

Factors for the Success or Failure of Stabilisation Operations

Sico van der Meer

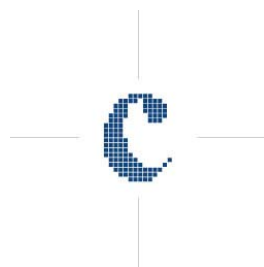
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1. Introduction

Background and aims

During the last few years, internationally operating armed forces have experienced a – at first sight – new kind of operation. Military operations in, for example, Iraq and Afghanistan are characterized by a combination of military warfare with a high level of violence, on the one hand, and reconstruction and aid activities that seem rather uncommon to the normal military tasks on the other hand. These kinds of missions, with a combination of hard (violent) and soft (reconstruction) tasks, are often called stabilisation operations or stability operations. There does not exist, however, a widely accepted definition of this kind of mission, and even about the term itself there is confusion. Next to stabilisation or stability operations, this kind of military mission is sometimes described in broader terms of military interventions or humanitarian interventions, or in more specific terms of counterinsurgency operations or even peace enforcing operations. There is also a discussion as to the ‘newness’ of these operations. Most experts agree that many examples of this kind of operation can be found in history. What may be new, however, is that these operations are becoming more common than they used to be.

Not only the definitions and characteristics of stabilisation operations are unclear, but there is also little unanimity among the military and scholars about the effectiveness of these operations. Both civil and military experts have written articles and books on this subject during the last few years, presenting research results or personal experiences that could be useful when looking at the effectiveness of stabilisation operations – or whatever these operations could be labelled. Because of the considerable amount of publications on the subject, combined with the unclear terms and definitions, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the wood from the trees. This paper aims to provide an overview of literature, thereby focusing on the factors for the success and failure of stabilisation operations from the military point of view. By comparing selected books and articles, the paper will combine the most mentioned factors that influence the success or failure of stabilisation operations and they will be listed in a table that can be used, for example, by policy makers preparing or evaluating a stabilisation operation. The paper will not only conclude by categorising the different factors, both quantitative and qualitative, but also by comparing the conclusions reached by civilian authors with those of military authors. Some remarks on the practical value of the outcomes of this research will also be made.

Definitions

Because of the mist surrounding the concept of stabilisation operations, a broad approach has been chosen in this paper: within the framework of stabilisation operations, military (humanitarian) interventions and counterinsurgency operations are also included, as well as peace operations within the higher levels of violent interaction (for example, peace enforcement). Thus the definition of stabilisation operations used here could be described as follows: Stabilisation operations are military missions that are aimed at creating stability in a certain area, stability meaning a stable, safe society with no place for insurgents, terrorists and other safety undermining elements. A specific feature of stabilisation operations is that they incorporate a certain level of violence due to resistance to the stabilisation forces by (irregular) combatants or insurgents. It is this violent character that amounts to the difference between stabilisation operations and real peace operations based on peace keeping, although the difference between stabilisation operations and peace enforcing operations is less

clear. Typical examples of stabilisation operations are the multinational military operations in Afghanistan (since 2001) and Iraq (since 2003).

When using the term ‘factors for success or failure’ in this paper, success and failure are defined as follows. Success means attaining the goals of the operation that were defined beforehand, not only in the short term (defeating the opponent) but also in the longer term (creating durable peace). Failure in this paper means an inability to attain the aims of the operation that were defined beforehand, also when the aims seem to have been attained at first sight, but when the situation subsequently deteriorates once again so that the operation proves to be ineffective after all.

Selection of literature

The literature used in this paper is very diverse. First of all, the literature chosen can be divided into literature by authors with a civilian background (for example, the analysis by Paddy Ashdown, based on his political and governing experiences) and by authors with a military background (for example, the memoirs of General Wesley Clark, in which he tries to draw lessons from his military experience). By comparing publications by civil and military authors it is examined whether there are differences between the views from a civilian or military perspective – a question that will be dealt with in the concluding section of this paper.

An even more important criterion, however, is that every selected book or article mentions several factors of influence in the success or failure of stabilisation operations. A majority of the literature on stabilisation operations deals with only one specific issue that the author considers very important. Several publications deal, for example, with the importance of a well written doctrine or the necessity of certain kinds of command structures. In this study, these publications have not been taken into account. Instead of publications dealing in detail with one aspect of stabilisation operations, this paper only makes use of literature that contains observations on potential factors of success or failure in general. The article by Erwin A. Schmidl, for example, is a summarizing analysis concluding a special issue of the journal *Small Wars and Insurgencies* on ‘The Future of Peace Operations’. The same

is true of the article by Rod Thornton, which concludes a special issue of *Contemporary Security Policy*, entitled 'Confronting Insurgencies'. Both articles provide a more general analysis in which the other articles in these special issues, that focus on specific factors, are brought together.

Of course also the definition of the term stabilisation operations, as described above, has been an important criterion when selecting the literature. Although several of the selected books and articles do not address stabilisation operations specifically, but focus on military interventions, counterinsurgency operations or modern warfare in general, they still offer implicit or explicit factors for the success or failure of military operations that can be characterized as stabilisation operations.

To ensure that only up to date insights are incorporated in this study, only books and articles that have been published in the 21st century are used.

Last but not least, it should be acknowledged that only publications in the English language have been selected, which also means that most authors and views are Western. Of course it would be very interesting to include non-Western views, but due to practical reasons this has not been done. The same argument can be made for the amount of literature that is used. Although it would be very interesting to include more books and articles, within the limits of this paper the selection of eighteen publications that has here been made seems to offer a good cross-section of the literature available. The books and articles that are used are listed in the bibliography of this paper.

Research method

The comparison of the selected literature was done by the following method. First, every publication was examined as to what factors for success or failure are mentioned. Next, all the factors mentioned were listed in a table, which can be found as Appendix 1 at the end of this paper. This table not only presents an overview of which publication has mentioned which factor, but it also shows in how many publications each factor is mentioned. It must be noted that all factors mentioned have been translated in a rather general wording. This

made it possible to compare the often different phrasing for the same factor more easily. Factors for success or failure that were mentioned by less than three authors are not incorporated in the table. The reason for this was to prevent too many factors – even with this minimum requirement of a factor being mentioned on three occasions the table already contains 22 different factors.

On the basis of the number of publications mentioning each factor, a ranking is made. The most mentioned factors for success or failure are at the top of the list. Of course, counting when a factor is mentioned is not the same as the weight that authors attach to a certain factor. It is for example possible that several authors mention a certain factor, but only give it secondary importance, but because that factor is mentioned by several authors it climbs the ranking list compared to primary factors that are mentioned less often. Nevertheless, the number of times mentioned shows an agreement within the group of authors that the factor could be of influence for the success or failure of stabilisation operations. In the sections dealing with the separate factors in the list, the assessments made by authors are explained in more detail.

Structure

The structure of this paper is as follows. In 22 sections, the 22 most mentioned factors for the success or failure of stabilisation operations will be presented. The ‘ranking’ of the factors determines the sequence of the sections: the most mentioned factors are at the beginning, the least mentioned ones will be dealt with in the last sections. After describing these factors, the paper ends with a section entitled ‘Observations and Conclusions’. In this section the various factors will be categorised from both a quantitative and thematic point of view. This section will also investigate whether there are differences to be found between the authors with a civilian background and authors with a military background. Last but not least, the results of the paper will be assessed as to their practical usefulness. Could the results of this study be useful to (military) policy makers and planners when preparing for a possible stabilisation operation?

2. The Factors

In this section all 22 factors for the success or failure of stabilisation operations will be presented. The number of publications mentioning each factor determines the sequence of the sections: the first sections deal with the most mentioned factors and the least mentioned ones will be described in the last sections.

Factor 1: Combination of Military and Civil Efforts

Twelve of the eighteen publications mention the combination of military and civil efforts as an important factor for the success or failure of stabilisation operations. This factor is thus the most mentioned one in the selection of literature that was used for this research.

Lahneman, for example, states that ‘essentially, there is no military solution to the problem, only a military dimension.’ He argues that military interventions like in Afghanistan and Iraq have proven that military action is a tactic rather than a strategy. ‘While these efforts have a military dimension, they also possess political, economic, legal and civil aspects.’ (Lahneman 184). Thornton is also convinced that,

when they are successful, the military component of stabilisation operations is only one of a series of components – including political, diplomatic, economic and psychological components. (Thornton 213).

Rupert Smith also states that military force can only be effective when it is applied as part of a greater scheme, in which military, political and economic levers focus on the same goal (Rupert Smith 399). In this regard, he warns that military success is only a part of the overall success. 'It must always be remembered that the political objective and the military strategic objective are not the same, and never are the same: the military strategic objective is achieved by military force whilst the political objective is achieved as a result of the military success.' (Rupert Smith 12).

Most authors who mention the necessity of combining military and civil efforts point to the root causes of the problems that provide the need for any stabilisation operation. As Joshua Smith writes: 'It is important to remember that internal conflict is fundamentally a political, economic and social problem and that true conflict resolution requires solutions that address these root causes. While military intervention may succeed in temporarily stopping the fighting and suppressing violence, this does not equate to conflict resolution.' (Joshua Smith 6).

Seybolt also argues that humanitarian intervention has a far greater possibility of being successful in the long term when the military efforts are accompanied by political, economic and social efforts. 'Without long-term resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation, a country is likely to fall back into war.' (Seybolt 277).

A question raised by some authors is who is responsible for the coordination of military and civil efforts. Most authors point to the political level in this respect. Lahneman, for example, criticizes policymakers for often being too unwilling to match the ambitious goals of interventions with adequate resources. (Lahneman 178-179). Clark, in turn, also strongly criticizes the political decision level in his book. It is this political level that is responsible for clear, realistic aims, as well as for the attention given to the integration of military and civil activities. Moreover, he writes, political leaders 'must understand the limits of what can be done with military efforts alone'. When the military level is expected to take into account the higher political

considerations for the requested military effort, the political level should be clear about these considerations towards the military. (Clark, for example, 458).

Rothstein, however, argues that both the political and military leaders must understand the potentials and limitations of the military instrument – thus indicating a shared responsibility in the coordination of civil and military efforts. (Rothstein 172).

It may be too clear to be mentioned, but because the military instrument should always be part of a larger packet of efforts, military force should not be used too readily. As Connaughton puts it: ‘Military intervention is the last resort of a collective security machine.’ (Connaughton 80). This is also why the military instrument should always be used with political authority and why the political effects of using it should always be well analyzed. (Kurth 89, Cohen 50).

Factor 2: Clear Objectives or ‘End State’

The second ranked factor for the success or failure of stabilisation operations is mentioned on eleven occasions in the publications used for this study. This factor is summarized here as having clear objectives or – in military terms – a clear ‘end state’. The core of this factor is knowing beforehand what the goals of the military operation are. By having clear objectives, it is also possible to determine the circumstances in which the military operation can end and the military can return home.

A staunch supporter of the importance of having clear objectives is Clark. He states that clear, realistic aims are ‘essential’. It is the political level that is responsible for the overall aims, not the military. The armed forces must know beforehand what the political aims of the operation are – and of course, Clark states, these aims should be ‘sound’ and ‘achievable’. This is also why the political level must be aware of the possibilities and limitations of the military instrument. (Clark 458).

Seybolt is also of the opinion that clear objectives are of great importance: ‘The question how to intervene with a reasonable prospect of success is essentially a question of strategy. As a general

concept, strategy is the process of selecting goals and choosing appropriate means to achieve them. What is the objective of the intervention and what must be done to achieve it?' Before launching any military intervention, he writes, policy makers have to ask themselves three important questions: 'What is the distinct objective? What military strategies can achieve the objective? What are the material and political requirements of those strategies?' (Seybolt 269).

'A sound initial plan, possessed of a clear vision of end-state objectives' is even considered by Cavaleri as being the 'key to immediate and long-term success during stability operations'. He warns, however, that such a plan should not be static. Flexibility is necessary and the plan should always be open to adaptations because of changing situations during the operation. (Cavaleri 37).

Lahneman also points to the importance of 'setting appropriate goals and developing realistic exit strategies'. He, in turn, warns that any effective exit strategy must address both military as well as non-military aspects of the situation in the operation area. (Lahneman 178-179). De Wijk, Fraticelli and Carafano also mention the importance of clear, concrete and realistic objectives (De Wijk 249, Fraticelli 54, Carafano 5). Connaughton uses the term 'end game', which he explains as the 'plan for the force extraction at the same time as the force insertion', and Ashdown uses the word 'destination' when talking about the goals of a mission. (Connaughton 80, Ashdown 5-8).

Thornton, finally, does not mention clear objectives as a possible factor for success or failure as such, but he implicitly makes a marginal but interesting note on the subject. He warns that setting a date of departure may decrease a military operation's possibility of success. An end state should be defined in substance (leaving when X has been reached), not in time (leaving after X months or years). By setting an end date in time instead of substance, the opponents will realize that time is on their side and they will try to slow down the military operation as much as possible and simply wait until the set date. (Thornton 213).

Factor 3: Long-Term Commitment

Ten out of the eighteen publications used in this study mention long-term commitment as an important factor in considering the potential success or failure of stabilisation operations. 'If you can't stay the course, don't go in', summarizes Cavaleri. He calls 'time' a key resource, observing that during stabilisation operations usually 'the issues at play are more complex, difficult to resolve, and resource-intensive than previously imagined.' (Cavaleri 34). Joshua Smith states that 'the need for a long-term commitment to rebuild shattered states is vital' and 'is likely the most determinant factor to whether an operation qualifies as successful [...] or a failure.' (Joshua Smith 22-23).

Schmidl even mentions 'the willingness to stay committed as long as it takes' as 'one of the main conditions *sine qua non* of a successful outcome of any intervention'. He argues that the composition of a military mission may change over the years from a more robust 'fighting operation' to a peace mission focussing on civilian, police and economic aspects, but nevertheless these kinds of military operations require a long-term commitment. Setting an end date for these operations at an early stage is not possible. (Schmidl 202).

Both Thornton and Cohen agree with Schmidl's remark on the difficulty of setting an end date for the operation. Thornton emphasizes the need for patience in stabilisation operations. 'Speed is not a virtue', he writes, 'It is, indeed, counter-productive.' (Thornton 219). An effective strategy is time-consuming and when the intervening forces determine a point of departure beforehand, it is a sign for their opponents that they lack commitment. (Thornton 213). Cohen also warns that insurgents are strengthened by the knowledge that within a few years the intervening forces might again abandon the area. He emphasizes the need for 'constant reaffirmations of commitment backed by deeds' to bolster the belief of the local population in the survivability of the government that is backed by the intervening forces. When the population knows that the intervening forces will leave after a certain date, and is not sure that the government will survive this departure, there is no reason to support this government or the foreign troops linked to it. (Cohen 51).

Seybolt, Fraticelli and Mockaitis also mention the importance of a long-term commitment. (Seybolt 277, Fraticeli 54, Mockaitis 51-52). What is exactly meant by 'long-term' is in general not determined, however, although some authors mention 'several years'. Ashdown is clearer in this respect: he thinks in decades. The 'most important lesson', as he calls it, is that 'building things up takes much longer than knocking them down. [...] Winning the high tech war may take weeks. But winning the peace that follows is measured in decades.' This is why he also argues that intervening forces should avoid setting deadlines. His advice is 'staying on, and sticking to it, long after the CNN effect has passed.' (Ashdown 8).

Last but not least, Lahneman also emphasizes the need for long-term commitment. Intervening troops might need to stay for years. That is why he gives the following warning: 'In particular, one should be wary when the argument is made that a particular military intervention will be a short, tidy affair with few or no linkages to political, social, and economic conditions within the country that is a candidate for intervention.' (Lahneman 187-191)

Factor 4: Many (Ground) Forces

A relatively often mentioned factor is also the need for the employment of many forces. Most authors in this regard explicitly mean ground forces – often the term 'boots on the ground' is used.

Hammes, to start with, considers that large infantry and military police units are necessary in stabilisation operations because of the need to secure and pacify the operation area – not only the heavily populated areas, but also the more remote areas. He adds that although these forces must have protected mobility at their disposal, they should primarily operate on foot. Only in this way will they be able to operate effectively. (Hammes 262-263).

Clark also states that 'flexible, agile ground forces are required, along with strategic transport to deploy and sustain them. And, in the final analysis, boots on the ground are more likely to be decisive in the long term.' (Clark 440-441). Kurth is of the same opinion. He argues that only ground forces are able to defeat the local military or militias that cause the problems in the operation area. (Kurth 95).

How much ‘many’ really means is difficult to measure. De Wijk states that ‘too much force is usually better than too little’. (De Wijk 258-259). Mockaitis, in turn, is rather far-reaching in his analysis of the amount of ground forces required. He argues that ‘it takes tens of thousands of soldiers to defeat thousands or even hundreds of insurgents.’ He also offers a solution as to how to have so much military available: ‘The need for large numbers of boots on the ground also suggests the desirability of keeping indigenous security forces in being when occupying a country, no matter what some of its members may have done in the past.’ (Mockaitis 52-53).

A somewhat different approach is offered by Thornton. He also emphasizes the need for many ground forces, and acknowledges the difficulty of having so many intervening forces available. Like Thornton, he suggests that indigenous forces are needed to assist the foreign troops in fighting the insurgents. Instead of retaining the existing armed forces in the operation area untouched, however, he is in favour of newly recruiting indigenous forces for this purpose. (Thornton 217-219).

The viewpoints of Fraticelli, Lahneman, Ashdown and Seybolt correspond with the arguments mentioned above. They also emphasize the importance of employing overwhelming, or at least credible, force in the operation area. (Fraticelli 2, Lahneman 181, Ashdown 6, Seybolt 269-274).

Factor 5: Unity of Effort

Unity of effort or, as defined by De Wijk: ‘the synchronization of all means and all efforts to reach an objective’, is mentioned as a factor for success and failure in eight of the eighteen publications used for this paper. (De Wijk 249). The concept of ‘unity of effort’ is sometimes also called, or combined with, ‘unity in command’.

Carafano attaches a great deal of value to the factor unity of effort. When talking about governmental actors (both military and civilian) he is rather clear: ‘Despite the multiplicity of actors, a single agency or headquarters must command the operations.’ There are no misunderstandings either about who should take the lead in such headquarters: military commanders or civilian administrators. ‘The

military should remain in charge', he states. (Carafano 6). On the other hand, he acknowledges that this military lead headquarters are only useable to attain unity of effort for the governmental actors. Talking about unity of command or unity of effort among governmental and non-governmental actors is 'senseless' or even 'unreasonable', he argues. Creating a 'common space', however, in which governmental and non-governmental actors confer and coordinate their activities, should be stimulated. (Carafano 4).

'Connecting with joint, interagency, coalition and indigenous organizations is important to ensuring that objectives are shared and that actions and messages are synchronized. The resulting synergy is essential for effective counterinsurgency', Cohen writes. He recognizes, however, that this is not that easy to accomplish. Communication and liaison between the military and civil actors are the best tools to improve the standing of this factor. (Cohen 50).

Some authors who point to the need for unity of effort claim that this is best accomplished during operations that are led by one particular state – a 'lead country' (Seybolt 270-274) – or when the operation is completely executed by one state without interference from any other states. (De Wijk 252, Kurth 92). This subject is also dealt with while discussing factor 10 of this study: Multilateral Action.

Unity of effort is also considered important by some other authors, who do not always explain their thoughts on this factor in a very detailed manner. (Ashdown 5-8, Clark 424, Cavaleri 35, Lahneman 171, Fraticelli 1).

Factor 6: Reconstruction Activities

To make a stabilisation operation a success, a military victory alone is not enough. In eight publications the need for long-term stability after the military victory is emphasized – and this is why reconstruction activities in the operation area are necessary. Next to the core business of the military, they should also pay attention to reconstruction activities in the economic, social and political spheres of the community in which they are intervening. These reconstruction activities should be started as early as possible, which means that they should already be part of the military planning phase from the earliest

stage. Civil-military co-operation is often considered to be a useful instrument to improve the effectiveness of reconstruction activities, although some authors see an increased role for so-called Civil Affairs Units within the armed forces.

Seybolt, to start with, argues that military intervention is useless without any reconstruction of the political, economic and social systems of the country in which the intervention takes place. A military victory is not a guarantee for stability, but when combined with reconstruction activities the possibility of success considerably increases. (Seybolt 277). Lahneman shares this view. Creating stability cannot be done by military activities alone; a combination with civil (read: reconstruction) activities is necessary. (Lahneman 166, 183).

Ashdown is also of the opinion that in order to be successful, reconstruction activities are needed. 'It is vital to start as quickly as possible on the major structural reforms – from putting in place a customs service or reliable tax base, to reforming the police and the civil service, to restructuring and screening the judiciary, to transforming the armed forces, and above all to pushing the structural changes that will restart the economy.' (Ashdown 5-8).

Both Carafano and Cohen also mention the importance of reconstruction activities. Carafano in this regard focuses on 'restoring basic public services such as water, power, waste management, and public safety.' Cohen states more broadly that 'lasting victory will come from a vibrant economy, political participation, and restored hope.' (Carafano 6, Cohen 52).

The importance of (especially economic) reconstruction activities is also emphasized by Cavaleri. He points to the necessity of including the planning for reconstruction activities in the military planning process as early as possible so as to prevent the possibility that a military operation will start without having thought about this more civil and long-term aspect of the operation. Reconstruction is not a simple task, he states: 'Commanders and planners must weigh many factors when determining the most appropriate course of action for economic reconstruction and stability.' (Cavaleri 36).

Mockaitis and Hammes also mention the need for reconstruction activities. They both advocate the employment of specialized Civil

Affairs Units within the intervening armed forces. 'Tasked with spearheading rebuilding and community-relations efforts at the local level, they need both excellent infantry training and a host of practical skills', explains Mockaitis. (Mockaitis 53-55, Hammes 263). Schmidl, on the other hand, argues that the importance of reconstruction activities mostly requires better cooperation with civil actors. (Schmidl 202).

One more interesting detail that is emphasized by Mockaitis should be mentioned here. He wonders why the political level of reconstruction efforts is often overemphasized compared to the social and economic level. With the 2003 intervention in Iraq in mind, he states: 'Overemphasis on building political institutions, perhaps at the expense of rebuilding critical infrastructure during the first phase of the occupation hurt rather than helped the coalition cause. No election can take the place of basic necessities.' An important lesson for reconstruction activities, he writes, is that the interveners must consider what the people in the operation area actually want – which may be quite different from what the interveners in first instance were planning to give them. (Mockaitis 53).

Factor 7: Legitimacy

A factor that is also mentioned by many of the authors is the legitimacy of the military operation. A lack of legitimacy may result in several disadvantages regarding the operation's chances of success. First of all, the international community will be less supportive of both the military operation and the civil reconstruction activities that are connected thereto. This may not only be the case on the level of governments and international organisations, but also on the level of non-governmental organisations and the media. Second, there is a lesser possibility that the intervening military forces will receive support from the local population in the operation area. Last but not least, a lack of legitimacy may have a negative influence on the morale of the military themselves, which in turn may decrease their effectiveness.

Support from the international community, not only from important states but also from international organisations, is 'vital' for the success of any stabilisation operation, Ashdown claims. 'Even more crucial',

however, is that the population of the country in which is intervened considers the operation to be legitimate. When the local population, including political, economic and social leaders, consider the military operation to be illegitimate, the risk that the operation will become a failure considerably increases. (Ashdown 7). His vision is underlined by Cavaleri. He considers legitimacy to be ‘critical to the long-term success of any stability operation’, because it contributes most directly to the allegiance of the population and thus the achievement of sustainable peace and stability. (Cavaleri 33 & 37).

Most authors who mention legitimacy as a factor of influence relate the importance of the factor to support by the international community and the local population that are both considered necessary for success. (Rothstein 170, Cohen 49, Fraticelli 51, Lahneman 173, Carafano 5). De Wijk is the only author who also makes a link between the legitimacy of the operation and the morale of the intervening military. A lack of legitimacy will have a negative influence on support – both political and public – for the operation on the home front of the military. This may lead to a low belief in the cause they are fighting for, which in turn may make them risk-averse and less effective. (De Wijk 257-258).

The only author who points to a reverse relation between legitimacy and effectiveness is Kurth. ‘Judging by recent history, there may be something of a trade-off between the legitimacy and the efficacy of an intervention’, he writes. He considers the United Nations to be the most legitimate political authority to decide upon a military intervention, but also ‘the least efficacious one’. ‘Conversely’, he continues, ‘the political authority with the greatest efficacy, in the sense of being able to decide upon and authorize an intervention quickly and coherently, is the government of a particular nation-state with modern, standing, expeditionary (overseas) military forces, probably the United States, Britain, France, Australia, or Canada. [...] Thus, the most efficacious political authority is also likely to be the least legitimate one.’ (Kurth 90).

Factor 8: Political Courage and Commitment

Several authors consider courage and commitment on the political level as an important factor for success on the military level. Most of

these authors do not merely mention this factor, but also attach a great deal of value to it. Political courage and commitment may, however, have different connotations: courage in accepting risks (for example, casualties among one's own military), courage in leaving the military work to the military (politicians should not meddle with operational details), courage in placing enough human, materiel, and financial resources at the disposal of the operational command, and courage in starting a military operation without setting a clear end date beforehand.

Kurth, for example, argues that political courage and commitment contributes a great deal to the success of a military intervention. Even when all other factors for success or failure are met, 'the intervention will fail if political decision makers are feckless', he states. In this regard, he gives the example of the United States intervention in Somalia in the 1990s, in which the administration of President Clinton did not have the courage to risk many American lives, which culminated in a suddenly terminated and thus largely failed military intervention. (Kurth 92).

In the words of Seybolt, political courage and commitment are 'crucial' to the success of the humanitarian intervention. He explicitly refers to political courage as 'accepting the costs in "blood and treasure" of military action'. 'If a government does not have the political will to devote substantial military capabilities and to risk its soldiers' lives, it should not choose a challenging type of intervention, even if the needs on the ground warrant it. The chance of success in a challenging type of intervention while acting "on the cheap" is low'. (Seybolt 270-276).

Schmidl also considers this factor to be highly important. For him, however, political commitment especially means 'the willingness to stay committed as long as it takes'. (Schmidl 202). In this regard, his view is similar to that of Thornton. Thornton, who states that 'a campaign-winning strategy is time-consuming [and] requires much patience and [...] perseverance', considers political commitment to be especially important with regard to the time that is needed to end an operation successfully. Setting a point of departure for the troops in the operation area is therefore not favourable; it shows the opponent that the intervening forces lack the commitment to stay as long as it

takes, so they will only have to wait and survive until this set end date of the operation has come. (Thornton 213).

De Wijk is also very clear about the need for political courage: 'If the intervener is not willing to take risks, and consequently accept casualties, the operation is doomed to fail. [...] There is a clear link between risk-taking and the success of an intervention.' (De Wijk 245-248). Closely linked to this political courage in taking risks is De Wijk's view on collateral damage. He advocates the need for accepting higher levels of collateral damage than is often the case nowadays (see factor 13 for more information on this). 'This could require tough and unpopular decisions, which are hard to explain to the general public, especially in those states with political cultures that reject the use of force. Only strong, visionary leaders will be able to explain why military force must be used.' (De Wijk 255-256).

Joshua Smith has more or less the same opinion. He states that intervening forces must not be afraid of taking sides in a conflict with several parties, and to make defeating the combatants the main goal of the intervention. The intervening forces need to make use of decisive force to attain this goal. 'While this strategy has several drawbacks, such as significant risks of casualties, high costs, and a likely increase in short-term violence, there are several benefits that recommend it as a successful strategy'. (Joshua Smith 13). He also acknowledges, however, that using this force is often impossible 'due to a lack of political will and/or concern over casualties to domestic soldiers'. (Joshua Smith 21).

Last but not least, Clark points to yet another part of the courage that is required at the political level. He is not only of the opinion that politicians should have the courage to leave the operational details of the military operation to the military themselves, but he also states that political courage is needed regarding the search for a political solution in the long term. To prevent a stabilisation operation from continuing forever, politicians have to find the courage to make difficult choices. In this respect, Clark mentions the case of Kosovo: as long as there is no clear final-status determination in Kosovo, military involvement will be necessary, and no one knows how long this will continue. (Clark 458).

Factor 9: Early Intervention

When somewhere in the world a situation emerges that eventually could result in the need for a stabilisation operation, this operation's chances of success considerably increase when it is started as quick as possible. Seybolt, for example, mentions 'speed' as an important factor for success. Although he recognizes that the use of force will always be a last resort and that peaceful tools like diplomacy should be used first to solve the situation that may eventually require military action, delaying the decision to intervene militarily may seriously decrease the chances of success. (Seybolt 269-270).

De Wijk also warns against waiting too long before deciding to use military means. 'Political decision makers tend to see force as a last resort, after diplomatic initiatives and sanctions have failed', he writes. 'But waiting until other policies have failed could be counterproductive and preclude the effective use of force.' De Wijk especially highlights the countermeasures that the adversaries could prepare when the decision to intervene takes too much time. Clearly, a prepared adversary will cause much more problems for military interveners than a surprised adversary. (De Wijk 249)

Early action is called a 'key lesson' by Clark. Both statesmen and military leaders should move early to deal with crisis situations that may be solved by military action, because 'delay raises both the costs and the risks'. (Clark 423). Joshua Smith considers a timely response to be 'a vital component to the success of the operation' and Hammes also emphasizes the need for 'arriving in the theatre rapidly'. (Joshua Smith 21, Hammes 262).

Lahneman, who also states that a delay in military intervention may be a factor which makes the operation less effective, advocates better early warning mechanisms for international crises. 'Better early warning would give policy makers more time to debate the merits of a proposed intervention and deal with the various domestic hurdles to intervention.' (Lahneman 168).

Kurth, finally, points to the trade-off between the legitimacy and the speed of the military operation. While he argues that the decision on an intervention should be taken quickly in order to be most effective, legitimacy ideally comes from the United Nations that cannot be

characterized as the quickest organisation in terms of decision making. The quickest interventions are those exercised by particular states that do not wait for the outcomes of international political decision-making processes. (Kurth 90-92).

All authors who mention early intervention as a factor for success seem to consider it mainly as a political issue. The military are able to start a stabilisation operation rather quickly, but the hurdles in political decision-making processes are a delaying factor. How these political processes could be improved in terms of speed remains rather unclear. Kurth argues that unilateral decisions to intervene make quick military operations possible, but he also acknowledges that this way of operating decreases the operation's level of legitimacy – which is also an important factor of success. Maybe the factor of early intervention may be linked to the factor of political courage and commitment: politicians should have the courage to decide with more speed on the need for military action when political tools to resolve international crises seem to be ineffective. But again, this kind of quick decision may decrease the legitimacy of the operation.

Factor 10: Multilateral Action

Several authors argue that stabilisation operations may be most effective when conducted by one state with a capable military organisation. By acting in an unilateral fashion, problems like slowness, a lack of unity of effort, and non-flexibility will be prevented. Nevertheless, only one author really recommends unilateral action as a factor for success. No less than seven authors prefer multilateral action, even though they see several disadvantages therein.

This apparent contradiction is well explained by Ashdown. It is true that one powerful nation can win a war, he acknowledges. But modern warfare, like a stabilisation operation, is not only about war but mostly about what comes after the war: 'winning the peace', as he calls it. For a long-term victory, in the sense of stabilising a war-torn country by providing security and reconstruction, broad international cooperation is needed. In this regard he not only advocates cooperation between many nations, but also working in close partnership with international agencies and NGOs. (Ashdown 6).

Lahneman also argues that the reconstruction phase of a military intervention, which he describes as ‘nation building’, is too difficult to manage for one state party. ‘Many hands lighten the load, many minds produce more constructive ideas than only a few, and many partners reduce the burden of an intervention’s expense.’ To make a military intervention a success, he advocates composing ‘a coalition of willing states’, preferably supported by and in cooperation with the United Nations. (Lahneman 184-188). Mockaitis and Fraticelli mention the same aspect: stabilisation operations are too complex to be conducted by a single state. Despite all the problems that arise from working multilaterally, sharing the burden seems inevitable when making such an operation a success. (Mockaitis 52, Fraticelli 51-54).

Both Seybolt and Joshua Smith are also in favour of a multinational approach. Acknowledging the difficulties that will arise from this, they advocate the appointment of a ‘lead nation’ within the coalition. This lead country should assure the overall direction and the unity of command within the operation. (Seybolt 270-274, Joshua Smith 20-21). Connaughton and Ashdown, who also see multilateral action as increasing the possibility of success, do not specifically mention the concept of a lead nation. They both warn, however, that within the multilateral coalition a great deal of effort has to be put into maintaining consensus. (Connaughton 80, Ashdown 6).

De Wijk has mixed feelings about the factor of multilateral action. On the one hand, he acknowledges that operating within a coalition could enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the operation. On the other hand, he argues that coalition warfare will undermine the ‘key principle’ of unity of effort. All in all, he seems – maybe somewhat hesitatingly – to be in favour of multilateral action. (De Wijk 252-254).

The only author in this literature selection who clearly defines multilateral action as a factor that decreases the chances of success of stabilisation operations is Kurth. He highlights several cases of successful military interventions that were all conducted by the armed forces of one particular state. Not every state is capable of conducting a military intervention unilaterally, he admits. Possible successful actors, however, may be nation states ‘with modern, standing, expeditionary (overseas) military forces, probably the United States, Britain, France, Australia, or Canada’. By operating unilaterally, he argues, a military intervention can be undertaken ‘decisively and

quickly, and executed with focus, persistence, and effectiveness.’ (Kurth 90-92).

Factor 11: ‘Hearts and Minds’

Winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the local population in the operation area is considered to be a factor for the success or failure of stabilisation operations in six of the publications used for this literature comparison. Although six may seem to be a relatively small number, all of the authors mentioning this factor attach a great deal of value to it.

Rupert Smith, to start with, argues that winning the hearts and minds of the local population is a key factor to success. Modern warfare, he writes, is characterized by fighting an ‘invisible’ enemy that is hiding amongst the people. It is crucial, however, to realize that ‘the people are not the enemy’. The best way to defeat the insurgents, Smith points out, is ‘to differentiate between the enemy and the people, and to win the latter over to you’. As soon as this differentiation is not effectively made, the people will turn to see the intervening military as their enemy. Once this has happened, making a success of the operation will become almost impossible. (Rupert Smith, 267-370).

In line with Rupert Smith, Cohen also states that the population is a key factor in ending an insurgency. Isolating the insurgents from their cause and support is the best way to stabilize the operation area because ‘cutting an insurgency off to die on the vine is easier than it is to kill every insurgent’. The best way to decrease the support for the insurgents is ‘redressing the grievances that fuel the insurgency’. Moreover, Cohen warns that in order to win hearts and minds it is best to use the minimum possible force within the military operation: ‘Mounting an operation that kills 5 insurgents is futile if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of 50 more.’ (Cohen 50-51).

Rothstein, who also advocates winning the support of the local population, offers several recommendations that could be helpful in this. Like Cohen, he also believes in undermining the causes of the insurgency. He therefore recommends ‘demonstrating integrity and competence of government to represent and serve the needs of the people’. In this regard, he also advises to ‘take political initiative to

root out and visibly punish corruption and eliminate grievances'. It is however important that the intervening forces are not themselves seen as the (only) ones that bring stability. Rothstein considers it necessary to 'visibly identify the central government with local political / economic / social reform in order to connect the government with hopes and needs of people, thereby gaining their support and confirming government legitimacy'. Rothstein also agrees with Cohen that using violence towards the insurgents should be limited as much as possible. He recommends 'capture and conversion to the government cause instead of focussing on "body count"'. (Rothstein 170).

Cavaleri and Mockaitis also mention the importance of winning hearts and minds. In this regard, they both point to the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity among the intervening military. Without any knowledge of local norms and customs it will become quite difficult to win the support of the population. (Cavaleri 35, Mockaitis 54). Next to this, Mockaitis criticizes the focus on political institution building during stabilisation operations in the recent past. The intervening parties must consider what the people in the operation area actually want, instead of giving them aid that they do not need. An overemphasis on building political institutions instead of providing basic necessities should be prevented. (Mockaitis 53). Last but not least, he also warns against the use of too much force, as well as too much force protection. 'A healthier balance between force protection and mission goals also could improve relations with the local population. Flak jackets, helmets, and goggles offer some protection, but they can impede building good community relations, which may offer even greater security.' (Mockaitis 55-56).

Winning the hearts and minds of the local population is also highly valued by Thornton. In line with Mockaitis, he also urges intervening parties to take into account the wishes of the people. 'If the roads are not built, if the hospitals remain decrepit and the sewage not removed, then the gathering of hearts and minds will prove impossible', he states. What people in general want most of all, he thinks, is security. Without security people cannot live normally. To provide security, it is vital that military force is always well targeted and will cause as little collateral damage as possible. Collateral damage may create the image, in the view of the people, of the intervening

military as part of the problem instead of the solution to the problem. (Thornton 212-219).

Thornton also clearly describes why winning the hearts and minds is so important for the success of the stabilisation operation. 'If hearts and minds are won then the ready concomitant should be that a wealth of intelligence sources are made available. [...] A virtuous circle is thus established. The intelligence provided allows for the more targeted use of military violence. This then reduces both collateral damage and threats to security and helps win hearts and minds. With hearts and minds won, more intelligence is generated.' (Thornton 213).

Apart from the factor 'Hearts and Minds' some authors also mention factors like 'reconstruction activities' and 'providing security for the local population'. Although these factors could eventually be considered as a subcategory of 'Hearts and Minds', in this paper it has been chosen to discuss them in separate sections (see Factors 6 and 13).

Factor 12: Education and Training

Education and the training of the military involved in stabilisation operations are mentioned in several publications as a factor of influence for the success of these operations. This factor can be split into two subcategories: enhancing the cultural awareness of the intervening military on the one hand, and general training to be prepared for the spectrum of different tasks that the military will be confronted with during a stabilisation operation on the other.

Three authors emphasize 'formalized predeployment intercultural education and training', as Mockaitis calls it. 'Basic knowledge of local norms and customs can prevent a lot of ill will in an occupied country', he writes. (Mockaitis 54). Cavaleri even argues that enhancing the cultural awareness of the military is one of the most important factors for success: 'Informed, adaptive situational understanding at all levels of a stability operation is a key combat multiplier in the fight for a sustainable peace'. (Cavaleri 35). Carafano is also of the opinion that 'understanding the country' by the intervening military is an important principle to make the operation a success. (Carafano 6).

Five authors mention the factor of education and training in a broader context. They argue that conducting stabilisation operations requires different skills than regular warfare for which most military are trained. Stabilisation operations take place ‘amongst the people’, and it is important to gain and retain their support (see Factor 11: ‘Hearts and Minds’). That is why only training in military skills is not enough – although several authors also point out the need for ‘excellent infantry training’ during stabilisation operations. The military should be educated and trained in practical skills to make contact with the population, to win their hearts and minds, and to conduct reconstruction activities. Moreover, the decentralization of the decision processes (see Factor 18: Decentralization of Command) requires extra training to enable the military to operate in small units. These small units will be confronted with difficult situations in which long communication lines in receiving orders are not always workable, so the military up to the lowest organizational level should be trained to be able to take difficult decisions themselves. (Thornton 217-219, Hammes 282, Fraticelli 54, Cohen 51-52, Mockaitis 54-57).

Factor 13: Providing Security for the Local Population

Closely related to Factor 11, ‘Hearts and Minds’, is this factor of providing security for the local population. In six publications this factor is mentioned as positively influencing the chances of success. One author, however, has an opposite opinion and sees this factor as increasing the risk of the operation ending in failure.

Cohen, to start with, sees security for the population as the ‘cornerstone’ of any effort. ‘Without security, no permanent reforms can be implemented, and disorder will spread’, he argues. In this regard, he also warns that causing collateral damage has a negative effect on the security of the local population. The intervening forces should therefore use the minimum force possible during the operation in order to prevent collateral damage. (Cohen 50-51).

Security is a factor which is ‘critical to the long-term success of any stabilisation operation’, argues Cavaleri. Providing a secure environment for the local population is necessary to rebuild the country to a viable state. ‘If the local populace is afraid to venture out to conduct business, or work, or vote, the legitimacy of the

government and law-enforcement apparatus is in question.’ (Cavaleri 33-37).

Thornton even advocates an ‘effort that needs to concentrate more on ways of providing security than on ways of eliminating opponents’. Only by providing security will the interveners win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the people. In turn, the people will provide the intervening forces with intelligence about their opponents which makes it possible to operate in a more targeted and effective manner. In this way a vicious circle is started, as is described under Factor 11 (Hearts and Minds). On the other hand, he warns that insurgents often try to provoke intervening forces ‘to use their force inappropriately so that it becomes clear that the practitioners of counter-insurgency are not providing security for the general populace’. As soon as the insurgents come to be seen as the threat to security they will be denied support by the population, but the same will happen concerning the intervening forces when they cause too much collateral damage and thus come to be seen as also being a threat to security. (Thornton 212-219).

Ashdown, Carafano, Rupert Smith, and Clark consider security for the local population to be also important, and link this factor mostly to police activities. Ashdown regards ‘establishing the rule of law’ as ‘the over-riding priority’. He writes: ‘Crime and corruption follow swiftly in the footsteps of war, like a deadly virus. And if the rule of law is not established very swiftly, it does not take long before criminality infects every corner of its host, siphoning off the funds for reconstruction, obstructing the process of stabilisation and corrupting every attempt to create decent government and a healthy civil society.’ (Ashdown 5-8). Both Carafano and Rupert Smith agree that establishing some sort of rule of law is necessary to create the circumstances for a successful economic and political reconstruction of the operation area. (Carafano 5, Rupert Smith 378-379). Clark is also of the same opinion, advocating the deployment of ‘robust police-type capabilities’ to offer security on the level that ‘most militaries are simply not capable of performing’. Factor 19 in this paper will devote more attention to this argument of deploying separate police forces.

It should be mentioned, however, that one author considers security for the local population not as a possible factor which increases the success of stabilisation operations, but on the contrary as a factor that may increase the risk of failure. De Wijk states that during military

operations ‘it could be necessary to accept higher levels of collateral damage in order to achieve a higher degree of military effectiveness’. ‘Limiting collateral damage’, he explains, ‘may not always be possible, and is sometimes undesirable. First, in unconventional conflicts the distinction between combatants and non-combatants is very difficult. Thus, the intervener may have no other choice but to inflict “unacceptable” levels of collateral damage in achieving his object. Second, for military reasons, limiting collateral damage could be counterproductive because it might decrease the tempo of the operation, thereby leaving the initiative to the adversary. Third, limiting collateral damage could preclude a limited strategy of attrition.’ (De Wijk 255-256).

Factor 14: Cooperation with Civil Organisations

Five authors consider cooperation between military and civil organisations as a factor for success or failure. Thornton argues that the input of non-military organisations is ‘vital’ for the success of the operation. He uses the term ‘multi-agency approach’ for the close cooperation between the armed forces, intelligence services, government departments, international agencies and non-governmental organisations. (Thornton 218).

Both Cohen and Carafano also consider cooperation with civil organisations to be important for obtaining synergy advantages. It has to be taken into account, however, that there will be some level of coordination, at least to ensure that all actors aim to achieve more or less the same goals. (Cohen 50, Carafano 5-6).

Lahneman also emphasizes the need for cooperation with civil organisations. In his opinion, the military must prevent the fulfilment of civil tasks that could be done by civil organisations themselves, especially when the stability situation improves. ‘The military should hand over authority to appropriate civilian leaders and organizations as soon as the situation is stable and remain as the “junior partner” to help re-establish law and order.’ (Lahneman 184).

Ashdown, finally, points at ‘the importance of an exceptionally close relationship between the military and civilian aspects of peace implementation’. Both the military as well as the civil organisations

must realize that cooperation is necessary. In his words: ‘Civilians depend on the military if they are to succeed. But the military depend on the civilians too if they are to succeed.’ (Ashdown 5-8).

Factor 15: Emphasis on Intelligence

Military operations in which intelligence will not be of any significance are very unlikely to exist. It is not surprising, therefore, that intelligence is also considered to be a key factor when discussing the effectiveness of stabilisation operations. Although the need for intelligence may be considered self-evident, five of the authors in the literature selection still emphasise that intelligence is a key factor to the success of stabilisation operations. Some of them do not go into detail, but only briefly mention the importance of high quality intelligence on the operation theatre and the opponent. (Connaughton 80, Cohen 50).

Some authors, however, are more detailed about this factor. Both Hammes and Rothstein argue that the method of intelligence gathering during stabilisation operations may differ from other kinds of operations. Because stabilisation operations are conducted amongst the population, and the opposing forces are often working without the infrastructure of an established military organisation, technical instruments to gather intelligence are less important and, instead, more emphasis is placed on human intelligence, or HUMINT in military language. The best resources of intelligence are the local people themselves. Getting into contact with the population, winning their support and receiving information from them is very important to the success of stabilisation operations. (Hammes 263, Rothstein 174).

Thornton agrees with Hammes and Rothstein about the importance of human intelligence. He adds, however, that within these operations the focus of intelligence gathering should not only be on the opponents, but also on ‘those who feel inclined to support them’. To make a stabilisation operation a success, intelligence about the local society is necessary, because that is where the opponent receives his support. As was already shown in the section on ‘winning hearts and minds’ (Factor 11), Thornton describes a virtuous circle: the intelligence gathered from the local population allows for a more targeted use of military violence, which in turn increases security, but without much

collateral damage. This consequently helps in winning the hearts and minds of the population, which leads to even more possibilities to gather intelligence, and the circle starts again. (Thornton 213-216).

Factor 16: Information War

The term 'Information War' is taken from Connaughton. He uses this term to describe a factor for success that is also mentioned by four other authors: managing the external dissemination of information to generate public support for the stabilisation operation, both in the operation area itself and elsewhere. (Connaughton 80).

Clark, for example, is convinced that public support for the operation is 'essential'. To ensure this support, he argues that devoting attention to the media is 'a must'. Communication about what happens during the operation and how this contributes to the overall aims is very important. Clark especially focuses on the communication towards the home front of the intervening military, where both the public as well as the politicians should be well informed about the operation. (Clark 444).

Cohen sees 'information operations' in a broader context. Managing information flows concerning the operation is a 'key tool' in creating and maintaining realistic expectations 'among the populace, friendly military forces, and even the international community'. In this way, information operations will build support and limit possible discontent during the operation. (Cohen 51).

Carafano, in turn, considers the local population in the operation area to be the main focus of the information war. 'Winning requires offering ideas', he states. Only by offering new ideas about life and society will a new ideology take shape in the operation area. And that is important, he argues, because 'an ideology offers solutions to political, cultural, security, or economic ills'. (Carafano 6).

The need for 'information and media operations' is also emphasized by Thornton. He adds another dimension to this factor: the opponent may also use information as a weapon. In the hands of the enemy this weapon could become so influential that the operation will considerably lose support on the home front of the intervening

military. As Thornton explains, insurgents often try to provoke the intervening forces to use so much force that it will cause collateral damage. ‘They want Western militaries to use their power inappropriately so that it becomes obvious that the practitioners of counter-insurgency are not providing security for the general populace. [...] Moreover, the partisans of insurgency can plaster the results of the ill-judged use of military force by their opponents all over the world’s newspapers and TV screens. This can and often will undermine the sense of mission among the populations of the countries that sent their men and women to fight in these counterinsurgency campaigns.’ (Thornton 217).

Factor 17: Clear Mandate

Four authors consider a clear mandate as a factor that may influence the success of stabilisation operations. Schmidl, for example, states that ‘a realistic mandate [...] is one of the core requirements of a successful mission’. (Schmidl 204). Joshua Smith also advocates a clear and strong mandate, of which so-called rules of engagement form a part. In his view, these rules of engagement must allow for lethal force if necessary. (Joshua Smith 17).

De Wijk states that ‘unclear mandates and rules of engagement could [...] endanger the operation’. He also warns, however, that too strict rules of engagement could undermine the flexibility of the military, thereby clarifying that ‘clear’ is not the same as ‘strict’. (De Wijk 251).

Providing clear guidelines from the political level towards the military is also considered important by Clark. In this regard, however, he also sees a responsibility for the military themselves. They should, in turn, take into account the higher-level political considerations of the operation, ‘some of which are too subtle or variable to be incorporated into the relatively fixed rules of engagement’. (Clark 458).

Factor 18: Decentralization of Command

An influencing factor that is mentioned more by military authors than by civilian authors is the decentralization of command. Of the four

publications in which this factor is mentioned, only one has been written by an author with a civilian background.

Mockaitis, the civilian author, argues that stabilisation operations are mostly small-unit operations. These small units operate in difficult circumstances in which critical decisions must be taken in split seconds. Losing time because they have to ask for instructions along the chain of command will make them less effective. Thus, the central command should allow critical operational decisions to be taken at lower levels. (Mockaitis 56).

Three publications by military authors mention the same aspect. Cohen calls this factor ‘empowerment of the lowest levels’. These kinds of operations have to be decentralized, and ‘lower level initiative has to be supported and encouraged’. (Cohen 52). Rothstein also advocates ‘a simple chain of command and freedom of action extended to the smallest forward-based units’. (Rothstein 172).

Rupert Smith, finally, writes that ‘hierarchical chains of command can be a hindrance, particularly when the engagements are at low tactical levels; they lead to layers of headquarters between those actually engaged in conflict and those conducting the confrontation.’ This is why he advocates a change in military organisations: ‘[...] we must develop the confidence to grant authority to those we send to conduct these complex operations to commensurate with the responsibilities laid on their shoulders’. (Rupert Smith 402-403).

Factor 19: Separate Police Forces

In four publications a clear distinction between military and police tasks is advocated, including a distinction between those who fulfil these tasks. Earlier in this paper it was already observed that providing security to the local population is considered to be an important factor for the success of stabilisation operations. These operations often take place in chaotic circumstances, sometimes combined with a power vacuum, in which the local population is not only confronted with military warfare, but also with crime, lawlessness and so on. Providing security for the population, also on a more civil level (crime and corruption), is crucial for establishing an atmosphere of trust in and support for the intervening forces and the new situation they create.

Civilian police tasks therefore have to be fulfilled. In general, however, the military are not trained for such tasks and should therefore not be burdened with this responsibility. Seybolt, Carafano, Clark and Rothstein advocate the deployment of separate police forces alongside military forces.

Seybolt, stating that ‘soldiers are not trained to provide police services’, argues that a constabulary force is required alongside the military. This constabulary could be a local force, but if that is not possible, international actors should assist in providing these services. (Seybolt 277). Carafano is in favour of domestic security forces for these tasks. ‘It is not essential that the nation is free of violence, but the occupiers need to ensure that the new leadership has adequate forces at its disposal to begin to establish a functioning civil society.’ (Carafano 5).

Clark, in turn, states that the intervening parties have the responsibility ‘to create a full range of deployable, robust police-type capabilities as well as providing a legal and judicial structure to support their responsibilities’. (Clark 458-459). Thornton looks in another direction to provide the desired police capabilities for the operation area. He argues that a distinction could be made between intervening parties regarding what kind of troops they can deliver. Some countries may not be in favour of contributing military forces that may become involved in heavy fighting, but would preferably opt for contributing police forces that are not necessarily required to take part in active warfare. (Thornton 218).

It should be mentioned that Schmidl and Rothstein also refer to the importance of police tasks at the local level, but they do not explicitly opt for separate police forces. (Schmidl 202, Rothstein 170).

Factor 20: Early Post-Combat Plan

Having a sound plan before starting any military operation seems self-evident. Three authors, however, emphasize that plans should not only be made for the military operation as such, but also for the so-called ‘post-combat phase’ in which reconstruction activities are added to the tasks of the intervening forces.

Cavaleri considers the integral planning for both the combat and the post-combat phase to be a key factor in the success or failure of stabilisation operations. The planning should not only be detailed and innovative, but also continuously adapted to the ever changing situation when the operation has started. (Cavaleri 36).

Both Lahneman and Ashdown mention the factor of an early post-combat plan without going into much detail. It is clear from their point of view, however, that such a plan should be an integral part of the military planning as a whole. Making a plan for the post-combat phase of the operation only ‘as an afterthought to the fighting’ (in the words of Ashdown) is not to be recommended. (Lahneman 180, Ashdown 5-8).

Factor 21: Many Special Forces

It is somewhat remarkable that in the literature selection used for this study relatively few authors mention the role of Special Forces. One could have expected that unconventional warfare – the category in which stabilisation operations are usually grouped – would pre-eminently be the type of operation in which Special Forces could play an important role. Nevertheless, only three out of the eighteen authors consider the employment of Special Forces to be a factor for the success or failure of stabilisation operations.

De Wijk, Hammes and Rothstein point out that Special Forces may constitute a crucial element within stabilisation operations. Because of the small groups in which these forces operate and their extraordinary training and skills, these Special Forces are able to operate very flexibly and to achieve more detailed goals than conventional forces. Especially when it is difficult to identify the enemy, because the insurgents hide amongst the population, very small and flexible units are needed to operate within local society, gathering intelligence and carrying out precision operations. Special Forces are best suited for these kinds of tasks. (De Wijk 21 & 227, Hammes 265, Rothstein 274).

Factor 22: Useful Doctrine

In three of the eighteen publications used for this study, a useful doctrine is mentioned as a potential factor for the success or failure of stabilisation operations. Mockaitis, Carafano and Thornton all mention the need for a good doctrine, without going into much detail concerning this factor. Thornton, however, states that just having a useful doctrine is not enough. The intervening forces should also seriously incorporate the contents of the doctrine within their operations – it should be prevented that the doctrine is nothing more than an irrelevant piece of paper. (Mockaitis 57, Carafano 1, Thornton 218).

Remarkably enough, these three authors all have a civilian background; this factor is not once mentioned by authors with a military background. The reason for this difference between military and civilian authors is unclear. Maybe having a useful doctrine is too self-evident for military authors to mention, but it could also be that the military care less about doctrine than one would expect beforehand, at least when it is considered important for the success or failure of a stabilisation operation.

3. Observations and Conclusions

From the comparison of eighteen relevant publications on stabilisation operations in this paper, the 22 most mentioned factors for the success or failure of these operations have been ranked (see Appendix 1). It may be considered remarkable that the eighteen publications do not all mention the same factors of influence. Even the most mentioned factor was not mentioned at all by six of the eighteen publications. This again proves how diverse (views on) stabilisation operations can be and how difficult it is to find relevant factors that may influence the success or failure of these operations. Although the differences in factors that the authors mention already provide one important aspect of the findings of this paper, one may nevertheless conclude something in addition. First of all, it is possible to classify the factors mentioned both quantitatively and thematically. Apart from that, it may be interesting to compare the findings of the authors with a civilian background to those of the authors with a military background – does a different background matter when thinking about stabilisation operations? Last but not least, something may be said about the practical use of the findings in this study.

Quantitative classification

When classifying the 22 factors in a quantitative way, one may distinguish between three groups of factors:

First of all, there are the factors that are mentioned in more than 50 percent of the publications. This group is rather small, because it consists of only three factors: a Combination of Military and Civil Efforts (mentioned in 12 publications), Clear Objectives (11) and Long-Term Commitment (10). These factors are so often mentioned in the literature that one may state that there is some level of agreement thereon among the authors writing on this subject.

Second, we can distinguish factors that are mentioned in 33 percent to 50 percent of the publications. These factors are: Many (Ground) Forces (9), Unity of Effort (8), Reconstruction Activities (8), Legitimacy (8), Political Courage and Commitment (7), and Early Intervention (7). On these factors less agreement exists, but they are still so often mentioned that they certainly may have some relevance when searching for factors of influence.

Finally, there are the factors that are mentioned in only 33 percent of the publications or even less. In the total selection, factors that were mentioned by less than three publications have not been included, but that still leaves quite a number of factors in this category: Multilateral Action (6), Winning 'Hearts and Minds' (6), Education and Training (6), Providing Security for the Local Population (5), Cooperation with Civil Organizations (5), Emphasis on Intelligence (5), 'Information War' (5), a Clear Mandate (4), Decentralization of Command (4), Separate Police Forces (4), an Early Post-Combat Plan (3), Many Special Forces (3), and a Useful Doctrine (3). On these factors there is little agreement in the publications used for this research, but they are still mentioned on several occasions – which shows that they may have at least some importance.

Thematic classification

Next to a quantitative classification, it may also be useful to group the 22 influential factors into thematic categories. Although many thematic classifications can be thought of, a clear and concise one

would be a grouping into four categories: political courage, good preparation, winning 'hearts and minds', and a specific operational approach.

The category 'political courage' could be summarized as the need for strong commitment on the part of the military and political leaders, not only during the preparations for and the start of the operation, but also in the long-term. Political and military leaders must have the courage to make quick decisions, to assign a great deal of resources (in money, material and personnel) to the operation, to take risks and to decentralize the decision-making process – which also means that the political and military leaders should not want to meddle in every operational detail of the operation. Factors within this thematic group are: Political Courage and Commitment, Long-Term Commitment, Many (Ground) Forces, Early Intervention, and Decentralization of Command.

A category entitled 'good preparation' may seem to be too self-evident to mention in a list of factors that influence the success or failure of any military operation. But testifying to the literature used in this research, good preparation was often lacking when past stabilisation operations were started. This group of factors could be summarized as ensuring that people and/or organisations that are involved share the same vision concerning the aims and methods of the operation and are prepared to do that which is expected of them. The following factors could be grouped in this category: Clear Objectives and 'End State', Unity of Effort, Combination of Military and Civil Efforts, Multilateral Action, Education and Training, Making a Post-Combat Plan at an Early Stage, and having a Useful Doctrine and a Clear Mandate.

A specific factor influencing the success or failure of stabilisation operations seems to be winning the support (often called 'hearts and minds') of the local population in the operation area. This requires, for example, a great deal of attention to be devoted to civil-military cooperation, reconstruction activities, providing security, and information management. Factors within this thematic group are: winning 'Hearts and Minds', Combination of Military and Civil Efforts, Reconstruction Activities, Cooperation with Civil Organisations, Providing Security for the Local Population, and waging an 'Information War'.

Last but not least, stabilisation operations demand a specific way of operating militarily. This special approach is partly linked to the previous category mentioned: the winning of hearts and minds in the operation area. But also the decentralization of command and the need for ‘boots on the ground’ (including special forces and police forces) must be mentioned in this respect. The following factors could be grouped into this category: Reconstruction Activities, Many (Ground) Forces, Many Special Forces, Separate Police Forces, Decentralization of Command, an Emphasis on Intelligence, and good Education and Training.

Comparison of civilian and military authors

The table in Appendix 1 makes a clear division between the authors with a civilian background and those with a military background. This division makes it relatively easy to investigate whether there are clear differences between the viewpoints of both groups. Surprisingly (or perhaps not so much), there are no big differences to be found. The factors of influence that are mentioned in the literature are often mentioned with the same frequency among both groups of authors. Only some relatively minor differences can be observed, taking into account that the ratio of civilian authors to military authors is 10 to 8.

Three factors are more often mentioned by authors with a civilian background than by those with a military background. Political Courage and Commitment (6 to 1) is clearly a factor that is considered less important by military authors. Separate Police Forces are not popular among military authors either (3 to 1). More surprising, maybe, is the fact that rather internal military factors like a Clear Mandate and a Useful Doctrine are not often mentioned by military authors. A useful doctrine is never mentioned by military authors (3 to 0), a clear mandate is only once considered to be an important factor within the group of military authors (3 to 1).

On the other hand, the military authors attach relatively more value than the civilian authors to the factor ‘Hearts and Minds’ (4 to 2) and Decentralization of Command (3 to 1). Especially the latter factor may also be considered as a typical internal military factor, which may partly explain why it receives less attention by civil authors.

Practical usefulness

Could the results of this literature overview be useful to the practice of policy making and planning with regard to stabilisation operations? Presumably, the answer could be positive. The set of 22 factors of influence for the success or failure of stabilisation operations that emerged from this literature survey may be used as a 'tick-off list'. By simply ticking off the 22 factors, any stabilisation operation may be checked against these factors, not only in the planning phase, but also while monitoring and probably adapting plans during an operation. Even when subsequently evaluating an operation, the list of factors could be useful, showing where possible 'bottlenecks' could be found.

To illustrate the usefulness of the 'tick-off list', two examples will be given. Both the US military operation in Iraq (2003–to date) and the Dutch military operation in Afghanistan (2006–to date) are evaluated by means of the list of 22 factors. Both specific lists are added to this paper as Appendix 2 and 3. This ticking off is, of course, only a very rough exercise without any detailed investigation. The results may thus be discussed, but within this study the results do not serve as a case study in itself, but only as an example of how the list of possible factors may be used.

The US military operation in Iraq, which started in 2003, is often called a clear example of what stabilisation operations are. When this operation is roughly evaluated with the 'tick-off list', the following image emerges. Several factors on the list can be considered to have been taken into account by the intervening forces. There is little doubt, for example, as to the factors Political Courage, Early Intervention, and Clear Mandate. On the other hand, many factors are less clear and could be ticked off both positively and negatively. Legitimacy, for example, may be doubted because the intervention started without the approval of the United Nations, although this approval soon followed for the second phase of the intervention in which the real 'stabilisation effort' started. There are also questions about the objectives of the operation and whether a clear end state was defined beforehand. Moreover, a great deal of criticism has been voiced about the initial lack of efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local population – too little reconstruction activities, scarce cooperation with civil organisations, and too little attention to providing security for the population. Although the initial failure of these factors was later

recognized by the military and political leadership, it is clear that the factor of an Early Post-Combat Plan was not met at all. This is, however, the only factor that at first glance could clearly be marked as 'not met'. The considerable number of factors that are ticked off both positively and negatively nevertheless shows that the stabilisation operation in Iraq cannot be characterized as one with the best chances of success.

When carrying out the same exercise with the Dutch military operation in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan, a typical stabilisation operation that started in 2006, the tick-off list shows a somewhat more positive image. No factor can be marked completely negatively, and there are also less factors that are questionably ticked both positively and negatively at the same time. Especially the factors Clear End State and Long-Term Commitment cannot be marked completely positively, because the end of the Dutch involvement is not defined qualitatively (the troops will depart when goal X is reached) but quantitatively (the troops will depart after X years). One could argue, however, that after this set date of departure other NATO troops may take over the Dutch responsibilities. Doubtful is also the score on the factor Many (Ground) Forces. As in much of Afghanistan, there seems to be too few military forces available to stabilise the extensive, mostly densely populated area. Both in Afghanistan and Iraq the factor Separate Police Forces can be marked positively and negatively at the same time – although in both operations no separate police forces are deployed, a great deal of effort is being invested in creating a reliable and effective local police force.

These superficial examples show that using the 22 factors as a 'tick-off list' could offer policy makers a quick overview of possible improvements during the planning phase or during an operation itself. However, it cannot be claimed that this offers anything more than a quick overview. Not only would much more research be necessary, but it should also be realized that the balance between the relative importance of the separate factors can show major changes for each possible stabilisation operation. As stated previously, stabilisation operations are never the same; the circumstances and aims of each operation will always differ.

Last but not least, it should be noted that many of the factors that are included in the list are rather 'classic' factors for the success or failure

of any military operation in general, not specifically stabilisation operations. Factors like employing many (ground) forces, intervening at an early stage, and ensuring unity of effort can even, so to speak, be found in classic works on warfare by Sun Tzu or Clausewitz. This again proves, as already stated in the introduction, that stabilisation operations are not a completely new phenomenon, but rather a modern variant of the classic art of warfare. In this regard, the 'tick-off list' that has been presented here does not offer any very surprising elements. The amount of literature that is being published about stabilisation operations nevertheless shows that there is still a need for analyses on the subject by military and civilian policy makers and researchers involved in these kinds of operations. For them, this paper will hopefully be of some use.

Conclusion

When comparing eighteen publications in which several factors for the success or failure of stabilisation operations are mentioned, it appears that some agreement can be found among the authors concerning 22 factors. These factors could be roughly classified into four thematic categories: political courage, good preparation, winning 'hearts and minds', and a specific operational approach.

The complete list of factors (see Appendix 1) could be used by policy makers as a 'tick-off list' while planning, adapting or evaluating stabilisation operations. Although the factors in the list may not be very surprising and more research is needed to really estimate their value, the list may still be a helpful tool in providing a quick overview of potential 'bottlenecks' within a stabilisation operation.

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Appendix 1: Factors per author

Civilian authors

	Ash	Car	Con	Kur	Moc	Sey	Sch	Smi	Tho	Wij
1. Combination of Military and Civil Efforts	X		X	X		X		X	X	
2. Clear Objectives / 'End State'	X	X	X			X				X
3. Long-Term Commitment	X				X	X	X	X	X	
4. Many (Ground) Forces	X			X	X	X			X	
5. Unity of Effort		X		X		X		X		X
6. Reconstruction Activities	X	X			X				X	
7. Legitimacy	X	X	X							X
8. Political Courage and Commitment				X		X	X	X	X	X
9. Early Intervention				X		X		X		X
10. Multilateral Action	X		X	O	X			X	X	
11. 'Hearts and Minds'					X				X	
12. Education and Training		X			X				X	
13. Providing Security for Local Population	X	X							X	O
14. Cooperation with Civil Organisations		X					X		X	
15. Emphasis on Intelligence			X						X	
16. Information War		X	X						X	
17. Clear Mandate							X	X		X
18. Decentralization of Command					X					
19. Separate Police Forces		X				X	X			
20. Early Post-combat Plan	X									
21. Many Special Forces										X
22. Useful Doctrine		X			X				X	
	X = author mentions factor									
	O = author mentions opposite									

Military authors

	Cav	Cla	Coh	Fra	Ham	Lah	Rot	Smi	Total
1. Combination of Military and Civil Efforts		X	X	X		X	X	X	12
2. Clear Objectives / 'End State'	X	X		X		X	X	X	11
3. Long-Term Commitment	X		X	X		X			10
4. Many (Ground) Forces		X		X	X	X			9
5. Unity of Effort		X		X		X			8
6. Reconstruction Activities	X		X		X	X			8
7. Legitimacy	X		X	X		X			8
8. Political Courage and Commitment		X							7
9. Early Intervention		X			X	X			7
10. Multilateral Action				X		X			6
11. 'Hearts and Minds'	X		X				X	X	6
12. Education and Training	X			X	X				6
13. Providing Security for Local Population	X		X					X	5
14. Cooperation with Civil Organisations			X			X			5
15. Emphasis on Intelligence			X		X		X		5
16. Information War		X	X						5
17. Clear Mandate		X							4
18. Decentralization of Command			X				X	X	4
19. Separate Police Forces		X							4
20. Early Post-combat Plan	X					X			3
21. Many Special Forces					X		X		3
22. Useful Doctrine									3
	X = author mentions factor								
	O = author mentions opposite								

Appendix 2: American Operation in Iraq

American Operation in Iraq	Yes	No
1. Combination of Military and Civil Efforts	Y	N
2. Clear Objectives / 'End State'	Y	N
3. Long-Term Commitment	Y	
4. Many (Ground) Forces	Y	N
5. Unity of Effort	Y	N
6. Reconstruction Activities	Y	N
7. Legitimacy	Y	N
8. Political Courage and Commitment	Y	
9. Early Intervention	Y	
10. Multilateral Action	Y	
11. 'Hearts and Minds'	Y	N
12. Education and Training	Y	N
13. Providing Security for the Local Population	Y	N
14. Cooperation with Civil Organisations	Y	N
15. Emphasis on Intelligence	Y	
16. Information War	Y	N
17. Clear Mandate	Y	
18. Decentralization of Command	Y	
19. Separate Police Forces	Y	N
20. Early Post-combat Plan		N
21. Many Special Forces	Y	
22. Useful Doctrine	Y	

Appendix 3: Dutch Operation in Afghanistan

Dutch Operation in Afghanistan	Yes	No
1. Combination of Military and Civil Efforts	Y	
2. Clear Objectives / 'End State'	Y	N
3. Long-Term Commitment	Y	N
4. Many (Ground) Forces	Y	N
5. Unity of Effort	Y	N
6. Reconstruction Activities	Y	
7. Legitimacy	Y	
8. Political Courage and Commitment	Y	
9. Early Intervention	Y	
10. Multilateral Action	Y	
11. 'Hearts and Minds'	Y	
12. Education and Training	Y	
13. Providing Security for the Local Population	Y	
14. Cooperation with Civil Organisations	Y	
15. Emphasis on Intelligence	Y	
16. Information War	Y	
17. Clear Mandate	Y	
18. Decentralization of Command	Y	
19. Separate Police Forces	Y	N
20. Early Post-combat Plan	Y	
21. Many Special Forces	Y	
22. Useful Doctrine	Y	

About the author

Sico van der Meer is a Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’, where he has two separate main research themes: Dutch Defence Policy, and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. He graduated in History at the Radboud University Nijmegen in 1999. Before joining the Clingendael Institute in 2006, he worked as a journalist and as a fellow of a research institute on civil-military relations.

This paper is based on a report on the same subject, in the Dutch language, that was written in 2007 at the request of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence. This report has been changed and updated – remarkably, however, the changes in the selection of the literature did not result in influential changes to the scheme of factors or to the conclusions, which may be an indication of the reliability of the overall impression in this study.

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