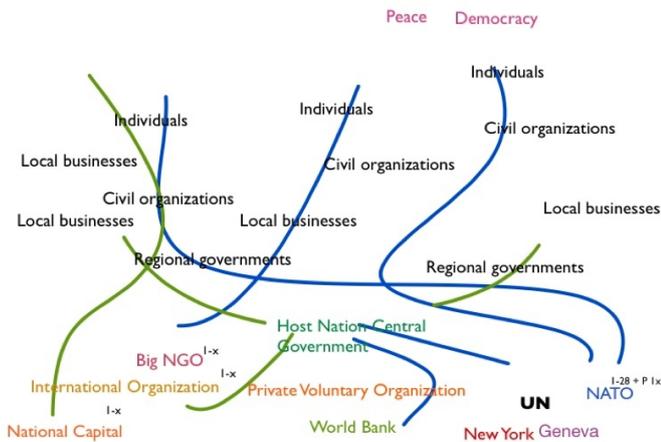


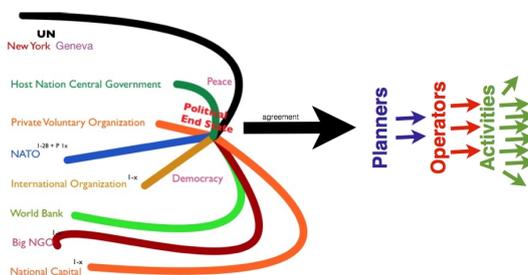
For the short version of [click here](#) .



As we think about how to use the Comprehensive Approach to achieve mission objectives more efficiently and effectively, we ask the question: What is the problem we are trying to solve? See Figure 1. While many actors work to generate effects in crisis increased activity can lead to confusion and decreased efficiency. In response the Comprehensive Approach offers a solution.

The Thick Comprehensive Approach

The CA solution comes in two broad categories: thick and thin. The thick view assumes robust collaborative interaction based on an agreed end state, overall mission objectives, and the means through which those objectives should be achieved. See figure 2.

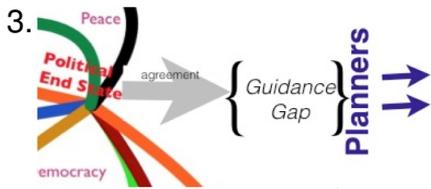


Yet, this thick agreement is seldom obtainable, and when achieved, suffers from three major deficiencies: failure to embrace local actor priorities – it reflects the interests and objectives of the "International Community" more than those of local actors; statement generation on common objectives without resource commitments; and failure to provide adequate direction for mission agreed objectives. In other words, there is a guidance gap between the thick CA

The Utility of a Thinner Comprehensive Approach (Expanded Version) - ACT

Written by Commander Michael Hallett, United States Navy, Strategic Plans and Policy

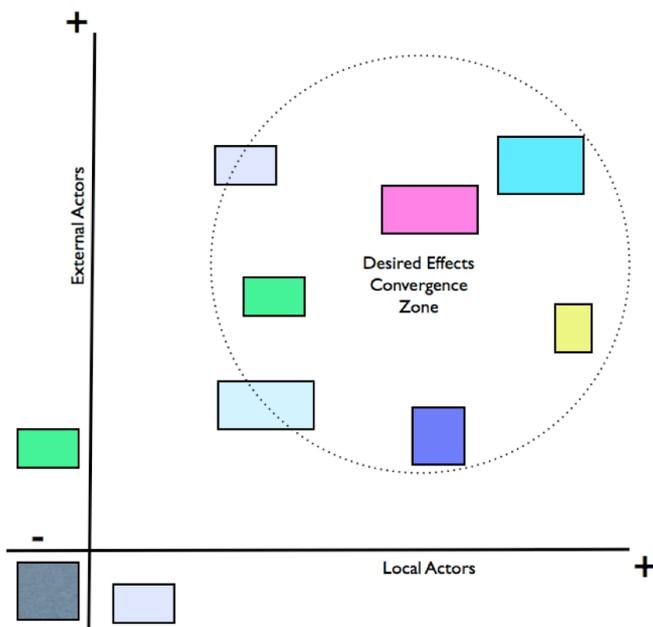
political level agreement and the guidance necessary for planners to do their work. See Figure



Therefore, while working at the strategic level to operationalize the thick CA, NATO should work to operationalize a thinner version.

A Thinner Comprehensive Approach

Looking at the CA as a design process for aligning incentives and reducing transaction costs, the process offers a practical approach to CA operationalization for NATO. This thin CA accepts that problem management, problems of an extremely complex nature, and present security environments require activities beyond the organic capability set of any one single organization.



The thin CA is design process that that reduces the inter-organizational interaction transaction costs and provides a structure that enables self-synchronization among diverse organizations. The aim of the thin CA is to, through the reduction of transaction costs and alignment of incentives, facilitate mutual reinforcement of activities in the "convergence zone" where effects are beneficial for both local and external actors. See figure 4.

There are five steps through which we can use this thin CA to enhance planning and operating.

1. Create a Venue

A venue, either cyber or normal, within which a community of interest can gather is required. The key is that all the actors are able to participate in the information and knowledge management processes that take place there to facilitate mission execution. This space will have different configurations depending on the mission ranging from a tent near the provincial governor's compound in a stabilization and reconstruction situation to a web enable ultra-secure virtual meeting space for the private sector and government organizations responding to a cyber attack.

2. Define the Problem

Once the community of interest has been formed and is able to articulate its view, it is necessary to define the problem. The problems facing us in the current complex operational environment are for the most part [wicked](#) . That is, they are ill defined, complex, (not just complicated) and the definition of the problem itself structures the range of possible solutions. The thin CA provides a process through which continues feedback from a wide variety of actors informs the evolving understanding of the problem as activities generate effects and the situational dynamics evolve.

3. Inventory and Access capabilities

Inventory and access existing capabilities. The understanding of capabilities, limitations and working processes of a wide variety of actors developed during the first two steps provides actors with the mutual awareness necessary to enable self-synchronization among participants to match capabilities to tasks. This process will illuminate capability gaps.

4. CA as design enables view of activities and activity gaps

Activity	Actor
1	G
2	
3	B, C, E
4	A
5	D, F
6	
7	

Find and Fill Capability Gaps

Find and fill capability gaps. The thin CA both exposes gaps early in the engagement and when a capability gap is uncovered facilitates work to develop the necessary capability to fill it. See figure 5. In some cases closing some gaps will require only adding resources while others will demand entirely new capabilities.

5. Support Local Solution Development

Support local solution implementation. Accessing existing capabilities to help local actors manage the problem. In other cases modification or creation of new capabilities, combining local and external resources will be necessary to fill the gaps. The thin CA process makes this much easier by providing a structured design process through which multiple groups can contribute pieces of the solution reducing costs and accelerating capability delivery. See figure 4. The thin CA facilitates the required self-synchronization as actors match capabilities to tasks.

Thin CA as Port Operations

In practice the Thin CA is similar to the process through which railroad, trucking, shipping and port operations companies move cargo through a port; they share information and have interoperable processes in place so they may move the cargo quickly and efficiently, cooperating when it meets their interests and staying out of each other's way when it does not. The Thin CA enables similar interaction to accomplish missions, adding energy to positive actors and isolating the others.

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