

**Faction Liaison Teams: A Peacekeeping Multiplier**

**A MONOGRAPH  
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The United Kingdom's Joint Warfare Publication on Peace Support Operations stresses the need for effective liaison in order to prevent misunderstanding, friction, opposition and escalation of the conflict. Beyond this doctrinal support, little has been written to define how this liaison should be conducted. The purpose of this monograph is to fill part of that void. The monograph firstly examines peacekeeping and the reasons why liaison is so important to it, before analyzing the British Liaison structures that were used in Bosnia between 1992 and 1996. The review identifies certain issues that were key in shaping this structure. These issues were team structure, interpreters, command and control, communications and force protection. Subsequent analysis of them provides insights which are then used to develop a conceptual model. This model could be used as a skeleton upon which future faction liaison organizations may be built. The model proposed by this monograph is of a small team with one liaison officer, equipped with both secure and nonsecure communication equipment. The use of local civilian interpreters is recommended, as is the basing of the team in the local community, preferably in civilian housing. The core principle of this model is based upon the team's primary purpose being that of a directed telescope for the commander, one that is permanently focused on the factions command structures.

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## *Preface*

In the summer of 1995, I deployed to Bosnia as a member of the British contingent to UNPROFOR; my role was to be that of a Sector Liaison Officer. The bulk of my tour was spent facilitating the movements of the Rapid Reaction Force as it prepared for and conducted the NATO/UN air/land campaign. With the arrival of IFOR, my tour was extended and I became one of the Liaison Officers for the UK led MND SouthWest. Most of this tour was spent with the 1<sup>st</sup> Krajina Corps of the Bosnian Serb Army. My Bosnian colleagues and I felt that in peacekeeping operations this form of liaison has a far greater importance than in conventional operations and was in fact the true ‘peacekeeping multiplier.’

Little has been done to capture the Bosnian liaison structures evolution, let alone distill those experiences into some practical pointers for future operations. As I remain convinced that these structures will be required again in the future, the intent of this monograph is to try and fill part of this void.

I would like to acknowledge the help of the staff of the Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth and the Tactical Doctrine Retrieval Cell in England for their outstanding support during my research. I would also like to thank Colonel Robin Swan for his advice, guidance and dialogue. In short, his input truly made it a learning experience and not just another hurdle. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Helen, for dutifully listening to my ramblings without yawning.

## *Abstract*

The United Kingdom's Joint Warfare Publication on Peace Support Operations stresses the need for effective liaison in order to prevent misunderstanding, friction, opposition and escalation of the conflict. Beyond this doctrinal support, little has been written to define how this liaison should be conducted. The purpose of this monograph is to fill part of that void.

The monograph firstly examines peacekeeping and the reasons why liaison is so important to it, before analyzing the British Liaison structures that were used in Bosnia between 1992 and 1996. The review identifies certain issues that were key in shaping this structure. These issues were team structure, interpreters, command and control, communications and force protection. Subsequent analysis of them provides insights which are then used to develop a conceptual model. This model could be used as a skeleton upon which future faction liaison organizations may be built.

The model proposed by this monograph is of a small team with one liaison officer, equipped with both secure and nonsecure communication equipment. The use of local civilian interpreters is recommended, as is the basing of the team in the local community, preferably in civilian housing. The core principle of this model is based upon the team's primary purpose being that of a directed telescope for the commander, one that is permanently focused on the factions command structures.

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## **Part 1**

### **Overview**

*Conflict thrives on rumour, uncertainty, and prejudice. The timely passage of accurate information based on a trusting relationship is a key method of combating uncertainty and promoting stability in a conflict region. Liaison is therefore a vital tool of a Peace Support Operation force and key to the successful execution of operations. Failure to liaise risks misunderstanding, friction, opposition and escalation of the conflict.*

Peace Support Operations,  
United Kingdom Joint Warfare Publication 3-50<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The current and ever increasing plethora of deployments has shown that peace keeping is a growth business for today's professional military community. The above quotation defines liaison as being one of the principal concepts that is articulated in the British doctrine for Peace Support Operations. Beyond this doctrinal support, little has been done to explain or expand further on the subject. This monograph is aimed at filling part of that void.

This chapter will provide the background for the paper by defining peacekeeping operations and explaining why liaison is so important to them. It will then set the parameters of the paper, explain key terminology used within it and outline the structure for the remaining chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> United Kingdom Permanent Joint Headquarters, *Peace Support Operations*, JWP 3-50, page 7-12.

## The Problem

At the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the British Army has found itself increasingly involved in peace support operations. The increased frequency of these deployments is best illustrated by the fact that during the height of the recent operation in Kosovo, 47% of the British Army was deployed on various operations.<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of these deployments have been of a peacekeeping nature, indeed over the last decade only Op GRANBY (the UK name for Desert Storm) was a conventional warfighting operation. Their size has varied from individuals sent as observers to reinforced brigades or divisions operating within a UN, NATO or coalition framework. The current British government's foreign policy is one of involvement and engagement on the international stage and this is unlikely to change. This, coupled with public opinion, is likely to ensure that the British Army remains heavily committed to peace support operations well into the new millennium.<sup>3</sup>

## Peacekeeping

*'Operations carried out with the consent of the belligerent parties in support of efforts to achieve or maintain peace in order to promote security and sustain life in areas of potential or actual conflict.'*

Army Doctrine Publication, Volume 1, Operations<sup>4</sup>

The British Army is no stranger to operations aimed at keeping the peace. The campaigns in Kenya, Malaya, Borneo, Oman, Aden, Cyprus and of course Northern Ireland provide clear historical proof of this experience, and that is just within the last

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Soldier to Soldier: Overstretch and the Unplannable* in *Soldier: Magazine of the British Army* (Andover: St Ives Ltd), March 1999, page 3.

<sup>33</sup> The Rt. Hon George Robertson, MP. *Introduction to the Strategic Defence Review*. 1999, page 1.

<sup>4</sup> Army Doctrine Publications, *Volume One, Operations* - Annex A to Chapter 7.

fifty years. However, this experience does not transfer easily to the modern peacekeeping mission for three reasons. Firstly, modern peacekeeping operations require genuine impartiality; all of the old campaigns had demanded the opposite. Secondly, the force requires the consent of all the belligerents to operate effectively; again, this had not been required before. Lastly they are nearly always multinational in nature; the majority of the earlier operations had been unilateral.

These changes are reflected in the current British peacekeeping doctrine, which emphasizes the need for impartiality and consent as the overriding fundamentals for a modern peacekeeping operation. This doctrine, as articulated in the Joint Peace Support Operations manual, highlights the need to be regarded as an impartial supervisory third party, charged with overseeing the implementation of international agreements with the consent of the belligerents.<sup>5</sup> To understand the restrictions of a peacekeeping mission it is worth looking at these two fundamentals in greater detail.

The failure to remain impartial will normally result in being perceived as being one of the protagonists and therefore part of the problem. British doctrine stresses that the practice and, perhaps more importantly, the maintenance of the exterior perception of impartiality are essential to the success of a peacekeeping mission.<sup>6</sup> The consent for a peacekeeping mission is normally official and formalized in a treaty or accord at the political level. In reality, this consent is likely to be under some strain on the ground and may indeed be only partial in some areas. The reason for this relates to the fact that the consent reached at the political level almost certainly resulted from compromise by the parties involved, a fact that not all may be in agreement with. It could be argued that the

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<sup>5</sup> United Kingdom Permanent Joint Headquarters, *Peace Support Operations, JWP 3-50*, page 7-13.

<sup>6</sup> Army Doctrine Publications, *Volume One, Operations – Annex A to Chapter 7*.

initial main effort of any peacekeeping force is to promote, sustain and deepen that consent. This is done by utilizing confidence building measures and creating a spirit of cooperation between the factions and the Peacekeepers. The theory on the dynamics of cooperation, as proposed by Robert Axelrod, highlights the key requirement to sustain this type of environment. His work, based on numerous simulations of the 'Prisoners Dilemma', underlines the need for a robust level of reciprocity to ensure that cooperation continues rather than collapses.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it can be seen that this theory also supports the need for any peacekeeping force to have some form of punitive capability in order to robustly reciprocate if one of the factions considers non-cooperation. This punitive capability need not be a purely military response; other areas of national power could easily be used if credible (diplomatic, informational and economic). However, due to the potential variances in the level of consent at the tactical level, the peacekeeping force must be armed and maintain some form of offensive military capability. This tactical level of military capability is essential to enable the level of reciprocity required to maintain cooperation at that level. Linked to this, the psychological need to be taken as a credible military force in a country where the rule of the gun has presided should never be underestimated. However, it is important to remember that this weaponry and perhaps more importantly the associated ability to use it, although important, is not the primary tool that has been given to the force commander to achieve the mission. The primary tool is that of consent. This gives him the ability to speak openly to all of the belligerent parties in order to prevent surprise, build trust and therefore deepen the peace process.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, page 185. He regards this need as the principle reason for the predominant success of the 'Tit for Tat rule' during his studies. The 'Tit for Tat rule' simply stated that one would cooperate until the other did not. As soon as he did not, one would reciprocate in kind. Once he

The primary influencing factor that affects both of these fundamentals is that of the personalities involved. Their importance in this environment is crucial, as Clausewitz stated ‘the personalities of statesmen and soldiers are such important factors that in war above all it is vital not to underrate them.’<sup>8</sup> The ability to accurately assess, gauge and monitor these personalities relies heavily on human interaction or HUMINT. Technological advances in intelligence systems may enhance this ability but they will never be able to conduct it alone. If one accepts this assumption it becomes obvious that the emerging domain of Information Operations (IO) will be one of the decisive operations that the commander will use to shape the operational environment effectively. This paper will look at one of the precision tools that he could and should use to facilitate the essential communication requirement for this line of operations, liaison.

## **Liaison**

The most important priority for liaison is to the warring faction or factions. A good liaison structure here will provide the commander a channel through which he can negotiate, coordinate and if the situation requires it, protest. This priority is supported by Axelrod’s theory, which implies that all participants must understand the rules of the game, this can only be done by communicating them accurately. Thus it can be seen that a poor liaison structure with the factions is to fail to address effectively the primary players whose actions determine the environment for the whole operation. If this liaison link is weak or vague it could erode the belligerents trust in the peacekeepers and so inhibit the implementation of other confidence building measures. Liaison that builds

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started to cooperate again so did the other. This rule never led to victory (higher number of points than the opponent) but with time it leads to a substantially higher average than any of the other rules.

<sup>8</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz. *On War*, page 94.

trust and belief in the peacekeeper's impartiality is a strong facilitator for the overall operation; its importance should not be underestimated.<sup>9</sup>

This liaison link can be established either directly or indirectly. In the first instance the commander could permanently attach a liaison officer to the various faction headquarters, to act as a human interface, and be involved himself in occasional direct face to face meetings with the faction leaders. The alternative is to establish a communication structure and conduct the liaison remotely by message traffic and the occasional meeting. Current sociological and psychological theories infer that human beings need social interaction.<sup>10</sup> Linked to this is the theory that the perception of a personal relationship is of great importance in developing an individual's intuitive sense of trust. This relationship should not be confused with friendship but rather as a result of extended interaction that is known to be durable in its nature.<sup>11</sup> As the direct form of liaison caters for these needs more fully, it is upon this form that the monograph will focus

## **Purpose and Scope of the Study**

The British Force's involvement in Bosnia started in 1992 and continues today. During this time, it has served as a central part of both the UN and NATO forces that have been and continue to be deployed in the region. This deployment has been perceived by many to have been extremely successful at the tactical level, particularly when compared against the activities of other national contingents.<sup>12</sup> Central to the British

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<sup>9</sup> Lt Col J D Deverell. *British Army Review No 115*, page 17.13.

<sup>10</sup> Gerard Egan. *Face to Face*, page 2.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, page 188.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Clarke, *The Lessons of Bosnia for the British Military*. Brassey's Defence Yearbook, 1995, page 57.

tactical success has been the use of direct liaison with the various factions. The purpose of this study is to identify any faction liaison fundamentals or guidelines that were key to this success. These should be able to assist in the planning of efficient liaison structures on future peacekeeping operations.

The primary question for this paper is does a study of the faction liaison conducted by British Army units in Bosnia provide any generic guidelines that could aid the creation of similar structures in the future? There are three subordinate questions, which support and enable this primary question to be answered. These are (1) How was the faction liaison conducted and was it successful? (2) What were the primary issues that faced the creators of the structure and how were they dealt with? (3) Do any of the solutions highlighted by the above question have any applicability outside of Bosnia?

The scope of this study is limited to the various liaison structures used by the British Army in Bosnia between October 1992 and May 1996. This period covers both the UN mission and the first 120 days of the NATO led force. It spans a period of dramatic change, not only in the history of Bosnia but also in the operating rules and guidelines that the peacekeeping force worked under.

To enable focus on the faction liaison structures used by British forces, this paper will not comment upon the systems that were used by other nations or the political arena, except where it is thought applicable in order to further support or counter an argument. Neither will it study the liaison officers attached to the other formations to aid command in a multinational setting. Finally, the liaison system used to control and co-ordinate the civil aid programs such as with the UNHCR, is also beyond the scope of this paper.

Throughout this paper, the term faction will be used to describe a belligerent party. This has been done to prevent confusion, as the belligerent parties in Bosnia were internationally known as factions and have been referred to as such in the majority of the research material used for this study. The other term that is used throughout the paper is that of directed telescope. Van Creveld defines their purpose as being to ‘prevent the commander from becoming a prisoner of his staff...and would enable him to cut through the regular command hierarchy and take a look at any part of the army or obtain any kind of information that might be required at the moment.’<sup>13</sup> This definition applies throughout.

## **Outline**

This paper has four parts. Part 2 provides a historical review of the British faction liaison structures from October 1992 to May 1996. Part 3 highlights the primary issues that the structure encountered in its evolution and the solutions that were actually adopted. Part 4 provides an analysis of these issues and their solutions to see if they have any applicability outside of Bosnia. It concludes with a generic model for future peacekeeping operations.

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Van Creveld. *Command in War*. Page 97.

## **Part 2**

# **BRITISH ARMY FACTION LIAISON**

## **Introduction**

This part analyzes the British faction liaison structures that were created and used during both the UNPROFOR and IFOR missions. They will be dealt with separately as the differences between the two missions were substantial.

## **UNPROFOR**

*SLO's were instrumental in securing freedom of movement for the deployment of the Rapid Reaction Force. However, a straightforward list of tasks belies a more fundamental factor: an ability to establish a special relationship, in some cases a unique relationship, with warring faction officers and members of the indigenous civilian authorities. This ability to develop and foster an atmosphere of cooperation and confidence is what makes the SLO organization such a valuable asset. Their contribution to the mission is out of all proportion to their numbers.*

Brigadier ARD Pringle  
Commander GRAPPLE 6<sup>14</sup>

This review centers on the three main areas of command that British forces became responsible for as the UNPROFOR mission developed: Battalion, Brigade and HQ Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC). They will be looked at in that order.

## **Battalion Level Liaison Structure**

Lt Col Bob Stewart, the Commander of the CHESHIRE group (the first British unit to deploy into Bosnia during the summer of 1992), conducted two reconnaissance visits to get a feel for the situation and develop his deployment options.<sup>15</sup> The requirement for a good liaison structure was raised on the first visit during a meeting with the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Battalion in Croatia. The Canadians, who had been in Croatia for some time, had found faction liaison to be essential in enabling real time communications to be established with the factions within their AO. Indirect communication structures such as telephones had not proven to be robust enough.<sup>16</sup>

The CHESHIRE group's mission was simply stated as 'to assist UNHCR in conveying humanitarian aid to those that need it within the VITEZ Sector of Ops.'<sup>17</sup> Lt Col Stewart's mission analysis led him to revisit the Canadians comments in detail. The requirement for liaison with both the factions and UNHCR was identified as being essential in enabling aid to be delivered effectively. This resulted in the implied task of 'establishing liaison with all necessary local civilian and military authorities in order to negotiate forward delivery of humanitarian aid' being formally defined within his written mission analysis.<sup>18</sup> He felt that the best method of tackling this task was to create a number of liaison teams. His plan called for six teams to be created (five to liase with the local factions and one to liase with the UNHCR).

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<sup>14</sup> Brig A R D Pringle, *Post Tour Report – Commanders Review of OP GRAPPLE 6*, HQ 20 Armd Bde document dated 9 Nov 95, page 6.

<sup>15</sup> The term CHESHIRE refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment as it was around this battalion that the group was built.

<sup>16</sup> Lt Col R A Stewart. *Broken Lives*. Page 37.

<sup>17</sup> Lt Col R A Stewart. *Post Operational Report – OP GRAPPLE ONE: 1 CHESHIRE Group*, dated 13 Jul 93. Page 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Page 8.

Each team consisted of a young Captain with a driver and signaler. These personnel were drawn from the groups ORBAT and were not posted to the group specifically for the task. The Captains were taken predominantly from the groups support platoons (these were employed as rifle platoons in Bosnia and as such were commanded by the platoons Warrant Officers for the tour). For mobility, they were mounted in soft skin landrovers and equipped with both VHF and HF radios for communications. Throughout the deployment, communications were to prove difficult due to the sheer size and geography of the battalion's area. Although the group deployed with a limited number of satellite communications systems, they were only used by the LO teams for specific tasks. Their primary purpose was to establish the communications links from the battalion to Bosnia Herzegovina Command (BHC) and the Headquarters, British Forces (HQ BRITFOR) in Croatia.

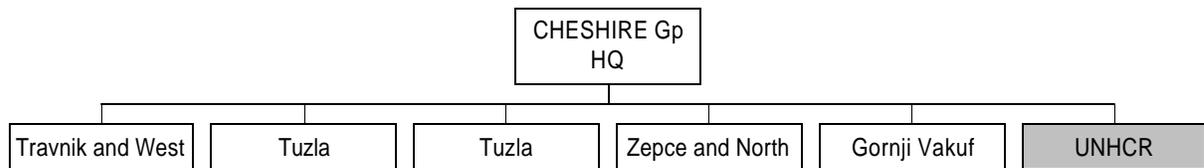
To overcome the language barrier on the ground two military interpreters had been posted to the group. This number was simply not enough to enable the group to operate effectively. A large number of local interpreters were therefore hired to cover this capability gap. They were issued British military clothing and were effectively adopted by the battalion. An interpreter was attached to each team on a permanent basis to enable a sense of continuity and stability.<sup>19</sup> As a general rule these interpreters tended to be used primarily amongst the factions with whom they had ethnic linkage.

Once Lt Col Stewart had created the capability he employed it by giving each team a geographical area of responsibility but retained them under the direct control of his

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<sup>19</sup> The Rifle Companies and other units tended to work from a pool system. This provided patrols with interpreters when required, when not required they would return to the pool for use by others.

Battalion HQ. The initial structure, showing the geographic breakdown, is shown below, each box represents one LO team.



**Figure 1. The CHESHIRE Group Liaison Structure on deployment**

This centralized control structure was to ensure that the LO's remained aware of the whole the area and did not become too wrapped up in local issues. In addition, he wished to maintain personal control of them in order that they could also serve as his eyes and ears, in effect his own directed telescope.

Lt Col Stewart felt that this liaison structure needed to be set up quickly to enable the group's early effectiveness. He realized that the group needed to start escorting aid as soon as it arrived, as this was the time that the world's media and more importantly the Bosnian population would be watching most critically. To do this he initially placed them at the front of the group's deployment plan. Eventually he decided that if they were to facilitate the arrival of the group (hereafter referred to as BRITBAT), they needed to be in even earlier. To achieve this he took them with him on his second visit and left them in theatre to prepare the ground for the group's deployment. This was to be crucial, as the battalion appeared to be deploying into the middle of an ongoing offensive. This paid off and the deployment took place without incident and aid delivery commenced immediately upon its arrival (in fact the LO teams had already started escorting small

convoys and had managed to establish a local cease-fire<sup>20</sup>). With the early deployment of the LO teams he had effectively shaped and prepared the region for BRITBATs operations.<sup>21</sup>

At an early stage he realized that aid would be best delivered in a stabilized environment and that simply dropping it off and leaving would not achieve the missions implied intent – a reduction in the level of human suffering. To that end, he worked hard at developing local cease-fires to provide that environment. His LO's were an essential part of this effort and were deeply involved in negotiating these local agreements. When not specifically tasked, the LO's were expected to patrol their areas in order to enhance their knowledge of it, whilst strengthening their personal relationships with the local commanders and civilian officials. These would often take the form of route proving patrols coupled with social calls. This activity provided useful route information and HUMINT.

The teams were accommodated and sustained in the company base that was in or closest to their area. The alternative was to base them centrally at the battalion headquarters. Basing them out with the companies reduced their travel time and made them permanently accessible to the local factions in that area. The other benefit was to ensure that the information gained by the team would naturally pass to the company that was responsible for the area; indeed the teams would conduct tasks for the company commander as well as the CO. This removed the need for the company to create its own liaison teams and thus kept the primary points of contact simple. This prevented

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<sup>20</sup> Lt Col R A Stewart. *Broken Lives*. Page 85.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, page 86.

confusion over who was responsible for talking to the factions, not only within the group, but also amongst the factions themselves.

Once deployed the LO teams performed beyond all expectations and as such little was altered. The one area that did constantly change was the definition of the areas that the teams were allocated. These were adjusted to reflect new priorities for aid delivery or a change in the confrontation lines following an offensive. This reflects the fact that the liaison teams were the commanders primary tool to operate throughout both his area of influence and area of operations whilst the rifle companies were restricted to the group's area of operations. Another area that developed was at the Company level. Situations would occasionally arise that required the Company Commander to create his own LO's for a particular problem. These LO's would be drawn from the Company for the duration of the problem and rejoin once it was resolved. The battalion LO would operate around these short-term teams and ensure that they were 'nested' into the wider situation. An example of this was the independent company at Gornji Vakuf, which for a while sat in the middle of fierce local battle between the Muslim forces (BiH) and Bosnian Croat forces (HVO). The Company Commander found that he needed to coordinate daily with both sides if he was to achieve his mission and so created two LO's, one for either side. During this period the battalion LO based with the Company continued to work the area outside of the town.<sup>22</sup> The other area that changed was that in addition to geographic area LO's, a few additional LO's were set up to liaise permanently with a single faction headquarters. These LO's became the focal point for all dealings with that HQ. The first one that was set up was with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps of the BiH. By the end of the CHESHIRE

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<sup>22</sup> Col P G Williams. *Liaison – The Key to Success in Central Bosnia*, Army Defence Quarterly, Vol 124, No, 4 dated Oct 94. Page 390.

group's tour, the liaison structure of five geographic faction liaison teams and one faction headquarters team was set and changed little over the next couple of years.

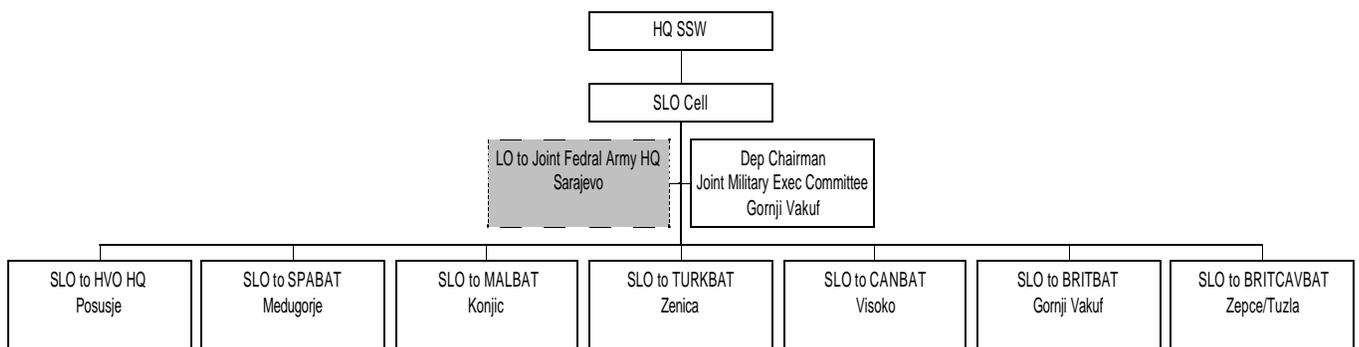
### **Brigade (Sector) Level Liaison Structure**

The effect that the LO teams had been able to achieve at the battalion level was noted by HQ BRITFOR. They felt that the system could be expanded to allow them to look into areas outside of the group's AOR and thus shape its operations more effectively. To do this they set up their own LO teams, which became known as UKLO's. The officers for these teams were provided by the Army as individual reinforcements and as such came from every branch and had varying levels of experience. The drivers took on the role of radio operator, thus reducing the team size by one person. The communications problems were even worse for UKLO's because of the greater distances involved; to counter this each team was issued with both a civilian satellite telephone (INMARSAT) and HF radios. For command, control and administration of these teams, a separate UKLO cell was set up in HQ BRITFOR. The Royal Marines became the lead branch for this organization and as such provided the Chief UKLO (Major), support staff and all of the drivers. These teams used local interpreters along the same lines as those of BRITBAT.

They were loosely assigned geographical areas but COMBRITFOR primarily used them as his own directed telescope, as such they worked more on specific tasks issued by the cell in HQ BRITFOR than on area patrolling. The area patrolling that they did conduct was aimed at enhancing the HUMINT knowledge of areas in which the UN presence was low. Having received general guidance from the controlling cell these patrols were left to the LO to plan using his initiative and understanding of both the local

situation and his commanders intent. This inevitably led to some duplication with the BRITBAT LO's as there was no formal and little informal co-ordination between the two groups activities.<sup>23</sup>

Initially Bosnia had been split up into numerous battalion level areas that reported directly to BHC. In 1994 it was decided to change the theatre geometry by adding another layer of command in the form of sectors. These sectors were roughly equivalent to a brigade and were created by placing the already present battalions under their command, only the headquarters staff were new to the theatre. The BRITBAT AO was within the boundaries of the new Sector South West (SSW) and this enabled HQ BRITFOR, which was based on a British Brigade headquarters, to step forward and assume the role of lead nation for HQ SSW. As a result of this move the new sector already had a liaison structure in place and the UKLO's simply changed their name to that of Sector Liaison Officers (SLOs). The SLO structure became area oriented, with a team based with each of the sector's battalions. The structure in 1994 is shown at figure 2. The shaded box represents a post that was administered by the SLO cell but worked directly for BHC and thus was outside the SSW chain of command.



**Figure 2. HQ Sector South West's SLO Structure**

<sup>23</sup> Col PG Williams,., *Tactical Command in Bosnia – Operation GRAPPLE 3*. Page 20.

The SLO's role was threefold; firstly, they were to act as the liaison between SSW and the battalion to whom they were attached (in effect a low key coalition support team). Secondly, they were to liase with the higher end of the faction leadership within the battalion's area, leaving the battalion to liase with the lower end. The purpose of this was to establish a line of communication with the primary regional players that responded directly to the newly formed Joint Military Executive Committee (this sector level committee was subordinate to the Commission at BHC). This committee was the tool that the commander used to negotiate and arbitrate with the factions and obviously required a direct link with the factions to be effective. Lastly in addition to these tasks they continued to act as the Sector Commanders directed telescope, although now primarily within their respective battalion's AO.<sup>24</sup> This formal division of liaison responsibility went a long way to limiting the duplication that had occurred between the BRITBATT LO's and the UKLO's.

### **Bosnia Herzegovina Command (BHC) Level Liaison Structure**

The primary liaison tool used at BHC was that of the UNMO structure, which was constructed at the very start of the mission. The UNMO structure is the UN's template for a multinational monitoring or observation mission and it continues to be used successfully on numerous UN operations today. The background and methods of its operation are beyond the scope of this paper. In addition BHC gained a lot of information indirectly from the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) structure. This flow was indirect, as the ECMM mission did not officially come under its

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<sup>24</sup> HQ 20 Armoured Brigade Headquarters, *Op GRAPPLE 6 – Post Tour Report*, dated 9 Nov 95. Page 6.

command but resulted from existing personal relationships between the staffs of the two organizations. Their structure and methods are also beyond the scope of this paper.

General Sir Michael Rose, on taking over command of BHC, found the UNMO system to be unresponsive and on occasions both ineffective and misleading.<sup>25</sup> He attempted to correct this by speaking directly with the British Colonel that had been appointed as the Deputy Commander of the UNMO organization. This did go some way to correcting the system, but its refusal to actively collect intelligence and the frequency of inaccurate or biased reporting caused him to create a new group of liaison officers.<sup>26</sup> In effect he wanted his own directed telescope, a trusted group of people that could act as his eyes and ears, enabling him to make qualitatively better decisions in a timely manner. These new liaison officers were called Joint Commission Observers (JCO's) and were officially drawn from across the UN contingents in Bosnia to provide a direct liaison link to the Joint Commission in Sarajevo. In reality they were predominantly drawn from the British Special Forces, an organization that General Rose had been involved with for much of his career. The JCO's deployed in teams of four or more with a mix of military and local interpreters and used a variety of secure communications that enabled robust and direct communications to its controlling HQ, which was located within BHC. Indeed its main office was located close to General Rose's, which reflects the importance that he placed on their product.<sup>27</sup>

The JCO teams initially reported directly to BHC from across Bosnia. This occasionally upset the local UN commanders as they felt that they were being denied access to information that could be of use to them. In response to this, JCO sector HQ's

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<sup>25</sup> Gen Sir Michael Rose. *Fighting for Peace*. Page 57.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Page 57.

were created. These controlled the teams within that sector and passed information up to BHC, whilst keeping the sector commander informed. In line with this change, they were officially placed under operational command of the sector commanders. However, in reality their true loyalty remained with BHC in general and to General Rose in particular.

The JCO organization gave BHC a clear picture of the ground reality during a confusing time and enabled NATO air to be used in the CAS role under close centralized supervision. They did this by bringing what were, in many ways, conventional methods to the theatre. These methods varied from overt patrolling, surveillance tasks and probably most importantly, the capability to act as forward air controllers for NATO aircraft.<sup>28</sup> Despite these methods and capabilities their primary purpose was to conduct direct faction liaison in support of the Joint Commission, in order to provide the vital link for the Commission itself. Consequently, they overlapped with the efforts of the UNMO's in general and in SSW the SLO's. This duplication became even more pronounced as they began to settle into a routine within the sectors.

### **UNPROFOR Summary**

The success of UNPROFOR is not easily identifiable and much has been written condemning it as an abject failure. The simple fact is that UNPROFOR did negotiate and implement the lasting peace agreement between the BiH and HVO (all be it after several attempts) and had enabled wide spread aid delivery (its initial mission). The aid delivery had reached the point that, within SSW at least, they had almost done themselves out of a white UN job.<sup>29</sup> Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the second echelon 'Green

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Page 58.

<sup>28</sup> These capabilities proved essential during the various crises that arose around Gorazde and Sarajevo.

<sup>29</sup> 20 Armoured Brigade Headquarters, *Op GRAPPLE 6 – Post Tour Report*, dated 9 Nov 95. Page 3.

Troops' of the Rapid Reaction Force, were the vital land component participants in the short NATO/UN Air Land Campaign of September 1995. It should be remembered that it was this campaign that brought the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) to the negotiating table, thus effectively enabling Dayton to take place.<sup>30</sup>

The early days of UNPROFOR validated the need to have liaison teams and they were regarded by many as peacekeeping multipliers. The primary reason for their success was that personal relationships achieved a great deal more in Bosnia than written directives or statements. A frequent example of this arose from the issue concerning freedom of movement. A freedom of movement directive from the UN to the BiH, for example, may not translate down to the roadblock that was physically stopping the aid from being delivered. However, the LO who knew the local commander could often have the roadblock removed. He did this by combining the leverage of his personal relationship with the commander with an explanation that his (the factions) higher HQ had agreed to the directive. In short, the LO chain of command was faster than that of the factions and as a result, they were often able to articulate the various agreements to them before it had come down their chain. The importance of a personal relationship is obviously vital as without it the faction commander would be understandably unlikely to believe an unknown officer who simply turned up with a missive or directive. In addition, these teams would often help the factions understand and fulfil the various agreements, in effect advising the faction commander and staff.<sup>31</sup>The importance of this becomes apparent when one realizes that many of the tactical ground commanders had little if any formal military training. Thus little things, such as the use of NATO map symbols on

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<sup>30</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Bn The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, *Op GRAPPLE 6 – Post Tour Report*, dated 20 Nov 95. Page 4.

documents, were completely new to most of them.<sup>32</sup> Finally, during the war many regions were controlled by paramilitary organizations that were only tenuously under the command and control of one of the main factions. This 'warlord' factor was often impervious to directives but vulnerable to approaches made on a personal basis.<sup>33</sup>

The other area that proved successful was that the LO teams were able to act as the commanders eyes and ears, in effect his directed telescope, in what was a confusing environment. By personally providing accurate information (which the commander trusted), LO's enabled commanders to make effective timely decisions. They were also essential in arranging meetings for the commander with the appropriate faction leader. This sounds simple, but in reality simply finding the faction leader that truly controlled the power could be a time consuming task. The LO's dramatically reduced the time that the commander had to spend on this task. The early success and relatively low cost of these teams was noted and every commander wanted his own group to work for him. The confusion and duplication that this plethora of LO's created is discussed further in Part 3.

Overall the system used was an outstanding achievement and was one of the key factors in SSWs relative success. The day before IFOR took control, all of the organizations described above were in operation. NATO planners had observed the complications that this caused and declined the offer of retaining the UNMO organization. As a result the UNMOs left Bosnia with the ending of the UNPROFOR

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<sup>31</sup> 20 Armoured Brigade Headquarters, *Op GRAPPLE 6 – Post Tour Report*, dated 9 Nov 95. Page 6.

<sup>32</sup> The author found that the primary reason that the staff of the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps of the ARBiH was not going to comply with aspects of the force notifications, as required by the military annex, was due to a lack of staff training. However, they were happy to accept advice and guidance once asked, subsequently their returns were both accurate and timely.

mandate.<sup>34</sup> Conversely the British systems, and more importantly its experiences, were deeply woven into NATO's planning for the IFOR deployment.

## IFOR

*The DLOs' contribution to the success of MND SW's operations on Op RESOLUTE should not be underestimated. The young officers concerned lived and worked amongst the factional commander's staff and built up good working relationships with them. In addition, they enabled the GOC to get an accurate feel for sensitive situations that would otherwise have been impossible to obtain.*

Op RESOLUTE Post Tour Report  
Dated 4 Oct 96<sup>35</sup>

The need for a stronger force with a clear mandate was seen by many as the solution to the impasse that UNPROFOR had found itself in. The mandate was provided by an agreement reached in Dayton, Ohio, which became known as the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). It contained a military annex that clearly laid down a timeline of military actions that the factions were expected to adhere to. NATO, who was tasked to provide a comprehensive implementation force to supervise and if necessary enforce the various provisions of this annex, provided the stronger force.

This framework provides a far clearer example of Axelrod's 'Tit for Tat rule' being formally incorporated to ensure continued cooperation. The use of force, however, was still viewed as the tool of last resort. The need for efficient communications between IFOR and the various factions was obviously essential if every body was to move

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<sup>33</sup> The 'Warlord' factor is used to describe some of the units that appeared more involved with their own local war than that of the faction they represented. This was most prevalent during the war between the HVO and BiH.

<sup>34</sup> Brig M A Charlton-Weedy. *Faction Liaison – The Far Side of OP RESOLUTE*, Army Doctrine and Training News, No 7. Page 1-25.

forward together. The Joint Military Commission (JMC), authorized by article VIII of the annex, was to be the primary institution to achieve this. This was replicated at the MND level, where it was simply known as a Military Commission (MC). The MC nested directly with the JMC to ensure that all of the information given to the factions was the same. This was essential if manipulation by the factions was to be avoided.<sup>36</sup> It was apparent from the outset that a liaison system would be required to maintain communications between the various meetings. Article VII authorized a liaison system and more importantly demanded that the factions cooperate with it. This liaison system would support the Commission structure by explaining the annex in detail, ensuring attendance at the various meetings and arranging bi-lateral meetings when required. In addition, it would allow potential areas of non-compliance to be identified early and therefore countered. In short, they were to be the ‘oil’ for the Commission process.

The structure used by HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (HQ ARRC) will be looked at first, as it was predominantly British in nature.<sup>37 38</sup> The structure used within the UK led MND South West will be looked at second as it nested directly under that of the ARRC. The review will finish with a summary of the major factors that caused these structures to change from those of the UNPROFOR mission.

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<sup>35</sup> HQ 3 (United Kingdom) Division Headquarters, *Op RESOLUTE Post Operational Tour Report*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 96. Page 26.

<sup>36</sup> This ‘manipulation’ was real and had plagued UNPROFOR. In essence it was simply the factions IO campaigns attempting to warp the international effort to a point that it directly supported that factions war aim or simply no longer interfered with them.

<sup>37</sup> HQ ARRC was the ground component HQ for IFOR.

<sup>38</sup> The UK is the framework nation for HQ ARRC and as such provides its commander and a large proportion of the staff.

## **ARRC Liaison Structure**

At the very first JMC, Lt Gen Walker, the ARRC Commander (COMARRC), announced the foundation of his liaison organization and gained agreement from the factions for them to be accepted into their headquarters.<sup>39</sup> This was in line with article VII of the military annex. He also clearly stated that whilst HQ IFOR was responsible for liaison with their political leaders, his teams would deal with the faction army commanders and functioning ministries, whilst the MND teams would deal with the corps/division level of command and local authorities. This effectively set out a clear division of responsibilities whilst achieving comprehensive coverage. This clear division would prevent anything falling between the gaps, thus providing an essential defense against manipulation by the factions.

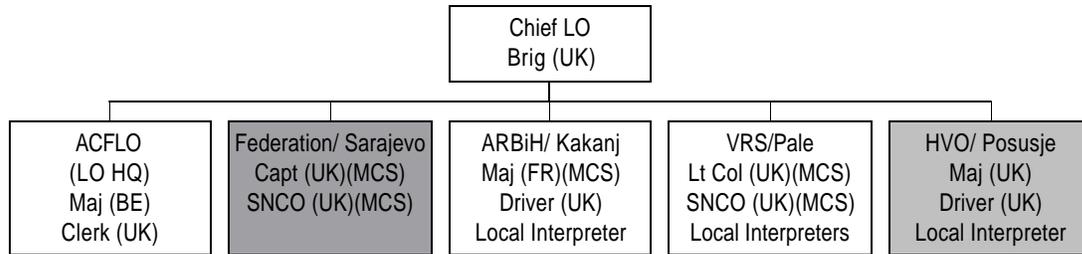
To fulfill the ARRC liaison requirements, five teams were set up and deployed. Each team consisted of an officer, a driver and an interpreter. Because of the number of colloquial speakers that had been trained during the UNPROFOR operation, many of the teams deployed with Military Colloquial Speakers (MCS) in addition to or instead of locally employed interpreters.

The ideal was for the organization to be multinational, but several constraints affected the practicality of this. These constraints, which are discussed in part 3, resulted in an organization that consisted of ten UK personnel and one each from France and Belgium. All of the teams were issued with standard Land Rovers and communicated by INMARSAT, TACSAT and telephone. The organization of this liaison structure is shown below. Note that the shaded boxes were old SLO posts set up by UNPROFOR

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<sup>39</sup> Brig M A Charlton-Weedy. *Faction Liaison – The Far Side of OP RESOLUTE*, Army Doctrine and Training News, No 7. Page 1-25.

and as such the relationships and equipment were simply handed over between the British Officers concerned:<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 3. ARRC Faction Liaison structure on deployment**

### **Division Liaison Structure**

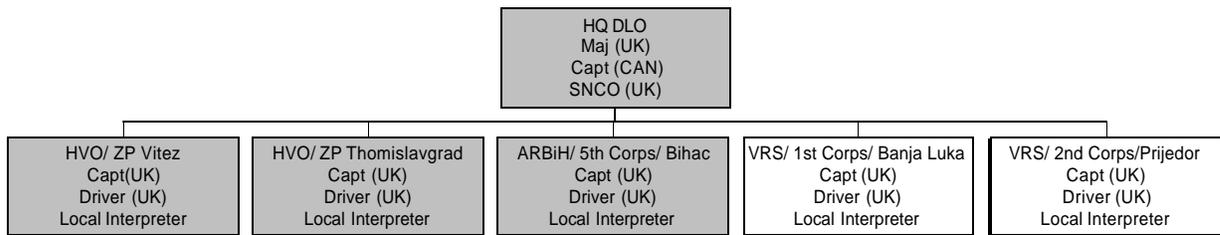
Like COMARRC, Maj Gen Jackson, Commander MND South West, announced the structure of his liaison organization during his first MC. He stated that this organization would be an essential part of the Commission process and that the officers involved were to be viewed as his personal representatives. In this vein he then went further and explained that he would hold the faction commanders personally responsible for the safety of these officers. He also expected them all to be given offices *inside* their headquarters. The factions agreed to both of these demands, although they were more than was technically required by article VI. The demand for offices inside the headquarters may initially seem minor but it was to fundamentally alter the mindset of the factions to the liaison officers and underline their role as the GOC's personal representatives.<sup>41</sup>

The liaison structure that Maj Gen Jackson used was based on the SLO structure, which had been inherited from UNPROFORs HQ SSW. In essence, the organization

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, page 1-26.

<sup>41</sup> Authors personal recollection from the MC meeting on 23 Dec 95 at Bocac Dam.

only changed its name.<sup>42</sup> This eased the transition greatly and with the exception of the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) posts, allowed the relationships that the SLO's had built to remain valid. Initially this liaison structure was reflected at both brigade and battle group level. Manpower for these additional positions was provided by the SLO's that were now surplus to the DLO structure. With time, it was identified that this nested system led to some duplication and weakening of the DLO's status as the GOC's personal representative. This duplication was due to the relatively minor role that the faction brigades played in the process; this led to the Brigade LO's talking with the DLO's contacts to achieve their tasks. This obviously diluted the LO's ability to develop a unique personal relationship. Consequently the two structures were merged and the DLO's became open to tasking by the brigades. This tightened structure limited the opportunities for the factions to manipulate the process by playing one LO against another. In addition, simply by its reduction it greatly enhanced the structures efficiency. The resulting structure is shown below; the shaded boxes identify the posts that had been established by the SLO structure whilst the shadowed box highlights the fact that the 2nd VRS Corps was disbanded during this period:



**Figure 4. MND South West's Faction Liaison structure on deployment**

<sup>42</sup> HQ 3 (United Kingdom) Division Headquarters, *Op RESOLUTE Post Operational Tour Report*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 96. Page 25.

The DLO structure used all of the equipment that it had used under UNPROFOR all be it no longer painted white!<sup>43</sup> The majority of the local interpreters also stayed with the structure, whilst new interpreters were hired to work with the VRS teams.

As the teams were now tied to specific faction headquarters three of the five teams moved into rented accommodation in order to be close to the headquarters building. This enabled them to be available to the factions at all times and gain a feel for the local communities' issues and opinions.

All of the DLO teams were issued TACSAT radios in addition to the HF sets, which they retained. These radios were to significantly upgrade the reliability of communications within the organization and were operated on a schedule system by the teams to conserve battery life.

## **Summary of Changes**

The deployment of IFOR brought a dramatic increase in manpower to the theatre and this reduced the need for the SLO's to conduct their patrolling task within a given area. Civil Affairs teams and regular patrolling by the battalions themselves took over large parts of their role. In short, exploring teams were no longer required due to the density of forces on the ground.

This enabled IFOR to alter the liaison structure and focus it on enabling the commission process. Three main factors affected the organization and were responsible for driving the changes that occurred. Firstly, it had become genuinely impartial *across the board* by deploying to VRS formations (with the exception of a few UNMO teams this had not been done under UNPROFOR). Secondly, the GFAP agreement and the

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<sup>43</sup> The author's personal experience of having to paint his Landrover is amply verification of this!

commission process in particular, gave a common focus that had not been present before. Thirdly, Lt Gen Walker, as COMARRC, had clearly articulated the division of liaison responsibilities; this removed much of the duplication that had plagued UNPROFOR and effectively closed many of the gaps that had been open to manipulation by the factions.

In conclusion, under UNPROFOR a great deal of the SLO's time had been spent working with the factions to determine what needed to be done and only once that was agreed, could the how be discussed. Conversely, the DLO's spent all of their time on the how aspect, as the GFAP had detailed the what. This difference, alongside the forces enforcement capability, enabled IFOR to succeed where UNPROFOR had foundered.

## **Part 3**

# **ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPLE ISSUES**

## **Introduction**

From the historical review, five principle issues can be identified; the solutions to which were responsible for the manner in which the liaison structure evolved. These are (1) the individual team structure, (2) the interpreters that it used, (3) how the teams were controlled and the missions that they were assigned, (4) the communications that they used to facilitate this and lastly (5) their force protection. This part will review these issues in the order mentioned above.

## **Team Structure**

The structure of the team resulted from the answers to four separate issues. These are nationality, size, rank and the manner in which they were selected. Initially these factors had little impact as the first teams were formed by BRITBAT to support itself. As such they were all British by nationality, small in size (limited manpower available) and selected by the Battalion Commander personally. As the structure grew it became exposed to these issues to a greater degree; each will be looked at in turn.

**Nationality.** Only British officers and soldiers had manned both the battalion and UKLO structures, this was acceptable as they were created to support national organizations. The SLO structure had remained British despite the fact that it supported a multinational headquarters for two main reasons. Firstly, it was the easiest solution as the UKLO structure was already in existence and was known to be effective. Secondly, the Commander of SSW was British and by ensuring that it remained a national concern, he avoided several potential areas of friction. Firstly, fluency in both spoken and written English was not an issue, secondly he had real control over the officers in it. This control was derived from the fact that he wrote their confidential reports, had the power to dismiss and perhaps most importantly, could direct and order without reference to a contributing nation.<sup>44</sup> In addition, this arrangement ensured that SLO's were all trained on one course in England.<sup>45</sup>

During its planning HQ ARRC had desired a multinational structure but three constraints affected its practicality, and these resulted in it remaining predominantly British. These constraints were formally articulated and accepted by the national contingents involved. The first constraint was that of a common language. As the UK is the framework nation for HQ ARRC, English is the common language; therefore total fluency in both its spoken and written form was to be essential. All nominees were screened to ensure that this was achieved. Secondly, some of the participating nations had relationships with one of the factions and to ensure impartiality and, more importantly, the factions perception of it, these nations were excluded from the organization. Third, there was a clear and justifiable perception that the liaison teams

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<sup>44</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade. *Op GRAPPLE 6 – End of Tour Report*. Dated 9 November 1995, page 6.

<sup>45</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade. *Op GRAPPLE 4 – End of Tour Report*, dated 2 November 1994, Annex M.

would be exposed and isolated in potentially hostile situations, the force protection policies of some of the contributing nations excluded them from the organization.<sup>46</sup>

In summary it can be seen that the two organizations arrived at similar solutions despite different starting points. However, it is interesting to note that one area that was regarded as crucial to the SLO structure, the efficiency of national control, was not articulated in the ARRC's formal requirements. In the authors opinion this was because the ARRC is not an ad hoc multinational formation but one of long standing, thus the reporting chain and level of national involvement concerning the actions of individuals was already established and set.

**Size.** The first teams put together by the CHESHIRE group consisted of one officer, two soldiers (one driver and one signaler) and one interpreter. Experience proved that the signaler could drive without affecting the team's efficiency, and thus it was reduced by one soldier. Both the UKLO and ARRC structures adopted this template. This small size proved effective for three main reasons. Firstly it allowed the officer to build close personal relationships with the faction officers, secondly it ensured that he remained dependant on his parent headquarters. Lastly, it ensured that the team was truly mobile due to its minimal logistic footprint.

A larger team, as proposed by Col P G Williams in his article "Liaison – A Capability Gap in Current Peacekeeping Doctrine," would have diluted the personal contact of individuals, been more autonomous and thus been able to taken on specific staff duties.<sup>47</sup> In the authors opinion this would have eroded its primary role as a

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<sup>46</sup> Brig MA Charlton-Weedy, *Faction Liaison – The Far Side of Op RESOLUTE*. Army Doctrine and Training News No 7, page1-27.

<sup>47</sup> A larger team, which would be able to take on certain staff duties, was proposed by Colonel P G Williams in his article *Liaison – A Capability Gap in Current peacekeeping Doctrine*, which appeared in

facilitator for the headquarters as it would effectively have become a subordinate headquarters

**Rank.** Initially the officers were of Captain rank and relatively young.<sup>48</sup> This was against conventional wisdom, which advises that liaison officers should ideally be of a senior enough rank to ensure respect; however, manpower realities simply prevented this from being sustainable over a long period of time. Captains were used primarily as a result of accepting the mean ground between availability and capability. In short, Captains could be spared and were relatively experienced. Despite this concern the use of Captains proved extremely successful, the majority rising to the role with both energy and panache. HQ ARRC, by having a greater call on resources, tended to follow the conventional approach and used Majors and Lieutenant Colonels. This inadvertently aided the delineation of responsibilities on the ground as the senior LO generally represented the senior headquarters.

**Selection.** Despite the overall successes of the system as a whole, it was not perfect as a small number of the LO's simply did not perform well.<sup>49</sup> This occasional poor performance was more apparent in the UKLO/SLO/DLO organizations than at the battalion or ARRC level. The reason for this can be attributed to the manner in which the individual LO was selected. At the battalion level they were personally chosen by the Commanding Officer, who knew them well. Likewise, at the ARRC level the Commander was able to select them after a comprehensive screening process. Conversely, within the UKLO/SLO/DLO structure the various posting branches filled the

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the Army Training and Doctrine News periodical, page 1-32. His proposal envisioned a team of four officers and eighteen soldiers.

<sup>48</sup> Many were in fact Lieutenants who were promoted to the local rank of Captain.

<sup>49</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade. *Op GRAPPLE 4 – End of Tour Report*, dated 2 November 1994, para 18.

positions. Thus, the individuals were selected because they were available or could be spared from their units, not for their ability to negotiate and operate with initiative. This process led to a few individuals being sent who were either terminating from the services or extremely junior and relatively immature. The only method of correcting this was to either remove the officer, hoping for a replacement, or to prioritize the posts.<sup>50</sup> The later method was generally adopted as it ensured that all the posts were filled whilst allowing for an internal selection; the right person for the right position based on how he had performed during the pre tour training. The Chief LO who attended the training and understood the current needs of the various positions was responsible for this internal selection. It is also important to note that he rotated on a different timetable to the LO's themselves. This staggered rotation ensured that he could guide the new LO's effectively on their arrival and adjust their positions if necessary.

## **Interpreters**

Conventional wisdom recommends the use of military interpreters as this maintains operational security and control. In reality, the limited number of interpreters that were available within the British Army in 1992 were simply not enough to enable the operation on a sustained basis. In addition, few of the registered interpreters were truly fluent, especially with the local dialects, and this hindered their ability to conduct detailed negotiations. The CHESHIRE group over came this by recruiting interpreters locally after a comprehensive English test. The security concerns of this were studied and access to sensitive areas such as operations rooms or information cells was restricted

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, Annex M.

accordingly.<sup>51</sup> Overall, it was felt that using locals would provide a triple benefit to the group that would far outweigh the security risk, which itself could be mitigated by information control measures. Firstly, their language ability was normally a great deal better than that of a military interpreter. Secondly, the group *wanted* the locals to know what they were trying to do. By using local interpreters, who were expected to talk about their work amongst the local population, it assisted in establishing the fact that they were genuinely impartial, thus aiding their transparency. Thirdly, it provided a simple and effective method of gauging local feeling. This was further aided by the fact that the battalion recruited interpreters from all sides. This widespread recruitment, apart from being a logical result of impartiality, was necessary as the factions generally trusted the British officer but occasionally refused to negotiate if the interpreter was from a different ethnic group. This was due to a concern over their own operational security.<sup>52</sup> This could be overcome on a visiting basis but often became a constant source of friction if the team was living permanently with that faction. Consequently, teams attached to factions tended to use interpreters from that faction's ethnic group. This also had the benefit of easing their support requirements as the interpreters could live at home. Perhaps most importantly they provided the team with an effective method of gauging the local feeling, allowing them to make reasonable judgements on force protection measures, this capability would obviously be absent if the interpreter was also an alien to the area. An

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<sup>51</sup> The security concerns were related to the Operational Security of the unit. Although it was important to develop transparency over the concept of the unit's operation the detailed timings and manner of execution was thought to be contrary to sound Operational Security.

<sup>52</sup> This concern was not unfounded as the interpreters were almost certainly a source of HUMINT for the factions. This HUMINT was either collected formally by interview or informally through conversation. Thus the use of interpreters needed to be done with awareness of the Operational Security concerns of the factions and the Peacekeeping forces.

added bonus was that by recruiting local interpreters both UNPROFOR and IFOR were seen to be keen to employ the local populace, and pay well!

The CHESHIRE group worked hard to integrate the interpreters into the group and it did this by issuing them British uniforms, providing accommodation when required and feeding them. This adoption was important as it assisted in securing their loyalty and went some way to limiting the intimidation that they could be exposed to.<sup>53</sup> The intimidation they faced from the factions was real and varied from words to sniping.<sup>54</sup> This unofficial policy was used by all of the structures on a voluntary basis, in that the interpreters could decline accommodation or British uniform if they so chose. It should be noted that one of the primary factors in issuing British clothing was the weather and the need to constantly get in and out of armored vehicles. Overall the policy of using locally contracted interpreters was extremely effective and their performance, for the most part, was superb. ARRC, on creating its structure, was able to use a number of military interpreters successfully, primarily due to the numbers trained over the UNPROFOR years, but despite this advantage they still relied heavily on local interpreters for the reasons given above.

## **Command and Control**

The initial success of the LO teams was such that it caused the various organizations mentioned in Part 2 to be raised. As an example of the numbers employed in his role the author, whilst serving as an SLO, had twenty UNMO's, four ECMM observers,

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<sup>53</sup> The protection was a legal smoking mirror, as the initial ROE did not entitle the use of force unless British soldiers were under attack or threatened. The interpreters despite being in British uniform were not officially regarded as British soldiers. The expansion of the ROE rectified this.

<sup>54</sup> Lt Col Stewart's female interpreter was killed by a sniper.

numerous battalion LO's and a JCO team operating in his area. This situation inevitably led to a state of duplication and confusion, which was most strongly felt by the factions themselves, who were now speaking to so many LO's that they were no longer sure who spoke on behalf of whom. This often led to the factions setting up their own liaison cells, thus putting a layer between the LO and the true source of power, the faction commander. This weakened the liaison structure by firstly diluting the depth of personal relationships and secondly presenting the factions with numerous opportunities to manipulate the system to their own advantage. The duplication also led to confusion within UNPROFOR, as some elements would simply not pool information as they felt that due to the number of LO's involved it was open knowledge. In short, every one thought some one else was distributing the information, which inevitably led to no one doing it effectively. Again, the resulting gaps were open to manipulation by the factions and this was particularly noticeable in 1995 when the Federation was encouraging NATO airstrikes but trying to discredit UNPROFOR.<sup>55</sup> IFOR tackled the problem efficiently by streamlining the numbers involved (the UNMO organization was not retained) and clearly articulating the division of liaison responsibilities. By doing this the organization not only became more transparent to IFOR itself but also more clearly visible to the factions themselves. This went a long way towards closing the gaps that had been open to manipulation by the factions, thus limiting the deliberate misinformation that had been present before. This division was successful because it not only clarified the liaison structure within IFOR, but more importantly, where it plugged into the factions. It also required other organizations that wished to liaise with a different level to do so through

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<sup>55</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade. *Op GRAPPLE 6 – End of Tour Report*. Dated 9 November 1995, page 2.

the unit that had primary responsibility. This ensured that the headquarters that was responsible for a certain faction headquarters was aware of *all* communications that had been made to it, therefore ensuring that a united front was continuously displayed. On the ground, this resulted in the LO being responsible for arranging meetings and introducing these other organizations. In summary, no one entered the faction headquarters without the LO being present. This ensured that he was aware of all the issues that IFOR had raised with it and was therefore in an informed position to deal with any queries that the faction raised after the meeting.

The various task organization charts clearly placed the teams under the operational command of the headquarters that they reported too. However, friction did occur as the LO's were obviously operating in a subordinate units AO, the commander of which had no formal control over them. This friction generally arose as a result of LO's who were unaware of the need to keep the local unit informed as it was not part of their formal remit. This obviously irritated the local commanders who naturally clamored for some formal level of control. This was unacceptable to the headquarters that had control (fear of dilution, reduced responsiveness etc) and so the compromise solution was to direct the LO's to lean forward by keeping the local unit informed. This compromise generally worked well and ensured that they remained focused on their responsibility to support the headquarters whilst aiding the local unit.

Linked to command and control is the relationship that the commander establishes with his LO's. For them to work effectively as his directed telescope or personal representative he needs to know the individuals personally in order that he can interpret their reports effectively and that they may develop an understanding his personal

information requirements and concerns. It is understandable that this level of involvement will be limited and that the commander will rely heavily on his staff to conduct many of these actions. However, it is vital that the commander views them as *his* LO's and uses them accordingly, anything less will dramatically weaken their use to him. Regardless of whether or not the commander knows his LO's personally, he *must* act as if he does when in front of the factions. The factions will note these interactions and it is upon them that they will decide if the LO truly is or is not the commanders representative and therefore of use to them. If the commander does not do this the factions may well decide that the LO is irrelevant to the process and thus weaken the liaison structure. In short the commander has a vital role in establishing his LO's credibility with the factions, it should not be underplayed.

## **Communications**

LO teams needed to speak to two different groups of people, firstly their controlling headquarters and secondly the local UNPROFOR or IFOR ground unit. Communications between the teams and their headquarters was a constant problem due to the geography and distances involved. Satellite systems over came this and enabled reliable communications to be established. Initially, this was done with IMMARSAT but TACSAT soon replaced it and proved far more capable. Communications with the local units were generally VHF whilst the back up system throughout remained HF. This mix proved effective and robust.

Initially all radio traffic had been conducted in clear. This had been done deliberately to enhance the transparency of the mission. The theory was that interception of this

traffic would only prove that the force was being even handed in its approach. However, TACSAT enabled secure communications to be possible and this capability was fully utilized. The reason for this change was due to a realization that factions would only give the information specified in article V of the military annex,<sup>56</sup> on the understanding that it would not be given to the other factions. The possibility of anybody else intercepting this information was unacceptable and therefore secure means were used on a regular basis. In the author's experience, the factions were happier when secure means were used as they felt it protected their own operational security.

## **Force Protection**

Small teams moving around the theatre independently and living with the factions are obviously at potential risk. The detention of numerous UN observers by the VRS following the first air strike on Pale provides ample evidence of this.<sup>57</sup> However, the overall benefit of the teams to the mission was felt to outweigh this risk and therefore it became a matter of managing it rather than avoiding it. The force protection issues for liaison teams can be divided into three main areas: (1) armed or unarmed (2) escorted or unescorted (3) housed in the local community or within a military base. These areas will be looked at individually in the order given.

**Armed or Unarmed.** UNMO's are always unarmed; they view this as a vital psychological tool in getting the factions to accept them. In essence, they feel that it underlines the fact that they are Diplomats in Uniform. Conversely, all of the British LO's were armed with both rifles and pistols to underline the fact that they represented

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<sup>56</sup> Article V required the factions to accurately inform IFOR of the locations and details of their armed forces.

the military force and to provide a self-protection capability. This armament did not upset the factions, who simply regarded it as a sensible precaution in a war torn region within which banditry was prevalent.<sup>57</sup> Common sense needs to be applied by the LO as it is obvious that carrying a rifle into a meeting with the local Mayor is uncalled for and could be provocative.

**Escorted or Unescorted.** All of the LO teams moved unescorted throughout the theatre for the majority of the time. This worked well as their size underlined the fact that they were not an offensive force and thus not a conventional threat to the factions. However, escorts could and would be provided if the situation deteriorated. This flexible response worked well and was efficiently done on a local basis.

**Housing.** The UNMO's lived amongst the local communities. This worked well and enabled them to report accurately on the minor factors that were affecting the population; these included such things as food, water and medical supplies. In addition, the fact that they were suffering the same deprivations aided their acceptance by the local community. The British structures tended to use a mix of both, primarily for financial reasons – if a base was in the town, it was cheaper to house the team in it rather than rent accommodation. The use of a house was regarded as the preferred option for the reasons given by the UNMO's and the fact that it enabled them to be truly available to the factions at all times. An unexpected benefit was that these houses were often regarded as neutral terrain. This was particularly important for the VRS teams who were officially banned from the headquarters buildings following the arrest of General Djucic in

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<sup>57</sup> Christopher Bellamy, *Knights in White Armour*. Page 117.

<sup>58</sup> The authors experience as an UNMO in Cambodia bear this out. Within his region the banditry and Khmer Rouge attacks were almost endemic. The inability of the Sector troops to be every where, prompted many of the UNMO's and NGO's to 'acquire' weapons for personal protection.

Sarajevo on war crimes charges.<sup>59</sup> Despite the formal suspension of liaison between the VRS and IFOR following this arrest, they were able to continue meetings and low level liaison tasks in their house. This ensured that a line of communication remained open and obviously made the reestablishment of formal liaison much less problematic once the suspension had been removed. The force protection issues raised by living in the local community were partially alleviated by grouping JCO teams with DLO teams. This proved effective and by living together they were also able to complement each other's role, enhancing the efficiency of both organizations. As with the escorting issue, all of the teams had a secure base that they could move to if the situation deteriorated. The decision to remove the teams to secure bases, however, is one that should be taken only as a last resort, as it negates the use of the house as neutral terrain and sends a significant signal to the faction themselves. In addition it delays the reestablishment of normal relationships once the crisis has passed, which of course is precisely the time that they are needed most.

**Intelligence Collection Asset or Impartial Liaison?** The one issue that has not been addressed so far is that of the LO's role in collecting intelligence. The reason for this is that all of the structures categorically stated that if they were to be actively engaged in any intelligence collection plan, their ability to maintain their special relationships would be threatened. Therefore, they avoided any formal connection with the G2 structures.<sup>60</sup> This avoidance, although well intentioned was inefficient and fundamentally flawed. The flaw derives from the fact that what they say to the Commander about a specific incident or individual *is* a form of intelligence. It is the

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<sup>59</sup> Based on the author's personal recollection.

author's interpretation that the real reason for this avoidance was twofold. Firstly, if they were to become a collection asset for the G2 cell, they would no longer be the Commander's personal representative; this was obviously unacceptable, as it would undermine their whole purpose. Secondly, they wished to avoid a situation in which they would be forced to collect on issues that could well affect their faction relationships, if caught.<sup>61</sup> In summary, they were concerned about diluting their special relationship, not only with the factions but also with the Commander himself. If these assumptions are accepted alongside the fact that their product does have G2 relevance, the problem has then moved to one of control and synchronization rather than avoidance. This issue is incorporated in the model outlined in the next part.

## Summary

In summary, it can be seen that the solutions that were used in response to the primary issues drove the shape that the structures were to take. It is interesting to note that many of these responses were driven by manning and equipment realities. For example, all agreed from the beginning that they should be carefully selected and equipped, but the system simply could not fully support these desires indefinitely.

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<sup>60</sup> LTC Michael L. Findlay, *Special Forces Integration with Multi National Division North in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Dated 21 May 1998, page 25.

<sup>61</sup> This fear is justified. The author was on one occasion tasked to collect VRS unit patches. These patches were a sensitive issue and the author discovered that the G2 tasking had been initiated by a Staff Sergeant who desired them for his own collection! The cost benefit analysis of tackling a sensitive issue for someone's personal collection obviously does not add up.

## **Part 4**

# **CONCLUSION AND GENERIC MODEL FOR FUTURE PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

### **Introduction**

Peacekeeping operations tend to fall into one of two categories, observer oriented or force oriented. In the first, the consent is solid and the observers are the primary military tool in use, the remaining force structure is limited and generally light. The other category occurs when the consent is potentially brittle and the deterrence effect of the force is the primary military tool. This is the gray area of peace support operations in that it occupies the divide between pure peacekeeping and enforcement. The resulting grayness has caused many cynical observers to label them as UN Chapter Six and a Half operations. The British involvement in Bosnia falls firmly within the latter category. Lessons from Bosnia therefore have little relevance to the first category; in addition, the current UN model for observer missions has been proven successful on numerous operations and thus provides the reader with a template. Therefore, this category will not be commented on further. The second, force oriented, demands a different structure and here the Bosnian experience has clear applicability, it is for this type of operation that this model is designed.

## **Faction Liaison Model for Force Oriented Peacekeeping Missions**

The following model is not prescriptive but conceptual in nature. This is to ensure that it is adjustable to the local factors encountered; indeed, it is essential that these adjustments be made to ensure its applicability. In short, the model is a set of guidelines that provide a skeleton upon which a structure could be built.

**Purpose.** Within Bosnia the essential purpose of the LO teams was to provide the commander with his own personal directed telescope. He used this to trouble shoot in areas that he was unclear of and to speak with and gain a constant feel for the local commander's opinions and problems.<sup>62</sup> This is nothing new as Van Creveld has shown that commanders since Napoleon have created and used directed telescopes.<sup>63</sup> It is proposed that the opportunity provided by the consent of peacekeeping operations, of physically placing a man in the faction command posts, has enhanced the potential capability of the directed telescope to a point never seen before. This purpose worked well in Bosnia and provided the commander with clarity and perhaps more importantly a channel through which he could communicate precisely with the factions, whilst being able to constantly monitor their feelings. It is strongly recommended that this purpose (of providing the commander with a directed telescope focused on the faction) be retained. In the author's opinion, any dilution of it would create a system that would replicate the efforts of the commander's sub units, therefore relegating their input to the regular command hierarchy. In summary, they should be regarded as facilitators for the HQ not sub units of it. The maintenance of this purpose enables the commander to operate at a

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<sup>62</sup> Primarily this related to those of the factions but it could and was used to look at his own forces on occasions, this is particularly important within a multi national contingent.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Van Creveld. *Command in War*. Page 97.

higher tempo than he would if constrained to the regular command hierarchy, which would inevitably have the added friction of being multinational.

**Command and Control.** To ensure focus on the purpose stated above, the teams must remain under the operational control of the headquarters of the Commander that they are supporting. The delineation of liaison responsibilities needs to be cascaded from the highest level down to ensure that no gaps or duplications exist. This delineation needs to be constantly observed and ruthlessly enforced if discrepancies are found. However, it is crucial that the LO's lean forward and make every effort to keep the local unit informed of firstly their actions and secondly any issues that could have an effect within that units area of operations.

In order to coordinate the teams and ensure efficiency within the HQ itself it is recommended that a Faction Liaison Cell be created. The purpose of this cell is to coordinate and administer the teams for the Commander. This cell should not rotate at the same time as the LO's themselves, in order that it can provide some level of continuity and direction. The senior officer should be personally involved in the training course and the subsequent selection and tasking of the LO's themselves.

**Intelligence.** Faction liaison teams are obviously an unparalleled source of high quality HUMINT. For this to be used effectively it needs to be linked in with the wider G2 collection plan. It is proposed that this linkage be done via the cell mentioned above, rather than by direct communication or tasking from the G2 cell to the team. The controlling cell would ensure that any G2 tasking did not detract from the team's primary role and vet its potential to upset the team's relationship with the faction leaders. It is

also recommended that the final acceptance of a G2 task rests with the LO himself, as he is the only one that can effectively judge the risk to the relationship.

**Selection.** Lieutenant Colonels or Majors would obviously be an ideal pool from which to select the LO's. However, this is simply not sustainable in the long term therefore after the initial maneuver period of the operation it is likely that the mean ground of Captains is likely to become center of mass for the selection pool. Captains generally performed well in Bosnia and are well suited for supporting the purpose stated above. The few that did not perform well simply should not have been appointed to this role. The lesson here is that selection is essential, as poor LO's are at best simply ineffective and at worst potentially damaging to the overall mission. This selection could be done either by a realistic posting branch scrub (based on the posts requirements not officer availability) or by selection on the training course. The preferred method is the selection course. Here the volunteers would be trained together with a merit list being produced, the best obviously then being sent on to fill the posts. The primary characteristics being looked for are tact, initiative, self-reliance and robustness.<sup>64</sup> The skills required center on a detailed understanding of the mission, commander's intent and the ability to interpret both effectively. The flaws that should preclude selection being immaturity, excessive arrogance, and any susceptibility to any form of 'Stockholm syndrome.'<sup>65</sup>

**Team Size.** The smaller the team the better, as it ensures mobility and maintenance of the primary purpose. To ensure clarity and focus there should only be

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<sup>64</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade. *Op GRAPPLE 4 – End of Tour Report*, dated 2 November 1994, para 18.

<sup>65</sup> Stockholm syndrome refers to the phenomena in which people exposed to others for a long time begin to believe in the others views. Personal beliefs, relationships or background could increase the potential of an LO believing the faction and thus losing objectivity.

one LO in a team. The team can be enlarged to give it a greater level of force protection but the principle of only one LO to a team is recommended. This single point of contact reinforces and empowers the leverage effect that personal relationships may achieve.

**Armed or unarmed.** It is recommended that the teams be armed for personal protection. Pistols should be considered as the minimum. Other weapons should be issued dependant on local factors (average engagement range etc). It is stressed that these weapons are only for self protection against dissidents or criminals not the factions themselves.

**Communications.** This will alter depending on the local infrastructure but as a minimum, it is recommended that the team carry two separate means. Firstly, a VHF or HF set to communicate with the local peacekeeping force and provide a back up link to its controlling headquarters. Secondly, a satellite system such as TACSAT, to enable communications to its controlling headquarters. A satellite system is recommended as it allows anyone to speak directly to the LO; for example this would allow the Ambassador to speak directly to the LO about a specific situation. This capability enables information to be passed directly from the source in real time, a system of relays prevents this. This capability enforces the primary purpose and is strongly recommended.

Due to the openness of peacekeeping operations, not all traffic needs to be secure, but a secure means does need to be available to enable sensitive information to be passed without fear of compromise. This requirement is essential in order to gain the trust of the factions so that they feel able to trust the LO with their sensitive information.

**Interpreters.** It is unlikely that the Army will initially have sufficient fluent linguists to support a force oriented peacekeeping mission that occurs outside of Europe.

Consequently, civilian interpreters will be required. Locally recruited interpreters are preferred as they support the openness of the mission, understand the local dialects, provide a means of sensing local opinion, and offer local employment. Thought should be given to restricting their access to areas of detailed information, such as movement timings, personnel details and so on. This does not counter their ability to support the openness of the mission but prevents them from being in possession of information that could undermine the operational security of the team. The system of adoption worked well and is recommended, so long as it remains voluntary for the interpreters.

**Dress.** The LO should be empowered to alter the force protection rules that apply to the force as a whole, this applies particularly in the area of dress. This is to enable him to maintain a low-key approach that is essential in avoiding perception barriers that could lead to inadvertent escalation. An example would be that whilst for the force as a whole, the wearing of helmets, body armor and the carriage of long weapons has a deterrent effect, an LO going to a meeting dressed in this manner would be seen as provocative and thus degrade his ability to work effectively. However, in order to retain some form of control and oversight the LO's controlling cell must be aware of and approve all such adjustments.

**Accommodation** Ideally the team should be accommodated within the local community but local factors may preclude this. If within the local community, thought needs to be given to extraction or escape plans for the team. These plans need to be practiced on a regular basis. Thought should be given to equipping the team with emergency beacons similar to those issued to pilots; these were occasionally issued to the

DLO's according to the threat.<sup>66</sup> The advantages of placing the LO's in the local community are twofold. Firstly it will increase the frequency of contact and secondly it enhances understanding of the local community and the reputation of the LO in it.<sup>67</sup>

**Logistics.** The team should be as self-supporting as possible, this enables mobility and responsiveness. This is normally achieved by issuing the LO a cash float to allow local purchase. This float should be large enough to enable the LO to entertain as well. This is an essential part of building up personal relationships and should not be left for the LO to fund personally.<sup>68</sup> Items that can not be locally purchased should be made available from the local peacekeeping force unit. The controlling cell can push the items out to these units for collection by the teams. Equipment maintenance should be done in a similar fashion. The principle of self-sustainment is strongly recommended.

## Conclusion

The faction liaison structures utilized by the British forces in Bosnia proved extremely effective and were essential in preventing misunderstanding. The model, based on these experiences, suggests that a small, self-sufficient team with robust communications is the best tool to enable faction liaison to work effectively. This team provides the commander with a directed telescope that gives him a robust channel of communication and a valuable HUMINT source. This enables him to make qualitatively

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<sup>66</sup> Authors personal recollection whilst employed as the DLO to the 1st Krajina Corps in Banja Luka.

<sup>67</sup> Both of these, frequency and reputation, are regarded as key ingredients by Robert Axelrod in his theory on promoting cooperation.

<sup>68</sup> In Bosnia the DLO's were provided with a fund to cover such eventualities. This was audited on a monthly basis and the purchase of alcohol was forbidden. The concept of entertaining Faction leaders without at least a bottle of wine or glass of beer was ludicrous. This resulted in some of the DLO's reaching into their own wages.

better decisions, concerning the factions, in a timely manner. In conclusion, faction liaison is an essential part of any peacekeeping mission, which is ignored at its peril. They are a peacekeeping multiplier and need to be planned for accordingly.

## **Implications**

**For Future Operations.** The central underlying premise of this paper is that faction liaison is an essential aspect of modern peacekeeping. If that premise is accepted then it needs to be planned for along with all of the other unique aspects that such operations demand. In preparation for future missions this planning should center on doctrine, manpower provision and finance.

Within doctrine the role of faction liaison needs to be expanded so that concepts such as the Faction Liaison Cell become as common as that of the Civil Military Operations Center. Linked to this is the need for articulation of their purpose and concept of employment, in order that the commanders of the future understand how to use them to best effect.

With the manpower limitations of today's forces, it is obviously inefficient to maintain a standing body of liaison officers and therefore they will always need to be drawn from the force once the mission has been assigned. This paper has argued that the manner in which this is done is crucial and probably one of the most difficult parts to get right. This difficulty would be significantly reduced by the adoption of a formal process of selection, at both the personnel office level and the subsequent training course. Better tracking within the personnel office of individuals that have skills or experiences that

would enable them to carry out the role efficiently would also ease the selection of high quality LO's.<sup>69</sup>

Each mission is so vastly different from the others that the procurement of equipment specifically for liaison officers would be expensive, potentially underutilized and perhaps most importantly wasteful if the local factors do not comply with the procurement assumptions. To counter this the liaison teams should use standard equipment wherever and whenever possible, enhanced by off the shelf purchases of mission specific equipment. This mission specific equipment will vary from communications to transport such as river craft. The point of this discussion is that finances will need to be planned to cover both this eventuality and the provision of the self sustainment/entertainment funds for the teams themselves.

**For Future Research.** The model described above is easily used by National contingents or alliances such as NATO but is less easily used by the UN due to its institutional belief in the UNMO system. Since its creation the UN has used the UNMO template with differing results across the world. Although this paper suggests that it works well in situations where consent is solid, its research was simply not detailed enough comment otherwise. As the UN reenters the enforcement realm of Peace Support Operations (the mission in Sierra Leone is clearly of this nature) a detailed study and analysis of the UNMO system would be both timely and welcome.

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<sup>69</sup> Skills would center on languages whilst experience would center on previous employment as an LO or UNMO. Knowledge of the region would also be of great use.

## *Glossary*

ARRC	Allied Rapid Reaction Corps
BiH	Bosnian Muslim Armed Forces
BRITBAT	UN acronym for the British Battalion
BHC	Bosnia Herzegovina Command
CHESHIRE Group	British combined arms formation based on the 1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment
DLO	Division Liaison Officer
ECMM	European Community Monitor Mission
HVO	Bosnian Croat Armed Forces
IFOR	Implementation Force as authorized by the Dayton Peace Agreement
IMMARSAT	Civilian insecure satellite telephone system
JCO	Joint Commission Observer
JMC	Joint Military Commission
MC	Military Commission
MND SW	Multi National Division South West
SLO	Sector Liaison Officer
SSW	Sector South West
TACSAT	Tactical Satellite System
UKLO	United Kingdom Liaison Officer
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer
UNPROFOR	United Nation Protection Force
VRS	Bosnian Serb Armed Forces

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