

Effective Interagency Interactions and Governance in Comprehensive Approaches to Operations: Introduction

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1.0 SETTING THE STAGE

It has been recognized by many actors in international security missions that effective interaction, coordination and cooperation between the actors is a prerequisite for achieving the level of security that is aimed for. Today's complex conflicts cannot be solved by military means alone.

Practice has shown that combination and multiplicity of governmental and non-governmental instruments closely linked to host nation instruments is required for developing and maintaining secure environments and long-term development. By aligning the different approaches, more answers are generated, because the different expertise and inputs of a wide variety of the different instruments are shared. Additional drivers for combining efforts are the reduction of costs by avoiding duplication and conflicting organizational cultures and agendas, faster decision-making since actors have established lines of communication and interaction, and the stronger legitimation of missions for the public by having a broader participative basis.

A similar position is taken by other organisations in crisis management missions. For instance, the UN uses the concept of Integrated Missions in which processes, mechanisms and structures are in place to arrive at common strategic objectives with political, security, development, human rights, and where appropriate, humanitarian UN actors at country level aligned [1]. The EU has adopted the comprehensive approach in its European Security Strategy of 2003 stressing that the Union must "pursue coherent policies – bring together the different tools and capabilities of EU policy, such as European assistance programmes, the European Development Fund and the Member State's military and civilian capabilities" [2]. The conclusion is that a comprehensive approach (CA) to crisis management operations is an essential element in modern operations.

However, while diversity and broad participation is seen as necessary, it complicates decision-making and action dramatically. A multifirmity of opinions, concepts and ideas, lines of command, principles, ways of working, and actors that have different interests and aims, needs to be addressed, requiring broad mindsets and adequate preparations [3]. Moreover, with often many actors in the field, it takes time to bring the relevant actors together. In addition, because of the complexity inherent within integrated approaches (including the possibility of competing goals), these approaches present a unique challenge to leadership. Different organisations within the comprehensive approach could be individually successful while the approach as a whole fails to meet its objective [4]. An underestimated cost is also that coordination between different actors takes funds and capacity, which often is not sufficiently available. Some critics fear that bringing more parties in the responsibility of the governments may become diffused. This change in responsibilities requires also new concepts on how to govern these "solution-oriented partnerships that

may include non-government organizations, willing governments and other stakeholders" [5]. This sounds fine but a review of this development concluded that there should be done more: "idealism and nice words need to be complemented by a realistic assessment of potential limits of partnerships and – most of all – practical action to make them work" [6].

Now, with the recognized need for a broad, integral approach at one hand and the list of obstacles at the other hand, the question is how to master the obstacles in the development of broad collaborations. How can we do better, reduce the evident costs of building and maintaining collaborations, and improve the effectiveness of the collaboration, while respecting each other's independence? Moreover, how can we improve the effectiveness of the organisational system by means of functional leadership?

2.0 OUTLINE SYMPOSIUM

This three-day Symposium, which builds on the Toronto 2010 Workshop on Collaboration in a Comprehensive Approach to Operations [7], is designed to identify current CA-relevant theoretical structures and models, with special regards to comprehensive collaborative arrangements, in order to:

- Identify key advances in inter-agency collaborative approaches that are immediately applicable to the operational context;
- Develop theories to support the further development and operationalization of the comprehensive approach; and,
- Focus further research and development efforts and international research programs.

Operations should not be limited to missions in Afghanistan, but also refer to missions elsewhere, such as Somalia, Libya, Sudan, Congo, and areas with high environmental threats, such as floods, earthquakes. For the purpose of the Symposium, the application of the comprehensive approach is not limited to only out-of-area Civil-Military operations, but is extended to homeland security and even collective defence: these are functions which also require broad participation ('whole of society') and have similar underlying characteristics.

Bringing together Academics, Defence Scientists, Military, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations the Symposium wants to create an environment for intensive information exchange and focused discussion on key principles for improving the operationalization of comprehensive approaches to operations. The intention is to develop guidelines for building and maintaining effective collaborative arrangements.

Rather than only identifying current challenges and dilemmas and past activities, the Symposium participants should seek to formulate answers to the critical issues of inter-agency collaboration, and develop key principles for and solution approaches toward the further development of the comprehensive approach.

The following topics address the scope of the Symposium:

- What structures and processes and governance models have been developed over the years specifically for managing interactions and collaboration in complex arrangements of partners?
- What metrics have been used to qualify the effectiveness of building and maintaining comprehensive collaborative arrangements, and what data are available?
- What training, exercise, and preparation approaches have been applied, and how effective and efficient were these?
- What are the required competencies for leaders and participants in these arrangements?

- What has been learned from practice, in terms of shared wisdom or best practices on how collaboration in a comprehensive approach can be made work?
- What models and theories can help to support the further development and operationalization of the comprehensive approach?
- What are future directions or developments of comprehensive approaches to operations (in broadest sense)?

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