



JOINT DISCUSSION NOTE 4/05

THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Joint Discussion Note 4/05, January 2006,
is promulgated
as directed by the Chiefs of Staff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Sperry', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the bottom of the signature.

Director General
Joint Doctrine and Concepts

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PREFACE

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of Joint Discussion Note 4/05 '*The Comprehensive Approach*' (CA) is to codify emerging best practice and provide initial guidance to the MOD on the principles that should guide incorporation of CA thinking into the planning and execution of UK operations. This discussion note is also intended to inform and support development of the CA across Whitehall.
2. **Context.** The CA is a natural extension of the UK Military Effects-Based Approach (EBA)¹ and should be developed in a complementary manner within the MOD. The potential benefits of the CA can only be fully realised if absorbed within the culture of individual government departments. This note is the first step, by the MOD, towards this goal. Future developments will need to be agreed pan-governmentally, as will the rate of progress.
3. **Structure.** This Joint Discussion Note comprises 5 sections. Section I introduces the concept of the CA and describes how it could assist in the implementation of National Strategy. Section II sets the geopolitical context within which HMG responses are implemented. Section III explains the CA, concentrating on the application of 4 guiding principles. Section IV details benefits to the military of adopting the CA. Section V outlines a possible roadmap for future developments.

LINKAGES

4. Joint Discussion Note 4/05 updates the understanding of the CA expressed in Joint Warfare Publication (JWP) 3-50 '*The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations*' (2nd Edition) and Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1/05 '*The UK Military Effects-Based Approach*'.

JOINT DOCTRINE PUBLICATIONS

5. This discussion note does not represent a fully agreed or staffed position but has been raised in short order to establish and disseminate current thoughts on best practice. It also establishes the basis for further development and experimentation and provides a doctrinal basis for operations and exercises. The CA will be incorporated into future Joint Doctrine Publications when sufficiently mature.

¹ The UK Military Effects Based Approach is described in JDN 1/05.

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THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

CONTENTS

	Page No
Title Page	i
Authorisation and Distribution	ii
Preface	iii
Contents	v
Para No	
Section I – Introduction	
The MOD interest in the Comprehensive Approach	101
An Explanation of the Comprehensive Approach	103
Motives for Action	104
Section II – Operating Environment	
Strategic Trends	105
Transnational Themes	106
Contemporary Security	107
The Human Dimension	108
Transition Challenges	109
Section III – The Comprehensive Approach	
Employing the Comprehensive Approach	110
Managing Changes in Tempo	111
Guiding Principles	112
Enabling the Comprehensive Approach	113
HMG Direction	114
HMG Unifying Theme	115
Effects	116
Synchronising Activity	117
Supported and Supporting Departments	118
Conflict and Crisis Prevention	119
Perseverance	120
Campaign Authority	121
HMG Information Strategy	122
Information Management	123
Reaching a Shared Understanding	124

Lead Framework	125
Inter-activity	126
Language	127

Section IV – Military Adoption of the Comprehensive Approach

Advantages to the Military of the Comprehensive Approach	129
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Section V – Future Developments

Cross-Whitehall Working Group	131
Cross-Whitehall Implementation Strategy	132
Wider Utility of the Comprehensive Approach	133
Role of the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre	134

THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

The MOD Interest in the Comprehensive Approach

101. In 1991, UK military personnel deployed to Bosnia witnessed crisis and conflict involving a complex interplay of civilian, para-military and military groups and individuals, International Organisations (IOs) and the mass Media. This situation was characterised by a bewildering diversity of influences and factors and it was recognised that the military instrument alone could not deal with complex modern crises involving, and occurring among, communities and populations. In addition, increasing recognition of the importance of the roles that Other Government Departments (OGDs) and agencies, as well as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) play, added to the complexity, but efforts were rarely coordinated or focused on a common set of objectives. At the tactical level on the ground, it was apparent that the various instruments and agencies needed a firmer basis for understanding and cooperation in coordinating their activities.

102. This view was reinforced during subsequent operations in the 1990s and, by 1999, NATO commanders in Kosovo acknowledged that shared understanding and collaboration at the **tactical**¹ level were inadequate in dealing with the scale and complexity of the refugee crisis and subsequent stabilisation operations. Therefore, responsibility for military-civilian cooperation was elevated in UK thinking to the **operational**² level, with the establishment of OGD representation in the Defence Crisis Management Organisation (DCMO), in particular at the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ). In parallel, and in the light of experience gained in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq, it became evident that coherence could only be achieved if **strategic**³ processes, planning and objectives were harmonised across all instruments and agencies. This thinking was initially articulated in UK doctrine in a publication - *'The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations'* - and its development has been taken forward as the *Comprehensive Approach (CA)*.

103. **An Explanation of the Comprehensive Approach.** National Strategy⁴ is delivered by appropriate application of the 3 national instruments of power (diplomatic, military and economic). The CA is a conceptual framework which could

¹ The tactical level is the level at which units and formations directly engage with allies, adversaries and neutrals.

² The operational level is the level of activity that links military strategy to tactics and is the level at which campaigns are planned and conducted.

³ The military strategic level involves the development and employment of military forces and the prioritisation of military resources between concurrent operational theatres, providing military strategic objectives and defining end-states to meet national strategic objectives.

⁴ National Strategy is the application of the national instruments of power in pursuit of national strategic objectives and has replaced 'Grand Strategy' as defined in *'British Defence Doctrine'* (2nd Edition).

be used to reinvigorate the existing, Cabinet Office-led, approach to coordinating the objectives and activities of Government Departments in identifying, analysing, planning and executing national responses to complex situations. Post-operational analysis of situations and crises at home and abroad has demonstrated the value and effectiveness of a joined-up and cross-discipline approach if lasting and desirable outcomes are to be identified and achieved. However, in complex, high-tempo situations, no response can be totally inclusive; the CA would require judgement in its application with regard to the number of potentially decisive participants. The realisation of national strategic objectives inevitably relies on a combination of diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power, together with an independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity and a customised, agile and sensitive influence and information effort. In seeking to strengthen, and hasten, the formation of these partnerships within an institutional framework and in support of collective ministerial decision-making, it is hoped that the CA could help encourage, at the earliest opportunity, the forestalling, containment or permanent resolution of crises. The relative weight of effort and influence of each individual instrument or element will vary according to the circumstances, but, generally, Departments and agencies will find themselves in the position of being a ‘supported’ or ‘supporting’ entity. This means that, depending on the character of a crisis, the military instrument may often not constitute the main effort and might be required to conduct enabling or supporting activity to create conditions for other instruments or organisations to deliver an enduring outcome.

104. **Motives for Action.** Nations engage in crisis and conflict resolution for a variety of motives, such as normative values (including humanitarian considerations), pragmatic self-interest and legal obligations that collectively constitute ‘national interest.’ National political consensus and perceptions may be easy to shape and express when intervention or action to defend or assert essential interests are concerned, but can never be taken for granted when considering discretionary action.

SECTION II – OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

‘The threats to peace and security in the 21st Century include not just international war and conflict, but civil violence, organised crime, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. They also include poverty, deadly infectious disease and environmental degradation, since these can have equally catastrophic consequences. All of these threats can cause death or lessen life chances on a large scale. All of them can undermine states as the basic unit of the international system.’⁵

⁵ Sep 05. ‘In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All’. Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations for decision by Heads of State and Government; pages 24-25 of the full report. [http://www.un.org/larger freedom/](http://www.un.org/larger%20freedom/)

105. **Strategic Trends.** In the complex and dynamic strategic environment of the 21st Century, significant potential challenges to peace and security are likely to persist throughout the international environment. The range and interconnected nature of several transnational trends will affect the resource, science and technology, social, military and political dimensions. Generally, in a world of sovereign states, unequal in development and resources, conflicts and tension seem set to continue among nations and power groupings. The symptoms of crisis will be spawned by a combination of climate change, ideology, greed, ethnic animosity, residual territorial claims, religious fanaticism and competition for resources (including agricultural land, mineral wealth, water rights and oceanic resources). The desire for socio-economic improvement and population migration (refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)) driven by war, economic and environmental collapse or natural disaster will generate national responses and demands for international assistance. Additionally, terrorist actions, communal violence, endemic criminality and ethnic disturbance will continue to complicate international relations, while individuals and commercial interests are likely to have multiple identities and allegiances.

106. **Transnational Themes.** Four transnational themes are of particular relevance:

- a. **Population and Resources.** The combined effects of increased global human activity, economic output and population growth look likely to intensify pressure on the environment and food, water and energy resources. This trend will be exacerbated by urbanisation and the creation of ‘mega cities’, while industrialisation and personal expectations in developing countries will strain all resources.
- b. **Identity and Interest.** Improved communication technologies and personal mobility have eroded geographical, traditional and formal boundaries. Identities will be less fixed and less formal national, cultural and personal communities of interest are likely to proliferate, based on group or personal advantage, although some well-defined ethnic and religious allegiances are likely to remain strong.
- c. **Governance and Order.** Both international and national structures and systems – including international order, law and trade – will need reinforcing to ensure stability and order, in the face of globalisation, more intense competition and the challenge from transnational features, such as terrorism, piracy and organised crime.
- d. **Knowledge and Innovation.** Commercially-led civil and military knowledge and innovation will proliferate at unprecedented rates to a wide number of the world’s technologically enabled and networked population, producing unpredictable growth, opportunities, risks and challenges.

107. **Contemporary Security.** In the modern world, traditional geographical, defence-based, physical security is no longer the only criterion that defines human well-being and development. Increasingly, security is seen as a combination of attributes relating to freedom from persecution, want, fear and a broad range of other concerns, such as water, food and environmental security; in military terms, people have become the vital ground. Aspects of this trend are recognised by the UN's 'Responsibility to Protect (RtP)'⁶ agenda, which focuses on preventative and developmental lines of activity (including 'pre-emptive' action) rather than purely reactive intervention. However, prevention requires a longer view and proportionately more effort in recognising the indicators of an impending crisis and in tackling the root causes of instability rather than the more obvious symptoms. In turn, early responses may be difficult to determine, but will, in an inter-connected world, always require decisions and intervention across a wide range of activity including economic, diplomatic, military, developmental and humanitarian.

108. **The Human Dimension.** The human security agenda requires a response that is sensitive to the extensive, particular needs of societies, communities and individuals. To this end, all constituent parts of a society (rule of law, education, commercial, humanitarian and health, information, military, economic and diplomacy and governance) should be considered, as well as the history and culture of an individual society.

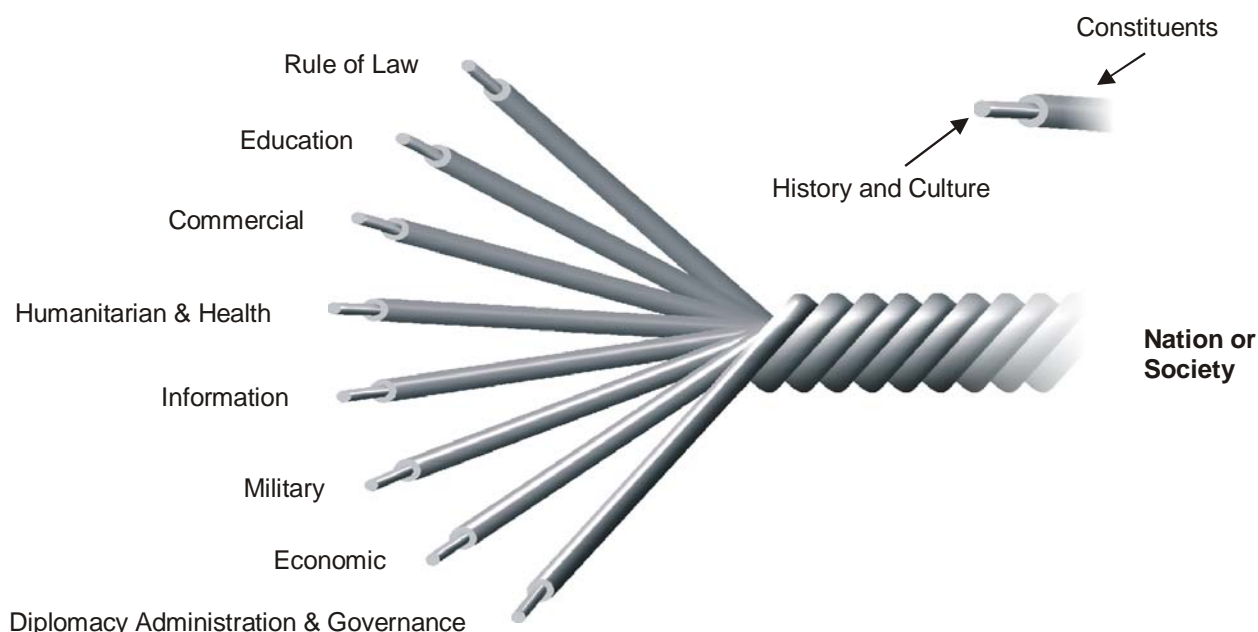


Figure 1 – The Constituents of a Society

⁶ Initiated in 2001, 'The Responsibility to Protect' agenda is gaining acceptance in the international community. At the 2005 UN World Summit, (14-16 Sep), there was a clear and unambiguous acceptance by all governments, of the collective responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and a willingness to take timely and decisive collective action for this purpose, through the Security Council, when peaceful means prove inadequate and national authorities are failing to do it. www.un.org

Only then can a range of appropriate objectives, resources and contributors be established to influence the situation. The spectrum of involvement, doctrinally and familiarly known as the ‘Complex of Actors’,⁷ might comprise other governments, IOs, NGOs and private and commercial interests. Additionally, experience has indicated that successful resolution would overwhelmingly rely on the attitude and motivation of the indigenous and/or local population at the heart of the crisis and those in the surrounding region, although care should be taken not to create a dependency culture. Two other groups that should be considered in any responses are opportunists,⁸ who seek to benefit from the situation or the perpetuation of a crisis, and spoilers who have an interest in undermining the response.

109. **Transition Challenges.** In resolving crises, particular challenges and complex situations arise when transitioning between a condition in which the military instrument is paramount and a condition where civil primacy is restored, especially when intervention forces cede responsibility for security and rule of law to indigenous forces. The application of the CA in these circumstances would seem pragmatic and especially beneficial, but care would be needed to ensure that additional complications were not introduced. These might include imperfect transfer of control or responsibility between Departmental leads, between ‘supported’ and ‘supporting’ elements, or, for example, when domestic political considerations and pressures affect the tempo and weight of effort.

SECTION III – THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation

110. **Employing the Comprehensive Approach.** The CA is a concept which may be applicable throughout the continuum of conflict and crisis, both at home and abroad, and is the parallel, more extensive employment of the Effects-Based Approach (EBA).⁹ The degree to which it should be applied will be guided by the imperative for a comprehensive response. This will depend upon the complexity, duration and nature of the situation, and the potential benefits of such collaborative action. The need for collaborative processes, shared understanding and concerted action is most required in the area of crisis prevention and resolution. Here, 4 concurrent activities of prevention, intervention, regeneration and sustainment require careful synchronisation

⁷ ‘The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations’ (2nd Edition) page 2-11.

⁸ Opportunists can range from criminal elements to entrepreneurs. Some elements of the media may also fall into this category. Their actions can have long or short-term malign or beneficial influence.

⁹ The EBA is defined as ‘The way of thinking and specific processes that, together, enable the integration and effectiveness of the military contribution within a Comprehensive Approach’. JDN 1/05.

to ensure that the underlying issues are addressed in order to produce self-sustaining stability and peace.

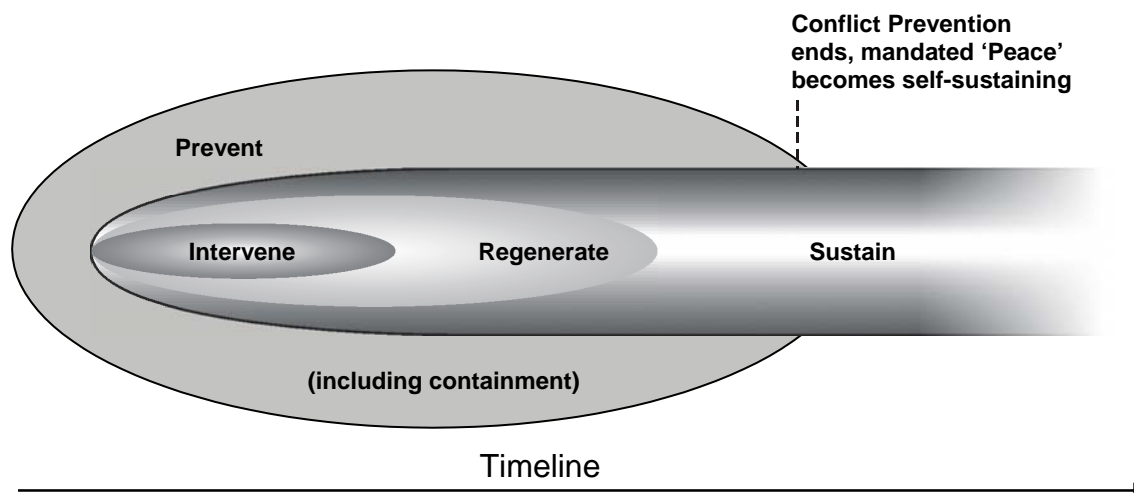


Figure 2 – Concurrent Activities

111. **Managing Changes in Tempo.** The move from a routine Defence and Overseas Policy posture to a crisis management posture can stimulate rapid variations in tempo across Government, often owing to Departmental priorities and political imperatives. Experience and lessons from previous operations have shown the value of bilateral contacts between individuals in different Departments and the formalisation and harmonisation of procedures, vocabulary and planning time-lines in support of decision-making. The MOD maintains the DCMO in order to provide a single point of access and assist with shifts in tempo.

Guiding Principles

112. The 4 guiding principles of the CA conceptual framework are:

- a. **A Proactive Cross-Whitehall Approach.** Whitehall already has a range of early warning systems and mechanisms for the coordination of Whitehall activity at the official and ministerial levels. It is essential that the provision in both areas should support HMG objectives, accommodate the concerns and contribution of each relevant Department and determine priorities and supported/supporting Departments. Seeking to improve this provision should be a continual process, but should be tested against the need to ensure that new initiatives are fit for purpose and fully justify any additional resources when set against other priorities.
- b. **Shared Understanding.** A shared understanding does not imply conformity and uniformity, as each participating entity or Department will contribute a distinctive set of professional, technical and cultural disciplines, values and perceptions. This broad basis of talent and perspective should

provide breadth, depth and resilience to analysis, planning, execution and assessment and contribute to a common baseline of understanding on which risk assessments, judgements and decisions can be made.

c. **Outcome-Based Thinking.** Planning and activity by all Departments should be based, and judged, on the achievement of progress towards an agreed HMG strategic objective, through consideration, and constant review, of all likely short, medium and long-term outcomes. In all cases, the possible reactions and motivations of the ‘Complex of Actors’ needs particular consideration and management, especially in regard to influencing global, regional and local opinions and attitudes.

d. **Collaborative Working.** The CA should be reinforced by institutional familiarity, trust and transparency between Government Departments and through frequent personal contact, human networks and information sharing. More sophisticated and integrated Information Management (IM) techniques, infrastructure and connectivity would play a central role in enabling these advanced working practices and in providing horizontal, vertical and diagonal collaboration between communities of interest at all levels, within and between Departments.

Enabling the Comprehensive Approach

113. The principles underlying the CA need to be at the heart of routine crisis management machinery in order to support the processes which could be put into place when assessment staffs identify that a crisis is of sufficient gravity, urgency or complexity. An invigorated process of pooling individual Department’s assessments of indicators and warnings would ensure that a common and early understanding of a crisis is achieved.

114. **HMG Direction.** A National Strategic Aim defined by HMG might be instituted to provide the single, unambiguous and achievable headmark for CA activity. The National Strategic Aim would gain strength and coherence through consultation with all relevant Departments and agencies. However, it is important that the consultation and planning tempo should not be allowed to obstruct the political process or the decision-making tempo.

115. **HMG Unifying Theme.** The complicated interplay between all participants and the dynamics of a particular situation, including those aspects that are imperfectly recognised or understood, will require considerable judgement and interpretative skills. Identifying and articulating an agreed inter-Departmental Centre of Gravity (CoG) as understood by the military instrument may therefore prove difficult or impossible. However, through cooperation, coordination and agreement, the formulation of an HMG Unifying Theme, consistent with the National Strategic Aim,

may prove more readily achievable. This HMG Unifying Theme could be defined as *‘the central premise that determines the character, context and direction of the entire HMG Strategy’*. On the basis of the HMG Unifying Theme, guidance could be derived to inform subsequent planning and Departmental activity which could, when translated into effects and objectives, become the framework for a comprehensive response. As events unfold, initial analysis of the situation should be reviewed and, exceptionally, the HMG Unifying Theme adjusted if required.

116. **Effects.** As indicated above, the CA is the natural counterpart of the EBA,¹⁰ which is now being applied to UK military planning. It is defined as:

‘The way of thinking and specific processes that, together, enable the integration and effectiveness of the military contribution within a Comprehensive Approach’

EBA involves the translation of discrete actions to generate an amalgamation of effects in order to realise a desired outcome. An EBA applied as the military aspect of the CA, in conjunction with the instruments of power and employing a wide range of coordinated activity, could produce more coherent and desirable effects and thus deliver the desired outcome with greater assurance.

117. **Synchronising Activity.** Within any response, each Department would want to monitor and conduct activity within its own area of responsibility, especially in the allocation of manpower and resources. As is currently conducted by the Cabinet Office at the strategic level, coordination would be required to satisfy the range of competing priorities, sequence actions and compensate for structural and institutional imperfections. The overriding consideration should be to focus all activity and effort on the achievement of the National Strategic Aim in accordance with the Unifying Theme.

118. **Supported and Supporting Departments.** When executing a synchronised or prioritised plan, individual Departments may act in either a supported or supporting role depending on the agreed main effort at any particular time. This consideration is of key importance when dealing with conflicts and crises that are likely to persist for years or even decades. In these circumstances, frequent reviews of the situation should include judgement about the main effort and the balance of the supported/supporting relationship. Experience has shown that this dynamic assessment is often overlooked, resources are misapplied and the chance to re-focus a national effort is often missed.

119. **Conflict and Crisis Prevention.** While pre-emptive action remains controversial, it is important that intervention takes place at a time when it can be most

¹⁰ The UK Military EBA is explained in JDN 1/05.

effective in forestalling or containing a crisis. In some cases, despite the continuous action of other instruments and agencies, the military instrument might be the only one that can be applied quickly and effectively to respond to short-notice, rapidly emerging or uncontrolled crises, especially those involving a breakdown in the Rule of Law and Security. In these circumstances, diplomatic, development, economic and intelligence activity should be applied as part of a CA as soon as possible in order to facilitate the stabilisation and normalisation process.

120. **Perseverance.** When engaged in the resolution of complex situations, the possibility of long-term engagement should be considered and sanctioned at the political level from the outset of an intervention. Failure to demonstrate commitment and capacity for the long haul, both generally and by individual Departments, could make effective resolution across the security continuum much more difficult, especially if the response is subject to limited, disputed or inadequate resource provision.

121. **Campaign Authority.** In recent operations, the need to create and maintain tangible legitimacy and confidence – the Campaign Authority¹¹ – has been recognised. Campaign Authority requires careful consideration and conduct of all activity to ensure that expectations are managed and that support is forthcoming from those groups and individuals who shape opinion and imply consent. Maintaining Campaign Authority within theatre as part of a CA would be challenging and depend on a continuous, rigorous appraisal and assessment of the effects being realised across all dimensions and by all instruments among the indigenous population and wider audiences. Inevitably, the dynamic interplay and agility of the coordinated, synchronised Information Strategy will play a vital role in maintaining Campaign Authority.

122. **HMG Information Strategy.** Actions may have a perceptual or cognitive effect on situations and it is important that information does not impact adversely on decision-making or the achievement of desired outcomes. Information is the lifeblood of the CA concept and, although information can often be undesirable or unpredictable in its impact, it should be managed to support joined-up activity in the diplomatic, economic and military arenas. This aspect of activity would be achieved through an Information Strategy that for the CA could be defined as:

‘Information activity coordinated across Government that influences decisions, opinions and outcomes in order to support the National Strategic Aim and associated Policy objectives’

¹¹ Campaign Authority is an amalgam of 4 interdependent factors: the perceived legitimacy of the international mandate; the perceived legitimacy of the authority of those conducting operations; the degree to which factions, local populations and other actors subjugate themselves to the authority of those conducting operations and the degree to which the activities of those conducting operations meet the expectations of factions, local populations and others.

Key elements of the information strategy would include information themes and objectives that allow each Department to coordinate defensive and proactive information activity consistent with the harmonised HMG approach. It would be especially important to establish a coherent, consistent narrative and context within which successful achievement of objectives could be recorded and reported by a wide range of audiences and which would enable successful rebuttal of hostile or false information. The Information Strategy should be coordinated vertically from the National strategic to departmental tactical/field levels, and horizontally and diagonally across Government within the various communities of interest.

123. **Information Management.**¹² The efficient management of the flow and content of information would be vital in realising the CA. IM should be implemented through integrated management processes, procedures and services that enable and support collectors, producers and users in storing, locating, retrieving and transmitting information, so that the suitable information is presented in the most appropriate form and quantity. IM in the CA concept relies on an understanding of the complex, multi-dimensional information requirements of each Department across both cultural and technical boundaries and the discrete characteristics of hardware, capacity (both human and technical) and sophistication of each individual area. Whilst there is an enabling technological aspect to IM, the fundamental issue is the orchestration of collaborative ways of working and commonly recognised protocols. Based on previous experience, a common, but flexible framework for information sharing would be required, probably comprising a layered or sectioned network to achieve interoperability within national and OGD security constraints.

124. **Reaching a Shared Understanding.** Realising the required level of understanding for the CA should be engendered culturally through routine working practices, liaison and education. Reaching agreement on wider situational awareness that implies a shared understanding of the participants, the situation and the response, offers the benefits of synergy while retaining the cultural and professional diversity, agility and resilience necessary in complex circumstances.

- a. **The Participants.** Understanding the capabilities, limitations and culture of other participants should enhance a Department's contribution to the CA because an appreciation of the likely and possible contributions of other actors may reveal cooperative opportunities and areas requiring de-confliction.
- b. **The Situation.** Participants are likely to have unique situational awareness requirements, reflecting different perspectives and priorities, and each calling for different scope and granularity. A shared understanding of a

¹² Information Management is defined as 'a set of integrated management processes and services that enable collectors, producers and users to store, locate, retrieve and transfer the right information, in the right form and of adequate quality, by the most timely, effective and efficient means in a manner consistent with the commander's mission'. *The UK Joint High Level Operational Concept* (HLOC).

situation requires discussion, information sharing and an understanding of other participants' needs. Therefore converging areas of interest and responsibility should be identified and the employment of various Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR)/information gathering activity, as well as open sources and data-bases, tasked to meet the needs of all, in accordance with the National Strategic Aim and the Unifying Theme.

c. **The Response.** Planning for a comprehensive response should be conducted within a framework whose character and size should be structured according to the range of participants and the complexity of the situation. Once again, collective capabilities should be optimised in order to realise the effect implied by the National Strategic Aim, underpinned by the Unifying Theme.

125. **Lead Framework.** Recent events and lessons from operations have shown that the pursuit of an effective and timely response may be best served by recognising a lead framework entity. In Coalition operations, an IO, such as NATO, UN or the EU might prove serviceable or, alternatively, the proven lead nation formula might suit. Cooperation and synchronisation would be best achieved through application of the supported/supporting approach. However, it should be recognised that a strictly stove-piped, compartmentalised structure would not work and linkages and relationships would have to be sensitively arranged to reflect the contribution that various participants can make in the achievement of effects. For example, it may be that a Departmental contribution from a supporting nation in an IO-led enterprise might be in a better position to influence events than a similar body within the IO itself. In these circumstances, hierarchical sensitivities should not inhibit efficient delivery.

126. **Inter-activity.** Collaborative working would be essential to ensure that, where necessary, all activities were conducted coherently in support of the HMG's National Strategic Aim. However, various potential contributors might be unable or unwilling to collaborate fully owing to political, constitutional or security constraints. As a result, participants could interact at 4 levels¹³ and may move between these:

- a. **Independent.** Separate and discrete activity (not necessarily concurrent, but with a common purpose) with no interdependencies or shared responsibilities.
- b. **Coordinated.** Concurrent interdependent activities linked through a shared framework.

¹³ Derived from a QinetiQ study of Organisational Agility Nov 2005.

- c. **Coherent.** Activities conducted with mutual understanding in the same part of the environment and sharing the same information.
- d. **Unitary.** Partners combining to act as a single entity.

In applying the CA, these various levels of interaction need to be understood, published and implemented through direction, coordination, negotiation or de-confliction.

127. **Language.** All the enabling functions described above must be supported by language, common vocabulary and definitions that remain simple to understand, intuitively recognisable and agreeable to a wide range of participants. This aspect is especially important when dealing with a variety of different nationalities and the use of plain English (based on the use of definitions in the Oxford English Dictionary) should be encouraged. Jargon and the excessive use of esoteric acronyms should be avoided.

SECTION IV - MILITARY ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

128. As seen above, the military instrument cannot operate in isolation and successful operations and enduring outcomes will involve a wide range of contributors and influences. Comprehensive analysis, planning, execution and measurement of effectiveness should enable a more effective and efficient deployment of finite national capabilities, including heavily tasked military assets. The CA embraces the EBA and could be used to improve the coherence of responses to future conflicts and crises.

Advantages to the Military of the Comprehensive Approach

129. Specific advantages to the military of a CA include:
- a. A more thorough, comprehensive analysis of a situation that will enable clearer understanding of the root causes of the problem(s) and, consequently, more informed risk assessment and decisions.
 - b. Wider participation and greater coordination between Government Departments in the analysis and planning phases should lead to the more efficient achievement of objectives and the realisation of effects.
 - c. OGDs and wider partnerships will be able to provide additional, complementary Intelligence and analytical assets, skills and expertise during crisis preparation.

- d. Developing communities of interest to which the MOD can contribute, and from which it can draw, should identify opportunities for joined-up activity and efficiencies.
- e. Comprehensive planning should allow the MOD to make better use of limited resources through better targeting and tailoring of the military instrument. Comprehensive analysis is more likely to reveal alternative options in other dimensions and in the use of more diverse instruments.
- f. The exposure of MOD, in terms of the frequency and intensity of commitments, could be minimised relative to other elements within a CA, if crises are prevented from escalating into conflict.
- g. Greater appreciation of OGDs, NGOs and IOs should allow, at the appropriate opportunity, smooth transition of responsibility from military to civilian (or *vice versa*), or from external to indigenous, control.
- h. The ability to generate and maintain Campaign Authority should be enhanced through the CA placing greater emphasis on the visible use of wider instruments and agents, rather than military and security activity.
- i. As understanding of the CA increases, military deployments in complex environments, especially those involving operations among people, should improve the prospects for successful focused deployment of forces.
- j. The military contribution to crisis or emergency within the UK will be improved by routine contact with outside agencies and OGDs.
- k. Military personnel will be exposed to best practice and a wider range of positive influences in a globalised environment.

SECTION V – FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

130. This discussion document has been designed to advertise existing best practice, explore the issues associated with CA and to stimulate debate about its future development. The benefits of adopting the CA would only be realised if it were absorbed within the cultures of individual Government Departments. Future development and the rate of progress of the CA would depend on cross-Government agreement and investment.

131. **Cross-Whitehall Working Group.** An ad hoc cross-Whitehall working group (WG)¹⁴ has been established in order to seek ways in which CA principles and practice

¹⁴ Membership includes representation from the Cabinet Office (CO), Department for International Development (DFID), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), MOD and Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU).

might be stimulated across Government Departments. The Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre (JDCC) will continue to support this group by communicating emerging best practice, lessons from operations and thought based on first principles. Contributions from all constituents are encouraged, especially in accommodating the requirements and cultures of individual, distinctive Departments and entities.

132. **Cross-Whitehall Implementation Strategy.** The WG is in the process of making recommendations on what a CA implementation strategy might look like. Initial proposals for the elements that this strategy might entail include:

- a. **High Level Buy-In.** To ensure high-level support, for the development of the CA, the WG needs to secure DOP (CPR)¹⁵ and Senior Official level agreement that CA represents a substantive, and valuable contribution to enhancing inter-Departmental coordination. Subsequently, a shared definition of the CA, based around the definitions and principles in this discussion note would need to be agreed, before a definitive cross-Whitehall framework document were produced. This would enable each Department to create supporting documentation and to explain the CA to personnel.
- b. **Study Groups.** The cross-Whitehall WG, if formally constituted and tasked to take the CA forward, should be delegated authority to form subordinate study groups to examine particular issues by identifying and engaging with thematic communities of interest (such as education, training or information management).
- c. **Developing the Comprehensive Approach Culture.** The establishment of the CA within Departments would be a long-term educative and cultural task, which would require careful management of expectations and a grip on what is realistically possible or necessary. Leaders, managers and individuals would need to encourage intuitive comprehensive thinking and seek opportunities to invigorate existing inter-Departmental relationships at every level. This process could include specific education and training, mutual inter-Departmental awareness and the development of a common, accepted vocabulary and glossary of specialist terms.
- d. **Operations.** Aspects of the CA would need to be explored and validated into current HMG overseas engagements. In particular, the complex situation in Afghanistan, involving several Government Departments, might provide a suitable test-bed for a more comprehensive EBA in the planning and conduct of inter-Departmental activity in support of a National Strategic Aim. Relevant CA lessons could also be catalogued and identified.

¹⁵ Defence and Overseas Policy (Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction).

e. **Lessons.** Departmental lessons should be drawn from recent, ongoing and emerging operations to identify best practice and to inform the development of the CA. To this end the JDCC could examine the possibility of setting up a common database of lessons that would be available to all stakeholders.

f. **Information Technology.** The wide variety of Departmental IT systems would make IM problematic in support of the CA. In the short-term, relationships, linkages and communities of interest need to be identified, together with a data-base of compatible (and incompatible) networks and systems. In the longer-term, IT acquisition strategies should optimise the opportunities for inter-Departmental communication, situational awareness and decision-making.

g. **Planning Tools.** To the greatest extent possible, future interventions and responses should be planned, executed and assessed in accordance with CA principles at all levels, as far as Departmental characteristics and cultures will allow. A suite of common tools could usefully be identified, developed and agreed with which to align planning regimes and expose best practice. The Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit's (PCRU's) Joint Stabilisation and Planning Framework and the MOD's Generic Strategic Campaign Planning (GSCP) tool are examples of existing comprehensive planning and decision tools.

133. **Wider Utility of the Comprehensive Approach.** While this note focuses on the value of the CA to HMG when responding to crisis and conflict, every opportunity should be taken to broaden its applicability and diversify acceptance and participation.

134. **Role of the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre.** JDCC considers that it is important that development of the CA maintains momentum, through wide engagement across Whitehall and within the MOD. If the CA were to be implemented, the JDCC proposes that it should play a key role in continuing to innovate and stimulate the adoption and development of the idea within military networks, through WGs, experimentation and exercises. More specifically, the JDCC would wish to:

- a. Encourage cross-Government recognition and adoption of the CA through continued support to the cross-Whitehall Comprehensive Approach WG.
- b. Continue to engage with allies and others to develop the potential benefits of the CA and to encourage possible future partners to participate.

- c. Seek to broaden the CA's applicability through engagement with domestic security Departments and agencies.
- d. Capture and exploit multinational best practice and developments in industry and the commercial sector.
- e. Engage with military strategic and operational HQs to identify opportunities and challenges and to develop the CA in concert with EBA activity.
- f. Provide, in BDD 06,¹⁶ the latest understanding of the CA, while developing specific formal doctrine.
- g. Develop a MOD implementation strategy for the CA.
- h. Use experiments, exercises and operations as opportunities to influence and observe the practical application of the CA.
- i. Within the production and validation of doctrine and concepts, justify the development of education strategies, technology acquisition and process adaptation that would support the CA.
- j. Encourage practitioners to continue to debate, experiment and exercise the CA to develop best practice.
- k. Lead in the development of harmonised language, vocabulary and definitions and promote best usage and expression within the MOD and across OGDs.
- l. Ensure that future developments of EBA and the CA remain coherent and are distributed to a wide audience through documentary and Internet-based means.

¹⁶ Due to be published in 2006.