

Winning the Peace: Scope and Management Implications of Analysis of Stabilization and Counter-Terrorist Operations

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Ian Mitchell has worked in Operational Research (OR) since 1988, following a flirtation with accountancy. For the Centre for Operational Research and Defence Analysis (CORDA) he initially produced historical data compilations. Studies of the land battle followed until 1992. After two years as an independent OR consultant to the UK Department of Social Security and European Space Agency he joined the Defence Research Agency (DRA) at Fort Halstead in 1994. He managed the Battle Group War Game, and led infantry studies. He moved to Porton Down in 1998 managing OR studies until 2000 when he was seconded as the OR specialist for the Directorate of Equipment Capability, Nuclear Biological and Chemical (DEC (NBC)). As of 2004 he integrates analysis to support broader considerations of CBRN defence. Ian served on the Council of the UK OR Society from 1994 to 2000, and was elected as Vice-President in 2002. He was commissioned into the Territorial Army in 1984 and was introduced to OR as part of a Business Studies degree during 1986.

John Medhurst joined the Defence Operational Analysis Establishment (DOAE) in 1985, after completing a BA in Philosophy. He worked for a variety of organisations within the UK MOD, including the Fleet Operational Analysis Staff (FOAS), the Headquarters of the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (HQ ARRC) in Bielefeld, Germany, and the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment (CBDE) at Porton Down in Wiltshire, acquiring an MSc in Operational Research along the way. When CBDE was brought into the newly formed DERA, he worked for the Chemical and Biological Sector at Porton Down and the Centre for Defence Analysis at Farnborough, being responsible for the Historical Analysis group. In 1998 he left the MOD to work for Landair International Ltd, a small consultancy company with expertise in systems dynamics modelling and GIS applications. In 2001 he set up his own consultancy, Larrainzar Consulting Solutions Ltd, specialising in applying systems approaches to defence problems

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ABSTRACT

The gap between military operations and civil administration has narrowed. In modern military operations, tactical situations may have strategic effects. Military outcomes act as enablers of civilian operations rather than as discrete results in their own right. Areas that have usually been the responsibility of civilian government are now under the direct influence of asymmetric attacks. Effects not covered by traditional analysis techniques decide the lasting effect of operations.

This paper draws on the outputs of past Cornwallis meetings to suggest scope for analysis. It discusses technical approaches to this analysis. It recognises that a new inclusive approach to the management of analysis may be required. It seeks to promote discussion on these technical, social and organisational issues.

INTRODUCTION

As we move into the 21st century the overlap between military and civilian operations is continuing to spread. Military operations are directed to civil objectives and political arguments are pursued through mass violence. The distinction between military and civilian is becoming blurred. Models with broad representation of soft factors' will assist in illuminating these issues more than those with masses of detail but limited scope.

In most modern wars, military objectives are secondary rather than primary. The changes to the civilian situation are as important as the military outcome. The military cannot offer a panacea. Once stabilisation has reached a sufficient level, political issues of presentation and opinion predominate.

In a complex environment such as this, treatment of the whole system is essential. The scope of this kind of problem is challenging and will require representation of soft issues which act as catalysts to the processes. These can have effects over periods of years. Analysis of stabilisation and counter terrorism operations requires a client who has a suitably broad remit.

COUNTER- TERRORISM AND STABILISATION

Stabilisation, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism are taken to be interventions into the function of one state by another state or a non-state actor. Stabilisation is action by one party, a state or organisation, sometimes acting alone, or as a member of an alliance, in order to adjust the internal function of another.

Terrorism can be seen to be political violence outside the formal structure of war directed to attaining objectives unavailable by jurisdiction, influence or persuasion. Its violence is distinguished from formal activity between state warfare, which has legal constraints, and is distinct from guerrilla and insurgency warfare, which at least presents a military objective. Counter-Terrorism works directly against terrorist activities.

MILITARY SUCCESS – NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

Military forces provide control and denial of parts of land, sea and air battlespaces. The military are designed primarily to exert lethal force in order to achieve control and denial. Whilst their capabilities can be used to support civil power, and often are, they remain fundamentally different to other state agencies such as Police forces who use violence as a last resort.

In discussions at RUSI during the early 1990s, the shifting down of military capability was a proposed solution to the rise of Peace Support Operations. This was based on the idea that the move from High Intensity Conflict to Low Intensity Conflict was both achievable and valid using the same force structures, training and tactics.

Brigadier General von Korff's 2001 paper to the Cornwallis Group emphasised the Multi National Brigade (South) (MNB (S)) provided coverage of non military tasks in Kosovo. This paper also emphasised the need for co-operation between many different organisations, some 72 non-governmental organisations in this case, working hand in hand if progress is to be expected. This implies that military success is not mission success in itself.

The model of a three-block war, first identified by General Krulak, Commandant USMC 1995-1999, seems to acknowledge material differences in types of military operation. As described by Rear Admiral Richard Cobbold CB FRAeS in his comment in RUSI Journal in February 2004 these are "fight a war, provide local stability in a fluid situation and offer humanitarian aid." The Military are the only agency that can deliver the first, whilst police may also be able to provide the second and the third can also be carried out by relief organisations or local charitable institutions.

General Wesley K Clark's recent 'Winning Modern Wars' covers the warfighting through Iraq in its first chapters. Hard issues such as the importance of close co-ordination between air and land forces are highlighted. Soft issues such as image are apparent even in these. General Clark cites the power of imagery of the seizure of Baghdad International Airport and summarises the problem of small tactical actions if published becoming a major influence on policy.

The last chapters concern themselves with wider political and economic issues. These include public confidence, frustration, deep senses of injustice and powerlessness and ideology generating anger. He suggests the need for a "Department of International Development" as a cabinet level or sub-cabinet level agency.

The events of 2003 and 2004 in Iraq and Spain show the spreading overlap of military and civil operations. Iraq seems to have experienced a greater mixture of warfighting and peace support than the Afghanistan campaign.

OPINION AS A CATALYST FOR ACTION

The ability to sustain stabilisation operations is based on the will to act being maintained by the intervening party. As discussed in Cornwallis VI, in a democracy conducting

expeditionary operations, those in power are subject to the views of the voters in the next election. Cornwallis VII emphasised the key role of hatred and lust for power in shaping the situations in Rwanda and Angola. Confidence in a regime similarly drives behaviour. Levels of hatred and confidence are extremely soft factors, and difficult to measure.

If they are important to the issues of stabilisation and counter-terrorism then they should be addressed by the best means available. Pat Rivett's entertaining 1999 ISMOR talk on analysis heresies emphasised that the key issues have to be faced regardless of the difficulty in obtaining data if a study is to have real value. As Jay Forrester has said, to omit a variable from a model makes a very specific assumption as to its value – that it is zero, or has no effect.

THE LONG TIME HORIZONS OF INFLUENCE

Once the fighting has stopped, influence on opinion and propaganda becomes the main means to influence developments by changing peoples' views. This is more than those Information Operations limited to supporting the military operation. It involves alteration of fundamental belief systems. The belief system established may last for years as an example from denazification illustrates.

Herbert Sulzbach had the unusual distinction of having been commissioned by both Kaiser Wilhelm II and King George VI. Terrence Prittie's foreword to Herbert Sulzbach's World War 1 autobiography emphasises the importance of his later work during and after World War 2. An innovative approach was effective in denazification. This included the use of an Armistice Day parade at Comrie POW camp on 11 November 1945. The vast majority of some 4,000 prisoners of war, saluting the dead of all nations attended it. Part of the ceremony was to vow "to take part as long as we live in the reconciliation of all people and the maintenance of peace." It is a contrast to the earlier oath of loyalty to Hitler, which was a major step in the infection process of Nazism.

Sulzbach's 1946-1948 work at Featherstone Park Camp in Northumberland used a camp newspaper, radio service, orchestra, theatre, and art gallery as means of re-education. A former SS Standartenfuhrer Gunther d'Aquen remarked to Sulzbach "You have cured me of certain preconceptions."

The re-education had effects. Sulzbach received some 3,000 letters of thanks from ex-prisoners following their repatriation. The result of the activities at Featherstone Park was a network of individuals founded by Sulzbach as the Featherstone Park Group in Dusseldorf in 1960. Prittie credited this with preserving good anglo-german relations despite pressures to the contrary at that time. This indicates the importance of shaping opinion and perspective of individuals to build on stabilisation in the long term. It also indicates the power of "soft" issues in the form of individual perception founded on a different set of preconceptions.

In contrast the 2003 paper presented to ISMOR XX by Andersson, Turlind, Sjoberg, and Wiss used the earlier growth of the influence of Nazism as an example. It described Nazism as a contagion of extremism, analogous to a disease infecting the individual citizens and so the body politic as a whole. With the aggressive tenets of living space, night and fog and protective custody the attitudes instilled by the state made it aggressive.

Following this analogy the subsequent war acted as a radical surgery, excising people, materiel and structures. In this, military capability acted as the enabler for the subsequent stabilising therapy provided by Sulzbach to occur. This therapy could not have been applied whilst the disease was in full bloom – since like most such diseases of extremism, intolerance of alternative thinking was an inherent part of the belief-system. Sulzbach himself left the area controlled by the Nazis in 1932 in order to survive.

This example demonstrates that the use of education is as much a part of stabilisation in the long-term operations as the removal of heavy weapons is in the short term. It also underlines the importance of individual people in the nature of the system.

What is a system, except that which individuals have made it and keep it?

Colonel Archibald Gracie, one of the very few who remained on deck of the Titanic and survived the night of the sinking (14/15 April 1912), made this remark. It emphasizes that systems are human creations and that they are products of the interactions of many diverse individuals.

The study of states suggests that compartmentalizing them into discrete sub-systems, either Civilian and Military or Economic and Political, is an approach that limits understanding of the potential of the whole, and if applied to modeling, will lead to local and dysfunctional optimization. It requires a higher-level perspective to recognize that the whole machine may be damaged even though an assembly is achieving its mission, according to its own terms.

For civilian development the survival layer provided by military capability is a prerequisite. Terrorism attacks a society by inflicting military levels of violence against any member of the society. It seeks vulnerabilities to destroy this foundation of personal security and so reverse or frustrate the development of societies in whom the terrorists have lost confidence and patience. The target is the society as a whole, and the civilians as parts of that society within reach of the terrorists.

Output measures such as the numbers of crimes of violence occurring provide yardsticks for this, although they can only be descriptive rather than prescriptive. The normality surveys described to Cornwallis by Rose and Neighbour show how these can be extended to basic economic functions.

Confidence in a system is harder to measure, yet a perceived failure to allow representation has been a key part of the foundation of political groups small and large. The call “No taxation without representation” is part of a large-scale example, which led to the foundation of the USA. At the other end of the scale are the independents on Amesbury town council.

GROUPS

The perception of political representation of the interests of groups within states is key to confidence in the system of government. Concern with the apparent failure in representation of interests to local planning authorities was sufficient motive for the author to participate in

the 2003 local elections in the UK. This followed attempts to inform and influence the existing representatives from the House of Commons downwards. The conduct of these suggested that the views expressed were not being represented.

Having been elected to Amesbury Town Council, other civil sub-systems became apparent through the policing liaison group and youth forum. These activities do not appear to be well served by analysis and lack a coherent frame of reference. A Town System Model would be a means to structure the debates over planning issues at this the lowest level, if rationality is felt to have a potential contribution to make.

From the point of view of policing, the health of the town can be gauged through the levels of crimes reported and arrests. These are used to judge the success of initiatives. These have included the presence of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the establishment of no-alcohol areas. Reports are delivered to the Town council as a means to monitor the situation. Interventions in this area, especially via PCSOs, are a very low-level type of stabilisation, seeking to maintain a quality of life.

QUANTIFYING THE SUCCESS OF STABILISATION OPERATIONS

The success of any operation lies at a point determined to be the end of the sequence of processes. Whilst arbitrary and subjective this is the boundary of the system which the decision-maker recognises.

Definition of the system boundary may be that of civil society or a moral system with objectives stated in terms of a better world. Al Qaeda's views suggest that they consider themselves part of a system doing God's will. The Ministry of Defence tagline "A force for good" similarly implies service to a higher purpose than narrow national interest. The perceptions of each group of a given event may be represented by different functions for similar inputs. For example to one group footage shot on the morning of 11 September 2001 of the impact of aircraft on buildings shows a dramatic success whilst to the other the attack on the World trade Centre was an atrocity demanding action.

BUILDING MODELS OF STABILISATION

Analysts in Operational Research (OR) use models or representations of reality as aids to thought in order to provide decision-makers better understood alternatives. Selection of the appropriate resolution in terms of things represented and the time and space in which they interact is the challenge to be faced. Stabilisation operations suggest a scope covering the health of a state as a whole.

Much OR is divided according to government department remits leaving this field mainly in the realm of commercial games such as Sim-city. These "God games" are usable and popular because decision making and the complexity of the system are reduced to the point where it is playable as a game by an individual. The need for playability counters the tendency to ever increasing detail in representation.

The lure of a computerised generic universal model of everything as shown by the Matrix or the holodeck is strong. These are both fictitious generic synthetic environments, indistinguishable from reality to those immersed in them. They both function in real time. Whilst useful to training and mission planning the detailed synthetic environment is not necessarily an ideal tool for analysis.

If we could cope with the complexity of the real world, we would not need to build models of it. Experience in infantry modelling suggests that the more free play there is within a model, i.e. synthetic representation of processes, the less there is clarity in cause and effect relationships.

A model of stabilisation has to lie beyond the confines of the military box. Ends or effects rather than means are key within the box. The successful provision of an enabling capability is a necessary rather than sufficient condition for success by a higher level.

If one accepts Military Capability as an enabler to stabilisation then its representation can be analogous to its enabling capabilities, such as Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) Defence. The NBC Capability System Model (NBC CSM) allows the effects of the performance of NBC defences on an overall campaign as described by Mitchell and Medhurst.

The issues of long timescale, soft issues such as opinion and the operation of civil society discussed above imply a higher degree of ambiguity in the building blocks used, with representation of some factors, especially those centred on people and their perceptions, softer than many analysts may be comfortable with. A system-based representation offers a way ahead in which to build a model.

REPRESENTATION BY SYSTEMS MODELS

To this author systems modelling as a method appears appropriate to the themes of recent and the present Cornwallis Group meetings. These were analysis for:

- Crisis Response and Societal Reconstruction.
- Assessment, Evaluation and Crisis Management.
- Compliance and peace building.
- Governance and Stability.
- Stabilization and Counter Terrorist Operations.

These subjects are each various aspects of the health of a state. If they all need to be considered in order to build a model of governance then this may imply the need to treat the state as a set of interacting processes, which together generate effects, determining that level of health.

Stabilisation is the establishment of sufficient stability to allow the society to rebuild and Counter-Terrorism seeks to deny the effects of destructive opposition to this. The former looks at building whilst the latter is a counter to destruction. Both are processes affecting the level of “health” of a society. Different groups have different definitions based on their views. The news broadcasts of the 9-11 attacks provoked different reactions based on the outlooks of members of groups around the world. Representation of these different subjective viewpoints implies different scales, which may be the inverse of one another. This is an unusual example of the classic zero sum game.

The importance of soft factors in driving the behaviour of individuals suggests that some means of representing levels of these, which act as triggers or gears for other processes, is an important part of any model. Levels of confidence in own Governments and Hatred for others determine acceptable casualties to be endured or inflicted by the military sub-system or in the general population. Central to the representation are people and their perceptions.

COMPONENTS

From discussions at Cornwallis VIII, an initial mind map of the problem of Governance and Stability was produced as described by Mitchell and Medhurst. This mind map is reproduced at Figure 1. Note that some elements on the mind map represent aspects of the society, others aspects of economic activity and yet others are broad headings to capture possible solutions. The scope of governance and stability can probably be set as being everything – since all aspects of the state, and therefore of human activity, need to be returned to what might be considered a normal state. The components shown on the mind map are merely the most important aspects of the problem.

Even taking these components as the most important, the challenge of representing them in some form of interacting model is considerable. It is not even clear how we might measure some of these components, let alone how they interact and how their different measures could be inter-related.

Measures of the economy, of basic resources and even of security are generally available – the GNP or GDP, the return on investment, unemployment rates and the other variables beloved of economists. Economic theory tends to deal with stable states and equilibrium conditions, so often the sharp and continuous processes of adjustment that are common to stabilisation operations can prove difficult to model, although in a dynamic modelling environment such as used in System Dynamics modelling, these processes of adjustment could in principle be modelled. Measures of basic resources are the stuff of the poverty measures used by the World Bank – the proportion of the population with access to clean drinking water or food above a certain number of calories per day. Security measures include the usual array available to politicians seeking to show that they are tough on crime – murder rates, clear-up rates, seizure of arms and explosives, arrests and imprisonment rates.

Other areas have potential measures, for civil society for example, the measure might be the total membership of different types of clubs and organisations, or the level of charitable contributions made. What determines this level of membership is far from clear. Measures of governance are also interesting; possibly one measure is the proportion of GDP consumed by government activities. This could make one measure of civil society the proportion of

GDP left in the hands of the citizens, leaving the relationship between governance and civil society one of what might be described as creative tension.

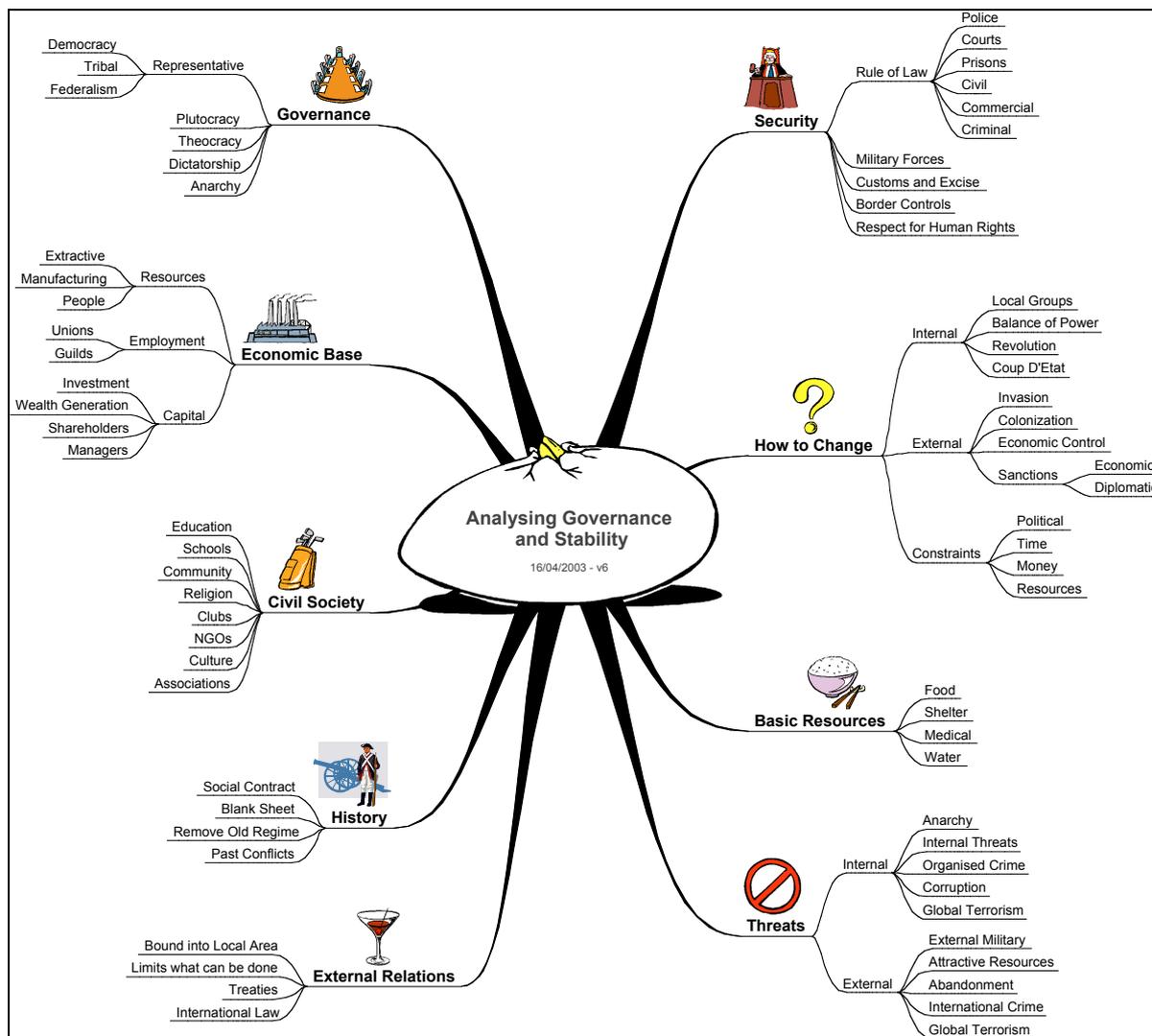


Figure 1: Mind Map of Governance and Stability from: Medhurst and Mitchell—Political Cartography—Cornwallis VIII 2003.

Figure 2 takes the analysis a stage further and proposes some interconnections between the different components shown on the mind map. At the top of the diagram are the interacting dynamics of government and civil society, probably the most difficult areas to quantify, as discussed previously.

At the centre of the diagram is the level of security, which is in turn influenced by security force activity, the level of external and internal threat and the level of security force activity. The level of violence is the level of activity by the hostile forces. The tension level can be thought of as the level of unrealised violence. The tension level in society reflects grievances that could lead to violence, but which might either be suppressed or released into violence. There are a complex series of feedback loops between these three variables that would doubtless be the subject of an interesting research topic to unravel.

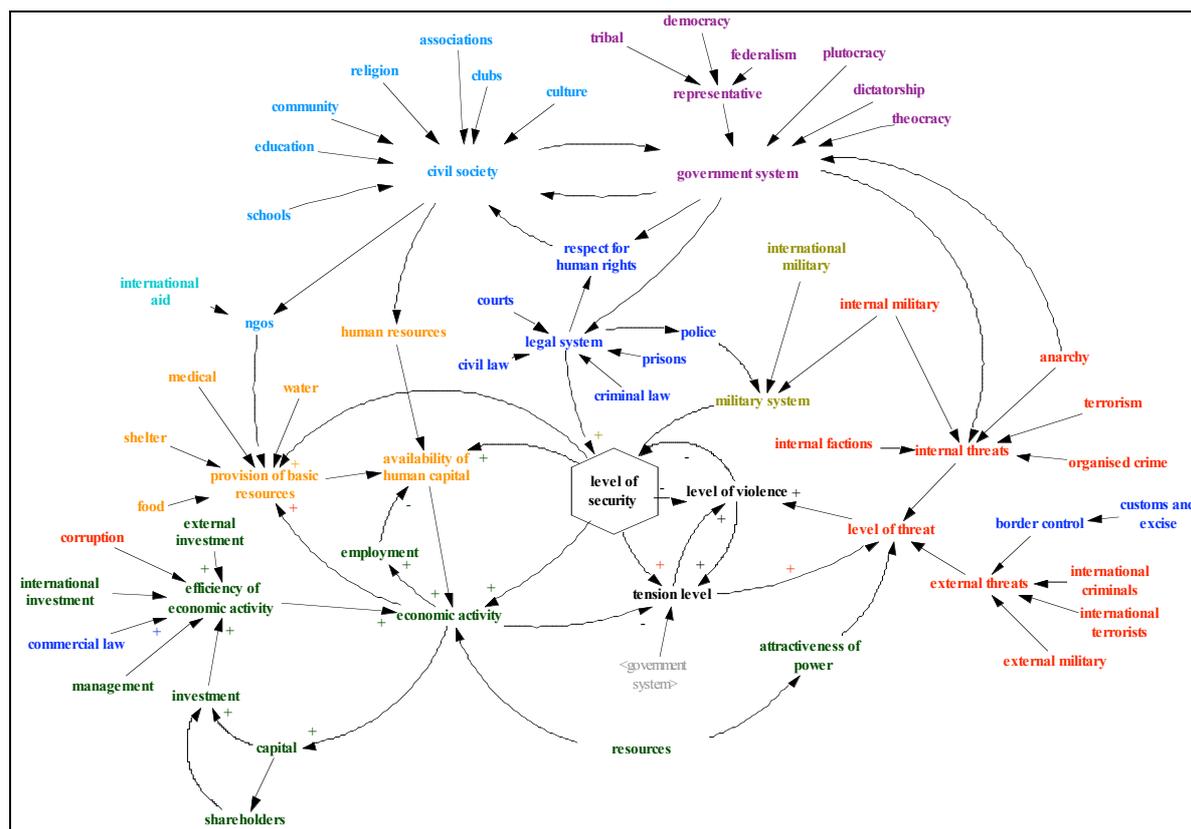


Figure 2: Interactions of Components from the Cornwallis VIII workshop.

The level of security occupies the centre of the diagram as it has a set of profound effects throughout the rest of the diagram, influencing the ability to carry on economic activity, provide basic resources and enable human resources to be used effectively. It is also the only real leverage point accessible directly to military forces, and the external and internal military are attempting to apply a spanner to this nut to try and control the rest of the machine. Whether it succeeds or not will depend upon the interplay of the three variables involved in the feedback mechanism already discussed. Note that economic activity is shown as the only way of reducing tension. This is probably not entirely true, but does show that the beneficial consequences of increased levels of security arrive indirectly, whilst the detrimental effects on tension arrive directly. The longer the delay times involved in seeing the benefits of increased security, the more pernicious, and the more difficult to control, the central triple feedback loop is likely to be.

The role of the legal system in providing security is also identified. Clearly where lower levels of threat are present, the legal system alone is sufficient to provide an adequate level of security, it is only when the situation has deteriorated to the extent that the legal system is ineffective in containing the threat that military assistance is required, and if the level of violence can be kept at a level that the legal system can cope with, there is unlikely to be a serious rise in tension without external or internal destabilising influences. The role of military assistance is therefore that of providing effective transition to civilian authority.

The threats shown include the internal military itself, if not properly controlled, the government system, if not constrained by respect for human rights, and a variety of other actors, including organised crime, foreign militaries, criminals and terrorists. The model also

shows the impact of corruption on the efficiency of the economy. Another point to note is the effect of external resources on both economic activity (though not its efficiency) and the effect of the temptation of those resources on the level of threat to the society due to the desirability of power.

Even the simple diagram shown here could act as the starting point for a model of governance and stability. It is also clear that such a model would require a wide range of inputs from specialists in different disciplines including economics, internal security, governance and peacekeeping operations. The critical question however, is the inter-relation between the three 'problem' variables of level of security, level of violence and tension level. Historical data may be the best starting point for developing this core process as a mini-model.

THE CLIENT FOR ANALYSIS OF STABILISATION OPERATIONS

There needs to be a body whose business it is to consider these issues as part of the planning process. Analysis in Operational Research is always for a decision-maker. Its value lies in the results achieved from better decisions by this individual. There is a Customer– Supplier relationship for analysis of stabilisation operations. Whether tacit or not, a Patron is needed if the implementation of the ideas proposed is to occur. Money drives development of models and for that to happen someone must see it as within their terms of reference.

The broad perspective suggested by the technical discussion above implies a client with broad scope across government departments in remit and funds. There is a need for an outlook of decades and stability in the management of this analysis in terms of years. It is likely that an operation will last beyond the lifetime of the administration, which began it and therefore will require an institutional framework within the public sector. In the UK Her Majesty's Treasury is probably the only such body existing at present, and this is not an operational command.

CONCLUSION

To analyse stabilisation is to study the operation of states in the first stages of emergence from chaos. This is a wide scope encompassing soft factors in perception as well as the interdependencies of many activities administered to date in separate government departments. The use of systems modelling is one way to represent this broad spread of activities, albeit with large assumptions and uncertainties. The critical need is for a client able to act based on these analyses having commissioned them.

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