



Seminar between the Iraqi Defense University for Higher Military Studies and the Royal Danish Defence College

Policy brief from the seminar on May 25th 2022

Introduction

In Copenhagen, Denmark, on May 25th 2022, the Center for Stabilisation (CFS) at the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) held a joint seminar with the Iraqi Defense University for Higher Military Studies, comprising the National Defence College (NDC) and the Strategic Studies & Research Center (SSRC). The purpose of the seminar was to create a forum for knowledge sharing and academic capacity building where researchers from the RDDC and the SSRC could present their perspectives on selected topics. The seminar was a part of a week-long program consisting of both academic and cultural activities for a DUHMS delegation. The delegation was led by Staff Lieutenant General, Saad Mezher Mohsin al Allak, and consisted of eight representatives from the different institutions of DUHMS. NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) and NATO Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) supported the program for the visit. The initiative is a part of RDDC's stabilisation

program for Iraq, which is managed by the CFS and financially supported by the Peace- and Stabilisation Fund's program for Iraq and Syria.

The aim of the program is to enhance cooperation and academic capacity building between Danish and Iraqi security institutions as well as gathering knowledge about the security situation in Iraq for the Danish Defence to be used in education within the field of security sector reforms.



Group photo of the Iraqi delegation spearheaded by Staff Lieutenant General, Saad al Allak, (front row, number four from the left) and the Royal Danish Defence College with Chief of Staff, Commander Christian Rune (front row, number five from the left)

Key takeaways from the seminar

The seminar consisted of two sessions focusing on security political crisis management and civil-military cooperation in counter-terrorism operations, respectively.

Chief Consultant at the CFS, David Vestenskov, opened the seminar by highlighting the importance of the cooperation between the CFS and the SSRC while briefly explaining CFS' role in different programs.

In the first session, Chief of Section at the Institute for Strategy and War Studies at the RDDC, Dr. Annemarie Peen Rodt, illuminated her views on crisis management in a

presentation titled *“Successful Conflict Management by Military Means”*. In a nutshell, Dr. Rodt broached the definition of success in conflict management by military means. It is paramount to consider both actor-specific and conflict-specific perspectives when evaluating the success of conflict management. This entails considering both what is achieved (goal attainment) and how it is achieved (appropriateness) from an internal and external perspective. Dr. Maytham Anidi Ali from the SSRC subsequently delivered a presentation titled *“Methodology in crises analysis and management (political and security crises)”*.



Dr. Ali touched upon the different levels a crisis can reach from being a problematic situation to a full-blown catastrophe. He underlined the importance of identifying and understanding the phenomenon at hand as early as possible to avoid that the crisis escalates or intensifies. This requires a thorough analysis of the phenomenon in which the right questions are asked and theoretical lenses applied. According to Dr. Ali, crisis management entails both planning for and dealing with crises, which can be achieved through many different approaches.

Key takeaways from the seminar

- Conceptualize the definition of success in conflict management by military means.
- Identify and understand possible crises as early as possible to avoid escalation.
- Create cooperation between civil and military institutions in counter-terrorism efforts.
- Consider the divergent objectives and political dynamics of actors involved in counter-terrorism.

Dr. Haider Taha Aska from the SSRC initiated the second session with a presentation on *“Achieving national security through civil-military cooperation in combating terrorist organizations”*. Dr. Taha highlighted the importance of interaction, cooperation, joint planning and exchange of information between armed forces and civil society institutions. The military constitutes the executing link in the fight against terrorist organisations whereas the main roles of the civil society institutions are to possess early awareness, to be inclusive, and to work towards rapprochement between all groups of society, to effectively utilize media outlets in the fights against terrorism and, lastly, to help with rehabilitation. In future operations against terrorist organizations, it is imperative to plan for the development of civil-military cooperation. To end the second session, Dr. Troels Burchall Henningsen from the Institute for Strategy and War Studies at the RDDC shared his perspectives on *“Political Dynamics between Intervening Powers, Local Governments, and Elites in Areas of Operation”*. Dr. Henningsen introduced a general framework of the political dynamics that affect counter-terrorism efforts. In this relation, it is vital to take into consideration the concept of the state and the messiness of political relations between the different entities or actors in counter-terrorism



efforts, including the state, the intervening state or coalition, and the societal group. These actors hold differing views on the objective of counter-terrorism efforts and, consequently, they are concerned with different questions. The government is mostly interested in the effectiveness of counter-terrorism responses. The objective of militias / self-defence groups as well as intervening states or coalitions, on the other hand, is their contribution to counter-terrorism and the stability of the country. In conclusion, a number of political dynamics need to be considered when planning counter-terrorism operations, comprising the political interests of the involved actors; the role of militarized elites; the government's ability to foster alliances and trust; and the level of cooperation among intervening powers.

The future cooperation between DUHMS and RDDC

The DUHMS and its appertaining institutions and the RDDC extensively agreed on the need for constantly working towards solidifying and enhancing cooperation between said institutions by organising seminars, webinars, and workshops for knowledge-sharing.

The next joint seminar between the DUHMS and the RDDC is designated to take place in December 2022 in Baghdad, Iraq. The seminar will unfold the implications and consequences for the global and regional security systems of the war in Ukraine focusing, partly, on great power balance and, partly, on the implications of war on shortages of resources and the impact on logistics and supply chains.



Dr. Annemarie Peen Rodt taking questions after her presentation on "Successful Conflict Management by Military Means" at the joint seminar between the SSRC and the RDDC