

Why so little PSO Analysis in the UK?

Geoff Hawkins

Retired Senior Analyst and 2007 Fellow of The Cornwallis Group

At the Twelfth Cornwallis Group meeting Geoff Hawkins was elected a Fellow of The Cornwallis Group. Geoff Hawkins retired from the UK MoD in April 2007 after 38 years as an operational analyst. He studied mathematics at Leicester University where, in 1969, he gained a B.Sc. He then joined the MOD's Defence Operational Analysis Establishment (DOAE), West Byfleet. He studied Army Command and Control issues and organised field trials for the collection of data on communications and command decision making. In 1973 he was posted to DOAO(Germany) where he was involved in assessing the adequacy of 1(BR) Corps communication systems before concentrating on effectiveness of VSTOL air operations for RAF(Germany). He subsequently returned to DOAE where he was responsible for investigating information requirements for senior army commanders and studied land combat concentrating on battalion-level force mix issues. He also conducted a study on the requirements for light support helicopters. In 1979 he joined SHAPE Technical Centre, The Netherlands, where he carried out a major armour/anti-armour study assessing the capabilities of all Corps within the NATO Central Region and led a study of the requirement for land service equipment stocks. On returning, once again, to DOAE, he led studies on Battlefield Nuclear Weapons, Warsaw Pact chemical capabilities, Arms Control and suppression of enemy air defence systems. Promoted to Superintendent in 1987 his division studied air campaigns, ground based air defence and supported arms control negotiations, including Conventional Forces in Europe. He led the team providing OA support to the UK MoD during the planning for the Gulf War. He was posted to Director General (Scrutiny and Analysis), MoD, Whitehall in 1993 and as Assistant Director Operational Analysis (Land), scrutinised the OA conducted in support of all land equipment procurement. He represented the UK on NATO Research Study Groups on the Military Application of Operations Research 1993 - 1998. He moved to Assistant Director Operational Analysis (Policy and Programmes) in 1998 and until his retirement scrutinised all of the OA conducted in support of Policy and Programming staff. He was also responsible for research into new techniques and their application to new challenges facing MoD.

INTRODUCTION

The Cornwallis Group sees itself as a vehicle for excellence in analysis through discussion, outreach and publication about complex problems related to obtaining and maintaining peace and stability in the world. It is a bridge between national military agencies, other governmental departments, international and non-governmental organizations who often work together on the ground but seldom meet in a reflective environment to discuss issues of common concern. It is established as a forum for the exchange of analytic techniques and processes, not limited to models, dealing with or related to improving the conditions for international peace and stability. Participants from any and all nations are welcomed into the Cornwallis Group. The primary activity of the Cornwallis Group is the conduct of symposia and workshops, including publications, dealing with problems and issues related to

improving the conditions for, and contributing to, the establishment and maintenance of, international peace and stability.

Cornwallis has had twelve successful meetings and demonstrated that the analytical community has a lot to offer the decision-makers both for planning and conducting Peace Support Operations (PSO). The UK has committed more resources and time to these operations than any other type, such as medium and large sized conventional interventions, but the bulk of the analysis is still focussed on operations other than PSO. This note discusses why this should be. It is the personal view of the author based upon 38 years of conducting, running and scrutinising Operational Analysis studies.

PURPOSE OF ANALYTICAL STUDIES

In the UK studies are conducted at the request of sponsors who are looking for advice on an issue or, more commonly, evidence to support a decision that they wish to take. Most studies address the following issues (in order of amount of effort allocated):

- Procurement of equipment.
- Setting resource levels.
- Defining the future strategic direction.
- Improving doctrine, tactics and procedures.
- Support to on-going operations

PROCUREMENT

Most the UK's current equipment was procured against requirements set against a need to conduct conventional interventions operations at large or medium scale (predominantly warfighting operations). There has been a belief, and a policy in some areas, that PSO should and could be conducted with the equipment procured for these operations. It is true that much of our equipment is used for PSO as well as other operations and also true that some, expensive, equipments are only procured for intervention operations (these include amongst others MLRS, submarines and many RN ships).

Having deployed on operations with the equipment that we had the UK has found shortfalls and the military deployed have no time to wait for extensive studies to provide rigorous analysis advice. Procurement is often based solely upon military judgement. This is based on the misconception that studies take months or years to complete and the analytical community needs to be more responsive and demonstrate that it has a capability to conduct quick analysis to support fast procurements, just as is demonstrated regularly in the field. Some limited study of stockpiles for munitions has taken place but more studies are required on the surveillance capabilities required for PSO, helicopter lift, armoured vehicles, and small arms.

RESOURCE LEVELS

Short operations of both medium- and large-scale operations will often drive the number of equipment that a force requires. However PSO have a wider impact on resources that has not been adequately studied. Current operations are lasting much longer than expected. Resource plans have assumed operations lasting just 6 to 12 months despite historical analysis showing that this type of operation often last 10 years. The MoD hasn't yet aligned planning assumptions to past reality.

The number of troops deployed on current operations, unlike previous war fighting operations, has not been underpinned or checked against analysis. Even simple troop to task analysis has not been conducted. Long operations drive numbers of men who have to be rotated and there are instances where specialists are returning to theatre before they have been adequately rested. The pace of operational tours has also had an impact on the army's ability to train for its wartime function. These issues are amenable to study but have not been addressed. Long deployments and continuous use of equipment has a large impact on maintainability and the need for spares. The consumption of the life of equipment, such as flying hours for rotary wing, will have an impact of the need for replacements and will disrupt the usual procurement of replacement equipment. This needs analysis to see whether the forward programme is affordable.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Some limited work has been conducted on the strategic future but more analysis is required to ensure that the UK's planning assumptions reflect the most probable future and that the worst case scenario is not the only driver of decisions. The MoD needs to examine the frequency of operations and to decide how many it can support. Historical Analysis has been used to examine the frequency and length of past operations and has identified the key factors that lead to success in PSO¹. This work has been widely presented but many of the lessons have not been taken into account. For example, why is it of strategic importance to kill the terrorist leaders when the analysis shows that this is negatively correlated to campaign success?

DOCTRINE, TACTICS AND PROCEDURES

The UK forces have a lot of experience in conducting PSO and are regarded by many as the best in the world. Many nations have based their PSO doctrine on that of the UK but the UK has not been rigorous in its use of analysis to support doctrinal development. An exciting new development is the PSO Model² and it has enabled the UK to examine strategies and doctrine and it is now used at the Staff College for training. However it is not used to support officers about to deploy, nor is it used to inform decisions at the highest levels. The model will not fully mature until it is used in anger to support commanders. It also has the scope to be used for cross-departmental and planning and to support international decision making. The

¹ Cornwallis Group IX paper 24

² Cornwallis Group XI paper 15

DIAMOND model³ has been used to examine tactical issues arising from both Iraq and Afghanistan but the work was commissioned by the scientific community and has not been exploited as much as it should have been. It is surprising that given the problems faced by commanders in the field that they do not call for more analysis.

SUPPORT TO ON-GOING OPERATIONS

The UK has deployed analysts on all operations since the Gulf War of 1991. Analysts are currently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have been producing very high quality work and there have been demands to increase their numbers. Their work has often been presented to the Cornwallis Group and received plaudits from the international community⁴⁵. However, the senior commanders do not seem to appreciate the full range of what analysis could be conducted to help with their decision making. The analysts collect and analyse much data and are, usually, the point of focus for measures of campaign progress. Forward planning is still left to the command staff and is rarely supported by analysis. This remains a challenge to all deployed analyst.

CAPABILITY

The UK has the proven capability to conduct studies of almost any PSO issue. Small scale combat has been modelled for years. Logistic issues, such as the sighting of bases and resupply policies are bread and butter to the analyst. Surveillance is a key to the success of PSO and the UK has conducted many studies but few for current operations. Strategic and doctrinal issues can be addressed with models developed over the past 5-10 years and validated against past and current operations. Front-line analysts deploy with a suite of models of which few are used. They also have the capability to produce bespoke models very quickly but are rarely tasked to do so.

CONCLUSION

The UK has demonstrated that it has a good capability to model PSO. Models have been developed with research money and historical studies conducted on past operations. The UK has made major contribution to international symposia and received a great deal of praise. However, despite this, the full capability is not being used and decisions are too often not supported by analysis. The analysts need to engage the decision-makers with more vigour and make efforts to get them to attend future Cornwallis Group meetings. They would then learn how they can be helped and the military will make contacts that will be valuable when they deploy on operations. Operational Analysis and the Cornwallis Group will only be successful if the quality of analysis is high, which it is, and engagement with senior decision-makers is also high, which for the UK it is not fully satisfactory.

³ Cornwallis Group X paper 19

⁴ Cornwallis Group IX paper 25

⁵ Cornwallis Group XI paper 16