Understand
to **Prevent**

The military contribution to the
prevention of violent conflict

MCDC
COMBINED OPERATIONAL ACCESS

Understand to Prevent

The military contribution to the prevention of violent conflict

A short guide

A Multinational Capability Development Campaign project

Project Team:
GBR, AUT, CAN, FIN, NLD, NOR, USA

Distribution statement

Introduction

1. 'Understand to prevent' (U2P) was a multinational project conducted under the auspices of the Multinational Capability Development Campaign (MCDC) through 2013/2014. The aim of the project was to determine what contribution defence forces of the world can make to the prevention of violent conflict. This short guide complements the full study, Understand to Prevent: The Military Contribution to the Prevention of Violent Conflict.

2. While the concepts are primarily designed for the member nations of MCDC, those proposed also apply to all military forces in the world. We see the MCDC nations as being able to develop these concepts into operational lines of action but the principles of military forces supporting democratic stable states is universal and we claim no monopoly. Various agencies within the United Nations (UN) in New York have expressed a desire to work on a future project and we hope that the ideas developed can be spread as widely as possible to other military organisations around the globe.

3. While the *raison d'etre* of defence forces is to fight, nations have also used forces to prevent violence through traditional techniques of deterrence and post-crisis peacekeeping. This project consolidates those concepts and moves on to develop new opportunities to contribute to the prevention of violent conflict.

Purpose

4. The purpose of this project was to examine preventing violent conflict before a crisis occurs. Many agencies already operate in this space, particularly various organisations of the UN. The military contribution must therefore be carefully identified to ensure that it provides a synergistic contribution to the comprehensive approach, rather than further complicate the conflict environment. External interference is often far from welcome in conflict areas of the globe; and a military involvement may have a further negative connotation.

Our idea

5. While there has been much inter-agency experience over the last ten years of reconstruction and stabilisation in failed states, it has been done after a specific period of violence (i.e. downstream). A central premise of this project is that the same skills and capabilities can be translated to the pre-crisis period (i.e. upstream) and thus provide stability and prevent the transition into violence. So, while the use or threat of force remains available, an understanding of the conflict environment would allow defence forces to offer other, more positive, contributions to the effort.

Structure

6. This publication has been split into two parts. In Part 1, *Foundation studies*, we review some of the established academic and practitioner knowledge relating to the human domain, conflict, violence and prevention. In Part 2, *The understand to prevent concept*, we review the potential contribution of military actors and look conceptually at how that engagement could take place. This publication provides a baseline for

further collaborative prevention work within the multinational and inter-agency community.

7.   Developing an operational model to pull together the diplomatic, economic, military, civil society and business levers of influence for prevention is the subject of a 2015/2016 project. This project will be led by the UK in the MCDC forum.

Key tenets

8.   The concept relies on two fundamental tenets:

- understanding; and
- human-centrality.

First, **understanding** is critical to success. Effective decision-making relies on a reliable understanding of the problem. Second, the actors in this sphere of influence, or domain, are all human. Thus our understanding, decision-making and actions should be human-centric.

9.   The concept will include **generic understanding** of the human domain – psychology, sociology, anthropology, human conflict, violence, the established tools of prevention and the potential effects of military involvement. The concept will also need **specific understanding** of the conflict, the actors, their relationships, the problem and the potential positive and negative effect of external influences – including oneself.

10.   It is also worth discussing key terms. Throughout this publication we have relied upon the definitions provided by Professor Johan Galtung in the 1960s and, more recently, Professor John Paul Lederach. Their insights have wide academic credibility and inform much of the understanding of peace within the UN.

Terms[1]	
Conflict	A natural human experience which arises between *actors in pursuit of incompatible goals* or experiencing feelings of threat or denial. Without the structures of a stable state conflict can lead to negative violence.
Violence	Relates to both the direct, or physical, violence that is all too easily seen, and the underlying structural and cultural violence that prevents some actors from realising their potential.[2]
Prevention	Refers to the action of stopping (violent conflict) from happening or arising.

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1   These descriptions of terms have been specifically developed for this publication to aid understanding.

2   In the case of U2P the violence under consideration is that of **collective political violence**, rather than other social or interpersonal violence.

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1 - Understanding the human domain

'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

Constitution of UNESCO[3]

1.1   If we are to consider the complexities of human violence and its prevention, we must develop a human-centric understanding of the problem. In this section, we develop our understanding of the h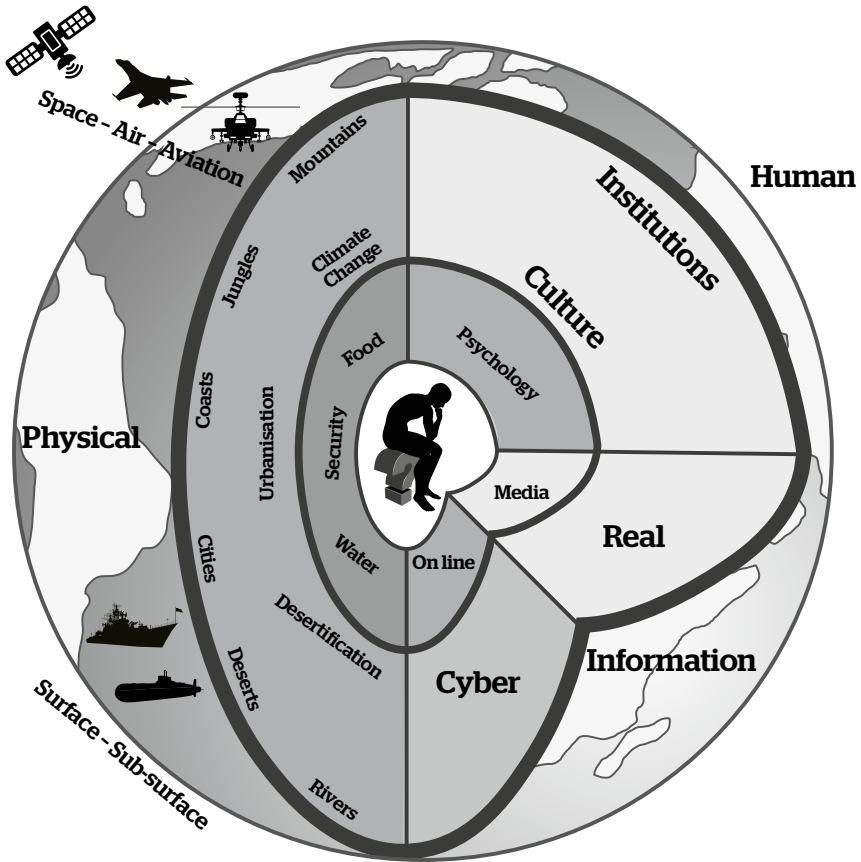uman domain – that being the entire sphere of human existence and interaction. We analyse the internal influences on our being: needs, honzons (those things held sacred) and our emotions. We analyse the external influences of culture, institutions, networks, trust and leadership.

1.2   Understanding oneself is also important as well as being aware of how others perceive you and your own biases and preconceptions. Before making decisions, it is very useful to know how well we understand a problem and therefore how much risk is inherent in our plan. We provide a quick guide to test levels of understanding and risk in decision-making.

1.3   The current model for preventing violent conflict can be understood by referring to 'the conflict curve' (Figure 1.1). The curve represents conflict manifesting itself as violence as a conflict between two or more actors escalates past a notional 'crisis line'.

Violent conflict and its prevention – The conflict curve and upstream concept
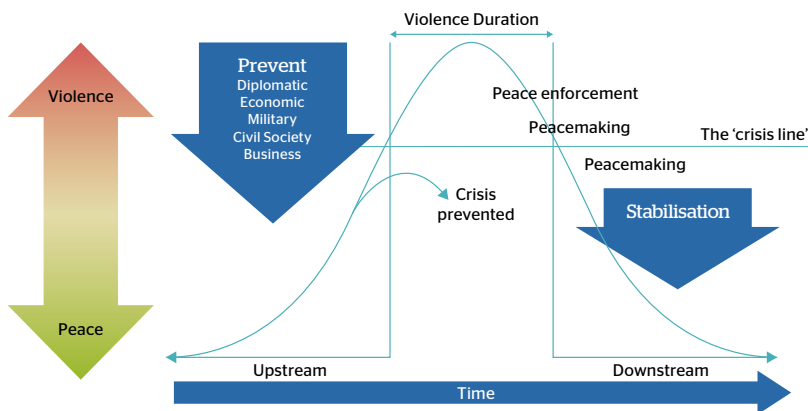
Figure 1.1: The conflict curve

3   Constitution of UNESCO adopted in London on 16 November 1945.

1.4   The conflict curve may be a segment of a far longer sinusoidal wave, but reducing the size of the peaks of the curve is our aim. Recognising this standard curve is the first step. To understand conflict, and what allows it to trend towards violence, we need to concentrate on the left hand side of the curve (Figure 1.2, 1-4).
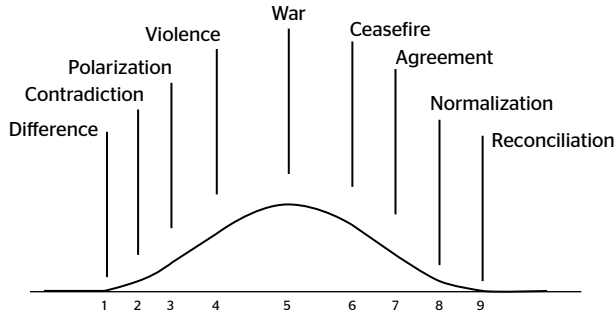

Figure 1.2: The stages of conflict

1.5   The transitions, through difference, contradiction and polarisation, towards violence (as shown in Figure 1.2) can be spotted by some well-established markers. In fact the team identified over a dozen early-warning models in use across the UN, nations, business and non-governmental organisations. They could be more effective if linked into a wider and more integrated model; but the reality is that early-warning in itself is not the main challenge. This comes from the reluctance of governments to commit to remedial effort before a crisis. We are not suggesting that we launch a new campaign for altruistic action. We fully recognise that even when violence has broken out, only nations whose interests are threatened are likely to assist in the resolution of the crisis. We are keen to stress two points:

- investment in turning the curve early is much more cost-effective than waiting until violence occurs; and

- in an interconnected world it may not be immediately obvious how a new threat could draw in other nations and affect their interests.

1.6   We would suggest that no nations are likely to invest in a blanket fight against violence because it would be difficult to justify unless interests are threatened. But the reality is that more effective early warning, and a developed skill-set and focused local support, could remedy a situation long before expensive intervention is required.

1.7   We need to understand conflict, the conflict and all the actors in the conflict. We should also understand those seeking to help (especially their needs and sensitivities), the comprehensive mechanisms to prevent escalation and where the military has a role to play.

1.8   Support to fragile states can prevent them from failing. There is plenty of evidence – such as the Northern Ireland model (Figure 1.3) – where the process of agreement, normalisation and reconciliation can work. We believe the considered application of stabilisation activities earlier in the curve – before violence has erupted – can be more effective and, critically, less expensive to intervening third parties.
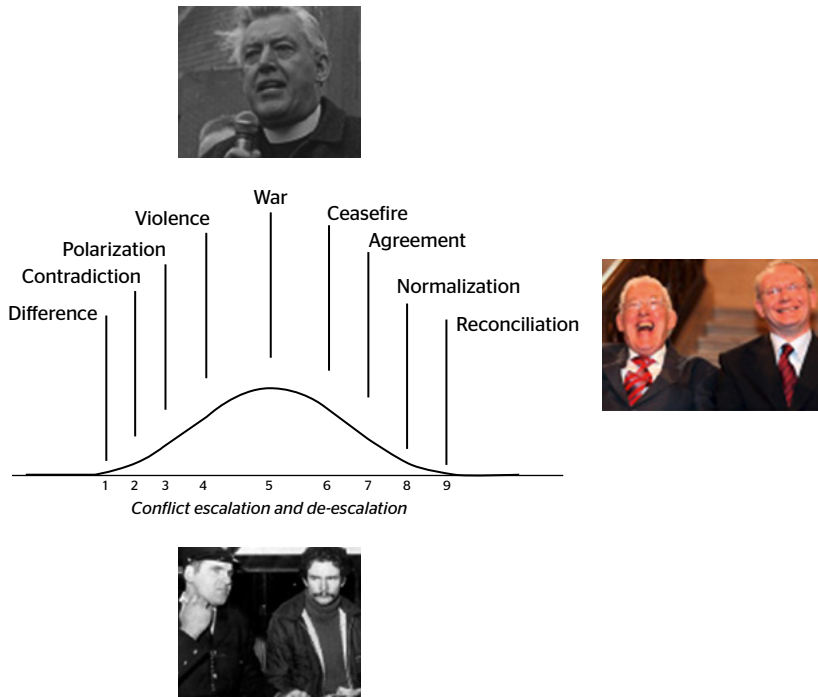

Conflict escalation and de-escalation

Figure 1.3: The transition in Northern Ireland

2 - Understanding conflict

2.1   Conflict and violence are different. Understanding that difference is key to developing effective approaches to prevention. In the next two sections, we will explore conflict and violence and the relationship between them.

2.2   Despite conflict being widespread and we may have experienced it ourselves on some level, it is difficult to define. The sprectrum ranges from the inner conflict of an individual through to a minor dispute between two individuals to nation states threatening all-out war.

2.3   The model proposed by Galtung[4] seeks to reduce conflict to its basics. His ABC or conflict triangle (Figure 2.1) is now widely accepted and used. Galtung argues that all conflict arises from the interplay of three essential elements. These are the:

- **contradictions** – the issue or resource over which there is disagreement or what he calls 'incompatibility';

- **attitude** of the conflict actors – their perceptions, emotions, judgement and desires – towards the contradiction and each other; and

- **behaviour** that arises from this.

For example, two or more actors strongly desiring (*attitude*) the same resource (*contradiction*) can provoke feelings of mutual hostility (*attitude*) that give rise to violent action (*behaviour*).

Attitude and behaviour can be both the cause and effect of conflict, and so tend to reinforce each other. For example, even the perception (*attitude*) in one

actor that another actor might desire (*attitude*) the same resource (*contradiction*) can prompt in him a hostile attitude and behaviour towards the second actor and so provoke hostility in return.
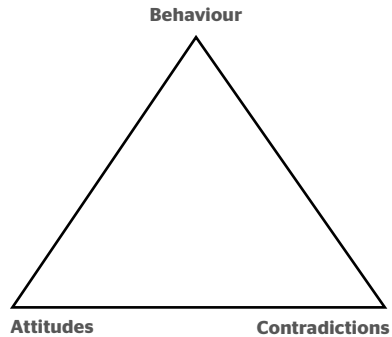
Figure 2.1: The Galtung 'ABC' triangle of conflict

2.4   This theory infers that conflict needs more than simple difference, disagreement or incompatibility between the actors. To activate a conflict a perceived threat or denial is needed. If any of the actors fear that they will suffer loss or harm in some way, or will be denied something they care about, conflict will be triggered.

2.5   Expressing this ABC dynamic in a single sentence, one can say that:

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66 Conflict arises when people perceive that something they care about is being threatened or denied. 99

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4   Galtung J, *Theories of Conflict, Definitions, Dimensions, Negations and formations.*

Importantly, whether the perception of threat or denial is accurate or not is immaterial; neither is the merit of the 'something'. What matters is how actors view things, what they care about and by how much. The same goes for all the other actors involved.

We can therefore say that conflict develops between actors pursuing incompatible goals. Let us consider an example using sport – specifically, cricket. In cricket, there are two teams of eleven. Each team has other supporters and followers off the pitch. Both teams have incompatible goals – they both want to win. They don't want to come second. There is an immediate contradiction: the players, the support teams and the followers' attitudes are set against the opposing team. This could colour their approach in many aspects of their lives. The effect is instantly apparent in their behaviour. They could change the clothes they wear, sing team songs and challenge their friends who support the other side. They train to be the best. Conflict has begun.

Then it's the day of the match. Players are on the field, fired up with adrenalin and emotion, at the peak of their development. For hours they challenge each other, supported and roused by chanting crowds. Eventually, the game, in the case of a limited overs match, concludes and one team wins. Elation on one side, despondency on the other. **But no violence.**

We had conflict – but no violence – **why?**

In this case the conflict was set within very clear parameters. Rules and regulations controlled the activities on the pitch. There were umpires providing the rule of law, clear bounds of behaviour for all concerned and sanctions for anyone – on or off the pitch – for breaking the code of conduct. Such conditions meant we had a positive outcome from the conflict. Teams were able to develop their skills and reach new levels of achievement through competition.

Providing societal or personal controls that ensure conflict remains a constructive activity that helps prevent violence. But when those controls cease to contain that accepted behaviour, violence – negative conflict – can occur.

3 - Understanding violence

3.1   Direct violence (visible, physical violence) is familiar territory for military operators. It's where we are normally tasked to operate either through our own application of violence as an extension of government policy, or aspiring to deter the physical violence of others through deterrence or peacekeeping.

3.2   Using the military in such activities is well practised and outside the aims of this publication. We need to focus more on the root causes of direct violence and consider the indirect aspects or hidden violence. Only by addressing these can we provide positive peace, rather than a temporary lull in direct violence (negative peace).

3.3   Galtung's 'DSC' triangle can help (Figure 3.1). Structural and cultural violence will always lie beneath expressions of collective political direct violence. We therefore need to examine the challenges below the line.

Direct Violence

Seen

'Unseen'

Cultural Violence   **Structural Violence**
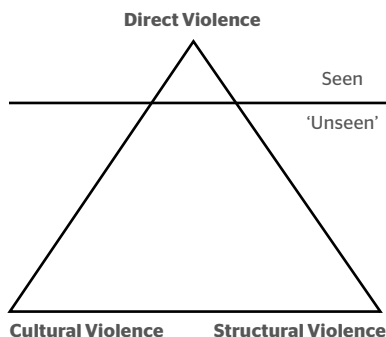
Figure 3.1: The Galtung 'DSC' triangle of violence

3.4   Structural violence occurs when laws or institutions are created that formalise the repression of parts of

society or against other societies; when discriminatory or exploitative attitudes and beliefs are built into the structure of a society.

3.5   Cultural violence is expressed in the very attitudes and beliefs that underpin a society and the power and necessity of violence. It includes the accepted narrative of history, how one society carries a resentment against another; and how those attitudes are built into its religion, arts, values and relationships. With the necessary cultural attitudes in place, direct and indirect violence against 'the other' can be justified.

3.6   We also briefly examined the role of leadership as a catalyst in the rise of violence. Many individuals may have personal reasons to feel violent against others but it is only when they can spread such ideas and establish them within the cultural and structural elements of a society that the effect is widely felt. Individuals can be dealt with by the laws and structures of a strong society; but when those structures weaken or reflect increasingly extreme views, a society's contradictions, conflictual attitudes and repressive behaviours can become accepted, with physical violence only a step away. Charismatic and persuasive leaders can act for, or against, such manipulation and so play a pivotal role.

3.7   Ultimately, we need to have tools for analysing conflict and violence and what turns groups and societies to reverse the normal predominance of civilised behaviour. Only by understanding a specific conflict with these tools can we hope to contribute to prevention.

4 - Understanding prevention

4.1   The model the international community has adopted for managing conflict and spreading peace and security is the structure and processes of the UN. The UN is not the first organisation that has sought to manage peace and security but it does present the principles and procedures that govern our nations today. The institution was established by charter at the end of World War II. This charter guides the processes by which nations provide security for themselves and others, using the nation state as the fundamental building block of governance.

4.2   Political settlement within, and between, states is fundamental to preventing violence. Increasingly, it is the fragile or failing state that threatens peace and security. As the political settlement within a state is threatened or lost, violence is likely to appear within or from outside its borders.

4.3   Figure 4.1 illustrates the model of the stable state. This model is useful in understanding how we can contribute to the move away from fragility. Governance, rule of law, economic success and development, together with internal and external security, provide that stability required to contain violence in all its forms. Our efforts must be directed at identifying structural problems early and analysing attitudes.

4.4   While some may see a need to intervene in a failing state's affairs, there can be great resistance by that state to third party intervention. Such sensitivities are recognised and respected by the various agencies of the UN and carefully managed programmes are developed to provide positive outcomes. Preventive intervention must be handled with great sensitivity. Sometimes this can be below the radar – but appropriate channels, either through the UN or bilaterally, need to be identified. This can be done
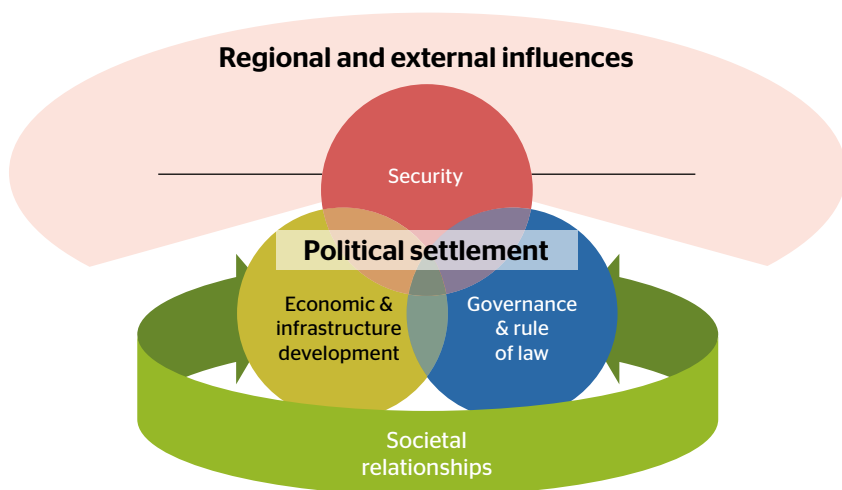

Figure 4.1: The compoments of a stable state

through other states, through other states with interests in the region and various diplomatic, economic, military, civil and business channels.

4.5   A key area of sub-optimal performance appears to be the failure to develop a broader comprehensive approach to prevention. This comprehensive approach has long been recognised and practised post-conflict and now we need to develop it in the upstream period.

4.6   Once in-depth analysis has been completed, prevention activity can be planned. Having considered a broad range of prevention methodologies, and in light of the UN Development Programme's recommendation, we consider the best strategy to follow is that of conflict transformation, as proposed by Professor John Paul Lederach.

4.7   The process of understanding prevention is a pragmatic one. It seeks not to resolve the conflict but to find ways of moving it away from violence and towards more positive forms. It is a process that will challenge traditional military thinking. Those who truly understand the philosophies of counter-insurgency will find the jump to conflict transformation easier than others. Its methodology, however, sits close to that of command planning for any operation. There are three parts:

- understand the current situation;
- visualise the preferred future – incorporating the stable state model; and
- instigate change processes towards that end.

4.8   The underlying principle must be 'local first'. It may take external pressure, facilitation and resources to get the conflict in focus and the conflict actors together, but a sustainable solution is only going to be found if it comes from those involved in the conflict.

4.9   Building constructive social change is an area where military education and experience is currently rather thin. While we are not suggesting the military will lead or act alone in building social change, it does have a role to play. We need to fit into the comprehensive team, understand the theories and then identify our role.

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Part 2
The U2P Concept
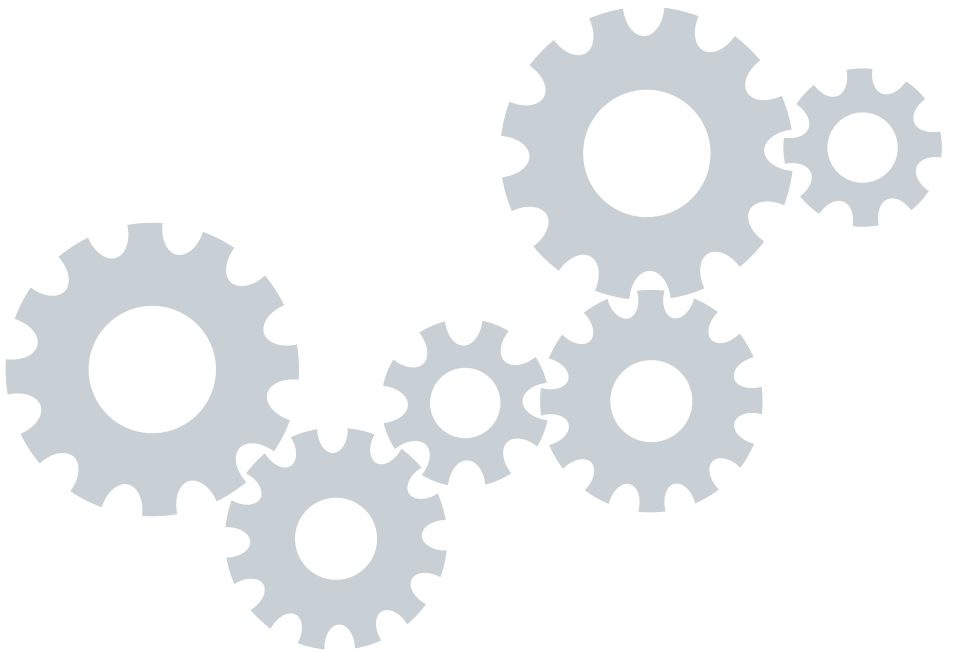
5 - Identifying the task

A comprehensive approach

5.1   Fundamental to the understand to prevent (U2P) concept is that military involvement is only ever in support of wider efforts to counter violent conflict. We have embraced the comprehensive approach throughout but have identified that, in the upstream prevention period, coordination between the comprehensive players – diplomatic, economic, military, non-government organisations, civil society and business – does not exist. The U2P concept therefore proposes establishing forums to bring together various stakeholders to help a host nation with a 'prevent' task. We call this a comprehensive contact team.

5.2   A comprehensive contact team is a facilitating and supporting forum, open to agencies and actors seeking to support the prevention of violent conflict in a specific host nation. They will be able to exchange information and therefore increase their understanding of the conflict. Their approach will be multi-layered and multi-dimensional, hence the need for coordination. Their aim will be to engage local actors to find local solutions to transform the conflict.

5.3   Developing this contact team model – its composition, methodologies and leadership (if any) – is proposed as the central theme of a subsequent project. Through exchanging and working on ideas, a model can be developed and then tested in an exercise environment. Operators in the prevention space can then understand each other's contribution, identify overlaps and gaps and optimise sharing of tasks.

Military tasks

5.4   We are already involved in many activities that can play a bigger role in prevention. Having identified those defence engagement activities, we should focus on exploiting opportunities for the prevention agenda. Furthermore, to be able to contribute effectively in the prevention field, we need to develop new skills. We must also develop our understanding which will need a combination of individual education and corporate systems for analysis and engagement. Military officers will need to develop their own skill sets to be able to be credible and contribute. They will need to understand concepts and theories of conflict, peace and prevention, and develop skills of negotiation, mediation and dialogue.

5.5   We can consider tasks under the following four headings (shown in Figure 5.1).

- **Standard** – those tasks which could fall to the military but may also be done by others.

- **Enhanced** – those areas where we need to develop our capability to be able to contribute effectively in the prevention field.

- **Focused** – those areas where we may already be involved in a relevant activity but where the main effort is not prevention. A prevent focus is now required.

- **New** – there are new tasks for military forces in the upstream period. We identify our contribution within the comprehensive team.

Standard tasks

5.6   Military forces provide governments with capabilities that extend beyond the basic defence of the nation. As the conflict curve grows steeper and a problem gets closer to being a crisis, the military will always have a role to play. While not necessarily being the ideal candidate to take on a specific task, our capabilities and characteristics could be called upon at short notice.

- Risk – where the security situation presents a challenge to those without the ability to protect themselves, military deployments could provide protection to people or property or to accomplish a task directly.

- Readiness – when only the military are able to deploy to meet a need in the time required.

- Range – when only the military have the ability to deploy at distance with appropriate logistics.

- Numbers – when only the military have the numbers immediately available.

- Niche – when the military have specialist capabilities. By virtue of the very broad skill-set in the military, and the advantages of deployability described above, it is possible that specialists in niche capabilities could also be provided to solve a particular problem or support host nation capacity building. Databases of such skills across the coalition nations should, therefore, be maintained.

Standard	Enhanced	Focused	New
Risk Readiness Range Numbers Niche	Develop understanding: • human centric • study conflict • structured early warning • adapt	A prevent focus for defence engagement: early, enduring understanding and influence Coalitions: unity of action 'Patrol with a mission'	Upstream engagement: • join the comprehensive team • agree roles: security sector reform/ armed groups • engage first – local first

Figure 5.1: Identifying tasks

5.7   The military could be used when one or more of these demands[5] are made. It would be preferable that once the need has abated, a cheaper, more bespoke response could be provided by other agencies or the business sector. Risk, readiness, range, numbers and niche (RRRNN) assists in identifying the tasks with which the military can help but are not necessarily the optimal choice in the longer term. A draft guide to activities in which we think the military must be, can be, and must not be, used can be found in Appendix T to MCDC's full publication.[6]

Enhanced tasks

5.8   Understanding. As stated above, there is a fundamental need for military officers to broaden their understanding of conflict. A polarised war-fighter's view of conflict will be a disadvantage in future operations 'amongst the people'. By studying conflict from wider angles than traditional war studies' perspectives and deepening our understanding of conflict mechanics, we will become better at war fighting as well as being able to take a credible place in the comprehensive prevention team. Additionally, military operators need to develop specific skills to become conflict specialists in their own right – listening, dialogue, mediation, negotiation and arbitration. Operating with a human-centric focus to prevent 'wars amongst the people' will demand enhanced skills.

5.9   Early warning. The military has also traditionally played its part in early warning. Reporting from intelligence agencies and attachés worldwide provides information on military capacity and intent. This intelligence is usually analysed in respect of whether that nation or group poses a direct threat to the home nation, its allies or interests, rather than a capacity for violence in itself. Spotting the capability and intent for violence wherever it appears is the needed task and a key contribution to the wider conflict early warning. Developing understanding of conflict indicators would give additional value to the analysis. Broader joint analysis of indicators within the comprehensive community – especially incorporating business actors – is required.

5.10   Early warning models. There are plenty of effective early warning models already available. Interconnectivity is a challenge but most important is the connection to the decision-makers who determine the response to warning. This political challenge – when is it of value to contribute to prevention? – is very subjective and usually based on a kind of cost-benefit analysis, rather than altruism. This is a topic that we intend to explore further in *Understand to Prevent 2*.[7]

Focused tasks

5.11   Defence engagement. There are numerous opportunities for defence engagement. The term covers many activities, from generic soft power to specifically targeted engagements, for example, defence sales. However, much of this activity lacks a prevention focus and certainly lacks coordination with coalition partners. U2P provides the opportunity to 'patrol with a mission'. Every engagement, whether a ship's visit

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5   Risk, readiness, range, numbers, niche (RRRNN).

6   *Understand to Prevent: The Military Contribution to the Prevention of Violent Conflict.*

7   The second phase of the U2P project planned for 2015/16.

or a foreign student on a sponsored course, should be provided with an *understand* and a prevention *influence* task. We must engage early and endure. Investing in relationships across the international security sector and beyond will provide the human-centric networks in which future comprehensive prevention operations will be conducted. Possible upstream enagement tasks may include:

- treaties and alliances;
- senior visits;
- defence attache networks;
- loan service personnel;
- civilian defence advisors;
- overseas exchange and liaison officers;
- overseas training teams;
- security sector reform;
- international defence training opportunities;
- conventional deterrence – general and immediate;

- overseas joint exercises;
- ship, unit and aircraft visits;
- defence industry cooperation;
- arms control and counter proliferation;
- maritime security;
- counter terrorism; and
- counter organised crime, trafficking and supply.

New tasks

5.12   The real evolution is the area of **upstream engagement**. The challenge is to identify the contribution we can make in the critical upstream zone, before direct violence occurs. In upstream engagement, we move out of the zone where the military uses force (or the threat of force) to change behaviours, into an area where, through our own example and demonstration, we can inculcate non-violent and preventive behaviours in other groups. This new set

Military to military – a brotherhood of arms?

The privilege of wearing a uniform and being part of a respected military organisation facilitates privileged access to, and potential influence in, other uniformed organisations. There is a relationship between military personnel because of their shared life experiences. It may not immediately expose itself in familial terms but there will be an underlying respect and willingness to communicate that would not be available to civilian interlocutors. Likewise, although not necessarily in uniform, armed groups – and particularly their leaders – may be more amenable to engagement from a military interlocutor. The 'brothers in arms' link might provide opportunities that can be exploited. These opportunities for engagement and influence must be identified and exploited.

It is recommended that preventive activities involving military forces or armed groups should initially be explored by the military component of the comprehensive team. Specific tasks may include security sector reform, military subordination, ethics, discipline, training, rules of engagement, sexual violence, law of armed conflict, disarmament and treaties. Analysis and understanding facilitate comprehensive understanding and shared approach to human centric skill-sets. This is achieved through understanding, dialogue, negotiation and mediation.

of tasks will call for new guidelines and principles. Examples may include the following guidelines and principles.

- Understand as much as you can.

- Integrate early, for a comprehensive solution will be required.

- Bring the team together, but there should be almost no circumstances where the military will take the lead in the upstream phase.

- Learn from those who have a better understanding – there will always be someone who was there before you.

- Do no harm – the influence of any intervention changes the dynamic.

- Be mindful that intervention may not be welcomed by local actors (especially military intervention) and other members of the comprehensive team.

- Be mindful that military uniforms can have a positive or negative influence.

5.13   Many of the skills developed and practised in the last 15 years under stabilisation activities have utility in the upstream phase. Support to fragile, or failing, states to find a **local solution** to the conflict challenge is the essence of this concept. There are plenty of agencies working to that aim, so how might the military usefully contribute to their efforts?

5.14   While external military involvement carries significant sensitivity, few would argue that the military should not be part of a comprehensive team and have specific roles to play. These roles would tend to focus on military-to-military (or armed group) influence connections – but other military-to-civilian tasks may appear upstream, often related to the RRRNN factors. And because of coalition networks, logistic capacity and a planning infrastructure, there may be a facilitation role that can be played to bring together the comprehensive team. This does not necessarily imply the military taking the lead.

UN Photo/Catianne Tijerina

The 'must not' consideration

5.15   Involving armed forces in preventing violence is an apparent contradiction and carries huge sensitivity in some areas. U2P has deliberately set aside traditional military roles of force-based intervention to explore non-violent prevention opportunities. It is essential to understand, therefore, that while self-defence is not denied, or the defence of a UN-mandated mission, using or threatening to use force plays no part in the U2P concept.

5.16   There are further sensitivities that need to be addressed. These are easily understood through the use of principles and human-centric consideration. The first two UN peacekeeping principles – consent of the parties and impartiality[8] – are very relevant but may not be in place at the start of the engagement. Impartiality could appear impossible if external actors have been invited in by one side in a conflict. Evidence of impartiality should be one of the very first things offered during early engagements with the actors. Only then can the consent of the parties be achieved, trust built and a local solution developed. Thus the posture, presence and profile of military external actors is particularly important in this process and will need careful consideration.

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8   The third being non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

6 - The way ahead: the comprehensive upstream team

The stages and principles of military contribution to prevention

6.1   The framework to guide those involved in planning the military contribution to prevention consists of five stages, with each stage having a number of supporting principles. Although the stages are logically sequential, each stage, (and the range of supporting principles), must be re-evaluated frequently to achieve the full potential of the prevention effort. The five stages are:

- understand;
- engage early;
- act;
- endure; and
- assess.

Figure 6.1 explains this framework.

The prevention framework

1.   Understand
- Create understanding of the conflict and its dynamics
- Adopt a "do no harm" approach
- Build relationships – build networks, adapt
- Be aware of opportunities for conflict transformation
- Engage in a substantial and iterative evaluation of the situation
- Develop a narrative that describes what is going on

2.   Engage Early
- Get key individuals involved through a respectful, people-centric approach
- Seek comprehensive inclusivity (*local first*/tactical, mid-level actors/operational, whole-of-government/strategic)
- Build credibility and trustworthiness by acting impartially
- Respect needs, but tap beliefs, emotions and motivation in order to influence behaviour (i.e. create a positive effect)

5.   Assess – continuous assessment – positive and negative feedback to adapt

3.   Act
- Address causes of direct, structural and cultural violence

4.   Endure
- See through the transformation of violent conflict to peace with real, lasting commitment

Figure 6.1: The prevention framework

6.2   Every intervention must be based upon legitimate involvement and an overall strategy to support a local solution. Maintaining the aim of that strategy is crucial to success. It is considered to be the master principle and foundation upon which the framework depends. The intent to 'do no harm' is the most important component of the strategy and yet is often the most difficult issue to reconcile with the immediate interests of nations contributing to prevention involvement.

Potential military contributions to prevention

6.3   Violent conflicts are likely to continue arising in fragile and failing states. There is consensus that western nations will continue to conduct military capacity-building missions but with a move to upstream conflict prevention in an attempt to avoid hard-end intervention. Such efforts will also generally be conducted as part of an alliance or *ad hoc* coalition. Military capacity building has become a central element of defence policies of several [NATO] Alliance nations. Moreover, despite the 'intervention fatigue' prevalent throughout the Alliance, smaller scale stabilisation interventions may still be unavoidable.[9]

6.4   So, whereas stabilisation operations are generally thought of as part of a campaign that comes with establishing peace following the conduct of war, and prevention or 'phase zero' operations seek to stave off the outbreak of violence, stability activities are pertinent to both kinds of operations. Stability activities are as follows:

- security and control;

- support to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration;

- support to security sector reform;

- support to initial restoration of services;

- support to initial governance; and

- assistance to other agencies.

6.5   All of these activities could be carried out by militaries in a pre-violence, prevention setting. Their presence will be subject to very clear controls. External military forces will only become involved through invitation of the host government, or possibly in extreme cases by UN mandate. Clearly though, some of these activities are best carried out by partners other than militaries (for example, support to service provision or governance) and ought to be if the security situation permits. Militaries have considerable doctrine and experience in these activities and are more or less capable of conducting them effectively depending on the level of professionalism.

6.6   The proposed development of the military skill-set is key in this area. The development of human-centric skills (for example, dialogue, listening, mediation and negotiation) will provide new ways in which military influence can be brought to bear but will also open up new tasks where the military can better contribute to the comprehensive effort. The focus

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9   Wilton Park and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Conference Report (WP1296), *Assisting host country militaries: assessing lessons from NATO, EU and member state experience*, (Wilton Park: 4-6 December 2013), page 1.

should be on providing ideas and resources for local exploitation as well as providing an appropriate military model for local emulation: perform – demonstrate – inculcate.

6.7   Security force capacity building is one aspect of supporting security sector reform. Such capacity building is an activity 'undertaken to develop the institutional and operational capabilities of foreign security forces, in order to create appropriate, effective and legitimate security institutions and forces.'[10]

Security force capacity building generally falls within the following categories.

- Building – structuring, recruiting and selection, equipping, infrastructure.

- Mentoring – providing one-on-one training by a senior officer.

- Advising – providing advice, guidance or assistance.

- Training – providing formal individual and collective training, and creating training institutions.

- Enabling – attaching elements into the host nation security force to augment capability or provide specialisation with a view to sustainably developing these over time.

The force must be developed to the balanced model of fighting power (Figure 6.2):
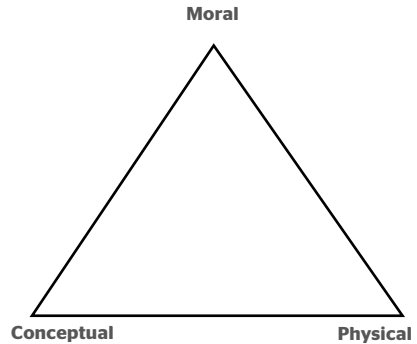
Figure 6.2: Balanced model of fighting power

6.8   Recent weaknesses exposed in the Iraqi Army would suggest that while considerable investment in physical hardware and education of tactics was made available to the new army, when tested against a determined opponent the will to fight evaded them. The underpinning moral component of defence forces must be built against the laws of armed conflict and the moral compass of ethical behaviour in support of a civilian government. However, it is essential that such a moral component is built by local actors according to local motivations.
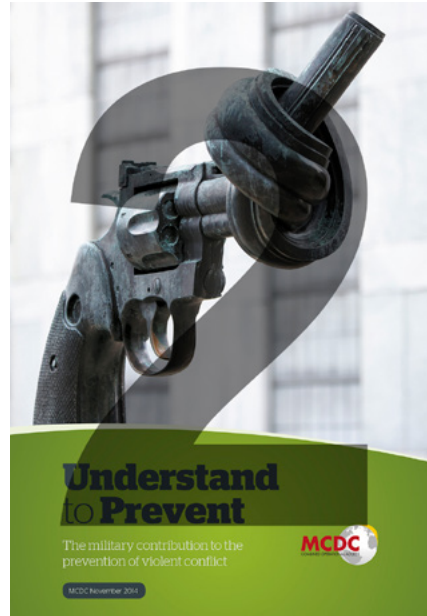
Some final considerations and a way forward

6.9   The idea of pre-emption or preventing future violent conflict as an upstream intervention activity in which militaries could be involved is starting to be taken more seriously, especially by military leaders. But there are many other players already in this space. This

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10 Department of National Defence, B-GL-323-000/FP-001 *Security Force Capacity Building* (2014 draft), paragraph 1-1-3.

project has identified some of the academic underpinning and best practice of engaged agencies and suggested the areas in which the military can contribute – but the full comprehensive upstream team has yet to be built and to develop its approach.

6.10   This report has established a conceptual foundation from which an operational model could be developed amongst the multinational and comprehensive community. However, more work needs to be done to take that task further – and we welcome your thoughts and ideas as we embark on U2P2. (Email – DCDC-MCDC@mod.uk).

Understand to Prevent

The military contribution to the prevention of violent conflict

MCDC November 2014

MCDC

Ongoing questions raised during this project that need to be answered in subsequent consideration

- What has worked well, and what has not worked so well, in prevention?
- What kinds of military capabilities ought to be committed to prevention?
- What are the 'mechanics' of gaining understanding and how do militaries train for it?
- How do we integrate early-warning indicators and how can we precipitate involvement?
- What are the measures of effectiveness that will tell military partners if the correct first, second and third-order effects are being created by prevention activities? Who measures?
- What kind of leadership model is most appropriate for prevention missions? What are the selection criteria for mission leaders? How are they trained?
- What are the legal and political issues that need resolution before committing to prevention missions?
- How is coordination with other non-military partners done to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort or working at cross-purposes?
- Are there models for committing effort to prevent violent conflict that do not have to rely on vested interests of contributing governments?