanding of the nature of the engagement.
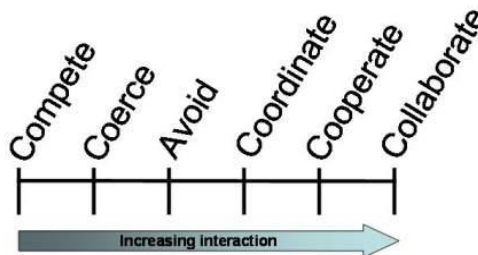
Figure 11 - 4: Levels of Interaction

4.0 CONCLUSION

The shift in focus from the primarily conventional approach to warfare of the Cold War period to a CA/JIMP warfare of today (and the future) with its inherent complexity drives the need for the military to better understand and apply the CA. The application of the CA in the often VUCA contemporary and future operating environments suggests the need for further research and development in the CA/JIMP field. This paper has proposed two LoIs (derived from the author's 7 years of involvement in the CA) for future R&D in support of improving the military's effectiveness within a CA/JIMP context. The two LoIs proposed, "Human Factors Considerations in the CA" and "A Tool to Enhance the Military's CA Effectiveness" offer the potential for NATO to significantly improve its ability to function within a CA/JIMP context. The tremendous expenditure of the Spirit, blood and treasure of NATO nations in support of the mission in Afghanistan and other theatres of operations merits continued and expanded R&D efforts to ensure that when militaries are engaged in CA/JIMP operations, they will always be ready *"for any old thing."*

5.0   REFERENCES

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[10] The A-I-A Three Step Process was presented at the Queen's Centre for International Relations 15-16 April 2010 Conference on **"**Canadian Perspectives on Comprehensive Approach" and will appear as a chapter in a book entitled 'Canadian perspectives on the Comprehensive Approach" to be published by the School of Policy Studies of Queen's University in the Spring of 2011.

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