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WHAT WOULD MILITARY SECURITY LOOK LIKE THROUGH A HUMAN SECURITY LENS

Reconciling the requirements of contemporary operations with the needs of human security

Report of a NATO Advanced Research Workshop on “Reconciling the requirements of contemporary operations with the needs of human security” (ARW 981712) held by Oxford Research Group, Oxfordshire, September 2006.¹

Overview

The key prerogative of the Human Security approach is the protection of the civilian population (particularly from violence and the fear of violence). Central to human security principles is the belief that placing the individual and his or her needs at the centre of any military operation will make military intervention more effective, especially in counter-insurgency conflict. The human security paradigm is predicated on the belief that post-war any political insurgency is primarily a response to *how* the intervention took place, and the level of suffering of the local people.

The context is a series of recent and continuing military interventions involving NATO member countries, the most protracted of which are in Afghanistan and Iraq. In these interventions many civilians have died, and the post-invasion phase has been characterised by continuing instability, intense counter-insurgency operations, and serious disruption to life on the ground. Whatever legitimate strategic outcomes may be claimed for such interventions, there is an urgent need for human security lessons to be learned and applied, not simply in relation to future operations that might be envisioned, but in these existing theatres of operation where many innocent lives are still being lost. These losses constitute an ongoing and growing challenge to the legitimacy and authority of the international community, and its ability to act in future conflict.

This seminar was called to review what human security initiatives are already being taken within NATO and its member countries, assess their effectiveness, and identify priorities for future action at policy, strategic, and operational levels.

This report organises workshop contributions under four main headings:

- A. How have decisions about military intervention been made, and how far have the needs of people on the ground been included in the process?
- B. How have decisions been implemented, and what human security challenges can be identified? (with case studies drawn from the Iraq and Israel-Palestine conflicts)
- C. What would it look like if human security were at the centre of intervention policy? What lessons are there to learn about best practice?
- D. Recommendations proposed in the discussions.

¹ The report was written by Wendy Conway Lamb with the help of John Sloboda, Gabrielle Rifkind and Scilla Elworthy.

A. How have decisions about military intervention been made, and how far have the needs of people on the ground been included in the process?

It was noted that certain historical and institutional patterns have served as obstacles to implementing change:

- 1) It has been drummed into all US soldiers from the moment their career in the US Armed Forces began that their job was to destroy the enemy armed force as quickly as possible with as few friendly casualties as possible. As one senior US officer stated, military students have been taught: “The task of the military in war is to kill human beings and destroy man-made objects in the quickest way possible.”²
- 2) An unwillingness to acknowledge the important lessons of the US Army’s disastrous experience in Vietnam meant that it was assumed to be an aberration, and it was hoped that the US government would never commit to counter-insurgency operations again. There was a convenient assumption that if low-intensity (and low priority) military operations were required, they could be conducted successfully by troops trained for conventional war.
- 3) A difference between the governments of the US and the UK in terms of institutional memory is that when there is a change of administration in the US, about three echelons of administrative staff is cleared out, so that only the lower secretarial levels of officials remain. This is an obstacle to developing a culture of learning from past mistakes.
- 4) Traditional ideas die hard in the military. It takes considerable time to develop any changes into military strategy, doctrine and tactics, and even longer for units in the field to adopt them as ingrained operational principles and techniques.
- 5) If you are not completely clear about your military objectives, then familiar tactics will define them for you.
- 6) US and UK military training devotes a majority of its time to traditional warfare, even though much contemporary combat now consists of counter-insurgency operations, and these provide the most demanding context in which to attempt to integrate human security principles.

Participants identified a lack of knowledge and understanding of the countries in which interventions take place as hindering both military effectiveness and the ability to promote human security:

- 7) Some of the mistakes which have been made in Iraq were due to essentialism. There has been a tendency to treat Iraq as a singular entity, with a singular culture, in which everyone has one set of aspirations. Even where there has been awareness of the presence of different groups (e.g. Kurds, Shias), it is a mistake to essentialise these. The complexities of Iraqi society and its internal politics were replaced by an over-simplistic analysis.
- 8) This simplistic form of analysis was allowed to develop so fully in the US and the UK that non-military alternatives which were being offered were marginalised or ignored.

² A senior UK officer described the British approach (documented in British Defence Doctrine), as being “to achieve government objectives as effectively as possible; and if this requires the use of lethal weapons then the military is prepared and trained to do so within the Law of Armed Conflict”.

The mechanics of recent decision-making processes leading up to military intervention were identified as unlikely to favour a human security perspective:

- 9) Participants considered it important to identify: how decisions of war are made; who is present in the decision-making process; who makes the decision and how; what the role of the military is; whether there is anyone representing a human security perspective, and if so, to what extent the human security voice is a central part of the decision-making or whether it is merely an adjunct and peripheral to the process.
- 10) One participant asserted that in the UK these decisions are taken by a very small number of people, and at critical moments in a great hurry, with little interest in the consequences. There is no system for thinking about the future and taking potential consequences into account.
- 11) The UK Foreign Office looked at what sustained Saddam's regime: the sale of oil to countries including Jordan and Syria. This money was used to pay for Iraq's armed forces and weapons. The Foreign Office spent a great deal of time devising strategies to tackle this complex problem. One approach would have been to take steps to dislodge Saddam by stopping his illegal smuggling, a tactic which would have required involving other states in the region. However, senior officials in both the US and UK governments did not take such suggestions seriously.
- 12) A successful UK system for maintaining a full and comprehensive assessment and implementation of all options for effectively dealing with the Iraq problem in the sanctions period would have required an interdisciplinary team at the highest levels, working on these issues intensively. This was not the case, and voices were heard who served to reinforce the basic assumptions already made.
- 13) The US has the National Security Council, which was established by the National Security Act of 1947, and is intended to fulfil an integrative option-appraisal function and contribute to executive decision-making. However, it has been used very differently by each different president and sometimes its contributions are pro forma and have limited impact.
- 14) In relation to the US decision to go to war in Iraq, a small group of neo-conservatives had an ideological predisposition as to what intervention should look like, and what the intended outcome would be. This did not involve consultation and listening to voices who did not reinforce their position. It led to an over-simplistic analysis of how the Iraqis would respond and behave, and their analysis did not understand the cultural differences and the nuances of an entirely different political system. They were making assumptions about human motivations based on their own experiences. There was genuine concern about possible WMDs. However, later analysis has suggested that information was manipulated to justify the argument and to concoct a connection between Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

Although the need for fostering civil-military relations is now gaining more attention among military and civil planners, decision-makers at the executive level have up till now blocked strategic implementation:

- 15) In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, there was no formal attempt by the UK military to collaborate with non-military actors, especially those based locally in Iraq, partly due to security (the military was not allowed to talk about plans), partly because plans were formulated inadequately and too late, and partly because of constraints laid on the UK by the dominant partner in the Coalition.

- 16) Although the US State Department had been gathering detailed information for post-invasion planning since early 2002, the president assigned responsibility to the Department of Defense, and executive planning for the post-conflict stage of the invasion was not begun until January 2003, only a couple of months before the invasion. A retired military general was appointed to coordinate the effort, and he pulled together an ad hoc group of 200 people from USAID, the State Department and the Military. However, the work of this retired general was blocked, Rumsfeld did not take into consideration the documents produced by the State Department, no planning took place at the Pentagon, and warnings of a probable insurgency were ignored.

Attention was drawn to a number of positive elements of current practice which could be built on:

- 17) Human security might be said already to be playing a part in military doctrine and operations through:
- The Geneva Conventions.
 - The development of Peace Support Operations doctrine.
 - Progress in international law relating to arms control and criminal courts.
 - The growing interest among militaries in engendering goodwill on the part of the local population through “hearts and minds” strategies, including activities which improve local infrastructure and livelihoods.
 - The UN member states’ endorsement of the “Responsibility to Protect populations” in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit.
 - Rules of Engagement.
- 18) According to the Human Security Report 2005, the number of armed conflicts around the world decreased by 40% between 1992 and 2002, a fact which may be attributed in part to the increasing trend for international action, with growing numbers of UN peace-keeping activities and preventive diplomacy missions.

Yet these elements have a range of weaknesses which limit their effectiveness:

- 19) The many rules and laws governing conduct in war, which are intended to protect civilians, are not sufficiently enforced on the ground. A balance needs to be struck which maximises the protection of military personnel while at the same time preventing the establishment of a culture of impunity.
- 20) The rules which already exist need to be developed further, promoted through training, and enforced universally, with punishments applied if necessary. A system for promoting international accountability is needed.
- 21) Current rules of engagement work adequately in traditional combat operations but are very difficult to apply in counter-insurgency operations and other asymmetrical warfare.
- 22) “Hearts and minds” strategies are effective only if it is made clear that such activities are being conducted with the security and well-being of the local population in mind, rather than primarily in the interests of the intervening forces.

- 23) The UN's "Responsibility to Protect" has not yet been fully defined, and is perceived by some to represent a Western neo-imperialist agenda, which justifies a continued role for the military even in situations where they may not be the best people for the job. It is important to bear in mind that the concept of "human security" is closely associated with this concept and therefore might not be immediately acceptable to all countries.
- 24) There are a variety of reasons other than international engagement which may explain the observation that the number of conflicts declined over the decade 1992-2002, and it is estimated that the success rates over this relatively short space of time, of international activities designed to stop ongoing wars and prevent new ones from starting, was 30-40%.

B. How have decisions been implemented, and what human security challenges can be identified? (with case studies from Iraq and Israel)

An analysis was provided of key factors underlying the escalation of violence on Fallujah:

- 25) Soon after regime collapse in Iraq, the stage for violence was set in Fallujah. However, this was not for the reasons normally given:
 - Contrary to the Coalition's claims, Fallujah was not a hot bed of Islamic militancy. Fallujah was religiously conservative, but was not a militant place, and Saddam's call to rise up against the invasion was formally rejected by the city authorities.
 - Fallujah was not full of Saddam loyalists. Contrary to Coalition beliefs, there had actually been many feuds between local tribes and the Saddam regime.
- 26) Following the fall of Saddam, Fallujah set up a committee of elders which had refused to rise up against the Coalition and had informed the US of their peaceful intentions.
- 27) The local population expected a low military profile in Fallujah, rapid reconstruction and respect for existing power structures. What they got was a major US military base and outposts, no clear reconstruction effort, and no recognition of the committee of elders.
- 28) Early in the occupation there was a small Sunni demonstration in front of a US occupation of a school. This was met with excessive force; up to 20 people were killed and many more wounded. Afterwards the US denied responsibility for this and no dialogue was initiated. This led to more demonstrations and some grenade attacks, to which the US reacted with force and aggressive patrols. This then led to further breakdown in relations.
- 29) Such a series of events and outcomes was not inevitable. Through a lack of knowledge, analysis and understanding, the US helped to create the very problems and violence it had initially expected from the Sunni population.

Several unused options in Fallujah in the period March-May 2003 were identified, any of which could have reduced violence if deployed:

- 30) There was mass dismissal of military and political personnel. For 10 months, the Iraqi borders were left open and anyone without a passport could get in. Borders could have been closed early on, ammunition dumps secured, and army and administration retained or at least compensated, not simply disbanded.
- 31) There could have been a systematic outreach to the various sectors of the Iraqi population with plans made *in advance* of how to engage them.
- 32) Local community leaders have a valuable influence, and lives could have been saved by listening to them and persuading them of the importance of coalition plans. Knowledge of the society, culture and language are crucial to do this.
- 33) Shooting of civilians at the school was a mistake; but when it happened, US forces could immediately have established an investigation, involving the mayor and local leaders, to determine what happened, and if necessary apologise and help victims.
- 34) The Coalition could have set up Centres of Listening and Documentation, allowing civilians to have their losses and grievances officially registered.

- 35) Respecting the dignity of the Iraqi people, and understanding Iraqi culture and concepts of honour, thereby avoiding unnecessary humiliation could have reduced violence significantly.

Some successes and signals of hope in Iraq were noted, based on creative initiatives at an individual level. While the individuals concerned clearly deserve acclaim, a question remains about how such exemplary conduct can be universalised and institutionalised:

- 36) US Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hughes enacted a courageous example of respect for human security, when he commanded his soldiers – surrounded by an angry crowd of Iraqis – to “take a knee”, thus diffusing a potentially deadly escalation of violence.
- 37) Some good reconstruction work has been done by Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, who commanded the US 101st Airborne Division deployed in Iraq from March 2003 until February 2004. He got the locals in Mosul together, set up a city council of 150 people who then elected their representative. The Mosul experience has been translated into a draft statement of doctrine, and has helped to prioritise ‘effects-based approaches’.

Fundamental human security failings were identified in international approaches to the Israel-Palestine and Lebanon conflicts:

- 38) There has been a failure to acknowledge the needs of both sides in the conflict. The entire security apparatus of the Israel-Palestine conflict was defined and constructed as promoting security for Israel, so all donor meetings focused on this, and the Palestinian security force was not designed to promote security for Palestinians.
- 39) Real security depends on the root causes of the conflict being addressed, and the issues creating the threat being dealt with. For example, the escalation of the crisis in Gaza and the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers needs to be understood in part due to the problem of prisoner release: so the real question that needs addressing is a mechanism for the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel. At present, there are over 10,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. Unless there is a legitimate mechanism for this to be addressed, it will result in further violence.
- 40) If there is to be any real security and stabilisation, the security needs of both sides must be addressed. As an example of this, following the war in South Lebanon, the security concerns of the Western community seemed to address predominantly Israel’s anxieties. Furthermore, the Lebanese Army is being asked to police southern Lebanon, when it is clear they do not have the capacity to do so. The international community is reluctant to recognize the asymmetry here.

A successful peace process in Israel-Palestine requires a broader understanding of what security means, for all in the region; a clear understanding of viable “end-points”; and a commitment to “talks as a means to stability” rather than “stability as a precondition of talks”:

- 41) It was considered that the language that we use and the way we frame the debate is crucial; for example: what do we mean by “security”? The term tends to be reduced to “military security” alone. We need to extend the debate to include the language of “human” security.
- 42) It thus becomes necessary to address what makes people feel safe. This needs to include freedom from fear, which may be something as simple as an environment that is sufficiently free from violence that one can take one’s children to school or go and visit one’s grandmother.
- 43) We need to address whose security are we referring to, and ensure we are aware of and address the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders involved in the conflict. In the Palestine-

Israel conflict there are multiple players, and if significant stakeholders are excluded they will undermine the process. This is a regional conflict, and requires a regional response.

- 44) Meaningful negotiations rely on all parties being clear about what their endgame is. The validity and expediency of those claims need to be explored openly.
- 45) Endless conflict creates traumatized societies which tend to see themselves as victims. This leads to a culture of blame and a feeling of disempowerment. In such an environment, there is a tendency to think only about the obligations of the other side to change the conditions of the conflict, and to assume that the only way to make the other side modify its position is to cause it sufficient suffering. This has led to a dangerous escalation in conflict, brinkmanship and deadlock in negotiations.
- 46) **Key lessons from the Northern Ireland peace process which might be applied to an Israeli-Palestinian peace effort were identified:** There is a flawed assumption that a peace process cannot begin until there is an end of violence. This leads to stalemate. Northern Ireland taught us that it was necessary to get all the players around the table for as long as it took, in spite of the continued violence, and it was only by all the stakeholders having legitimate participation in the process that the violence was ultimately reduced. This is a slow process and it is important not to be over-ambitious or expect immediate results: the first thing to do is to create an inclusive process, and start talking to each other about how to conduct the talks.

C. What would it look like if human security were at the centre of intervention policy? What are the implications for best practice?

It is becoming recognised that taking a human security approach is an aid to improving military effectiveness, rather than an impediment:

- 47) The traditional mission of simply aiming to destroy the enemy armed combatants is no longer militarily effective. The fact that there appears to be a growing understanding of this among military professionals provides grounds for optimism.
- 48) War cannot be stopped by the traditional “military security” approach of taking and defending territory. Peace does not come from securing territory; it comes from the people who live there and how they feel. The best way to ensure your own security is to ensure the other side does not want to attack you, so it is essential to recognise what their security needs are.
- 49) A government should consider first the outcome that it wants to achieve, and then the conditions which would allow this to come about, before it can assess what to do and how to do it. It must not decide on the military activity first. It also acknowledges that the military can be only one actor involved in achieving this outcome, alongside political and diplomatic actors among others.

It was proposed that a human security intervention must be perceived as politically legitimate (and also capable of delivering what it promises):

- 50) It is not enough to assess what to do *after* an invasion, since the decision-making process in advance of an intervention is crucial to an intervention’s success. You will not get the local community to cooperate with an intervention if they perceive the intervention as illegitimate.
- 51) The way that the military intervenes is very important as it can affect all that follows. In Northern Ireland the British Army took 20-30 years to realise that it couldn’t win militarily; the Government needed to address the issue politically. The fact that the British government declared that it had no *selfish* strategic or economic interests in Northern Ireland was crucial to its success.
- 52) Establishing authority is necessary when conducting an intervention, but this not just about manufacturing consent. An intervening body needs to establish its authority in four ways: through the legitimacy of its mandate; through the responsible behaviour of its armed forces; through the population’s recognition of its authority; and through its proven ability to meet or manage the expectations of that population.
- 53) People will side with the body most able to offer them human security. Initially, the international community needs to be that body, and subsequently this role needs to shift to the local/indigenous government.
- 54) We need to make sure that intervention is not about protecting our own security, and neither is it *perceived* to be. For example, during the intervention in Kosovo, the President of Kosovo was earning 800 Euros per month, while a junior official from the EU or NATO was earning ten times that amount. This risks giving the impression that we are more interested in the security of the UN and NATO and Western nations, than in the security of the people living in the countries in which we intervene.
- 55) There are political consequences to activities such as building schools. As a result of this, it would be necessary to think about how to involve the local people and make them feel that it is

their project and something they wish to protect. Experience in Afghanistan suggested financial transparency created greater trust and involvement. When Ashraf Ghani was Finance Minister, he suggested the use of public accounting ledgers in the local communities so they could see how the aid money was being spent.

It was suggested that current rules of engagement cannot by themselves address major issues about the conduct of troops on the ground:

- 56) Human security needs greater integration into all levels of military decision-making and activities, from doctrine development to training of soldiers.
- 57) We need to overcome notions of impunity, and acknowledge and prosecute misconduct among troops. For example, when the coalition of 150,000 foreign troops invaded Iraq, there was a problem with prostitution. This played a role in alienating the troops from the local people. Such problems need containing and addressing.
- 58) We must have realistic expectations of the army, which includes young men with limited experience. Soldiers may be trained to have good relations with local populations. However, in preparation for when conditions of violence escalate and there is an atmosphere of fear, it is necessary to employ a method of training which is different from preparation for conventional military operations, and which addresses the ability of troops to contain their own fears, which might otherwise aggravate the situation.

It was proposed that the integration of human security considerations into military doctrine and operations requires better collaboration between military and non-military components:

- 59) It must be recognised that the military can provide advice and contribute to an intervention *only* in the military's own area of expertise. The military should not and cannot be expected to do the work of the politician. Nor will the military ever end up being "armed social workers".
- 60) It is therefore necessary to work collaboratively with others. Collaborative activities must be concurrent, rather than sequential, and expect to be long-term across several generations. These ideas are part of the UK MOD's "comprehensive approach".
- 61) There has been an increase in interaction between military and NGOs and other civil society organisations, and civil-military cooperation has gained higher profile. Examples include Post-Conflict Reconstruction Units of the UK government, and Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, initiated by the US administration.
- 62) In Israel, it is the military which has the key role in discussing strategy. The danger here is that the analysis will not be systemic and non-military options will not be seriously explored. It was suggested that the decision to go to war in South Lebanon did not involve serious analysis of non-military options, for example liaising with the Lebanese government about the release of the kidnapped soldiers. In addition, too hasty decision-making prevented integrating the human aspects into the operational planning. Hizbullah, on the other hand, had a detailed plan to involve the local civilian population and protect civilian targets.
- 63) It can be difficult for the military to collaborate with non-military actors during conflict, so collaboration needs to be done in peace times and in the pre-conflict stage, with an emphasis on prevention of conflict. It is easier to build strong working relationships before a crisis. NGOs and international organizations could usefully serve as interlocutors between parties, especially

in pre-conflict situations when the facilitation of communication has the potential to prevent conflict.

- 64) NGOs often do not want to collaborate or synchronise with the military for various reasons. Collaboration however is very important in order to understand each other's activities and rules; otherwise, they are at risk of undermining each other.

Lessons need to be learned from the experience in Fallujah 2003-05:

- 65) The complex inter-religious tensions already present in Iraqi society should have been properly understood and addressed by the Coalition before invasion. There should have been a systematic outreach to the Sunni population, with a code of practice established for facilitating inter-religious dialogue. If the military do not feel that they have the capacity to carry out such dialogue, they should make sure that it is facilitated professionally through other actors.
- 66) Open dialogue is needed as part of an attempt to understand the enemy. Dissident factions need to be brought into the political process, and it should be made clear that the endgame is identifying misunderstandings and resolving disagreements.
- 67) In inflamed situations, when the aim is to restore order and calm, respect rather than force should be employed wherever possible.
- 68) Fair play should be modeled by the invading forces. Troops should be investigated and punished for breaking Geneva conventions. However, this needs to be placed in the context of the pressures which troops find themselves under, and research is needed into why standards are abandoned.
- 69) Post-conflict reconstruction strategies should be prioritised.

Other issues for human security which are becoming increasingly important on the international agenda were noted:

- 70) There is a perceived lack of democratic accountability over decisions to resort to military force, and this is increasingly seen as a threat not only to international security but also to human security. The contract between executive, military, parliament/representation, and the electorate has been placed under enormous strain by recent events, particularly in the USA and the UK.
- 71) Security Sector Reform (SSR) works best when it aims to reorient security forces from state or regime security to the security of the country's citizens.
- 72) Force protection must not become the main purpose of an operation. Problems of overstretch, combined with declining public and media support at home, risk encouraging excessive emphasis on force protection. However, especially in counter-insurgency operations, over-protection of troops will reduce the possibility of building good relations with local civilians and is likely to limit the mission's chances of success. Prioritising force protection also encourages tactics such as aerial bombardment which cannot protect civilians.

It was agreed that one means for improving human security and reducing civilian casualties would be to greatly increase the priority given to non-military means of promoting security:

- 73) Even if military interventions were able to successfully reduce the number of civilians they kill, the Human Security Centre finds that the global death toll from war-induced disease and malnutrition dwarfs the direct death toll from violent conflict.
- 74) Although non-military options are explored before there is a commitment to military intervention, there is a need for greater creativity and commitment to exploring non-military interventions which may often be complex and involve bringing in a number of different parties. Potentially, this may also involve talking to governments with whom one is not in agreement.
- 75) Military doctrine, planning and training need to be explicit about operations in situations other than conventional war, and to value them as highly as combat operations.

D. Recommendations for future action, proposed in the discussions.

- 1) **Understand as much as possible about the culture, politics and history** of the places in which we intervene before we intervene. It is important not to simplify the situation, for example by assuming that all the population has the same beliefs, needs and priorities, and will react in a uniform way to an intervention.
- 2) **Seriously and systematically consider all non-military options**, and thoroughly analyse the potential consequences of military action, before deciding to intervene with military force.
- 3) **Talk with, and listen to, those parties perceived as the enemy**, whether terrorists, insurgents, or unfriendly governments. Make every effort to understand their agendas and aspirations, including their reasons for hostility, and to address these issues, as well as conveying clearly what our aims and interests are.
- 4) **It is essential to differentiate between those who have a political agenda, and thereby something to talk about, and those who do not.** So for example, groups like Hamas have called for a long-term ceasefire and wish to engage. In contrast, some groups have a more nihilistic agenda and it is unlikely that negotiations would be possible. If we do not differentiate, we are at the risk of turning those groups who do have something to talk about into groups who are sufficiently angry and alienated that we will have lost the opportunity for dialogue.
- 5) **Any form of military intervention will require careful post-conflict reconstruction.** This needs to be carefully integrated into any plan of action. As a result, it would be necessary to have a very clear idea of what outcome is intended. One would need to assess what processes and climate are necessary for this to be achieved, and consider how the military may be able to contribute to this outcome along with other actors – rather than letting military tactics define the action. If military involvement is decided upon, it would need to be ensured that comprehensive, realistic long-term plans are made for the post-invasion phase.
- 6) **Ensure that an intervention is perceived as legitimate**, both by going through international institutions and by making every effort to gain the support of the local population by seeking advice and cooperation from pre-existing local structures of authority.
- 7) **Improve the training and equipping of the armed forces for the protection of civilians in asymmetric warfare.** While civilian protection is difficult enough in conflicts between one national armed force and another, it is even more difficult, yet remains operationally essential, in counter-insurgency operations and other asymmetric warfare, where soldiers are under great psychological pressure due to the difficulty of distinguishing between enemy combatants and civilians.
- 8) **Make human security considerations a part of all military activity, not just an add-on.** Human security is not about doing non-combat operations. The integration of human security principles is needed most urgently at the operational level, through training and a fundamental change of military culture, supported by accountability and stringent enforcement. For example, every military operational plan for any unit size could include a civilian protection component. This would be part of the planning procedure, combat operation orders and success evaluation.
- 9) **Work, and communicate, better with non-military actors.** Since this can be difficult during conflict, it is important to work together in peace times and in the pre-conflict stage. This means understanding how the non-military actors work, conducting joint training exercises, recognising

the skills and services which the military are better able to provide than non-military actors, and vice versa, and being as transparent as possible about planning.

- 10) **Set up a system which facilitates learning from past experience**, at all levels of the decision-making process. This should include historians and psychologists. It also requires building up a culture in which it is acceptable to recognise mistakes made in the past and to have alternative recommendations taken seriously.
- 11) **Change the public discourse about war**. The focus should be shifted from discussing how to do war better and how to protect ourselves from threats. What we need to discuss is how to deepen our understanding of the root causes of conflict and how to intervene earlier. This means drawing on non-military alternatives in order to contain and manage conflict, and prevent its escalation.

How this report was written

Participants at this two-day residential workshop included senior military, diplomatic, academic and NGO experts from the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

This report identifies key themes raised by participants during intensive information exchange and dialogue. The report is based on brief formal presentations made by invited speakers, and on notes made by recorders during extended informal discussion periods which followed these presentations. It therefore does not represent views or address issues which were not raised during the proceedings, nor does it embody a consensus of the views of all participants, except where indicated.

The meeting was held under the Chatham House rule, which means that contributors are not identified by name.

All participants were offered an opportunity to comment on a first draft of this report, and every effort was made to accommodate comments received. The final text remains the responsibility of Oxford Research Group, and it should not be taken as a formal agreed communiqué from all participants.

About Oxford Research Group

Oxford Research Group (ORG) is an independent non-governmental organisation which seeks to bring about positive change on issues of national and international security. Established in 1982, it is now considered to be one of the UK's leading global security think tanks. ORG is a registered charity and uses a combination of innovative publications, expert roundtables, residential consultations, and engagement with opinion-formers and government, to develop and promote sustainable global security strategies. In 2003, Oxford Research Group was awarded the Niwano Peace Prize, and in April 2005 *The Independent* newspaper named ORG as one of the top twenty think tanks in the UK.

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