



Foreword

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In my time as a soldier, I have learnt to spend as little time as possible learning lessons in 'the school of hard knocks'. I became aware of the discipline of Operational Analysis in the early 1970s when I watched a young analyst study the way we in 2 PARA were patrolling in Belfast. He was seeking to find out why it was that, the three parachute battalions were gaining more useful information, arresting more people, and suffering less casualties than other units. The result of his work can be seen to this day in the organization of patrols and patrolling in Northern Ireland. He applied the rigour of the scientific approach to explain and codify the practice we had developed in the Darwinian process of conducting operations in Cyprus, Aden and Northern Ireland.

Since then, I have sought to use the scientific approach in the first instance. I have found it beneficial to have a broad understanding of the physics behind the characteristics of the

weapons and equipment available to me and the enemy, so as to exploit the enemy's weaknesses and guard mine; doing this successfully is the essence of the Art of War. To do this to advantage requires one to simplify the complex, to gain relative advantage in speed of action, agility and concentration of effort. Frequently, this is a matter of organization, and this requires an understanding of the human factors as well as the 'hardware'. And again I have found the science of these matters a help in arriving at a solution in advance of the problem. In the last decade, I have done this on a number of occasions, in particular in the Gulf 1990–1991 and as GOC Northern Ireland 1996–1998, where I was well supported and greatly assisted in conducting my Art by the science of the Operational Analysts.

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