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THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH – TRAINING TO SUCCEED

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Exercise Solo Flight

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THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH – TRAINING TO SUCCEED

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary operating environment (COE), conventional warfare alone will not defeat an adversary who engages in irregular or hybrid warfare. Prior to the Cold War era the Soviet Union provided an adversary with a perceived simple kinetically based threat to be countered with a military solution. Regional proxy conflicts were similarly waged using mostly military capabilities. The western militaries of that era were trained to deliver violence to the enemy, not talk to civilians and gain their support for the mission. Post conflict stability efforts were not an issue for the military but something for the government to solve later. During the conflict, the effects on the population and being able to interact with that population was a consideration for the military but not a significant one. In this post-Cold War era a vastly different geopolitical power structure has emerged. Regional conflicts, religious extremism and humanitarian crisis (manmade and natural) have created a complex battlespace where a powerful well-funded western nation finds itself challenged to defeat a small group of insurgences (state or non-state) hiding in the civilian population. We are in the fourth generation of warfare, where the adversary uses largely asymmetric tactics to achieve their aim and objectives. Non-kinetic, human relationship tactics are needed to counter these threats. The best chance for success requires a nation to operate with other nations and national/international agencies which that nation may or may not have influence over. The complexity of the COE requires using a coordinated cohesive collaborative strategy with all battlespace actors in order to succeed in achieving its aims. The name given to this collaborative effort is the Comprehensive Approach (CA).

Canada learned much from its decade long mission in Afghanistan and put into practice the mechanisms needed to develop the necessary skills to work with government and non-government stakeholders to build this comprehensive approach required for mission success. However, after the conclusion of the mission and as time passed, many of the members from both the military and civil service who experienced this collaborative effort have departed, resulting in the experience and understanding decreasing. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that continuous training is required to maintain these skills. Training of both the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to understand and practice working with coalition partners, other government agencies, national and international agencies, as well as training of those stakeholders to understand the workings of the CAF. Various recommendations for training will be offered.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH?

The comprehensive approach to operations is a national strategy conceptual framework that combines joint, interagency, multinational and public (aka. JIMP) actors that contribute individual strengths and capabilities that work together to develop a multifaceted solution in the COE. Brining these actors together is required to create a solution that addresses the adversary's grievances/root causes, counters the adversary's narrative/message, protects the population and defeat the adversarial force. The comprehensive approach should begin at the strategic level where all the national elements of power (DIME) and high level actors can be assembled for collaborative planning and execution. However, any plans should be reviewed and implemented at both the operational and tactical levels. This will result in the plans being conceived,

designed, and ideally enabled at the strategic level in order to create a strategic end state with support and be implemented at both the operational and tactical level. Plans developed at the operational and tactical levels are nested in the higher level direction to result in a synchronized plan designed to reach an end state. The CA can be applied across the full spectrum of operations to ensure unity of effort and efficiencies in both skill/experience and resource management.

JIMP can be broken down into each of these areas (DLDC, 2007):

- Joint – CAF elements and support organizations;
- Interagency – Other government departments (OGD) and agencies (OGA) both domestic and foreign (i.e. Global Affairs Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, US-AID);
- Multinational – Allied or International coalition partners (i.e. NATO/ US / UK); and
- Public – Involving a variety of elements including domestic and international public, non-government organizations (NGO), public volunteer organizations (PVO), as well as media and commercial organizations (both domestic and foreign).

A key understanding is that in the CA, the military (CAF) is not necessarily the leading actor. In an organization such as the Canadian Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) it is promoted as “The government of Canada’s response” to the natural disaster¹ with the local Canadian Embassy Head of Mission being the lead supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the CAF DART. Depending on the operation/crisis, departments and agencies can be classified as ‘supported’ or ‘supporting’ actors. The CAF contribution to CA is not just in hard power

¹ During the DART mission to the Philippines, the mission (Op RENAISSANCE 1301) was promoted as “Canada’s response to super typhoon Hyian

capabilities but with planning expertise and experience in logistical support and operating in austere environments.

Our allies and alliances also have definitions of the CA. NATO definition of the CA is an all-embracing concept that includes all actors within the international community, be they government, international institutions or non-government organizations (Council, 2008). The US definition of the CA is an approach that integrates the cooperative effort of the departments and agencies of the US Government, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, multinational partners and private sector entities to achieve unity of effort towards a shared goal (Army, 2008). The UK states that their CA definition is comprised of commonly understood principles and a collaborative process that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation (The Comprehensive Approach - UK Joint Discussion Note 4/05, 2006). The UK definition also has the same classifications of JIMP actors.

These definitions of the comprehensive approach vary but each contains similar elements, whether they be employed at the interagency/governmental level or at the tactical field level (The Comprehensive Approach - UK Joint Discussion Note 4/05, 2006):

- A pro-active engagement approach - Establishing networks prior to operations/crisis that are supported by standing agreements, personal and institutional relationships and early, shared analysis of an environment and battlespace. Ad-hoc/just in time relationships that are short lived are less likely to be successful or enduring²;

² Including in my responsibilities as the J9 (CIMIC) for the DART was to ensure I kept a network of contacts in the humanitarian relief operations (HUMRO) community. One of my most important contact was with the Senior Civ-Mil Coordination Advisor in UN-OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) based in NY. When the Government of Canada decided to respond to the 2013 super typhoon that affected the nation of the

- Shared Understanding - Understanding of strength, limitations, capacities and culture of each actor. A shared understanding of the operating environment and the threats to lasting stability and security.
- Outcome or End-state-based Thinking - Progress towards the agreed objectives and end state when planning and conducting activities.
- Collaborative Working - Collaboration between all players including military, civilian and indigenous/local. Based on mutual trust.

In Afghanistan, Canada began recognizing that a combined military and civilian organization was needed to meet the challenges of the operating environment. The 2008 Independent Panel of Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan (aka The 2008 Manley Report) recommended that the Canadian Government coordinate the mission effort, shifting away from the almost exclusive military approach to one that included other government departments such as foreign affairs (Canada G. o., 2008). From the start of the Canadian mission in Kandahar in 2005, Canada established a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to lead on the reconstruction to support stability operations. However the Canadian mission was still primarily a military lead and focused mission with reconstruction and development based on building influence for the task force. Based on recommendation of the report and direction from Ottawa, the military and CIDA/DFAIT were to work together to develop the way ahead. Working together these

Philippines, I immediately called my contact and he updated me on what NGO organizations were in the area Canada was looking at deploying too. He told me who was lead at the UN-OCHA sub on-site operations coordination centre (OSOCC) in that area and ensured introductions were made before our arrival. When we arrived the UN-OCHA lead in the area had been told all about us, with glowing recommendations, and he had subsequently helped to gain favourable first impressions from the NGOs in the area. This was the example of a robust proactive engagement approach that was vital to mission success. A well-used line is that "Arrival at the airport is not the time to exchange business cards".

departments developed a single campaign plan that coordinated effects employing military and non-military activities to achieve mission objectives.

The main challenges to implementing a CA is in two areas: Ego and culture. Ego leads to the inability to work together to develop that solution where the respective actors believe that by not being in the lead they are losing some degree of power. A lack of knowledge of the organizational culture of each actor leads to the lack of trust and misunderstanding of the reasons behind decisions the respective organizations make.

The modern concept of winning the war but losing the peace is a real possibility in this modern COE where counter insurgency operations and hybrid warfare is more the norm. Those military personnel are task, process driven with the aim to drive to an end state and do not have time to understand the other actors in the battlespace. Being able to release the ego and cease the need of always being in the lead must be developed.

Canadian OGDs feel lost at times when working alongside the CAF. The CAF is much larger than a department like GAC (60,000 vs 3,000) where having personnel available for deployment, not to mention any training, is difficult to manage. Each department has their own procedures and lexicon. Not understanding these cultural differences results in misunderstanding which can only be overcome with continued working together in a group like START³ and training.

³ The Government of Canada (GoC) established the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) in recognition that in order to effectively deal with the complexities of fragile states and international crises, the GoC needed a whole of government (WoG) approach combining the policy, programming and coordination capacities of the GAC as well as the justice, policing, corrections and military services. This was to enable departmental expertise from all relevant departments and agencies (Canada G. o., 2016). This task force is still in existence today.

Working with coalition partners raises ego conflicts with competing national policies and focus. Each member of the coalition will have national caveats which will limit operations and each member must understand those cultural differences to be able to plan towards an end state.

NGO have developed mistrust of militaries. While the military is mission focus, a NGO is focused on the needs of the population. An NGO undergoes a project for a community where as the military engages in a project to build influence and consent for the mission over the community often through projects of a short time line, such as a quick impact project (QIP). The NGO's projects are based on long term sustainable initiatives to aid the population. Civilian agencies may not be constrained by a time frame as they may be local and living in the community. An organization such as an NGO lives or dies by the funding it can raise with donors so publicity at accomplishing these projects in many cases is key to their survival. Therefore an NGO may not want to become part of a team to accomplish an effect if they feel they will not be given enough credit for the work they are doing (Ball & Febbraro, 2011).

TRAINING

One of the primary ways to mitigate the challenges of ego and culture is by training, both individually and collectively. Individual training will develop cultural understanding and developing networks and relationships. Training collectively will promote operational competencies and a greater general awareness of the roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders/partners therefore setting the conditions for success of operational effectiveness

once deployed (Vavro & Roy, 2011). Understanding each other's culture, with its motivations and capabilities, will result in demystifying the preconceived prejudicial views of each other's organization resulting in removing the perceived threat to your own organization and therefore the perceived threat to the organizational ego.

JIMP elements of Joint and Multinational have historically worked well together in Canada. The CAF and coalition partners such as NATO and ABCA (Australia, Britain, Canada, America and New Zealand) have experience through training exercises and developed doctrine. Granted, that an organization such as ABCA joins together nations with the same language and very similar cultural backgrounds and NATO has existed for 60 years (Est 1949) with missions and doctrine that has developed relationships and understanding in operational differences experienced over those years.

JIMP elements of Interagency and Public are not as well practiced. Bringing together interagency departments (OGDs) to develop a coordinated plan is not necessarily a new idea but was established out of necessity during the days of Afghanistan. To accomplish this closer working relationship, Canadian OGDs began participating in redeployment exercises such as Ex MAPLE RESOLVE, the final confirmation exercise prior to deployment to Afghanistan. The purpose was to collectively train in the planning process to ensure the needs of all actors were included at the earliest point in the process and for mutual understanding of the planning process. The yearly Canadian DART exercise, Op RENAISSANCE, includes GAC members as any humanitarian response operations (HUMRO) is a government of Canada response and not solely the military (DART). This exercise routinely includes humanitarian agencies as well in the exercise. The

challenge is the continued inclusion of OGD members in military exercises, especially the further away in time from the mission in Afghanistan. OGDs such as GAC often do not have the personnel available for training. These members may be moving from one assignment to another and do not have the time to attend a training event. Public organization are possibly the furthest removed from the military in culture of all the JIMP categories and any training with the military would have to be self-funded as while the CAF can assume the cost of rations and quarters, the salary of the NGO would be the responsibility of the organization. Therefore any training event would have to be short in duration and focused to ensure the NGO recognizes the value for time and fund spent.

To aid the Commander in working with the public the military has personnel trained in the capability of civil military cooperation (CIMIC), which when assigned to a unit, gives the Commander a capability that has a better understanding of motivation and capabilities of groups like NGOs. Currently, Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC) CIMIC courses (CIMIC Operator and CIMIC Staff) include briefings and discussions with Canadian based NGOs and UN-OCHA⁴ staff or CAF members who have completed UN-OCHA training. CIMIC courses teach the role of UN-OCHA, humanitarian principles and SPHERE standards⁵.

⁴ To help coordinate all the actors in the humanitarian space, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) was formed. UN-OCHA will be the main point of contact with respect to interaction with NGOs in the humanitarian space. UN-OCHA's role in a humanitarian crisis is to assist in the coordination of international humanitarian efforts. To this end UN-OCHA conducts global training programme courses several times a year, around the world, designed to engage both civilian humanitarian organizations and military personnel with attendance split 50/50 between the two groups. The aim of the course is to help understand cultural differences, capabilities and to create the networks that will help ensure better working relationship in area of a crisis (footnote: business card). The moto of UN-OCHA is "Coordination saves lives" (UN-OCHA, UN-CMCoord Field Handbook v 1.0, 2015).

⁵ The Sphere Project is a voluntary initiative that brings a wide range of humanitarian agencies together around a common aim - to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and the accountability of humanitarian actors to their constituents, donors and affected populations. The handbook outlines levels of normal civil use and need broken down into four categories/chapters:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Training must start at the lowest levels. While training and operating with military coalition partners is already a robust system, the actors lacking interaction and understanding are the OGD and public partners, NGOs especially. The following recommendations are presented to improve JIMP interoperability:

- Early CAF training. For the CAF officers at the PD2 level it is important to provide training on the role, objective and operation process of OGDs and NGOs (operation of the international humanitarian system). Initial familiarity of JIMP and the CA is to be added to DP2 courses;
- OGD and NGO positions on CAF training courses. Positions on CAF staff planning courses such as Joint Staff Operational Planning (JSOP). Currently positions for OGDs are allocated for JSOP. Positions for NGOs can be allocated on the CIMIC Staff Officer course where an overview of the CAF OPP is given. Positions on the CIMIC Operator course would give NGOs and CIMIC operators a greater understanding of each other's procedures;
- Exchange with OGDs. Coordinate a secondment process where CAF members are exchanged between departments to learn cultural differences, policies and processes⁶;

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- Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion;
 - Food security and nutrition;
 - Shelter, settlement and non-food items; and
 - Health action

⁶ As most CIMIC operators are reservists, secondments may be easier to arrange given time to arrange with the members civilian employer.

- Designate OGD positions in deployable units and include in training. Units that are expected to deploy should designate positions for OGDs and work with that OGD to ensure the position is filled in a consistent manner. This will be difficult and it is important to ensure that the training events are focused and value added for the OGD in question. This includes expeditionary and domestic;
- Continue training events which include NGOs to increase cultural and capability understanding as well as develop network relationships. The re-established Civil-Military Interagency Planning Seminar (CMIPS) is a JIMP based exercise which brings together CAF, OGD, and NGO representatives for a three day seminar to improve the understanding of each other's culture and capabilities as well as to improve future interoperability and personal relationships. This seminar should be continued on an annual basis. In the latest after action review of the 2018 CMIPS the recommendation that the seminar be included as part of the CAF road to high readiness training should be adopted. (Centre, 2018); and
- JIMP Lessons Identified and Learned data base. Develop a database of lessons identified and learned of past JIMP-enabled exercises and missions open to all JIMP actors. As the START is meant to be a 'one stop' shop for GoC stability response, this should be coordinated in that organization.

CONCLUSION

Continuing to employ the comprehensive approach will be required to ensure Canada's success in future operations across the full spectrum of operations. As the COE requires not just the

conflict to be won but the subsequent peace as well. Reconstruction and development of a nation post conflict is not a task that a military has the skills to conduct on its own. All a nation's tools of power (DIME) are required to succeed. Becoming the international norm in the COE, this comprehensive approach brings together actors from a nation and international partners to develop a long term solution (Rostek, 2011). Canada understands the COE requires response and will continue to work with JIMP actors. As well, Canada will continue to train with JIMP actors in areas such as operational planning and understanding each other's capability/culture. Canada's weakness remains in the understanding and working with public sector (largest cultural difference) and therefore through training collectively must develop strategies to learn and develop understanding to counter conflicts of ego and cultural differences which will interfere with mission success. Implementation of the comprehensive approach is not an easy feat to accomplish and the paradigm shift will not be accomplished overnight. Through this individual and collective training the CAF will become leaders and sponsors of the CA in Canada. We all have to make an effort to understand our partners as they are also trying to understand our way of conducting business. As members of the CAF we seek solutions and act. However as cultural shifts and relationships take time to build, patience is the word.

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