

## **‘Interoperability of the Mind’: Professional Military Education and the Development of Interoperability**

For a number of economic, military and political reasons, multinational operations are becoming increasingly important. As their prevalence increases, so does the significance of ensuring that partner nations are interoperable. This can be achieved in a range of ways, including standardisation in areas such as equipment and tactics, techniques and procedures. However, despite being frequently overlooked, cultural interoperability is central to the cohesion of all coalitions. As has been stated:

Over and beyond the problem of linguistic communication, or the difficulties involved in harmonizing procedures, technical arrangements, etc., there remains an issue that is less easily apprehended and ought to top the agenda of military social scientists: that of cultural interoperability.<sup>1</sup>

Cultural interoperability can be grounded in a common language, a similar ethos and comparable principles. It can also be developed and enhanced through multinational exercises, personnel exchanges and liaison officers. An important avenue for developing cultural interoperability is provided by international professional military education (PME), which allows for sustained cross-cultural interaction between students and staff from a range of nations. From a military perspective, PME offers a unique environment for the frank exchange of ideas and for cultural acclimatisation, which may not be feasible during exercises or operations. Furthermore, it is a ‘safe’ option in that the exchange of classified information or defence technology can be avoided.

Given the ongoing debate around the ‘transformation of joint professional military education’, it is important that all factors – positive and negative – be included in the equation.<sup>2</sup> Particularly during an era of austerity, investment in education initiatives will be scrutinised and so it is important that the far-reaching benefits of internationalising PME – and its cost effectiveness – are appreciated. Beyond the diplomatic and political benefits, which are well understood, there is a practical advantage in the development and enhancement of cultural interoperability – the bridge to cohesive multinational operations. PME – as a means to deliver greater cultural

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

interoperability – should therefore be seen as a potential keystone and efforts to reap the benefits of an internationalised education programme should be correspondingly increased.

## **Interoperability: An Ongoing Challenge**

Interoperability is a complex and multidimensional concept that is relevant at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. In the most straightforward terms, interoperability ‘is a measure of the degree to which various organizations or individuals are able to operate together to achieve a common goal’.<sup>3</sup> Historically, the focus of interoperability has tended to be concentrated on equipment and technology,<sup>4</sup> but the human elements of interoperability are equally, if not more, important at each of the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

Cultural factors have proven to be a source of friction throughout the history of multinational operations, with the consequences ranging from inconvenience to impediments to cohesion and success. Even amongst the closest of allies such as the US and the UK during the Second World War, there was reportedly ‘a great deal of friction over perceived cultural insensitivities’.<sup>5</sup> As the composition of multinational operations became more diverse, the problems were exacerbated. During the Korean War, the well-meaning decision by the US Army to replace the assortment of weapons possessed by Ethiopian troops with new US-made weapons proved problematic as the failure of a warrior to return home with his original weapon was traditionally perceived as a sign of defeat.<sup>6</sup> The conduct of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was notable for the separation of multinational forces by functional or geographic responsibilities. One study has observed that ‘some forces were assigned to areas where they would not have to work with other UN forces with whom national problems might emerge’.<sup>7</sup>

Although the separation of multinational forces has a number of drawbacks, close integration can increase the chances of friction, as evidenced by the Dutch decision to deploy a company to replace part of the British commitment to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in 1998. The Dutch troops were placed under the command of the British section commander, but the decision led to tension due, amongst other factors, to concerns over the ‘hierarchical customs within the British Army’, which ultimately led to a suggestion that the personnel should only operate ‘within one’s own tasks and responsibilities’.<sup>8</sup> A subsequent Dutch special commission report recommended that personnel should get to know and respect

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

the culture of their partners.<sup>9</sup> Despite a number of mitigating measures being put in place over previous decades, cultural friction has continued to affect contemporary operations. In Afghanistan, friction occurred between a range of participating armed forces. At Camp Julien, for instance, it was reported that Belgian and Canadian forces ‘formed two “blocs” and were continuously causing frustration among each other’.<sup>10</sup> Equally, in 2003, cultural friction between Dutch and German forces was noted to have led to ‘substandard cooperation’ and to have been the cause of ‘serious misunderstandings and conflicts’.<sup>11</sup>

As multinational operations become more frequent and coalition partners more diverse, the relevance of cultural interoperability is increasing. Angela Febbraro, Brian McKee and Sharon Riedel – building on earlier work by George B Graen and Chun Hui – have noted: ‘the challenge of multinational military operations is to select and train “transculturals” – those individuals who transcend cultural differences and who can bring people of different cultures together’.<sup>12</sup> The requirement for cross-cultural experience and ‘transcultural’ outlooks has given rise to the concept of ‘cognitive interoperability’, which has been described by Tim Blad and David Potts as ‘a confidence and mutual understanding based on shared military education and values’.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of multinational forces maintaining a shared understanding has been recognised by major military bodies around the world, although there have been variations in the terminology used. Whilst the Germans have emphasised the idea of *Einheit im Denken* [‘unity in thought’], the British have focused on ‘interoperability of the mind’ and the Americans have favoured the term ‘co-operability’.<sup>14</sup> At first glance, the concept of cognitive interoperability may appear straightforward. However, although reference is sometimes made to a common military culture/ethos, there are, as Christopher Dandeker points out, ‘a variety of military and doctrinal cultures’.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, a common military ethos is a vague and unsatisfactory benchmark for interoperability. Although a shared culture provides a foundation, significant work is still required to reach a level of cultural interoperability which allows for the full spectrum of operations. Consequently, nations need to be proactive in undertaking measures designed to enhance cultural interoperability. One obvious opportunity for developing greater cross-cultural understanding is to increase the number of international students in PME, as well as create new or enhance existing initiatives to maintain links with participants after their departure.

Aside from the delivery of knowledge and skills, PME is also fundamental for the process of ‘professional socialisation’ and is a ‘crucial part of the construction of national military culture’.<sup>16</sup> The invitations extended to international militaries to participate in PME within a host nation are an important element of military ‘soft power’ and a good example of ‘military-military diplomacy’.<sup>17</sup> Although it is not the primary purpose of internationalisation, the cross-cultural engagement that occurs in this context can have significant subsidiary benefits in the form of enhancing interoperability.

### **From Jointness to Multinational Mindedness**

The most powerful tool any soldier carries is not his weapon but his mind. These days, and for the days ahead as far as we can see, what soldiers at all ranks know is liable to be at least as important to their success as what they can physically do.<sup>18</sup>

First and foremost, military education institutions need to produce effective officers capable of undertaking and leading operations. In order to be effective, PME must be offered at different stages of an officer’s career and, for efficiency, should be delivered ‘just in time’ to provide appropriate preparation for the likely tasks of a particular rank. As officers progress, their education needs to be more nuanced and focused, in a range of tasks, including multinational interaction. Notably, General William DePuy, First Commander of the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, remarked: ‘war is the great auditor of military institutions’, and although that sentiment is still relevant, the conduct of operations across the entire spectrum of military activity is equally an auditor of PME institutions.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the interaction of international military forces and, in part, the achievement of interoperability, will serve as an indicator of how successful the internationalisation of PME has been.

The development of a flexible and creative military mind through PME can be viewed as a four-step process: the cultivation and development of professionalism in a single-service environment; the progression of ‘jointness’; an emphasis on the ability to co-operate as part of a whole-of-government approach; and the development of the capacity to operate in a multinational environment. The concept of ‘jointness’ – the effective integration of the

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

different service branches of a nation's armed forces – has become ever more important and its significance has been reflected in the PME experience. Thomas Keaney noted: 'An officer's early career takes place within the organization, doctrine, and culture of the uniform he or she wears, but senior officers inevitably deal much more in a joint environment. Their education for these assignments has increasingly recognized these circumstances.'<sup>20</sup>

The broadening of PME from a narrowly focused single-service perspective to a whole-of-government approach, which is a collective effort by military *and* civilian agencies within a government to achieve a common goal, has also been of great significance. The flexibility required to transition from a single-service mindset to a combined or joint approach set a precedent and provided the impetus for the necessary shift first to a mindset that encompassed whole-of-government thinking and also to multinational mindedness within the armed forces. When serving as Commander, Joint Education, Training and Warfare, Royal Australian Navy, Rear Admiral James Goldrick declared in 2010:

My emphasis, in an attempt to achieve simplicity in a complicated subject, is on the classical aspects of 'jointery', that is, between and amongst the Services, rather than on international or inter-agency factors. The truth is, however, that the right approach to resolving inter-Service issues readily extends to the wider stage.<sup>21</sup>

The contemporary security environment necessitates that nations will frequently operate together for political, as well as military reasons. It is incumbent on the armed forces, especially those responsible for education and training, to ensure that officers are sufficiently prepared for the likelihood of working with a range of multinational partners. As Michael Codner has pertinently observed, educational exchanges offer a means to 'transport the best training practices as well as doctrine and procedures'.<sup>22</sup>

## **From Student to Multinational Leader**

In terms of cross-cultural experience, exposure to PME in a foreign nation can have a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on students. The United States Naval War College (USNWC), for example, invites 100–150 international officers to the US per year to study a range of

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

practical subjects and to engage in its field studies programme. The College has asserted: 'Each officer is greatly influenced by what they see and learn in the U.S. Each one forms strong bonds with their U.S. and international classmates. They maintain these professional and fraternal ties, remaining in contact for the rest of their lives.'<sup>23</sup> In acknowledgement of the value of such international, cross-cultural experiences, the USNWC has introduced a series of Global Maritime Partnership initiatives, such as the Regional Alumni Symposia, to maximise the benefits to officers of international study in the US.

In the US, the Naval Command College (NCC), the Naval Staff College (NSC) and the Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) Flag Course provide examples of the expansive reach of cross-cultural PME. The NCC, which offers an eleven-month course for international students that is generally integrated with the domestic academic programme, annually educates the best and brightest officers from over 60 nations. More than 2,000 individuals from over 100 countries have graduated from the college. The NSC, established in 1972, offers a bespoke intensive five-month version of the NCC course, and similarly to the NCC, has educated well over 2,000 officers, many from small navies around the world.<sup>24</sup> The CFMCC offers a tailored course that focuses on likely regional scenarios and facilitates the ability of senior officers to work together effectively in a multinational environment.

This trend towards increasingly internationalising the student intake of classes at war/staff colleges has been replicated across the US. Since 1950, more than 500,000 international officers have received some form of education or training in the US.<sup>25</sup> For instance, in 2000, 9,000 officers representing more than 100 countries were educated in the US, with an estimated 200 participating in full-year courses at PME institutions.<sup>26</sup> Efforts to increase multinational inclusivity are also increasing elsewhere in the world. In the UK, since the turn of the twenty-first century, international officers from up to 49 countries have constituted approximately 30 per cent of the student intake on the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, approximately 30 per cent of graduates on the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the New Zealand Command and Staff College are international officers.<sup>28</sup> The personal relationships and professional networks developed during the course of study endure well beyond its completion.

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

As with any multinational military interaction, there are political and diplomatic considerations in the decision-making process for international inclusivity in PME. That said, the initiatives being undertaken in a range of countries emphasise the importance attached to facilitating cultural interoperability through interaction in an educational environment. In Europe, for example, the commandants of institutions in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, which consists of all NATO members and 22 partner nations, meet annually to consider course delivery and curriculum content.<sup>29</sup> However, whilst aligning curriculums and institutional cultures is important, the recruitment of qualified international students remains a priority. A number of nations use America's Foreign Military Sales programme, which enables the sale of defence equipment and services to foreign states when it will enhance domestic and international security, as a means to send students to US institutions on a reimbursable basis.<sup>30</sup> Developing nations, which would be otherwise unable to cover the cost of sending students to the US, are provided with financial support through a range of US State Department initiatives, including the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme.<sup>31</sup> In Europe, students take part in exchanges between a range of staff colleges across the continent, while smaller-scale visits and exercises by British, French, German, Spanish and Italian military personnel take place throughout the academic year.

For smaller nations, such as New Zealand, exposure to international military education is particularly important, due to the likelihood that the country's armed forces will act as junior partners in coalition operations rather than leading them. Murray Simons aptly surmised: 'In New Zealand's case, world-class trained and educated personnel are arguably our best contribution to global security ... We need better access to foreign education to learn their doctrine, culture, and capabilities.'<sup>32</sup> Transnational PME provides mutual benefits. Smaller nations obtain an understanding of the culture, doctrine and operating style of larger ones, and students of those countries likely to lead coalitions obtain an invaluable insight into the perspective, skills and limitations of likely junior partners.

## **Global Leaders, Global Outlook?**

Brigadier General Edwin R Micewski reminds us: 'Since war, in whatever form and on whatever level of technology, will remain a social act, we should never lose sight of the "eternal human face of warfare".'<sup>33</sup> As the human face of war is now more multinational than ever

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

before, emphasis must be placed on encouraging interaction between international personnel away from the intensity of operations. The increasingly multinational composition of classes has provided an opportunity for a productive exchange of original and varied ideas. Smaller group discussions in the classroom are crucial for the free exchange of different beliefs and perspectives and to greater mutual understanding. Jeffrey Zacharakis and Jay A Van Der Werff observed that: ‘When learning occurs in groups, it is a negotiated process where individual hypotheses are shared and reinterpreted by the group. If the group is a team, every team member provides input toward a common goal to construct new knowledge and analysis’.<sup>34</sup> Smaller group work forms the bedrock of cultural interchange PME institutions and provides a platform for the enhancement of cognitive interoperability.

There is increasing acceptance that solely creating leaders for ‘warfighting’ is no longer sufficient or, indeed, appropriate in the contemporary global security environment. General David Petraeus advocated ‘pentathlete leaders’ who possess a broad skillset and are ‘comfortable not just with major combat operations but with operations conducted throughout the middle- and lower-ends of the spectrum of conflict, as well’.<sup>35</sup> Steven H Kenney has summarised: ‘As the world proceeds rapidly into a future of great uncertainty, the ability of our officers and enlisted personnel to think innovatively and strategically, to apply finely honed critical faculties and knowledge bases in any situation, “on the fly,” could be our single greatest force multiplier.’<sup>36</sup> Part of that perceptive ability is the capacity to anticipate the attitudes and responses of multinational partners.

At the UK’s JSCSC, students on the Advanced Command and Staff Course are separated into syndicate groups of ten officers, which include individuals from each service branch, government agency employees and students from overseas armed forces. Following prolonged observations of the course, Anthony King remarked: ‘students are actively forced to collaborate with each other and to develop a collective understanding of the joint concepts and practices which have been developed by the British forces’.<sup>37</sup> Equally, British officers are exposed to the different perspectives held by overseas students. Describing the benefits of this sort of internationalised PME in the UK, then Air Vice-Marshal Brian Burridge, the commandant of JSCSC, explained: ‘they [officers] need to recognise that other nations may approach problems differently, a particular requirement in the context of multinational crisis management. This

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

type of very personalised, individual development is only possible through small group interaction.’<sup>38</sup>

## **Know Thy Friend**

Naturally, the majority of students at PME institutions will be drawn from a nation’s domestic forces, but the inclusion of international service personnel affords an opportunity to develop goodwill among multinational forces. At the most extreme end of the spectrum, integrated PME can help to overcome and even begin to reverse negative attitudes towards a particular nation. In his study of multinational military co-operation, military sociologist Charles Moskos argued that, for example, ‘resentment of America is multifaceted and complex’, but that the cultivation of working relationships with international officers in a variety of settings, including PME, can ‘make a big difference’.<sup>39</sup> As Tom Ruby and Douglas Gibler have pointed out, many visiting or international officers (IOs) have no previous experience of graduate military education. For them, international PME provides ‘an important path toward developing a truly professional military’ in some countries, as well as offering an ‘opportunity to learn more about how American officers think, both through school-sponsored weekly intramural sporting activities and through the more frequent informal social and professional gatherings’.<sup>40</sup> Interaction between ‘culturally dissimilar people’, especially in an intensive environment such as a PME institution, offers a unique means to develop ‘cross-cultural competence’.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, sensitivity and understanding are generated by the role that some international officers play as cultural ‘bridges’. One study of PME in the US revealed that students from Australia, Canada and the UK ‘often become the de facto intermediaries between the IOs as a collectivity and the American personnel’ because ‘while native English speaking, [they] are, nevertheless, still not Americans’.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the experience of being overseas in an unfamiliar environment encourages interaction between international students united by facing a similar situation. Indeed, the students may not congregate naturally, but the common experience that they share and the challenges they encounter whilst studying overseas tend to draw them together, which provides a further avenue for enhancing cultural interoperability. Multiple participants in a survey of the effects of PME in the US alluded to ‘improved

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

multinational interoperability ... in addition to improved interoperability with the United States'.<sup>43</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum, sustained contact over a prolonged period can help to consolidate existing effective relationships. For example, although the United States Navy and the Royal Navy already exhibit a high level of interoperability, the contributions of British officers to teaching at USNWC are designed to preserve and progress the long-term connection between the two navies. The relationship of trust that exists among the 'Five Eyes' nations means that students from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US often naturally form friendships, thereby furthering cohesion.

Recent operational experience demonstrates that sustained interaction in an educational setting can have a direct bearing on interoperability among likely coalition partners. Notably, thec of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) in 1999, Major General Peter Cosgrove (Australian Defence Force), was able to draw on his experiences with the British Army Staff College, the Indian National Defence College and as a graduate of the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College to assist him in leading the multinational operation.<sup>44</sup> Four years later, when the Iraq War commenced, Cosgrove was serving as the Chief of the Australian Defence Force. During the same conflict, then Captain Peter Lockwood, commanding officer of HMAS *Anzac*, found the process of integrating with the US Navy somewhat easier, having completed the staff course at USNWC.<sup>45</sup> Lockwood's experience is typical of the experience of a number of officers participating in international coalitions during recent conflicts.

### **Internationalisation of PME: The Balance Sheet**

When considering the benefits of the internationalisation of PME, it is prudent and necessary to address the possible drawbacks, which include increased costs and potentially limited reach. It must be acknowledged that only a very small percentage of military officers will engage in overseas PME and, consequently, it would be unreasonable to expect a paradigm shift across the armed forces of any particular nation. However, given that many of the officers selected for overseas PME in the most prestigious institutions (particularly those from developing nations) progress to senior leadership roles, the benefits are significantly further reaching than first appearances may suggest. Ruby and Gibler have indicated that: 'The "Hall of Fame" data

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

(distinguished foreign graduates) maintained by the service schools shows that a large number of foreign graduates become chiefs of their services, militaries, or hold other senior positions in their countries several years after graduating from US PME.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Carol Atkinson's study of US war/staff colleges indicated that international officers 'form an epistemic community of upwardly mobile military professionals who have personal friendships and professional connections to both their U.S. counterparts and their fellow international officers'.<sup>47</sup> As one example, the illustrious list of members of the National Defense University's 'International Fellows Hall of Fame', includes: a Chief of the Australian Defence Force; a Chief of the Finnish Army; a Chief of General Staff of the Mexican Navy; a Hungarian Chief of the Defence Staff; a Malaysian Chief of Army; a Norwegian Chief of Defence Staff; a Polish Chief of the General Staff; a Nigerian Chief of the Army Staff; a Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman; a Commander of the Guatemalan Air Force and a Secretary of Defence of Pakistan, among many notable others.<sup>48</sup> In 2013, it was stated that 24 of the chiefs of the world's air forces were graduates of US PME initiatives.<sup>49</sup> The longlasting gains of PME are significant and can contrast with the benefits of other international interaction, such as multinational exercises, which may be more transient. As the turnover of personnel is generally higher at the tactical level, interaction that facilitates contact between those likely to work at the operational and particularly the strategic level is especially significant.

In reality, not all international officers are of the same standard and there are inevitably weaker students. A survey of US and UK students revealed that international officers were considered to 'represent the best and worst' of any given cohort, but it was also emphasised that contact with overseas participants, of whatever calibre, still provided domestic students with an 'international perspective' that they 'would otherwise never have obtained'.<sup>50</sup> Even when the weakest of international officers are factored in, the benefits to overseas participation in PME ultimately outweigh any drawbacks.

It is also important to remember that students are not the only ones who can play an active role in enhancing cultural interoperability. The Royal Navy exchange officers that serve on the faculty of USNWC provide a pertinent example of extending cross-cultural reach through teaching. Whilst students can be selective in their interaction with classmates, the presence of

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

international lecturers compels students to participate in some degree of cross-cultural engagement. The combination of international students *and* teachers ultimately encourages a broad range of multicultural interaction, which in turn serves as a platform for multinational ‘mindedness’ on the part of those students who become future leaders. Conversely, there is a risk that personnel who participate in overseas PME will receive insufficient education relevant to their own national context, but that can be mitigated by supplemental classes, as demonstrated by the ‘top-up’ modules that have been undertaken by US and Singaporean students returning from international institutions.<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, an appreciation of national context is much easier to obtain than an international perspective due to the everyday immersion of personnel in their domestic environment.

Importantly, the exchange of ideas in an educational environment, particularly among those nations perceived to have divergent operating cultures, provides a rare avenue for collaboration. The delivery of week-long courses on NATO doctrine and concepts at the Russian General Staff Academy and the Combined Arms Academy in Moscow, as well as reciprocal visits to the NATO School in Oberammergau, which focused on Russian operating styles, offered a low-key means of enacting engagement and enhancing understanding.<sup>52</sup> Educational institutions provide an un-contentious setting in which to initiate and advance multinational interaction which could be difficult or impossible under other conditions, such as full-scale operations.

Another potential criticism of sending exchange students to overseas establishments is the significant expense. In reality, there is still a substantial cost to educating an officer at a domestic establishment, and any gap between domestic versus international PME can be justified by the benefits. As human resources are arguably the most important element of any armed force, the investment in professional development should be considered a worthwhile expenditure. The inclusion of overseas students in domestic PME provides an opportunity to cultivate links with international military personnel that have the capacity to reach the highest positions in their nation’s armed forces. In 2010, the US was able to educate and train 7,000 international personnel from 136 countries for a combined cost of approximately \$96.7 million, which amounted to 0.2 per cent of the State Department budget.<sup>53</sup> Aside from the potential to enhance interoperability, the cost can be considered warranted by the fact that ‘building partner capability and capacity’ is ‘a critical, distinct line of effort that contributes greatly to U.S.,

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

partner, regional and global security'.<sup>54</sup> Of course, there is also significant diplomatic value, especially when the international education of students from less affluent nations is funded by more affluent ones. In these cases, the goodwill generated further justifies the cost-effectiveness of international PME. Ultimately, whilst PME does not represent a silver bullet for the challenges of enacting interoperability, it does constitute value for money and offers an avenue for fostering cohesion.

Although caution must be exercised to ensure the fundamental aims of PME are achieved, there is nevertheless some latitude to expand both the reach and influence of its multinational aspects. Within reason and where feasible, the number of international participants could be extended and potentially supported by an increase in sponsorship by the host nation where relevant and practicable. Perhaps even more useful would be an increase in international teaching staff, which could be achieved as part of a systematic exchange programme, such as between Five Eyes or NATO nations. Even a slight increase, or merely the addition of one new international lecturer, has the potential for far-reaching effects. Despite a number of commendable endeavours, such as the USNWC's Global Maritime Partnership initiatives, more could be done across the board to facilitate ongoing cohesion between international PME alumni. The 'epistemic communities' that develop must be preserved and enhanced to ensure not only ongoing diplomatic benefits, but also the maximisation of benefits to interoperability.

## **Conclusion: Breaking Down Barriers, Building Bridges**

Cultural interoperability is distinct due to its inclusivity. Whilst divergences in equipment and technology can hinder interoperability, human factors are applicable to all nations. Although the most materially advanced nations may predominate in the realm of technical interoperability, there are considerable risks involved in assuming a corresponding cultural superiority in the field of interpersonal relations. When operating alongside civilian agencies and non-governmental organisations, Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely counselled that 'achieving one's aim is much more a matter of persuasion than diktat'.<sup>55</sup> To a degree, the same logic can be applied to the multinational military environment. Multinational forces need to be convinced, not compelled, and a relationship based on trust and goodwill will invariably help to facilitate co-operation. Although the sentiments that underpin a trusting relationship can, in

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

theory, be developed in the field, by that stage it is often too late and, in any event, the strongest bonds are cultivated by cross-cultural engagement during peacetime, away from the intensity and pressure of operations. Sustained contact over a prolonged period of time is invaluable in preventing a ‘cold start’ to operations.

In terms of personal relations, the unifying effect of PME should not be underestimated. Tim Blad and David Potts have written: ‘Wellington commented that the “battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton” – meaning that the officers had all gone to the same school. This is what our national staff college and higher command courses provide nationally today.’<sup>56</sup> Whilst the authenticity of the oft-attributed Wellington quotation is questionable, the merits of PME in fostering relationships are beyond doubt.<sup>57</sup>

The benefits of cultural exposure are multifaceted and help to develop a common understanding in a number of ways. Not only are new connections developed between distant nations, but existing relationships are solidified. Preconceived stereotypes can be broken down and relations based on trust and cultural understanding can be developed. Although this will not always be the case, and there will inevitably be negative experiences or elements of disappointment, the benefits far outweigh the limitations.

By broadening the horizons of officers during PME, the bedrock for human and cultural interoperability is being consciously or, in some cases, subconsciously developed. If human interoperability is the lynchpin of cohesion within a coalition and multinational operations are a reality to be faced, then the benefits to be reaped from the internationalisation of PME must be more fully understood and valued. Furthermore, efforts to increase international involvement in PME and to preserve its subsequent benefits must be expanded.

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Boëne and Didier Danet, 'France: Farewell to the Draft and All That', in Jürgen Kuhlman and Jean Callaghan (eds), *Military and Society in 21st Century Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2011), p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher J Lamb and Brittany Porro, 'Next Steps for Transforming Education at National Defense University', *Joint Force Quarterly* (Vol. 76, First Quarter, 2015), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Myron Hura et al., *Interoperability: A Continuing Challenge in Coalition Air Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Yves Boyer, 'This Way to the Revolution!', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 144, No. 2, April/May 1999), p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Alejandro P Briceno, 'The Use of Cultural Studies in Military Operations: A Model for Assessing Values-Based Differences', in Paula Holmes-Eber, Patrice M Scanlon and Andrea L Hamlem (eds), *Applications in Operational Culture: Perspectives from the Field* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Steve Bowman, 'Historical and Cultural Influences on Coalition Operations', in Thomas Marshall, Philip Kaiser and Jon Kessimer (eds), *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, December 1997), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Efrat Elron, Boas Shamir and Eyal Ben-Ari, 'Why Don't They Fight Each Other? Cultural Diversity and Operational Unity in Multinational Forces', *Armed Forces and Society* (Vol. 26, No. 1, 1999), pp. 88–89.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Soeters and Miepke Bos-Bakx, 'Cross-Cultural Issues in Peacekeeping Operations', in Thomas W Britt and Amy B Adler, *The Psychology of the Peacekeeper: Lessons from the Field* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 288, 291.

<sup>9</sup> Angela R Febraro, 'Leadership and Management Teams in Multinational Military Cooperation', in Joseph Soeters and Philippe Manigart (eds), *Military Cooperation in Multinational Peace Operations: Managing Cultural Diversity and Crisis Response* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Tibor Szircsev Tresch, 'Cultural and Political Challenges in Military Missions: How Officers View Multiculturality in Armed Forces', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in Honor of Charles C. Moskos, Part A* (Bingley: Emerald, 2009), p. 116.

<sup>11</sup> René Moelker, Joseph Soeters and Ulrich vom Hagen, 'Sympathy, the Cement of Interoperability: Findings on Ten Years of German-Netherlands Military Cooperation', *Armed Forces and Society* (Vol. 33, No. 4, 2007), p. 497.

<sup>12</sup> Angela R Febraro, Brian McKee and Sharon L Riedel, *Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors* (Neuilly-sur-Seine: Cedex, 2008), p. 3-7. See also George B Graen and Chun Hui, 'U.S. Army Leadership in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Implications for Training', in James G Hunt, George E Dodge and Leonard Wong (eds), *Out-of-the-Box Leadership: Transforming the Twenty-First Century Army and Other Top-Performing Organizations* (Bingley: Emerald Group, 1999), p. 243.

<sup>13</sup> Tim Blad and David Potts, 'Beyond Interoperability: Part 1', in David Potts (ed.), *The Big Issue: Command and Combat in the Information Age* (Shrivenham: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 2002), p. 140.

<sup>14</sup> Febraro, McKee and Riedel, *Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors*, pp. 1–3.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Dandeker, 'On "The Need to be Different": Recent Trends in Military Culture', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 178–79.

<sup>16</sup> Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, 'The Education and Training of Military Elites' in Michael D Stephens (ed), *The Educating of Armies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), p. 15; Tamir Libel, *European Military Culture and Security Governance: Soldiers, Scholars and National Defence Universities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> See: Carol Atkinson, *Military Soft Power: Public Diplomacy through Military Educational Exchanges* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014); Peter Dutton, Robert S Ross and Øystein Tunjø, 'Introduction' in Peter Dutton, Robert S Ross and Øystein Tunjø (eds), *Twenty-First Century Seapower: Cooperation and Conflict at Sea* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> David H Petraeus, 'Beyond the Cloister', *American Interest* (Vol. 2, No. 6, 1 July 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Leonard D Holder, Jr and Williamson Murray, 'Prospects for Military Education', *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 1998), p. 90.

- 
- <sup>20</sup> Thomas A Keaney, 'The War Colleges and Joint Education in the United States', in Gregory C Kennedy and Keith Neilson (eds), *Military Education: Past, Present, and Future* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), p. 149.
- <sup>21</sup> Rear Admiral James Goldrick, 'Thoughts on Joint Professional Military Education', *Australian Defence Force Journal* (Vol. 181, 2010), p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup> Michael Codner, 'Integration and Interoperability: The Who and the What', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 141, No. 5, October/November 1996), p. 37.
- <sup>23</sup> United States Naval War College, International Programs, <<https://www.usnwc.edu/Departments---Colleges/International-Programs.aspx>>.
- <sup>24</sup> John N Christenson, 'Promoting Global Maritime Partnerships', *Naval War College Review* (Vol. 65, No. 1, Winter 2012), p. 10, pp. 12–13.
- <sup>25</sup> Tom Ruby and Douglas Gibler, 'US Professional Military Education and Democratization Abroad', *European Journal of International Relations* (Vol. 16, No. 3, 2010) p. 5.
- <sup>26</sup> Douglas M Gibler and Tomislav Z Ruby, 'Educating Foreign Officers', *Joint Force Quarterly* (Winter 2002–3), p. 119.
- <sup>27</sup> Kate Utting, 'Beyond Joint – Professional Military Education for the 21st Century: The United Kingdom's Post-Defence Training Review Advanced Command and Staff Course', *Defence Studies* (Vol. 9, No. 3, 2009), p. 316.
- <sup>28</sup> New Zealand Command and Staff College, Defence Diplomacy, <<http://nzdf.mil.nz/what-we-do/command-and-staff-college/defence-diplomacy/default.htm>>.
- <sup>29</sup> Peter Foot, 'European Military Education Today' in Gregory C Kennedy and Keith Neilson (eds), *Military Education: Past, Present, and Future* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), p. 202.
- <sup>30</sup> Ruby and Gibler, 'US Professional Military Education and Democratization Abroad', p. 5.
- <sup>31</sup> Gibler and Ruby, 'Educating Foreign Officers', p. 120.
- <sup>32</sup> Murray Simons, *Professional Military Learning: Next Generation PME in the New Zealand Defence Force* (Canberra: Air Power Development Centre Australia, 2005), p. 7.
- <sup>33</sup> Brigadier General Edwin R Micewski, 'Education of (Military) Leadership Personnel in a Postmodern World', *Defence Studies* (Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003), p. 7.
- <sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Zacharakis and Jay A Van Der Werff, 'The Future of Adult Education in the Military', *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (Vol. 136, Winter 2012), p. 91.
- <sup>35</sup> Petraeus, 'Beyond the Cloister'.
- <sup>36</sup> Steven H Kenney, 'Professional Military Education and the Emerging Revolution in Military Affairs', *Airpower Journal* (Vol. 26, Autumn 1996), p. 52.
- <sup>37</sup> Anthony King, 'Unity is Strength: Staff College and the British Officer Corps', *British Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 60, No. 1, 2009), p. 132.
- <sup>38</sup> Air Vice-Marshal Brian Burrige, 'Post-Modern Military Education: Are We Meeting the Challenge?' *Defence Studies* (Vol. 1, No. 1, 2001), pp. xvii-xviii.
- <sup>39</sup> Charles Moskos, *International Military Education and Multinational Military Cooperation* (Alexandria: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2004), p. 2.
- <sup>40</sup> Ruby and Gibler, 'US Professional Military Education and Democratization Abroad', pp. 5–6.
- <sup>41</sup> Allison Abbe and Stanley M Halpin, 'The Cultural Imperative for Professional Military Education and Leader Development', *Parameters* (Winter 2009–10), p. 27.
- <sup>42</sup> Moskos, *International Military Education and Multinational Military Cooperation*, p. 7.
- <sup>43</sup> Atkinson, *Military Soft Power*, pp. 102–3.
- <sup>44</sup> John R Ballard, *Triumph of Self-Determination: Operation Stabilise and United Nations Peacemaking in East Timor* (Westport: Praeger, 2008), p. 58.
- <sup>45</sup> Author interview with Commodore Peter Lockwood, RAN, 5 May 2011.
- <sup>46</sup> Ruby and Gibler, 'US Professional Military Education and Democratization Abroad', p. 7.
- <sup>47</sup> Atkinson, *Military Soft Power*, p. 103.
- <sup>48</sup> International Student Management Office, International Fellows Hall of Fame Program, <<http://ismo.ndu.edu/Alumni/International-Hall-of-Fame-Program/>>.
- <sup>49</sup> Captain Miriam Krieger, Lieutenant Commander Shannon Souma and Daniel Nexon, 'US Military Diplomacy in Practice', in Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B Neumann (eds), *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 248–49.

Steven Paget

Published in *The RUSI Journal*, 161:4, October 2016, pp.42-50. This is the post-print version and must not be copied or cited without permission.

---

<sup>50</sup> Moskos, *International Military Education and Multinational Military Cooperation*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>51</sup> Simons, *Professional Military Learning*, p. 39.

<sup>52</sup> Major General Peter Williams, 'From Dialogue to Interoperability?' *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 150, No. 5, 2005), p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> Atkinson, *Military Soft Power*, p. 61.

<sup>54</sup> Jeffrey E Marshall, *Skin in the Game: Partnership in Establishing and Maintaining Global Security and Stability* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2011), p. xiii.

<sup>55</sup> Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, 'Defence and the Universities in the Twenty-First Century', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 149, No. 3, June/July 2004), p. 35.

<sup>56</sup> Blad and Potts, 'Beyond Interoperability', pp. 140–41.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140–41. Mika LaVaque-Manty has stated: 'Even though the Duke of Wellington was an alumnus of Eton, the claim about his mot is apocryphal – a myth. Not only is there no evidence that the duke ever said such a thing, but it really could not have been true: the educational reform in public schools that made the playing fields so important did not happen until well after the Battle of Waterloo.' Mika LaVaque-Manty, *The Playing Fields of Eton: Equality and Excellence in Modern Meritocracy* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009), p. 88. Blad and Potts used this quotation to highlight the importance of personal relationships that are developed through collective education; they were not necessarily claiming that the quotation was authentically Wellington's.