

# **The Comprehensive Approach - Doctrinal Overview and Implications for Leadership from a Swedish Perspective**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The original aim of this paper was to support the Headquarters of the Swedish Armed Forces with the task of developing the operational organization according to a Comprehensive Approach (CA). The paper is built upon a literature review and the results can be summarized as follows:*

- (1) The UN, EU and NATO differ on how far they have developed (CA) doctrines and core conceptual documents and to what levels they have implemented the approach within their international missions.*
- (2) Sweden does not currently have a comprehensive approach of its own but seems to be headed in that direction. Small actors, such as Sweden, can mainly contribute to the larger actors within a mission with “plug-in” capabilities depending on the needs of the mission.*

*Summarizations and conclusions regarding the comprehensive approach and its demands on leadership according to Sweden were drawn based upon the literature review and Sweden’s current status in the process of creating a comprehensive approach. The conclusions are summarized below:*

- (1) The CA context can be assumed to put an increased emphasis on the following leadership challenges: highly complex military tasks, a need for political and cultural understanding, a frequent lack of time and resources which has resulted in highly complex decision making in an (usually) unstable environment.*

*From a leadership perspective, particularly at the operational and tactical levels, this leads to the following conclusions. The present leadership model of the Swedish Armed Forces – Developmental Leadership – holds up well against the new challenges. However, it needs to be complemented with the following competences/skills to make it more context specific for the comprehensive approach: conflict management, cultural competence, emotion management and an increase of attention on flexibility/adaptability. The practical consequence resulting from this can be divided in two broad areas. The first is individual-related, which calls for improved officer selection and education. The second is organization-related, which implies a need to develop CA-relevant and effective management routines.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Sweden has a long history of nonalignment in military alliances, most notably not being a member of such organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On the other hand, there is an ongoing effort in Sweden to develop the national armed forces in a direction which is compatible with the standards of NATO and the requirements to take part in operations led by the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). Following from this, it is of vital interest to investigate how the understanding of the

comprehensive approach by leading international organizations relates to the Swedish military. This can be illuminated from a number of different perspectives. The present text focuses on military leadership and the compatibility of the current Swedish model of military leadership with demands posed by a comprehensive approach.

This paper is divided into five parts. The first is an overview of the doctrines and core concepts that were found which included the comprehensive approach. There is a summary following each organization discussed which includes our own analysis of problems/challenges identified based on the core doctrines and literature review. It attempts to answer the following question: What doctrinal and conceptual basis regarding the comprehensive approach exists within NATO, the EU, the UN and in Sweden? The remaining four parts build on this review of the literature and challenges identified. The second part is devoted to an analysis of leadership challenges that follow from a comprehensive approach along with illustrative examples from Swedish soldiers that were involved in international peace-enforcement missions. Part three identifies desired leadership competencies and skills to meet these challenges. Then, in part four, the desired competencies and skills are related to the current leadership model of the Swedish Armed Forces. The fifth and final part presents a summary and conclusion.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature was collected from multiple sources. Specifically, the organizational doctrines and core concept documents were downloaded from the following organizations' websites:

- NATO: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>
- EU: [http://europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm)
- UN: <http://www.un.org/en/>

The comprehensive approach literature was collected through the electronic database of the Anna Lind library at the Swedish National Defence College. The material was sorted into different categories for review: doctrine from each organization, articles related to each organization, articles relating to Sweden and other Nordic countries, and articles that overviewed the concept of the comprehensive approach. A considerable number of doctrine and core concept documents were found from each organization. Regarding leadership, some doctrine and core principle documents were more relevant than others; references to those particular documents are listed within the text.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY OF SWEDISH INFORMANTS**

Altogether there were 15 participants in the initial qualitative study, Military leadership and emotion coping in acute situation conducted by Nilsson, Brandow, Ohlsson, Alvinus & Larsson (2013) which looked at emotion coping strategies in irregular warfare environments. From the initial study, several experiences were described which fit in very well with the comprehensive approach concept. The informants whose international experience can be defined from a comprehensive approach perspective were used to illustrate the types of challenges that were initially found in the literature review. From the 15 used in the initial report, 5 were identified to have valuable experience within an international context in which some type of comprehensive approach concepts were used. These were soldiers that were involved in international peace-enforcement missions where multiple actors were involved, both military and civil. For the purpose of this paper, the experiences chosen were those used to highlight the challenges that were perceived in these types of missions which were also described in the literature review.

The data was organized according to organizational position, the highest level consisted of Chief of staff and leaders within Operating Mentoring Liaison Team (OMLT), the middle level consisted of platoon leaders and member of OMLT and lower level were soldiers in platoons in Afghanistan. Informants' military rank ranged from cadet to colonel and their ages spanned from 20 to 60 years. Most informants described their

experiences from operations in Afghanistan, and one had experience from a United Nations mission in Sudan. All except for one had previous experience in other international missions such as Gulf of Aden, the Balkans, and Lebanon.

#### **4.0 PART 1: DOCTRINAL AND CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW/ SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED**

The end of the cold war, from a European perspective, has led to new challenges for military forces. The threat against a country's own territory is generally considered as minimal, while most conflicts have been of a domestic character. Peacekeeping and peace building missions have been a focus. These kinds of missions have generally been characterized by more challenges than security and by tasks that demand more than traditional military means. While there is a need to keep belligerent parties apart and to sometimes defend oneself against violence from hostile groups, there is also a need for humanitarian efforts and (re-)building functional societal institutions. This, in turn, has led to the emergence of concepts like the comprehensive approach.

There is, however, a lack of a clear definition of the comprehensive approach concept. It generally refers to different mixtures of military and civilian efforts and to solving problems that are both military and civilian in nature. The comprehensive approach is neither a specific method nor a specific strategy to follow when organizing a mission. As its name implies, it is more of an approach to handle the complexities which encompass the new types of missions that are prevalent today. Most definitions include the idea that the comprehensive approach is a culture of cooperation between multitudes of actors involved in handling a crisis situation [1]. Within this area there are several concepts that are more or less synonymous with the comprehensive approach. Examples include Integrated Missions (IM), Civil Military Coordination (CMCO) and the Whole of Government Approach (WGA). The latter concept refers mainly to a coordinated effort at the national level.

The contexts where the comprehensive approach should be applied are often broad and varied in nature. Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq are a few examples of the countries that are most frequently discussed in the current literature which have had international missions using a comprehensive approach. These types of missions differ in several ways. First, they differ in security standards and in what the host nation may need from the international community for support. Second, they differ in the kind of strategy and tactic that could be expected to be successful. Third, they differ in the kinds of civilian organizations that could be of help. Accordingly, there are different kinds of comprehensive approach strategies that need to be applied within the different contexts.

The concept of a comprehensive approach has been debated and also, to some extent, criticized. Some have noted that it has a reputation as a "catch-phrase of little consequence" [2]. Others have highlighted the need for operationalizing the concept and many have questioned its effectiveness [3].

An issue that needs to be addressed regarding implementation of a comprehensive approach is the consequences and development opportunities for leadership. Leadership, like the comprehensive approach, is a broad concept with a lack of consensus within research on how exactly to define it. The definition chosen here is based on an interactive theoretical model that is further discussed below.

#### **4.1 Three Perspectives on the Comprehensive Approach**

This section will focus on three of the biggest multi-national organizations, NATO, the UN, and the EU, and their history and progress to obtain a comprehensive approach within their frameworks. It will also emphasize the challenges they have encountered while developing the comprehensive approach so that it can be later tied to leadership.

#### **4.1.1 North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

According to our findings, it appears that NATO has not successfully integrated the comprehensive approach into their doctrines. It is currently focusing on developing the comprehensive approach as an operational concept based on its Effect-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO). Essentially, NATO is a military alliance and therefore can only be deployed as such [4]. It is not built in a manner to implement a comprehensive approach on its own. Therefore, after the 2008 Bucharest Summit, it was declared that NATO's role within the comprehensive approach is only that of a contributor due to the lack of civilian capabilities within its organization [5]. However, Coning and Friis state that because NATO is a contributor to efforts led by the EU and UN in international affairs, it can be considered to be adopting a comprehensive approach as a form of policy coherence [6].

##### **4.1.1.1 Problems/challenges**

We identified several challenges for NATO concerning the comprehensive approach. First, there is a lack of political consensus within the organization about what ambitions to have. Some members want more and some want less of the comprehensive approach.

Secondly, NATO has no civilian components. The organization lacks a civilian culture, civilian procedures and a comprehensive approach doctrine. This implies, among other things, that the specific tasks in comprehensive approach operations are unclear. There seems to be two possibilities for NATO as a military organization. The first is to include civilian components within its own organization and the second is to cooperate with external civilian organizations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Presently, it seems that the latter condition is mainly the case, e.g., in Afghanistan. This, in turn, will demand NATO to be a good co-partner for the other actors. It also demands that there is a way of handling possible conflicts between military and civilian efforts.

Third, Conflicts between NATO and civilian counterparts could, for instance, stem from the concern that humanitarian workers should be neutral in relation to the military parties. If humanitarian efforts are mixed with military actions, there could be a credibility problem. A related problem is that NATO may be perceived as controlling the NGOs. This may cause frustration within the NGOs since military institutions may be perceived less favorably by public opinion. Thus, the perception of military control may also negatively affect political support for the whole mission.

Another conflict could be about openness. The military has a tradition of conducting operations in secret, while winning the hearts and mind of the local population may benefit from being more open about military operations. The openness of the forces is, however, influenced by the unit and by rank. When on a patrol mission a soldier can in many cases be quite open, since not all plans are known to him.

Lastly, it appears that NATO does not always have the same agenda as the UN and/or the EU. One main reason for this is that these organizations have different members. The membership of strong nations like Russia and China may cause the UN to have quite different agendas when compared to NATO.

#### **4.2 The European Union**

Over the past ten years, the EU has made considerable progress in its efforts to establish a better functioning comprehensive approach. The European Security Strategy (ESS) was adopted in December 2003 and has been their core doctrine regarding a unified European approach toward security challenges. According to Gross, this document came as a result of the EU's involvement in Iraq [7]. It was an attempt to create a coherent culture within the EU member states to repair damage done from conflicting views regarding their involvement there. The ESS also discusses the need and challenges for civilian and military components to coordinate more effectively [8]. Since 2003, a *Security Strategy Update* has been released, which refers to

the Lisbon treaty regarding development and changes that the EU should make in developing their comprehensive approach [9]. Another core document, which includes civil-military components, is the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); this was formerly known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). This document focuses on its crisis management capabilities and the actors involved in the process.

The EU often uses the acronyms CMCO (Civil-Military Coordination) and CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation) when discussing civil-military coordination efforts. According to Wendling, CIMIC usually deals with operational and tactical support issues and CMCO is related to the civil and military affairs within the political and strategic level. The use of the terminology within the organization has also led to an actual policy created to reflect these components, the Civilian-Military Coordination Policy. This policy was created to coordinate the elements in field operations and it addresses the need to strengthen the coordination with all actors regarding the planning and follow-through of operations [10].

### 4.2.2 Problems/challenges

Although the EU has many policies, doctrines and acronyms for the civil-military actors involved within their international missions, the breadth and scope of the effectiveness of its policies remain unknown in a crisis management theater thus far. Coning and Friis pointed out that the EU has currently not deployed a mission incorporating all of their capacities in one integrated forum [11]. They have been involved in parallel missions, even within the same country, but the true test of effectiveness will come within a unified endeavor.

One of the biggest challenges that the EU has faced regarding creating more advanced doctrines and planning has been that the civilian and military committees have had a difficult time working together. This includes disagreements over the text that should be included for their comprehensive approach concepts. An example of this includes the civilian committee preferring the term “mission” and the military committee wanting to use the word “operation” [12]. Although this example appears to be purely a disagreement over semantics, it highlights the difference in the views of the separate committees and the challenges that they have faced in attempting to plan together.

Another difficulty the EU is facing is whether or not member states within the EU will adopt the Whole of Government Approach at the national level and then later connect that to a comprehensive approach at a multinational level. There are many parties involved that must agree on the concept and follow through with implementing it in their own countries before it can be successful for the organization as a whole.

Having a civilian reserve readily available for missions is yet another problem the EU faces. They do currently have a database system in order to find qualified personnel but the quantity and quality of the civilians needed for such a mission is limited and many of the reserves are also shared with NATO, which naturally could cause a problem if they both become involved in missions simultaneously.

### 4.3 United Nations (UN)

Out of all three of the organizations, it appears that the UN has the most developed comprehensive approach in combining civil and military components into their missions. They have, however, strategically chosen to call their approach by other names in order to differentiate themselves from other organizations. The UN often uses the name Integrated Approach (IA) when referring to their method of handling complex military-civil tasks. They also have an Integrated Mission (IM), which was first implemented in 2004/2005. The UN’s secretary general released a *Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions* in 2006 stating:

An integrated mission is based on a common strategic plan and a shared understanding of the priorities and types of program interventions that need to be undertaken at various stages of the



recovery process. Through this integrated process, the UN system seeks to maximize its contributions towards countries emerging from conflict by engaging its different capabilities in a coherent and mutually supportive manner [13].

They have also implemented an Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP) which is an organized and systematic way to include all of the actors involved during a crisis, including all of the local actors in the host country and those involved at the UN headquarters.

After comparing several organizations, including EU, UN and NATO, Wendling stated that the “UN remains the international organization with the longest experience of the multidimensional approach through its integrated approach” [14]. Overall, this organization has an advanced doctrinal plan to address civilian-military unified endeavors even though it is labeled differently than the other organizations.

#### **4.3.3 Problems/challenges**

Of notable concern within the literature is that despite their advanced planning and doctrine, the UN has also encountered difficulties when actually attempting to implement a comprehensive approach in peacekeeping missions. According to Coning, the UN Peacekeeping missions have had a poor rate of sustainability thus far due to a “strategic deficit”, which is defined as a lack of coherence at the strategic level [15]. He has also found that the UN has experienced difficulties implementing the comprehensive approach in the field level due to lack of flexibility in constantly changing situations. More specifically, there has been an inability of successful cooperation in the field with other organizations regarding resources in the early stages of a conflict. This is mainly due to strict policy rules/regulations regarding use of resources and equipment and therefore can be a difficult challenge to rectify unless it is addressed at the operational and strategic levels.

#### **4.4 The Comprehensive Approach and Sweden**

Sweden does not currently have a comprehensive approach of its own but has a variation of the whole of government approach. Grönberg states that in March of 2008 the Swedish government presented a national strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security building operations to the Swedish Parliament. It included Swedish support for combined civil and military actors. Grönberg further elaborates that the combination of these two sides has been challenging for Sweden in the past since civilian and military efforts are often separate. Previously, the Swedish military and civilian agencies have had different mandates and priorities which have resulted in difficulties when working together. The national strategy presented in 2008 recognizes that contributions must include both civil and military capabilities in order to be successful. It is also noted within the national strategy that the Swedish involvement is to support UN and EU peace efforts while also achieving Sweden’s overall national objectives [16].

It is our analysis that this recognition appears to support the idea that Sweden is moving towards the ideology of a comprehensive approach in an international arena even though it has not been fully established at this time within its doctrine. According to the Swedish Defence Research Agency, the Swedish approach is a “concerted action” of grouped support and the overall level of ambition is collaborative. The Swedish approach is a variant of a Whole of Government Approach and is not part of an international system at this time [17].

There is currently not a unified Nordic approach either, although it has been suggested by researchers as a possible beneficial collaboration in the future. Each Nordic country has its own policy and certain countries are more developed than others within the process of implementing a comprehensive approach into their own doctrines. Friis and Rehman reported that Sweden has stated its willingness to use a Whole-of-Government approach when it participates in international crisis management [18]. They continue to say that the main role that Sweden appears to have when implementing a comprehensive approach at this time is to help by contributing to larger actors that are also using the approach in the international arena. Small actors, such as

Sweden, will usually contribute to the larger actors within a mission with “plug-in” capabilities depending on the needs of the mission. “Plug-in” capabilities are specific skills or needs that a country can contribute. Friis and Rehman conclude by saying that the effectiveness of the ability to use a comprehensive approach can be measured in terms of inter-agency coherence in the field with key actors such as the UN, the EU, NATO and other large contributors [19].

## **5.0 PART II: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL/TACTICAL LEADERSHIP ILLUSTRATED FROM A SWEDISH PERSPECTIVE**

From our literature review it appears that, the UN, EU and NATO, differ on how far they have developed relevant doctrines. They also seem to differ in their ability to come to a political consensus. The reason for the differences could be related to two important aspects. First, the three organizations differ in the number of member countries. It is reasonable to expect that there would be more difficulty with a larger number of member countries, since members may differ in their political and cultural traditions and in the interests they may have. Second, the three organizations differ in the number of responsibilities they have to deal with. The greater the degree of responsibility, the harder it may be to focus on a specific issue, like the comprehensive approach. NATO would, therefore, theoretically have the best opportunities for a unified approach, but even on this level there seems to be problems with internal consensus. Generally, there seems to be a risk for conflicting goals and an imprecise approach at the strategic level. From a leadership perspective this may, among other things, highlight the importance of the specific operation/mission to have clear goals.

Within the comprehensive approach doctrine and literature, many challenges have been brought forth in efforts to find ways to implement the approach in a more effective manner. Several of the challenges that were identified that could affect leadership are discussed below, specifically at the tactical and operational level. An example of each type of challenge is illustrated below from a Swedish perspective at an operational and/or tactical level.

### **5.1 Distal Challenges**

#### **5.1.1 Complexity of the task**

The task for a comprehensive approach mission/operation is normally complex and possibly one of the more complex tasks a military leader faces. The end-state of the operation, peace, democracy, and functional societal institutions, are normally a result of a long term, historical process which is hard to accelerate. The perception of injustice in different population groups may be an obstacle, but this is also a process that may need time to change. The injustice may, however, feed radical and violent views and encourage ideologies that are less optimal from a democratic point of view. Accordingly, these are structural problems behind the leadership challenges that, in the short run, are hard to affect.

There are more factors that contribute to this complexity, like different and parallel political agendas, as well as cultural differences both within the organization and in relation to the host nation.

Below, a Swedish commander describes the challenges he encountered when working with local defense forces in Afghanistan:

What was really challenging, that was what a person calls the “Local Defense Forces”, which were different armed Afghan units in several locations that all had different mandates

Being able to keep up with the different actors involved in missions and which mandates and rules that were applicable with each unit was challenging to coordinate internal actors according to their different

rules/mandates. A wider variety of cultural differences will be addressed more extensively under proximal challenges.

There is also an emotional complexity. The comprehensive approach is normally exercised in a context of conflict, which in itself is emotionally provocative. According to Nilsson, Brandow, Ohlsson, Alvinus & Larsson, 2013 many different emotion coping strategies are often used in order to help individuals handle the emotionally taxing situation. Examples of these are distancing, rationalizing, externalizing, etc. These can be healthy in a short term perspective to handle complex, emotionally challenging situations but can be harmful in a long term perspective [20].

In addition, there may be an emotional aspect related to the use of and the distribution of power. The local population of the host country may be cooperative in varying degrees, some more so than others. This has been the experience from several Swedish operations. Examples of this have been previously been found in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Africa. Some groups of civilians have opposed foreign involvement, which made the achieving the goals of the mission more difficult.

An example of this was found from a commander that was involved in a UN mission in Africa:

This is something I had a hard time with in Africa, or it felt like a challenge, not actually solving the tasks given, more of interacting with the local population...At least in Africa, you had this feeling that you were perceived as "Here comes the white man again that is going to try and help us figure out a problem that he himself has created"...

There may also be divergences between the multiple actors involved that may put pressure on leadership. Combined with other environmental stressors, this means that there is a constant demand on military leaders to handle multiple balancing acts.

### **5.1.2. Political understanding/support**

Some of the problems encountered by these multi-national organizations appear to be that the origin of the comprehensive approach is at the political and strategic level and that there may be a lack of consensus between different members. It would, of course, be better if there was such a consensus, but this is a political problem rather than a leadership issue. At the tactical and operational level, a commander has to accept the results of political processes, even if he or she does not find the outcome optimal from a military point of view. Several commanders, platoon leaders and soldiers questioned the political support they perceived that they received in international missions, especially concerning morally challenging decisions that often need to be made. Much of the questioning had to do with what they were allowed to do versus what they would like to do in morally taxing situations in an international arena. It is also important that a leader feels he/she has support from the leading group and political level in specific situations that demand it.

A commander within an international peacekeeping mission reported:

And with that (mandates), I also experience very strongly that those involved in Swedish political leadership don't care that much about what we do. They want to be involved politically but I sometimes question if they take the moral responsibility for what they let us be involved with and do.

It appears that commanders would benefit from an understanding of the political processes behind the decisions.



### 5.1.3 Complex decision making

Decision making on different levels may differ considerably in what kind of leader qualities they demand. On lower levels the decisions may be more short-term and involve fewer alternatives and circumstances to balance. Higher levels within a hierarchical scheme simply involve more complex decisions. It could be argued that the increase in complexity seems to be more exponential than linear. As a commander moves up to the international and intercultural level, there are more circumstances to balance when making decisions. He or she must have the competence to identify these circumstances, judge their importance, search for relevant information and decision support, analyze data and compare alternatives.

There is also a challenge regarding the different rules/mandates from the different countries that are involved within one international organization. In this circumstance described below, Swedish laws sometimes were different than the rules/laws of the organization, which in this circumstance was United Nations.

All of the Rules of Engagement, well I shouldn't say all, several of them were not really applicable within the legal support we had from here (Sweden) until the government changed the page on its offensive mission rules, this was also the case where you take the initiative to carry out, exercise violence.

This presents a challenge for what is expected from an organizational level (e.g. U.N.) versus what is allowed at a national level.

## 5.2 Proximal Challenges

### 5.2.1 Cultural competence

Several types of cultural competencies are important in the implementation of the comprehensive approach. In international operations, leaders first need an understanding of the culture of both the host nation and the participating nations. Typically, the countries in which comprehensive approach missions are conducted have very different cultures, and a leader needs to be aware of the differences as well as having a level of diplomacy on how to handle differences in a respectful way. Even small cultural offences can be disadvantageous when trying to get the local people and the diverse participating actors to work with you on a task, rather than against your efforts.

Because the use of the comprehensive approach involves many different actors and organizations, it also demands a competence for different organizational cultures. This is, however, a complex issue. The organizational culture could often mirror the kind of tasks the organization has, as well as its past history. Organizations that have their origin in fighting wars will have a different culture than organizations that were founded specifically to work on humanitarian issues. To add to the complexity, an organization (whether it is military or civilian) does not have one uniform culture, but rather several subcultures within itself.

One of the biggest challenges though, is for both the military and civilian actors that are involved to have a mutual respect for what each has to offer to the comprehensive approach process. It can often be felt within the organizations that either side has a hard time relating to the other's perspective and they can often think that their own side's contribution is worth more than the others. An example of this was previously mentioned with the collaborative efforts of the military and civilian components within the EU on deciding a name within a doctrine. These types of issues can affect leaders in many ways when it is necessary to work together on missions. Therefore, it is important for military leaders to accept the value that the civil actors have to contribute as well as give them an opportunity to be a valuable part of the process.

An example of this at the Swedish (operational level) was given by an informant who routinely worked with several civilian actors within a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan. In this circumstance, the informant was working with the Afghan police and this person reflected on the difference in cultural views they held of women:

...their view (Afghan) of women were completely outdated, there were several police that were sitting and laughing and having a discussion and then when the interpreter was asked what it was about he said, “they are sitting and talking and comparing who mistreats their wife the most”, and then I was like “is that a competition?” and their view of women was totally absurd...

When asked if their conflicting views affected their working relationship, the informant replied:

No, I already knew about it before the mission so it didn't affect me really, it was more like “well, that is their view”. Instead you began to look down on them actually, on their closed views and double-morals

Another example was reported of how unpleasant the civil actors were with the local population, in which they were depending on for information. It was reported:

When we were out on an operation, it was always with the army and the police, and they could go to a little family to check out the situation (regarding the Taliban) and be pretty rude towards them, although sometimes nice....they would check out the situation and almost demand that they would be served food and then they would sit there and eat all of their food. I would refuse it...

The informant continued with the description, including that the civil actors usually promised to return to pay the family for the food they had eaten; however, they rarely followed through on their promises. For this OMLT soldier, this problem was particularly concerning to him because he felt the civil actors were taking advantage of the families since most of them were very poor and did not have regular access to stores to buy supplies to support their families.

### **5.2.2 Time**

Often, in situations when the comprehensive approach will be used, time is of the essence at the beginning of a mission. It is usually critical that an organization or actor be involved as soon as possible when a situation develops to prevent it from worsening. A complication with this press of time is that the decision and planning stages, along with all of the different committees that need to be involved, often take time before the beginning of a mission can commence. According to the United Nation's document, *A New Partnership Agenda-Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping, Integrated Approach and Integrated Missions*, a faster deployment to mission sites is critical within the beginning stage of the comprehensive approach [21]. This needs to be accomplished at the strategic level by establishing a mission headquarters on site so that the prioritization of tasks can be sequenced and began within a shorter period of time. The document also mentions the need for leaders to be able to do “scenario-planning” in the field in order manage and respond to crisis situations in a timely fashion.

After decisions and plans are made, there is a short turnaround time for units to be put together and then deployed to begin the tactical stage. This can be a challenge for tactical unit leaders because the units that are put together often have no experience working with each other prior to the mission. The leader has to be able to build a relationship and a sense of trust with his/her subordinates along with team building within the group in a very short time period.

A soldier at the tactical level described an educational challenge due to dispatch on short notice:

It was only to get to it and do it (learn on site). There was no alternative. It worked out pretty well for me anyhow and then I helped teach the others that also did not have enough training on it (systems used on site).

### 5.2.3 Environment

As would be expected, being involved in missions within unstable countries poses challenges. It makes the working environment a volatile one that requires a huge amount of flexibility from a leader's perspective. The plans and orders that are passed down from a strategic level should allow for a good amount of flexibility for the leaders at the operational and tactical level to make changes based on the continuously changing environment. Leaders should be seen as the 'expert' in their own domain because they are the ones that have the most relevant and current knowledge upon which to base decisions.

A description from an informant shows the type of changing, chaotic environment they experienced in Mogadishu and the challenges it presented:

In 2010 in Mogadishu...a lot had happened but it was a full on war zone there and the government forces were almost non-existent that had physical control over parts of the harbor and the presidential palace. In general, the whole city was...lawless and especially under the influence of the Al-Shabab, which was a type of terrorist group connected to Al-Qaida.

This type of example illustrates the type of volatile, risk-filled environment that a mission could take place. This, of course, takes a special type of individual, equipped with many different abilities and skill sets to make decisions in this type of environment and to bear the responsibilities that follow along with it. The next section examines the abilities, skills and competencies that were identified in the comprehensive approach doctrine and literature.

### 5.2.4 Resources

Short preparation time also has a direct effect for the resources that can be accessible at the mission site when beginning a mission. The operational level must be able to get orders for what resources are needed and be able to get them to the mission site in a quick and timely manner so that the mission can begin as quickly as possible. This can be a challenge as necessary resources often come later than anticipated. This leaves units and leaders in an awkward position on how to begin their tasks.

Receiving resources in a timely manner is not context-specific to the comprehensive approach as it can happen in other types of missions as well. However, something that can be specifically challenging to the comprehensive approach is the need to share resources with other agencies that are also involved in the same task at the mission site. This is the true essence of the comprehensive approach: the ability to work together with different agencies in order to complete a similar goal. This can be a challenge because each agency has its own policies, rules, and regulations that it must follow regarding resources. The delay that can take place for an agency to have approval to share resources with another agency/agent is crucial time that could be spent on the mission itself. One of the main goals of the comprehensive approach is to 'work smarter, not harder', so to speak, avoiding duplicating work within agencies in order to help complement each other's abilities in the mission.

Due to the many unknown factors, such as volatile environment and time constraints, the availability of resources could also be unknown. An informant described that:

Yes, and then of course, you really don't have any idea if there is a motorcycle with a bomb on it, that you really can't know. Or a car with something...

Resources are often planned reactively instead of proactively, which would be ideal. As mentioned previously, the environment was often unpredictable and the resources often had to be planned in accordance to an event that happened.

Another challenge is the resources that are available connected with the resources that are used from the local actors. An example of this was given from an informant in regards to protective gear. The Swedish soldiers had all of the protective gear required to work in a high risk environment, however, many of them chose not to wear it due to the fact that they worked directly with Afghan soldiers who did not have the gear. The informant described that:

It is also that we work according to how they (Afghans) work. We are away and running through the mountains with the Afghan army that has absolutely nothing (protective gear), they have only their uniform and a weapon and they are fast, ya, then it feels like you can't take everything (protective gear).

This became quite a problem later in the mission because the Swedish soldiers were ordered to wear their protective gear and many decided not to in order to adjust to the warm Afghan heat and to make themselves quicker in comparison to the Afghan soldiers they were working with. This was reported to be especially a problem among the younger, less experienced soldiers.

### **5.2.5 Conflicts**

Due to the many factors involved in these types of missions, such as multiple actors, ambiguous laws/mandates, cultural considerations, etc. the risk for conflicts are heightened considerably. Leaders working in this type of environment should be mentally prepared for probable conflicts and have the ability to handle them in a diplomatic way which is focused on conflict resolution in order to achieve the higher goal of the mission as well as hold the integrity of the other parties. A few examples of types of conflicts international peacekeeping missions are described below:

I was Chief of Staff to eleven officers which were all the same level and rank that I was... There were eleven nationalities, from Russia, Nigeria, Egypt, Rwanda, Norway, England, India and Pakistan. It was this type of glorious mix of nationalities that despite everything worked pretty well together but after they left the organization and went back home then they continued to have conflicts with each other (nations), for example Pakistan and India, those types of tensions. So that was a part of it, to handle those types of ingrained, existing conflicts that were based on which nationalities that were put together in this type of time restricted work environment.

The informant continued by explaining that cultural differences and the combination of different nationalities often created disagreements when there was a need to have unanimous decisions made. There were many differences of opinions about conflict resolution, such as:

In many countries there was a culture of... if people didn't agree; if you take away the problem then the problem is solved. Maybe compromising and finding a middle ground isn't something that works all over the world. That was the first time that I reflected on that. If we're going to achieve any real changes then it's going to take time, an unbelievable amount of time.

When asked how they finally ended up working successfully in a group when they differed so much in opinion, it was answered:

Sometimes you just had to be at peace to say that we are currently not in agreement and then every time you meet it has to be handled with a long term plan instead of a short fix and I think that can definitely be a challenge for Swedish soldiers that are in an international mission. To be away during a time restricted period, you are usually away for 6 months so you want to make your absence from home feel worthwhile, that you have actually achieved something, that you have contributed to something. But when you are in that context then you realize, damn, what do I think I am going to accomplish in this 6 months? Probably very, very little. And that can actually be a very

tough thought, to give up 6 months and endanger yourself, and to what benefit? Yes, in a very long perspective then there is naturally a little accomplishment achieved but when you are actually there, that accomplishment feels unbelievably small.

One of the problems reported is that these types of disagreements tend to create split views within the organization. It was reported that:

There were split views within our organization. All of us eleven represented UN and the international community and I felt that it was very important that we, we shouldn't sell a "cracked picture" to those we were trying to help fulfill the peace-agreement with. So instead of all trying to agree on all decisions, I decided to split all of the responsibilities up. So, every individual had their clear and specific responsibility area so that on paper we could be united as a UN organization on our decisions and so that we didn't stomp on each other's areas of responsibilities and that minimized those types of conflicts within our organization.

## 6.0 PART III: DESIRED COMPETENCIES/SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS FOR OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL LEADERSHIP

### 6.1 Desirable Leadership Competencies/Skills

Before looking at specific competencies and skills, the difference between the terms *skill* and *competence* is defined for clarification. The Oxford dictionary defines a skill as "the ability to do something well; expertise". There are many different definitions of competence but most definitions include the core concepts of a person's combination of knowledge, applied skills and behavior related to the competence. Some even include the person's attitude as well. Therefore, a skill is a subset of being competent in something. To illustrate, social competence can be regarded as a broad concept that includes skills such as giving and receiving feedback constructively and being able to adapt words and body language to different cultures and peoples.

Within the comprehensive approach doctrine and literature there were several skills and/or competencies that were identified as important for implementing the approach within peacekeeping operations. Those skills/competencies were interpreted for what would be specifically important for a leader role when implementing the comprehensive approach. They were chosen based on their high frequency of occurrence within several documents. Some of the factors identified are general skills that would be important for other types of leaders in missions that are not related to the comprehensive approach while others are more specific to this context.

#### 6.1.1 General skills/competencies

##### 6.1.1.1 Communication skills

Communication skills often include a person's ability to express ideas to others through written, oral and non-verbal ways. Therefore, the effectiveness of a person's ability to express those ideas depends on how well they are at communicating. "Leaders should be effective communicators, both locally and globally. Effective communication of the mission's role and functions to local actors is essential" (United Nations document: *A New Partnership Agenda-Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping*) [22]. Specific to the comprehensive approach, this document emphasizes the importance of good communication skills that a leader should have within Integrated Approach and Integrated Missions. It should be a leader's focus with all of the actors involved within a mission, such as subordinates, the leader's superiors, other leaders, and civilian and actors.



Specific to communication, an important task that leaders should be involved in for the comprehensive approach is involvement in internal/external meetings for planning and receiving of information. This helps coordination and collaboration efforts with the other actors involved. Everyone has the opportunity to work towards a shared goal and it gives a shared situational awareness within the mission. The EU emphasizes the importance of leaders specifically being involved in consultative meetings with other international organizations in the field that are involved in crisis resolution [23]. This also helps with improved communication between the actors.

Another important form of communication is interaction with the media. Wong, Bliese and McGurk noted that, previously, interaction with the media was a restricted, bureaucratic activity for higher officials within confined settings. With the current trends of increasing real-time reporting and advances of technology, public relations training is now being added to all levels of leadership education [24]. With its growing accessibility, the media can be present for many different critical and daily activities at all levels; leaders should be prepared and skilled in handling the task of dealing with the media. The United Nations emphasizes the importance of clear communication with regards to the media and the need for “well designed and smooth communication strategy to increase confidence in the peace process and build trust among parties in the conflict” [25].

#### *6.1.1.2 Social skills*

Current research often links leaders’ social skills and ways of interacting with people as a defining concept of being a successful leader. Yukl emphasizes the importance of the need for leaders to be skilled with dealing with people as well as with current issues [26]. An important aspect of effective social skills is the ability for a leader to be able to change their technical language depending on who he/she is speaking with so that the ideas communicated are easily understood by the recipient. An example of this would be to use terminology that civilians understand rather than using military terminology when having meetings that include civilian participants.

Another social aspect specific to the comprehensive approach that should be considered is the leader’s ability to accept and give value to other contributors, including all actors within a mission. This means that he/she openly tries to include other actors within coordination efforts. The leader should be aware of the value that other actors have to offer and, within efforts to coordinate all actors, give them credit for their ideas, a chance to be heard and have an openness to implement ideas decided upon together. This skill is specifically important due to the challenges that the military and civilian/local actors have felt when trying to coordinate together. More specifically, challenges have existed regarding not giving actors outside of the military realm an appropriate sense of value within a mission, despite the demands for their competences within the comprehensive approach.

#### *6.1.1.3 Stress tolerance skills*

Due to the volatile environment and the demand for a leader to be able to handle complex decision making on short notice, a leader should have well developed stress tolerance skills. In general, this type of person should have a naturally high stress threshold to begin with and also have skills to handle stressful environments. This of course, is a general skill since many types of missions also include this need.

### **6.1.2 Specific skills/competencies**

There are also several skills/competencies identified that are also general skills for leaders but have more importance when implementing the comprehensive approach. These types are listed below.

### 6.1.2.1 Conflict management skills

This is particularly important because of the many different actors involved in the implementation of the comprehensive approach. As we have discussed earlier, there are many different cultures involved in these types of missions (local cultures, inter-agency cultures and intra-agency cultures) therefore, this is an environment naturally conducive to conflict. It is important that a leader involved in these types of missions is skilled in the area of conflict management. This is a skill that can be learned and improved.

According to the United Nation's *Peacekeeping Operations (Capstone Doctrine), Principles and Guidelines*, conflict management and leadership are very important skills for a start-up of a mission since most of the international staff have not worked together previously [27]. Pertaining to leadership, the document adds that strong leadership is especially important during the start-up phase when new procedures are being established. Confusion at this stage can be problematic because missions usually develop quickly directly after initial start-up. The start-up and ending of a mission are critical times of change, in which roles are re-defined and many parties are involved, which can also lead to a higher risk of conflicts. These types of events should be anticipated and dealt with immediately so that it does not hinder the mission's goals.

### 6.1.2.2 Cultural competence

According to Martin and Vaughn, cultural competence refers to a person's ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures [28]. It is comprised of four components:

1. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
2. Attitude towards cultural differences
3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
4. Cross-cultural skills (which includes communication skills)

Due to the multiple nations involved, which include differences in cultures, religions, languages, etc., cultural competence is a very valuable asset for a leader to have. They will not only use it for their own tasks but it will be of value to help educate and advise their subordinates, who are often in contact with the local people within the mission areas.

The UN discusses the "social impact" of the military on the local country in their *Capstone Doctrine* [29]. This specifies that leaders should be aware of their unit's impact on the host country. For example, the mixing of genders in societies that upholds strong traditional gender roles (e.g. limiting the mixing and socializing between genders and employing women) along with other activities that may be unacceptable, such as gambling and drinking, may cause friction within the host country. Leaders must be aware of the social and cultural norms within the host countries and be respectful of their views since these can work against their agenda of working together towards a similar goal within a mission.

### 6.1.2.3 Emotion management skills

This concept is interpreted as an important skill for leaders given the volatile and stressful environment they often work in. This is not a new concept within academia but it has gained popularity within the last ten years in connection to leadership. Emotion management is defined as "the management of feeling to create a publically observable facial and bodily display" [30]. The ability of leaders to control their own feelings in order to match the feelings that are appropriate for the situation is a skill that is especially important when dealing with tasks in emotionally taxing environments. Emotional management has been shown to be a central characteristic of effective leaders, both with regulation of their own emotions and the regulation of others [31, 32].

Within the realm of emotion management, an idea that has gained interest within the psychology and management fields is the concept of *emotion regulation* (ER). Gross describes ER as a "process by which we

influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them” [33]. He describes emotion regulation as a conscious process that can involve increasing, decreasing or maintaining emotions.

Regulation of one’s own emotions is referred to as *intrinsic regulation*. This is more of a general concept that would be important for most actors within an international mission. *Extrinsic regulation* refers to the skill of helping others regulate their feelings. This concept has led to emotion regulation strategies, which are skills that can be learned in order to regulate one’s own emotions and/or help others with the regulation of their emotions in a given situation. There are specific cognitive regulation strategies that leaders can learn and practice, which can be used both intrinsically and extrinsically. These strategies would be particularly important for leaders to use when encountering emotionally charged situations, such as a crisis, to help themselves or others to decrease their own emotions in order to keep calm to fulfil a task.

Blascovich and Hartel discuss the importance of how emotions are communicated from person to person within different cultural settings and how misunderstandings can easily happen based on the cultural interpretation of the event (often resulting from non-verbal behavior) [34]. They indicate that as the military increasingly trains and conducts missions abroad within multi-cultural environments, knowledge of the cultural difference (specifically emotional aspects) will be important to mission success. They bring up intriguing questions such as what gestures do people from particular cultures find threatening or comforting and what signifies respect.

## **6.2 Desirable Leadership Behaviors**

Within the comprehensive approach doctrine and literature there were also several behaviors or ways of being that were described as being beneficial in implementing the comprehensive approach. All of these aspects can be seen as both general leadership abilities and as abilities specific to the comprehensive approach. They are often found in other international military situations that are not specific to the comprehensive approach. Their importance specifically related to the comprehensive approach is explained under each sub-category.

### **6.2.1 General leadership behaviors**

#### *6.2.2 Highly adaptive/flexible*

Due to the complex and constantly changing comprehensive approach environment, a focus on increased flexibility for leaders at the operational level is necessary so that they have the ability to adapt and adjust accordingly. Both tactical and operational leaders need to be flexible to plans changing at short notice and be able to change plans themselves when they find the current plan is not working. The EU’s *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* discussed the importance of increased flexibility in order to be successful when implementing the comprehensive approach [35]. They correlate the need for higher flexibility with the heightened complexity of the task. The document is also specific with the need to have troops/leaders who have the flexibility for short notice deployment.

#### *6.2.3 Inspire/motivate others*

This is valuable so that subordinates feel motivated to complete necessary tasks within the mission. More specifically, it is important that the leader is open with information that is necessary for subordinates to have an accurate idea and motivation behind their own tasks. This creates meaning to their work rather than a checklist of tasks to fulfill without the understanding of why.

### 6.2.4 Trust

Leaders should have trust in the people that they are working with. It is counter-productive in a changing environment to try to be in charge of every aspect within a given mission. Just as a leader wants trust from their subordinates in order to lead them, it is equally important that they also trust their subordinates to follow through with the tasks they have been given. This helps create a culture of trust within the unit and makes it possible for more to be accomplished in a short amount of time. With time being such a critical issue in the comprehensive approach, trust is imperative.

### 6.2.5 Cooperation/coordination

Due to the complexities of the tasks involved in these types of missions, it is important for leaders to have accurate situational awareness and to draw on the expertise of others to face complexities. The EU states that “in integrated missions, leaders should have the capacity to assess progress, draw on specialized expertise to identify critical gaps, and to work with a range of partners to meet peace-building needs” [36].

In order to be more adequately prepared, leaders should receive education and training that is context-specific for the types of challenges that they are likely to face in the field, including working with other actors. It is stated in the UN Capstone Doctrine that this is vital for the preparation of leaders [37]. Training exercises should include civil expertise so that coordination feels natural in the field. More training, including training with international actors, should be encouraged. This should help with the coordination and cooperation endeavors that seem to be problematic at the field level.

Prior to a new mission, contact time for leaders should be provided so that they have a chance to get to know others who will be involved in the mission. Establishing these relationships encourages an easier ability for cooperation later. The UN’s Capstone Doctrine refers specifically to this in regards to leadership, emphasizing the importance of leaders being able “participate in the mission planning, briefings on the situation and to meet and work with their colleagues in mission leadership” [38].

### 6.2.6 Feedback

The ability to give feedback is paired closely with a leader’s communication ability. It is very important that a leader at this level gives feedback to those he/she is working with. They need to know at an evaluative level how they are doing individually and as a team in order to feel fulfilled and to develop themselves further. It is also important that they are aware of the plans that may be developing and changing and how they may be affected.

### 6.2.7 Role model

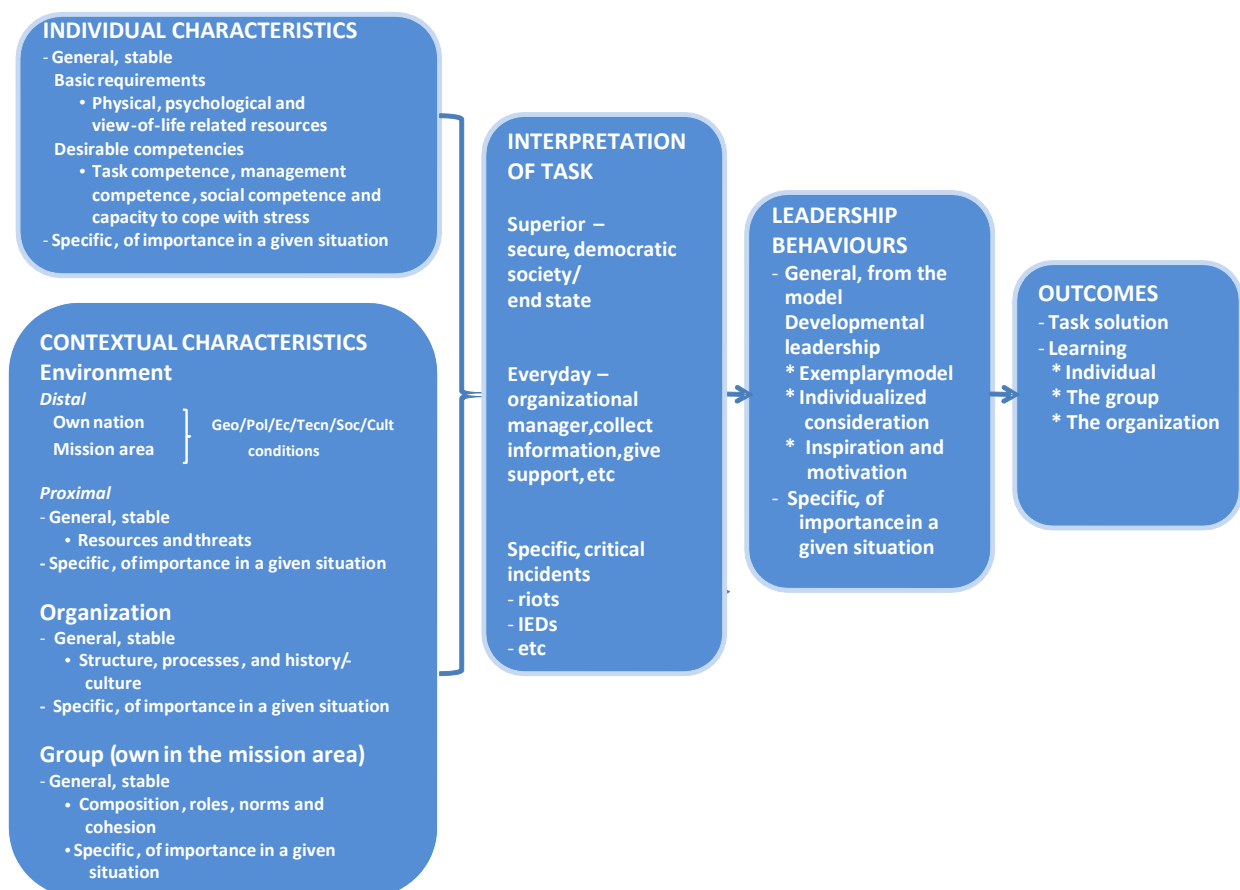
A leader should behave in a way that portrays the way he/she wants others also to behave. A great deal of leadership research stresses the importance of a leader acting as a role model to his/her subordinates, especially in the popular leadership theories such as transformational leadership. This is, of course, a balancing act of responsibilities as well. Everyone involved within a mission is ultimately responsible for their own behavior so the organizational rules and regulations should be the defining norm for how an individual should act. However, a leader also has a very good opportunity to show the appropriate way to be, defined by the organization

## 7.0 PART IV: IMPLICATIONS FOR SWEDISH MILITARY LEADERSHIP AT THE OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL LEVELS

Based on the existing doctrinal and conceptual texts on the comprehensive approach, we have tried to deduce challenges implied from a leadership perspective, and, following from this, to identify leadership

skills/competences and behaviors that are desirable to meet these challenges. We will now turn to an analysis of what these desirable leadership skills/competencies and behaviors mean for Swedish military leadership. In order to maximize the generalizability of our line of reasoning, we will use a theoretical model of leadership as a road map in this analysis.

Since 2003, the Swedish Armed Forces has used “Developmental leadership” as its official leadership model [39]. Recently, two further developments of this model have been made. First, the contextual part was elaborated, allowing for more situation-specific applications of the model [40]. Second, aspects from the authentic leadership model [41], and from the indirect leadership model [42], were integrated with the developmental leadership model [43]. A simplified version of this integrated model was presented by Larsson et al. [44] and this version will serve as the basis of the present text. The model is shown in Figure 11-1.



**Figure 11-1. Theoretical model of leadership (modified from Larsson & Eid) [45].**

The leadership model implies that a number of individual and contextual characteristics interact and shape a military commander’s appraisal or sense-making of a given situation. This meaning, which applies to what is taking place, in turn generates a number of leadership behaviors, which, to a greater or lesser degree, affect the outcome.



In the following, a selection of key aspects of each box in the model will be discussed. The selection was guided by an attempt to focus on aspects of high relevance to military leadership at the operational and tactical levels within the framework of a comprehensive approach.

### 7.1 Individual Characteristics

Beginning with “Basic requirements” in the developmental leadership model, nothing new emerged in the present analysis. This means that favorable physical, psychological and view-of-life-related resources are also assumed to be relevant in the case of operational/tactical leadership within a comprehensive approach framework.

Continuing with “Desirable competences” in the developmental leadership model, once again, nothing contradicts the four competences defined in the model: task-related competence, management-related competence, social competence and capacity to cope with stress. However, in the context of the comprehensive approach, some important addenda were noted. In particular, the following three competences/skills were highlighted: conflict management, cultural competence and emotion management. All three reflect important aspects of military leadership in a comprehensive approach context and deserve more attention in selection and education processes.

In terms of the developmental leadership model, the three addendums can be seen as special cases of the existing concepts as follows: (1) conflict management can be looked upon as a part of ‘Social competence’; (2) cultural competence can be regarded as a special case of ‘Extra-organizational management competence’; and (3) emotion regulation can be seen as part of the concept ‘Capacity to cope with stress’.

### 7.2 Contextual Characteristics

The contextual side is covered in a somewhat summary fashion in the developmental leadership model. The recent elaboration to the model previously mentioned is mainly based on well-established organization- and group-level theories and does not fully capture the specific aspects identified in the present study [46]. Taking the presented model (Figure 11-1) as point of departure, nothing was found in the present analysis which contradicts the aspects mentioned in the model. However, the comprehensive approach context implies an increased emphasis on the following: the complexity of this kind of military task, the need for political and cultural understanding, a frequent lack of time and resources, and, following from this, a situation characterized by highly complex decision making.

An example of this is that comprehensive approach operations/missions are carried out in parts of the world where the political situation is complex; otherwise they would not be needed. Accordingly, a comprehensive approach commander may have to deal with weak societal structures, corruption, and violence on a frequent basis. There is also the challenge of how to reach the end state and to hand over different responsibilities to local institutions that may be too weak to handle them. On the other hand, comprehensive approach missions are not supposed to be everlasting.

Another example relates to differences compared to the Cold War military tasks. Modern crisis management implies a broader range of demands. There are political dimensions included, where poverty and justice may affect the security situation. There is a need to integrate immaterial aspects such as actions of influence to win hearts and minds. There is also a financial aspect, in that the comprehensive approach may demand resources for infrastructural investments.

There may also be conflicting objectives of different kinds. Examples are that the local population may expect the humanitarian participants to be neutral and independent, while the military participants will rarely be perceived in this way. It may cause credibility problems for humanitarian efforts if they are mixed with military operations. There is also a conflict about openness, since the military has a tradition of secrecy.

Generally, decision making in the comprehensive approach may need a balancing between several different goals and there may be several aspects and interests that have to be aggregated. This may imply that the perfect solution may often not be at hand and that there is a need to communicate the pros and cons of what is decided. It is accordingly important to have reasonable expectations for the outcome. Otherwise, there will be too much pressure put on the individual commander.

To identify dilemmas as complicated in a more objective way would indicate that the possible solutions are not exclusively at the individual level. They could not solely be reduced to the competencies of the single commander. If an aspect of the task is identified as inherently complex, the possible solutions would include the finding of effective and relevant management routines. This implies that recruiting a suitable leader is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the comprehensive approach to be successful.

### **7.3 Interpretation of Task**

There are several problems/challenges that are tied to interpretation. One of particular importance from a leadership perspective is the lack of consensus on how to define the comprehensive approach. There are other kinds of definitional problems, for example the unclear differences between peacekeeping and peace building. There is also the need for a further development of doctrines and a common vocabulary within and between organizations that could potentially work together.

These structural aspects represent one side of the coin. The other side is constituted by individual differences between military leaders in how a given context and task are appraised. Generally speaking, the more clear-cut the environmental aspects are, the more likely it is that different military leaders will interpret the situation similarly. The opposite of this, obviously, is that highly complex and ambiguous environments and tasks are prone to be appraised differently.

### **7.4 Leadership Behaviors**

The analysis of desired leadership behaviors in a comprehensive approach context identified the following: highly flexible/adaptive, inspirational/motivational to subordinates, an emphasis on trust and feedback and on being a favorable role model. All these aspects can be found in the theoretical model. However, it should be noted that the need to be highly flexible/adaptive appears to be more emphasized in the complex and dynamic comprehensive approach environment. At the individual level this may once again have selection and education consequences.

### **7.5 Outcomes**

The overall outcome in a comprehensive approach operation is to reach a defined end state. This is often formulated as a political goal, where peace, security, and democracy are important values. Of course, there are task solutions at lower levels with more short-term and restricted goals. The success of these could be related to the other parts of the model. However, this is not the purpose with the present study but rather an object for future research.

### ***Outcome Example***

The “Outcome” box of the leadership model (Figure 11-1) contains the aspect of functional task solution. A common response from former Swedish force commanders in Afghanistan concerns difficulties in defining and measuring what is meant by the task solution “end state.” A typical interview response:

*I’m commanding this force for six months. It’s predictable that there will not be peace, security and democracy within this time frame. So what could a part end state look like in my case? How do I know if we have done a good job?*

Examples of part goals regarded as more or less measureable and meaningful by a sample of former Swedish commanders in Afghanistan include:

- Support from the host country population
- Number of opened schools, health care institutions, etc in the host country
- Amount of money spent (Swedish tax money)

## **7.6 Summary of Leadership Implications**

The present analysis can be summarized as follows. First, all aspects of the theoretical leadership model have been interpreted as being also relevant in a comprehensive approach context. Second, some additional aspects, not mentioned in the existing model, were identified (see Table 11-1). Additional attention to the aspects summarized in Table 11-1 is highly recommended as an addendum to the present praxis.

**Table 11-1. Comprehensive Approach-specific Aspects not Mentioned in the Existing Leadership Model of the Swedish Armed Forces.**

| Theoretical concepts  | Practical consequences                                    |
|---|---|
| Desirable leader competencies/skills<br><div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> Conflict management<br/> Cultural competence<br/> Emotion management </div> <div style="font-size: 3em; line-height: 1;">}</div> </div> | Selection and education                                   |
| Contextual characteristics<br>Highly complex task<br>Need for political understanding<br>Need for cultural understanding<br>Lack of time and resources<br>Highly complex decision making  | Development of relevant and effective management routines |
| Interpretation of task<br>Inter-individual variation due to ambiguity of environment and task   | Selection and education                                   |
| Leadership behaviors<br>Being highly flexible/adaptive  | Selection and education                                   |

## **8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this literature-based study can be summarized as follows:

- (1) The UN, EU and NATO differ on how far they have developed comprehensive approach doctrine and core conceptual documents.
- (2) Sweden does not currently have a comprehensive approach of its own but seems to be headed in that direction. Small actors like Sweden can mainly contribute to the larger actors within a mission with “plug-in” capabilities depending on the needs of the mission.
- (3) The comprehensive approach context can be assumed to put an increased emphasis on the following leadership challenges: highly complex military tasks, a need for political and cultural understanding, a frequent lack of time and resources, and, following from this, highly complex decision making.

From a leadership perspective, particularly at the operational and tactical levels, this leads to the following conclusion. The present leadership model of the Swedish Armed Forces – Developmental leadership – holds up well against the new challenges. However, it needs to be complemented with the following competences/skills: conflict management, cultural competence, emotion management and an increased attention on flexibility/adaptability. The practical consequences following from this can be divided in two broad areas. The first is individual-related and calls for improved officer selection and education. The second is organization-related and implies a need to develop comprehensive approach-relevant and effective management routines. Because the present study was literature-based, there is a strong need for empirical studies in military contexts.

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