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Defence models uncovered: how to understand the defence style of a country

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes four different styles, or models, of defence organisation that can be found worldwide. The framework outlined in the paper has been designed to help politicians, diplomats and officials understand better their own system so they can improve it, or to understand the system of others so they can produce better interoperability. The four styles (or models) suggested are mutually exclusive as each has defining factors that mark them out from the other three. The models are *rational* focusing upon warfighting; *emotional*, the antithesis of rationality where choices of the day dominate; *politically dominant*, where a political solution is chosen for the country such as conscription; and *militarily dominant*, where the whole defence system is controlled by the military with no proper civilian oversight. Each model is hard to sustain and most countries tend towards one style being dominant with elements of the others.

KEYWORDS

Defence; security; NATO; ESDP; organisation; defence policy; capabilities; culture

This paper sets out to provide hypotheses of a model for understanding the system of defence used by any particular country. It identifies what each of four styles of defence (organisational models) sets out to accomplish, and what each model actually delivers in reality. The paper is intended to help Ministers, diplomats, advisers, and all those involved in Defence Institution Building/Institutional Capacity Building work with a common understanding. The paper deliberately does not discuss the defence system of any particular country because this would detract from communicating some novel ideas to assess these unique governmental organisations. The paper intends to conceptualise the existing forms of defence organisations into a single model framework that is relatively easy to comprehend, explain, depict, and compare with the others.

Therefore, what is presented reflects a cumulative image based on the existing reality, easily identifiable from open source documents, from comparing national defence budgets to force and structure sizes, from official national positions concerning defence and operations, as well as from the MOD websites, data on military casualties, visible defence equipment purchases and announced acquisition intentions, the media, and the outpourings from ubiquitous defence and security seminars.

The need for a new defence model or thinking framework

The need for a *new* model to aid understanding of national defence organisations is evident more than ever as the mission of national defence becomes more complex and the international security environment keeps changing. At the same time individual nations, and especially international security and defence architectures, clearly struggle for harmonisation and coherence when they try combining their members' military capabilities for combined operations and missions. The simplicity of the days of World War One – or even Two – with relatively simple defence systems and organisations, based almost solely upon large numbers of men and women (often a huge percentage of a nation's population and economy) with a clear enemy on the state border, has given way to a wide range of new complex factors. We now have enemies using the same national passport as the soldier (not wearing uniforms or insignia), and operating inside the borders of the particular state. Technology is changing the way we think and operate about defence. We have unmanned remotely piloted drones that can kill at a distance, the military increasingly collaborating with civilian organisations, implementing ever flatter organisational structures, all the while dealing with high personnel costs, and with increasingly questioned international moral and legal frameworks.

This new model needs also to be *defence-specific*. As with any public organisation, defence systems deal with public resources, for which the public holds them accountable and expects effective and efficient performance for delivering their *stated* purpose. But unlike any other public system, defence organisations are unique stemming from their role of being the custodian of the nation's monopoly of organised, unlimited violence. This monopoly is associated with two important traits: significant and indispensable *confidentiality* in actions and considerable *uncertainty* of tasks. These two make, from the one side, the public control over the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency very difficult. From the other, it allows defence officials and politicians more easily to stray or creep away from the systems *raison d'être* to their own ends with relative impunity knowing the public will have little understanding of what they are doing.

Generally, the popular common model used today for describing defence systems is based upon comparing numbers of men in arms, tanks, artillery pieces, warships, and fighter aircraft, defence budgets; and sometimes and rarely, declarations of moral values and political norms. These statistics, are often deceiving even for own national purposes and do not provide a reliable foundation for comparison and working with other allies. They are even less appropriate, if not useless, as a basis for deciding one's short-term corrective measures for the budget let alone for making an informed and realistic strategy.

The inadequacy of such statistical approach stems from the failure of this method to account for important factors and elements of a modern defence and security environment; from the decoupling of resources from capabilities, of political will from public support, and perhaps most importantly, from ignoring national culture. This challenge becomes clearly visible when dealing inside the NATO organisation for real-world operations. This creates the challenge of how to compare each-others' defence organisations for effectiveness, efficiency, affordability, and also for moral basis, public acceptability and political support.

Many countries today, including those of the former Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact, and Yugoslavia, and their allies world-wide, have defence organisations that are still heavily

influenced by Cold War legacies. Some countries are new, or re-established with totally new national defence organisations. Some countries have allowed their defence organisations to degrade year-on-year as they cut budgets piecemeal thereby producing “Potemkin village armed forces”, i.e. merely existing as organisations, but with constantly degrading capabilities. Others have had serious organisational change forced upon them by political circumstances like wishing to join the NATO, or managing dramatically reduced budgets. Some are at war and have to change and improve. But, many are still left in a sort of “defence management limbo” with old and obsolete leadership thinking, structures, and ideas, as many in the military and political circles seem to yearn for the simple days of old, visibly keeping their defence systems for a world that has long gone. Some countries seem happy to stay that way; others have political desires for change but possess little management clarity or skill. However, almost without exception worldwide, there are today few ministries of defence with their defence organisations that can realistically claim to be fully fit-for-purpose for the challenges of the day, and even less for those of tomorrow. Therefore, without a common model from which to provide a single platform for understanding each-other’s and their own defence systems, there are no ways the nations can realistically judge themselves, or be sensibly judged by others.

Hypothesis one: All defence organisations fall broadly into one of four recognisable models: Rational, Emotional, Politics dominant, or Military dominant.

Hypothesis two: It takes effort to stay within one particular model as there are always powerful external and internal forces pulling the organisation in different directions, so whilst the organisation may be recognisable by one currently prevailing model, elements of the organisation may be pulled, or start drifting, to-and-from another model. Therefore, an ideal “representative” of any of the models does not exist. Rational defence organisations have always an integral mix of the four traits, whereas one is prevailing and as such is determinant for the organisation’s adequacy of performance, efficiency, and public image [Figure 1](#).

Defence models

The rational model

The “Rational” defence construct is the defence model of those countries who wish to use their forces for serious external political gain and who are ready to fight and win. They

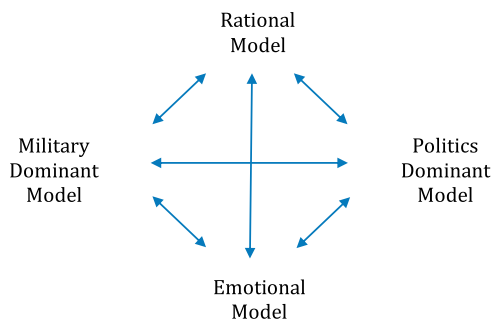


Figure 1. Models of defence organisations.

seek to train and employ warriors. To achieve and continually sustain this objective their budgets are balanced carefully in thirds amongst personnel, equipment, and activity costs. They choose leaders for results and potential. They are quick to change their organisations and structures as the environment changes. In consequence, change and innovation to create improvement is a constant theme and part of the defence mentality, both from the military and civil servants. Their troops are always ready to deploy and they count readiness and reaction times in mere hours, and not days or weeks. Maintaining units in the forces that cannot be deployed is anathema. They strive for excellence in everything they do, and are always willing to move to a better defence model or idea. They have strong policy guidance, and co-ordinate and co-operate with others when needed, even if not always easily. The forces are usually fully professional and use volunteer reserves that also go on operations, train, and exercise regularly themselves (regularly is defined as weekly, not annually or less as in other defence models).

There are always problems with the search for the highest quality. These countries do not always co-operate well internationally with other forces by choice. This is because the defence staffs of countries using this model often think of themselves as better than everyone else and their undoubted professionalism can easily appear as institutional, military, and even intellectually arrogant. Reality model countries also want to preserve their political independence for operations. This may increase their internal speed of response, but this internal focus can reduce overall military capacity for an operation below that of a slower, but broader and deeper multinational venture. The desire for delivering effective capability to robust operations and political and media “adoration”, can also see parts of the system like the intelligence services or special forces separate themselves from the mainstream defence system. This can deliver long-term adverse consequences across a whole range of operational, moral, policy, financial, and legal issues for the country, the organisation concerned and the forces as a whole. The national defence organisation, in effect, becomes unbalanced.

The Rational model is not easy to maintain. There are always dangers with trying to find the extra 10% of quality that costs, and frequently wastes, large amounts of money. Too often, many non-mainstream organisations within defence and security also strive for perfection where there is no real operational need and this also wastes money. The constant high-levels of readiness and operations can create internal stresses that bring a military social-backlash in the form of high turnover and wastage. The political class, and senior officials, often strive for advancement of their military cause, or simply to please, forgetting that the forces they rely upon are human. The more that those forces are used, the more money needs to be allocated for proper care and support, relaxation, and sport. A serious danger to the Rational model is that those vital enablers that actually underpin the human element and make the model work are often the first things to be cut from the budget. The Rational model is hard to achieve and maintain, and easy to break. But when properly constructed, it is the only organisational model that can be relied upon to deliver force for a country, if, when, and where needed.

The emotional model

The Emotional model is the antithesis of the “Rational” construct. It is a model that often occurs when political leadership and defence officials are less skilled in finance,

management, and defence and are forced to make decisions based upon emotion and the choice of the day rather than logic, finances, and facts. This is not helped in countries that have adopted the US Planning Programmeing and Budgetting System (PPBS) which appears to create an opaque system for handling defence money.¹ It is also likely to prevail in cultures with “high power-distance”, where the political elite dominates and is too strong for the military, and thus stops them from developing properly. The elite may also be frightened of the political power of a truly working defence force. The model may see the political elite failing to communicate outwards the true level of the organisation’s ability, knowing there will be compliance from the forces and complacency, or no opposition, from the public. This can be for a variety of reasons. Politicians may wish to spend money elsewhere in government, it may be false national pride, some politicians may actually believe that the level is much better than it really is, or just the empty or desperate hope of confusing a potential enemy that the country can do more than it actually can.

This model also has cultural foundations based upon power. It relies upon the political selection of generals and a commensurately weak and unquestioning media. It is usually symptomatic of a weak policy directorate in the ministry of defence (MOD) and weak and possibly already politicised the MOD briefings upwards to ministers. It can never be a comfortable system. Everyone inside is fearful and no one feels secure, even if that fear is more irrational than real. But, old leadership and legacy internal security habits die hard. Political power, often highly emotional in display, overrules common sense decision-making. Leadership is often based more upon gaining and holding power and dispensing fear, than delivering positive leadership.

Within alliances, this model can only be sustained by allies turning a blind political and military eye to the realities of a country upon which they may later rely. They either do not want to accept the reality of the ally, for political or social reasons, or simply cannot make skilled judgment for lack of experience. In defence of the political reality, this construct may have developed over time from another baseline such as having been in the Warsaw Pact; or becoming a new democracy, but the nation now finds itself with a defence system that needs radical reform. Ministers of defence and chiefs of defence may wish to change the model, but there is insufficient political strength at the national level, and possibly lack of modern management understanding or business skill to do so either. But in some cases this myth of a functioning defence is retained because politicians simply cannot face the public. Equally, it may suit generals and admirals to keep their large pretend force as justification for their social status; or worse, profits. Even if there is reform, the new structure can be captured by a select group – with jobs created for friends rather than the best soldiers. In this way entire groups of military ineffective units/weapon systems are saved for the sake of retaining people as opposed to rational restructuring for operational effectiveness combined with financial efficiency.

The forces will likely have few effective modern capabilities. In readiness terms, they may be able to deliver limited capability for international operations, or for third tier non-military tasks like supporting the public during floods and snow storms at home, but they are likely years away from being able to deliver true organisational capability across the whole system. Ships will be in harbour and planes on the ground, vehicles will be aging with flat or worn tyres in garages, and barracks will be deteriorating steadily as funds go elsewhere. The budget will be heavily skewed towards maintaining manpower

numbers, or on retaining large numbers of ships hulls, or old planes. True defence activities and modernisation will be poorly supported. But, this should not denigrate the servicemen themselves. They may be brave and capable (and individual soldiers are often as good as anyone anywhere), but with limited training and support, their capabilities as warriors deteriorate and shrink annually. They move further and further away from having true defence spirit and abilities as the leadership, training, and support around them degrades.

The model is easily recognised from the outside by the wide variety of activities undertaken by the MOD, few of which have any relevance to delivering operations. Ministers of defence will travel widely and speak often, generals will be regularly shaking hands in public usually with foreign and credentialed generals, the MOD will run copious seminars and write distracting papers on non-core subjects, and even on core subjects, but then veiled behind a deceitful eloquence. Needed changes will be “studied”, possibly even by high-grade consultancies, but their recommendations shelved quietly. Defence academies will concentrate their efforts on low-level tactical thinking, technical specialisation to an absurd degree, and soft power subjects at the expense of “real fighting subjects”. What defence activity is public will be limited, rarely showing more than a few “Special Forces”, or single helicopters with high activity and noise, serving to bluff the public rather than educate.

This model is perhaps the easiest to maintain and some countries, even within NATO, have managed to keep up the charade for years. When the truth finally does dawn at the political and national level, then the only solution is dramatic and radical change to rebalance the budget and reduce to a truly sustainable size. Tinkering at the edges, producing yet another uncoded and meaningless long term plan, talking loudly in public, and attempting gradual change may help with appearances, but can never solve the true, root problems of a tired system and unbalanced budget. Even to the contrary; delay prolongs this obvious gangrenous agony leaving no option later but military amputation. But as this change requires strong and consistent political will that has been absent for years, it is likely that the charade will simply continue until there becomes total defence irrelevance, the country loses a war, or gravely embarrasses itself on an international operation.

The politics dominant model

The Politics Dominant model is where a country has used a political justification to follow a particular, singular and long-term national defence model (but not the Rational Defence Model described above). They see this as best fitting their culture, geography, or budget. Typically this will be based upon constructs like territorial defence, mass conscription, or the heavy reliance upon society or reserves (i.e. Total Defence). This model is usually linked to, and enabled by, some other political ideas like non-alignment, neutrality, or independence. The model often relies upon a political decision to mobilise the country for war with a “hope” to produce a *working* national defence organisation *in extremis*. The nonsense of expecting a working military system that suddenly appears at a political wish; no matter how good the preparation (mainly paper-planning and stockpiling), and instantly being efficient, is rarely questioned, but always present. This mass fallacy is constantly reinforced by political speculations with short time horizons, rarely exceeding the tenure of office, while at the same time cynically committing defence expenditures to less than optimum defence effects or capabilities.

Because this is a politically justified construct ignoring the real military world, there is rarely any questioning, or testing, of the true military capability of this system (until disaster comes). In most cases after a sustained period of time the model develops into a form of national “religion” and simply passes beyond any question of change by the parliament, military, or public. Although designed as a political-strategic construct, the system overtime becomes a “repeating tactical conveyor belt” with limited operational, or strategic capability. To the nation, the model appears to be a “good thing”, but in military reality terms, the “emperor has no clothes”. Real security may actually be coming from the national political stance, but this will prove weak if ever genuinely challenged because the underpinning defence model is a mirage, ready to collapse at the first real national military test.

The budgets in this model are usually badly skewed towards manpower, sometimes towards high-profile equipment procurement, and often for purchase of stores for defence reserves to be used when the “big enemy” comes. This focus on stockpiling inherently depletes the nation’s powers today. But, rarely is defence money directed towards delivering the proper amounts of ammunition and training needed to deliver true usable, and sustainable, capabilities. The readiness times to deliver trained and working structures are usually vastly over-long for the current environment, and in some cases so lengthy they are bizarre to the extreme. Because the organisations rarely go on demanding operations, or train and exercise properly; thus, many aspects of key capabilities will be either extremely weak or totally missing. The units exist on paper, but not in reality. Except for the keen volunteers for operations, officers are rarely tested in the field for *sustained* periods or with *full* reality-based and mentally demanding exercises. Missing this true challenge, many develop skills more akin to teachers than warriors. In consequence, in the absence of high-quality “warrior-like” officers to teach and mentor their juniors, the skill quality of the soldiery also becomes poor and usually limited to narrow fields of expertise.

Having “accepted” the model the military are likely to develop in one of two ways. They may simply become supine and unquestioning of the political arguments for providing a flawed defence, serving their careers more as teachers and administrators than soldiers. Alternately they may themselves embrace the model as “religion” and in certain conditions turn it into the Militarily Dominant model, keeping the worst flaws of the model going for their own corporate ends. In both cases those who do not like these attitudes leave. Supported by a commensurate weak and unquestioning media the model continues despite evident flaws. This is usually symptomatic of a weak the MOD policy directorate supported by weak, misleading, and politicised the MOD briefings to ministers.

There are exceptions within this model such as where the government allows forces to deploy on international operations and individual quality flourishes. But these deployments are often of symbolic size and rarely in high tempo operational areas. The forces are often formed of cobbled-together units of volunteers, and not properly and sufficiently trained as a unit or team. They are usually unable to be sustained independently for the operation and invariably need international help. This construct delivers no ability for the wider organisation to develop a self-learning capacity or organisational memory, and this constrains the overall organisational fighting culture. The national defence organisation itself has limited institutional capacity to improve from the learning and any possible new lessons, along with modern skills and techniques, are simply wasted. Parts of the system become tested and trained by operations, *but most significantly, the organisation itself never develops.*

Worse than this in some countries manifesting this model, those individuals who deploy on operations, go abroad for professional military education, or serve on international military staffs, are treated poorly on return by the “old school” that never deploy, and are often stigmatised before the public as mercenaries. Modern operations are viewed as somehow different from the political defence construct and are therefore seen as not being militarily relevant. The true warriors resign early, careers unfulfilled, and the whole system suffers. The real question and fault line of this model is the reliance upon a political decision to mobilise, or deliver funding. This reasoning flies in the face of all experience, logic, and realism because evidence shows that to deliver this decision would be politically and financially unlikely for any government. To do so would be tantamount to declaring war on any enemy, thereby worsening the situation that has prompted the need in the first place. But in addition, few, if any, modern organisations have the human administrative capacity to expand to the size demanded by the model inside a sensible timeframe. Even if they were to do so, it would consist of be poorly trained tactical-level units and little else. The questions of who feeds and supports these troops, or who now runs the businesses of the country that has been mobilised seems to be conveniently forgotten, and ignored by everyone including the media and defence staffs. Again, this model depends upon allies turning a blind political and military eye to the realities of the defence system in a country they may later rely upon.

The military dominant model

This defence model is where the military have gained political power or influence for themselves and run the military organisation for their own ends. There is a complete loss of true civilian political control and this becomes extremely difficult to get back. It may take decades. This model contains a wide spectrum of possible sub-modalities; from the armed forces taking national power, to simply creating a corrupt, soft, and easy life for the military elite, or even both. For it to occur demands political chaos, moral collapse, or a total loss of political will on the part of the political and civil elite.

There are also less political and more benign modes of this construct where the military is misusing resources to increase their own social capacity at the expense of the defence budget. The defence forces waste the budget by over-ranking jobs, creating too many colonels and generals, developing large wasteful staffs, giving drivers and cars for people with no real operational need, and providing excess allowances, sustaining lavish defence resorts, military travel, and garish uniforms. The officers become lazy, reduce the amount of hard training, and go home early during the work week. This can easily occur with a succession of weak ministers of defence, or a government that sees defence and security as a sideshow not worthy of their attention. This “soft” military corruption is in some ways more insidious because of the outward pretence of delivering defence, while rendering the system totally inadequate and wasteful. The effects are also harder for people outside of the forces to see and judge.

Often there is political compliance with this model as the politicians are feted by the military with overseas trips, wasteful military dinners, and grandstand exercises and parades, all with little military substance and designed to please, flatter and bribe, and creating a façade of political legitimacy. There can also be strong links to “hard” corruption where senior officers and defence officials skew the requirements for high-cost

procurement programmes. They gain political acceptance for the purchase, but with excess funds, then going to the political as well as the military elite. Senior officers and officials may often leave the forces to work on the projects they had championed in uniform, or jump straight into politics themselves.

When the political elite finally acts to change this model – for example where the country is in transition to democracy, departing from a totalitarian political system of full symbiosis of military elite with politics, then there is a need completely to restructure the top-level of the forces. This also means removing links to any former defence related political elite, since hard corruption creates very strong bonds of symbiosis. Those in power have shown their true colours and their moral weakness. In this case, if the senior officer's corps is not replaced entirely, the transition period will be protracted, possibly taking several generations. There are inevitably some good people damaged in hard political action. Politicians need to take care not to lose those who were unable to do the right thing, because they lacked power or influence, or were under danger of removal or even death.

The models interaction

No country can ever stay in one model completely or easily, because external and internal tension, especially the budget, will always pull all or parts of the system towards another model [Figure 2](#).

The hardest model to achieve would appear to be the Reality construct because common sense and observation shows that today so few countries are doing this successfully. Defence in most of the world sits somewhere on, or close to, the other three models with one or two countries drifting centrally showing confusion about their political direction and military coherence. They can be judged by what they are not, rather than what they are. It is important to accept that a national defence organisation does not necessarily stay fully resident in one model, but may be in a balance created over time amongst two or

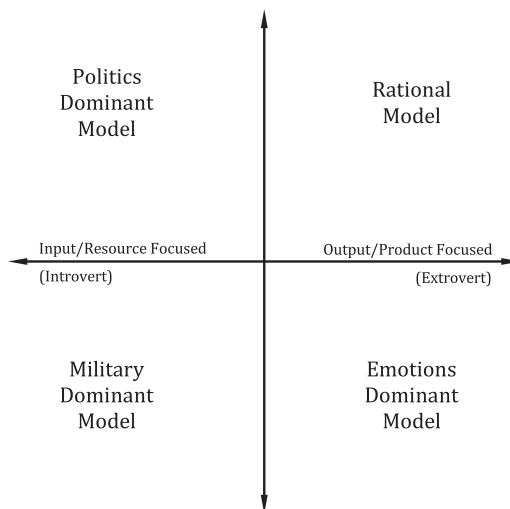


Figure 2. Defence models' interaction grid.

even three forces pulling at different aspects of the institution and also at different organisational levels.

The stresses demanding change are many and varied. War usually makes organisations become rational very quickly – even if raising military and organisational standards takes years longer. But even with war, some aspects of military weaknesses can stay stubbornly resistant, especially where corruption is rife or civilian control is weak. Alliances also have an inherent pull to make the whole organisation better and more effective; but conversely, being in an alliance often reduces the political will and courage that danger brings to nations standing alone. Arguably, the weaker member of alliances drifts away from reality by political default.

Many countries suffer unconfident politicians who rather than face reality, simply search for face-saving solutions, or too easily turn to the military for “expert” advice. One consequence of this is an inevitable disdain for the political class shown by the military, which then if not reversed quickly by political strength and intellect and clear policy, soon becomes military dominance. At the operational level there is the fundamental desire of many service people to become professional in word and deed, even if just for reasons of pride. When good soldiers are in organisations that are not organisationally professional, they will stretch the boundaries to make them so. This will always pull non-reality models toward reality in some areas, but rarely the organisation as a whole, because their enthusiasm is a threat to too many vested interests within the system. At the other extreme, over-use of professional troops or availability of soft money will often fuel demands for more spending on social support.

In truth, apart from the Reality model, the three other models are sub-optimal for the country in political and organisational terms, even if they provide important social benefits. At best they may meet alliance operational requirements, with support from bigger allies. But at worst, they are just wasting public money and acting either as a social service, political façade and “theatre”, or as a lucrative source for symbiotic military-political corruption. Culturally, many nations seem unable or unwilling to notice the fact that the defence leadership and management constructs they use today are outdated and in many cases totally counter-productive to national ambitions. The high power-distance relationship used between senior officers and those they lead – deemed necessary up until the Second World War – has now become a heavy defence burden. Those hero leader politicians, senior officials, and chiefs of defence who today still sign every paper and make every decision have themselves become the central problem for reform and modernisation. They are sustaining a defence culture that has as much relevance to modern warfare as the horse to modern armoured units.

What do the models mean for others looking in?

What this defence models paper tries to show is that each country has a unique model that it presents to the outside world made up of a combination of the unique national political and military cultures but that these can be recognised generally as dominant in one of the four quadrants. This model reflects how the country thinks and how it acts. It reflects how it makes policy, but more importantly how it thinks of policy as a concept, how it talks about policies, and how that shapes defence decision-making. But the language construct and meaning within any model is unique to that model and is not the same as that used by

players outside. The philosopher Wittgenstein calls this understanding a “language game” where two or more sides are speaking the same language but the meanings are totally different.² To aid understanding of this, two simple examples are outlined below for the words “policy” and “committee”.

What this language game does is create an internal world within each model where whatever is said becomes self-fulfilling because the language can only be heard and understood from the point of view of the country using it. The culture dominates the understanding. Outsiders can rarely understand it, let alone feel the emotional drivers behind it. In this respect, to help a country change models, outside assistance becomes imperative, even *indispensable*, because *at the top level* of the system the only language that can and will be used is the language that explains the model as being a success, therefore internal change becomes impossible. To change is to admit that all previous policies and acts were failures and the language; the very basis of thinking, meaning and being, was itself wrong.

So understanding a model and the creation of organisational glue such as required by NATO and the EU requires more thinking about, and understanding than, just collective utterances about “ways forward”. The truth is that on return from any meeting in NATO the players come back with their own vastly differing interpretations of the language and concepts displayed and then adapt or reject the policies according to how their own model language perceives them. NATO Smart Defence, European Defence, and burden-sharing, etc., are ideas that are seen with completely different interpretations depending upon the national model they affect.

But understanding that there are different models and cultures and that languages are interpreted very differently itself aids international understanding. The next stage of development of these ideas will be for the authors to develop further a series of questions as a method of identifying the national defence organisation in a way that shows which model a country is closest to. In this way officials can better understand themselves and start to decide if and where exactly change is needed. The next stage will be getting countries to accept that the model they have may not be serving their best political and military interests. This challenge seems more difficult. Nevertheless, once the model of the defence organisation is detected and understood, this will greatly facilitate decisions regarding the next steps.

Summary

This paper has not explored in any depth what makes a good defence system as there are too many national historical and cultural exceptions that must be taken into account. But there are a few things that are vital and must be faced politically within any model if the defence system is to have long term viability as a national tool.

The first of these is that decision-making that does not stress warfighting today and not at some lengthy time in the future (starve today but jam tomorrow!) is actually contrary to the whole concept of spending money on a national defence organisation that needs to be ready to be used.

The second is the need for a balanced budget with personnel, equipment, and activity taking close shares. An unequal budget always leads to a loss of capability and guarantees the need for regular dramatic change to bring the system back into balance.

Third is the need for genuine social equality between the highest and lowest in the forces, supported by a radical improvement for MODs and staffs in peacetime training

and business practices. Without these changes, no modern force can manage to achieve the level of organisational and mental flexibility and low-level responsibility-taking needed to be operationally effective in the current environment. This change is especially challenging in cultural terms for all senior defence officials and officers in all but the rational construct, but it must be faced.

Fourth is that professional forces of all ranks and all organisations (especially MODs) need every second of their career to train and prepare if they are to reach the world-class standards of potential enemies. Time and money spent on anything non-core defence and security is dangerously spent.

Example of how models shape or are shaped by language and concepts

An understanding of the meaning of the word “Policy”:

Rational – an agreed formula to position the defence organisation strategically for maximum political and military benefit

Politically dominant - decisions that gain maximum long term popular political and public support and ostensibly provide national security confidence even if with no logical military underpinning.

Emotional – short term decisions that make the defence organisation and senior officials look good today irrespective of any possible long term consequences

Militarily dominant – positions the military for maximum benefit to them not the country they serve, although that may be given publicly as an excuse.

An understanding of the meaning of the word “Committee” or “Working Group”

Rational – A grouping of experts and decision makers to produce the best possible outcome for defence and the country

Politically dominant - A grouping to reinforce what has already been politically decided

Emotional – a chance for officials to abrogate personal responsibility and take the easiest and most popular course

Militarily dominant – a forum for ostensibly handing down senior officer decisions but also to provide collective responsibility for illegal actions.

N.B.: We have used this paper over a number of years whilst conducting change management consultancies throughout central and eastern Europe. The model has been exposed for comment with an accompanying questionnaire to defence and political colleagues in many countries including Bulgaria, Kosovo, Montenegro and Ukraine.

Notes

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors .