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Shrivenham, Wilts

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BCISS Comments on JWP 2-00 Re-Write Arising from DCDC Intelligence Seminar

Dear Col. Rigden,

We were delighted to have attended the subject conference at Shrivenham, which we found to be a lively intellectual atmosphere well suited to the topic under debate. We trust you found our offerings worthwhile. In our intent to continue our contribution to the production of JDP 2.00, we plan here to summarise some of our commentary and thoughts arising from the seminar.

1. Essential Concepts

One of the most important items to emerge from discussion at the conference was the degree to which service and defence intelligence are about substantially different matters than intelligence within the civilian world, including at the national level. We are further convinced that a really effective interface between defence and civilian intelligence institutions and processes has to recognise those differences and accommodate them consciously and effectively.

Military intelligence is essentially about two interdependent but logically distinct functions. In the first instance, intelligence is about compiling, maintaining and managing an institutional knowledge base that can be fed into planning and decision-making. Its second is to, as put in the current intelligence doctrine, 'get inside the decision cycle' of an adversary. And, following Sun Tze's dictum that 'all war is based on deception', that decision cycle is something which the adversary will go to substantial lengths to conceal through various denial and deception measures.

In the civilian world, the knowledge management function is one of the two principal roles of the Civil Service through its task of providing advice to Ministers. The other main function, of course, is executing Ministers' decisions. In the military, however, the nature of 'execution' (kinetic or otherwise) means that knowledge management must be handled through separate line management from operations, however closely the two may have to interact in practice. Because the Civil Service performs the dual function of information and execution, civilian decision-makers tend to look to, and think of, intelligence only in terms of its latter function, i.e. penetrating the decision cycles of adversaries, competitors and occasionally also allies.

Another substantial difference in thinking between the two spheres is the distinction between the 'strategic', 'operational' and 'tactical'. In military thinking, the distinction between tactical, operational and strategic is essentially *spatial* and a question of scale, equivalent roughly to the levels of the engagement, the theatre or campaign, and finally regional or global plans and posture. In civilian terms the distinction is *temporal*; 'tactical' equates to short-term be it in terms of days, weeks or months while 'strategic' refers to medium to long term typically in terms of months or years. Occasionally strategy may refer to a confluence of mutually reinforcing policies in separate areas, but such convergences tend to play out the medium-to long-term time scales. 'Operational', by contrast, equates almost to the sub-tactical level

of the melee, referring to techniques and specific actions whether it be contacting an agent, bugging an embassy or getting a story placed in the news media.

Incorporating an explicit understanding of the different conventions in the two worlds is vital for three reasons. The first is, of course, the role of the new doctrine in contributing to handling the interface between military intelligence institutions and capabilities and the predominantly civilian national intelligence machinery that is far more comprehensive and on-going than in previous strategic environments such as the Cold War. The second is there are a number of service and MoD elements that perform dual defence and national roles such as DIAS and JARIC. Finally, and of most immediate relevance is the lesson of COIN operations in Malaya, Kenya and elsewhere that effective counter-insurgence depends on cogent, consistent and continuous cooperation and integration between military and civilian elements of government at every several level of the campaign.

It is also worth keeping in mind that the knowledge-management and decision-penetration tasks embraced within military intelligence involve somewhat different skills, aptitudes and procedures and this too is something that any new doctrine should take into account implicitly or explicitly. This leads naturally to a number of specific elements within the existing JWP 2.00 that have been the subject of attention and criticism.

2. The Intelligence Cycle – Is It "Broken"? Can it be "Broken"?

We earnestly contest the idea that the Intelligence Cycle is *broken*, in the sense that it is somehow a Standard Operating Procedure that is somehow ill-conceived or poorly implemented. The intelligence cycle is (and always was) a *heuristic* concept that describes a set of logical inter-relationships between several types or classes of activity. It cannot usefully be turned into a procedural clockwork that serves as a "quick win for busy analysts".

Doctrine of, course, provides several things to a military: a summary of best practice, a teaching platform, a document for accountability in task, a basis from which we distil TTPs, and an aide-memoire for officers on operations. Accordingly, even though the current doctrine statement actually describes the components of the intelligence cycle as a series of 'on-going' processes rather than sequential steps, it is perhaps inevitable that some officers will be tempted to try and interpret and use it as a *process driven* analysis, rather than as description.

In part it may be the case that the int cycle is considered "broken" because it was *enshrined* in an effort—tied in with the false-scientific ideals of effects-based operations—to speed the decision-cycle of British formation HQs. In the Cold War era, we were faced with a (presumed) predictable foe that we (presumed) had a doctrine which pushed rapid decision-making. Coupled with the Red Army's (known) numerical superiority, our assessment was that the only way we could defeat any attack was to couple our superior technology with superior speed of action. The result of this combination is the fetish for rote mechanistic process, hence a fetish for the int cycle as process. Abuse of the idea of EBO (at its base one of the most useful concepts adopted by the British military since 1945) has tried to turn art into science, and left a mess in its wake.

The int cycle, therefore, must be caveated as a description and not a process with an end in itself. From the perspective of a formation commander, the desired outcome is not that his J2 completes the cycle for cycle's sake; the outcome is support to the commander with information and analysis supplied in a timely fashion.

Consequently, it may be worth considering how to draft any discussion of the intelligence cycle, and to do so with an eye towards what actual SOPs people are looking to read into it that could be articulated separately from the int. cycle *as* SOPs. Is there one or a number of

process templates that might be formulated for and in the new JWP 2.00 to do the SOP task while relegating the int cycle to prefatory heuristic discussions that we recommend (see below) appear the front of each chapter?

3. The Dual Nature of Intelligence Support in COIN

We must therefore recognise that there has been a bifurcation of requirements for operational-level military intelligence. In the first instance we still have to apply fire. Indeed, this is an increasingly complex task as we increase the precision and discretion with which we apply fire. Intelligence support to targeting and the overall process of kinetic operations still exist. At this military intelligence is well suited and largely effective.

What we have no doctrine for are the duties not traditional to inter-state uniformed warfare. Describing the system-core of an insurgent network is more akin to understanding an organised crime-ring than it is to templating an MRD. Negotiating with a tribal or clan chief requires an anthropologic understanding of the human terrain which would have been laughably out of place in the Falklands or Germany. Plotting an Afghan insurgent's or a Somali pirate's next action requires statistical regression analysis, not a 1:25,000 map template. "Separating the insurgent from his base of support" cannot be achieved with more accurately and speedily targeted JDAMS. This, the second nature of intelligence within the COE, is primarily civilian in nature. Since there are not enough civilians to do this, it now befalls the military to gain a second professional competency in the kind of intelligence typically handled purely in the civilian sphere.

Perhaps more of a shock to the military, much of the expertise it will need to harness to succeed is also civilian. The British military needs to look beyond its ranks to find the knowledge it needs. It must have systems that encourage this.

It is worth adding a tip of the hat to the sound predictions of horizon scanning exercises such as DCDC's *Global Trends*. From these we know that the 'wicked problems' of complex human terrain are bound to continue well into the future. (Has war ever *not* been complex?). Whether the current COIN *zeitgeist* continues, the operations we are bound to engage in will require continued proficiency in these skills, presuming no requisite (and universally liable) civilian body of "stability administrators" is formed.

It was asserted by some at the conference that somehow the warfare British Forces were now engaged in was somehow "new", which implies to some degree that our canon of military philosophy is now invalid. It is "War Made New" (see Max Boot, 2008), at heart a call to rid ourselves of the shackles of Clausewitz. Calls such as this are as invalid as they are frequent. It is the greatest of human conceits to believe that what one is experiencing has no precedent.

4. "The current intelligence system and cycle is still not optimised for the post-cold War…"

The quote here above, taken from the conference discussion paper, has a grain of truth to it. To prove this we must adhere to one another two separate pieces of logical understanding, one about the nature of COIN operations, the second about the nature of the relationship between command and intelligence.

It has been proved amply elsewhere that what is required for success in COIN operations is not primarily kinetic in nature. The speed at which an army can deliver (vast, overwhelming) kinetic effect on a COIN operations is meaningless, because the delivery of that kinetic effect can never be so precisely targeted as to ameliorate the (failed) politics which is the engine of

insurgency. The main effect of fires, speedily delivered or not, is alienation of the local populous. So, it is to *non-kinetic effects* which we must turn to achieve success in COIN.

Unfortunately, militaries are primarily designed to do two things: smash things and kill people. To be less glib, they achieve the aims of the state *through violence or the threat of violence.* Clausewitz reminds us that lacking the honest intent to apply violence renders a military act ineffectual even before contact (see Howard, *Clausewitz,* p.13). Where western governments have succeeded in counter-insurgency it is because they have *not* pursued a military resolution, but rather used it to protect improved governance and punish overt acts of armed opposition, the latter only very carefully. It is civilian leadership, not military leadership, which has achieved victory. In the realm of intelligence, for a specific example, it was not the Intelligence Corps which was the lead in Malaya, but the Special Branch.

But that was the past. It is now the case that it is the British Military which must undertake those tasks which were previously the duty of other branches of HMG. We no longer have a colonial service, and so cannot dispatch able administrators especially skilled in the governing of others. It is indeed seemingly impossible, so far, to achieve even the most basic consensus between the various departments of government on how to achieve development and stabilisation in Afghanistan. While many have volunteered, it remains the case that we have no body of civil servants whose *duty* it is to assist in the governing of others. Thus is abrogated to the British military the civilian duties that would previously have fallen on the shoulders of suitably trained civil servants.

This leads us to the second aspect mentioned above: the relationship between command and intelligence. It has been noted by Cambridge historian Christopher Andrew that the reason for Soviet intelligence's consistent inability to provide sound analysis was the nature of the Soviet system. It was at core a *militarised* system, and one based on fixed ideology. Once a decision was made, sound analysis risked contradicting the ideology or undermining the authority of the leadership; because of this, the healthy choice for a KGB head was to avoid analysis. Their role was to support the implementation of policy, not its formation (see Andrew, *The Mitrokhin Archive*). In the west, by comparison, it was the duty of the civilian intelligence chiefs *to speak truth unto power*, so as to allow the formation of the best possible policies. The entire ethos of western intelligence is centred on the value of uncomfortable truth.

It is a fact that command within the British military is also, in effect, dictatorial. It must be, for very sound reasons, and the military intelligence doctrine we inherit works well for what was required of it. Yet now British military intelligence—a community whose inherited purpose it is to *support the speedy application of deadly fires*—is being required to support the application of non-kinetic effects typically handled by civilians. War has not changed. The role of military intelligence has not changed. Rather, *fundamentally non-military requirements have been added to the job description of an intelligence community with no inherent understanding on how they must be applied*. Like the KGB, (operational level) military intelligence in Britain was there (arguably) to support the commander's plan more than it was to help in its formation. But the "wicked problems" posed by stability operations and COIN demand that intelligence helps the commander understand extremely complex systems (of systems) and form policy to deal with them.

This not wholly unprecedented in British military experience. Both Malaya and Kenya were successful COIN campaigns abroad where the distinction between the policy political and operational military domains. Significantly, the lion's share of British military combat operations in the Cold War were not conventional at all, but counter-insurgency actions – and yet the thinking underpinning military intelligence doctrine has never really reflected this.

Our suspicion is that part of the problem is trying to have a *single* intelligence doctrine for *two completely different* operational environments. This may be where much of the current dissatisfaction lies. The current JWP 2-00 consists essentially of two main elements: core concepts in Part 1 and a relatively uniform portrayal of how intelligence work is to be conducted in the field in Part 2. Part 2 is very much geared towards conventional, symmetrical operations. However, while people often focus on supposedly 'broken' concepts from Part I, most of the discussion at the conference actually indicated that it was the highly structured and heavily prescriptive Part 2 that was proving unwieldy in the Afghanistan context. Consequently, we suggest that any new doctrine might be best structured in terms of three distinct elements or subordinate doctrines within JWP 2-00. This would consist of:

1. Part 1: Core conceptual issues, common procedures and competencies (logically similar to the current Part 1 but substantially redrafted and repackaged, see Section 6 below);
2. Part 2: A specific joint intelligence doctrine for conventional or symmetrical joint operation (keeping what remains appropriate from Part 2 but revised to meet current practice); and
3. Part 3: a specific joint intelligence doctrine for asymmetrical or COIN operations (dovetailed into transferable elements of Part 2, but articulating closer links at policy and planning level with OGDs and coalition partners, the wicked-problems/'civilian-style intelligence' elements discussed above and other COIN-specific issues).

5. Standard Operation Procedure or Professional Core Competency?

Nonetheless, we assert that this point must be made clear: in intelligence especially, process is not a substitute for critical thinking. And doctrine, it should be added, can never be the substitute for professional skill-sets. Intelligence, it has been noted, is as much art as science. Art cannot be taught in a book. A corollary is that we should not try to teach art in a book; we can only describe what it looks like when done best.

One of the most strikingly recurrent themes during the DCDC conference was the idea that what was 'broken' in military intelligence was not so much concepts, principles or processes as their *implementation*. With the concrete examples and instances that were raised during the conference in mind, we are inclined to suspect that this is actually the most accurate diagnosis of the problems and challenges that currently afflict UK military intelligence practice.

There is a real question as to what the UK military wants or needs any intelligence doctrine to do. It is to set standards and conventions for a regularised process or provide a basic understanding and mental frame of reference for service personnel 'doing intelligence'? Of course the answer, in part, is both. This has, however, a dual significance.

In the first place, this obviously needs to feed into the drafting of the new doctrine. Writing and 'packaging' *understanding* requires a very different presentational style from drafting and parcelling out *process*. Whoever is drafting the new JWP 2.00 will need to be able to stop and reflect on whether they are writing to encourage understanding or provide procedures and standards and then changing drafting gears as required – or, alternatively, the two different tasks will need to be identified and then farmed out to different members of the drafting team according to their relative experience and abilities at writing either the one or the other.

The second implication is that the new doctrine needs to be drafted in terms of, and with reference too, the training available and probable skill sets characterising anyone using JWP 2.00. As we observed at several points during the conference, intelligence – especially in

the sense of penetrating an enemy's decision cycle – is fundamentally about critical and creative thinking. Is there or can there be a doctrine for 'thinking outside the box'? In real terms, it is probably asking too much of a doctrine manual to hope that it might encourage let alone inculcate the intellectual intuition and sensibility on which *good* intelligence analysis *really* depend. In which case, there needs to be very serious consideration of what sort of interlocking training resources and programmes will be expected to complement the doctrine. Whatever else might be a 'take home' from the doctrine conference, the realisation that no intelligence doctrine can be hoped to be effective as a 'stand alone' item is essential.

6. Drafting, Presentation and 'Style'

Insofar as the new doctrine is to be effective it needs to be both lucid and engaging, as accessible and even enjoyable as possible to read for officers who are already expected to do six impossible things before breakfast and still have space in their hectic lives for a hundred-odd pages of prescriptive intelligence doctrine. It is true that DCDC has vastly improved the standard of prose used in doctrine manuals, if ADP 1.00 *Land Operations* and JDP 3.40 are indicative. Our main commentary here is that the writing and editing style of these manuals can still be improved upon slightly when applied to JDP 2.00.

A notable obstacle to understanding the nebulous nature of intelligence in the existing JDP 2.00 draft is that the language tries to render precise that which is the opposite of precise. As only some of intelligence doctrine is amenable to scientific descriptions of process, a large proportion of it must remain prose of a philosophical bent. Some concrete suggestions:

a. Have a substantial introductory chapter (not perfunctory preface) written by a literary luminary. Some suggestion, only partially in jest, was made of Frederick Forsyth, a British author no stranger to intelligence. An introduction by such a figure would have the effect of making the doctrine something people *wish* to read. It will as well better encapsulate in *professional prose* something which is difficult to capture in the words of soldiers. A general officer or an academic, no matter how skilled and respected, would be a poor substitution.

b. Have an introduction to each chapter which is based on long-form prose. Attempt to summarise the spirit of the chapter rather than its facts. As with the introductory chapter, this should be an explicit attempt to 'catch lightning in a bottle'; to seize on the idea, rather than the process, of intelligence.

c. Continue with the use of insets and side-bars to give vignettes. This is evocative, and accessible to people with different learning styles.

Writing JDP 2.00 is no doubt a challenge. Yet the skill-base and knowledge is there to be harnessed, and if it can be written in an engaging way, it stands to be a landmark in the somewhat darkened valley of doctrinal fame.

Sincerely,

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