

Using Wargames For Military Purposes

Wargaming Wicked Problems

Senior Leadership Development
for the Centre for Defence Leadership &
Management, Beckett House, Shrivenham

Jim Wallman
Director, Past Perspectives

Using Wargames For Military Purposes

The Aim

A game that allows senior leaders on the Senior Leadership Development Programme to practice partnership working between agencies, in the context of emerging 'wicked problems'

The Players

Senior leaders at, or approaching One Star level from all three services, defence civil servants and senior staff from other national security agencies.

Using Wargames For Military Purposes

Desired Outcomes

- Exploration and observation of player behaviours – particularly in the context of the ‘wicked problems’ concept they were being introduced to.
- Allowing players to examine patterns of behaviour in negotiation and decision making and to allow challenges in a psychologically safe space, and to provide a reference point for mentoring and personal development.
- To *involve* participants on the course as a contrast to lectures.

Using Wargames For Military Purposes

Wicked Problems – Clumsy Solutions

Wicked Problems are characterised by ⁽¹⁾

- The problem is not understood until after the formulation of a solution.
- Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
- Solutions to wicked problems are not right or wrong.
- Every wicked problem is essentially novel and unique.
- Every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one shot operation.'
- Wicked problems have no given alternative solutions.

1. Conklin, Jeffrey (2006). *Dialogue mapping : building shared understanding of wicked problems*.
Chichester, England:

Using Wargames For Military Purposes



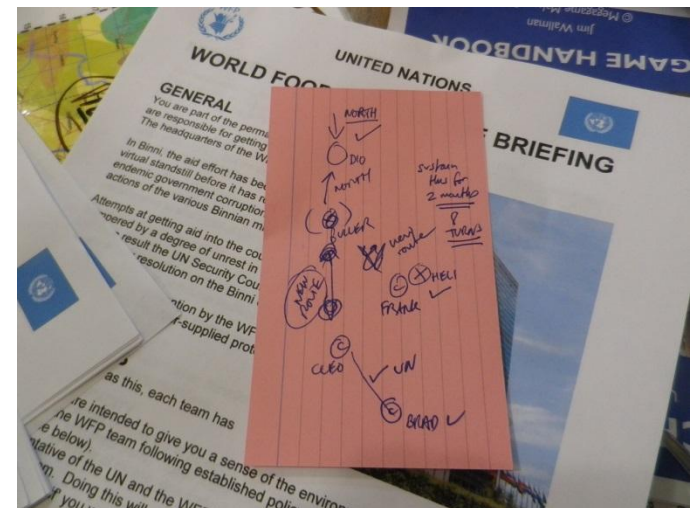
Crisis in Binni is a manual political/operational game about a humanitarian crisis in a fictional West African country.



Using Wargames For Military Purposes

Originally developed for educational audiences, the key elements of the Crisis in Binni are:

- Incomplete and constantly changing key information
- No end point
- Complex player-led political interactions both internal and external to the crisis.
- Unformed organisational relationships that have to be constructed in play
- No 'DS solution' – possible outcomes are highly varied



Using Wargames For Military Purposes



Game Structure

Part 1 : UN SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION

(Evening)

- Draft a Security Council Resolution

Part 2 : PRE-INTERVENTION PLANNING PHASE

(Morning)

- Implementation planning
- Rules of engagement
- Information gathering
- Posturing and positioning

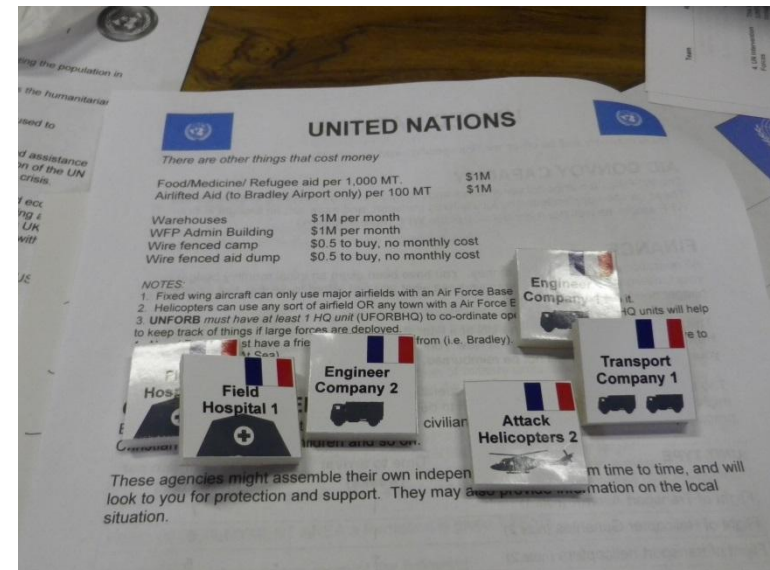
Part 3 : IN-COUNTRY INTERVENTION PHASE

(Afternoon)

- Responding to emerging reality
- Updating information
- Updating rules of engagement
- Negotiation with the real actors

Part 4 : DEBRIEF

- Outcomes for participant and reflection from players and college facilitation team.



Using Wargames For Military Purposes



How does this play out with the senior staff?

Expected Outcomes

- Unexpected behaviour – ‘acting out’
- Discomfort
- Challenge
- Affirmation of skills & experience
- Self-Reflection



Using Wargames For Military Purposes



How does this play out with the senior staff?

Unexpected Outcomes

- Connected with wider Defence issues such as 'engagement'.
- Introduction to the engagement necessary to work in 'intertribal' partnerships.

