33 ISMOR: Themes and Trends

A Personal Perspective

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33 ISMOR Themes and Trends

- Themes – there are detectable themes, often viewable from more than than one perspective (e.g. analyst, military, decision maker, historian etc.)

- Trends – always difficult to say if there are trends without several years of data but I will offer some observations anyway and compare to ISMOR 31 &32

- Is anything missing?

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  - ACRONYMS, especially unexplained ones!!

Managing Expectations of my "analysis" (a Disclaimer)

Will <u>not</u> be offering a comprehensive resume of each presentation, each session or even each day's efforts

Will not provide a <u>full</u> quantitative analysis of the content of the presentations

My perspective may not fit exactly with your impressions or conclusions (if at all) but, hopefully, it will strike a chord (or two)

As previously, I have assigned 2 to 4 "thematic descriptors" to each presentation or poster and added them up – these are the numbers you will see against the descriptors on the next slide

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What I term my "Conventional view" –

- Decision support for military (17) –
- Analysis of data/techniques/model development (15)
- Data evaluation (9) –
- Procurement (7) –
- Capability requirements and/or management (6) –
- Weapons (5)
- Understanding military decision making inc. C2 & ISR (4)
- Medical (4) –
- Support to Operations (4) –
- Cyber (3) –

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What I term my "Conventional view" (2016) –

- Decision support for military (17) – need to advise military of choices. Many different aspects.
- Analysis techniques/model development (15) – many presentations on models and their development with "few" results
- Data evaluation (9) – Analysis of data becoming increasing focus
- Procurement (7) – Less mention of lack of funding. Acceptance?
- Capability requirements generation (6) – Analysts still contributing
- Weapons (5) – An upturn this year
- Understanding military decision making inc. C2 & ISR (4) – Still a challenging area
- Medical (4) – Recognising need to improve understanding
- Support to Operations (4) – Still happening but declining
- Cyber (3) – Seems to be making some progress (finally)

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Comparison of 2014, 2015, 2016:

Title	14	15	16	Title	14	15	16
Analysis/models	16	26	15	Weapons	2	2	5
Decision support	10	10	17	Cyber	3	1	3
Support to Ops	9	5	4	Air power	3	2	4
Capability R'qts	6	5	6	Maritime	0	5	1
Military decision making inc C4I	6	5	4	Lessons learned	0	3	0
VFM	5	4	0	Joint(ery)	0	3	1
Analysis for Management	5	0	4	Logistics & supply chain	0	3	3
Data evaluation	2	2	9	Procurement	0	3	7

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Theme based view (2016) –

- Operational Analysis of (*the conduct of*) Military Operations has been in the minority this year
- (On the other hand) Support to Military or Defence "decision making" has featured highly
- (*Direct*) Support to military operations has decreased (Afghanistan withdrawal effect?) – but still seen as helpful and integral
- Understanding "soft issues" and "soft OA", i.e. behaviours, reasoning, mental models, social impact
- Improving ease of use & transparency of analysis (for analyst and customer)
- Return of war gaming, continues?

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As last year, are these themes going to be trends? Now a perspective over 3 years

Answer is, unlike last year, the "picture" on trends is mixed:

- Budgets are still tightening (except China, Russia) but VFM has not featured so highly
- Data evaluation both small and large features much more strongly
- C4ISR still featuring
- Recognition that conflicts are not getting simpler (a trend) and the issues they pose are growing. Emerging willingness to analyse them
- End of operations in Afghanistan does now seem to have reduced level of <u>direct</u> support to military but not wider decision support
- Range of techniques to tackle "problems" seems wider with "soft OA" growing

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As last year I ask the question - Are these themes and trends relevant?

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Are these themes and trends relevant?

Statement as previously:

- Exact number of conflicts in world imprecise – over 400 conflicts identifiable with around 40 where loss of life is significant and sustained.

- Majority of 40 are internal but often with external implications or interventions e.g. Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Mali, Congo (Eastern Region), Libya

- Factors involved vary (and are rarely singular) – religion, resources, ethnicity, political ideology, historic grievances, poverty, social inequality

BUT this year,

- There are a few workshops and/or presentations that are tackling some of the issues raised by these conflicts. Again, Dave Sloggett's presentations stand out as providing some insight into the issues.

So, in summary:

- Where is analysis going?
  - Analysis of "state on state" conflict not uppermost this year, is this just a US concern?
  - Use of soft OA to support "decision making" across range of issues
  - Analysing data sets, both small and large, is welcome
- Some indication that analysts are addressing some of the conflicts that are most pressing e.g. Libya?
- But are analysts not tackling the challenges of "terrorism" (a generic term) or is it just too classified?

QUESTIONS?

OBSERVATIONS?