

CMIS 2009 Summary Report

The program for CMIS was based on four working themes:

- Conflict Prevention and the Protection of Civilians
- Governance and the Rule of Law
- Disaster Management and Humanitarian Action
- Peace and Stabilisation Operations

Each day contained a mix of keynote speeches, interactive panel sessions followed by in-depth analysis during breakout working group sessions. The sessions were chaired by facilitators, assisted by subject matter experts and sought to capture the experience and knowledge of the wide range of participants.

Day 1: Conflict Prevention and the Protection of Civilians (POC)

Points emphasised during the day included the notion that there is a continuum from peacekeeping, through peacebuilding to peacemaking, but that this did not mean that the activities are discrete and separate. There was consensus that activities are more likely to be concurrent rather than consecutive.

A second point was that, in any mission, if civilians have been protected, then success has been accomplished. Consequently, there is a need for proper guidelines as to what protection of civilians (POC) means and how it is to be implemented, as well as the provision of sufficient resources to achieve this objective.

Common themes that emerged included:

- The international nature of the idea of POC. This is seen in the universal applicability of humanitarian law which has resulted from the so-called CNN effect that can command the attention of audiences worldwide, and from the wide spread of countries prepared to deploy resources to ensure the protection of civilians in peace operations;
- That led to the next theme, the infinity of actors involved in peace operations. Of course, in practice, the actors are finite, but the total activity of UN agencies, national missions and NGOs, as well as local participants, means that there can be hundreds, perhaps thousands, of participant agencies. Each of these will have its own agenda and few agendas will coincide;

- Because of the infinity of actors, there is often an ignorance of the perspectives of others and an ignorance of their aims, capabilities and weaknesses. Consequently, there is a continuing potential for mixed outcomes within an intervention area;
- At the same time, an intervention area is a discrete area and, therefore, the actions of one actor are likely to impact directly upon the actions of others. Sometimes there are strong interdependencies between actors, sometimes not;
- Interaction between actors, particularly military, police and the civil sector, does exist but there are still many differences in approaches within these groups;
- Given their number, interactions and interdependencies in an area of operations, it is important that all actors are included to the extent they can be and want to be. Without inclusion, there are dangers to the ideal of protection and, at times, dangers to the participants also.

Day 2: Governance and the Rule of Law

Discussion throughout the day ranged across both conceptual and practical issues with much overlap between them. It is important that concepts are aired because without concepts . theory . practice is likely to develop in ways not necessarily anticipated by the practitioner. Concepts also cover the issues of organisation, structure and law, under which practitioners must operate.

In planning, there should be an entry strategy to answer the linked questions:
Why are we here and what are we going to do?

The case studies of the day were wide-ranging and the listener could legitimately leave the day either pessimistic or optimistic about the state of peace support operations. There was agreement that what is important is an understanding by all participants of the causes and underlying context of the mission, and of the ever-present possibility of conflict over differing perspectives. a theme carried over from the previous day. .

There was also emphasis on the need for operations to be sustainable and sustained, that is, there are no short-term solutions and participants should be prepared to be involved in many missions for a period of years rather than months.

The social nature of peace support operations was also emphasised. Process and outcome both involve people and not mechanisms. This means that situations and solutions that applied in one operation may not be applicable to another. Template solutions should be avoided. The social nature of the process also leads us to the understanding that we need to involve all elements in society in the solutions. This might mean that institutions and groups that are often ignored, such as women and community groups, have to be brought in to help with finding solutions.

Ultimately, the message deriving from the day was that we should be optimistic about the state of peace support operations because, even if ideal solutions take time to achieve and have not always been achieved, we are trying to learn and apply lessons, and we are being innovative in our approaches.

Day 3: Disaster Management and Humanitarian Action

Discussion on this day reinforced many of the lessons of the previous days relating to the complexity of missions, the need to understand differing motivations of mission and local participants, the sensitivities of different participants (shown, for example, in the ways that many NGOs see the armed forces within a mission as a group to be avoided), and the ways that innovation in approach is being developed by different organisations.

Insights of value included the idea that a disaster should be measured in terms of the number of injured and the survivors rather than the number killed, because those who need the most help are the casualties.

The meaning of neutrality was also discussed and the idea of neutrality in the context of action, rather than actor, was raised as a concept that would allow antagonistic groups to work with each other in specific circumstances.

The term humanitarian space was raised in several presentations in the context of the emotional space - the space within which the actor feels comfortable operating - rather than the territorial - the space normally considered by the armed forces.

The wide variety of civil actors and the differences between humanitarian and development groups was a common theme. There are as many issues

surrounding cooperation between civilian groups as there are between civil and military groups.

For the armed forces, the five **NOTs** for civil actors presented by one speaker were salutary.

Humanitarian actors are not deemed to be:

- Part of any counterinsurgency strategy
- A force multiplier
- A source of information
- Part of the ~~build~~within the armed forces approach of shape, clear, hold, build
- To be directed.

Given the preference expressed by many of the NGO participants to deal with the armed forces through formal civil-military liaison intermediaries, it would be sensible for NGOs and other groups to be advocating the development of this capacity within the UN.

Different groups of actors have different approaches to cooperation. Disaster NGOs are prepared to cooperate with the military, but are wary of differing cultures. Humanitarian groups are very wary of cooperating to the extent that, for example, the ICRC will listen but will make its own mind up about issues and will probably not discuss its conclusions with other actors. The UN want to have relationships, but internal complexity within and between UN agencies makes this difficult at times. The ICRC is not concerned with mandate issues such as ~~a~~ just and fair society. It is concerned with ensuring the application of international humanitarian law in the form of the Geneva Conventions.

The military tend to emphasise the need to ~~get on~~ [the military's] message although this is changing. The media, both local and international are often overlooked. They can both help and hinder and reciprocal relationships that might assist both sides.

Day 4: Peace and Stabilisation Operations

The continuing themes of innovation, complexity and the need for shared knowledge and understanding of each others concerns, strengths and weaknesses were again developed.

Complexity leads to the need for comprehensive training and to the selection of appropriate people, not just of senior commanders. Prior joint and combined interagency training leads to shared knowledge. Training leads to process which is also important. Good people can make a poor system work, but they should not have to expend their energy trying to fix the system.

Finally, seminar participants agreed on the degree to which the concept of civil-military cooperation has evolved from the colonial concept to what is understood of such cooperation in today's environment. The colonial notion was that the armed forces role was to support civil power with force and there were few, if any, non-government participants in events. The notion today is that all actors, civil and military, try to work to a common end and, where that is not achievable, try to understand what their interlocutors consider to be important so that they do not actively hinder each other.

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Overall, CMIS 2009 developed participants understanding of civil-military interactions within peace operations, revealed some of the complexities of multi-agency cooperation and sounded a cautionary note about the difficulties of managing peace operations in the current environment. Future CMIS meetings will develop these themes with the intention of continuing the development of actor expertise within peace operations. A full Report on CMIS 2009 will be posted to the Centre's website in the near future.