



Australian Government

Australian Civil-Military Centre

Reflections of Interagency Leadership

ACMC



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We will review this document periodically. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and can be sent to communications@acmc.gov.au.

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Foreword

The establishment of crisis management taskforces often occurs with little or no notice. Leaders at every level can find themselves plunged into planning and executing multiagency operations while simultaneously: building a team; framing the taskforce purpose and scope; and establishing operating structures and procedures. In most crises they will have to deal with a 24/7 media cycle and powerful political pressures.

This publication provides multiagency taskforce leaders and their staff with knowledge, experience and advice to assist them in their role. It covers lessons learned from operations ranging from domestic and international disaster response, through peace and stabilisation operations, to coordination of multiagency efforts in high-intensity conflict. It draws on the experience of civilian, police and military leaders from Australia and New Zealand who have led multiagency taskforces in complex emergencies. While every taskforce will be different, common principles based on hard-won experience are apparent, and can help us avoid starting from a blank page every time.

This document was requested by former taskforce leaders who saw the value of having a document which combined a Leadership Guide, a 'how to guide' and which provided some anecdotal reflections from those who had walked this way before.

This guidance is not only for 'the' leader, but all the people who will provide leadership in an integrated team environment. All members of a taskforce must understand the 'who, what, why, where and how' of their mission. They must understand what their leader requires and the pressures that the team is operating under. A cohesive and effective taskforce team will always be more effective than a group of individuals doing their own thing - no matter how highly skilled they are.

Effective multiagency leadership requires all involved to demonstrate open and honest communication, to value individual and organisational contributions, and to apply experience, knowledge and mental models to solve problems. This guide works on the understanding that crisis management and resolution will invariably require interagency collaboration at some level. You will need to practice leadership that maximises the application of diverse institutional cultures and capabilities, often in the absence of command authority or decision rights. We call this the Integrated Approach.

You may be fortunate enough to be studying this guidance in advance of a crisis. Equally likely, it may have been handed to you at the same time as your appointment to the role. Whatever way that it comes to you, I wish you the very best as you take your next steps as a leader within an interagency team.

General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC
Chief of the Defence Force



These are the stories of seven taskforce leaders who share their experience of a range of challenging situations. The purpose of these reflections is to prepare leaders of interagency task groups yet to come. The material you will read covers the personal experience of civilian, military and police leaders in both domestic and international environments from Australian and New Zealand perspectives.

For further information explore the recorded interviews that are part of the interagency leadership toolkit available on acmc.gov.au.

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Effective Approaches to Australian Interagency Cooperation

Ms Lyndall Sachs PSM

Introduction

Interagency leadership is about using influence and negotiation to forge and maintain consensus and cooperation among diverse participants. Within a taskforce, it is about building team spirit and a sense of shared objectives.

In this article I offer my thoughts on behaviours, practices and leadership approaches that will help leaders fulfil their responsibilities in interagency environments. I draw on my leadership experience with an interagency team responding to the volatile situation in Iraq in 2014-15 while I was Australia's Ambassador to Iraq, based in Baghdad.

My experience in interagency leadership

I have observed interagency cooperation, particularly the civilian-military interface, in several working contexts.

Internationally, I worked with the United Nations in Yugoslavia and Zaire; the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands in 2003; and as Ambassador to Lebanon where I led the 2006 evacuation.

I was part of Canberra-based responses to the September 11 attacks in the United States, the Bali bombings and the Boxing Day 2004 Tsunami.

From 2011 to 2015 I was Ambassador to Iraq. In September 2019, I assumed the position of Australia's Ambassador to Iran, based in Tehran.

The 2014 crisis in Iraq

In December 2011, with the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, the world's focus shifted elsewhere. The rise of Daesh in 2013-14 and its declaration of a caliphate across much of Syria and Iraq suddenly brought Iraq back to the attention of policy makers.

Information about this little-known group was scarce. The loss of expertise on Iraq following the downsizing of the international community's engagement in Iraq compounded this issue.

With Baghdad under threat, the Australian Government wanted to build an understanding of developments and how they might affect Australian interests.

In addition to ensuring the safety and security of the embassy and its personnel, I was responsible for representing Australian interests in Iraq



Ms Lyndall Sachs, then Australian Ambassador to Iraq, receives the 76th Iraqi Army Brigade sword from Brigadier Ali Khalid Abdullah Ali.

and managing communications between key stakeholders including the Australian and Iraqi Governments and like-minds. The situation was extremely dangerous, and information was scant and often contradictory. It was difficult to engage with the relevant Iraqi authorities, who were struggling to respond to the threat.

My key objective was to gauge and assess the rapidly spiralling environment and communicate to Canberra what we were seeing and hearing on the ground. It was important I work closely with the Iraqi Government to understand their priorities and their concerns and communicate this back to Australia to ensure we provided an appropriate response.

Of concern for both Iraq and Australia was securing the legal basis for Australia's military presence. The presence of foreign troops in Iraq was politically very sensitive and needed to be carefully managed. My team and I worked very closely with an array of agencies in Canberra and with Australia's like-minded allies as part of the international response to the circumstances. The discussion focused on how Australian military trainers could assist the Iraqi response. With the United States preparing to play a key leadership role in the international response, it was important Australia engage closely on how its contribution would complement their plans.

Our task was to bring information together in a seamless way and ensure that the various stakeholders understood the complexity and challenges that we were dealing with, including the domestic sensitivities facing the Iraqi authorities.

We had to work across multiple layers of information sharing and decision-making in different locations and different time zones.

My experience responding to this complex situation informs the following observations and advice.

Initial challenges and priorities

The most important role of a positional leader is to understand and communicate government objectives and to share these clearly with everyone involved. However, in the initial days of a crisis response it can be difficult to gain a clear understanding of objectives because governments are working up their response, which is often multi-layered. You need to consider the connected pressures that governments may be under.

In the first one or two days of a taskforce being set up, focus on gaining an understanding of the scope of the issue and what the host government and Australian Government objectives are. This lays the foundations for your advice to Canberra. This is important because, if your advice is wrong, decision-makers may make decisions which will have long lasting and possibly negative consequences.

Next, understand what resources, skills and capabilities your taskforce needs, and communicate gaps that will affect its ability to respond. It is critical to identify priorities in the early stages of a response. If you have taskforce priorities wrong, you will be focusing on the wrong things.

Trust is fundamental to all teams. You will need to start building trust – both in yourself as a leader and among the members of the taskforce – from

the outset. Share with the taskforce your expectations of yourself and of members, and the goals and objectives of the taskforce. You also need to share your experience with the taskforce and how it relates to the work of the taskforce. This step will help ensure people appreciate your skills and capabilities.

Be very conscious that any crisis response can be stressful. You will have to manage your own stress and the stress of your team. They will be looking to you for calm and measured leadership.

Leadership observations and lessons

Use your experience and knowledge

Experience is vital in complex and crisis response environments because it gives you an idea of what to expect.

Leadership is very much about anticipating problems, understanding the risks and drawing on experience and knowledge to achieve workable solutions.

However, every situation is different, so the most important things for a leader to bring to any response are flexibility, adaptability and communication.

Individuals maintain knowledge for a short period of time, so a leader must ensure that knowledge transfer takes place. Learning from previous crises, including lessons

from each organisation, supports the application of knowledge to the next situation you are in.

To achieve knowledge transfer, it is very important to embed personnel, training and information sharing within and across different organisations.

Understand other organisations' perspectives

Different organisations have very different cultures. Try to understand the roles, capabilities, limitations and resources within other organisations so that you can gain insight into how each agency will respond. Embracing and harnessing the differences will help in ensuring agency buy in and foster team spirit, as well as maximising the capabilities of participants and the expertise, skills and resources they bring from their agencies.

Interagency teams will come together more quickly and operate more effectively if the agencies have actively prepared to work together. Communication and relationship-building skills need to be part of training exercises before a response.

An invaluable way of achieving cross-agency understanding is by exchanging staff between agencies. For example, in the lead-up to or during a crisis, liaison officers can improve cooperation by explaining differences and mitigating some of the sharp edges that arise in complex environments. This kind of engagement will help people appreciate that they are working on the breadth of considerations within an Australian response, not just on a single issue for a single contributing agency.

A foreign policy perspective is always going to be very different from a military perspective. A diplomat's role is to communicate and to build

relationships. We recognise that there is a time for military might, but there is also a time for conversation, discussion and negotiation.

As a military leader, developing an understanding of foreign policy will help you appreciate the nuances and complexities of foreign relations and how your organisation fits within broader government efforts. It is also important for diplomats to take the opportunity to engage with military colleagues during training and exercises. This type of engagement is useful to break down stereotypes surrounding the conduct of foreign relations and the role of diplomats – it is not cocktails and canapes but frontline work dealing with very high-level people, often in difficult and dangerous environments.

As was the case in Iraq, the Australian Government's diplomatic representatives are the first point of engagement with another country. The range of skills a diplomat brings include developing relations with a broad array of people across the host government, navigating around and negotiating with senior officials of the host country, and liaising with like-minded missions to ensure that all components of Australia's presence in a country is both safe and appropriate.

Communicate with your team

Your role is also to ensure everyone clearly understands the government's aims and objectives. As objectives firm up, keep team members informed of priorities, roles and responsibilities. Individuals bring very different perspectives to a response. It is critical to ensure that every member understands their roles and that of their agency. Lack of clarity about who has the lead on an issue, how they fit in to the process, and in the overall response will damage team cohesion and lead to conflict and poor decision making.

Teams will look to you for guidance. Providing it can be difficult in the early stages of a response, but it you need to maintain open and frank conversations. Your communication style is important. To make information palatable or to make people embrace it is not just about the content of the message you are delivering; it is about how you deliver that message.

It is also important to be conscious of the potential for 'group think' – unquestioning consensus within a group. You need to create a team environment centred on constructive consultation and contesting ideas and assumptions to ensure the team has looked at an issue from a range of angles.

Be agile

Particularly in the initial days of a response, be alert to changing priorities and objectives. You will need to be agile and flexible in your thinking and ability. Surround yourself with people who can collate information, present it in a cogent manner, critically examine it and contest it if necessary. This approach draws out implicit information and understanding that may be beneath the surface. Recognise that you need to be flexible with the timing of decisions you would like to make and that a slightly delayed decision is better than a bad decision.

Teams also need to be flexible and willing to challenge in a constructive way to test and triangulate information and put it into the context of the situation

at hand. This means that when new information arrives, we can reflect on and revise our decision-making. It also ensures that, to the best of the team's ability, the information we base our decisions on is accurate. This can be difficult because a lot of information is unclear or contradictory. You should be mindful that things change very quickly in fluid environments.

Create a sense of shared purpose

A shared understanding of the taskforce's purpose is vital to effective interagency cooperation. It will enable team members to appreciate the importance of collaboration over competition. Ensure that participants understand that others may have limited scope to shape or influence positions on issues, and this may slow down decision making.



Ms Lyndall Sachs, Commander JTF 633, Rear Admiral Trevor Jones, Assistant Minister for Defence, Stuart Robert and the Commander of the Special Operations Task Group in Iraq.

Interagency leadership includes articulating a vision of the role of the taskforce and what it is aiming to achieve. More important is using this as the foundation to develop a shared sense of the taskforce's goals, purpose and collective responsibility.

The best way to achieve this is by working together with members of the taskforce to identify what the priorities are and to focus on results

and solutions. In practice, this is identifying the skills and capabilities of the agencies and the people represented, then making sure they are used to the best effect.

It is important to bring people along with your sense of leadership. This means empowering agencies and team members to consult within their own hierarchies and across the taskforce to be able to make informed recommendations that can feed into the decision-making process.

Create a culture of collaboration

To foster collaboration within an interagency taskforce people, it is important to be aware of the value of their contribution – as opposed to their status in a competition. The first element of this is ensuring people know that the response is not about an individual agency's contribution. Rather, each agency contributes to a broader vision and objective. The second is ensuring individuals and agencies have their views heard and considered. This includes providing an explanation as why an idea or initiative of an individual or agency does not become a part of taskforce operations.

A clear vision and sense of shared outcome further supports a culture of collaboration. The only way to achieve this is by building trust and setting expectations that the response is going to be about shared endeavour and outcomes and teamwork. An effective practice is talking people through their behaviour and reasons when impediments to collaboration arise, such

as people not contributing, actively undermining or doing something that conflicts with the vision. Where a frank but respectful conversation has not worked, you may need to go to a higher authority to put the team back on a collaborative path.

Conclusion

As an interagency response leader, you need to understand the scope and scale of the issue at hand and the skills and capabilities of your team. You need to communicate the purpose and priorities of the taskforce and build trust in your leadership and among team members. You need to embrace and harness different skills and perspectives and encourage a culture of constructive contestability.

The lesson I would like to share in closing is that interagency environments are all about relationships – building them and maintaining them through influence and negotiation. Within your taskforce, this means building team spirit and a sense of shared objectives.

You also need to look after your own wellbeing as a leader. You are only human. Pace yourself, because if you burn out quickly you will not be able to provide the leadership necessary to achieve what the Australian Government wants.

Interagency Leadership Lessons from the Northern Territory Emergency Response

MAJGEN Dave Chalmers AO, CSC (Ret'd)

Essential building blocks for success in leading an interagency taskforce in complex and challenging circumstances are understanding the different objectives, enabling effective communication and collaboration, understanding agency cultures and adapting your leadership style to suit the team.

In sharing insights from my role as Operational Commander of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) Taskforce between 2007 and 2009 I reflect on the political nature of taskforce leadership and how to get the best from a team in complex and relationship-based interagency operations. I will begin by outlining my previous experience and the challenges involved in setting up the NTER Taskforce. I will then offer some observations and advice on creating successful interagency teams.

My experience of interagency leadership

In 2001–2002 I served as Australian Defence Force (ADF) National Commander of Australian Forces in East Timor, then in 2004–2005 I was Commander Joint Task Force 629 in response to the Boxing Day 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. In 2007, I was appointed Operational Commander of the Australian Government's NTER Taskforce.



Brigadier Dave Chalmers looks out over the devastation of Banda Aceh.

When I took on the NTER Taskforce leadership role I had no experience in Indigenous affairs. It was quite daunting to step into a completely unknown environment, working with agencies I did not know and being responsible for outcomes in areas outside my experience.

However, my previous experience had given me some resilience and confidence in my leadership. Things had gone wrong on previous operations, and there is always a

risk some things might go badly, but I had ADF training and experience to fall back on.

I knew this would help me to make decisions on what to do and how to go forward successfully.

The NTER Taskforce

In 2007 the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse released its final report, *Little Children are Sacred*, which examined child abuse and family violence in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. One of the report's main recommendations was 'That Aboriginal child sexual abuse in the Northern

Territory be designated as an issue of urgent national significance by both the Australian and Northern Territory Governments'.¹

On 21 June 2007, in response to this recommendation, the Australian Government announced the establishment of the NTER Taskforce to oversee its Northern Territory Emergency Response. The taskforce's role was to engage with stakeholders, alert the government to emerging issues and help to promote public understanding of the response.²

At the time, the NTER Taskforce was unique because it brought together the (then) Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Defence – two agencies that do not usually work together. Defence had experience in working with foreign affairs and security agencies, but it had not participated in the implementation of social policies.

In my role as Operational Commander I provided military leadership to coordinate and manage the measures implemented as part of the response. I was to be a coordinator and problem-solver – I was to bring the agencies together to ensure that the delivery of the government's measures was efficient and effective.

Initial challenges

Leading an operation is very different from leading in peacetime or on exercises. The pressure is much greater, and in the back of your mind is the realisation that there are real-world consequences if you get it wrong. Disconcertingly, you get nowhere near the amount of information on an operation that you might during a training exercise. The situation is usually unclear and there will be uncertainty about what you need to achieve. As a leader, your role is to generate certainty to allow the taskforce to move forward.

On the NTER Taskforce I was a main spokesperson for the Emergency Response, both in the media and more generally by contributing to public discussion. At that time, the Emergency Response and my role, were highly politicised.

Many questioned the appropriateness of military leadership in the situation. In performing my role, I had to be very aware of the difference between the military environment and an interagency environment.

As a military leader on a military operation, you speak with authority about what is happening and why you are doing things. In the interagency environment of the Emergency Response I was responsible for how measures rolled out but not for deciding which measures to use. Therefore, in public statements and media spots I needed to tread a fine line between explaining operational policy and justifying it.

Managing community relationships and the dynamics that arose was a leadership challenge. I needed to acknowledge Indigenous people's negative perception of the Emergency Response while gaining enough acceptance to support delivery of measures in a community.

Initial priorities

One of my first priorities was to establish a taskforce headquarters. There were no guidelines or doctrine to assist with this, and the public servants assigned to the Emergency Response had no experience in running an operational headquarters.

TASKFORCE OPERATIONS CENTRE

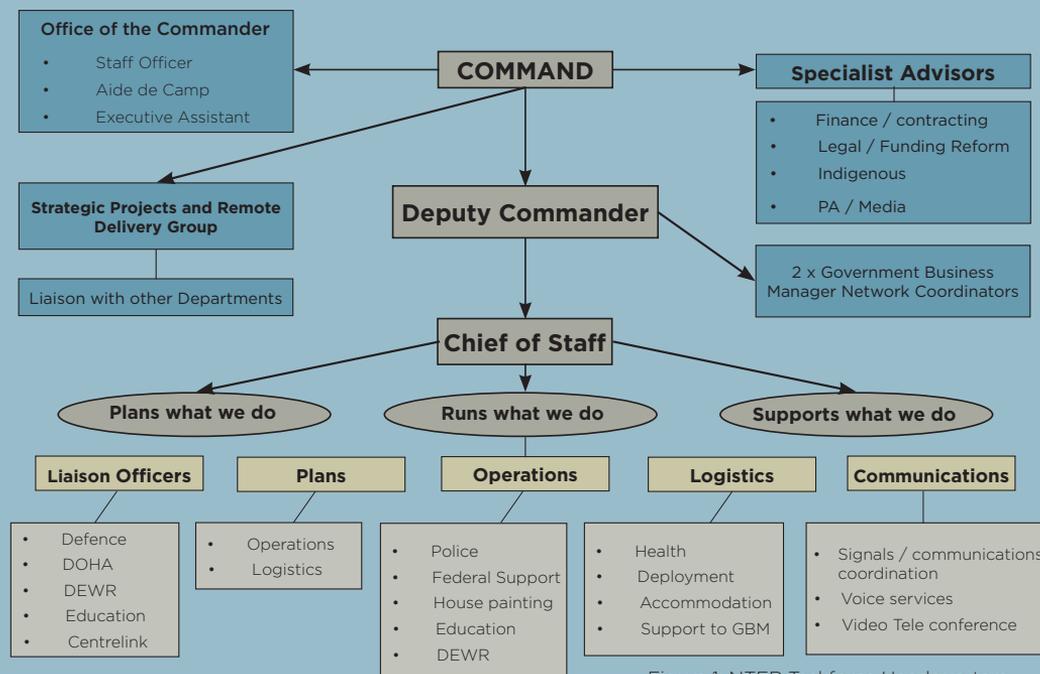


Figure 1: NTER Taskforce Headquarters

However, I knew what functions worked well in Defence – liaison officers, plans, operations, logistics and communications – so I translated them into a model for an interagency environment, adapting them to meet the needs of the situation and the taskforce. In setting up the headquarters structure, I assigned people to functions that were not directly related to the delivery of their department’s measures. As I explained to my new staff, I did this so that staff would become integrated into the purpose of the NTER Taskforce as a whole and develop a team culture centred on the operation rather than on agency allegiances.

My second priority was to get out on the ground and find out what was happening. This was key to the success of the taskforce. I spent a lot of time in communities meeting with people and listening to different points of view. When problems arose, I had firsthand experience and could talk with confidence about a measure in communities. This empowered me to respond to and deal with issues.

Lastly, I needed to be clear in my own mind about my leadership expectations and priorities to provide the Taskforce. Having clarity of thought resulted in effective communication with the taskforce and we were able to openly discuss priorities and pressures.

Leadership observations and lessons

Understand the objectives

Military power is almost always part of a broader government effort. Think through and understand the political objective of your leadership role, not just the military objective. It is particularly important to understand that what constitutes success in a narrow military sense may not achieve the actual taskforce objective.

The operations Australia undertakes are not actioned in silos, so they should not be viewed in agency-specific terms. Leaders need to appreciate the differences between what is important from their agency's perspective and what is important in the national interest, and the types of leadership and effort needed to deliver both.

Focus on communication

Listen to Communities. The voices of the 73 Indigenous communities who were part of the response were an integral part of NTER operations and planning

To ensure communication with communities, I placed liaison officers into each of the communities we were working with. These officers were a much-needed interface between communities and government agencies. They helped manage the influx of bureaucrats into communities and were a source of community information. The officers were able to provide advice on the best time to visit communities, and they brought together agencies that were working on similar issues to align their efforts and reduce the number of meetings with communities, thereby reducing the burden on community members.



(Above) Rachel Willika presents Major General Dave Chalmers with a letter of her concerns for the community, outside the Sunrise Health Clinic at Manyallaluk, NT.

(Left) Carpenter Guy Rankin talks with Major General Dave Chalmers during a community meeting.

Understand organisational culture

Recognise the importance of organisational culture. We all belong to agency 'tribes' with distinct ways of doing things. Leaders must have the insight and perception to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their own culture

and of other people's cultures. Your culture is not necessarily better – in an interagency environment, it is just different. Use the strengths of other cultures to make the taskforce more effective.

Build a culture of collaboration

Over the 18 months the headquarters existed, we were able to develop an Emergency Response identity by melding different agency cultures into our own unique one.

One of the big challenges in the early days of the NTER Taskforce was that agencies operated independently, and their staff did not want to collaborate or share information, particularly if there was bad news. Sometimes a measure rolling out was not going well, and agencies would be secretive about it and refuse to share information. We had to get past this, and we did so by building trust and recognition between taskforce members. The trust built internally transferred to their respective agencies.

Recognise people, their voice and their contributions. This will greatly contribute to building the team and creating a team culture.

In an interagency environment, you can bring everyone together by letting everyone voice their views and talk through issues.

Communicate with your team in a way that brings your personality to the operation. You are not telling people how to do their job – rather, you are giving them a framework within which they can do their jobs.

Make your expectations clear to people. When I set up the taskforce, I established clear expectations and priorities and put them in writing. I sent them to all staff and reinforced the message by going around and speaking directly with people.

I also held regular all-staff headquarters meetings to communicate weekly priorities and pressures and hear briefings from two or three senior executives on their area of responsibility. Staff then had the opportunity to ask questions so that they could receive information directly from me on what was happening. Regular meetings were also an effective way to reinforce outcomes we were working towards and how we were going to achieve them in a highly politicised environment.

Be prepared to adapt your leadership style

Keep in mind that leaders must be adaptive. To get the best out of the people on the NTER Taskforce I needed to modify my leadership style to embrace the collaborative styles that exist in other agencies. I needed to wind back my Type A personality and really listen more and speak less to ensure that everyone became integrated and a part of the team.

In the Defence environment, meetings and collaboration are incisive. At first, I found the social policy agency culture of listening and allowing everyone a say cumbersome and frustrating. But it was important for me to adapt to a meeting format that allowed everyone to contribute, because it led to shared understanding and at least the perception of consensus-based decision-making. So, resist the temptation to stop people talking because meetings have become interminable! If conversation is shut down, people feel excluded.

Conclusion

I was fortunate to have many leadership positions throughout my time with Defence, including being Operational Commander for the NTER Taskforce. I hope that the experience I gained during that operation and others will assist those facing similar situations in the future. Leading in an interagency environment is not easy, but understanding agency cultures, adapting your leadership style to suit your team, and communicating effectively are essential building blocks for success.

Page 7, Photo Credit: Corporal Cameron Jamieson
Department of Defence

Page 10, Photo Credit: Department of Defence

¹ Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse 2007, Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle 'Little Children are Sacred', Northern Territory Government, p 22.

² Australian Government, Department of Social Security 2008, Northern Territory Emergency Response: One Year On, Commonwealth of Australia.

Enabling More Capable Whole-of-Government Cooperation – A Military Perspective

MAJGEN Chris Field AM, CSC

In this essay I articulate lessons I have identified from my experience working in interagency environments between 2009 and 2019. I offer the lessons to assist leaders at all levels in disaster response, recovery and reconstruction to strengthen whole-of-government cooperation.

The lessons reflect how my thinking has evolved from a military-primacy in operations to cognisance of the nuances of interagency, whole-of-government and whole-of-community environments. The focus of these lessons support the ADF's contribution to whole-of-government cooperation, as outlined in Australia's *Defence Strategic Update 2020*, which states that the ADF "must be more capable of working with Commonwealth, state and territory agencies, including in response to disasters within Australia."³ Because of this focus and my military background, this essay includes some military concepts and terminology.

My interagency leadership experiences

Between 2009 and 2019 I led three separate operations in two Australian states, responding to fires, floods and cyclones. Tragically, those disasters collectively led to the loss of more than 220 lives; damage and destruction of around 40,000 homes as well as other property and infrastructure; and costs to the community, business and economy of more than \$14.3 billion.

In 2009 I was Senior Australian Defence Force (ADF) Officer, Puckapunyal Military Area, Victoria, during Operation Victorian Fires Assist. In 2010–2011 I was Chief of Operations & Plans in the Queensland Reconstruction Authority during Operation Queenslander, assisting devastated communities affected by the Queensland floods. In 2017 I was Queensland State Recovery Coordinator during Operation Queensland Recovery after Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

Lessons for interagency leaders

Build Relationships and Understanding

1. **Before a disaster event:** Relationships should be developed and rehearsed in 'Phase Zero' – the time encompassing all community activities prior to the beginning of a disaster event. 'Phase Zero' is military lexicon and refers to everything done to prevent conflicts from developing in the first place.

Before a disaster event is the ideal time to rehearse relationships, interactions, communication channels and decision making.

This covers pre-and post-disaster learning events which bring stakeholders together and contribute to greater understanding of local community recovery and resilience.

'Phase Zero' in disaster relief operations means stakeholders develop mutual trust, shared understanding and disciplined procedures to maximise resilience and cooperation before a disaster event.

These opportunities lead to daily and weekly touchpoints that result in habitual relationships between key community stakeholders.

This includes state, district and local disaster management organisations, centres, groups and first responders, and people responsible for management of roads, seaports, airports, railways and essential public infrastructure.

This covers pre-and post-disaster learning events which bring stakeholders together and contribute to greater understanding of local community recovery and resilience. These opportunities lead to daily and weekly touchpoints that result in habitual relationships between key community stakeholders.

This includes state, district and local disaster management organisations, centres, groups and first responders, and people responsible for management of roads, seaports, airports, railways and essential public infrastructure.

2. Defence as a supporting agency: In interagency environments, cooperation is based on a collegiate, transparent and trust-based relationship that can be known as a “supported/supporting relationship.” This relationship designates the lead agency as the “supported” agency because they receive assistance from other agencies. The agencies that assist are known as “supporting” agencies because they complement or assist another organisation.

A supporting/supported relationship is effective because acknowledges the lead agency and replaces a formal, rigid and hierarchy that does not match the nature of interagency environments.

Defence as a supporting agency offers significant capability during disaster response in terms of people, practices and equipment. During Operation Queenslander, the assignment of a small team of three ADF personnel to write the Operation Queenslander State Community, Economic and Environmental Recovery and Reconstruction Plan 2011-2013 reflected where Defence adds value and capability.⁴



Brigadier Chris Field, Commander 3rd Brigade and the State Recovery Coordinator meets with The Honourable Jackie Trad, Deputy Premier of Queensland, during her visit to the ADF's Operation Queensland Assist 2017.

3. **Listen to Community Needs:** During a response, leaders need to build or strengthen connections with the communities they are assisting. Some local and community leaders will be strong-willed and experienced, so good leaders need to listen for soft voices. These voices may include local leaders from small, volunteer, self-trained, experienced and highly motivated community-based organisations. Local knowledge will assist you define the problem you are facing and understand how community members are supporting the needs of their own communities.

4. **Assisting Vulnerable Communities:** There is a need to understand and support all parts of communities, including the elderly, disadvantaged, renters, at-risk homeowners, not-for-profit organisations, primary producers and small business owners. This requires two actions from interagency leaders: problem framing and a focus on people's resilience.

(1) **Problem framing:** These actions include defining and understanding community recovery needs and gaps in meeting these needs. First responders such as fire and rescue, state emergency, police services and local authorities, will compile rapid damage assessments which quickly map vulnerable communities to assist in framing the problem at hand. Simultaneously, other stakeholders will compile and provide their own comprehensive data to define problems requiring solutions. Precision in this data is important.

Examples of metrics and critical information requirements that enable leaders and decision-makers to frame, understand and address community recovery needs, include:

- number of people affected
- geographic areas impacted
- Local Government Areas (LGAs) activated under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA)
- kilometres of roads and rail repaired
- sea and airports reopened
- number and value of grants paid to affected people
- value of community recovery exceptional circumstances grants paid to primary producers, not for profit organisations and small business
- number of volunteer organisations active in affected areas and amount of volunteer work performed
- number of homes and businesses with power and water restored
- number of schools and early childhood centres reopened
- number of inspections of government assets and quantity of government assets assessed as damaged
- hectares and number of parks and forests reopened
- number and value of insurance claims

Once damage from a disaster event is framed, defined, assessed and understood, the recovery, reconstruction, reconnection and rebuilding of communities is now a problem that is known and can be addressed.

(2) Focus on people's resilience: People and communities are at the centre of disaster response, recovery, reconstruction, reconnection and re-building and all operational solutions need to consider and enable their resilience. A leadership focus on resilience is an idea, state of mind or feeling that ensures community recovery is locally designed, led and coordinated.

Operation Queensland Recovery 2017-2019 demonstrated the benefits of this approach by including eight Local Recovery Plans written by Local Government Authorities as 'plans-on-a-page.' These plans empowered, enabled and accelerated local recovery leadership by articulating and recognising:

- Local leaders: Mayor, Council Chief Executive Officer and Disaster Recovery Officer.
- Ethical values: articulation that local leadership is empowered and resourced to enable people and communities to identify, assess and reach their potential.
- Local voices and narrative: description of community needs to achieve recovery, bring purpose of local recovery efforts, identify the methods to achieve recovery and define what successful recovery looks like.
- Local recovery group: description of functions, membership and tasks to map projects required and needed, and respective project leadership, completion, deliverables, location and resources.

5. **Enable Charities and Volunteers:** Communities work in their local area pre-, during, and post-disaster events and leaders need to enable and unify their efforts. Charities, volunteers, not-for-profit entities and caring citizens are the heart of disaster response, recovery, reconstruction, reconnection and re-building and they complement first responder, government and private sector services. Local community resources can be harnessed through understanding volunteer-based capabilities, enabling community selflessness and momentum by integrating their efforts into operational Lines of Recovery, supporting community recovery hubs, referral, information centres and outreach teams that provide information, and unifying electronic resources to enable wide access of support.

6. **Information Sharing:** Information and intelligence is a critical component of disaster relief operations, and leaders need to maintain a cooperative relationship with other stakeholders to optimise information flow and intelligence sharing. A single point of truth for critical information such as weather warnings, road closures, river levels and coastal conditions, and open communication between all stakeholders results in operational clarity and rapid sourcing of information. In-turn, people and communities in need receive agile assistance that builds their resilience and increases confidence in the response.

7. **Unity-of-Purpose:** Planning and conducting whole-of-nation operations brings agencies, stakeholders and communities together with unity-of-purpose. This approach is necessary to ensure the effective and efficient coordination of resources to achieve government objectives. It reduces duplication of resources, capabilities and functions while simultaneously achieving cooperation and synergies within and between government services.

In 2011, Operation Queenslander moved beyond whole-of-government arrangements and utilised a unity-of-purpose approach to disaster relief. This approach centred on senior state departmental leaders who organised and led sub-committees based on six Lines of Reconstruction:

1. Human and social
2. Economic
3. Environment
4. Building recovery
5. Roads and transport
6. Community liaison and communication

These efforts achieved Commonwealth, state, business, peak body, non-government organisations, local government and community-based participation and harmonised mutually reinforcing, interdependent, synchronised and tailored lines of reconstruction.

A focus on collective impact through unity-of-purpose brings together stakeholders in a structured and disciplined way that achieves cross-sector teaming and a common purpose that results in long-lasting change.

Operational Governance

1. **Define the Problem:** To support unity-of-purpose and collective action, leaders need to provide early or preliminary guidance to planners. Preliminary guidance is the leader's opportunity to articulate their intent and vision to their planners. In recovery operations, it is beneficial for leaders to include the following:

- the environment
- known problems to be solved
- direction from higher authorities, including government
- the leader's personal understanding of the mission combined with their professional knowledge and experience
- receipt of confirmation and back-briefs from planners to leaders

2. **Planning:** The effective application of a planning process is a core leadership skill in disaster relief operations to deal with the uncertainty and complexity of these environments. The ADF's Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP) is effective in disaster relief operations and overcomes differences in whole-of-government planning, writing and language. Time is lost and plans delayed when people are frozen by an inability to write, understand or develop products needed for operational governance.

From experience in Operation Queenslander, the modification of JMAP is achievable for planners by changing military language of 'purpose, method and end state' is cross-departmental language of 'why, how and outcome



Commander of the Emergency Response Force, LTCOL Jen Harris (right), is briefed by a Queensland Police officer on the damage caused to the town of Bowen, Queensland by Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

required.' To bring uniformity to interagency environments, consider how JMAP can be adapted to achieve cohesive planning, writing and language for operational government.

Disaster relief operations cover response, recovery, reconstruction, reconnection and rebuilding operations and achieving and maintain operational momentum is based on campaign planning and establishing a campaign sequel. Leaders need to be predisposed to designing responses that match complex, evolving and long-term operational problems.

In short, Eisenhower's dictum reflects disaster relief planning:

Plans are worthless, but planning is everything. There is a very great distinction because when you are planning for an emergency you must start with this one thing: the very definition of 'emergency' is that it is unexpected, therefore it is not going to happen the way you are planning.⁵

3. Templates and tensions: In domestic settings, organisational procedures and templates do not always match the complexities of disaster relief planning, including post-disaster considerations. To gain a fuller understanding of effective governance structures for the situation at hand, consider lessons from previous disaster events for two key reasons:

a. Consulting with people who have disaster response experience provides fundamental ideas, principles and practices. Having an experienced employee seconded to the response further enhances knowledge sharing. In my own experience, the sharing of lessons from the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority provided the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, including myself, with a useful series of lessons that informed thinking and planning.

4. Aligned boundaries: Clear and aligned geographical and organisational boundaries assists communities recover because resource and responsibility boundaries are known. Useful knowledge includes:

- federal and state departments, services and disaster management boundaries
- local government areas
- areas of disaster alert coverage
- rulings on Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA)
- areas of media, mobile phone and internet coverage
- areas enabled by service providers such as water and electricity networks
- probabilistic storm tide modelling and water catchments areas
- roads, bridges and rivers employed as boundaries of convenience

5. 'Future Operations' in Team Design: Operation Queenslander included a small team of dedicated military planners, which confirmed in my mind that operational and strategic success hinges on an interagency team that integrates actions officers, leaders and planners.

During a disaster response, action officers focus on day-to-day urgent activities and leaders concentrate on providing guidance and gaining stakeholder trust and support. At the height of a crisis, furthest from people's

minds is the need for planners – a dedicated group of people whose sole purpose is to provide a post-disaster strategic vision enabled by a campaign plan.

A planning group ensures a response is future-focused because time and space is available to think critically and creatively to understand, visualise and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them. The group can maintain response momentum to reduce the fatigue of action officers and leaders from the relentless daily pressure of a crisis.

Individual Leadership Lessons

1. **Influence over Command:** Leaders need to nurture disparate organisations and stakeholders, and a ‘unity of command’ model that uses orders, direction and reporting is not effective in these situations because it does not suit all organisational cultures. Instead, leaders need to visit, talk and listen to people, align and rehearse procedures, and maintain open communication with key stakeholders to achieve unity of purpose. This means leaders need to influence, rather than command, stakeholders towards a common purpose.

2. **Critical thinking:** Seek out and understand theoretical concepts to develop critical thinking skills needed to address the complex, unanticipated and unstructured problems faced in interagency environments. One valuable concept is the utility of design, which is a “methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualise, and describe problems and approaches to solving them.”⁶ Interagency environments are ‘plans-in-motion’ which benefit from using a design methodology to create flexible, adaptive and iterative solutions.

During Operation Queensland, the ADF planning team employed design methodologies to contribute to a plan that enabled the Queensland government to respond to multiple events occurring simultaneously across the entire state including river and flash flooding, coastal storm surges, cyclones and monsoonal rains.

3. The value of education and training

There are two points regarding the value of education and training, and leaders need to commit to lifelong learning to prepare for working in interagency environments.

Firstly, optimise every education and training opportunity, both personally and professionally. This means continuous self-education through reading, discussions and critical thinking.

Secondly, education and training are not restricted to the classroom, domain, firing range, field training area or airspace. Knowledge and experience are gained through exposure to interagency operations, local government authorities, complex urban planning challenges, non-military leadership styles and Commonwealth-State interactions. These education and training experiences enhances multiagency cohesion and they enable people to learn and thrive in complex, uncertain and demanding environments.

Conclusion

Defence has made a strategic commitment to be more capable of working with Commonwealth, state and territory agencies, including in response to disasters within Australia. This essay provides lessons for future leaders based on my experience and knowledge of domestic natural disaster response. These lessons centre on building relationships and understanding, operational governance and effective individual leadership traits. They span tactical to strategic considerations and present a mix of organisational and individual opportunities for training, education, development and capability realisation.

My aim was to demonstrate maturation of thinking as experience and knowledge grows over time, within the broader context of enabling the ADF to respond to future disasters within whole-of-government requirements. More broadly this paper aims to assist with continuous change as the ADF listens to, learns from and understands whole-of-government requirements to enable our development of more capable whole-of-government cooperation.

Page 14, Photo Credit:SGT Rob Hack
Department of Defence

Page 17, Photo Credit: CPL David Said
Department of Defence

³ Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update*, Canberra, 2020, p. 40

⁴ The small team of planners was led by Lieutenant Colonel (now Colonel) Jim Hammett (Royal Australian Infantry Corps), and included Lieutenant Colonel (now Brigadier) Sue Graham (Royal Australian Corps of Transport) and Captain Evan Armstrong (Royal Australian Corps of Signals). Other ADF members who made significant contributions to *Operation Queensland*, especially the Implementation and Local Plans include: Lieutenant Commander Jo Beadle, RAN, and Squadron Leader (now Wing Commander) Alan Brown, RAAF. In addition, Queensland Police Service members, who are also Army Reserve Officers, made considerable contributions to *Operation Queensland*, including: Superintendent Mark Plath (Colonel, Army Reserve), and Detective Senior Sergeant Steve Vokes (Lieutenant Colonel, Army Reserve).

⁵ Dwight D Eisenhower, 235 - Remarks at the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference, Washington DC, 14 November 1957

⁶ Army Doctrine Publication No. 5-0, *The Operations Process*, Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 31 July 2019, p. 2-16

Reflections as Police Commissioner, United Nations Mission in Liberia, 2014-2016

Superintendent Greg Hinds

This article focuses on what I learned and observed in leading the Police Component of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission in Liberia following Second Liberian Civil War.

Arriving in Liberia with an open mindset and adopting a 'be present' leadership approach guided much of my thinking and actions to unify effort, develop a clearer and more coherent strategic direction, and set out a roadmap to prioritise and achieve our mandate.

My experience of interagency leadership

I joined the police in 1987, at the age of 19, and spent 15 years with the NSW Police Force, finishing at the NSW Police Academy in charge of Intelligence Training. I transferred to the Australian Federal Police in 2002 and since then have had the opportunity to work within very challenging and evolving circumstances. In-service training and tertiary studies were fundamental to shaping my ability to achieve strategic law enforcement outcomes, and lead and inspire people.

From January 2014 to December 2016 I was Police Commissioner with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In this role I was responsible for strategic leadership of the UNMIL Police Component – a body with 40 contributing countries and 1,795 staff members.

As Police Commissioner with UNMIL I led capacity building and development for Liberian law enforcement agencies; gave operational support for law enforcement; and advised UN Mission leadership and the Liberian government on national security, policing and law enforcement issues. I was also responsible for enabling the successful transition of security responsibilities and operations back to the Liberian government to fulfil the UN Security Council's mandate for the mission.

As part of UNMIL's leadership team, I also performed the roles of UNMIL Special Representative of the Secretary-General and, for longer periods, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law (D/SRSG). As D/SRSG, I led the Rule of Law Pillar for seven months during the height of the Ebola outbreak and cumulatively performed the role for more than 66 weeks during my three years in Liberia. It is important to make this point because the position came with considerable leadership requirements and reflects the need for leaders to adapt and to take on extra responsibility at short notice.

United Nations Mission in Liberia

The UNMIL peacekeeping force was established in September 2003 to monitor a ceasefire agreement in Liberia following the resignation of the president and the conclusion of the Second Liberian Civil War. The peacekeeping mission formally withdrew on 30 March 2018.



Commissioner Hinds on a field visit with the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Commissioner.

Thankfully, there was an absence of bombs and bullets in Liberia – which was not the case for many other peacekeeping missions at that time – although they did occur sporadically. Instead, our operating environment was characterised by asymmetrical threats, disgruntled former armed combatants, and wide-ranging deadly infectious disease, including Ebola and Lassa fever.

UNMIL was able to establish peace and create a permissive peacekeeping environment quickly. However, reintegrating people into society following hostilities was more challenging to achieve.

Initial challenges and priorities

When I first took up the role of Police Commissioner with UNMIL, the position had been vacant and there was a sense of urgency in getting to Liberia. To prepare for my role, I participated in the annual Police Commissioner and Heads of Police Component Conference in New York in early November and started receiving my in-briefings from the various HQ areas. I finally arrived in Liberia on 10 January 2014 after more than 60 hours of travel from Canberra.

From the outset in my role as Police Commissioner I was mindful that many people would not have worked with an Australian police officer before. My personal and leadership shadow would be cast across my leadership team and working relationships within the UN family and externally across national counterparts and the international community. This meant that first impressions were important and would also be lasting.

It was clear that I needed to set a high standard early by leading by example – a priority consistent with my personal trait of being a ‘practical perfectionist’. At the same time, I acknowledged that I would be on a steep learning curve but recognised that I would have people around me to support, advise and guide me because I was new to UNMIL and also the UN.

I used the early part of my time as Police Commissioner to develop an approach that would unify and focus efforts, harness potential and direct it towards achieving our mandate priorities set by the UN Security Council.

Also, from the beginning my leadership efforts focused on developing relationships with international partners by understanding their national priorities and objectives and realising opportunities to cooperate and collaborate.

Joint Development Framework

When I arrived, it became clear that there was no framework in place to guide the Police Component’s operations and promote national ownership of restructuring and reform priorities. This resulted in an ad hoc approach to Police Component activities and priorities.

The Liberia National Police (LNP) had completed a baseline assessment with UNMIL support in September 2013. The assessment reflected on institutional,

administrative and operational effectiveness and development of Liberian police capacity. Reading the assessment on arrival gave me insight into the status of 10 years of capacity building and development and provided me with the foundation to set a strategic vision and address areas that needed to be changed. However, it showed that the Police Component had been operating without strategic vision and lacked evaluation and monitoring systems and joint development/partnership frameworks.

In February 2014, UNMIL received a Military and Police Capability Study visit, followed directly by a Strategic Review Mission from UN Headquarters in March. In preparing for these visits, it quickly became apparent that the Police Component required a longer-term plan to guide a more structured and systematic approach to restructuring and reform aligned to a longer-term plan, culminating in an exit strategy. I led efforts to gain national leadership, ownership and buy-in to identify and implement operational priorities based on the opportunities and gaps identified in the assessment.

To guide these efforts, the Police Component developed a Joint Development Framework with LNP and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) to meet the needs of the mission and ensure sustainable progress. The framework centred on three partnerships at different levels to engage middle and senior leadership: a high-level Joint Steering Committee; a working-level Executive Committee; and a supporting secretariat.

The Joint Development Framework yielded significant dividends and was adapted and matured with the various stages of institutional development. It was critical during the Ebola crisis and security transition phases and essential to decision-making and advisory support in the implementation and operationalisation phases of the new Police Act and Immigration Act.

Recruitment

Once established, the UNMIL Police Component's priorities needed to accord with the mission mandate. It was essential to ensure that priorities matched with the requisite skill sets within the UN Police (UNPOL). This was so that we could identify police, immigration and civilian staff with the critical skill sets for a capacity-building mission.

Heads of Police Components will continue to struggle if the skill sets of their workforce do not match the priorities in their work plans. Skills-based recruitment, matched to evolving mission needs and requirements, will include (in a mandated capacity-building mission) a need for greater gender and national balance, a better mix and use of specialised advisors, enhanced use of regional cooperation and engagement, greater focus on report writing and analytical skills, and engagement of personnel with skills in relevant enabling systems (including human resources, administration, fleet management, finance, logistics and asset management).

Ebola crisis and the regional delivery model

In March 2014 Ebola spread to Liberia from Guinea. Its rapid and uncontrolled spread became a major national disaster by July 2014. At one point, the disease threatened livelihoods to a point where Liberia's stability, safety and security were at significant risk. The gravity of the disaster locally led to the

declaration of a three-month state of emergency and led the UN Security Council to proclaim Ebola a threat to international peace and stability.

It became evident during the Ebola Crisis that UNPOL's regional delivery model was not fit for purpose. It was characterised by a scattered and unsystematic approach across UNPOL's 27 team sites. During the Ebola crisis, Liberia's law enforcement agencies coordinated and planned their responses at the county level from county capitals.

We needed to develop an integrated headquarter and county (hub and spoke) delivery model. This change in UNPOL's delivery model strengthened county mechanisms by shifting effort away from small stations to county headquarters. The new model allowed UNPOL to become more connected with Liberian County Commanders by integrating field-level specialist advisors with the LNP and the BIN in all aspects of daily work and restructuring and reform efforts.

The county-based model reflected a shift in focus to building county mechanisms at the institutional level rather than investing in developing individuals. This change operationalised and strengthened county mechanisms, ensuring greater access to and delivery of policing and immigration services across the country.

By shifting to a county-based delivery model and strengthening the headquarters in the capital, Monrovia, the Police Component was able to take a more united, cohesive, targeted and holistic approach to strengthening institutions, systems and processes. Very importantly, this included decentralising essential services.

Donor coordination, partnerships and deconfliction

An important part of my role was to support the coordination and harmonisation of Liberia's broader capacity-building and development agenda. To achieve this, early on in my deployment I established a Donor Coordination Group comprising international, national, non-government and civil society partners working in security sector reform and criminal justice transformation.

This group was instrumental in setting restructuring and reform priorities and helping to develop capacity for national counterparts to better equip them in operationalising this change. It enabled me to match capacity building and development with gaps in outcomes that national counterparts had identified in their self-assessment exercises and provided a platform to deconflict and realign capacity-building and development essentials.

Leadership observations and lessons

Be present

Develop the ability to be mindful. Mindfulness as a leadership trait allows you to be fully present. This was fundamental to my leadership approach in Liberia. It grounded me and allowed me to focus on the here and now.

In my role, I could not be reactive. Being present allowed me to listen to others and observe what was going on around me.

While I understood mindfulness as the ability to be fully present, I did struggle with not being overly reactive or overwhelmed with my role and responsibilities. Mindfulness is a quality we all possess; however, it takes continual learning and commitment to effectively apply it.

Build trust and confidence in your leadership through patience and resilience

It is important to be patient and resilient and to trust your team. Create a space for people to reach their full potential – to grow, make mistakes, adapt and continuously learn. This is especially important in a situation with compressed timeframes and complex requirements.



Commissioner Hinds conducts field visits with workers and community groups

When working in Liberia, at times it was obvious to me what needed to change or what we needed to do differently but, because we were there to support, advise and reform, I had to turn change into a journey and bring everyone along, including the Police Component and national counterparts.

This meant creating and cementing trust and confidence in who I was as a leader, not just because I was

the Police Commissioner but also due to the need to lead and direct change within the mission to achieve our mandate priorities.

I needed to show my human side, living by the adage ‘What I do is important, but it doesn’t make me important’. This means placing unconditional trust in others, particularly my leadership team. This was a little daunting and uncomfortable, but the upside was that I knew through experience that people grow when they are most uncomfortable – get comfortable with being uncomfortable!

Galvanise your purpose and values

Ensure that your purpose and values settle before you communicate them and make them well understood. Early on I developed a Commissioner’s Intent, which set out a vision and a mission to galvanise purpose. The focus was on what needed to be in place before UNMIL’s departure from Liberia – the mission end state.

In support of the vision, and in focusing on mandate implementation, it was important to instil and champion the key principles and values that were to guide the work and activities of the Police Component. They were:

- promote, protect and respect human rights
- provide support that was gender-responsive, with attention to the needs of vulnerable groups
- oppose fraud and corruption in all its forms
- operate in an environmentally conscious manner
- conduct thorough and standardised assessments
- implement restructuring and reform efforts within a wider rule of law and security sector reform context

- identify and recruit specialised capacities to fulfil mandate implementation
- ensure capacity development was demand driven and appropriate to Liberia's needs
- recognise the political context in which we operate
- respect Liberian ownership and broad buy-in
- focus on sustainability
- regularly evaluate delivery
- cultivate partnerships and collaborate.

Set expectations with all team members from the outset

Make sure your team members know from the start what your requirements are. I personally delivered the Commissioner's Intent to all new UNMIL members during their induction period. The Commissioner's Intent was critical in establishing expectations and orientating their thinking and purpose towards being peacekeepers in Liberia. By attending each induction program, I was able to focus my team on delivering the mission mandate and reinforce the behavioural standards expected of them.

There is a natural bias among deployed police and immigration officers to approach their work from an operational viewpoint. This would be appropriate for a mandate with executive authority, but it was not consistent with UNMIL's restructuring and reform remit.

I realised that, as part of the Police Component's broader change management process, it was important to reaffirm and emphasise that our mandate involved capacity building rather than operational activities. It took some time for mindsets to transition to this – it was easy to default to operational roles rather than being advisors, coaches and mentors. The change took many advisors out of their comfort zones, so they needed constant messaging and guidance to re-orientate their thinking.

Cultivate productive relationships

To be successful, it is important to invest personally and professionally in key relationships. From the outset I recognised that it was essential for me to find culturally appropriate solutions to meet Liberia's needs – 'Liberian-based solutions'. While I could draw on the backgrounds, skills, experience and expertise of those I worked with, we had to ensure that national counterparts also played their part. This required tact, diplomacy, resilience and patience, coupled with the ability to actively listen, negotiate, persuade and influence, and an ability to be deliberate with intentions when driving change and sustaining impact. Authentic people management and communication skills underpinned the successful delivery of the Police Component's Strategic Development Plan and Liberia's Security Transition Plan.

Establish national ownership, leadership and buy-in

The success of UNMIL's transition hinged on national ownership and leadership, as well as support from a broad range of national stakeholders and advocacy from the international community. Recognising and developing national capacities was critical to achieve an effective and sustainable

handover of UNMIL responsibilities to Liberian partners. Our actions and activities needed to be anchored in local needs, sensibilities, resources and priorities.

To improve national ownership and buy-in I implemented an assessment tool, designed and co-developed with national counterparts, that determined the current states of readiness and preparedness of legislative, policy, operational, administrative and integrity aspects of the police and the immigration service. The assessment tool enabled senior leadership in Liberia's key law enforcement agencies to reflect on their organisation's progress against international good practice institutional norms. It also identified gaps and opportunities to enable the prioritisation of key reform issues to continue transforming and professionalising performance.

Remain agile

Another leadership trait that was valuable to me as Police Commissioner was agility. This came to the fore during the Ebola crisis. In response to this crisis, UNPOL's activities moved to meeting Liberia's emerging needs, including training and personal protective equipment required to respond to the outbreak.

The importance of agility is reflected in UNPOL's activities and achievements over four phases:

- (1) Pre-Ebola: We focused on establishing the Joint Development Framework and identifying priorities from the gaps identified in the joint UNMIL/LNP baseline assessment conducted in late 2013.
- (2) During Ebola: We moved towards supporting national counterparts to implement the government's State of Emergency declaration and provide security support to the significant health and humanitarian responses. At the same time, we needed to ensure sound risk management strategies were in place for staff safety, health and wellbeing. The Police Component had to put its restructuring and reform agenda on hold and move to a more operational posture to assist Liberia's security agencies.
- (3) Post-Ebola: Our attention shifted to changes in our delivery models for UNPOL's restructuring and reform efforts, while planning for and managing a steep drawdown in the Police Component's personnel and preparing national counterparts for security transition. As Ebola abated and the country started to recover, I was able to refocus efforts on UNMIL's core security sector reform agenda for the LNP and BIN and, secondarily, on the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency and the Transnational Crime Unit.
- (4) Exit strategy: In preparation for UNMIL's inevitable closure, I focused on preparing and implementing the Police Component's exit strategy in alignment with the broader mission's departure from Liberia.

Develop long-term strategic planning

A critical part of a mission is to outline the desired end state, signal mission intent and progress towards success. However, on my arrival in UNMIL in early 2014, there was no strategy for preparing Liberia's law enforcement agencies

for the departure of the peacekeeping mission. There was a clear lack of long-term strategic vision and exit strategy.

The nature of the one-yearly UN Security Council Resolution mandate extensions can explain this void. But it meant the mission repeated a one-year plan 10 times, with a short-term focus on immediate mandate execution rather than long-term growth or development. It severely limited UNPOL's programmatic activities, budgetary planning and vision, and ultimately its ability to focus support for the key reform and restructuring priorities of Liberia's law enforcement agencies to eventually perform their core functions without UN support.

To resolve this situation and establish good practice, we developed a step-by-step programmatic framework for the Police Component's life cycle. The list below provides some high-level insight into the steps that leaders can take for future policing components:

- **Involve police from the outset:** Police should be involved in peace agreement discussions and negotiations to fully appreciate the operating environment and address the key rule of law and criminal justice issues. Their involvement ensures the incorporation of policing expertise into the peace operations continuum, including conditions for conflict mitigation, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and nation-building phases. Early engagement assists in better understanding the security context and operating environment and allows a policing element to establish itself as a trusted partner of the host government.
- **Conduct a baseline assessment of law enforcement agencies:** From the outset, a Police Component should conduct a baseline assessment of law enforcement agencies, to get an accurate picture of their institutional capacities and capabilities. This process should identify gaps and challenges so that executive, operational, rebuilding, restructuring and reform support can be effectively targeted.
- **Develop an exit strategy, then work backwards to identify the necessary building blocks to attain the desired end state and reform priorities:** The next step is to assess and define success in terms of mission achievement, which is connected to the law enforcement agencies capability. By listing the criteria of a functioning policing service, the Police Component can work backwards to identify the necessary building blocks or priorities to achieve the end state. If you have not identified the necessary building blocks to reform, there is potentially a disconnect in the justice and security sector continuum, and gaps in institutional building and reform.

There also needs to be a balanced effort between institutional and individual development. A clear common understanding of compartmentalised targeted priorities, and the order of these priorities, is essential to framing an exit strategy. This process also helps you identify what skills and resources the mission will need during the relevant phases, enabling you to match skills with requirements – not just have boots on the ground.

- **Adopt a project management approach:** When peacekeeping missions move from a peacemaking or maintenance of peace role – that is, from a

rebuilding phase in a post-conflict setting to a restructuring and reform phase – it is critical that to establish a project management methodology and framework. It is important to adopt a simple project management tool – the UN’s preference is PRINCE2, for example – and framework so that it is utilised and embraced by those required to use, implement and operationalise it. Adopting a project management approach during my tenure enabled the Police Component to, for the first time, identify strategic priorities and document a strategic development plan, work plans and implementation plans.

- **Establish evaluation, assessment and monitoring systems:** Each Police Component should have monitoring, evaluation and assessment systems in place, including an evaluation framework to measure and track its compliance with and progress against mandate, budget and work plans.
- **Set up institutional frameworks rather than focusing primarily on individuals:** Capacity-building efforts should focus not on individuals but on strengthening institutions. Investments in individuals quickly diminishes or gets lost. A more holistic, institution-wide focus will bring greater long-term gains.

Conclusion

During my time in Liberia the UNMIL Police Component achieved the successful transition of full security responsibilities to the Liberian government in June 2016 and ensured there was no breakdown of security or rule of law. The number of cases going into the formal criminal justice system increased; there was less reliance on traditional justice mechanisms; and there was greater access to criminal justice services and mechanisms.

UNPOL’s efforts were most visible in communities, where our activities resulted in engagement and partnerships that grew the necessary community confidence and trust in Liberian law enforcement and security agencies.

The tools that assisted me most during my leadership were self-assessments, benchmarking and national partnership frameworks, and individual and institutional development, because they supported Liberian leadership and ownership, enhanced internal accountability and improved information exchange and crisis management response mechanisms.

The Joint, Interagency and Multinational Nature of Conflict ⁷

MAJGEN Roger Noble AO, DSC, CSC (Ret'd)

As a leader, you need to accept that all operational actions will be joint, interagency and multinational. I say this upfront because lots of people do not think in these terms and actively work hard to avoid this reality. Leaders need to appreciate the nuanced requirements of working within joint, interagency, whole-of-government and humanitarian environments in conflict.

I have led many interagency tasks during my career, but in this article, I discuss what I learned about leadership during my role as Deputy Commander for the Land Component of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq in 2016. This is because leadership in war needs more thought and critical review than it currently gets, and leaders need to appreciate the nuanced requirements of working within joint, interagency, whole-of-government and humanitarian environments in conflict.

For military leaders, this means exploring beyond conventional leadership theory, and single service and domain notions of what works. It also means realising the limitations of contemporary Australian operational experience and avoiding fads, buzzwords and using peace as the main guide for leadership into the future.

My interagency leadership experiences

I began my career in the Australian Army Royal Australian Armoured Corps. Since then I have held several command positions and have deployed on operations to East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2016 I was seconded to the United States Army and served as Deputy Coalition Land Force Commander, Iraq, as part of Operation Inherent Resolve. During this period, I was involved in the great counterattack to defeat DAESH, recapture Fallujah and the Euphrates River Valley, and liberate the city of Mosul. We had a clear mission and purpose – defeat DAESH and ‘Get Mosul’.



MAJGEN Roger Noble toured training sites at Besmaya to inspect Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve’s multinational effort to train Iraqi security forces personnel.

Iraq in 2016: Operational Context is Critical

War Remains a Human Endeavour

The complex situation in Iraq required us to frame the conflict as a political contest with humans at the centre. Every situation is about people – a leadership focus on the employment and impact of military platforms, ships, planes, missiles and rockets is the legacy of a conventional high-end warfighting narrative that does not reflect the complexity of humans waging war.

Leading in conflict means moving past simplistic mental models that conceptualise winning based on weapon ranges, force ratios and systems. You need to realise the primacy of communication and narrative as the central part of your campaign.

War as a Complex Adaptive System

Mental models are critical for solving problems and achieving outcomes in the real world. From my perspective and experience, the most effective approach to understanding the nature of conflict is through the lens of it being a Complex Adaptive System. This is not a new point, but it is rarely the subject of professional discussion.

Complex Adaptive Systems

A complex adaptive system (CAS) involves many agents that act as parts and interact with each other to generate emergent, system-wide patterns of behaviour for the whole. The patterns that are generated feed back into the system by constraining and changing subsequent behaviours reflecting that the whole system, or environment, determines the condition of each part, or agent.

At the same time, the interactions of the parts form the environment in which all subsequent interactions take place. This complex and mutually causal relationship between part and whole generates all other characteristic behaviours of a CAS. These include unpredictability, scaling, attractors, butterfly effects, heterarchy, dynamical behaviour through time, turbulent boundary conditions, emergence, lock in, and so on.'

Eoyang, G.H., Yellowthunder, L., Ward, V., A Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) Approach to Public Policy Decision Making, Society for Chaos Theory in Psychology in the Life Sciences August, 1998, The Union Institute Postdoctoral Associate Community Faculty, Chaos Limited Department of Anthropology Metro State University, University of Minnesota: 4

Clausewitz was a complex systems theorist before the term or theories existed. He articulated the evolutionary and dynamic nature of the relationship between all the actors. Iraq 2016 was a textbook example of Clausewitz's thinking about war and his following salutary point:

Efforts were therefore made to equip the conduct of war with principles, rules, or even systems. This did present a positive goal, but people failed to take adequate account of the endless complexities involved. As we have seen, the conduct of war branches out in almost all directions and has no definite limits; while any system, any model, has the finite nature of a synthesis. An irreconcilable conflict exists between this type of theory and actual practice.⁸

Iraq was characterised by complex, non-linear, dynamic relations that were iterative, evolving and unpredictable, but there were often patterns of behaviour and activity. Relationships between actors were fluid and dynamic. An action did not generate an equal and opposite reaction. Understanding the system and the patterns within it proved critical. You need to be looking at the system, not just the pieces.

Leadership in Complex Adaptive Systems

The leadership approach that suits the joint, interagency and multinational nature of conflict when it is characterised as a complex adaptive system is not a rigid, hierarchical model but a disciplined and accountable devolved approach. Focus is on unity of effort facilitated by narrative, intent, planning and leverage of limited command authorities. The clearest explanation of how we fought in Iraq comes from a business text:

Rather than relying on a detailed formal organisation structure to channel all activities and interactions, high tech companies rely instead on the informal organisation, the self-organising networks of relationships that arise naturally from purposeful collective activity, and on temporary organisations, such as teams and task forces.⁹

On the surface this may appear to be a loose approach, but it is anything but. Adopting this leadership approach was a disciplined approach in a complex environment that aimed to deliver a unified effect from the widest range of stakeholders to achieve our mission.

Adopting informal and self-organising networks to achieve a mission is a leadership approach that is context driven. It requires critical thinking, open minds, expert input, deep understanding of the environment, campaign thinking, all accountable through systematic feedback and assessment. And I will not lie, this takes a lot of work and relies on leaders who can accept being wrong but will learn, use their imagination and have a relentless focus on the purpose not the pieces.

Iraq in 2016: challenges and priorities

The military is only one part of 'the plan' or 'effort'

Believe it or not – there may not be a 'big plan' for a situation as complex as Iraq because they are hard to do. There will be a concept, set of plans, narrative or a framing that the military needs to fit within and shape in an ongoing and iterative manner. If this is not clear to you as a leader, then take time to frame and communicate your understanding. Miss this or get it wrong and you will assuredly fail.

Finding and Integrating stakeholder interests

In Fallujah and Mosul the Iraqis, the coalition and a multitude of 'friendly', 'partly friendly' or 'not enemy today' stakeholders faced an adversary that used all available means to fight a conventional defence using a mixture of conventional and unconventional weapons. The adversary was narrative driven, knew the power of a globally connected information environment and had few, if any, restrictions on their behaviour.

If they did not have mines, they used improvised explosive devices (IEDs). If they did not have tanks, they used suicide bombers on foot or in vehicles.

They uploaded everything to the internet in almost real time, driving their targeted global, regional and local message on the invincibility of their warriors of the Caliphate.

To defeat DAESH in the field and defeat their messaging and narrative, which was key to their credibility and morale, we needed to engage in a cognitive contest of wills.

Political and interagency leaders are not bystanders in this type of fight; they are active, engaged participants whose interests are vitally engaged. As leader, my job was to knit the national interests together into a coalition quilt that was always changing its shape and form. In complex multiagency combat environments, if you are expecting a single clear, written order from higher up and freedom to execute then you are in for a surprise! In this case I needed to synchronise military planning with broader nation-state and humanitarian efforts; and understand, respect and integrate the interests of all key stakeholders.

Unity of effort

One of the key lessons drawn from Iraq 2012 was that the military force needed to understand all the actors, both inside and outside Iraq, and whether they were ‘friendly’, ‘partly friendly’ or ‘not enemy today.’

In most cases, the military force has no authority or means of control over these actors, especially where actors were globally distributed.

This reflects the value of ‘Unity of Effort’ as a central idea in 21st century Iraqis and the coalition agreed on the basic collective

purpose: defeat DAESH. However, Iraqi interests and priorities diverged from those of the coalition in important ways. Priorities were always subject to active debate and change. For example, the Iraqi focus was on liberating Fallujah, while the coalition mission was to clear Fallujah of the enemy – different objectives and approaches that generated different approaches to solving the problem of getting Fallujah back. Constant dialogue, founded on trust, listening and empathy, proved mission critical to unify Iraqi and coalition efforts.

The notion of Unity of Effort rests on bringing stakeholders together, drawing out their purpose and common interest, and having the imagination, tolerance and discipline to tie them together to the extent you can.

Unifying efforts is important in interagency environments because you need to achieve:

- A common and shared understanding of the situation
- Understanding and respecting actor missions, goals, values and constraints/limitations
- An understanding of common interests, goals, and objectives
- Coordination, alignment and deconfliction of efforts to deliver a coherent effect
- Shared assessment of progress and development of federated forums to change course if necessary¹⁰

Unified Effort for Mosul inhabitants

At the time of the Mosul Offensive, Mosul was a city of a million inhabitants. What happens when you commence an attack on a place like that? To protect and ensure their humanitarian needs, it was important to have a plan. This was a monumental multiagency effort. It needed to be prepared months in advance to ensure that people knew how to get a safe place and that, when they arrived, there would be enough resources and security to protect them. All of this needed to happen within the context of military mission achievement.

To succeed in these efforts, we had to involve multiple stakeholders, including the UN, civil society and humanitarian actors. We used an iterative process of information and knowledge sharing through open, honest and serious conversations. One of our broader learnings from the Mosul Offensive was the need for better communication lines and information flow between military forces and humanitarian actors to prepare and manage displaced people, including alignment of military operations with the establishment of camps.

Leadership observations and lessons

From my experience, the key to improving your leadership skills is to watch and learn from everyone – good and bad – and then build and search your own leadership database to find a leadership approach that fits you as an individual.

Keep in mind that people and situations are different. This means different leaderships models will work in different situations, and there will be different risks and consequences. Your leadership must be effective within the context of its conduct. The knowledge and experience you bring to a situation will matter greatly; talent and potential only go so far.

Establish unity of effort

You can and should prepare yourself individually and the force collectively to put in the work required to draw stakeholders together into a unified effort in challenging environments.

Make a commitment to share what you can in a timely manner with those who need it. This will go a very long way towards achieving unity of effort. Focus on the operational environment and respective stakeholders to align, compliment and influence interests and actions across the stakeholder set. Aim for a federated approach to all things so that teams and groups with common interests and objectives develop and collaborate both directly and indirectly.



MAJGEN Roger Noble, (seated at right), speaks to international and Australian participants during an Exercise Crocodile Response planning conference, at RAAF Base Darwin, NT.

Understanding who is out there, what they can do and how to integrate them within a unity of effort approach is key. Reciprocal sharing of this knowledge is also important, but it is a skill that military organisations struggle with.

Measure performance and effectiveness. You would find it surprising how few organisations systematically measure and assess performance and effectiveness, let alone use the results from such an effort. Military capability delivers an almost unparalleled organisational capacity to capture information – for example, about the enemy, the ground, the information environment, the stakeholders, the culture, the infrastructure and the plan. Using this information and measuring performance and progress are key elements that draw others to the table – what works, what does not work, what needs doing and what needs to stop all matter greatly.

Develop a coherent narrative and plan. Complexity can be overwhelming. The military is often the best resourced and trained stakeholder to deal with complex environments. Proven military practices can help you to achieve clarity of intent, sequencing, objectives and methods. The coherence you bring will attract people to contribute. You may not be explaining or progressing your narrative – the skill to translate other actors' plans, intent and messaging is a powerful unifying ability.

Develop comprehensive knowledge of yourself, your organisation, and your organisation's influence and capacity. Specifically, you need to understand the authorities you hold and what this means for the network. For example, in Iraq the Land Component Commander controlled all kinetic strikes – not necessarily approval but sequence, timing and method. This was a significant authority. It brought together stakeholders who sought to apply force or to influence sequencing or targeting. So, the Land Component was a lead interlocutor with those entities and agencies that controlled (or tried to control) strikes in the non-kinetic realm. This gave us significant authority in driving unity of effort. Our capacity to strike, lift, observe, support, train and equip was finite but unparalleled.

Use dialogue and influence to get everybody to cooperate to execute a plan that achieves your objectives and potentially theirs as well. One of your opportunities as a leader is to influence using the power of knowledge. Knowledge is a key reason people engage with the military force. It is critical that you understand the cognitive impact on those around you, including the enemy. Success relies on understanding and accessing information held by the broadest set of joint, interagency and coalition stakeholders.

As a result, listening skills become essential, because they will enable you to identify a common interest, find points of agreement and disagreement, and find what is acceptable. Listening is both an individual and an organisational skill. Organisations need to seek inputs and feedback and systematically process this into a rigorous assessment of progress. It is essential for leaders to talk with people to understand their narrative, their interests and their personal logic.

You also need empathy to understand these interests. Find a unifier and focus on this over an organisation or entity. Empathy can be scarce on the modern battlefield, but the capacity to put on the shoes of another is pivotal to meaningful understanding.

Success rests on bringing stakeholders together, drawing out their purpose and common interest, and having the imagination, tolerance and discipline to tie them together to the extent you can. It is possible to do this with stakeholders that you do not even actually engage directly if you use mutual contacts and avenues to pass information. For example, in the Fallujah and Mosul attacks, the Popular Mobilisation Force integrated into the plan without direct engagement between the coalition and the force.

Unity of effort requires listening and collaboration. Therefore, it often best preserves humanitarian space, promotes relationships and enables coordination without reliance on an overriding structure. It relies more on self-organising teams and informal relationships and networks that develop through purposeful collective activity.¹¹

Identify and understand not only the problem you are trying to solve but also the context in which you are solving the problem. Institutions can develop ways of thinking, with unstated assumptions, to find solutions that may or may not be suited to complex multiagency environments. From a military perspective, the Joint Military Appreciation Process is a highly effective method for developing solution options to specific problems.

In western military thinking there can be an underlying assumption that the enemy's physical capacity to fight is the key – if you destroy the systems the enemy uses to fight, you will win. This instils a bias towards kinetic targeting of combat systems.

The extended war in Iraq showed us the need to adopt an initial problem framing and scoping effort that places the mission in context, including understanding the environment and the parameters in which we were operating. This approach made me realise that leaders need to appreciate the sheer dimension of a problem, including the connection between actions and consequences.

I cannot emphasise enough that success is no longer the number of dead enemy or destroyed tanks. Rather, it is the surrender, withdrawal or compliance of the surviving enemy. Killing the enemy and destroying its systems remains critically important, because it reduces the capacity to fight. But it is equally critical to undermine the confidence and will of surviving combatants and adversaries. This was very clear in Iraq in 2016, where the success of an extended DAESH defence of Ramadi and Fallujah was followed by the rapid collapse of enemy resistance along the length of the Euphrates River Valley.

Before you solve the problem, you must frame it and understand what you are doing. Part of this process is overcoming our habit of taking organisational norms and unthinkingly applying them to all situations. You will take a solution into a situation based on your training and education, but the world is too complex and nuanced for the standard response taught in military training.

Establish a learning culture

The better educated and experienced you are, individually and collectively, the more likely it is that you can deal with complexity. As a leader, you must teach and learn to be comfortable in uncertainty and to expect complexity.

Often the most effective performers were not those with classic military profiles but people and organisations with diverse experiences.

The Land Component was based on the US 101st Airborne Division, which had just returned from leading the US interagency response to Ebola in Africa. From this experience they learned how to engage and integrate with a staggering array of interagency and humanitarian actors. This proved invaluable when applied in Iraq in 2016.

Organisations need to institutionalise and inculcate a learning culture. One example is how the Australian Army effectively educates people through industry outplacements, giving them the opportunity to see how other organisations operate. This type of exposure to differences enables people to gain insight into a broad range of thinking and practices to apply depending on the context and problem.

If your education has placed you in scenarios that challenge your fundamental agendas and assumptions, when you are given a task like 'Get Mosul' you have the foundation and mindset to tackle such a seemingly monumental undertaking.



A Spanish trainer, left, briefs Brigadier Roger Noble, (right) the Deputy Commanding General of the Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command – Operation Inherent Resolve.

Know what works and what does not

As a result of my experience, I have come to challenge some long-held beliefs I was taught about what good leadership in conflict is. My main observations are that everyone is different, and that leadership is context specific. Few leaders are perfect, but the successful ones are those with a 'total' personal approach able to deliver the outcomes required in the operational context.

A conflict environment is outcome orientated. In a 'business as usual' peacetime bureaucratic setting, outcomes are often one part of a wider, less

defined objective set. The key is to know yourself and assemble a package of leadership approaches that works in the setting that you are in.

Highly effective individuals are aware of their own weaknesses and can design a personal system that lessens these vulnerabilities. You do not need to be perfect; you need to know yourself and develop a personal method that is suited to your context.

What seems to work

- Unrelenting Mission Focus – bind the pieces/stakeholders through the mission
- Intellect
- Professionalism & Professional Mastery – Master your part, not everything and use your subordinates to the best of their ability to help fill these gaps
- Resilience – Mental/Moral/Physical – Look after yourself
- Self-Awareness – Understand humans or put a network in that does
- 100%+ commitment
- Empathy and Listening – Dedicate time to it, force empathy until it becomes innate
- Decide and act – a bias for action founded on a risk-based approach
- Understand the context and their authorities – plus the limits of authority
- Know and engage key stakeholders systematically
- A Modern Inquisitive Outlook – Interest in the new, appreciation for what might be, know you don't know, curiosity
- An inbuilt moral/ethical compass, coupled with established checks and balances and trusted feedback
- Attention to critical detail NOT all detail – and know which detail to check and focus on
- Careful attention to and care of subordinates, intent driven action, demand for specific tailored inputs from the staff avoid being swamped by data and process
- Excellent communicators who can talk well and explain clearly
- Holistic, complex systems, systems thinking
- Able to look well out and build a path to success – classic campaigning
- Assessment driven, learning by doing – review and assess through a disciplined system of Measures of Performance and Measures of Effectiveness.

What does not

- Poor communicators
- Arse Covering careerists who no one trusts
- Those who don't understand their own authority and its limits
- The detailed Control Guys who obsess on control and detail and process
- Unity of Command versus unity of effort
- Over confidence and certain – 'the I know boats' kind
- Absence of empathy – What's it like to be an Iraqi?
- 'Military' guys – orders, acronyms and culture
- The bureaucratic guys who love the process and products and avoid the outcomes and decisions
- No feedback types with no structural checks and balances to tell truth to power – The Emperor's New Clothes
- Non-systematic, ill-disciplined and/or professional dilettantes who swim/drown in the data and product and process

Conclusion

I hope to have communicated several key messages on my approach to leadership. Leadership and education matter. War remains a human endeavour and how you think about it informs how you approach it. It is critical to understand the context and frame the problem using your mental models, knowledge and experience. People remain the most important element of the problem and the solution – know yourself and your people, and work hard to understand the context and the network of humans in which you operate. War is a staggeringly complicated, complex and messy business even when it is going well. A systematic, disciplined and informed approach is essential when confronted with a determined, ruthless enemy.

Page 31, Photo Credit: Photo By: U.S. Army Sgt. Josephine Carlson

Page 35, Photo Credit: POIS Peter Thompson
Department of Defence

Page 38, Photo By: U.S. Army Sgt. Josephine Carlson

⁷ This article is based on an Australian Command and Staff College Presentation.

⁸ Carl von Clausewitz *On War* p. 134 and 136.

⁹ Robert Maxfield, *Complexity and Organisation Management*, 1997

¹⁰ Adapted from Joint Staff J7, *Unity of Effort Framework Solution Guide*, 2013

¹¹ Robert Maxfield, 'Complexity and Organization Management', in David S Alberts and Thomas J Czerwinski (eds) 1997, *Complexity, Global Politics, and National Security* National Defense University, Washington DC, Ch 8.

Leading the Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa - Pike River Recovery Agency

MAJGEN Dave Gawn MBE (Ret'd)

In my current role as Chief Executive of Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa¹² (the Pike River Recovery Agency), I draw on a military career spanning 40 years starting in 1979 and culminating as Chief of the New Zealand Army from 2013-15. The Chief Executive role is an emotive and political leadership position that brings together many agencies to build trust and bring closure to families following the Pike River Mine Disaster in November 2010.

Over my years in both military and non-military interagency leadership, I have identified several leadership behaviours that have been effective for me. In sharing my leadership experiences, I provide insight into what I have personally learnt and applied.

To my mind, embracing 'servant leadership' provides a model for all leadership situations, but it is particularly effective in circumstances in which history, emotions, passion and perceived injustices come to the fore.

My experience of interagency leadership

In 2016 I was Head of Mission and Chief of Staff, United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in Israel, overseeing peacekeeping operations for the five signatories of the 1949 Armistice Agreement. I was Commander Joint Forces New Zealand from 2011 to 2013 and Land Commander New Zealand Army from 2007 to 2010. I commanded the first New Zealand company in the UN mission in Bosnia known as UNPROFOR (under command of the British), and I assisted with interagency collaboration in East Timor, Solomon Islands and other situations.

As Chief Executive of Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa since 2008, I am responsible for bringing together many agencies to build trust and bring closure to families following the Pike River Mine disaster.

Pike River Mine disaster

At 3.44 pm on Friday, 19 November 2010, there was an underground explosion at the Pike River Mine in the West Coast region of New Zealand's South Island. Two men managed to escape the mine. The 29 men deeper in the mine are believed to have died immediately or shortly afterwards.

There were three more explosions within the mine before it was sealed nine days later. The remains of the 29 men who lost their lives have not been recovered.

The Pike River Mine tragedy is a part of New Zealand's psyche. It is associated with safety failure, poor management, poor leadership and a lack of transparency.

Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa - Pike River Recovery Agency

Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa is working in close partnership with the Pike River families and other key stakeholders to plan for decisions on

the manned re-entry of the Pike River mine. It represents the needs of the families and draws together the police, WorkSafe New Zealand and other government departments in an interagency partnership.

The objectives of the manned re-entry are to:

- gather evidence to better understand what happened in 2010 with an eye to preventing future mining tragedies and promoting accountability for this mining tragedy
- give the Pike River families and victims overdue closure and peace of mind
- recover remains where possible.

My Chief Executive role is an emotive and political leadership position. I accepted the role because of the challenge and suggestions that nobody else was prepared to take it on. The recovery operation involved technical and operational risk and a risk to reputation, and there was a perception that the task could not be done. That appealed to me. My response was 'What do you mean it can't be done? Anything can be done - we just have to find the way'. This has helped set the tenor for my leadership.

Challenges

Before the agency, from the families' perspective there had been 10 years of broken promises, mistrust, lack of transparency and conflict. They saw a lack of accountability for actions taken (or not taken) at all levels. This shaped their early attitudes toward the agency. The hurdle of earning their trust and confidence through transparency, genuine partnership and communication was a continuous challenge that required the investment of time and energy.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced at the agency is the intense media scrutiny. It is well beyond anything imagined or anticipated. It is like the weather - part of the environment we work within - and everyone has a different attitude towards it. Media scrutiny is a characteristic of the interagency environment, and how you handle it can be a key to the success or failure of the undertaking you are leading.

A challenge for me personally is my role's legal responsibilities and accountability under the New Zealand Health and Safety Act. As a Chief Executive in New Zealand, you accept personal liability if you fail to exercise due diligence to ensure that your organisation complies with the Act. The high-profile, high-risk environment of Pike River and penalties of imprisonment for up to five years and a fine of up to \$600,000 certainly help to focus the attention.

Being from a military background and taking up this type of role means challenging and changing perceptions of military leaders and what we bring to the table. There is a very strong perception across agencies that senior military leaders are like those often portrayed in older Hollywood movies and television - hierarchical, autocratic and lacking empathy or compassion. The reality is that military leaders adapt their style to the situation and often need to adopt a very collaborative leadership style and decision-making role, particularly as they rise in the ranks and work more within the interagency space of governments.

‘Wellington nous’ is essential – you need to understand how the mechanics of government work, especially in the interagency space. You must have the ability to relate, interact, understand and see the wider political picture; and to navigate the political environment and work the levers of the Public Service through its established networks in order to achieve desired outcomes.

Priorities

When I took on my role, I had a mandate from government to ‘conduct a safe manned re-entry and recovery of the Pike River Mine Drift’. This mandate set the tone for my leadership vision and purpose.

Many debated whether a safe recovery is achievable. However, the operational task was straightforward – complicated but not overly complex. To my mind, however, success hinged on the relationship with the families and ensuring that they would be fully engaged and taken on the journey as a ‘partner’ in the recovery effort.

Vision and passion

Different elements frame effective leadership. In the role of Chief Executive of Te Kāhui Whakamana 29, I am driven to get closure for the families (such as is possible within the constraints of our mandate) – for us to undertake our mission to the best of our ability and efforts, and for families to be able to see this. Our longer-term outcomes include change in the regulatory systems for health and safety and in the wider remit of public health and safety in New Zealand and Australia. This is the legacy of 29 men who lost their lives.



MAJGEN Dave Gawn signing a partnership agreement between the Pike River Recovery Agency and the Stand With Pike Family Reference Group.

Within this vision are passion and compassion. Compassion will be in relation to the task you are undertaking, especially if it is complex, a crisis or emotive. There is a need to listen. Military leaders bring structures, processes, procedures, frameworks and tools, but everyone is different – your personality, empathy and ability to listen to others are dependent on experience and history. Use those elements wisely.

Values

These are the tenets of Te Kāhui Whakamana 29: close partnership with the Pike River families; health and safety come first; and transparency and openness. In any organisation, but particularly a new organisation, values and operating principles need inculcation so that core values and messages stick.

I like 'bumper sticker' statements supported by a compelling narrative when necessary. 'The standard you walk past is the standard you accept'; 'Leave your ego at the door'; and 'We can achieve anything as long as we don't care who gets the credit' are some we use. The story of the Pike River Mine tragedy and the 29 faces of those left behind is about as compelling a narrative as it gets.

Our values stem from our mandate to achieve transparency. In interagency environments, or when you are trying to build a team, achieving transparency can be challenging because of hidden agendas. Recognising that agendas can be a characteristic of interagency environments and having the ability to raise and discuss them means everyone can work towards the same outcome. Getting individual and agency agendas on the table strengthens the team, and trust is built through transparency and having courageous conversations that are necessary in an interagency setting.

Te Kāhui Whakamana 29 has been able to progress its vision by adopting a partnership approach – in the full sense of the word – by putting in place an organisation that represents the needs of the families and by drawing together the police, WorkSafe New Zealand and other government departments. Transparency and inclusiveness are vital.

Firstly, we have adopted a practice that any family member can attend any meeting held. Families have attended recruitment interviews, risk assessments and planning meetings. This is one way to embrace transparency, but it also goes to the heart of partnership. Transparency also extends to the public and media through proactive releases of ministerial reports, operational reports, risk assessments and planning documents. The only exception surrounds issues of police investigation to ensure evidential integrity. Transparency and inclusiveness are critical to building trust, and trust builds partnerships. This approach needs self-discipline to implement and reinforce in order to build trust – you have to walk the talk.

Secondly, we have a strong focus on health and safety, drawing on the adage 'The standard you walk past is the standard you accept'. We had to get people to commit to the very dangerous task we have to undertake. Notwithstanding the individual desire to do the best for the mates left behind in 2010, everyone was conscious of the fact that one serious accident could stop the recovery operation in its tracks. But for Pike our health and safety culture goes far beyond that. The tragedy in 2010



Pike River Recovery Team briefing families.

Maori proverb

He aha te mea nui o te ao, he tangata
he tangata he tangata.

What is the most important thing in the
world, it is the people, the people, the
people.

was primarily a failure in leadership that in turn lead to a failure of health and safety.

If the essence of an organisation is people, then the core of good leadership is to nurture those people and ensure they get home safely. In November 2010, 29 men

did not get home. Our leadership, at all levels, and our culture builds on a foundation of safety first.

Leadership observations and lessons

Find common ground

As a leader, try to find something common to all parties beyond the outcome and use it to bring people together and lay the foundations for deeper information sharing.

Bringing together agencies that have different agendas is a challenge, to say the least. I recall a key lesson from my time in Bosnia: 'Within an unstructured environment you first need to identify common ground in order to bring disparate groups to the table before a conversation can begin'.

Until we reached common ground, each of the 100-plus agencies/groups within our region of Bosnia appeared to be working to a separate agenda but towards the same long-term goal of peace and stability. Duplication of effort, wasted resources, mixed messaging and even competition for access to the local population were common. There was a propensity for misunderstanding, distrust and frustration.

We initially used security briefings as the way to bring people together, because everyone had an interest in the security environment and their own safety. This meeting became a regular event and its remit expanded to provide a forum for sharing updates on each other's programs of work in the guise of a shared security operating picture. We then changed from a military chair to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) chair to overcome the biases of some organisations regarding the uniform, and the security brief became just one agenda item as the focus moved toward coordination and transparency of the different programs.

In the initial meetings it was very evident how much crossover, duplication and compartmentalisation of projects and desired outcomes was occurring. Corridor conversations, relationship building and networking through the common ground of security were crucial to overcoming the barriers of different agendas, patch protection, strategies and egos.

This was a key lesson I carried through to assist interagency collaboration in other situations, including East Timor and Solomon Islands.

Build a culture of respect

A common purpose or shared vision will bring people together, but that is only the starting point. A strong culture comes from shared experience, empathy, listening, having difficult conversations and building a sense of value for everyone.

Recognise that every individual brings something to the table. In the military we grow our leaders from within and we can be suspicious of the value that others bring to the table if they have not been through the crucible of the military schoolhouse or operations. You must guard against this bias toward the military or your own culture and organisational background and embrace the diversity of others.

As the leader of a new agency, one of my priorities was to build a team. In my opinion, building a team is easier than inheriting a team that needs cultural change. After recruiting key appointments, I was able to second some additional military people for specific activities. This worked well because they brought planning expertise and mature planning frameworks that I was familiar with.

As a greenfields start-up agency, Pike brought together the different cultures of military, public service, mining, police and families.

I try to get around to speak with everyone and understand their experience and individual expertise, because it can be very difficult to bridge cultural differences across agencies.

The diversity of thought and experience provided genuine strength and richness, but it was challenging in that I was leading an organisation of disparate cultures that I did not fully understand.

Especially where a mandate brings together expertise, experience and qualifications that are unique and – as in the case of underground coalmining in New Zealand – very scarce. For example, there are only three underground coal ventilation officers qualified to work in New Zealand anywhere in the world. If we lose access to these experts, we cannot achieve our purpose.

Leadership includes managing experts, consultants and egos. Building a broad network that assures enough depth of knowledge to challenge – asking the right question is essential in developing sound advice, strategy and plans. Hard conversations, leaving egos at the door and recognition that everyone has value to add, no matter their background or experience, is equally important to build a robust team. As a leader, you must reinforce this through recognition.

Value diversity

Seek diversity – go out and get it because it brings a real richness to conversations. It cannot be tokenism. In the military, the value of diversity is part of inculcation from our first day in uniform and we think that we understand and value it, but I am not sure we do. We recruit from diverse backgrounds, but this is tempered through a training environment that clones soldiers for the battlefield, and we tend to promote like-images.

Bringing together an interagency team creates true diversity: each person comes from a different organisational culture and a different background, bringing different skill sets and experiences. This deters ‘group think’, promotes intellectual curiosity and challenges the norm. Difference adds value.

Listen

Leading in diversity is not easy. Learn to read body language and listen and draw out those who are more introverted in a way that allows everyone to maintain their self-respect and mana.

Mana

Mana is given or bestowed on a person or group who has respect. It is all encompassing and gained through actions, words and deeds. There is a spiritual element to it.

Some may have personal cultural mores whereby they concede or defer to those more senior, and others may feel they have little to add. Learn the art of the open-ended question to engage them and, most importantly, 'learn' your people and their agendas.

Be authentic

Be true to yourself. Passion, integrity, empathy, compassion and the art of listening and communicating are, to my mind, core qualities of good leaders. This is what you personally can bring to the table. The mechanics of a strategic vision, a plan and a governance framework to implement it – you can get those out of the textbooks. To me, the key is to be authentic.

Conclusion

In sharing my leadership path, from the New Zealand Army to Chief Executive of Te Kāhui Whakamana 29, I have touched on the emotive and political nature of interagency environments, building and implementing purpose, and effective leadership characteristics.

The Pike River Mine tragedy has resulted in different agencies working together for affected families. History shows us that such events are not unique, and much can be learned from the experiences of others. In providing insight into my own leadership experience, I hope to inform your leadership growth.

Page 43, Photo Credit: The Daily Blog, July 2018

Page 44, Photo Credit: Pike River Recovery Agency.

¹² Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae (Ngāi Tahu) has gifted the agency the Te Reo Māori name Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa, which can be shortened to Te Kāhui Whakamana 29. It is interpreted as 'The Empowering Voice for the Pike 29'. Ngāti Waewae is kaitiaki of Pike River in the Atarau region.

Leading a Multinational Force within a UN Peacekeeping Mission

MAJGEN Cheryl Pearce, AM

“Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers but only soldiers can do it.” Former UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld’s paradox of peacekeeping highlights how the transition from a soldier as a war fighter needs to be considered when adopting the role of peacekeeper. In a multinational and multicomponent environment, such as United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the requirement for a flexible, broadminded approach to leadership is crucial to support this transition.

Removing the weapon, the helmet and body armour from the warfighting soldier and asking them to keep peace between two heavily armed opposing forces, who vastly outnumber the peacekeepers, requires great strength of character. In this complex environment, authentic leadership is essential.

The understanding of good leadership varies between nationalities and environments, but the authenticity of a leader is key in bridging these differences, enabling the creation of strong relationships and collaboration in complex environments.

My experience of interagency leadership

I have over 35 years of experience as a military officer across a broad range of appointments, including interagency taskforces and strategic-political positions. In 2016 I deployed to the Middle East as Commander Task Group Afghanistan where I operated as part of a coalition force, responsive to Defence direction and worked alongside and supported the Australian Embassy. In 2019, I was appointed as the Force Commander UNFICYP and operated in a multinational and multicomponent environment delivering on the UN Security Council Mandate.

The experience I gained has enabled me to embrace the challenges, but also the nuances, of leading in a complex environment. It also developed my understanding and respect of different cultures, organisational structures, frameworks and perspectives.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

UNFICYP is a legacy mission. It was established in 1964 to prevent a recurrence of fighting between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and to assist in the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions, thus enabling a lasting political solution to be achieved. Currently on the island there is a delicate political/military balance between the sides with the real potential for disruption with significant political ramifications.



Force Commander MAJGEN Pearce joins a peacekeeping patrol in Nicosia, Nov 2020.

As Force Commander of UNFICYP, I led a multinational military force made up of 14 nations within a multicomponent peacekeeping mission, involving police, civilians and military forces, working alongside each other. I worked as part of a collaborative senior leadership team headed by Elizabeth Spehar, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of Mission. Other members of the senior leadership team included the heads of Police, Security, Mission Support (logistics and finance), Civil Affairs, Political Affairs, Media and Legal.

This appointment deepened my understanding and respect of how good leadership can bring out collective strengths and meet the challenges of multicomponent environments.

Leading in a Complex Environment

A key challenge during the initial stages of my deployment was that UNFICYP's vision and purpose in achieving the Mandate had not been clearly articulated. A unified understanding was not evident and needed to be established. In the absence of this clarity, misinformation and friction resulted with agendas, priorities and outcomes becoming misaligned resulting in sub-optimal outcomes. This misalignment was exacerbated due to the siloed nature of the Mandate tasks, UNFICYP's organisational structure, the congested buffer zone in which we all operated, the lack of integration and often a culture of mistrust between the components within the mission.

Any adjustment of our approach moving forward needed to be cognisant of our physical environment – 180 kilometres of buffer zone from west to east, ranging from four metres to seven kilometres wide throughout its length, heavily militarised on both sides and with approximately 80 per cent of the land with the buffer zone being used by the civil population. The environment was complex and highlighted to me that the military component could not operate independently to achieve its mission.

As a result of this complexity and to enable me to operate in an integrated manner with other components across the mission, it was crucial that I fully understood the strengths and challenges within the military component and nuanced my leadership style and approach accordingly. Equally, I prioritised establishing relationships with the senior leadership team seeking to better understand their personal and organisational priorities.

I built on my academic understanding of UNFICYP, and of Cyprus more broadly, gaining an understanding of the rich picture of language, culture, relationships, regional environment and security implications. This depth of knowledge assisted in identifying opportunities and gaps within our operational approach and processes to achieve the military mission. As I reflected on my broader purpose, it also set the foundation on how I could best support and progress the UNFICYP Mandate and achieve the Head of Mission's intent. One of my earliest lessons learned when attempting to set this foundation was assuming that the organisational culture of the UN would be similar to that of Australian and coalition environments. I identified quickly that the UN had its own distinct culture that I also needed to fully understand and adjust to.

To provide clarity around my purpose, both as a leader and more broadly for the mission, I facilitated a strategic planning activity to identify mission

priorities, its challenges and how these challenges nested and connected with each other. I worked collaboratively with the senior leadership team to identify a unified mission approach and establish an agreed set of short, medium and long-term UNFICYP goals.

Once we had a clear understanding and agreement of mission goals and priorities, I then lead an UNFICYP review to create an integrated mission. This review focused on three key areas that were operating sub-optimally; structure, process and culture. I learnt quickly that reform within a UN mission does not occur bottom up and as such I engaged with the UN headquarters in New York for their support to Head of Mission. A top down activity then occurred with open and collaborative consultation, resulting in a Head of Mission Directive and Implementation Plan, with ownership by the senior leadership group. The review was successful in its development; it has gained significant traction in its implementation at the time of my departure in January 2021 and the overall success in the achievement of an integrated mission will be determined by the 'want' of those leading the change.

Leadership observations and lessons

In the paragraphs below, I offer some insights (in no order) into how to bring authenticity to successful leadership of a multinational force within a peacekeeping mission. Within these insights, I also offer three lessons for leading in a complex environment. The first is to use open, simple, unambiguous communication tailored to the audience. The second is to work towards creating an environment of trust founded on listening, collaboration, understanding, perspective and motivation. The third is to ensure you clearly prioritise mission outcomes and the results you are seeking throughout the operation.

Define a vision and purpose

Clear articulation of your vision and purpose early in an appointment is critical, as it assists in achieving unity of effort within the military and across the mission more broadly.

This approach lays the groundwork to build trust between nations with little previous experience of working together and between different components of the organisation.

Leading by example and empowering a collective purpose amongst the team builds confidence and accelerates the cohesiveness that written words alone could not achieve.

My approach to empowering a collective purpose is embracing what I describe as value-add. An individual's value-add is their experience, perspective, values and voice, as part of the team. It takes discipline, courage and self-reflection to recognise not only individual but collective contributions to the outcome. Understanding and respecting the individual and collective value-add assists in providing direction and guidance to the force. It builds trust and empowers the team to work cohesively towards the broader mission purpose.

Articulating a vision statement requires a clear understanding of the current military situation. Directed analysis and mission back briefs from current incumbents and the review of previous post operational reports assisted me greatly. A personal assessment also needs to be made to understand the desired outcomes from each of the senior leadership team.

From my experience, military leadership in a multicomponent environment includes recognising that the military component is often operating in a support role to a senior civilian leader, usually in a political appointment. In the case of UNFICYP, I worked in support of the Head of Mission. My vision was nested within the broader mission but focused on the military component and how it needed to work together in an integrated manner to deliver on our United Nations Security Council Mandate.

With a clearly articulated and understood vision and purpose of the mission, my approach and priorities then focused on integrating with the other components of the mission to work together effectively. I kept the question, “who knows and who needs to know?” in the forefront of my mind as we adopted an integrated approach.

I empowered and developed my team in two parts. The first centred on leading and integrating the 14 nations contributing to the military



MAJGEN Cheryl Pearce signs the transfer of authority certificate, after two years as the Force Commander United Nations Force in Cyprus.

component, enabling an agile, unified and professional force to operate within the buffer zone 24/7. The second was visiting and engaging with the soldiers, publicly recognising their achievements and contribution, and listening to their interpretation of individual value-add and collective purpose.

These engagements enabled me to identify whether my overall commander’s intent was reaching the soldiers through my subordinate commanders. This was essential, as for most of the military within the mission, English was a second language and my intent required a constant focus.

Understand differences and build a positive culture

Cultural differences exist at both an individual and organisational level, and leaders need to develop and draw together as a team, where an integrated approach is a key outcome and an inclusive and diverse work environment exists. UNFICYP brought together many different nations, as well as permanent UN staff, who each view the Cyprus problem through a different lens and it took time and emotional energy to build cultural, language and historical knowledge and an understanding of good leadership.

From my experience, it is easier to build an inclusive and diverse team culture from the beginning of a taskforce or mission when everyone is new, and the focus is on commencing operations. In legacy missions, such as Afghanistan and UNFICYP, culture is just as important, but it is often more difficult to adjust as behaviours and mindsets are well established. In saying that, change can and must occur if the current environment and outcomes are sub-optimal.

As part of developing an understanding, it is important to gain insight into the mission's culture including how the environment and personalities shape it. From this point, you need to determine if the culture is fit for purpose and if not, how it needs to be adjusted. Any cultural reform will be hard and will take courage and difficult conversations to achieve ownership and commitment from the senior leadership team. The first step is then demonstrating and communicating the values and approach deemed essential, and then ensuring the organisational framework and processes to create a cohesive team are in place.

My personal approach is that of a continual learning journey; I assess the environment, try one approach to achieve an outcome and if it does not work, I reflect and try a different angle to get an improved response and connection.

In building culture, understand people – how they are thinking and why they think like they do. Work out their 'why' and connect it to the mission because it allows you to anticipate, plan, define priorities and ultimately determine a way forward.

Be agile in thinking and approach

Leadership in multidimensional environments can be ambiguous and uncertain, and often results in people being outside of their comfort zone. In these situations, a 'reflect, think, analyse' approach is generally effective as it gives time to build understanding, and conduct critical thinking and analysis before putting a plan in place and then acting. It also provides an opportunity for the team to explore multiple options to achieve an outcome as it may be a member of your team that has the good idea or expertise needed when identifying solutions.

An agile leader appreciates and empowers the expertise and experience of others. They do so by listening, engaging, removing ambiguity and documenting direction and outcomes. Agility is also recognising that you can address issues in a timely manner with an 80 per cent solution, noting the diversity of the workforce and the collaborative approach that needs to be adopted. It may not always be to the level you want as a leader, but it is a workable solution. The personal growth that comes in these situations is the humility to recognise that there are many ways to solve problems and empowering rather than managing your team to a solution is key.

Having an agile team supports a collaborative environment and results in risk appreciation and balances process and flexibility. From my experience and perspective, teams that are heavily process-driven do not always have agility in thinking and action to adapt to changing situations.

A practice that lays the foundation for an agile environment is individual's openly and enthusiastically sharing their knowledge and the capabilities/ roles of the organisation they represent. This creates a strong platform and in turn builds respect and trust for their expertise as part of a collaborative and integrated approach. This approach can then be adjusted to encompass the different agencies, components or countries.

Ensure clear communication

Common language is a critical component within multinational and multicomponent environments. Ideally, it should not be military, police or political but a language understood by all. Language builds strong relationships as it enables you and your team to communicate effectively. A common language leads to a shared understanding, which is necessary in missions with non-native English speakers and differing backgrounds and work cultures. Inconsistent language and acronyms create ambiguity, mistrust and missed opportunities for optimal outcomes.

Appreciating the importance of language in these environments is a leadership trait that I prioritise and no longer take for granted. I have worked hard to communicate effectively ensuring I am an active listener and appreciate non-verbal cues and body language as part of my understanding. Not having an appreciation of the importance of language, especially in a multinational environment, and not reflecting on and refining the way you communicate in the mission will create a sense of frustration, mistrust and confusion and will severely hamper your ability to lead effectively.

Create a diverse and inclusive environment

Respect everyone and create an inclusive and diverse environment is an essential element of good leadership. Once this has been achieved, empowerment of your commanders and leaders to create teams where background, gender, education, training and views are valued is required. This in turn builds confidence for all to contribute without fear of judgement or being publicly shut down.

I have identified that individuals will not engage and collaborate if they feel they do not belong, their voice goes unheard, or they cannot add value. Noting the diverse background of my military force, I focussed on finding potential in all my people and developing them to realise this potential, empowering them to know their voice matters and encourage them to harness their strengths and to work as part of a team to achieve force and mission outcomes.

With clear direction, this empowerment and confidence by my subordinate



leaders of their contribution and that of their teams enabled key issues to be brought through me to the senior leadership group for decision or resolution quickly. The leadership team is then able to adjust mission priorities and solve arising issues, including responding to crisis situations.

Force Commander MAJGEN Pearce talking to Sector 2 UNFICYP Peacekeepers, July 2020.

Prioritise mission outcomes

The military's strengths and contribution to multicomponent environments include planning, analytical thinking, deliberate prioritisation of work effort, and a clear definition of the outcome. A key risk is the assumption that these strengths and priorities are aligned with the broader mission approach. Often this is the case however there are times where misalignment, frustration and wasted effort occur, especially if this work is conducted without broader consultation.

From my UNFICYP experience, I have learned the value of regular senior leadership group activities that review and provide clear mission direction on issues and incidents, as often the collective insight and experience is greater than our individual assessment. Working through political and strategic issues collectively resulted in the collaborative development of guidance and direction. To mitigate any time slippage or misalignment of priorities, an agreed Forward Work Plan that was reviewed and adjusted as part of the senior leadership group agenda was an essential requirement for success.

In closing the loop on the agreed mission outcomes was the provision of a back brief to my commanders and staff, ensuring everyone had a shared understanding of organisational priorities within the context of the direction and guidance provided. This strengthened the foundations for the 'why' and inspired the individual and collective value-add and purpose.

Conclusion

Leadership within complex environments, such as a multinational peacekeeping mission, requires a flexible and broadminded approach that is nuanced and focused on people. The ability to clearly articulate your vision and purpose is crucial in ensuring that the foundations are laid early for trust and respect within a team of different nations and agencies. Allowing individuals to recognise their own value will assist in ensuring an understanding of your direction and guidance and unites the team to work towards achieving the wider mission purpose.

Leadership authenticity will enable you to respond 24/7 to dynamic and rapidly changing situations, often a key feature of multinational and complex environments. If you are not your authentic self, you will not be able to motivate and inspire others to follow your lead, and it will be difficult to overcome the differing perceptions of what good leadership is. In my experience, authenticity is built on being yourself and living your values as you lead with strength of character, courage and vulnerability.



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