

31 ISMOR: Themes and Trends

A Personal Perspective

Dr Tony Sinden

Associate Consultant

Decision Analysis Services Ltd

This document is Copyright ©2013 of Decision Analysis Services Ltd.
Its contents wholly or in part shall not be communicated or copied by any means
whatsoever to any third party, individual or organisation or government without
consent of Decision Analysis Services Ltd.

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

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

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