

Preface to The Cornwallis XII Proceedings: Analysis for Multi-Agency Support

Colonel Christopher Holshek

U.S. Army (Reserve) Civil Affairs
e-mail: holshek@hotmail.com.

Christopher Holshek, Colonel, U.S. Army (Reserve) Civil Affairs, has extensive civil-military operations experience at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels through a number of assignments and deployments, among them command of the first CA battalion to deploy to Iraq in support of Army, Marine and British forces, and as a KFOR CIMIC Liaison Officer to the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). He has also served as a civilian with the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia as well as with UNMIK. A strategic and operational civil-military consultant whose clients include DynCorps International and the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Civil-Military Relations, a graduate of the resident U.S. Army War College, and an adjunct faculty member of George Mason University, he has written extensively on civil-military subjects, including for Cornwallis VII, IX, and X. He is also the Executive Director of the Cornwallis Group. Col. Holshek is currently serving as the Chief of the UN Military Observer Group and Chief of Civil-Military Coordination for the UN Mission in Liberia.

The theme of the twelfth Annual Meeting of the Cornwallis Group, held at The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, Cornwallis Park, Nova Scotia, Canada, is a natural, cumulative progression from preceding workshop themes – all centering on the increasing complexity of the conflict environment. “Interagency,” “multi-agency,” “whole of government,” and “3D” (defense, diplomacy, and development) – each of these represents the need for integrated and joined up planning and operations for peace and stability, both among the civil and military components of the public sector and, albeit in more rudimentary phases of comprehension, between the public and private sectors.

Greater integration of all elements of national power is now indispensable to national and international security, as the growing appreciation of multi-agency approaches to these problems reflect. The need for better fusion is, in turn, driven by two strategic imperatives. First, national security issues in the evolving strategic environment since the early 1990s are increasingly non-military, with both threats and opportunities emanating mainly from the civil sector of society and the seams between nation-states. “Asymmetric warfare” is seen as “...population centric; the population is the ultimate key to victory for both sides of the conflict”.¹ At the same time, events at more pedestrian levels have more and more effect at the strategic level – and vice-versa. Hence the advent of the “strategic corporal”. In the flattening, 24/7 information-intensive world of the 21st century, decision cycles shrink as complex, interdependent, and multi-order effects grow, pressuring leadership of all walks of life and at all levels to anticipate change and shape events rather than be shaped by them. Thus, the margins of error are becoming too narrow, the stakes, risks, and costs too high, and the opportunities too great to keep doing the business of securing peace as usual.

Coupled to these constraints are the restraints associated with the second imperative of political, socio-cultural, and financial-economic stakes, risks, and costs. These are challenging the Cold War era bias towards coercive or “hard” power. It is clear that the commitment of resources to the pursuit of peace and security has become more problematic to decision-makers than ever – because these resources have become more expensive both in absolute and relative terms. Political leaders in democratic societies are pitched on the horns of a dilemma between social welfare demands and the rising costs of “security” seen traditionally in hard power terms.

This same dilemma is played out at the operational level, for example, by military commanders caught between their responsibility to provide security and protect their forces and legal, moral, and operational requirements to engage intertwining civil-military issues. This may, in part, explain the rising attractiveness of what Joseph Nye has called “soft” power. Soft (or persuasive) power is not only complementary to hard power. Accessed largely through multi-agency processes and from the private sector, it promises a more peaceful, stable, and profitable international environment, has further-reaching effects, is less expensive and risk-laden, and increases feasible and sustainable strategic and operational options.

The Cornwallis Group could not reach consensus on the precise meaning of “multi-agency” (or “interagency”) in the brisk pre-Easter climate near the Bay of Fundy. Accepting that, many of its participants nonetheless saw the exponential proliferation of multi-agency options, and capabilities, as both promising with respect to a more balanced approach to the pursuit of peace but conversely fraught with complexity and centripetal tendencies defying co-operation and co-ordination, let alone integration. The common denominator in that formula may be in finding unity of purpose (rather than the more common and strident term “unity of effort”). Given unity of purpose, the pursuit of peace is therefore not a matter of “either/or” but “both” – both the tangible and intangible inflections of power and capability. In other words, multi-agency approaches should be integrative and synergistic rather than compounded: multiplication, not addition.

This workshop was formed to demonstrate and discuss analyses to help achieve that purpose and its strife for unity: reviewing and assessing multi-agency capabilities as well as measuring progress, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, at the strategic and operational levels; examining the relationship among defense, diplomacy, and development; analyses of past, current, and future multi-agency efforts, planning, and decision-making processes; analytical tools, simulations, and gaming; and the multiplicative impacts of information and the private sector.

Indeed, there was no single moment of intellectual arrest that signified the discovery of the multi-agency Rosetta Stone. Nevertheless, there were, in all of the presentations and discussions, moments of elucidation and enlightenment constituting newfound pieces of the puzzle, among them the Workshop’s Best Paper by Dr. Andrew Hossack: *Security Force and Insurgent Success Factors in Counter-Insurgency Campaigns*.

The need to identify a unifying concept to promote a more holistic, balanced approach, with greater attention to multi-agency processes, the Group agreed, was more a matter of policy than operations – and the linkages between the two. This will be the task of Cornwallis XIII – Analysis in Support of Policy.

ⁱ David L. Buffalo, “Defining Asymmetric Warfare”, *The Land Warfare Papers*, No. 58, (Arlington, VA: The Institute of Land Warfare), September 2006, 16.