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Deadly Embrace?

The Decision Paths to Uruzgan and Helmand

Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift van Mirjam Grandia

- I. The drafting of strategy as an emergent process allowing room for bottom-up initiatives permits a better dialogue between civil and military decision-makers. However, ultimately strategic ownership needs to be taken foremost by politicians to be able to articulate a strategic narrative.
- II. The euphemisms, often employed by politicians to generate popular support for Western military missions, engender confusion amongst constituents. It, furthermore, endangers the use of military means, since the purpose of its use tends to remain vague and abstract.
- III. Military involvement in policy-making should no longer be an anathema. Instead, artificial and normative boundaries need to be addressed in order to advance civil military relations.
- IV. The use of frameworks, codes, and regulations whilst deciding on the use of military means does not in itself result in objective, coherent qualified, or transparent decision-making. The self-enforcing logic of a dominant idea or belief seems to regulate the decision-making to a much greater extent.
- V. The habit in Western states of asking the wrong questions, leading to the wrong analysis, more often than not, results in inescapable entrapments with a central focus on how to intervene before sufficiently addressing the reasons why to intervene.
- VI. Structural explanations of foreign policy decision-making tend to downplay the eminence and power of agency. A contingency based logic of decision-making facilitates a dynamic analysis of the series of decisions that are taken over time and allows for incorporating the influence of agency.
- VII. Theoretical models may limit the scope of a scientist since they are just but one prism that can be employed to explain activities and events. In fact, fitting the data into a model can become a self-serving goal rather than a means towards a goal. The true academic challenge is to be as open, curious and unprejudiced as possible
- VIII. The careful reconstruction of decisions taken by senior civil and military policy-makers is not to be limited to one field of science: it requires the inquisitiveness of a journalist, the precision of a historian and theoretical rigour of a social scientist
- IX. The concept of a deadline as understood in academia seems to differ from the military understanding of it. A military understanding of a deadline, combined with endurance discipline, and skills well taught in the military, are of assistance when it comes to finishing a dissertation in time.
- X. The management of ego's, including one's own, is an ever present challenge whilst pursuing a PhD.