

32 ISMOR: Themes and Trends

A Personal Perspective

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32 ISMOR Themes and Trends

- Themes – there are detectable themes, often viewable from more than than one perspective (e.g. analyst, military, decision maker, historian etc.)
- Trends – always difficult to say if there are trends without a broader and deeper analysis but I will offer some observations anyway and look back to ISMOR 31
- Are the presentations reflective of what is happening in the world?

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- But, a very brief diversion before I start. I believe I have identified the “WORD OF THE CONFERENCE”:

?

I bet you can guess it

32 ISMOR Themes and Trends

- But, a very brief diversion before I start. I believe I have identified the “WORD OF THE CONFERENCE”:

- **WICKED**

I am sure you go it right!

Managing Expectations

Will not be offering a comprehensive resume of each presentation, each session or even each day's efforts

Will not provide a full quantitative analysis of the content of the presentations

My perspective may not fit exactly with your impressions or conclusions (if at all) but, hopefully, it will strike a chord (or two)

As last year, I have assigned 2 to 4 “thematic descriptors” to each presentation or poster and added them up – these are the numbers you will see against the descriptors on the next slide

What I term my “Conventional view” (2015) –

- Analysis of data/techniques/model development (26)
- Decision support for military (10)
- Support to operations (5)
- Capability requirements and/or management (5)
- Understanding military decision making inc. C2 & ISR (5)
- Human factors/soft issues (5)
- Maritime (5)
- Procurement (3)
- Joint(ery) (3)
- Lessons learned or identified (3)
- Logistics/supply chain (3)

What I term my “Conventional view” (2015) –

- Analysis of data/techniques/model development (26) - noticeable ease of use & transparency (12) plus war gaming (5)
- Decision support for military (10) – specific and broad lessons
- Support to operations (5) – inc. non-combat
- Capability requirements and/or management (5) – inc. force mix
- Understanding military decision making inc. C2 & ISR (5)
- Human factors/soft issues (5) – in kinetic and non-kinetic ops
- Maritime (5) – both specific and broad analysis
- Value for money – as a driver rather than specifics
- Procurement (3) – issues rather than specific equipment
- Joint(ery) (3) – Australian interest?
- Lessons learned or identified (3) – both recent and past
- Logistics/supply chain (3) – specific challenges highlighted

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Comparison of 2014 and 2015:

Title	14	15	Title	14	15
Analysis/models	16	26	Human factor issues	0	5
Decision support	10	10	Cyber	3	1
Support to Ops	9	5	Air Power	3	2
Capability Require'ts	6	5	Maritime	0	5
Military decisions	6	5	Lessons Learn or l'd	0	3
VFM	5	4	Joint(ery)	0	3
Analysis for Man'mnt	5	0	Logs/supply chain	0	3
Contractorisation	4	0	Procurement	0	3

Theme based view (2015) –

- Military capability under review – examining the balance of forces (force mix) driven by funding as well as specific capabilities
- Support to military operations – still seen as helpful and integral
- Understanding “soft issues”, i.e. behaviours, reasoning, mental models, social impact
- Improving ease of use & transparency of analysis (for analyst and customer)
- Tackling “Wicked problems”?
- Return of war gaming?
- Looking beyond more immediate conflicts (Afghanistan, Iraq) for lessons and insights?

The same question as last year, namely, are these themes going to be trends?

Answer is (qualified) yes, perhaps!

- Budgets are still tightening (except China, Russia) so VFM and BoI still relevant
- Civil technology and capability rapidly expanding (knowledge, SQEP, service delivery, cost base etc.)
- C4ISR will still be area for investment
- Conflicts are not getting simpler and issues they pose go beyond the question of the weight of ordnance used
- Also end of ISAF operations in Afghanistan does not seem to have altered level of military support for OA, yet!
- But question remains as to whether they may not be the only trends emerging?

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As last year I ask the question - Are these themes and trends relevant?

Are these themes and trends relevant?

- Exact number of conflicts in world imprecise – over 400 conflicts identifiable with around 40 where loss of life is significant and sustained.
- Majority of 40 are internal but often with external implications or interventions e.g. Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Mali, Congo (Eastern Region), Libya
- Factors involved vary (and are rarely singular) – religion, resources, ethnicity, political ideology, historic grievances, poverty, social inequality
- As yet, the presentations have yet to get to grips with some of the issues raised by these conflicts. But Dave Sloggett's presentations provide some insight into the issues.
- So I looked to see if recent articles in Royal United Services Institute reflected my observations

One small comparison point - Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Articles (last 14 months):

Defence & Security Policy (global issues inc. NATO) – 8

General military interest - 7

Maritime Issues - 6

UK Defence & Security Policy - 5

Peacekeeping – 5

History – 5 (plus 14 on WW1)

Asia inc. China – 4

Afghanistan – 4

Terrorism, civil unrest, migrants – 3

Procurement – 3

One each on: Cyber, Nuclear policy, Russia/Ukraine, Analysis, Logistics

So, in summary:

- Where is analysis going?
 - greater ease of use and transparency
 - human factors and other soft issues
 - support to decision makers on issues besides procurement
- Some indication that analysis is looking beyond the very recent military actions and more broadly (perhaps)?
- But are analysts still not tackling the problems facing military and politicians daily?

QUESTIONS?

OBSERVATIONS?

Theme based view (2014) –

- Military capability to a budget – buy what you can, not necessarily what you want
- Support to military operations – seen as helpful and integral
- Understanding “soft issues”, i.e. behaviours, reasoning, mental models, social impact
- New and/or evolving challenges for military (and analysts) e.g. cyber, irregular forces (irregular strategy/tactics)
- Making analysis more auditable and relevant
- Impact of civilianisation (privatisation, contractorisation, reserves etc.) of “military tasks”
- Measures of effectiveness – new or different