



Operational command and complexity, what are we talking about today? 4/4

Complexity: what is ultimately behind the concepts?

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The fourth factor of complexity in decision making operational is an Arlesian called global approach ²⁹(comprehensive approach). Arlesian because although it evokes for many years, this global approach has been is still struggling to materialize in reality. There is no question of here to limit itself to the civil aspects mwell known ilitic diseases, but to deal more broadly with the compartmentalization of the totality of global players who contribute to the management of a crisis ³⁰.

This complexity is linked on the one hand to the complexity of the concept and on the other hand to the complexity of the share in the capabilities, in particular in terms of coordination, that this approach requires. An understanding of the concept and its military declination remains confusing at first, because its use in the military The work is largely based on the theories developed by the U.S. military in the early 1990s, after Desert storm, and adopted by NATO in the mid-2000s, at a time when the Americans were abandoning it...The idea of a comprehensive approach is not, in itself, a revolution at allnaire. Since the marriage of Susa, all the great warlords from Alexander to General Petraeus to General Petraeus to the Westerners, from Galliéni, Lyautey and de Lattre, have taken on board the fact that success military success was often only possible by employing equallylevers of action other than the armed force, and that the only military victory was not a sufficient condition to ensure peace. The conceptualization of the comprehensive approach is, however more recent and finds its intellectual origins in the approach holistic approach developed in sociology, notably by Emile Durkheim at the end of the 19th centurye century, and in systemic theories developed in the 1950s in the United States, in economics and at management. The application of these theories by the military has so took shape in the mid-1990s with two key concepts, the systemic analysis of the operational environment and the operations of theeffects-based rations (Effect based approach to operations - EBAO and Effects based operations - EBO), combined with the principle information superiority (dominant info) of the RMA. For remain simple, the methods of systemic analysis correspond to an attempt to integrate the complexity of the gescrises, but require a large collection capacity, analysis and information management. The EBAO, formalized by NATO from 2006 onwards, consists of "...". consistent application and overall of the various instruments of the Alliance, combined with practical cooperation with non-NATO actors, in order to create the effects

necessary to achieve the objectives and thus the end state sought by NATO »³¹. These theories reconthe need to produce "kinetic" effects and The "non-kinetic", complementary or successive, to solve a crisis. They therefore involve cooperation and synergies The goal is to achieve optimal cooperation between all international actors, civilian and military. Above all, they imply a common will and common objectives on the part of the various actors. This is both the basis and the problem of the concept. The EBAO has led to the establishment of complex staff processes to ensure understanding of the concept. The EBAO established complex staff processes to ensure understanding of the operational environment and the synchronised use of various levers of action to deal with the spectre of a crisis. After experimenting with these concepts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Americans finally came back to them, judging them to be inappropriate and beyond their technical capabilities. In 2008, General James Mattis, then commander of the US Joint Forces Command, considered that the concept was "misapplied and overextended to the point that it actually hinders rather than helps joint operations".³² Although the concept has been partially abandoned by the Americans, it still fundamentally undercuts the employment doctrine, methods and functioning of the NATO staffs. Knowledge Development, COPD, Info Ops and full spectrum targeting are still entirely based on these concepts of a systemic approach and effects-based operations. However, the necessary resources and the resulting overly complex coordination do not contribute to real synergies and proven performance in the field of vector integration, inter-agency cooperation and "inter-ministeriality". Involved in Iraq and Afghanistan since the mid-2000s, the American armed forces have had to bring up to date the principles of French counter-rebellion, inherited from the decolonisation conflicts.³³ The result is a counterinsurgency doctrine (COIN), which is a confusing mix of civil-military cooperation, systems theory and tactical principles. This doctrine was taken up at NATO in the late 2000s, with the aim of achieving success in Afghanistan. Thus, the global approach is struggling to materialise, mainly because the armed forces have neither the mandate nor the means to lead such a process. They can only contribute to it. However, the reality of modern crisis management shows the weakness, if not the non-existence, of effective bodies dedicated to planning and inter-agency coordination, capable of federating the actions of all the actors, whose interests and tempos sometimes differ significantly. Aware of this difficulty and themselves engaged for three decades in so-called "low intensity" operations, French forces have been trying for the past ten years or so to apply the concept in a more pragmatic and less patronising manner. Having developed a global manoeuvre concept for the land forces³⁴ at the end of the 2000s, the Army is now emphasizing in ATF, the understanding³⁵ and cooperation³⁶ among eight operational superiority factors (OSFs). These do not replace, but rather clarify, the notion of the contribution of land forces to the overall approach to crisis management. However, these two OSFs are based above all on the ability to exchange information in good time and possibly to share effects production systems of all kinds between distant and heterogeneous players.

The result is that interoperability and confidentiality issues, which it is increasingly necessary to extend to the *déla* de the military sphere, in order to take into account organizations civil, governmental or not. For the military, as contributing to the global approach to crisis management, this concept should be able to be declined at several levels: doctrinal (harmonization of job concepts); procedural (interoperability of command systems); organisational (interoperability of command systems); organisational in order to Mitigate the risk of multiple decision chains and functional; and finally technical (standardization of the teams and the standards, formats, etc.). It is clear that we are at a point far away and that for the time being, the global approach is still a matter of more, at best an intellectual predisposition, and at worst a display effect, than an operational reality. The final explanation for the increasing complexity of decision-making is that it is a The final explanation for the increasing complexity of decision-making today lies in the combination of two factors, the dissociation of time from operations and the "in-fobesity". A first factor

observed for several dozen years of years refers to the shortening of state cycles. major, the OODA loop mentioned earlier. The increase in information-sharing capabilities effectively provides access to information considerably speed up all the processes implemented, in particular those related to the production and distribution of orders and reports from subordinate units (reporting). However, although the headquarters are faster, the time taken to achieve effects in the terrestrial environment, and in particular on the human environment of the operations, remains broadly the same. For example, the American offensive manoeuvre towards Baghdad in 2003 was no faster in absolute terms than the German breakthrough in 1940. Technological progress, especially in terms of land mobility, has not fundamentally reduced the viscosity of the battlefield. The effects on immaterial fields, i.e. on perceptions, apart from the fact that they are often difficult to quantify, remain long to produce. At the same time, information technology and modern systems for disseminating this information, both traditional media and now the Internet, have, on the contrary, accelerated political and media decision-making times. These differentiated accelerations have de facto created a gap between the horizons, the effects expected by political decision-makers and Western opinions, and their actual implementation on the ground. This fact is nothing new either, but it takes on a particular dimension in modern operations, justifying, as we have seen previously, a sometimes counter-productive approach to the planning and conduct of operations.

The second effect induces progress in communications notes the considerable amount of information now available on the at the disposal of headquarters. This increase is due to a significant increase in the capacity of the collection means intelligence, in particular that of airborne sensors, and space, dedicated to the surveillance of the theatre of operations. All These sensors have also been backed over time by systems that are different information themes, often compartmentalized, generating real difficulties in managing, updating, analyzing and sharing information. Thus, digitisation has generally led to the partitioning of the various functions of the headquarters in order to satisfy "business" needs³⁷. Furthermore, the lack of user-friendliness and the complexity of the tools implemented (TOPFAS, SICF to name but a few) have not facilitated the emergence of efficient digitisation to date. In an attempt to remedy these difficulties, the Americans introduced the concept of information knowledge management (IKM) into their structures in the 2000s. IKM is originally a multidisciplinary managerial approach bringing together all the methods and techniques that make it possible to perceive, identify, analyse, organise, memorise, share the knowledge of the members of a company. knowledge created by the company itself (marketing, research and development), or acquired from outside (economic intelligence), in order to achieve a set objective. In practice, the implementation of this concept is not entirely satisfactory at present and generates additional resource requirements, which contribute to the burden on command structures. In a very practical way, information management now requires both more coordination and overlapping levels of information synthesis and sorting. The Chief of Staff is now assisted in large structures (from the divisional level upwards) by a Director of Staff (DOS), Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS), Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS), etc. The Chief of Staff is also assisted by a Director of Staff (DOS), Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS), Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS), etc. Attempts to abolish these levels have so far led to information saturation of the decision-making levels and a loss of responsibility on the part of the subordinate levels. In some cases, this inflation in the number of staff at headquarters therefore leads to macrocephalous structures, which in turn generate, in addition to their logical increase in weight, an inflation of information needs and production. All too often, to give a striking illustration, we end up with orders that take far too long to elaborate and exploit, very much like the front page of Leclerc's order to seize Paris or Strasbourg in 1944. We are typically there in the law of diminishing returns. This paradox of digitisation resulted in a loss of confidence in their staffs on the part of the decision-makers, and was confirmed by the strengthening of teams of advisers around the general (command group and red teams), whose role was ultimately to facilitate the chief's decision-making. That is to say, the primary vocation of

a general staff...This very brief and inevitably incomplete inventory of fixtures leads us to wonder about the risk of the operational staffs being distanced from their primary purposes, which are... : to reduce uncertainty and complexity; to allow the chief to make decisions by measuring the risks involved; to implement his intention. In the first approach, technical progress and managerial theories, although they retain undeniable value in many areas, have so far contributed to amplifying the phenomenon of operational complexity, as our latest commitments demonstrate. Is this increasing complexity unavoidable? Improving command performance will probably require a reasoned simplification of command tools and an overall de-complexification of structures. Nevertheless, it is in fact the entire current command philosophy that must be changed, since the principles of operational decision-making remain unchanged. Systems, organizations and processes are not the exclusive factors for success in war. More than the tools, it is the leader's decision-making culture in combat and his ability to make decisions in the face of uncertainty that will most certainly and most importantly continue to guarantee victory or defeat in the long run.

29 Interested readers may usefully refer to the analysis of Wendling, Cécile, The global approach in civil-military crisis management : critical and prospective analysis of the concept, IRSEM Notebook No. 6, 2010. <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/153056/1551029/file/Cahier%20n%C2%B06%20Approche%20globale.pdf>

30 RDIA No. 2011/001_AG-CM, Global Approach (GA) in external crisis management (military contribution), CICDE, 2011. http://portail-cicde.intradef.gouv.fr/images/documentation/RDIA/20110124-NP-CICDE-RDIA-2011-001-AG-CM-2011_future-DIA-3.4.pdf

31 MCM 0052-2006, Military committee position on an effects based approach to operations, June 6, 2006.

32 Henriksen, Dag, A Misapplied and Overextended Example. Gen J. N. Mattis's Criticism of Effects-Based Operations. Air & Space Power Journal, 2012. http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-26_Issue-5/V-Henriksen.pdf

33 Valeyre, Bertrand and Guerin, Alexandre, De Galula to Petraeus, the French legacy in American counterinsurgency thinking, Notebook of the doctrinal research, CDEF, 2009. http://www.bleuonquille.fr/documents/docs/Galula_Petraeus.pdf

34 The global maneuver, CDEF, 2008.

35 ATF: The FSO of the day "understanding", 2016. <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/mediatheque/documentations/action-terrestre-future-les-facteurs-de-supe-priority-ope-rational-fso/atf-le-fso-du-jour-la-comprehension>

36 ATF: The FSO of the day "cooperation", 2016. <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/mediatheque/documentations/action-terrestre-future-les-facteurs-de-supe-priorite-ope-rationnelle-fso/atf-le-fso-du-jour-la-cooperation>

37 Interested readers may find it useful to refer to the C2IA working group status report issued in May 2018. Digitisation of Joint Operations Command : Vaincre par l'anticipation technologique, website of the Ministry of the Armed Forces. <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/economie-et-technologie/vaincre-par-l-anticipation-technologique>

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