An empirical study to evaluate the application of scenario planning methods to military operational planning

Paper 071

Paddy Turner
Cranfield University
Defence Academy of the United Kingdom
p.turner@cranfield.ac.uk
Context

- UK MOD Command, Inform & Battlespace Management (CIBM) Research Package
- Task 8: Planning & Decision Support
  - Investigate potential improvements in ways of producing and communicating plans, intent and courses of action
- Operational and higher-tactical focus
- Vision: develop and test potential interventions through a campaign of experimentation
- HQ ARRC engagement
- Methods to enable ‘understanding’
Overview

• Understanding complex situations
• Analysis of Conflict Dynamics & Generation of Future Scenarios
• Empirical Study with HQ ARRC
• Conclusions & Discussion
UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX SITUATIONS
Issues

- Strategic bounding of the situation
- Staffing
- Time pressure
- Lack of conceptual or methodological guidance
- Focusing upon production of output
- Focusing on symptoms rather than underlying causes
- Premature orientation towards action
- Reductionist thinking
- Forecasting
Requirements

- A forum for a diverse set of experts
- A way of developing a shared concept of the operating environment, based on underlying causes
- Holistic and open thinking about future outcomes
- Exploitation to support operational planning
ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT DYNAMICS & GENERATION OF FUTURE SCENARIOS (ACD & GFS)
ACD & GFS Key Concepts

**Humanitarian Situation**
- Adequate living conditions, respect for human rights
- Inadequate living conditions, no respect for human rights

**Government**
- Legitimate, accepted, effective
- Illegitimate, unaccepted, ineffective

**Irregulars**
- Incapable, passive
- Powerful key players

**Security Situation**
- Stable
- Unstable

**Driving Force**
Conceptual Model
ACD & GFS Key Concepts

- **Key Question**: sets bounds for consideration of future outcomes (timeframe, region, types of issues)
- **Scenario**: a plausible, consistent and compelling story about the future operating environment, based upon Future Driving Forces
Peace and Love

• “...All in all, the situation in Xland has shown great progress in the last couple of years, due to two main causes. The first main cause of this positive development is the regional stability that was reached after the peace agreement in Bogaland, and the involvement of Northland and Westland in the international community. The other main cause is the internal development of democracy and security, and the responsibility taken by the political leaders, the former antagonists of the Delta and Echo ethnic groups, based on the successful 2008 elections. The key event in this development might have been the political talks of reconciliation that took place during 2009. The help from international community during these years cannot be underestimated, when the combined efforts from UN, EU and a wide range of NGO’s were utilized very effectively in order to help and support the development. Finally, the new multi-ethnic national football team, now qualifying for the 2012 Euro Championships in Poland/Ukraine, has become the unifying symbol for all Xlandians and shows that there are possibilities for all...”
## ACD & GFS Key Concepts

### Present Time

#### Declining
- KLYKERS turn Guerrilla
  - EUFOR reaction – failure!
- Valliens increase smuggling (ROMME)
- No Gov. rule of law in rural areas.
- WESTLAND veiled support to Gov/EC
- Internal political arena looses in significance
- UN Sec Council VETO

#### Breakdown
- NORTHLAND technical support to KLYKER mines.
- Klykers sub-state
- Co-operation
  - Valliens sub-state
- Gov/EC tries to take over KLYK mines (SPU)
- WESTLAND open pol/fin support to Gov/EC
- International support diminishes (no UNSAF)
- More refugees out of XLAND, More IDPs

#### Intervention
- NORTHLAND intervenes
  - regular units
  - hardware
  - training-
- Klykers sub-state
- Competitors
  - Valliens sub-state
- Gov/EC failure to take over KLYK mines
- Gov/EC only in control of EC territory GÄVLE-SANDVIKEN
- WESTLAND support (mil. hardware) to XLAND
- More refugees out of XLAND, Less IDPs

### State in 3-5 yrs
- EUFOR/UNSAF LEFT
- NORTHLAND intervention
- Turning refugee flow
- Black economy growth
- Smuggling, IRR, criminals
- Anarchy in X-land
- Sub-states VALL-KLY
- No rule of law
- Gov. ruling GÄVLE-SANDVIKEN
- HIV/AIDS/deceases increase
- XLAND open LIC, semi-civil war

Acknowledgment: JCDEC, Swedish Armed Forces
Analysis of Conflict Dynamics (ACD)

ACD1 (WHAT)

ACD2 (WHY)

SYMPTOMS

UNDERLYING CAUSES

PMESII

Events & Actions
  - Actors
  - Structures & Systems
  - Interactions
  - Relationships

Sources of power
  - Interests
  - Motives
  - Beliefs

Observed

Inferred
Analysis of Conflict Dynamics (ACD)

ACD1 (WHAT)

ACD2 (WHY)

SYMPTOMS

UNDERLYING CAUSES

Past Driving Forces

Future Driving Forces

Future Situations

Current Situation

ACD3 (FUTURE)
Generation of Future Scenarios (GFS)

Driving Force: Regional conflict

Regional conflict de-escalating

DF

DF

DF

DF

Unsuccessful elections

Successful elections

Contained Crisis

Peace & Love

Armageddon

Eye Of The Storm

Regional conflict escalating

Driving Force Outcome of elections
Generation of Future Scenarios (GFS)

Peace and Love

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EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH HQ ARRC
Study Design

- Two-day workshop at HQ ARRC
- Seven NATO staff officers (OF-5, OF-4, OF-3)
- G5 Plans lead
- Real-world crisis situation
- Teaching and facilitation of ACD/GFS process in six stages by Team Solomon
- Wash-up discussion
Research Questions

Will participants...

1. ...develop more complex mental models of the situation?
2. ...be more able to voice uncertainty about the situation, its dynamics and possible futures?
3. ...maintain, collectively, a broader range of alternative plausible storylines about the future operating environment?
4. ...be more aware of a broader range of possible outcomes of the current situation?
5. ...be able to compare the benefits and limitations of both ACD/GFS and existing methods?
### Themes from observations

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<td>Increased understanding of plausible futures could benefit (influence) planning</td>
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<td>Multiple branches (G5, G35, G2,...) &amp; civilians required</td>
<td>Reinforces requirement of the process</td>
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CONCLUSIONS
Reflection on research questions

ACD & GFS methods enabled participants to:

1. Develop more complex mental models of the situation
2. Voice – and represent, in the concept of a Driving Force – more uncertainty about the situation, its dynamics and possible futures
3. Maintain, collectively, a broader range of alternative plausible storylines about the future operating environment
   • No desire to collapse the range of storylines onto ‘most likely’ and ‘most dangerous’ cases
4. Become more aware of a broader range of possible outcomes of the current situation (“exploring many End States but in less detail”)
5. Compare the benefits and limitations of both ACD/GFS and existing methods
Conclusions

- ACD & GFS enable development of broader and deeper understanding of complex situations
- ACD & GFS are ready for implementation within Operational Orientation
- HQ ARRC very positive about methods – requested SOI to be written