

Paths Forward: Similarities, Differences, and Evolution

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In the early evening of September 29, 1829, several hundred men were sent out to conduct foot patrols in central London. The newly created London Metropolitan Police Service represented a substantial new way of envisioning police, police organizations, and governmental responses to crime and disorder. The structure and operation of the newly created “Met” was heavily influenced by Sir Charles Rowan, a former military man who had been appointed as one of two joint commissioners of the force. Rowan’s influence reflected his military background, and that influence persists to this day¹ in most American police forces (Cowper, 2000).

This volume has laid out a number of parallels and distinctions between the military and policing worlds. Though these two fields are distinct, they share a number of similarities and appear to be evolving in a parallel fashion. In this chapter we endeavor to provide an overview of the current volume as well as the trends (both current and emerging) influencing (and will influence) the military and policing worlds. This includes consideration of the similarities and differences between these two worlds, and a discussion of the seemingly parallel evolutions they are experiencing. In many regards, these two worlds, while still distinct, are

¹ Though as Thomas Cowper (2000) noted, the ties between American policing and the military may not be as strong the former conventionally espouses, perhaps even to a detrimental extent.

perhaps more alike today than at any point in the past 200 years.

Similarities, Differences and Evolutions

As others have noted within this volume, the military and police share a number of commonalities. Police agencies are clearly influenced by military thinking about structure and function, in part because the former has for decades tended to draw new personnel from the ranks of the latter. Recent shifts in the role of the armed services have in some ways pushed the military to look more closely at policing to see what lessons might be learned. Despite commonalities, these two fields have been and will continue to be distinct. Fundamental differences in mission and method will continue to ensure that military and police remain distinct from one another. This distinction is a fundamental dimension of American culture and government. Within the milieu of these similarities and differences, both the military and police are undergoing evolutions in their roles, missions, and modes of operation.

Physical Context

Military futurists are properly concerned with the physical aspects of their operational environment. Military doctrine defines an operational environment as “a composite of conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military forces and bear on the decisions of the unit commander.”² The concept of an operational environment implies that the range of concerns influencing a military unit and its commander extends beyond the opposing force; it includes

² <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/o/03921.html> accessed April 8, 2008.

considerations of economy, society, government, culture, technology, and the environment, among other factors.

Though local policing exists in an environment where operational factors are considered, the latter may not be as deeply integrated into the thinking of the “unit commander.” It is a rare police chief who worries much about global warming. This, too, is easily understood. Civilian police operate in a well-understood and typically stable physical environment. Even though global warming may effect some local change, the scope is narrow, and the changes rarely are surprising. For the military, the scope may be literally worldwide and the changes not well-known or well-understood. Thus, for the military, shifts in logistical, supply, manpower, training issues, and even technology development may be crucial for missions. On the other hand, civilian police typically do very nicely with technologies left over from yesterday’s war.

Scale and Hierarchy

The majority of U.S. police departments have 20 or fewer officers. They report to no one more exalted than a local mayor or city council. They are characterized in general by intense knowledge of very local people, things, and relationships. Their weakness, now in the process of being patched by such entities as fusion centers and JTTFs, has been and remains information sharing. The simpleminded but vital three intelligence sharing questions (what do I know, who needs to know it, have I told them) is generally a foreign language. Most information sharing still takes place through informal networks (donut shops or for younger officers, bagel shops) without knowledge of those in the upper strata of the hierarchy.

The U.S. Military is structurally almost the antithesis of civilian policing.

The military is steeply hierarchical, with fairly clear and well-defined relationships between even distant parts. We do not mean to imply that the relationships function perfectly, but unlike much of civilian policing at least the relationships exist in a reasonably concrete form. The size of the military also means that reliance on formal hierarchy and communication protocols is of greater necessity.

Ironically, despite being on opposite ends of the scale and hierarchy spectrum, the police and military both struggle with effective communication and flexibility, though for opposing reasons. The military is highly centralized, but massive in size. This results in armed forces that are not always as agile, adaptive, and informed as would be ideal, though the military is constantly working to improve its flexibility, information systems, and responsiveness to current missions, constraints, and environments. In contrast, American policing is small in scale, but highly fragmented. Much less is being accomplished in terms of integrating agencies and their information systems to provide a more comprehensive understanding of crime and terrorism in our nation. Though rhetoric of information sharing abounds, there is still vast room for improvement.

Psychosocial Context

Military futurists may be interested in how best to develop new relationships in cultures not well understood. Civilian police, particularly at the local level, worry about that only with emerging immigrant subcultures. For civilian police, the cultures typically are well understood and relationships are to be enhanced and improved. The personnel and organizational demands placed on military and civilian police units, thus, dramatically differ.

Change: Evolution, Although Sometimes It Feels Like Revolution

Both military and civilian policing are evolving rapidly. At times, neither is sure how to prepare for likely futures or even whether such preparation is possible. What we find interesting is that, given the material presented in this volume as well as materials presented elsewhere (See previous FWG volumes), the evolution is parallel, rather than convergent. Under no likely scenario do we foresee a convergence of military and civilian policing. Culture, mission, legal structure, and practical politics all argue against more than increasing cooperation and increased sharing of information. Mission and organizations will remain distinct, although increasingly complementary. As cooperation and information sharing increase, the appearance will approximate the mating of porcupines, each new to the mating game.

In recent decades, we have seen policing undergo a transformation in which it has become accepted that the mandate of policing is broader than the simple regulation of crime. Contemporary policing discourse includes discussion of solving social problems, strengthening and empowering communities, ensuring homeland security, and meeting the needs and expectations of a range of local citizen interests. Likewise, the military is undergoing a similar transformation. The modern military is about more than simply preparing for large-scale armed conflict. The mandate of the armed services has expanded to include addressing a range of situations both domestically and on foreign soil. How will both the military and police continue to adapt, evolve, and respond to expanding organizational mandates?

How will military and police organizations recruit, equip, and train personnel to deal with a growing set of tasks and objectives? NOTE: This also means in both worlds we see the rise of privatization to fill the void emerging when there is neither the will nor the resources to meet need/demand for services.

Implications

1. We must develop means for military units to build relationships with civilian police departments in advance of need. When a crisis happens it is too late for relationship building.
2. We must carefully delineate mission and resource boundaries so that the emerging relationships do not result in emergent internecine squabbles
3. As has been noted endless times (including #1 above), it's about relationships—individual relationships. It's about base-level networking. If people are to work together, they must know each other well and must also know people and other resources in common.
4. Not unrelated, an environment where MOU's are the primary basis for relationships will not and cannot function in a meaningful way, whether between military and civilian police or between either of them and other information-age entities.
5. Hiring criteria for both military and civilian personnel must focus on social intelligence and social skills. Finishing various training schools, whether military or civilian policing, can do only so much. There must be solid material to start with.
6. Both types of organizations must move more toward outcomes assessment and become less oriented toward "bean counting" and

- institutional politics. On the other hand, members of both types of organizations must be taught that they are political actors in a highly complex and politicized environment, where cooperation is valued more highly than competition.
7. Both types of organizations must develop as their goals leaving situations better than they found them and building long-term relationships, including virtual relationships.
 8. Both types of organizations must become more transparent, both to their members and to external entities. Our enemy, increasingly, will be our inability to share information in a timely manner and to call upon pre-existing relationships to aid in problem prevention and resolution. Our enemy will not be nation-states nor will it be centralized, organized crime monoliths.
 9. "Moving through the chairs," "getting one's ticket punched," and similar industrial-age traditions in both the military and policing will have to give way to different career pathways.
 10. Leadership in both contexts will be redefined to mean leadership in acquiring and building effective teams by means of resources external to the formal organization.
 11. "Training" increasingly will give way to education targeted at increasing understanding of emerging zeitgeist, economic, and socio-demographic trends.
 12. The notion of combat policing (Myers, Broadfoot, Levin ca 1996), which provides an apparent link between policing and the military, will need clarification. Some of policing is moving more toward combat (SWAT teams, warrant service teams, etc.), while much of the military seems to recognize that combat is what one does when relationships have failed.
 13. The jurisdictional limitations of policing will increasingly become polite fictions, much as will *posse comitatus*. Blurring boundaries will characterize the operational environment for both the military and civilian policing.
 14. The military notion of "light fighter" may be moving more toward that of combat policing; at the same time, that much of policing is recognizing that fighting is less useful than finding common ground. Of course, this and many other issues depend on values exploration and more strategic thinking than is generally found in most civilian police agencies. Instead, they tend to think in terms of budget biennia and the terms of elected politicians.
 15. Decades ago, Tom Peters, and Peter Drucker, and Dorthy Deming provided us with what now seems obvious advice for getting jobs done through organizations. Concepts, such as flat, empowered, transparent, information-based, team-based, knowledge workers, and quality focused are old-hat in many civilian environments but still not well-executed in either civilian or military environments. Both have taken tentative steps in helpful directions, e.g., with community policing and a focus on special operators, but much more needs to be done.
 16. One military concept could, if widely adopted, could assist both civilian police and military. That is the concept of OODA, or (Observe,

Orient, Decide and Act), which is a concept used by the military in planning both commercial and combat processes at the strategic level. While OODA (or OODA loops as it is referred to when employed in an iterative process) customarily has targeted tactical environments, it is long past time for it to be applied to organization-level decision making. Information-based environments are not survivable if one relies on an industrial-age pace of decisions.

REFERENCE

Cowper, T. J. (2000). The myth of the military model of leadership in law enforcement. *Police Quarterly*, 3, 228–246.
