

Syndicate 1: Northern Iraq Critical Incidents: Issue Resolution in the Field

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INTRODUCTION

The most important characterization of peace interventions in the post-cold war period is that unexpected incidents will arise for which the mission mandate or other directions don't provide clear guidance. They usually require rapid resolution or risk seeing what seems to be a minor constraint become a serious obstacle through political positioning. The window of opportunity to resolve them is often short.

Senior civilian and military officers in the field, working effectively together, can often take timely action to resolve these incidents on-the-ground. As background for the working group session, the following were three critical incidents which arose in the Northern Iraq intervention, a short summary of the guidance which applied, the options available, and the steps taken to achieve a field-based solution:

KURD REFUSAL TO REPATRIATE

1. *The Mission/Guidance:* A "secure zone" was established in N. Iraq for the purpose of bringing the refugees back down off their precarious position in mountain camps on the Turk-Iraq border. Instructions included, "don't talk with the Peshmerga," the Kurd freedom fighters still in N. Iraq. This was a political directive based on the concern that by talking with them it would give them legitimacy and a claim for diplomatic recognition.

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2. *The Incident:* The Kurd leaders in the camps stated that they refused to come down as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power. The Peshmerga approached us saying they wished to help.
3. *The Options:*
- Refer the issue up the command chain for resolution. One likely outcome of this alternative would be a raising of the issue to the level of international diplomatic negotiation, delaying indefinitely the accomplishment of the mission. The result would be the need to construct permanent, all-weather camps on the mountains and total humanitarian assistance support.
 - Attempt to reason with the Kurd leaders. One likely outcome is a refusal and going to option (a).
 - Perform additional rapid appraisal and seek ways to meet both Kurd and international community objectives.
4. *The Solution:* We violated instructions and talked with the Peshmerga. We devised a plan to invite representatives of the Kurds on the mountains to come down for a visit to the first principal town inside the secure zone, Zakho, and to talk further. (Many of them had homes in Zakho.) The Peshmerga agreed to work with us on doing this. During the visit to Zakho, we asked if 1000 men could be sent down to help build the refugee camps being set up on the outskirts of town. They agreed, and 2-3 days later 1000 men were helicoptered down and started work. Most disappeared overnight, visiting their homes. Within days, the refugees began a spontaneous repatriation, and within 10 days all the camps on the mountains were vacant.

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S POLICE

1. *The Mission/Guidance:* Same as above.
2. *The Incident:* Simultaneous with the above, two days after the secure zone was established, over 200 police dressed in new military uniforms from the Iraqi government appeared in Zacko, parading down the street to maximize visibility. This presence would be a serious impediment to building the confidence of the Kurds to repatriate.
3. *The Options:*
 - a. Accept their presence as a political necessity, which the military commander said was necessary in light of the political decisions already reached during the peace negotiations to respect Iraq government sovereignty, and attempt to gain that acceptance by the

- Kurd refugee leaders. The likely outcome would be that Kurd leaders would not accept that, and winterized quarters on the mountains would have to be build, and full humanitarian assistance provided indefinitely.
- b. Talk to the police and have them leave. The likely outcome would be they wouldn't, and this would revert to option (a).
 - c. Forcefully eject the police. That certainly could be done. It would likely create unanticipated negative political outcomes.
 - d. Create oversight conditions which would make them so uncomfortable that they would leave on their own. That would be a desirable outcome, but would require measures not in any manuals.
4. *The Solution:* Authoritarian states are not accustomed to and are averse to transparency and accountability to the public. The police are particularly guilty of not feeling the need to be responsible to the population. Establishment of the secure zone also meant the military was in total control of civil operations in the zone. The police were required to provide their names and total transparency of operations in the police stations (i.e., listing names of prisoners and permitting open inspections and visits with the prisoners). The names of the police were to be publicly posted. The result was that the police left town on their own.

REPATRIATION TO DAHUK

1. *The Mission/Guidance:* Same as above. In addition, the secure zone included an area 30 km. inside the Turkey-Iraq border, which did not include the provincial capitol of Dahuk. For political reasons, again to respect the Iraq government sovereignty, the intervening community did not want the secure zone to include a provincial capitol. This zone was made known to the Iraqi authorities.
2. *The Incident:* After surveying the refugees, it was learned that up to 300,000 of them were from Dahuk. They made up most of the population of the city, thus this very significant city was virtually abandoned. By not including Dahuk in the secure zone, about half the refugees were not likely to be repatriated and the mission not accomplished.
3. *The Options:*
 - a. Refer the information up the chain of command for resolution. This was done, however, without a change in instructions. The outcome meant that permanent winterized housing would have to be built for up to 300,000 persons, along with providing total humanitarian assistance.

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- b. Convince the refugees to return to Dahuk in spite of the Iraq army presence in the city. The likely outcome would be a refusal and reverting to option (a).
 - c. Violate the instructions and extend the secure zone to include Dahuk. This, of course, would be career-threatening to field commanders.
 - d. Seek a way to *de facto* extend the secure zone to include Dahuk.
4. *The Solution:* The Iraqi military was asked to withdraw from the city to permit the citizens to return. The DART set up way stations and visitation tours to Dahuk for the refugees and encouraged them to repatriate to their homes. The understanding with the Iraq government was that Dahuk was *de facto* part of the secure zone. Reluctance to agree with this solution at the senior political levels of the international community yielded to the pragmatic rationale of the field-generated *fait accompli*.

The end result of the field-generated solutions was the total repatriation of the refugees to their homes and a withdrawal of the ground forces within 10 weeks, *mission successfully accomplished*. This is testimony to the validity of a practice of permitting field-based policy recommendations and delegation of authority to the field.

Syndicate I: Northern Iraq Syndicate Discussions

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The Syndicate consisted of the following members:

- *Briefer:* Dayton Maxwell, U.S.A.
- *Facilitator:* Paul Chouinard, Ph.D., Canada.
- *Scribe:* John Holt, Ph.D., United Kingdom.
- *Participants:* Anders Almen, Sweden; Professor Berndt Brehmer, Ph.D., Sweden; Charles Hawkins, U.S.A.; Andrew Nicholls, Australia; Gwyn Prins, Ph.D., United Kingdom; Binyam Solomon, Canada; and Alexander E.R. Woodcock, Ph.D., U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

The syndicate was briefed by Mr. Dayton Maxwell from World Vision, who as head of the USAID/OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) at the time, was involved with managing the relief operation. His vignette, following this report, describes the decision options facing the military and civilian field commanders and supplements this account. The crisis occurred at the end of the Gulf War in 1991, when 480,000 Kurdish refugees fled into the mountainous regions of Northern Iraq because of the threat of persecution from Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein. The main phases of the crisis were as follows:

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- a. The crisis began when large numbers of Kurdish refugees arrived in the mountainous area of Northern Iraq.
 - b. A secure zone for the refugees had to be established near the mountains. The refugees had to be persuaded to come down from the mountains and into the secure zone.
 - c. Support had to be provided when following spontaneous repatriation, with the refugees voluntarily coming down the mountains.
 - d. Finally, the refugees had to be repatriated to their own home areas, permitting the military to complete its mission and leave (or redeploy).

The syndicate discussion followed the four phases of the conflict, the outcome of which is summarised below. For each phase, a summary of the initial briefing provided by Mr. Maxwell is provided, followed by a review of the syndicate discussions. The final subsection of this report brings together all the suggestions from the syndicate for ways to improve planning and decision making, covering all areas of the conflict.

PHASE 1: ARRIVAL OF REFUGEES ON MOUNTAIN

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

480,00 Kurd refugees required food and shelter. The NGOs were not present prior to the arrival of the refugees, and hence had not been able to conduct a prior assessment. Due to the cold climate, there was exposure resulting in a hundred deaths a day, hence medical attention was urgently required. The Turks had closed their borders and hence their co-operation had to be obtained to be able to move people and supplies from that direction.

As a result of the mountainous terrain, supplies had to be dropped by air, which created its own problems. Security from attack by Iraqi forces in the area was uncertain. There was a high level of media interest, which had to be managed. Responsibility for the area were held by the US Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and by the US military with support from British and French forces.

SYNDICATE DISCUSSION

Within the aid effort that was undertaken, there were long term issues that were not being addressed, particularly the creation of a Kurd nation that was taking place. A further problem was that the Pentagon did not want to discuss humanitarian operations while the war was still going on. There were no organisational problems on the ground at this stage. Firm political leadership had been exercised at the start of the operation, which created a high level of empowerment amongst all those involved. The research issues from this phase are as follows:

- *Decision-making in coalitions:* This was difficult, even with a Joint Task Force (used for the N Iraq operation) and has proven even more so as a UN operation (the UN took responsibility after the operation).
- *Forward planning:* This was difficult for the Pentagon because of the distances involved.
- *Strategic assessment of intervention in a crisis area:* There are no systematic criteria to assist nations in the strategic assessment of deciding whether or not to enter new areas of peacekeeping operations. A suggested set of protocols to characterise conflicts to assist with this decision is given in Table 1.
- *Maintaining a national commitment for peacekeeping:* This is particularly difficult when an operation is being conducted for moral reasons.

Criteria	Description	Example applied to Northern Iraq
1 ENTRY CONDITIONS	State the circumstances which have led to the crisis situation which is to be resolved	Consequence of Coalition strategy as executed in DESERT STORM led to the Iraq crisis with Kurds in the Mountains
2 FELT POLITICAL COMMITMENT	Political commitment (can be expressed as a %) of each of the actors to the resolution of the crisis	As consequence of James Baker's announcement, USA acknowledges 100% commitment to Iraq situation
3 POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS	State the major constraints on the freedom of action for each of the major actors in the crisis: For this to be done, it is necessary, first, to identify the major classes of actors (Steps 5-8 below)	What are the constraints on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraq • Coalition partners • USA • Turkey • Other UNSC members • Other regional states
4 RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS	State what limitations there are in the provision of material resources: this will derive from the degree of felt political commitment and the nature of political constraints	As a consequence of Jim Baker's (US Secretary of State) executive statement, there were effectively no constraints on resources: this was a military operation, and cost/efficiency criteria were

		suspended
5 WHAT ROLE FOR STATE ACTORS?	State the role (lead; follow; no role etc.) for the specific actors	Coalition with predominant US lead
6 WHAT ROLE FOR PARASTATALS?	State the position of state funded agencies (e.g. CARE, CARE Canada etc.)	US CARE under orders from US government
7 WHAT ROLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS?	State the position of UN acronymic agencies	UNHCR later on the scene, and in a following role

Table 1: Characterisation of Peacekeeping Operations.

Criteria	Description	Example applied to Northern Iraq
8 WHAT ROLE FOR NGOs?	State the position of different NGOs operating in the crisis area	While there was no role prior to the crisis, NGOs deployed rapidly as soon as the crisis began, particularly the French, German and International Red Cross medical teams. Assistance with camp management also quickly materialised
9 DESCRIBE THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AUTHORITY	<p>Who has the authority to issue executive orders? (draw an organogram)</p> <p>Describe the actual nodes of authority in the specific situation (charismatic persons etc.)</p> <p>Describe the blockages/potential short circuits</p>	Major tensions observed between 'tactical' and 'strategic' levels of command, sometimes resulting in disobedience to orders which were clearly counterproductive

10 DESCRIBE THE CHAIN OF INFORMATION	Observe and describe who possesses relevant and accurate information fit to the purpose of the action (draw an organogram) Note and flag the AREAS OF MIS-MATCH between the chains of command and of information	Frequently, the possessors of the best information were not high in the command chain and those high in the command chain were not in possession of information that should command respect
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Table 1(continued): Characterisation of Peacekeeping Operations.

PHASE 2: ESTABLISH SECURE ZONE AND BRING DOWN THE REFUGEES FROM THE MOUNTAINS

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

The refugees had to be persuaded to come down from the mountains for reasons of health and shelter. For this to occur, a secure area had to be established with temporary camps to provide housing. There were large numbers of refugees requiring to be assisted, and it was not clear where they would eventually end up being resettled. The problems on the ground were compounded by various management difficulties. The military command wanted to give instructions to the civil bodies in the area, which was unacceptable to the civil bodies. Those working on the ground had been ordered by the US government not to speak to the Peshmerga (Kurdish freedom fighters), thereby severing one of the main lines of communications with the refugees requiring help.

To add to the feelings of insecurity of the refugees, a contingent of Saddam Hussein's police had arrived in the local town. A military HQ had been established in the local grain storage facilities, which included the principal food storage facilities needed for humanitarian assistance. This created access problems, which were greatly increased when the time came to gather the grain harvest. Building a camp to house the refugees was the responsibility of the military and of DART. The military had responsibility for establishing security in the area. There was no group specifically tasked with the responsibility for dealing with Saddam Hussein's police and with persuading the refugees to come down the mountain.

SYNDICATE DISCUSSION

There is a need to address the tactical/ strategic dichotomy with orders being given at a strategic level that do not reflect the realities on the ground. Those on the ground need to understand the reasons for decisions made at a strategic level which reflect issues of wider national concern. Flexibility of response is needed on the ground and some discretion has to be exercised in recognising unworkable constraints (e.g. not talking to the Peshmurga). Greater responsibility for decisions could be delegated to those on the ground. Better lines of communication between the ground and higher level are needed to deal with specific problems. An engagement plan is needed that covers both civil and military actors, for example in this situation, the military and civilian bodies had to work together to determine the secure area boundaries to be established.

The syndicate made the following research suggestions.

- A very significant area where further research is required is in developing the doctrine of ‘unity of effort.’ This is a major military doctrine within peace support operations, about which very little has been written.
- A further area of research would be to examine the various types of decisions required in peace-keeping operations. This research would take examples of the typical types of decision problems that are faced in such operations e.g. small incidents that have a big impact on the course of a conflict.
- An evaluation could be conducted of the effects of role changes on the military and of variations in the constraints placed upon them. Different types of problems require different types of decisions, e.g. in some cases direct command is appropriate and in other cases a more consensual approach is required.
- A further research topic is the organisation of resources within a peacekeeping HQ. This can be a problem, with the appropriate individuals not always having the resources. The military does not always have the resources and freedom of operation to help NGOs.
- One way of addressing the problems described in this section is to have a proactive group of analysts (as was the case in Bosnia), either on staff or in civil affairs, but directly informing the Commander. As there are many qualitative, unstructured problems, the type of Operational Analysis that is likely to be particularly relevant is so-called ‘soft OA.’

PHASE 3: SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

Through the ingenuity of the aid workers, an atmosphere of security was created so that the Kurds were able to come down from the mountains. Saddam’s policemen were required to

publicise their missions and movements, and were no longer able to operate clandestinely so they soon left town. A thousand Kurdish men were invited down from the mountain for a few days. When they saw for themselves that the situation down below was secure, they did not return to mountains. Shortly afterwards the other Kurds spontaneously repatriated themselves down from the mountains, as they realised that the ground below was secure. The large numbers of Kurds coming down from the mountains created new problems of providing accommodating and enabling them to return to their homes. These problems were the responsibility of DART, the military, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

A further problem was that approximately 250,000 of the refugees were from Dahuk, which was outside the secure area. These refugees could not be returned to their homes and the authorities were refusing to extend the secure area. This would mean winter accommodation having to be built to house the refugees. Further problems were created when the US Military Command in Stuttgart, Germany started to develop a transition plan without consulting those on the ground. (Stuttgart is the HQ for US forces in Europe that support NATO. For the US it was this Command that was responsible for the Kurd intervention.) Also, one of the allied force commanders on the ground tended to take precipitate action and not be easy for the civilians to work with. In addition to these problems, harvest time was drawing closer, requiring the use of centralised grain processing and storage facilities located on the sight of the Allied HQ. If the refugees were returned to their homes, a number lived in N Iraq, outside the area of operation of UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and hence they would not be able to receive UN help in rebuilding their homes.

SYNDICATE DISCUSSION

Some of the problems described above arose because of the attitudes and organisation of the military. It was suggested that the US National Guard, under the control of the US Commander-In-Chiefs (CINCs), has more experience in dealing with disasters and may be more suited to this type of operation. For a crisis in the US there is a clear progression of steps, that may also be relevant to peacekeeping operations, with the National Guard being called in, then as the crisis subsides contractors taking over until the status quo has been fully re-established. There is a need for those providing relief to stay in an area until the disaster has been completely mitigated (requiring authorisation from the External Affairs Department). Providing extended relief does not contradict the need for clear entry and exit criteria for forces within a peacekeeping operation. The military talk about 'mission creep', but there is a sense in which mission creep *is the mission* because the aim of sending forces to an area is to ensure that the safety of the civilian population has been established.

At this stage, the death rate had fallen and the population had stabilised but there was still a significant crisis with large numbers of people requiring accommodation. Crises have a lower profile in the media when they have stabilised, which can lead to a lowering of impetus. As options increase, unity of purpose can be reduced as it is no longer so certain what must be done. A suggestion from the syndicate to counteract these effects is the use of a simulation to model the population, and current dangers. Such a model could be used to highlight the potential civil population plight if action is not taken.

The site of the military HQ on the civilian grain production and storage site posed a problem and is a good example of problems of the operational difficulties at the civilian-military interface. It was suggested that a more thorough survey of potential locations should have been conducted prior to the HQ site being selected. It was suggested that there should be operating standards for NGOs and DARTs. These would provide guidance on how they should operate and also give a basis for assessing their performance. An example of what currently exists is the SPHERE project that has developed guidelines on operational co-operation and ethics among NGOs.

PHASE 4: REDEPLOYMENT

DESCRIPTION OF SITUATION

There was a need to maintain the security of the civil population in transit to their homes. These issues fell outside the authority of the military bodies, but were within the authority of the civilian bodies on the ground. There would be no long-term solution to the situation until the group from Dahuk had returned to their homes, otherwise they would be permanent refugees. There was a need for long-term humanitarian supplies to the refugees after they had returned home until they had become established again. The refugees needed help in becoming re-established in their home areas. All of these issues fell outside the authority of the military bodies on the ground, but were within the authority of the civilian bodies on the ground.

A further problem was that the Kurds needed to establish themselves as a autonomous authority but the aid organisations were forbidden from helping in this process by higher authorities. This is because of a strict interpretation of UN Security Council sanctions that said that 'government' inside Iraq could not be given assistance. The Kurds still had great fears of what the Iraqi authorities might do to them. There were conflicts between the existing Kurdish factions (Barzani and Talabani) and conflict resolution was required between these groups.

SYNDICATE DISCUSSION

On the ground, the Dahuk dilemma was eventually solved by the military negotiating the withdrawal of the Iraqi troops from Dahuk and the aid organisations arranging for the refugees to return to Dahuk. They arranged for the refugees to be bussed back to Dahuk.

The syndicate made the following suggestions for this phase. After the Gulf War, there had been a general desire that Saddam Hussein be overthrown. It had been hoped that the various opposition groups within Iraq might achieve this. However, the whole policy had not been thought through. Contingency planning had not been conducted because it had been thought that contingency actions would be precluded on budgetary grounds. Small actions at critical points might have prevented the crises from developing. The political aspects of the problem should have been more firmly addressed. An analysis of the long-term ethnic

religious issues should have been undertaken. More help needs to be given in conflicts to developing autonomous authority structures. This type of help could not be given in this case because of the sanctions on Iraq.

SUMMARY OF SYNDICATE SUGGESTIONS

In the Northern Iraq operation, planning was not conducted in a systematic manner. Future planning of similar operations should make use of models and projections of conflict trends, to represent both civil and military aspects. Sensitivity analysis can be conducted to examine the robustness of the main plan. With these tools, the most cost-effective approach to planning peacekeeping operations can be developed.

There were problems with the attitude of one of the US Generals, which led in at least one instance to an inappropriate, uncoordinated and dangerous movement of refugees. It is important that the right leaders are selected for all the organisations that are involved (military, NGO and international organisations). Research is needed into the determinants of attitude and motives of those involved in peacekeeping operations. From the N Iraq operation, it appears that some individuals are motivated by 'medals' whereas others are motivated by 'honour.' Those motivated by honour tend to be more sympathetic and helpful to the victims of a crisis. Studying the impact of individuals' motivations on behaviour should assist in changing unhelpful attitudes, as well as inappropriate training and policy. Training for peacekeeping should develop correct attitudes as well as operational understanding. A technique that could be used for such training is 'gaming'. There is a requirement to develop current understanding of the effects of stress on psychological performance.

The following detailed suggestions were been made by the syndicate with regard to the N Iraqi scenario:

- *Develop policy on the ground:* Those on the ground are closest to what is going on in a peacekeeping operation, it would be more operationally effective if they were to be responsible for formulating, or at least contributing to the formulation of policy. They should receive appropriate training and equipping. Technical infrastructure should be provided so that policy recommendations formulated on the ground can be readily communicated to those at the strategic level. Those at the strategic level will need to modify their way of working to be able to respond to policy from those on the ground.
- *Delegation of authority for adaptability:* If those working on the ground are to have responsibility for developing policy, they should have appropriate responsibility.
- *Increase effectiveness of tactical and strategic decision-making:* Both strategic and tactical decision-making need to be more effective, with both having a better idea of the limitations of their own perspective. Those working at the strategic level need to aware that they only have a limited

perspective of the situation of the ground, and that, unless there is very full consultation, there is a danger of creating policy that does not take account of the realities on the ground. Those operating at the tactical level need to be aware that there may be broader, national considerations, that are outside of their perspective.

- *More systemic approaches required for planning operations:* There is a need to develop more holistic and systemic approaches to planning peace-keeping operations. (A suggestion from the scribe is that the use of structured thinking methods from soft OA could be very appropriate e.g. Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology, Checkland and Scoles, 1990.) It was suggested that the simulation model, DEXES, described at the conference, could provide a means of modelling the dynamics of a peacekeeping situation, to see how a conflict might develop and to assess the impacts of proposed deployments.
- *Develop ways of obtaining good domain knowledge about an area of operations:* Developing domain knowledge of an area of operations, including the ground, the environment, the climate and the culture, are key to successful planning for any operation. Ways of extending this type of knowledge include conducting literature surveys and developing networks of experts to give briefings on different parts of the world.
- *Develop checklist(s) for strategic assessment:* A checklist for strategic assessment was proposed, and is given in Table 1, above. A table of this type provides a useful characterisation of the main parties in a conflict, their motivations and constraints. Such a table would be helpful in planning and monitoring the development of a conflict.
- *Make decision makers aware of Civil-Military Co-ordination (CIMIC) problems:* There is a need for increased awareness by decision-makers of the problems of CIMIC. There are barriers of different working cultures to overcome. Decisions have to be taken in complex rapidly changing environments. Decision need to be appropriately formulated to ensure that the key considerations are included (this process is referred to in the Psychological literature as 'frame, or be framed').
- *The need for good leaders:* It is imperative that all bodies involved in dealing with peace-keeping crises, military, governmental and NGO, have the best possible leadership at the top.
- *Need doctrine for 'unity of effort':* Unity of effort is considered to be a key doctrine in peacekeeping operations, yet very little has been written about how it can be obtained.
- *Need ways of structuring soft complex information for military and NGOs:* There is a need to structure information for decision making, including the flow from military to civil and civil to military. Regularly updated opinion poll data is required for both own countries and indigenous populations, so as to maintain awareness of the ebbs and flows in support for peacekeeping

intervention. There is a need to know who is negotiating with whom and why they are negotiating. Structured decision support systems are required to assess and analyse the data that is provided.

- *Need research into drivers of behaviour:* There is a need for research into the drivers of behaviour of personnel within military, government and international organisations and their consequences for civil-military interaction. Without understanding the underlying structures and cultures that shape individual behaviours, organisational training and changes will be misdirected. Research that seeks to improve civil-military interaction could be enhanced through a better understanding of fundamental drivers of behaviours within different organisational structures.
- *Sources of research:* The following are proposed as sources of funding for research in to the above areas:
 - > National defence research organisations e.g. FOA, DERA;
 - > Policy making ministries (e.g. Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs);
 - > OSD and policy support bodies.

REFERENCE

Checkland, P and J. Scholes, 1990. *Soft Systems Methodology in Action Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*. Wiley.