

10-20-30 Document:

Civil-Military Interaction Advice from Strong Angel

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The summary thoughts below have been very liberally borrowed from smart people. Some are previously published, some are original statements from Strong Angel participants, and some are just our discussed and considered opinion of a productive way to do things. Few are likely to be innovative; lessons learned the hard way tend to repeat themselves with no prompting.

There are three general categories of civil-military interaction:

- conflict intervention,
- natural disaster response, and
- complex emergency support.

There are suggestions for each below.

Ten Commandments:

1) The military should generally not be in overall charge. JTF Commander should be clearly subordinate to civilian authorities whenever possible. This:

- i) Sets a democratic process in place that's reassuring to the population served
- ii) Sets expectations for the levels of responsibility
- iii) Keeps the military footprint to an absolute minimum
 - (1) With a transition requirement apparent daily
- iv) Allows some mission drift (a desirable flexibility) while minimizing mission creep
- v) Maintains a coordinated Host Nation Support mandate
 - (1) Establish the scope of that mandate early and often

2) Technology cannot substitute for personal interaction

- i) Use all available modes of communication
 - (1) Decide in common when and how to use technology
 - (2) Don't assume face-to-face is ideal, but it's a good default
- ii) Agree early on common definitions of important terms
- iii) Do not assume that each understands the other. Cultural differences can be subtle, but profound
- iv) Get out and talk with counterparts frequently. Share food and drink, equipment and resources. It's proven to save lives.

3) Personalities are more important than Processes

- i) Don't throw away the book; thoughtful and experienced people wrote it, but be able to flex. You're the one on the scene. Value your own leadership in context.

4) Know the cultures and issues that surround you.

- i) Avoid imposing your standards and beliefs, but remember that there are international declarations defining fundamental human rights

- ii) Avoidable misunderstandings can cause distracting escalations
 - iii) Strive for impartiality to the sides within the conflict
 - iv) Breadth of understanding fosters a better recognition of the scope of your real task.
- 5) Work on building communications networks as you begin to plan**
- i) Key people need to communicate early across organizations
 - ii) Provide power where it's needed – all forms
 - iii) Get a multi-pathway phone book out and keep it updated
 - iv) If you can't communicate, you can't coordinate
- 6) Centralize planning and de-centralize execution.**
- i) Trust your people, but be thoughtful about whom you empower
- 7) Coordinate everything with everybody to the greatest possible extent**
- i) Few issues will doom a mission more quickly than the perception of arrogance
 - ii) The troops need to know their role in the larger picture
- 8) UN agencies are distinct, anarchic, and highly effective**
- i) UN agencies agree through collaboration and consensus. Don't try to impose force.
 - ii) UN agency technical communications structure has often been the best in the area
 - iii) The UN is no monolith. It is more than fifty agencies with various management structures, but a common theme is that the management is often very flat – occasionally directly from highest headquarters to a local representative in the field.
 - iv) UN agencies consider their mandate to be externally focused while we often look at “self” and “other”. Not wrong either way, but very different. Worth remembering.
 - v) UN agencies were there before, are there now, and will be there afterwards. They know a lot about the neighborhood and they understand the situation.
 - vi) The UN agencies look to the military to provide four areas: LISH
 - (a) Logistics support (particularly heavy lift)
 - (b) Information (particularly local conditions)
 - (c) Security (of UN and other non-governmental staff)
 - (d) Health (primary care for the UN staff)
 - vii) The key to success will be coordinating and cooperating
- 9) Senior Commanders and Staffs need education and training for non-traditional roles**
- i) Troops need awareness and understanding. Push the situational awareness out as far as you can.
- 10) Even in a seemingly simple operation – there WILL BE more media and more politics than anticipated. Be fair and be consistent.**

Twenty Recommendations:

- 1) Under-promise. Over-perform.**
- i) Repeat your intentions over and over, doing everything possible to prevent false expectations
 - ii) Make sure you complete the task you promised

- iii) Build sustainable solutions that can be effectively transitioned to national agency management.
 - iv) Make sure it's legal to make the promises you choose to make
 - (1) Standards of Conduct and Rules of Engagement can be exceptionally complicated for all concerned
 - (2) Keep the lawyers within your inner circle
- 2) The humanitarian intent should remain primary even against odds. Let it drive the operation.**
- 3) Ensure all planning is Joint.**
 - i) Use your sister Services. Play to everyone's strengths.
- 4) Synergy between the civilian and military arenas can be found through an awareness of competitive advantage within the continuum of effort.**
 - i) Help each party see the valuable reasons for working together.
 - ii) Ensure they have those reasons.
- 5) A Civil-Military Operations Center, in function if not in physical space, will be indispensable**
 - i) Break down the razor-wire barriers. Invite partners in.
 - (1) Co-location improves the cohesiveness of effort
 - (2) Problems can be solved in a common forum
 - (3) Issues discussed elsewhere can be voted upon collectively
- 6) Women in uniform can be a reassuring presence to an affected population**
 - i) 85% of recent affected populations have been women and children
 - ii) May distinguish the image of our new military presence over the local traditional military presence, increasing acceptance and improving rapport quickly
- 7) Avoid compartmentalized planning.**
 - i) Communication is hard enough. Don't compound the problem.
- 8) The two components likely to fail most frequently are communications and lift.**
 - i) Expect it. Plan in parallel layers.
 - ii) Keep a bedrock communications layer as a lowest common denominator across all boundaries and use it daily
- 9) Readiness should not be confused with sustainability.**
 - i) Be ready for high-end force projection going in, with secure logistics to follow quickly. The sustainment force composition is very different, is rarely on tap, and must be accounted early.
- 10) The psychological costs of sustainment are disproportionately placed on the shoulders of the best talent. Protect them.**
- 11) An afloat CMOC offers security, hygiene, and rest. While imperfect, it's a proven asset for some situations.**
 - i) Naval assets in a coastal region provide presence, poise, and protection.
 - ii) Early, formative discussions between new partners (a Humanitarian Planning Team) can take place afloat, then move ashore when ready
- 12) Critical Incident Stress Response within the care providers can prove disabling.**
 - i) Ensure resources are available for support. Most people have never seen what your personnel will have to endure daily.
- 13) Establish liaisons with stakeholders at every possible level, inserting full-time live bodies from coordinating agencies (e.g. the UN) where it seems valuable and where you can:**
 - i) within the Host Nation infrastructure
 - ii) within the local population groups

- iii) within the coalition partners
- 14) Establish pre-conditions for deployment where you can within**
 - i) Host nation agreements (through the Embassy, a Country Team, or a UN agency)
 - ii) Self-nation agreements
 - iii) International participants in the Theater
 - iv) UN agencies
 - v) Donor nations and agencies
- 15) Establish a secure environment for the conduct of your mandate**
 - i) Establish freedom of movement
 - ii) Neutralize the effectiveness of the belligerents in a fair and equitable manner across factions when possible
 - iii) Establish and maintain working relationships with the Host Nation, most frequently through the Embassy with a coordinating UN agency
 - iv) Be prepared to support humanitarian operations. They are often the core of the solution
 - v) Be able to monitor, verify, and report to and on your major stakeholders
- 16) Information Operations can improve safety and security during transitions to sustainment**
 - i) Conversely, in a digital age, communication dependent upon data links is inherently fragile and temptingly vulnerable. Expect failures.
 - ii) Use your PSYOPS and Civil Affairs teams early. May save lives.
- 17) Situational awareness will be problematic.**
 - i) Maps should be held in common and briefed in common
 - (1) Declassify information early and often to the greatest possible extent
 - ii) Daily briefs across topic areas should be held with all major stakeholders
 - (a) Safety and Protection
 - (b) Food
 - (c) Logistics transport
 - (d) Social services
 - (e) Domestic needs
 - (f) Health and nutrition
 - (g) Water and sanitation
 - (h) Education
 - (i) Shelter
 - (j) Income generation
 - (k) Environmental protection
 - (l) Agency operational support
 - (m) Public Information
 - (n) Budgets
 - (o) Exit Strategy
- 18) Information that needs to be tracked constantly:**
 - (a) Deployment of Armed Forces
 - (b) Stock at a glance
 - (c) Stock position, location
 - (d) Market price of Food Grains
 - (e) Maps: storing places and ports
 - (f) Shipping Schedules
 - (g) Position of Ships

- (h) Unloading details
- (i) Food movement programs
- (j) Internal Procurement
- (k) Maps: Situation Maps of affected areas
- (l) Relief Activities
- (m) Cash Allocated
- (n) Damage Reports
- (o) Foreign Relief arrivals

19) Key initial decisions to make:

- i) Weapons status?: none, or consider the absolute minimum level required
- ii) Host Nation ability to provide appropriate/adequate level of security?
 - (1) Try to augment and build. Not replace and take over.
- iii) Medical support and social sensitivities?
- iv) Civil Affairs to do Assessments?
- v) Means of communication coordination?: chose lowest common denominator
- vi) Imaging is necessary – getting the products to the people who really need it
 - (1) Again, declassify quickly
- vii) How to get to the people who need the most support – those in the muddy boots

20) Know the environment

- a) Weather, dust, mud, insects, diseases, and the impact on equipment and personnel

Thirty Advisories:

- 1) Decide on the image you want to portray and stick to it.
- 2) Start and restart key institutions early
 - a) Medicine, education, telephone services, electrical power, churches...
 - b) Begin the restoration of normalcy in areas that can transition early
 - c) Stay involved enough to ensure the re-start is sustainable
- 3) Don't make enemies but, if you do, don't treat them gently
- 4) Encourage innovation and non-traditional approaches. Then listen when you get them.
- 5) Plan early and include everyone. This can't be stressed enough.
- 6) Determine the Commander's Intent, the Centers of Gravity, a Mission Analysis from the Intent and those Centers, an End State, Measures of Effectiveness toward that End State, and a phased Exit Strategy toward a transition to normalcy
- 7) Remain aware of other operational commitments elsewhere that may tax your resources and replenishment options. There have been unwelcome historical surprises.
- 8) Initial and replenishment manning will fall short in medical, dental, construction, port operations, and other specialist areas. Few Services are deep in skilled personnel anywhere in this new millennium.
- 9) Avoid becoming the carrier of the United States Checkbook. That can create a falsely inflated economy very hard on the rest of the local population
- 10) Medical facilities have historically been looted and destroyed early.
- 11) Other skilled local staffs are often gone by the time we get there. Construction, electrical, plumbing, teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives, and so forth
- 12) Be aware of the local anti-intervention PSYOPS campaign that may be waged against you

- 13) Decide whether you need better maps and charts early and get the surveys started
 - a) Don't forget to share
 - 14) Recognize that fear of the military will be a constant impediment for many people at some level. It will be essential for you to understand the conflict issues, parties, and history
 - 15) Identify your budget and financial sponsors early, and recognize that all players present have both
 - 16) Also note that all participants have media requirements to one degree or another. Don't fight a tidal wave. Assist each other in the common goal of ensuring each is (and looks) useful to the sponsoring agencies
 - 17) Recognize that military priorities for early self-sustainment may not be shared by all parties present. Offload and airlift schedules will be controversial if transport logistics are difficult and controlled by the military
 - 18) Investigations of events that may later be evidence of war crimes will be an early requirement, often within the first 48 hours within the area. Be prepared to interview in the native language, photograph sites and subjects, and then archive the developing documentation. This has historically gone poorly and the guilty have gone free.
 - 19) Be prepared to offer religious services to affected populations. In many areas of the world such services are an overriding concern, and holding services can sometimes defuse significant tension.
 - 20) There is never enough scalable amphibious lift in a coastal operation
 - 21) Make early arrangements for a scalable, mobile public address system
 - 22) Form an early VHF and HF communications link between the military and the UN agencies
 - 23) There should be an area available for informal discussions. Coffee, tea, a few chairs. Much gets accomplished in an informal context, one-on-one.
 - 24) The UN agencies need a separate area to work together apart from the military. They will be there far longer than most military staff and may well stay in better, long-term billeting.
 - 25) Early formation of a Combined Logistics Cell that incorporates everyone saves a lot of time, money, and frustration.
 - 26) Power fails. Have backup manual methods for anything important that requires electricity. Many painful lessons on record.
 - 27) Have a central area for posting decisions, messages, and schedules
 - 28) Remember that more than half of our recent populations have been under age 15. We need preparation to handle children in large numbers. Use UNICEF. They are prepared to manage issues associated with child soldiers.
 - 29) The UN agencies are very reluctant to depend on the military for core services support. Our military priorities are altered on short notice from authority outside of our control, affecting the UN agency service provisioning to their population.
 - 30) Ensure all of your personnel understand their Standards of Conduct and Rules of Engagement. The carrying of small laminated cards has proved useful.
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