
The Cornwallis XI Round Table

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INTRODUCTION

It is the tradition of the Cornwallis Group to conclude the Cornwallis Workshop with a Round Table discussion in which the participants are asked to comment on what they liked and did not like, on thoughts for the next meeting, and where it should be held. The following is a brief summary of the results of the Round Table for Cornwallis XI.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE?

Comments received included positive views on the nature of the meeting and the pleasantness of the venue. The organisation of the conference was said to be excellent, and the direction was thoughtful and kind. The workshop environment was described as a constructive, friendly forum for learning and discussion; the resort and settings were good and there was a wide range of topics that were distributed evenly. Networking (old and new faces) and the ambience was considered very positively. The broad scope of discussions, the detail of discussions and follow on questions as well as the openness and honesty, allied to humour of the speakers was also enjoyed by participants. At least one participant 'enjoyed Cornwallis immensely.'

Other comments liked the papers by authoritative sources that were knowledgeable about subjects (first hand) with intelligent, critical perspectives. There was good pacing – not exhausting and time to be reflective. There was said to be an excellent balance between military/civilian/analysts. Participants were positive about the experienced people from all areas attended and there was good rapport throughout the conference, and further about the diverse group of individuals who have both practical and academic background. At least one participant considered that more young people would benefit from observing this conference since it provided a great knowledge base of top experts from which to learn.

The quality of the keynote speakers was described positively. Participants also reported positively on the good mix of military, civilians, NGO-types; and government decision types. Others said that there was a need to have more non-military participants. The intellectual companionship with opportunities for exchanges beyond the presentations (breaks, meals, and social time) was enjoyed by participants, as was the extended time with an hour for each speaker.

The Simulation activity on Wednesday was an engaging event and may warrant institutionalising into Cornwallis as an event rather than as a demonstration according to

participants. However, another said that the game, whilst interesting, was of little value. Specific comments mentioned excellent presentations (particularly the paper on *Fighting Fallujah*). Other comments included ‘Well organised as usual’ and ‘Great organisation and interesting topic.’ The meeting provided a ‘great opportunity to learn and to get peer review’ to at least some participants. The best parts according to one participant were from speakers who were both experienced and held military rank. According to one participant, the paper on *Fighting Fallujah* and its critique of Iraq execution ‘knocked my socks off.’ Furthermore, the diversity of presentations was said to have kept the proceedings crisp but also indicated how differently people approach the issues.

WHAT DID YOU DISLIKE?

Comments on what participants did not like included the single word: “Nothing” to comments on the difficulty to see the projection screen due to relatively high ambient light intensities as well as the quality of the microphone system. Other comments focussed on the contents of some of the presentations. The lecture theatre was said to be airy and comfortable for a group the size of Cornwallis. Others described the lack of internet and office machines at the conference venue.

There were several stylistic recommendations asking people to spell out the acronyms for their office/organisation; another for printing names on both sides of the name plates, for example. A suggestion was made that a (walking) microphone might be useful since to some it was very hard to hear both speakers and audience and that, again, it was impossible to see many slides. These matters were generally recognised as a problem for the Allenbery (the conference venue) not a Cornwallis problem. Otherwise, at least one participant observed that the facility was fine (except for all the stairs).

One participant observed that there was too much focus on doctrine presentations, and that it was a ‘shame we can’t get more nations involved.’ Another participant said that there were too many ‘dry’ presentations on US state/military co-operation that was claimed not to be of vast interest to attendees not from the US. One participant was critical that there was very little analysis and very little from the military perspective. Another observed that too many of the presentations were off topic and that few were actually about analysis.

A suggestion was made for presenters to send out their power point presentations before the meeting as it was difficult to see the details on many of the presentation materials. Another participant would like more opportunity for roundtable discussions. A further suggestion proposed having a panel debate/discussion as a keynote would be very interesting. Another would have liked more time for informal discussion in small groups.

At least one other participant touched on a perennial problem at Cornwallis the lack of participation from such countries as France, Germany, Holland, Poland, and Australia and from the countries such as Bosnia and Afghanistan that are impacted by interventions.

Finally, there were several negative comments about the train noise during the quiet hours at the Workshop. However others, including the Editor, really liked the sound of the trains in the night and felt that those sounds added to the charm of the bucolic environment of the Conference Center

WHAT TOPICS FOR CORNWALLIS XII?

Several suggestions were made for the topics to be addressed in Cornwallis XII. One proposed similar sorts of topics but possibly with regional focus, or with increased NGO and governmental participation. Others called for a meeting on a joined-up government approach to crises, a comprehensive approach that built on some of the thinking exposed in Cornwallis XI. Another participant suggested that the next meeting continue along the same lines of interest, of previous symposiums, perhaps a humanitarian organisational theme.

Others suggested effects-based planning in peace support operations; another operations conducted using effect based operations; application of the comprehensive approach; impact of media, the mechanics of corruption; cultural value systems, economic conflict, and a third suggested effects based theory and application emerging interagency doctrine. Another person suggested the next meeting cover the possible impacts of full spectrum of peacekeeping and stabilisation Operations on sovereign governments and international organisations.

One participant suggested that the next meeting cover anything with 'Analysis' or 'Operations' in the title or in the abstract and that the Group should keep coming up with topics that are not substantively covered by other for a conferences or workshops. Another participant suggested that the Group should think about a regional focus such as Africa since that might attract the interest of other countries such as France and South Africa with missions in those areas.

After much deliberation, the Cornwallis Program Committee has proposed that the next meeting should focus on *Analysis for Multi-Agency Support*. This is a very timely topic due to the increased and necessary involvement of entities and agencies other than military forces and ministries of defence and departments of defense in complicated crises and confrontations in such areas as Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia, and elsewhere. It is hoped that the workshop could provide a forum for the demonstration, discussion, and perhaps use of computer-based facilities that could be used to support multi-agency activities.

WHERE TO HOLD CORNWALLIS XII NEXT YEAR?

Discussions on where to hold Cornwallis XII focussed on holding the meeting in the United States, Canada, or Europe with some interest in holding the meeting in Hawaii or Australia, for example. There was interest in returning to Austria; in holding the meeting at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany; or convening at a United Kingdom location. Several suggestions proposed a return to Cornwallis Park, one with an eventual objective of alternating between Northern America/Canada and Europe year by year.

Another suggestion proposed holding the next meeting in France at the University of Aix-en-Provence. The University apparently has several institutes that meet periodically at a 12th Century monastery at Senangue (about 20 miles from Aix-en-Provence). The rooms there are said to be of about the same standard as The Pearson Centre, but the contracted food operation provided excellent results. Otherwise, there is much working space and an utterly tranquil environment.

After much deliberation, the Program Committee have decided to hold Cornwallis XII at the Pearson Peacekeeping Training Centre in Nova Scotia. We look forward to that meeting with great interest and enthusiasm.

The meeting of the Cornwallis Group XI was declared adjourned by the Chair at the end of the Round Table discussions. We look forward to Cornwallis XII: Analysis for Multi-Agency Support that will be held at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in April 2007!!