



The RUSI Project on Civil-Military Relations
In association with the
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Workshop III: Improving NATO-IO Cooperation in Hot Stabilization Missions
Summary and Main Points of Interest

Session One: Current Arrangements

Questions to Consider:

- *What IO/GO/NGO coordinating bodies or structures currently exist?*
- *What are the remits of these structures—activity planning, training, best practices?*
- *What problems are created or exacerbated by the headquarters/field divide?*

Obstacles to Cooperation:

Need to create greater mutual understanding through better dialogue and a common terminology
Lack of symmetry between what happens at the national level and at the international level/context
NATO doesn't want to drive it, just wants to plug in to the organizations that are already there
There is an extremely high turnover in the field; when dealing with people for only a limited time, personal relationships suffer

Comments:

There are many good fora for coordination but they are set up in a haphazard manner
Three main coordinating bodies for International Coordination:
The Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
InterAction
ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies)
NGO Military Contact Group is also very useful (meets quarterly)
Guidelines: UN IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee), UN MCDA (Military and Civil Defence Assets) are good guidelines, but the actual implementation differs on the ground

Session Two: The Future of the Comprehensive Approach

Questions to Consider:

- *How does NATO view the future of Comprehensive approach/OSCE?*
- *How do other IOs view the comprehensive approach?*
- *How do NGOs view the comprehensive approach?*
- *How can these differing views be reconciled?*

Obstacles to Cooperation:

The real problem with the comprehensive approach is that it presupposes clarity of purpose that is not necessarily there
NGOs: For example, MercyCorps had been in Helmand since 1986, in every single district up until 2004. Now they are able to operate in only 2 districts.
In Kandahar, most international NGOs had to leave after the set-up of ISAF
Access map for NGOs in Afghanistan is shrinking compared to even just 3 years ago

Much concern on NGO side is that CIMIC plans seem to be around short-term quick impact projects rather than wider reconstruction and political stability type operations – should focus more on nation-building

Instrumentalization of the development instrument is happening and must be stopped

The military recognise that the civilian organisations need to be there and need to be in the lead, but that the security situation does not allow it at the moment

Comments:

NATO thinks of the comprehensive approach as a predisposition to work together

The main vehicle for practical implementation of comprehensive approach is the Comprehensive Approach Working Group, which meets monthly

Key message is one of patience and cultural change

It is not about homogenizing all approaches but about understanding different approaches

Progress is possible: For example, there was no real mechanism for engagement with structures in Afghanistan during the establishment of the PRT in Basra last year; now there is a strong civilian lead to activities in the province. Helmand Executive Group is multi-agency and multi-national; there are good links with military planning processes where civilian activities are occurring and vice versa

It is more useful to accept that we are going to have different strategic objectives at different phases of an operation

Session Three: NATO and the International Community

Questions to Consider:

- *What is the current state of NATO relations with IOs such as the UN and OSCE?*
- *How should these relationships change or develop?*
- *How to differentiate the remit of NATO v EU? How can the relationship be balanced and made more functional?*

Obstacles to Cooperation:

Civil-Military relations are tremendously plagued by mistrust, unhealthy competition and information-sharing blockages

There is the perception in some EU countries that European interests are not realised sufficiently enough within NATO

NATO members in general and the UK in particular should be forced to say, what do we want out of our membership with NATO?

Comments:

NATO and the EU can be productive when they row in the same direction (e.g. Macedonia and the settlement between the Slavs and Albanians) and also unproductive (e.g. Darfur)

Afghanistan reveals the limitations of the interventionist approach that the US and UK have been pushing for the last 6-7 years

The real issue in this whole debate is about legitimacy; most of the world is looking at these issues from a completely different perspective – we are outsiders

The UN is the ONLY institution that allows for the establishment/rescue of legitimacy

Session Four: Bottom-Up Coordination?

Questions to Consider:

- *How can NATO-IOs and NGOs improve cooperation via seminars, conferences, workshops, training, education or staff exchanges?*
- *More importantly, what steps can be taken to institutionalize relationships in terms of liaison exchanges, joint training and exercises?*

Obstacles to Cooperation:

Governments don't seem to outfit civilians adequately

Civil-Military cooperation is constrained by a chronic lack of capacity on NGO side

Often NGOs have neither sufficient advance notice nor capacity to participate in military-sponsored training

One challenge is to attempt to institutionalize or formalize the "ad hocery" and operationalize the guidelines on the ground

Comments:

In Kosovo the UNHCR floundered because of the way NATO countries chose to direct resources

Mutual recognition that short-term narrow approaches to CIMIC are ineffective and counter-productive

NATO Dep Sec Gen favoured coordination "with" not a coordination "of" approach

NGOs should put the pressure on the policy-makers, not the military

Four levels of Hot Stabilization

1. Not making an enemy of the people or alienating the population
2. Wanting to build support for the political objectives of the mission (more proactive)
3. Trying to pacify the local population so they don't join the enemy, particularly young men who might leave to join the Taliban
4. Fighting a war and trying to win the peace at the same time → this takes you into a different category

We also need much more coherence and uniformity in training materials

Session Five: The Top-Down Approach**Questions to Consider:**

- *How can the NATO-IO relationship be taken further?*
- *What is the feasibility of an International Security Organization multilateral body (NATO, UN, EU) with proven capacity to provide security for other more regional organizations (AU, OSCE, OAS)?*
- *Where do non-traditional non-pol-mil organizations such as the World Bank and IMF fit in?*

Obstacles to Cooperation:

In CENTCOM planning for OEF, problems included the classification of information. CENTCOM didn't share a lot of details because of war plans classifications

NGOs are now worried that they are being perceived as the same as the military, and therefore lose all perception of complete neutrality

Very much depends on the foreign assistance policy of the donor country; Oxfam Novib made decision not to accept money from the US government. Organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières are now in discussions on whether they should accept money from the government at all

Erosion in status of NGOs is because they used to be viewed as neutral parties; now they are clearly targeted for attack, as is the UN, and have to operate in a different more proactive way to manage perceptions. However this new environment is not 100% due to NGOs being perceived as military actors - there are other factors in play here

There is no consistency of terminology

Also need some consistency of planning so that the successors can meet once people rotate out of their posts

Comments:

CENTCOM planning for OEF Afghanistan 2001 - was a very short planning time and it was very clearly understood from the start that humanitarian assistance and civilian actors would need to be part of the campaign

Was seen by most participants as a modest success; integrated briefings, sharing of information
A phone/fax line was made available by the DOD that the UN agencies could submit coordinates to keep off the strike list – an example of practical cooperation that went ahead despite bureaucratic barriers

Many personal relationships forged during planning were still in place later on due to the short nature of the mission

Afghanistan guidelines are seen from the military side as quite “NGO-ish” in the past, the NGO drafts, the military makes comments. Now NGOs should also sit down and see what they need
NGOs are independent by definition, and therefore we need a way of relating to each other that respects that independence

It is much more helpful to say we don’t have the same objectives but that we do have a shared interest in coordinating our efforts

The military should try and fit into existing coordinating bodies and figure out how to adopt their best practices

Humanitarian assistance has to be an end in itself; it can’t be subordinated to any political objectives

When you sit down to talk to people, it’s not necessarily because you share their objectives

Session Six: Highest Pol-Mil approach

Questions to Consider:

- *Is there potential for the formation of a Permanent Assembly of IOs/NGOs to promote improved coordination (IASC type model) with a one-stop coordination of civ-mil relations, handbooks, best practices, lessons learned, interoperability, emergency planning and disaster relief coordination?*
- *What effect would this have on current arrangements?*
- *How could such a project be facilitated?*
- *Could we also consider a NATO-centric approach?*

Obstacles to Cooperation:

There is a tremendous mismatch in resources; Senate Foreign Relations Committee can’t pass their legislation; as a result we have witnessed the need for stronger interagency cooperation and need to bring stronger civilian resources to the fight

How to bridge the institutions? The same people are representing their country in both of these institutions, especially military representatives – discussions are very formal

To coordinate is a transitive verb, the object of which no-one wants to be – none of us really likes to be coordinated

Comments:

Need to reiterate that the comprehensive approach is something to aspire towards – it is at least 20 years away

Need for governments to invest in agencies

NATO should determine its relationship with the UN in general and UNOCHA in particular and how that relates to what it is trying to achieve

In virtually every case NATO would prefer to operate under the auspices of the UN

Implementing the comprehensive approach largely involves an ethos or mindset change rather than structural or bureaucratic changes

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