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# Making sense of the world

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JEFFREY BRADFORD P.H.D.

BY PAUL TRUSTFULL

ESPECIALLY TODAY, MAKING COMMERCIAL, FINANCIAL OR POLITICAL DECISIONS UNDER UNCERTAINTY IN AN EXCEEDINGLY COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT IS A CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGE FOR INVESTORS, CORPORATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE.

Jeffrey Bradford P.h.D. is one of a handful of international experts, having undergone a quite unique apprenticeship informed by the British defence and operational research communities and tested as a strategy consultant and in the corporate sector.

His preparation for the commercial world was quite distinctive. By the time he attended British university he had lived abroad in Southern and West Africa for several years, “a fantastic experience to be exposed to different cultures at the formative stage of my life”.

Well regarded university degrees in International Relations and a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies from one of the world’s oldest schools in the field set him up to win a scholarship to study for a unique P.h.D. research opportunity with leading business school, Cranfield at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham [now part of the British Defence Academy].

“It was the first time the college offered a scholarship in the management science arena, and my choice was to focus on theories of strategic decision making theory encompassing organisational ideas, systems thinking and the

more qualitative look at game theory, and applying it to understanding how defence makes policy decisions under extreme uncertainty”

Coupled with consultancy work for the British Army’s Land Command, teaching to senior military officers in the UK and overseas, and publication in internationally recognised academic journals led Jeffrey to being an attractive recruit to the oldest strategy consulting firm in the World, Arthur D. Little.

ADL’s heritage dates back to its formation during the American Civil War, applying scientific thinking to real world problems. Jeffrey was a natural fit, working on M&A and strategic planning exercises for European defence companies. In addition with global responsibility for ‘managing complexity’ – troubleshooting cases with Clients in the TMT and natural resource extraction sectors.

For Jeffrey, ADL was a jumping-off point to take the role of consultant and subsequently Consulting Director for strategy consulting boutique, Think Tools. A Swiss based advisory firm with a high powered board comprising former Prime Ministers,

financiers, industrialist and the founder of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab. “A brilliant experience, Think Tools had advised DASA on developing the A-380 Airbus, Nelson Mandela and the South African government on development policy options and a variety of corporates and governmental entities around the world.”

Building on these experiences, Jeffrey joined the executive team of a UK defence outsourcing company, spending five years in a variety of group developmental roles. Working with the government and Ministry of Defence to build a corporate position on the £3.5bn aircraft carrier programme against stiff competition, navigating the Westminster political environment and fulfilling a number of corporate strategic planning and M&A needs. His final role was to apply his diplomatic and analytical skills to the task of building financial relationships with investors and the financial markets, “It was a great opportunity to work as part of a really tight-knit team to build a company which achieved double digit revenue and profit growth per annum, execute a challenging M&A programme and become a key supplier to the UK Ministry of Defence, from a starting position which was extremely fragmented”.



JEFFREY BRADFORD P.H.D.



THE ARMED FORCES AND FINANCIAL MARKETS ARE BOTH ENVIRONMENTS WHERE A PREMIUM IS PLACED ON THE ABILITY TO MAKE SENSE OF COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS AND TAKE DECISIONS RESULTING IN POSITIVE CHANGE



Beyond his corporate commitments, Jeffrey has been involved as one of the youngest ever appointment Council members of the Defence Manufacturers Association, representing defense SME interests to the Government. During this time he was appointed the first Chairman of the Policy Committee designed to provide a response to emergent policy issues for the association. Additionally, Jeffrey is one of the few industry players to have been through the MoD Acquisition Leadership Development Scheme. Also a member of the Engineering Employers Federation Economic Policy Committee and brought in by the Ministry of Defence as one of the brain trust on defense science and technology policy, Jeffrey is very well versed in the challenges facing the trans-atlantic defence industry today.

“looking out from 2008 over the next 5-7 years, it is clear that the focus of investment by Governments will be in extending the service life of existing equipments and managing the cost of operations. The US and British armed forces are literally wearing out major land systems and air transportation assets in particular.

To take just one requirement, that of air-to-air refuelling, new aircraft are needed right now by the American and British governments for which current procurement battles will be too slow. The winners in this case are likely the specialists with the knowledge to keep the KC-135 and British Victor air tankers flying.

Looking more broadly the heavy investment in Research and Development will pay dividends for the US military early in the next decade, prompting the problem of how to integrate these capabilities into slower moving.

Acquisition programmes such as the Future Combat System (FCS) for the US and the similar UK programme known as FRES The duller, but major constraining factor for both Departments though is simply managing the salary, pension and health care bills – to motivate those in service, and protect those retired from duty”.

Not to stand still, Jeffrey maintained alongside his commercial activity an enviable publication track record writing on defense industrial issues, strategic and scenario planning concepts, conference speaking and philanthropic activity advising the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

Today Dr. Bradford has branched out, starting a consulting boutique, Complexity Management International, “which aims to assist Clients in an ‘old school’ manner – providing insight to real strategic issues for which the Client is expert on implementation”. In addition, appearances on international television station, Fox Business as an international defence analyst and additional research and writing keeps the grass from growing under his feet.

When asked as to why he finds such challenging issues of interest, his response is simple, “We all want to be engaged with meaningful challenges when we get up in the morning, for me, strategic decisions involve navigating complex organisational baggage and personal agendas, but when done can have a really significant impact – one that I find particularly satisfying”.

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