

# 31 ISMOR: Themes and Trends

## A Personal Perspective

Dr Tony Sinden

Associate Consultant

Decision Analysis Services Ltd

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# 31 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
- An omission (perhaps?) – identification of omissions is not in the title of presentation but I will offer an observation, or two

## 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)

To assist myself in looking for structure, I assigned 2 and 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

“Conventional view” (for want of better title) –

- Analysis of data/techniques/model development (16)
- Decision support for military (10)
- Support to operations (9)
- Capability requirements and/or management (6)
- Understanding military decision making inc. C2 & ISR (6)
- Value for money (5)
- Support/analysis for management (5)
- Contractorisation (4)
- Cyber (3)
- Air Power (3)

“Conventional view” (for want of better title) –

- Analysis of data/techniques/model development – data analysis
- Decision support for military – rapid tools and specific advice
- Support to operations – recent and direct experience
- Capability requirements and/or management – within budgets
- Understanding military decision making inc. C2 & ISR – seeking better insights and understanding of thinking
- Value for money – balance of investment
- Support/analysis for management – support to MoD, companies
- Contractorisation – impact, value, best practice
- Cyber – impact, assessment, investment, how to analyse?
- Air Power – lessons identified, value

## Theme based view –

- 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

Are the themes going to be trends?

Probably yes (for immediate future) because factors impacting military are following certain trends

- Budgets are tightening (except China, Russia) so VFM and Bol still relevant
- Civil technology and capability rapidly expanding (knowledge, SQEP, service delivery, cost base etc.) – inevitable dependence on contractors?
- C4ISR will still be area for investment
- But end of ISAF operations in Afghanistan may alter level of military support for OR
- But they may not be the only trends emerging?

# 31 ISMOR Themes and Trends

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- 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
- These conflicts are source of much political concern for nations represented at ISMOR, and often involve military action by those nations – so?

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- Omission(s) – perhaps there are several (?) but I raise just one theme. Conflict avoidance and resolution.

Personal observations on my “perceived omission”:

- Lesson from this year’s centenary reflections on the origins of World War 1 – incident in a small country can escalate!
- Notwithstanding current “Ukraine crisis” there are few major (or even minor) inter-state conflicts
- Analysts need to respond to requirements of decision makers but need to focus on priority issues
- Need for analysts to remind their “paymasters” that understanding conflicts and their resolution (by all means including military and diplomatic action) is key task

So, in summary:

- Some changes of direction (from the past) in analysis e.g.
  - greater emphasis on what can I buy for my budget
  - soft issues
  - support to decision makers on issues besides procurement
- Analysis of some current and emerging challenges i.e. resources, contractorisation, cyber
- But are analysts tackling all the “big issues and contributing factors”?

**QUESTIONS?**