12$^{\text{TH}}$ ICCRTS

"Adapting C2 to the 21st Century"

The role of sensemaking in the Command-ISTAR relationship

Track 4: Cognitive and Social Issues (alternatives: Track 5: Organisational Issues; Track 1: C2 Concepts, Theory & Policy)

Paddy Turner, QinetiQ (UK)

Malvern Technology Centre, St. Andrew's Road, Malvern, Worcestershire. WR14 3PS

T: +44 (0) 1684 895478; F: +44 (0) 1684 897461; E:pjturner@qinetiq.com

The relationship between Command and ISTAR is characterised, in UK military doctrine, by the provision of Commander's Intelligence Requirements to the Intelligence function and the dissemination of Intelligence Products to consumers, including the Commander himself. This information-centric view does not, however, capture the human relationship between Command and ISTAR; nor does it explain how Command and ISTAR collaborate in cases where Intelligence Requirements cannot be specified. This paper introduces an activity model of the Command-ISTAR relationship which draws on both Weick's sensemaking concept and military experience. In particular, Daft & Weick's (1984) model of organisations as interpretation systems asserts that perceived environmental complexity shapes the mode of interpretation that an organisation might employ for sensemaking. When complexity is perceived as low, an organisation tends to employ a 'discovery' mode of interpretation, involving structured scanning, collection and analysis methods, typically against well-understood 'items' in the environment. When complexity is perceived as high, however, the organisation may not possess an adequate frame of reference for interpretation or know what 'items' are meaningful; in these cases it may employ an 'enactment' mode of interpretation that focuses on 'learning by doing' (alternatively, 'prospecting'). The Command-ISTAR activity model incorporates both interpretation modes to distinguish between procedural and adaptive ISTAR, the former being concerned with the efficient processing of Intelligence Requirements and the latter both coping with complexity by supporting Command-led problem framing and adjusting procedural ISTAR to maintain the effectiveness of the overall ISTAR service. The key conclusion from the paper is that although military organisations tend to be designed for discovery-mode interpretation, they should support both discovery and enactment given the types of environment that they operate in. The paper closes with implications and recommendations for doctrine, concepts and equipment capability to support both discovery and enactment within the Command-ISTAR relationship.