

# MIPB

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MILITARY INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONAL BULLETIN

## Cross-Cultural Competence



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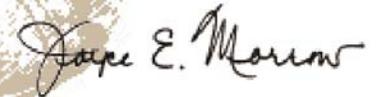
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# ALWAYS OUT FRONT

by Brigadier General Gregg C. Potter  
Commanding General  
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## Cultural Competence and the Contemporary American Soldier

From Valley Forge to Kandahar, the American Soldier remains the same resilient, intelligent and independent warfighter he or she has always been. The American Soldier is a model of courage and battlefield bravery. The battlefields are dramatically different, but the human dimension remains constant: People and their associated cultures. To be effective Soldiers, the Army, and its training base must be relevant and forward-looking.

Cross-cultural competency (3C) is a critical core skill for the contemporary American Soldier. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center (TCC) exists to develop and deliver relevant and mission-oriented training and education in all 3C aspects. This mission has evolved from providing cultural awareness training to developing cultural understanding and cultural expertise for all operational settings.

No single expertise—whether cultural competence, language expertise, or tactics—can stand alone in molding a modern fighting force capable of meeting and defeating a foe on any battlefield. Integrating battle tactics with cultural strategies enables the modern Soldier to rapidly adapt, survive, and be successful in all operational environments.

Every Army commander must master 3C to achieve mission success, especially in a counterinsurgency environment where people are the center of gravity. With so many competing demands and requirements, leaders must focus pre-deployment training on developing their 3C expertise and continue building their own capacity in 3C as part of their lifelong learning objectives.

### TCC as a Critical Multiplier

The TCC is a robust resource for 3C. It is the lead in training and educating Army leaders from captain

and below and advising many senior leaders. The TCC provides cultural knowledge and skills training for leadership development, including key leader engagements, negotiations, rapport building and cross-cultural communications. (See CSM Holiday's column on page 3 for more details on 3C training.)

The TCC leverages knowledge and experience through partnering with the Marine Corps, Air Force, Navy, Reserve Forces, and key Allied nations to provide the most relevant and effective cultural training possible. The TCC is a Soldier friendly resource staffed with the talent and experience to rapidly prepare and field course material and training aids and serve as a call-back resource for the entire Army.

Our new and junior troops have not experienced an Army without culture training because the Army embeds culture training at every level. Because of 10 years of continuous war, most of our Soldiers' 3C proficiency has matured to the level of cultural understanding. Consequently Soldiers are demanding more advanced and sophisticated culture training. Our redeploying troops have recognized this need as evidenced by the TCC's dramatic increase in requests for more advanced training. The TCC will continue to meet these advanced demands.

### The Future of Culture Training for the Army

The Army must be a learning organization that encourages Soldiers to understand and apply fundamental principles in rapidly changing contexts. Culturally astute leaders will leverage awareness and understanding with other capabilities to achieve an intercultural edge in reaching their objectives. Dynamic cultural situational awareness and responsiveness is a critical component of this devel-

*(Continued on page 4)*

# CSM FORUM



by Command Sergeant Major Todd S. Holiday  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence

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## Cross-Cultural Competency Training

In 2002 we began cultural awareness training with the establishment of the U.S. Army Culture Center at Fort Huachuca. The original concern was counterterrorism, but growing concern for cultural awareness ultimately led to the establishment of the TCC. Visibility increased over time. In January 2004 the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commander Lieutenant General Wallace requested an information brief from the Intelligence Center on the way ahead for the Culture Center. This brief was then forwarded to the Army Chief of Staff, which led to the U.S. Army Culture Center becoming the TRADOC Culture Center (TCC) in November of 2005. Development of cultural awareness training products continued and led to other undertakings. In 2006 the TCC sponsored the first TRADOC Culture Summit whose key concept was, of course, cultural awareness.

In the TCC culture awareness phase all the programs of instruction (AFRICOM, CENTCOM, PACOM, and CORPS lessons) were rolled into one package. However, it wasn't long before an urgent Warfighter request came in from a unit that had spent a year training for deployment to Iraq only to receive orders for Afghanistan just one week before their date of deployment. Because the TCC had adopted a unitary format of instruction, it could not provide differentiated assistance to deploying units. To meet the needs of the Army the TCC went from a general training support package (TSP) to a very modular and specific TSP to meet the requirements of the deploying units. TCC now trains with regional expertise throughout the operational environments (OE).

New training media from TCC include Smart Cards, Smart Books and Student Readers relating to CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and PACOM areas. These

products were designed for the graduated range of the junior enlisted (Skill Level One, *Smart Cards*), for the NCOs (Skill Level Two and Three, *Smart Books*) and for the First Sergeants and Commanders (Skill Level Four and Five, *Student Readers*). Instructional programs can combine all these resources for development of cross-culturally competent Warfighters.

The Army Culture Education and Training Curriculum (ACETC) booklet was developed to provide a quick reference for the Warfighter for everything available through the TCC. The ACETC became a much sought after product because units could customize their training requests. Originally a two-sided brochure, the ACETC grew to a 46-page booklet. The ACETC remains available by request or by online download.

Moving up from cultural awareness to cross-cultural competency (3C) training, the critical problem we now face is how to incorporate 3C into the curriculum. TCC developed interactive training videos, *Army 360* and the *IMT/BCT (Initial Military Training/Basic Combat Training) Video* to enable Generation X and Y Warfighters to acquire more effective 3C training. The *Army 360* video, filmed with professional role-playing actors, is an immersive, interactive training video employing a decision-tree structure that offers the Soldier a mission brief. Pauses throughout the video allow four alternative decisions based on hypothetical cultural scenarios representative of the OE. Successful navigation through the system (mission accomplishment) requires correct responses. Incorrect responses are terminal, possibly resulting in gunfire, loss of life, or other possible deleterious outcomes. Ultimately, incorrect responses prompt retraining. It is an effective way to train young Soldiers prior to deployment.

opment for the future Soldier as an Army leader. These capabilities will help Soldiers quickly read and understand subtle cultural signs, clues and relationships in the operational setting.

Army culture training will soon have the option to integrate distributed learning products for knowledge and face-to-face training for behaviors. Soldiers can complete interactive tutorials and participate in scenario-based culture training that puts them into events as active participants to practice their decision making skills and observe appropriate behaviors role modeled in the cross-cultural environment. This will lead to small group training

guided by a facilitator addressing the complex cultural combat skills of rapport building, negotiations and key leader engagements. These skills are as interpersonal as modern Army combatives, so training will be as interpersonal as combatives training. Soldiers will apply their cross-cultural knowing to cross-cultural doing and progress from being culturally aware to becoming cultural competent.

America's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Soldiers will continue to face challenges and opportunities that require 3C-proficiency. The TCC is a key enabler to further advance and honor our Valley Forge roots, to Kandahar and beyond. 

## CSM FORUM

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TRADOC Commander General Dempsey mandated another training product, the IMT/BCT video. All U.S. Army Soldiers in basic training must receive this one-hour, multiple episode video vignette training. Two professional narrators guide the Soldier through different types of 3C environments via cultural immersion scenarios. The narrators' dress, behavior, and conversation illustrate features of culture (values, beliefs, behaviors, norms) in contrastive settings. Cultural differences come alive in contexts that young Soldiers understand because they are set in familiar American scenarios. For example, a food court at an American mall, with all its ethnic foods, becomes a way to represent subcultural diversity. This training quickly elevates the Soldier's level of cultural competence.

This instruction can be incorporated into Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at the different Training Centers of Excellence as well. Available through the University of Military Intelligence (UMI) online, MI Soldiers can complete the curriculum during Phase 4 and 5 training before they leave AIT. Fort Huachuca is producing Soldiers who are well trained in 3C.

A Learning Management System (LMS) tracks the online training and issues certificates upon successful completion of the training. The LMS is an automated database for tracking users. When Soldiers log on to UMI, the login name and password identifies them and tracks their performance. All training within the LMS shell allows the gathering of a great amount of detailed data on users and provides

critical feedback for further refinement and development of training software. UMI is the main website for online training using the IMT/BCT video. Army 360 Version Two video will soon appear on the UMI website, making the application entirely web-based.

Platform instructors continue to implement 3C training via institutional training (IT), mobile training teams (MTT), and train the trainer (TTT). Instruction has grown into different team frameworks in order to accomplish training requirements at the Fort Huachuca level as well as with outside organizations, including U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force units. The teams have been mandated to train the full spectrum of Warfighters, from enlisted through captain. TCC has developed the cultural curriculum for the Advanced Leadership Course (ALC) and Senior Leader Course (SLC), the Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC), and the MI Captains Career Course (MICCC). These courses now include role-playing scenarios and situational training exercises along with conventional PowerPoint training.

This developmental history of TCC training (from Counterintelligence, to cultural awareness, to cultural expertise, to 3C training, to future integrated Culture and Language training) corresponds to the five levels of development of digital literacy methodologies, and reflects the movement of the entire U.S. military in the direction of increasingly differentiated, digitally integrated, and distributed curriculum methodologies. Level 1 represents a linear

*(Continued on page 31)*

# Cross-Cultural Competence

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center (TCC) at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, is proud of this unique issue devoted to the challenges and dimensions of cross-cultural competence (3C) in U.S. military training.

The aim of this special issue of the MIPB is to expand upon a broader view of the general and applied problems of 3C, without pre-conceived frameworks or biased notions of the challenges involved in the complexities of 3C conceptualization, training articulation, or operational application. We wanted to examine, through first-hand experience, the problems and requirements of 3C development as told by those who daily instruct, practice, develop, and ultimately put these skills into practice. This special issue also explores ways in which these skills may be applied to human and military experiences where 3C becomes a critical issue, across a range of cultural settings and contexts, in training and in operations as well as in everyday life.

The articles reflect a broad range of interests, skills, knowledge and subject matter expertise from within the TCC as well as from significant contributors without. Our intention was to gather a diversity of ideas on topics related to 3C without setting constraints or arbitrary boundaries upon what these ideas should be about. We sought authors to write, as much as possible, in their own voices and to bring to the table, as much as possible, firsthand experience. Only with a plurality of voices can we hope to achieve a solid foundation in exploring the 3C challenges.

U.S. military awareness of the importance of cultural differences in operating environments has expanded to an understanding of the requirement to develop true skill-based 3C for a broad range of personnel so that they can successfully navigate and operate in foreign field contexts. It is recognized that considerations of cultural awareness and 3C skill development necessary for operational effectiveness will vary across the spectrum of command and occupation. 3C requirements will be different for higher ranking officers in command than for privates or staff NCOs or other personnel on foreign ground.

We can distinguish the use of cultural knowledge at three levels (strategic, operational, and tactical) as well as the different requirements and kinds of cultural knowledge for each of these levels. Though cultural knowledge for all three levels may be interrelated, *strategic* knowledge generally requires more abstract notions of culture defined foremost by history and cultural dynamics. *Operational* and *tactical* levels of cultural knowledge require practical application and an analytical understanding of traditional customs and beliefs, as well as the

impact of operationally-defined culture upon human behavior in the areas of operations (AO).

3C has an intellectual history in cross-cultural communication studies that focused on value differentials between people of different cultures and how these differences influenced communication styles, intended especially for intercultural competence training applied to business and management. These studies were connected with models and requirements of international business and the conduct of high level meetings and negotiations, as well as for market research. They are not to be confused with broader cross-cultural research aimed at a form of comparative analytical scientific knowledge in basic anthropology, that generally inform models of cross-cultural awareness and 3C skill requirements.

In spite of academic criticism and theoretical methodological questions regarding such applied research, the broad use of 3C studies in education, business, political negotiation, marketing or military operation underscores the value of brokering and mediating cultural differences that might otherwise interfere with constructive outcomes. The net benefit of such systematic application is in the long run clear in many operational settings in definitely reducing the requirements for kinetic alternatives in otherwise violent situations, as well as for increasing the social leverage upon which the stable foundations of development can be built.

The theme of this year's special issue grew out of the interest generated by last year's special issue devoted to Cultural Awareness. The general theme (3C) of this issue covers a broad range of critical subthemes relating to cross-cultural negotiations, mediation, training and education, religion, culture and language acquisition, and conflict resolution and management. The sub-themes, problems and paradoxes of 3C, in training and application in operational settings, are examined by a host of different voices, drawing from a wide range of expertise and experience across many different military, cultural, and academic backgrounds. A 3C finish line has not yet been reached. Indeed, this is but the first leg of a long race, but it is clear that the entire U.S. military is headed in the right direction.

The Army is rapidly catching on and correctly ciphering the strategic and tactical requirements and necessity of maintaining and developing applicable 3C skills in the AOs. This has not been accomplished without fits, starts and stops, but the road as yet untraveled is made more worthy by the fact of its difficulty and the learning from mistakes that come from such a journey.

— Marilyn Willis-Grider, EdD  
Director, TRADOC Culture Center



# Some Thoughts on Cultural Mirror Imaging

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**by Colonel Sonny Reeves, Director, Training, Development and Support**

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What is mirror imaging? Basically it is observing or assessing someone else's experiences from our own worldview. We all do it. We do it daily. It is just more pronounced and at times operationally dangerous when we do mirror imaging in a foreign land, especially within non-Western societies.

## **Preconceived Notions**

Mirror imaging is a perennial challenge for all Soldiers. Throughout my 26-year intelligence career, I have struggled with this challenge. A simple example was my own mirror-imaging when I was on temporary duty in Qatar. I remember walking on the beautiful beach; the temperature was in the high 90s. An Arab father and mother were walking on the beach with their small son. The father and son were in bathing suits with no shirts on. The mother was in complete, traditional black Arab garb (the *Aabaya*). The mother had to be very hot and uncomfortable. I was hot and wearing a bathing suit. The juxtaposition was bothersome to me, but the sight was not that unusual in the Middle East. It did not seem to bother either of the parents. Many Westerners would probably condemn this act as ostensibly sexist, but was it?

As a Soldier, one does not have to accept nor approve of other cultures; however, one must be pre-

pared for these perceptions and understand them, in order to use them as a mission effectiveness multiplier.

Mirror imaging does not just apply to military operations. In the mid-1990s I was a young men's leader and Boy Scoutmaster for a male South African teenager named Percy. Percy, his siblings, and mother were prominent family members of the Zulu tribe and therefore, by default, members of the Inkhata Freedom Party. However, they committed a major social faux pas and tribal heresy; they supported Nelson Mandela's African National Congress which was primarily comprised of the Xhosa tribe. Because of their tribal treason, they suffered significant violence from fellow Zulu tribe members. Members of Percy's tribe tried to kill Percy, his mother Christine, and his siblings. Christine's brother, a very prominent Zulu and ANC leader, helped smuggle Percy and his family out of South Africa and they eventually ended up in the U.S.

This experience was eye opening. I had always viewed the South African conflict, especially Apartheid, from the lens of American Jim Crow laws. It was difficult not to. The South African perpetrators looked like Jim Crow villains. Clearly, from a simplistic American perspective, their motives were the

same. However, that is not completely true. South African policies of Apartheid were clearly racial and tribal as well. Percy and his family's hardships proved that point. I am not legitimizing or reducing the horrors of Apartheid, but I was attempting to demonstrate how preconceived ideas might influence personal actions as well as U.S. operations.

Even the smallest failure to anticipate how others interpret things can affect US operations. One combatant commander (COCOM) shared with a group of military personnel an experience he had while briefing a theater Minister of Defense (MOD). The PowerPoint slide had the COCOM area of responsibility lines that showed his responsibility for the MOD's country. Understandably, the MOD took exception to the notion that the U.S. was responsible for his country. It was the MOD's responsibility.

Clearly the commander and slide maker did not think through the potential cultural implications of this slide. We must be aware of mirror-imaging; if not, dangerous consequences might not be avoidable.

### **They Aren't Like Us Necessarily**

My own operational and tactical experiences, as well as my own studies, have taught me that there are pronounced differences in attitude and worldview in locations where the U.S. has historically operated, especially in the counterinsurgency (COIN) environment (e.g., Haiti for over one hundred years, Nicaragua, Liberia, Afghanistan, Cuba, etc.) Some of the most important cultural differences are the tribe, the strong tendency to look to the past (especially with grievances, perceived or real), and the decentralized nature of many non-Western cultures. Each of these factors complements one another to a degree. Additionally, these are traits that are not possessed by Americans in general, and these biases and outlooks are not generally carried into the operational environment.

It is not atypical that many of the countries in which U.S. soldiers conduct, or will conduct, operations have a long historical perspective, or in some cases deep-seated grievances. These perspectives are often alien to our country. Conversely, Americans generally look to the present and the future. Denesh D'Souza, an Indian immigrant to the U.S., articulated this issue:

...a lot has happened since the twelfth century, and we have forgotten a lot of things. American

culture is rather present oriented, and even what happened in the 1980s now seems dated. It is time that we started to learn and to remember because our enemies do. When bin Laden invokes the name of Salah-al-Din (Saladin), he is drawing inspiration from the great twelfth-century Muslim general who threw back the Crusaders and recaptured Jerusalem. In his videotaped statement released on Al Jazeera television, bin Laden said Americans should get used to suffering because "our Islamic nation has been tasting the same for more than 80 years." He was dismembering of the Ottoman Empire, the last of the great Muslim empires, by the victorious European forces after World War I.<sup>1</sup>

Put another way, D'Souza said that to Third World members, "birth is destiny."<sup>2</sup> That's a concept that contradicts the American myth that we can be whatever we want to be.

Perhaps the only similar backward-looking cultural worldview in America relates to the Civil War (or the War of Northern Aggression depending on one's regional perspective). The noted southern historian Shelby Foote said, "Southerners are very strange about that war."<sup>3</sup> Additionally, this view varies in the U.S. depending on where one lives and their race. Tony Horwitz, writer and former Civil War reenactor, said:

Everywhere, I [travelled], I had to explore two pasts and two presents; one white, one black, separate and unreconcilable. The past had poisoned the present and the present, in turn, now poisoned remembrance of things past. So there needed to be a black Memorial Day and a white Veterans Day. A black city museum and a white one. A black history month and a white calendar of remembrance. The best that could be hoped for was a grudging toleration of each other's historical memory.<sup>4</sup>

My own sense is that these separate racial views are becoming more reconcilable. Related to this backward-looking worldview in many regions is a tribe or clan or a family based society beyond which loyalty often may appear to be illogical. These perspectives also often may appear to us as a form of corruption because of what we perceive as nepotism over merit. In America, because of our strong sense of individualism, religious and ethnic diversity, and high mobility, this backwards looking mindset is

generally an alien concept. Nonetheless, this different community view is a challenge and a perspective that we must remain cognizant of in order to accomplish our mission.

Keith B. Richburg, the New York Bureau Chief of *The Washington Post*, and an author with significant professional African experiences, commented on the centrality of the tribe in many of the African countries that he reported on and how these loyalties undercut their own nations' forward progress. He said, "If there was one thing I learned traveling around Africa, it was that the tribe remains the defining feature of almost every African society. Old tribal mistrusts and stereotypes linger, and the potential for a violent implosion is never very far from the surface."<sup>5</sup> Richburg even described how black Africans would ascribe to him a tribal or ethnic group despite his U.S. passport and regular assertions that he was an American. For example, while in Kenya, a young woman asked Richburg where he was from, and this captures their dialog:

Woman: I think you're Kenyan.

Richburg: No, I said I'm American.

Woman: You don't look like an American. You look like a Kenyan.

Richburg: No, I insisted, I really am American. Trust me.

Woman: I know you're a Kenyan, she said firmly, turning away. You're just trying to pretend you don't speak Swahili.

Richburg: Okay, I said, resigned. You found me out. I'm really a Kenyan.

Woman: Aha! she said, turning back to me, pleased with herself now. I knew it.<sup>6</sup>

This surreal experience reflects a paradigm that we may find foreign but that may reinforce the obstacles and challenges we must face to avoid mirror imaging. Franklin Foer, an author and writer for *The New Republic*, stated correctly that "humans crave identifying with a group. It is an unavoidable, immemorial, hardwired instinct."<sup>7</sup> Though he was referring to the nation state, a strong tribe, clan, and familial identity may be more pronounced in the non-Western world; for some it is almost a form of fanaticism. This strong identity can lead to what we might consider corruption. Edward Banfield, in *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1958), argued that "the most familial-based societies, where

the sense of obligation is strongest, breed the worst nepotism and cronyism."<sup>8</sup> These challenges occur in areas where the U.S. operates regularly or has the potential to conduct operations.

Richburg wrote about a common African story that highlights the pervasiveness of corruption. This example may overstate the problem, but it conveys a significant cultural divide that we will likely experience to some degree. He described the parable as follows:

- ◆ An Asian and an African become friends while they are both attending graduate school in the West. Years later, they each rise to become the finance minister of their respective countries. One day, the African ventures to Asia to visit his old friend, and is startled by the Asian's palatial home, the three Mercedes-Benzes in the circular drive, the swimming pool, the servants.
- ◆ "My God!" The African exclaims. "We were just poor students before! How on earth can you now afford all this?"
- ◆ And the Asian takes his African friend to the window and points to a sparkling new elevated highway in the distance. "You see that toll road?" asks the Asian, then he proudly taps himself on the chest. "Ten percent." And the African nods approvingly.
- ◆ A few years later the Asian ventures to Africa, to return the visit to his old friend. He finds the African living in a massive estate sprawling over several acres. There's a fleet of dozens of Mercedes-Benzes in the driveway, an indoor pool and tennis courts, an army of uniformed chauffeurs and servants. "My God!" says the Asian. "How on earth do you afford all this?"
- ◆ This time the African takes his Asian friend to the window and points. "You see that highway?" he asks. But the Asian looks and sees nothing, just an open field with a few cows grazing.
- ◆ "I don't see any highway," the Asian says, straining his eyes.
- ◆ At this point, the African smiles, taps himself on the chest, and boasts, "One hundred percent!"<sup>9</sup>

The story's moral is obvious. Possessing this understanding will better prepare Soldiers to conduct different operations, especially in a COIN environment. However, Major General Michael Jones, the CENTCOM J3, speaking at TRADOC Culture Summit

IV, provided a different perspective. MG Jones highlighted a discussion he had with an Iraqi general on corruption. The Iraqi said that Americans pay a tip to a waiter after they provide service. The Iraqis pay the tip (bribe from a Western perspective) before the activity to ensure good service.<sup>10</sup>

## Use Cultural Understanding to Achieve Mission

The Apaches tribes, unlike the Sioux nations, were a decentralized organization with no real head. The Apache had Nant'an leaders that would rise up and various tribal members would choose to follow them. When a Nant'an died or was captured, others would arise, thus making it almost impossible for others to defeat them. The Spanish fought them for several centuries, without any success. The U.S. Army also fought them for several generations with limited success until the early 1900s.<sup>11</sup> It was quite ingenious how the U.S. Army finally defeated the Apache without firing a shot. They essentially inverted the Apache culture and made them a centralized tribe. How did they do this? With cattle!<sup>12</sup>

Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom said, "the Americans finally realized that they needed to attack the Apache at a very basic level in order to control them." The Army gave the Nant'ans cattle. The cows gave the Nant'ans power and responsibility, thus destroying their tribe's decentralized nature. "Their power shifted from symbolic to material." This empowered the Nant'ans but also turned their societal framework on its head because it made them a centralized group now tied to a land and formalized their power. "The cows changed everything...this broke down Apache society."<sup>13</sup> What relevance does this example have? The central point is if we are culturally sensitive, we can avoid the cultural faux pas of mirror imaging. If culturally sensitive, and well prepared, we can use cultural understanding to help better achieve U.S. objectives, thus reducing deployment time, resources, and saving U.S., coalition, and native lives. You do not need to be a COCOM commander to appreciate cultural differences and to learn how to avoid mirror imaging.

Where can you get help? The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center (TCC) has numerous user-friendly training and educational products that can assist your soldiers to become more culturally proficient. As an example, the TCC has Army 360 DVDs based on Afghanistan,

Iraq, and Somalia with a combination of exciting movies, education, and interactive training portions. The TCC has other exceptional products that it can tailor to unit requirements. You can visit the TCC website at the following site: <https://ikn.army.mil/apps/tccv2/> for more information. 

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# Creating Culturally Astute Leaders:

## Joint and Combined Fires University Providing Innovative Cultural Education

**by Sharon McBride, Editor-in-Chief, Fires**

*This article, from the September-October 2010 issue of Fires, is reprinted with permission.*

Despite growing awareness among Army leaders to include foreign cultural education as a part of training and operational planning, the roles that culture and religion play in successful missions and deployments are often overlooked. Battlefield lessons learned have confirmed that language skills and understanding of foreign cultures are crucial for success in full-spectrum operations. Often, cultural understanding is necessary both to defeat adversaries and to work successfully with allies. The Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy, released in 2009, highlighted operational experiences in Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq with having critical gaps in the Army capability to influence and operate effectively within different cultures for extended periods of time.

In an effort to develop adaptive, agile and culturally astute leaders with the right blend of culture and foreign language capabilities, the Fires Center of Excellence's (FCoE) Joint and Combined Fires University (JCFU) is leading the way with its implementation of a Cultural and Foreign Language Program (CFLP). Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov, who is fluent in five languages and versed in many cultures, was hired as the first TRADOC Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor, and is the head of the CFLP here at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Changing our current teaching paradigms required new ideas and the ability to go beyond providing Soldiers and leaders a rudimentary foundation in foreign culture and language familiarization. Traditionally, cultural

training tended to be overly simplistic and lacked a context for cultural understanding, Ibrahimov explained. The curriculum developed by CFLP helps Soldiers and leaders develop critical thinking skills needed to understand how culture might influence the outcome of an operation. Ibrahimov has created a holistic approach to cultural training that is now being looked at closely by TRADOC for other installations to emulate. According to him, becoming aware of cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is based on experiences, values, behaviors, beliefs and norms. In many cases, Soldiers may experience a foreign culture for the first time during a deployment, and as a result may inadvertently be disrespectful.

For example, in Iraq, the left hand is not used for contact with others, eating or ges-



tures; it is considered unclean. When talking with an Iraqi, especially during key leader engagements, close personal interaction is customary and distance is considered rude. Try all food and drink offered, and it's important to appear relaxed and friendly; social interaction is critical in building trust. Cultural awareness training would help overcome the 'culture

shock,' and give Soldiers the ability to adjust to an indigenous culture as quickly as possible to get the mission done. It should also build on the foundation of an individual's existing leader attributes which in turn reinforces the core leader competencies of leading others, developing oneself and achieving results. Cross-cultural training should focus, in particular on character, presence and intellect. (See figure 1.1 Cultural Awareness Objectives.)

**Figure 1.1 Cultural Awareness Objectives**

**Learning Objective 1 (Character): Demonstrate interaction and cross-cultural communications skills in order to effectively engage and understand people and their environment.**

Demonstrate a level of cultural awareness that includes a positive openness to other people, an understanding of prevailing values, beliefs, behaviors and customs, and a desire to learn more about cultures and language. This includes an introduction to a language that supports current military operations with the intent to promote additional study through self-development at the institution, at home station or at an academic university.

**Learning Objective 2 (Presence): Demonstrate communication, influence and negotiation skills essential for leaders to effectively operate in a JIIM environment.**

Leverage the knowledge gained by challenging students to employ skills to deal with ambiguous and complex situations, to regulate one's own behavior and to use the interpersonal abilities to deal with people from one's own or other cultures. This includes an understanding and ability to engage other joint and allied military personnel, and host country indigenous leaders with a moderate level of confidence.

**Learning Objective 3 (Intellect): Demonstrate a familiarization in a geographic region of current operational significance.**

Leverage critical thinking and cognitive skills through organizing information that supports cultural self-awareness. Depending on level of leader development professional military education, expand cross-cultural competence skills by gaining an awareness or understanding of a geographic area that highlights the implications of a region's economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features, and of sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the U.S. and its allies.

Apply relevant planning to considerations, terms, factors, concepts and geographic information to mission planning and in the conduct of operations. This includes leveraging other TRADOC and DOD schools, partnerships with universities and academia, gaming technology and opportunities that stress students' ability to concisely and persuasively speak and write, to engage in discussions, and employ cognitive reasoning and thinking skills.

Some programs define cultural immersion as simply 'being there,' asserting that physically being in another country is an immersion in itself and that knowledge of another culture and language will follow naturally. "That isn't always the case," Ibrahimov said. When developing a comprehensive program, Ibrahimov determined that three cultural competency levels (cultural awareness, understanding and expertise) must be included. These competency levels are now included in all courses taught by the JCFU, the FCoE Noncommissioned Officers Academy and in other leadership courses attended by officers and warrant officers to overcome cultural ignorance. (See figure 1.2 Cultural Competency Levels.)

The Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC), the NCO Warrior Leader Course, the NCO Advanced Leader Course, the Captains Career Course, the Warrant Officer Basic Course, the Warrant Officer Advanced Course, and the NCO Senior Leader Course have all been revised to contain specific approaches appropriate to each level in order for leaders to attain specific knowledge on culture and foreign language expectations. It is important to note, as designed the training places more emphasis on attaining cultural knowledge (big C), with some emphasis on learning foreign languages (little L).

"Our Soldiers and leaders really need to understand the cultural nuances of other countries," Ibrahimov said. "The decisions our younger Soldiers

**Figure 1.2 Cultural Competency Levels**

**Cultural expertise**

Advanced level of cross-cultural competence in a specific geographic area. Generally entails some degree of proficiency in a language; skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution, influence or leadership; and an understanding of the most salient historic and present-day regional structural and cultural factors of a specific geographic area.

**Cultural understanding**

Well developed cross-cultural competence in a specific region. Able to anticipate the implications of culture and apply relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information to tasks and missions. Familiar with a specific region's economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features, and aware of regional sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the U.S. and its allies.

**Cultural awareness**

Minimal level of regional competence necessary to perform assigned tasks in a specific geographic area; able to describe key culture terms, factors and concepts. Basic understanding of how foreign culture might affect the planning and conduct of operations.

and leaders are making often have strategic importance.” Cultural knowledge and understanding can open eyes so Soldiers can be more effective when dealing with a local populace. Having a rudimentary knowledge of a native language can be helpful in a variety of situations, he added.

## Partnerships and Cooperation

Ibrahimov also designed the CFLP program to have ongoing partnerships and cooperation with local universities and other military institutions. Cameron University, Oklahoma University and Oklahoma State University faculties conduct regular seminars for Fires professionals on topics of operational importance.

Past topics have included: *Central Asia: Modernity and Geopolitics in the Stans, The Cultural and Linguistic Patterns in the Middle East and Projections for Iraq, Who Will Lead? The United States, the European Union, China, and the Global Diffusion of Power, The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, U.S. Strategic Options in Afghanistan, Iran and U.S. Strategy, Russia: A Declining Superpower Reclaiming its Throne?* Future strategic topics are related to Russia, Iran and the Middle East.

“These seminars have led to an increased understanding by our students of cultural aspects and geopolitical trends, their impacts on the contemporary operational environment,” said Ibrahimov. “We are working on attracting more academic support to enhance ongoing education and training so they can be better prepared to operate in the joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational environments that they might be deployed in the future.”

Partnerships to enhance training have also been formed with TRADOC Culture Center and U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence both located at Fort Huachuca, Arizona; the Marine Corps University at Quantico, Virginia; the Defense Language Institute (DLI) Foreign Language Center at the Presidio in Monterey, California, and the East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University.

Ibrahimov himself also regularly conducts seminars with students attending the Fires Support Coordinator Course, Warrant Officer Instructional Branch, Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Captains Career Course. He also conducts specific or generalized pre-deployment training upon request. He has also been

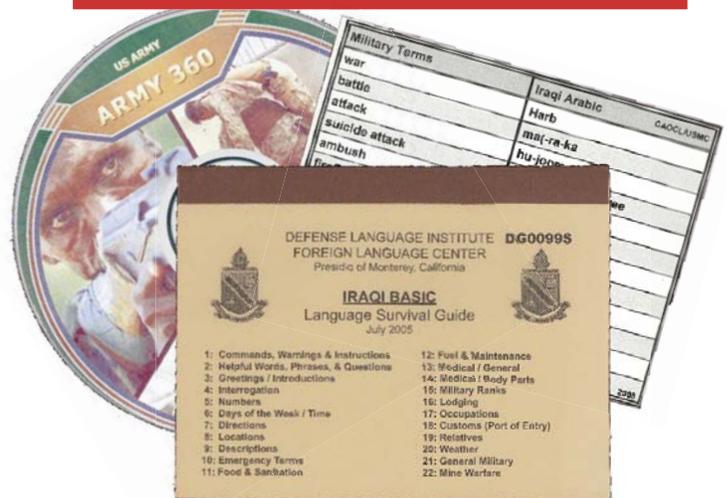
conducting train-the-trainer sessions for small group leaders, new cultural awareness instructors and new TRADOC cultural advisors. He has also made arrangements for allied international students and FCoE liaison officers to conduct regular briefs on their respective countries for additional knowledge.

## Cultural Simulation

Items in FCoE Cultural and Foreign Language Program’s arsenal include a ‘Cultural Awareness and Language Training Package,’ which is a portable training option for Soldiers that includes several foreign language CDs, a cultural awareness scenario-based game called “Army 360,” language flash cards and field-expedient smart books allocated from the Defense Language Institute for troops’ use. (See figure 1.3 Cultural Awareness and Language Training Package.)

Figure 1.3 Cultural Awareness and Language Training Package

- ◆ Iraqi Basic Language Survival Guide
- ◆ Tactical Dari Language and Culture
- ◆ Multi-Platform Tactical Language Kit–Dari
- ◆ Pashto Headstart & LSK
- ◆ Tactical Pashto: Language and Culture
- ◆ Multi-Platform Tactical Language Kit Iraqi Arabic
- ◆ Pocket cards—for use in the field
- ◆ Army 360
- ◆ DLI Foreign Language Center (Presidio of Monterey)
- ◆ Flipbook on Iraqi Basic–Language Survival Guide
- ◆ Flipbook on Korean Basic–Language Survival Guide



“Army 360” is a virtual simulation application that enables students to immerse themselves in true-to-life scenarios in order to broaden their experience in dealing with other cultures. They get to practice intuitive decision making abilities in a mock environment before facing the real-life culture dilemmas.



Ibrahimov also established a Culture and Foreign Language Resource Center in the Morris Swett Technical library, where students have access to computers for self-paced training, various cultural awareness books and numerous other applicable digital (to include Rosetta Stone) and traditional learning resources. These resources are available to captains, BOLC B attendees, NCOES and warrant officer students to prepare cultural research papers which are now a mandatory requirement in each of their respective training. BOLC B students are now eligible to receive certificates after completing four to eight hours of language training. The FCoE CFLP identified five operationally important languages for training: Dari, Pashto (Afghanistan), Iraqi Arabic, Korean, and Russian. Not sure where to start? A comprehensive reading list is also available at the resource center that includes books on areas that are currently strategically/operationally important to Army operations.

A dedicated FCoE CFLP resource page is also available by logging onto FKN. The site contains an abundance of cultural awareness and foreign language knowledge, information on past seminars, information on the program, media coverage of the events, foreign languages guides, links to DLI, Foreign Language Center resources, as well as the CIA Fact Book. The list and site are constantly being updated and upgraded.

The FCoE CFLP has also just launched an all-volunteer language and cultural awareness orientation class/pilot program that started in July. It's a 12-week language course that is conducted by a native Arabic speaker. "Sometimes troops have more success learning a foreign language by listening and practicing with a person rather than just listening to a CD," Ibrahimov said. The first session was attended by 46 volunteer students from FA/ADA CCC and WOES. FCoE CFLP is currently in the process of

identifying a Dari or Pashto instructor (Afghanistan) to launch a similar 12-week program in the future.

## Join the Army, See the World

Deployments are not going to be stopping any time soon. According to DA Pam 525-3-0, The Army Capstone Concept Operational Adaptability-Operation under Conditions of Uncertainty and Complexity in an Era of Persistent Conflict, the Army is going to continue to send large numbers of Soldiers into a region about which they have little knowledge and almost no cultural connection. We then ask them to interact safely and efficiently with military and civilian natives.

These interactions require varying levels of linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal backgrounds. Providing Soldiers with these backgrounds is critical. The FCoE CFLP is on target in providing an avenue of learning for leaders and Soldiers to achieve at least an elemental language proficiency (Level 0+/1) prior to deployment. (See figure 1.4 Speaking Language Proficiency Levels.) FCoE CFLP hopes that by providing evolutionary training, it will make all Fires professionals successful—no matter what corner of the globe they happen to deploy. For more information on the FCoE CFLP, log onto FKN at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/21617522>.

**Figure 1.4 Speaking Language Proficiency Levels**

- ◆ Speaking 0: No proficiency
- ◆ Speaking 0+: Memorized proficiency
- ◆ Speaking 1: Elementary proficiency
- ◆ Speaking 1+: Elementary proficiency, plus
- ◆ Speaking 2/2+: Limited working proficiency
- ◆ Speaking 3/3+: General professional proficiency
- ◆ Speaking 4/4+: Advanced professional proficiency
- ◆ Speaking 5: Functionally native proficiency



**Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov talks with children in a local village during a mission to open two water treatment plants in Balad, Iraq. (Photo courtesy of 28<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment)**



# What is Cross-Cultural Competency? Evolution of 3C in the U.S. Army

by **Angela Aube**

As we continually “learn new lessons” in each military engagement we face, the U.S. military has again remembered the importance of cultural information to the Soldier. An early ad hoc arrangement fostered by leaders who recognized the role of culture in military operations, cross-cultural competence (3C) has mutated and evolved from an unformed mass to something closely resembling sponge cake.

## **In the Beginning...**

Upon entering Afghanistan and Iraq nearly a decade ago, the U.S. military again discovered that we need to know as much as possible about ourselves and others. This has resulted in a compelling argument for the institutionalization of 3C education and training throughout all branches of the U.S. military. Even before its formal establishment in February 2006, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Culture Center was driven by the Army’s desire for culture education and training. However, a fly on the wall listening to requests for training since the beginning of this endeavor might have overheard some variation of this conversation:

**“We need cultural awareness training.”**

**“Ok, what do you need cultural awareness of?”**

**“The bad guys...We just don’t know enough to be able to find them and kill them.”**

Regardless of where this fly was located—at an Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Navy base—the conversation is likely to have been the same. Most certainly the end of this conversation—after training

had been created and/or delivered to an expectant audience—would have sounded something like this:

**“But that isn’t what I wanted...”**

Over the years, these same conversations continued to be (and most likely still are) dominated by such words as ‘awareness’ and ‘sensitivity,’ but often without a true understanding of what culture education and training is, what it can do for your unit and mission accomplishment, and also what it cannot do. The style of training, at least in the Army, has moved from knowledge-based lectures focused on ‘the other’ to skill-focused interactive education and training focused on a standardized framework designed to build important interaction skills. This training has also evolved in many cases from an additional separate block of instruction to education and training that is incorporated into the learning and practice of existing Soldier skills. In the beginning, culture training was often comprised of a lecture about Iraqis or Afghans, which sometimes culminated in a “culture situational training exercise lane.” Unfortunately, this proved to be a waste of resources in many cases, as well as a faulty approach. With separate training and exercise lanes, culture education and training seemed to be an unrelated topic, one that had no relation to the skills and abilities Soldiers were already required to learn, foster, and maintain. By incorporating culture education and training into current Soldier tasks, culture’s role becomes more apparent, robust, and integrated.

One other stumbling block in the evolution of culture education and training was the language used to describe it: awareness and sensitivity. These words often evoked a sometimes defensive feeling from Soldiers, resulting in the continuous need to justify our existence as culture training developers and teachers. If you've stood in front of a classroom of Soldiers on Day One of a 40-hour training week on culture—particularly between 2004 and about 2007—then you know the feeling of having to justify why you were there talking to them when they could be doing something else much more interesting.

However, over the last few years, the military mindset has certainly shifted from what one might label 'disinterest requiring justification' to students/Soldiers knowing why they needed the information and usually asking for more. Perhaps this is a result of increased support from leadership or the fact that many more Soldiers have made their way to a dangerous and sometimes, at least in their own minds, inexplicable operational environment. It seems that now, most members of the military recognize that the infamous phrase "Kill them all and let God sort them out" sounds good in theory, but tends to play havoc with successfully conducting most missions in a modern, counterinsurgency environment where "fence-sitters" can easily become active combatants. Regardless, the need for a new skill set has certainly evolved from changing circumstances and has informed culture education and training.

### **What is 3C?**

So, what is 3C? In the beginning, those words did not exist in the minds of most members of the military. Instead, awareness and sensitivity (those offensive words mentioned before) created images of acceptance, tolerance, and appreciation for the undoubtedly strange customs of 'the other,' while holding hands and dancing in a peace circle. That is not what 3C is, though. Essentially it is a process-oriented approach to a human-oriented skill set. The emphasis here is on a skill set. Essentially, 3C is teaching the now-forgotten *people skills*. These important skills are communication, rapport building, and negotiations, to name a few.

One would think, in the age of instant technology, constant human connection and social networking, that these people skills would be well developed. With an excess of 500 million active

Facebook users<sup>1</sup> and 145 million registered Twitter users,<sup>2</sup> one would think that the 3C cornerstone skill of communication would be well honed within the U.S. population. However, when the bulk of your 'conversation' is actually a one-way presentation of inane comments like "This movie is boring!" "I made awesome fajitas last night" and "Man, traffic is crazy today! I hate the Beltway!", one has to question the quality of our society's communication skills. Enter 3C.

Compared to the number of Facebook and Twitter users, the number of 3C users quite simply leaves them in the dust. Six billion people, give or take a few million, actively login to their 3C skills every day. Communication, rapport building and negotiation are key skills that have fallen by the wayside in many situations but are now making a comeback, at least in terms of key skills for members of the U.S. Army. No longer simply focusing on 'the other,' 3C allows us to explore these key people skills, honing them to a fine edge and incorporating them effectively into our everyday tasks as members of the military and as individuals.

AR 600-100, Army Leadership, explicitly names communication as a core leader competency, containing 12 distinct references to communication in its 24 pages. FM 6-22, Army Leadership contains 95 references to communication. Obviously, this key 3C skill has an intricate role to play in just the leadership aspect of a Soldier's skills. In fact, AR 600-100 says that "Leaders at all levels must be able to communicate, coordinate, and negotiate with a variety of personnel, including joint and coalition forces, interagency partners, nongovernmental organizations, local leaders, U.S. and foreign media, civilians, contractors, and people of different cultures and languages."

Of course, one of the biggest challenges facing the institutionalization of 3C throughout the military is the nature of the military and its purpose. The marriage of the necessary warrior mentality with the peace-keeping/nation-building mentality has been a troubled one. Even lacking statistical data to support this claim, one can make two educated assumptions regarding this troubled relationship:

- ◆ When you are holding a weapon and a member of the most powerful military in the world, it can be difficult to feel like you *need* to engage others in a communication exchange.

- ◆ When you are staring down the barrel of that weapon, you are likely to be less inclined to hold an honest, productive dialogue.



As the military learned in the past decade as it again made the shift between technology-based intelligence to human-based intelligence collection, technology cannot replace human interaction. When most exchanges in other cultures take place in person over a cup of coffee, rather than over the phone, eventually you have to go to the coffee shop if you want more information. Of course, once you arrive at the coffee shop you will certainly require communication, rapport building, and negotiation skills if you hope to actually have something useful to show for your interaction. And, so we must engage on a human level and create connections. Quite frankly, there is no alternative. Again, enter 3C.

From an Army perspective, 3C provides a baseline of knowledge of communication, rapport building and negotiation skills, asking Soldiers to develop strategies to help them achieve their objectives. 3C is not hailed as a solution to all the planning woes one will encounter, but is a tool to assist in successful planning and execution of key mission objectives. That is the purpose of 3C. It should help Soldiers at all levels answer these questions, from a universal human perspective, as well as an individual cultural perspective: “If I do this, what is the most likely out-

come? What effect might this have on accomplishing my mission? Can I accept these consequences? Do they align with my unit/mission goals?” For Soldiers, if education and training cannot help achieve their objectives, then there is simply no point in even talking about it. “Nice to know” information is essentially useless and there is always something more important they could be learning.

## Conclusion

Of course, talk of the purpose of 3C begs the question: What *isn't* 3C? Some try to avoid this question, but quite frankly, 3C has its limitations, as does any tool. It is not an algebraic formula, with a defined set of values and outputs. Although much of the culture training in the beginning focused on ‘the other’ and what ‘they’ do—often without much opportunity to explore variations in cultures and the fact that people are inherently unpredictable—3C offers strategies and insights, but not formulaic answers. 3C education and training should strive to explore the development of people skills, beginning with self-exploration and understanding. Without the personal foundation, our efforts will most likely be in vain because failing to account for our own thoughts, desires, and motivations leaves a significant gap in our planning and execution process.

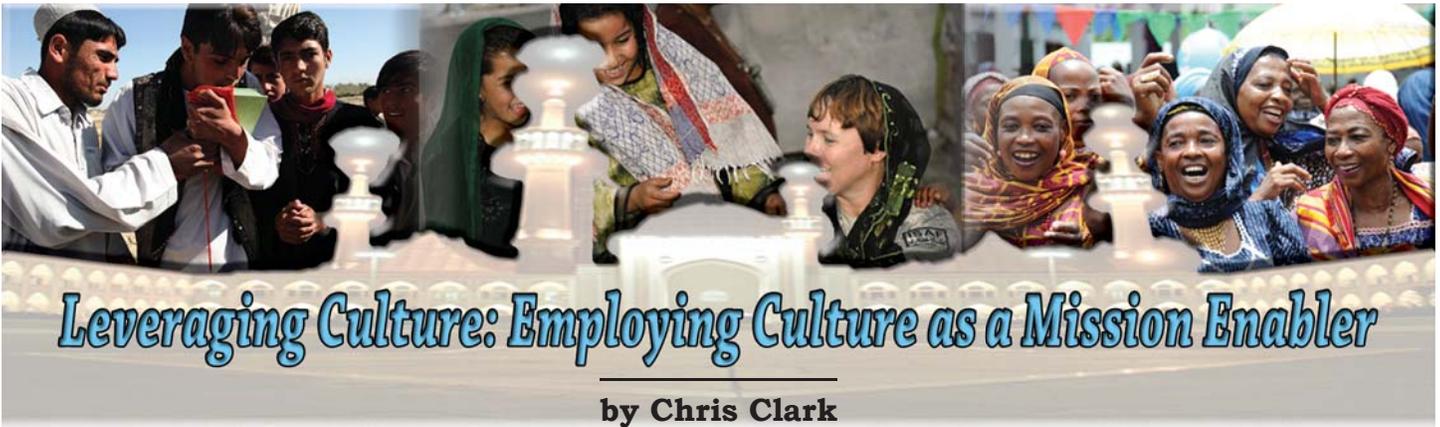
As we continue with this endeavor, we must continually remember that the purpose of 3C education and training in the military is to enhance the Soldier’s ability to effectively perform his/her job and return home safely. Boggled down with theory, this can be almost impossible. Armed with an effective marriage of theory and practice, 3C can continue to be a significant tool for members of the military. In the end, 3C is merely another tool for an already overloaded bag, but one with a significant role in today’s operational environment. Without 3C, the bag may be lighter, but certainly not as powerful. ✨

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## Introduction

Understanding the operational environment (OE) is one of the most critical requirements when deploying to an assigned area of responsibility (AOR). There are various methodologies that can facilitate the understanding of the OE at various operational levels. Two of the most commonly used methodologies are PMESII-PT (political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, and time) and ASCOPE (area, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events).

To determine what the overarching theme is in these two methodologies, it would not be too far a stretch to say that all the variables within these methodologies can be either directly or indirectly tied to the culture of the AOR. In today's fluid battlefield, not only is understanding the primary culture and subcultures that exist within your AOR important, but the ability to apply and integrate this knowledge into mission planning and daily operations is critical to mission success.

## Common Misperceptions of Culture Training

Many commanders now understand the impact that cultural considerations will have on their mission and are beginning to take the necessary steps to ensure that the overall cross-cultural competence (3C) of their unit is sufficient for the area to which they are deploying. Nevertheless, there are still a number of units that do not prepare their Soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers adequately to interact effectively with the culture in their AOR. There are myriad reasons for this.

One of the more common reasons is that there is a huge misperception about the purpose of culture training and how cultural knowledge should

be used in the OE. Some consider culture training to be the same as Equal Opportunity (EO) training. While EO training is critical to maintaining the cohesiveness of today's Army and there are many parallels between EO and culture training, EO training and culture training are two entirely different areas of focus.

Cultural knowledge is a tool within your overall toolkit of competencies that can be used when deemed necessary. A colleague of mine has stated on many different occasions that there is "no place for cultural considerations in an active kill zone." A caveat for this quote is that the goal of any kinetic engagement should be to identify all hostile elements and engage those hostiles without any collateral damage to the local populace or existing infrastructure. The reason for this is that force protection should never be put in jeopardy because you do not want to offend the local culture. Cultural knowledge is not about *not* offending someone from another culture. It is about harnessing the information to make Soldiers more effective in their missions. Training Circular (TC) 31-73, Special Forces Advisor Guide, lists force protection and human rights as two areas that should not be compromised for the sake of maintaining rapport.

## Three Steps in Culture Training

Like any tool, one needs to learn how to use it and maintain it, and when to use it. This leads us to an informal three-step framework on how to ensure that Soldiers are trained and mentored in the 3C arena. The first step is to develop a mindset within your unit in which culture is not thought of as a mysterious entity, but one that Soldiers feel is more of a mission enabler than a mission inhibitor. To create this mindset, leaders should ensure that

Soldiers understand the foundational influences that exist within all cultures.

In addition, Soldiers should participate in various self-awareness exercises to gain a better understanding of themselves. A higher level of self-awareness will better equip a Soldier to interact more effectively with someone from outside their own culture. TC 31-73 states that:

***“When communicating with people across cultures, advisors must abandon any sentiments of ethnocentrism—the tendency of individuals to judge all other groups according to their own group’s standards, behaviors, and customs. Such notions lead an individual to see other groups as inferior by comparison.”***

Do not confuse developing self-awareness with sensitivity training. It is about understanding the potential obstacles that may exist in your cross-cultural interactions, accounting for them, and maintaining an awareness of biases or prejudices that may factor into your interactions and decision-making process. This mindset will not be accomplished via stand-alone culture classes, but from integrating cultural considerations into appropriate collective training sessions, battle drills, and OPD/NCODP. This allows Soldiers to process the practical applications of cultural knowledge and will increase the collective “buy-in” of the unit to the relevancy of cultural considerations in mission planning and execution.

The second step is to integrate cultural skill building training into the unit’s training plan. Effective skill building training includes practice in cross-cultural communications, rapport building, negotiations, and key leader engagements. Cultural skill building training is a necessity because Soldiers need to understand how to employ their cultural knowledge when required. Not doing this would be like lecturing Soldiers on the functionality of an M4 and never allowing them to fire the weapon. The bulk of this training should not be conducted as separate training sessions, but should be integrated into your unit’s STX lanes and squad/platoon level training. The ability to learn and properly execute these cultural skills will have a significant impact on your unit’s ability to accomplish its mission. As with any training, an after action review (AAR) should be conducted to discuss all the learning objectives of the training exercise. If conducted properly, more learning

points may be gained from the AAR than from the actual training itself

The third step is the actual execution of these skills sets in the OE. Your unit will not truly know its overall 3C level until service members perform on the big stage in the AOR to which they are deployed. Multiple evaluations and assessments can be executed and analyzed during your unit’s train-up for a deployment. They will be missing one key element—the added pressure or intensity experienced while deployed; the one element that cannot be replicated sufficiently in a training environment. Commanders, first sergeants, platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, and squad leaders need to observe their troops’ performance closely and provide timely feedback to the individual. One of the more effective times to do this would be during tactical debriefs that occur after each operation. This is an optimal time to critique the successes and failures of your interactions with the local populace. If a negative incident occurred, then discuss the incident in detail and develop strategies to handle the situation more effectively in future missions. This will ensure the continued collective growth of the unit because the execution of cultural and other relevant skill sets should increase exponentially during the deployment.

## **Conclusion**

If these three steps are followed in one form or another, the overall 3C of a unit will be increased to the point in which culture knowledge and skill sets can be leveraged to become a mission enabler. The point at which cultural knowledge becomes a mission enabler is when a Soldier views cultural considerations as a constant consideration in mission planning and execution. Once the perception of culture training evolves from mandatory (*Crowd into a gym and listen to stand-alone training delivered as a lecture that is probably a waste of time*) to instilling in Soldiers the operational relevancy of cultural knowledge and the practical uses of it, an environment will be established in which a unit views cultural training on the same level and relevancy as weapons training. 

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# Operational Culture in the U.S. Army:

## The Fires CoE CFL Strategy

### Sets the Standard for the Rest of TRADOC

by **Mahir Ibrahimov, PhD**

Article adapted from *Fires*, January-February 2011

#### **Introduction**

Globalization, Internet networking, and instant access to worldwide news media have proliferated the merging or partnering of ideological groups that oppose the U.S. and/or U.S. policies. These groups operate in pan-regional and multi-regional battle spaces comprised of numerous cultures, both friendly and hostile. It appears likely that during the next decade the operational environment (OE) of our troops will be characterized by persistent and unpredictable conflicts in battle spaces teeming with multiple foreign cultures. The Army must be prepared to effectively operate along with our multinational and host nation partners against sophisticated and adaptive adversaries in order to achieve U.S. objectives. This dictates that Soldiers of every rank must become 'culturally astute' about the areas where they operate.

Our junior leaders face adversaries who employ multiple and dynamic combinations of conventional, irregular, terrorist, and criminal capabilities as they engage our Soldiers or attack our strategic interests. These hybrid threats can be expected to use a full spectrum of options, including every political, economic, informational, and military measure at their disposal. Combating these threats will necessitate creative solutions, and such solutions will require military forces that are adaptive enough to function in a variety of situations and against a myriad of threats with a diverse set of national, al-

lied and indigenous partners. It will require leaders who can anticipate change, create opportunities and achieve results.

The *Army's Leader Development Strategy* prescribes the future security environment will require leaders "who *understand* the context of the factors influencing the military situation, *act* within that understanding, continually *assess and adapt* those actions based on the interactions and circumstances of the enemy and environment, *consolidate* tactical and operational opportunities into strategic aims, and be able to effectively *transition* from one form of operations to another." As field artillerymen and air defense artillerymen support full spectrum operations, challenges in how we conduct fire support operations will require agility and innovation as new adaptive threats that employ a mix of new and old strategies and technologies emerge.

To prosecute the fight and accomplish the assigned mission, the U.S. Army Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery will need leaders who are adaptive, competent, and capable of operating with confidence in these ambiguous and complex environments. These leaders must be able to operate in decentralized organizations; be able to network with their joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partners; and be able to develop plans and operations that win the support of the population while defeating the enemy. They must have an understanding of how other people think and act, as well as an appreciation of cross-cultural diversity and beliefs. This cultural

sensitivity is just as important within a Soldier's organization and with other sister services and allies, as it is in engaging indigenous people and threats who exist within the contested OE. In order to meet these operational and environmental demands, we must enrich our leader training and education by leveraging and adapting training methodologies to replicate complexity and hybrid threats in the institutional classroom, at home station and while deployed.

Assessing the field artillery (FA) and air defense artillery (ADA) communities' requirements, we must develop leaders who have the core competencies to visualize, articulate and build partnerships and alliances; to effectively lead organizations; and be able to adapt to unanticipated, changing and uncertain situations.

## **The Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy**

To meet these operational and cultural challenges, the Army's goal as defined in the *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS)*, 1 December 2009, is to develop and maintain expeditionary forces that are led by Soldiers who are ready to deploy and operate effectively anywhere in the world across the full spectrum of conflict. This will require leaders who have sufficient cross-cultural, regional and foreign language competencies to enable the successful execution of military operations, not only an understanding of the culture and language in a particular area, but an understanding of the implications these considerations have on how operations are conducted. To achieve this goal, leaders and Soldiers must increase their cultural knowledge through operational experience, self-development, or as a learning opportunity during their professional military education (PME). Within the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), this will require schools and centers to develop, integrate and deliver cross-cultural education within their respective programs of instruction (POI).

## **Cross-cultural Competence**

This is a set of knowledge, skills and attributes that enables Soldiers to adapt effectively in any environment. It can develop over time through experience, but can be accelerated by principled learning methods. Cross-cultural competence (3C) enables negotiation and persuasion; mediation and conflict

resolution; leadership and influence; cultural evaluation, synthesis, and predictive analysis during staff planning; and other abilities that pertain to a specific geographic area.

Additional 3C characteristics include awareness of culture and of one's own cultural context, general cross-cultural schema and culture-analytic models, and an increasingly complex understanding of the impact of culture on military planning and operations (*knowledge*). Critical aspects of 3C are interpersonal and communication skills, flexibility in seeing different cultural frames and perspectives, and the ability to regulate one's own reactions (*skills*). Necessary ingredients of 3C are non-ethnocentric attitudes, motivation to learn about culture and to update one's knowledge base as new information is encountered and the ability to empathize (*attributes*).

## **Regional Competence**

Another major component of the culture development program is regional competence. This concept is defined as a set of knowledge, skills, and attributes related to a particular country, region, organization, or social group, which enables effective adaptation to that specific culture. Additional characteristics include awareness of the historical, political, cultural (including linguistic and religious), sociological (including demographic), economic, and geographic dimensions of a foreign country, global region, or other specific culture.

Acquiring regional competence enables negotiation and persuasion; mediation and conflict resolution; leadership and influence; cultural evaluation, synthesis, and predictive analysis during staff planning; and many other abilities that pertain to a specific area of operations.

It's also the ability to adopt perspectives common to that culture; ability to regulate one's own behavior, communication, and emotional expression to match cultural norms where appropriate. It includes positive attitudes toward the population and motivation to learn about the culture, to include how they make decisions.

A combination of both competencies acquired during the cycle of training, education and experience would help overcome the 'culture shock,' and give Soldiers the ability to adjust to an indigenous culture as quickly as possible to get the mission done.

## **Governance**

The TRADOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G2 serves as the executive agent for the CG, TRADOC as culture and foreign language lead for the Army. The commander, Combined Arms Center, TRADOC is the lead for implementation of culture and foreign language career development within all TRADOC organizations. The Army Culture and Foreign Language Management Office is delegated ACFLS implementation management authority from the TRADOC DCS, G2. FRAGO 18 (weekly) to OPORD 09-008, TRADOC Campaign Plan 10-11 outlines specific tasks to TRADOC commanders, staff and subordinate organizations on implementing the ACFLS. TRADOC centers and schools, in their roles as proponents, will be integrally involved in defining common education and training required to generate the necessary culture and foreign language capability for the Army. Proponents will also determine the culture and foreign language capabilities required in operating force units for which they are the proponent.

The ACFLS goal is to establish a baseline of culture and foreign language capabilities for all leaders and Soldiers to support the accomplishment of unit missions. The strategy's end state is to build and sustain an Army with the right blend of capabilities to facilitate full spectrum operations. The resulting force will have the ability to effectively conduct operations with and among other cultures.

## **U.S. Army FA and ADA Schools (USAFAS and USAADAS)**

The FCoE Culture and Foreign Language Program's (CFLP) desired outcome is to provide the Army with technically and tactically proficient and expeditionary-minded FA and ADA leaders who can operate in a JIIM environment across the full spectrum of operations and with a level of competence necessary to perform assigned tasks in a specific geographic area.

For FA and ADA Soldiers and leaders, it is desired they possess a sufficient level of cross-cultural and regional competence to effectively accomplish duties at their assigned level, and to have the cognitive, interpersonal and cultural skills necessary to make sound judgments in these complex environments. For target mensuration and collateral damage estimation, it is important that all artillerymen

and air defense artillerymen understand the effects that culture, people and civilian factors have on the targeting process.

The FCoE CFLP will leverage the capabilities at its disposal to establish the initial foundational training and education for field artillerymen and air defense artillerymen to be able to competently and confidently lead Soldiers. This includes the introduction and development of a basic awareness in culture and languages.

## **Constraints, Limitations, and Risk**

Time available and specific course length for students attending FA and ADA initial military training (IMT) and follow-on leader development PME courses are the principal constraints the faculty must contend with in order to meet the ACFLS desired outcome. Learning objectives will be achieved through modification of existing POIs, incorporating tasks into collective training events (capstone exercises) and through professional reading, critical writing requirements, and after duty language training and civilian education opportunities.

Resources and funding for additional instructors, role players, and lesson materials are limited. We must leverage existing cultural training, language, civilian academic partnerships and virtual gaming solutions to support USAFAS and USAADAS ACFLS learning objectives. Inclusion of ACFLS learning objectives into course curricula should complement and not put at risk common core and artillery technical training objectives.

## **Training Approach**

In order to build and sustain an Army with the right blend of culture and foreign language capabilities to facilitate full spectrum operations, we must leverage existing PME programs, organizational and functional training, and continuous life-long learning through a combination of training, education, and experiential opportunities to attain a level of awareness, understanding, and expertise. As we determine how to best implement the ACFLS, we will use the current leader development strategy that serves as a base for our existing instruction within the school and in the growth of our leaders.

Cross-cultural training and education should build on the foundation of an individual's existing

leader attributes which in turn reinforces the core leader competencies of leading others, developing oneself and achieving results:

**Character.** A leader of character internalizes the Army Values, lives by our Professional Military Ethic, reflects the Warrior Ethos and displays empathy towards Soldiers, families, and those people affected by the unit’s actions. Competence places an individual in the position to lead; character makes him or her an effective leader.

**Presence.** A leader of presence has credibility, exudes confidence and builds trust. Presence is conveyed through actions, appearance, demeanor, and words.

**Intellect.** A leader of intellect has the conceptual capability to understand complex situations, determine what needs to be done and interact with others to get it done. Leaders must have the ability to reason, to think critically and creatively, to anticipate consequences, and to solve problems.

At the USAFAS and USAADAS, the development of cultural awareness and/or understanding will be the principal objective; and introduction to a foreign language (basic phrases and elemental proficiency) is a supporting effort. In order to achieve a higher level of cultural understanding/ expertise or language proficiency, individuals would need to leverage other PME, civilian education and self-development programs.

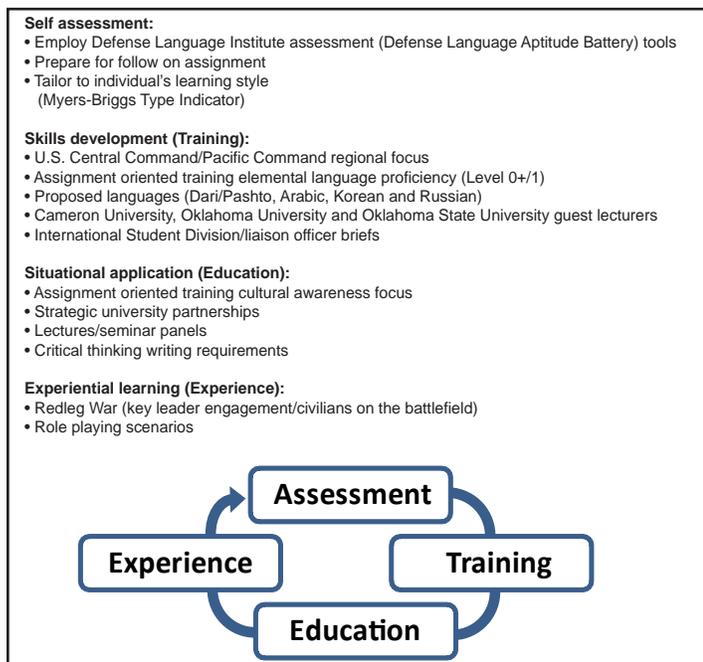


Figure 1. U.S. Army Field Artillery School CFLP

**Cultural awareness:** Minimal level of regional competence necessary to perform assigned tasks in a specific geographic area; able to describe key culture terms, factors and concepts. Basic understanding of how foreign culture might affect the planning and conduct of operations is desirable.

**Cultural understanding:** Well developed 3C in a specific region. A leader must be able to anticipate the implications of culture and apply relevant terms, factors, concepts, and regional information to tasks and missions. Familiarity of a specific region’s economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features is necessary, and awareness of regional sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the U.S. and its allies is paramount.

**Cultural expertise:** Advanced 3C level in a specific geographic area. This generally entails some degree of proficiency in a language; skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution, influence, or leadership; and an understanding of the most salient historic and present-day regional structural and cultural factors of a specific geographic area.



Figure 2. TRADOC Cultural Competency Categories

### Execution of Training

In order to achieve this goal, the FCoE CFLP will incorporate the following learning objectives and associated tasks in its IMT and follow-on leader development PME courses. This information provides

USAFAS USAADAS and NCO Academy with a plan for the conduct of culture and foreign language training and education. The following implementation plan is consistent with current Department of the Army and TRADOC leader development and cultural awareness initiatives to incorporate culture and foreign language into institutional training and education at the schools and CoEs.

**Learning Objective 1 (Character).** Demonstrate interaction and cross-cultural communications skills in order to effectively engage and understand people and their environment.

*(Demonstrate a level of cultural awareness that includes a positive openness to other people, an understanding of prevailing values, beliefs, behaviors and customs, and a desire to learn more about cultures and language. This includes an introduction to a language that supports current military operations with the intent to promote additional study through self-development at the institution, at home-station or at an academic university.)*

**Task 1:** Understand one's self; internalize the Army Values, our professional military ethic and Warrior Ethos.

**Task 2:** Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one's own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one's behavior, practices and language; and operate in a multi-cultural environment.

**Task 3:** Apply cross-cultural communication skills.

**Learning Objective 2 (Presence).** Demonstrate communication, influence and negotiation skills essential for leaders to effectively operate in a JIIM environment.

*(Leverage the knowledge gained by challenging students to employ skills to deal with ambiguous and complex situations, to regulate one's own behavior, and to use interpersonal abilities to deal with people from one's own or other cultures. This includes an understanding and ability to engage other joint and allied military personnel, and host country indigenous leaders with a moderate level of confidence.)*

**Task 1:** Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence.

**Task 2:** Apply communications skills during cross-cultural negotiations.

**Task 3:** Develop confidence in learning and applying language skills.

**Learning Objective 3 (Intellect).** Demonstrate a familiarization in a geographic region of current operational significance.

*(Leverage critical thinking and cognitive skills through organizing information that supports cultural self-awareness. Depending on level of leader development PME, expand 3C skills by gaining an awareness or understanding of a geographic area that highlights the implications of a region's economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features, and of sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the US and its allies. Apply relevant planning considerations, terms, factors, concepts and geographic information to mission planning and in the conduct of operations. This includes leveraging other TRADOC and Department of Defense schools, partnerships with universities and academia, gaming technology and opportunities that stress students' ability to concisely and persuasively speak and write, to engage in discussions, and employ cognitive reasoning and thinking skills.)*

**Task 1:** Apply culturally relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information in the development of mission plans and orders.

**Task 2:** Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the U.S.

USAFAS and USAADAS instructors will use a variety of learning-enabled training, education and self-development techniques to teach students attending IMT and PME courses at Fort Sill. Cultural instruction may be programmed, integrated into other training objectives, or as reinforcement through the use of self-paced learning tools or as research for presentations and writing requirements.

◆ **Facilitated instruction.** Classroom instruction will rely on instructor-led discussions and facilitated problem-centered exercises to assist the student in understanding basic cultural awareness and then challenging him/her through use of relevant scenarios they may encounter in their unit and/or during a deployment. Facilitated learning will focus on initiative, critical thinking and accountability for their actions. Small group in-

structors will receive cultural training assistance from the FCoE Cultural Advisor to enable them to better present information, lead discussions, and facilitate the problem-centered exercises. The instruction will leverage blending learning resources and augmented by professional reading requirements, self-paced technology-delivered instruction and research outside the classroom.

- ◆ **Web-enabled instruction, simulations and gaming.** The U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE), Marine Corps University, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), and Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University all have a variety of online instructional material that is available for instructor use. USAFAS and USAADAS currently are using the Army 360 Cultural Trainer as well as VBS2 Tactical Dari, Pashto (Afghanistan) and Iraqi Arabic simulation and gaming tools to augment instruction. As other culture and foreign language avatar and interactive simulation programs become available, we will evaluate and leverage those educational tools to augment classroom instruction and self-development opportunities.
- ◆ **Role-playing and key leader engagement scenarios.** Instructors will leverage the knowledge gained by challenging students to employ their interpersonal skills as part of in class role playing practical exercises and formal key leader engagement opportunities. The key leader engagement scenario will require an individual(s) to use an interpreter to engage other coalition military/police members and host country indigenous leaders in order to address a particular problem. This engagement will use mock-up facilities and capstone field exercises to reinforce the learning objectives and provide each student with feedback through an after-action review. Both role playing exercises and the key leader engagements will result in constructive feedback to the individual.
- ◆ **Academic lectures and seminar panels.** We currently have partnerships with several local universities, most notably with Cameron University, Oklahoma University, and Oklahoma State University. These universities support USAFAS instruction by providing lectures and seminars for our students on topics that ad-

dress geopolitical and cultural trends affecting the Middle East, Northeast Asia, and other areas of operational significance to the Army to include specific discussions on Afghanistan, Iraq, and Korea. The target audience for the lectures and seminars are the noncommissioned officers (ALC/SLC), warrant officers (WOBC and WOAC), and commissioned officers (BOLC and CCC). The lecture-series is scheduled as part of commandant's time and is conducted in sixty to ninety minute sessions once every six to eight weeks. We also have ongoing partnerships with DLI, TRADOC Culture Center (USAICoE), among other institutions and centers.

- ◆ **Leveraging the International Student Division and FCoE liaison officers.** All BOLC-B and CCC students receive country and cultural briefs from their fellow international students and assigned FCoE liaison officers during the resident course. Additionally, monthly "Know Your World" program assists students in better understanding the culture and geo-political significance of the country from where their classmate comes from and further expands the student's awareness of other cultures.
- ◆ **Analytical writing requirement.** To address the need to develop critical thinking and improve written communication capabilities in our leaders, a three-to-five page analytical paper (double-spaced, 12-pitch, Times New Roman) will be required from ALC, SLC, WOBC, WOAC, BOLC-B and CCC students that addresses a cultural or geopolitical topic of military operational significance to the U.S. The papers will be graded by USAFAS, USAADAS, and NCOA faculty members and feedback will be provided to the student. The FCoE is currently working with our university partners to contract and/or hire a person to support our written communications requirements.
- ◆ **Professional reading program.** A critical component of our leadership development and cultural awareness efforts includes a professional reading program (professional reading list is located on the FKN-accessed CFLP web-site). All BOLC-B and CCC students are encouraged to read one of three books based on their follow-on assignments: "*The History of the Modern Middle East*," by William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton; "*Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism*

in Central Asia,” by Ahmed Rashid; or “China, Japan, Korea: Culture and Customs,” by Ju Brown and John Brown.

◆ **Foreign language.** The goal of the FCoE CFLP is to introduce foreign language to students attending PME instruction and to give them the opportunity to achieve an elemental language proficiency of Level 0+, 1 (memorized proficiency, elementary proficiency) in a language of military operational significance. This includes opportunities to learn Afghan Dari, Pashto, Iraqi Arabic, Korean, and Russian prior to reporting to their unit assignments. All PME students are issued and provided basic instruction on the use of “Rosetta Stone” or multi-platform tactical language software programs in tactical Iraqi, Dari, and Pashto. In addition, those students who are interested in receiving additional language instruction will be provided the opportunity to receive training on Afghan Dari, Pashto, Iraqi Arabic, Korean, and Russian as part of a twelve week, 24 to 36 hour program. This opportunity is voluntary and instruction is provided through internal school assets and assistance from the DLIFLC during off-duty language sessions coordinated by the FCoE CFLP Advisor. DLIFLC also provides a web-site to facilitate the language training and sustainment proficiency which can be found at <http://www.dliflc.edu>.

### Additional Resources

A CFL Resource Center is established in the Morris Swett Technical Library within Snow Hall. Students are provided access to computers, cultural resources and professional reading material to facilitate research, learning and language proficiency.

The CFLP website is located on the Fires Knowledge Network. The website contains cultural awareness and foreign language resources, DLI Foreign Language Center resources, information on past lectures, foreign

languages guides and other significant links. The website is available with an AKO login on FKN at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/21617522>.

### Course Implementation

Following is the roll-up of CFL POI hours (programmed). (USAFAS is taken as an example to gradually promulgate to the USAADAS):

Course	Course Length	Culture and Foreign Language Focus
Captains Career Course (CCC)	24 weeks	36 hours
Basic Officer Leader Course B (BOLC-B)	20 weeks	10 hours
Warrant Officer Advanced Course (WOAC)	10 weeks	15 hours
Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC)	33 weeks	22 hours
Senior Leader’s Course/Advanced Leader’s Course (SLC/ALC) 13B/D/F/M/P/R/T	4-8 weeks	2.5 hours
Advance Individual Training (AIT) 13B/D/F/M/P/R/T		1 hour

Figure 3. U.S. Army Field Artillery School CFL Hours

Learning Objective 1 Character	Learning Objective 2 Presence	Learning Objective 3 Intellect
<b>Field Artillery Captains Career Course: 70 hours</b>		
<p>Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one’s own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one’s behavior, practices and language, and operate in a multi-cultural environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-cultural skills building (4 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Cultural influence and military operations (5 hours) (P)</li> <li>• International Student Division briefs “Know Your World” (2 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Apply cross-cultural communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army 360 Cultural Trainer (2 hours – self paced) (R)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oklahoma University media training (8 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Apply communications skills during cross-cultural negotiations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role-playing exercises (2 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Key leader engagement exercise (1 hour) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Develop confidence in learning and applying language skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to a language through Rosetta Stone software (4 hours minimum – self paced) (R)</li> <li>• Additional language training (optional) (PD)</li> </ul>	<p>Apply culturally relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information in the development of mission plans and orders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurgency overview and theory (4 hours) (I)</li> <li>• Pattern and social network analysis and practical exercise (8 hours) (I)</li> <li>• Counterinsurgency intelligence preparation of the battlefield and planning (6 hours) (I)</li> </ul> <p>Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the United States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength, weakness, opportunities and threat analysis country brief (6 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Writing requirement: Analytical paper of 3-5 pages (Approximately 10 hours of research) (R)</li> <li>• Analytical paper presentation/discussion (2 hours per section) (P)</li> <li>• FCoE CFLP lecture series (2 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Professional reading program (One book from recommended reading list – optional) (PD)</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Officer Leader Course B: 53 hours</b>		
<p>Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one’s own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one’s behavior, practices and language, and operate in a multi-cultural environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate in a multi-cultural environment (2 hours) (P)</li> <li>• International Student Division briefs “Know Your World” (2 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Apply cross-cultural communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army 360 Cultural Trainer (2 hours – self paced) (R)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate in a multi-cultural environment (2 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Apply communications skills during cross-cultural negotiations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key leader engagement during BOLC B fire support/maneuver lanes (8 hour) (R)</li> </ul> <p>Develop confidence in learning and applying language skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to a language through Rosetta Stone software (4 hours minimum – self paced) (R)</li> <li>• Additional language training (optional) (PD)</li> </ul>	<p>Apply culturally relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information in the development of mission plans and orders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Operations instruction (11 hours) (I)</li> <li>• Company Intelligence Support Team training (8 hours) (I)</li> </ul> <p>Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the United States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing requirement: Analytical paper of 3-5 pages (Approximately 10 hours of research) (R)</li> <li>• Analytical paper presentation/discussion (2 hours per section) (P)</li> <li>• FCoE CFLP lecture series (2 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Professional reading program (One book from recommended reading list – optional) (PD)</li> </ul>
<b>Field Artillery Warrant Officer Advance Course: 37 hours</b>		
<p>Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one’s own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one’s behavior, practices and language, and operate in a multi-cultural environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural awareness (3 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Cross-cultural factors and considerations (2 hours) (P)</li> <li>• Cultural influence and military operations (4 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Apply cross-cultural communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army 360 Cultural Trainer (2 hours – self paced) (R)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-cultural factors and considerations during negotiations (2 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p>Apply communications skills during cross-cultural negotiations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role-playing exercises (1 hour) (P)</li> </ul>	<p>Apply culturally relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information in the development of mission plans and orders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intelligence preparation of the battlefield and indirect Fires threat intelligence (8 hours) (I)</li> <li>• Counterinsurgency seminar (2 hours) (I)</li> </ul> <p>Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the United States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing requirement: Analytical paper of 3-5 pages (Approximately 10 hours of research) (R)</li> <li>• Analytical paper presentation/discussion (2 hours per section) (P)</li> <li>• FCoE CFLP lecture series (1 hour) (P)</li> <li>• Professional reading program (One book from recommended reading list – optional) (PD)</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Cultural Learning Objectives

Learning Objective 1 Character	Learning Objective 2 Presence	Learning Objective 3 Intellect
<b>Field Artillery Warrant Officer Basic Course: 70 hours</b>		
<p>Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one's own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one's behavior, practices and language, and operate in a multi-cultural environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural awareness (3 hours) (P)</li> <li>Cross-cultural factors and considerations (4 hours) (P)</li> <li>Cultural influence and military operations (8 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p><b>Apply cross-cultural communication skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Army 360 Cultural Trainer (2 hours – self paced) (R)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-cultural factors and considerations during negotiations (3 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop confidence in learning and applying language skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to a language through Rosetta Stone software (4 hours minimum – self paced) (R)</li> <li>Additional language training (optional) (PD)</li> </ul>	<p>Apply culturally relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information in the development of mission plans and orders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligence preparation of the battlefield and indirect Fires threat intelligence (8 hours) (I)</li> <li>Pattern analysis and simulation exercise (16 hours) (I)</li> <li>Counterinsurgency seminar (8 hours) (I)</li> </ul> <p><b>Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the United States</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing requirement: Analytical paper of 3-5 pages (Approximately 10 hours of research) (R)</li> <li>Analytical paper presentation/discussion (2 hours per section) (P)</li> <li>FCoE CFLP lecture series (2 hours) (P)</li> <li>Professional reading program (One book from recommended reading list – optional) (PD)</li> </ul>
<b>13B, 13D, 13F, 13M, 13P, 13R, 13T Senior Leader's Course and Advanced Leader's Course: 22.5 hours</b>		
<p>Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one's own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one's behavior, practices and language, and operate in a multi-cultural environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-cultural factors and considerations (1.5 hours) (P)</li> </ul> <p><b>Apply cross-cultural communication skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Army 360 Cultural Trainer (10 hours – self paced) (R)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstration on use of tactical language software (Two phrases weekly) (P)</li> </ul>	<p>Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the United States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing requirement: Analytical paper of 3-5 pages (Approximately 10 hours of research) (R)</li> <li>FCoE CFLP lecture series (1 hour) (P)</li> </ul>
<b>13B, 13D, 13F, 13M, 13P, 13R, 13T Advanced Individual Training: 6.5 hours</b>		
<p>Understand one's self; internalize the Army Values, our professional military ethic and Warrior Ethos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Army Core Values (1 hour) (P)</li> <li>U.S. Army Field Artillery history and museum tour (3 hours) (R)</li> <li>Command team in-brief (1 hour) (I)</li> <li>Initial, mid-course and final counselling (1.5 hours) (I)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Legend: (P) programmed, (R/I) reinforced/integrated, (PD) professional development</b></p>		

Figure 4. Cultural Learning Objectives (continued)

**FA CCC.** USAFAS' desired outcome is for FA captains to demonstrate an understanding of culture, how to leverage that knowledge in a JIIM environment and with a level of competence necessary to serve as staff officers and leaders within a complex environment.

**FA BOLC.** USAFAS' desired outcome is for FA lieutenants to demonstrate a basic awareness of culture, how to leverage that knowledge in a JIIM environment and with a level of competence necessary to serve as company fire support officers and leaders within a complex environment.

**FA WOAC.** USAFAS' desired outcome is for senior W131A warrant officers to demonstrate a basic understanding of foreign culture, and how to leverage that knowledge as a Corps/Theater targeting officer.

**FA WOBC.** USAFAS's desired outcome is for junior W131A warrant officers to demonstrate a basic awareness of culture, how to leverage that knowledge as a BCT/division targeting officer.

**NCOA.** USAFAS' and NCOA's desired outcome for senior NCOs attending the SLC is to demonstrate a basic understanding of foreign culture and

how to leverage that knowledge as a platoon sergeant and/or first sergeant. The desired outcome for mid-grade NCOs attending the ALC is to demonstrate a basic understanding of culture and how to leverage that knowledge as a senior section sergeant and/or platoon sergeant. The instruction is offered through a blended learning approach which includes programmed instruction, seminars, educational tools and independent study.

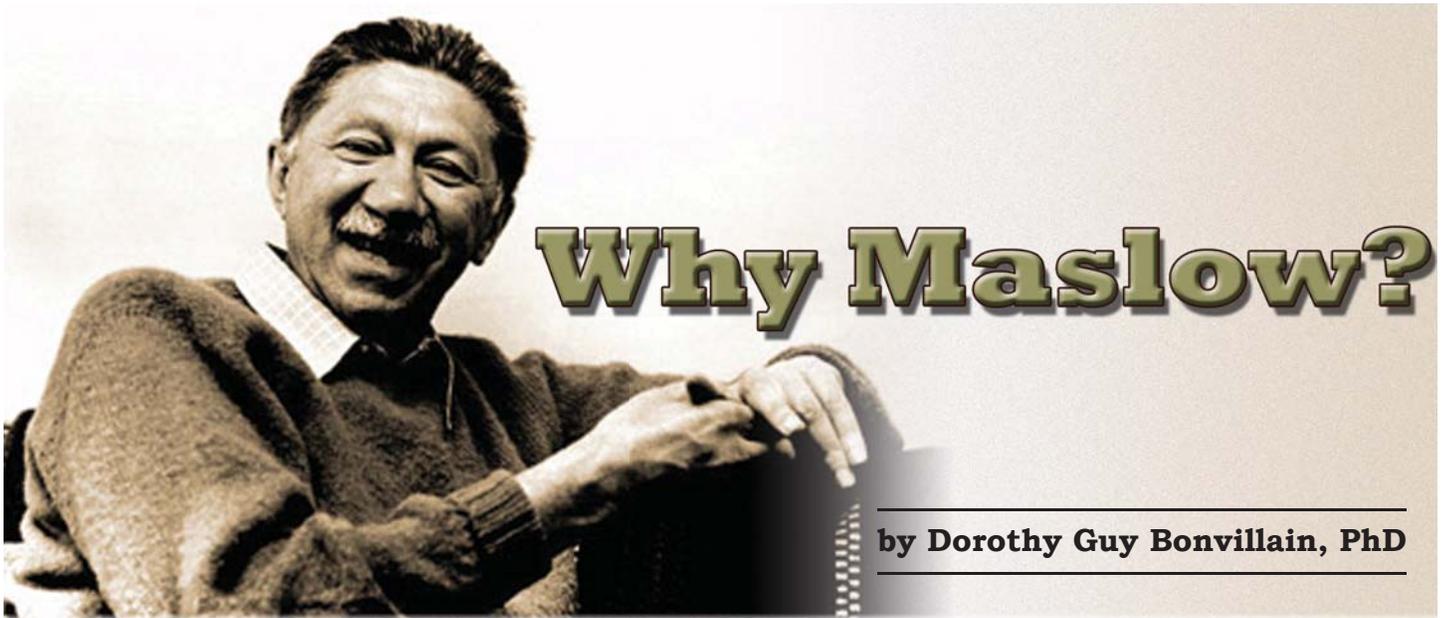
**AIT.** USAFAS' desired outcome is for 13-series Soldiers in AIT is to internalize the Army Values and Warrior Ethos, live by our professional military ethic and display empathy towards others.

### For More Information

The point of contact for the FCoE CFLP and its implementation is Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov. He can be reached

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*Mahir J. Ibrahimov is the Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He completed his PhD at the Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow in 1991 and has attended several post graduate programs at Johns Hopkins University and other U.S. institutions. He also served in the Soviet Army and witnessed the break-up of the Soviet Union. As a former high-ranking diplomat he helped open the first embassy of Azerbaijan in Washington, D.C. While working for the U.S. Department of State, he instructed U.S. diplomats in languages and cultures. He also provided vital assistance as a multi-lingual cultural adviser to U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom II and became the subject of a Department of Defense newsreel, "Jack of All Languages." Dr. Ibrahimov specializes in the cultural issues of the former Soviet Republics, south-central Asia, and the Middle East. He is the author of "Invitation to Rain: a Story of the Road Taken toward Freedom," and numerous other publications.*



*“What is necessary to change a person, is to change his awareness of himself.”*

*–Abraham Maslow*

Sun Tzu is often quoted as having said; “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”

What is less known is that he continued that same thought by saying: “If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat [and] if you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

The notion that a Soldier should be more than a simple tool of destruction designed only to close with and destroy an enemy was no more true in 500 BC than it is today...In fact, there are many lessons at play in Iraq and Afghanistan today that closely mirror the lessons of Sun Tzu and the “new” avocation that Soldiers must do much more than simply fight in order to actually win...they must think!

Dr. Bonvillain’s article titled “*Why Maslow?*” is an excellent example of why modern U. S. Soldiers must learn, fight and think on today’s battlefields and how those lessons are continuing to shape an Army that understands and advocates Sun Tzu’s premise that: “*For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the supreme of excellence. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence.*”

*–Foreword by Colonel Chris Hughes*

*Executive Officer to the Secretary of the Army*

***Can understanding Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs increase a Soldier’s awareness of himself and others? On a macro level, does the application of Maslow’s theory add value to culture training?***

This article will answer the questions posed, and for the purpose of edification, will present a counterpoint to an article published in *Parameters*<sup>1</sup> in which the authors caution against using American conceptual models to help warfighters better under-

stand the foreign operational environment. The article will examine why and how Maslow’s theory can contribute to better cross-cultural competency. But first, let’s look at the critical components of effective instruction and how this relates to Maslow and military education and training.

### **Military Education and Training: Gagné’s Nine Events of Instruction**

Any study of theory and effective instructional design leads one to the work of an outstanding scholar

and researcher, Robert M. Gagné, an American educational psychologist, who is considered by many to be the foremost researcher and contributor to a systematic approach to instruction for the U.S. military.<sup>2</sup> His book, *The Conditions of Learning* identified the mental conditions for learning and created a nine-step process called the events of instruction—based on the information processing model of mental events that occur when adults are presented with various stimuli. The focus of his work (and his followers known as behaviorists) was on outcomes, or behaviors, that result from training. Figure 1 below shows Gagné’s Events of Instruction (Gagné, 1985) in the left column and the associated mental processes in the right column:

Level	Instructional Event	Internal Mental Process
1	Gain attention.	Stimuli activates receptors
2	Inform learners of objectives.	Creates level of expectation for learning
3	Stimulate recall of prior learning.	Retrieval and activation of short-term memory
4	Present the content.	Selective perception of content
5	Provide "learning guidance."	Semantic encoding for storage long-term memory
6	Elicit performance (practice).	Responds to questions to enhance encoding and verification
7	Provide feedback.	Reinforcement and assessment of correct performance
8	Assess performance.	Retrieval and reinforcement of content as final evaluation
9	Enhance retention and transfer to the job.	Retrieval and generalization of learned skill to new situation

Figure 1

Gagné’s work was further institutionalized by Madeline Hunter, who based her direct teaching model on the nine events. Hunter’s Direct Instruction Model contains seven steps for effective instruction that mirror Gagne’s nine events. For decades her work, *Elements of Effective Instruction*, has been the primary source for instructional design for training teachers in schools of education throughout the U.S.<sup>3</sup> More recently, Harvard’s *Learning Spiral* builds on the step process of scaffolding lesson plans—with five components for building thinking-centered lessons and projects that include a link between new concepts and prior knowledge. Spiral lessons are designed to elicit the desired critical thinking performance from students and set standards for those performances. The Learning Spiral applies sound ped-

agogical principles to teaching critical thinking skills and cultural acuity.

My point is that a key component in each instructional design model is the link between new concepts and prior learning, and it is precisely Gagné’s third event that ties Maslow’s theoretical model to cultural education and training. I contend that Soldiers need a familiar point of reference as a context for understanding themselves and their operating environment. When the Soldier better understands his/her own values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms, he/she can then link learning about the foreign culture to improve tactical and operational planning.

This link from prior knowledge to new concepts provides a framework for comparison and contrast that facilitates knowledge retention and mission accomplishment. With regard to Operation Iraqi Freedom, then Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli said: “Cultural considerations are a pervasive factor throughout full-spectrum operations. Understanding the effect of operations as seen through the lens of the Iraqi culture and psyche is a foremost planning consideration for every operation.” Further, such considerations are an integral component of “indirect and small wars capabilities” cited as necessities for current and future conflicts by Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

This familiar model gives Soldiers a framework for understanding themselves, as well as a visual representation of how a host national’s needs may differ markedly from their own. In a recent interview (2010) and in his book, *War on Two Fronts: An Infantry Commander’s War in Iraq and the Pentagon*, Colonel Chris Hughes confirms that, “most American Soldiers know and understand Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.” In a previous article published in *Field Artillery Journal* (April 2007), I proposed Maslow’s model as a tool to help Soldiers understand that the priorities of host nationals may differ significantly from their own. In the case cited, (Iraq, or any nation that has endured years of war, chaos and destruction) an inverted Maslow pyramid reflects the subsequent infrastructure break-down and lack of necessities available to meet people’s basic needs.

Maslow’s theory is that people are motivated by needs and that certain lower level needs must be satisfied before higher level needs can be attained. Until a people’s physical and safety needs

are met, they will not progress up the hierarchy—their priorities will be on the basics of survival. The inverted pyramid in the American hierarchy indicates the comparative level of concern for and effort Americans must exert to progress through the earlier stages of the hierarchy to the highest level of self-actualization. See Figure 2.

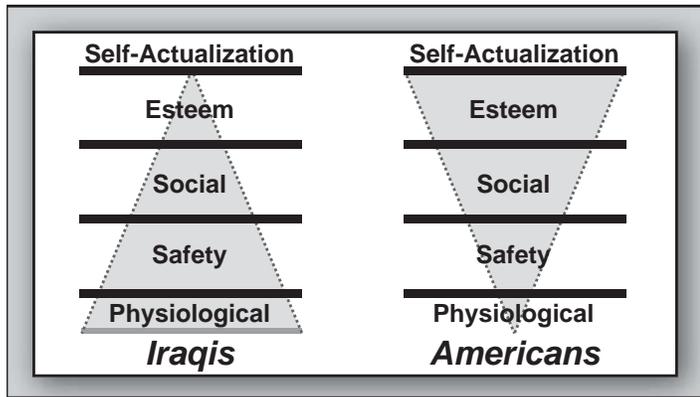


Figure 2

The efficacy of using Maslow (or any western model to assess the operational environment) was recently challenged in an article by Drs. Abbe and Halpin in which the authors contend:

“Content can also be influenced by the informant’s own cultural biases. For example, one recent article applied Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to Iraqi priorities. This analysis assumes that a theory based on a western conception of the individual applies equally to Iraqis at a societal level, an extrapolation that may be inappropriate without more detailed analysis of Iraqi society. Applying western theories carries the risk of promoting ethnocentric attitudes, as it implies that cultural differences can be attributed to a lack of societal maturity on the part of the nation being examined. Such an approach reflects a general bias assuming that other nationalities are much like Americans, a critical assumption that needs to be addressed in culture training.”<sup>4</sup>

My intent in this previous article was not to imply a lower level of sophistication achieved or to suggest a lack of societal maturity in comparison to the U.S.; rather, it focused on differing views, needs, and priorities based upon the operational environment. I still argue that Maslow’s theory can be used as an effective cross-cultural tool in the same way that the Myers-Briggs personality type indicator (MBTI) can be applied to other cultures. Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine Briggs posited that Carl Jung’s theory of psychological type is common to

all people (Myers and Myers, 1980/1995). Other researchers who apply MBTI to international cultures are Kirby, Kendall, and Barger.<sup>5</sup>

Our Soldiers are increasingly placed in missions that require an understanding of the people as part of the operational environment. They must understand that needs believed to be important to Americans are not so important to others—a critical consideration in tactical and operational planning. If you ask a Middle Easterner and an American “Who are you?” they will likely respond differently. For example, what is important to the people of Iraq—being a member of a particular tribe, their religion, being a husband/father, and then being Iraqi—differs for people in the U.S. Americans generally would answer in the reverse order. Understanding these differences allows us to develop tactics, techniques, and procedures that target specific areas in order to stabilize the environment.

Further, if we consider military objectives in Iraq based on Iraqi priorities and needs, we can presume that the Iraqis are most vulnerable to resistance or insurgent violence at the earlier “physiological” and “safety” hierarchy stages. Over time, as the Iraqi people develop their own system of democracy that works for them, the levels of resistance and violence become less likely.

## Critical Incidents and Cross-Cultural Competency

Increasingly over the last few years, the U.S. military has recognized the need to train skills in cross-cultural competency (3C) for greater mission success, and ultimately to save lives—American, local nationals, and coalition forces. One of the best examples of cultural competency applied by a warfighter in theatre was demonstrated by then-Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hughes, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 327<sup>th</sup> Infantry, when he instructed his Soldiers to get down on one knee, point their rifles to the ground, and smile.

Hughes’ unit, nicknamed “No Slack”, had the following description on their official website: “a rapidly deployable battalion that is lethal, ruthless, violent, and feared in combat.” But on 3 April, 2003, Hughes ensured that his Soldiers understood cultural differences and the meaning of restraint with a strategic command that de-escalated a crisis suddenly spinning out of control in Najaf, Iraq.

**The Story:** Soldiers were en route to the home of one of Iraq's leading holy men, Grand Ayatollah Ali Hussein Sistani, to seek his crucial support for their stay in this southern Iraqi city. But as they turned a corner, a group of Iraqi men blocked their way. Shouting in Arabic "God is great," the crowd grew into hundreds, many of whom mistakenly thought the Americans were trying to capture the town's holy man and attack the Imam Ali Mosque, a holy site for Shiite Muslims around the world. Someone in the crowd began lobbing rocks at the American troops. LTC Hughes showed restraint and intelligence when he directed his troops: "Smile, relax, take a knee, point weapons to the ground." Some Iraqis began to back off and sat down, many more continued to yell and block the road. "We're going to withdraw out of this situation and let them defuse it themselves," Hughes told his troops through a loudspeaker. "All vehicles turn around."

With his own rifle pointed toward the ground, the colonel bowed to the crowd and turned away. Hughes and his infantry marched back to their compound in silence. Responsible for hundreds of Soldiers, Hughes' thoughtful gesture of respect helped defuse an escalating crisis situation and clearly conveyed their peaceful intentions. Not all commanders would have done it this way, but Hughes stayed cool under pressure and ultimately prevented the clash of two cultures. When tempers had calmed in Najaf, the Grand Ayatollah Sistani issued a decree calling on the people of Najaf to welcome Hughes' Soldiers back.<sup>6</sup>

## Relevance to Current Training

Fortunately most Americans do not need to be apprehensive about receiving the basic necessities of life. Consequently, on a tactical level, do we begin to understand what is important to others, or what they value and seek? Do we understand the cultural and motivational differences between them and us? Do we know what events or actions could lead to violence? Do we understand that the threat of violence is greater when basic needs are not met? More importantly, how do leaders at the tactical level develop skill at making such an analysis under pressure, often without the benefit of a dedicated advisor with regional expertise or deep cultural understanding? (Hughes, 2007)

Is there linkage between Maslow and this critical incident significant to current training? Does this

real-world exercise in restraint contain 3C lessons? The answer is yes, we should use familiar links to better understand and develop effective tools, techniques, plans and procedures to keep our Soldiers alive, which is what all of us are about.

When we reflect on this critical incident, can we find instructive elements in Hughes' decision making process to better prepare Soldiers for deployment abroad? Today it's mission-critical to align and teach skills in critical thinking, situational awareness, and the cultural acuity process that Hughes employed to de-escalate the situation in Najaf. One thing is clear, the environment we face in the future will be unlike any we have trained for or faced in the past. For years the foundation for training effective application of warfighting doctrine at combat training centers were the words: "Know yourself, know your environment, and know your enemy." Commanders and trainers need to consider the components of effective instruction, the importance of teaching new concepts linked to prior knowledge, and then create calendar 'white space' dedicated to training culturally-competent Soldiers. I believe the end result justifies the goal and purpose for cultural training—lives were saved, American and Iraqi. ✨

## Endnotes

1. Allison Abbe and Stanley Halpin, "The Cultural Imperative for Professional Military Education and Leadership Development," *Parameters*, (Winter 2009-2010): 22.
2. J. Michael Spector, *Gagné's Influence on Military Training, Research and Development in The Legacy of Robert M. Gagné*, Section 2, Chapter 8, 211-227, Rita Richey, Ed. 2000 at <http://www.ibstpi.org/Products/Legacy-Gagne.htm>. In the 1950s, Gagné served as the Technical Director of the Air Force Maintenance Laboratory at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and also as the Research Director of the Perceptual and Motor Skills Laboratory at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado. His interests covered a wide range of topics from perceptual abilities to personnel selection. In the early 1960s, Gagné published an article in the *American Psychologist* which represented a consolidation of many of his findings from military research and eventually formed the basis for *The Conditions of Learning*. Additionally, Gagné founded the *Training Research Journal* which had as its stated purpose the synthesis of theory and research pertaining to training from multiple fields. This annual journal represented a major contribution to the publication of research and development initiated in military settings, and its first publication in 1995 contained an article reflecting Gagné's continuing strong interest in internal cognitive processes and their implications for the design of instruction. In 1992, he was officially recognized by the Commander of the USAF Systems Command, General Ronald W. Yates, who specifically cited Gagné's long-standing commitment to improving the quality of military training and his many significant influences on military personnel and training research. Over a 50-year span, Gagné defined the framework for effective military training. He left a record not closely approached by any other individual.

3. Madeline Hunter, *Enhancing Teaching: Planning for Effective Instruction, Lesson Design* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 87-95. Hunter's Direct Instruction Model contains seven steps: anticipatory set, objectives and standards, teaching and modeling, guided practice, check for understanding, independent practice, and closure.

4. Abbe and Halpin, 22.

5. Linda K. Kirby, Elizabeth Kendall, and Nancy L. Barger, *Type and Culture: Using the MBTI® Instrument in International Application* (Mountain View: CPP Inc., 2007). Also, see *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*, Kirby and Barger, 1996 which summarizes dozens of articles by researchers and practitioners of MBTI in non-U.S. cultures with groups and individuals who are culturally different from those with whom the MBTI was developed and tested.

6. View CNN footage: Najaf critical incident at <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/heroes/chrishughes.html>.

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Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 15(2), 1-22.

*Dr. Bonvillain holds a PhD in Educational Administration and International Education from American University in Washington, D.C. Her experience crosses a global spectrum, from high school principal in Arizona to leading an international research team as Special Consultant to the Minister of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. She managed programs for the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia and the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations in Washington, D.C., lectured at Foreign Service Institute, and is a SETA advisor to the U.S. Army for ISC Consulting Group. Her published works include: Traditional Handicrafts of Oman and several professional journal articles. She is currently Chief of Partnership for the TRADOC Culture Center at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.*

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## CSM FORUM

(Continued from page 4)

instruction method involving PowerPoint slides (this term is used figuratively to refer to the learner's journey through the curriculum) in set sequence. Level 2 involves the incorporation of multi-media formats into the PowerPoint. Level 3 involves the incorporation of videos into the PowerPoint with alternative sequences and limited user interactions. Level 4 involves limited branching of alternative sequences, as well as multiple user interactions (dragging things around on the screen, or selecting alternative scenario settings). Level 5 is a fully interactive immersion simulation, involving multiple user integration/distribution, multiple people, multiple scenarios and multiple outcomes, in possibly multiple training locations. Currently we are at level 3 to 4 in training development, at both the TCC and within the larger Army levels.

There has been a paradigmatic shift in instructional methodologies as determined by the Army Learning Concept 2015 Training Strategies. It is a movement away from slide presentations and instructor-centric fixed training curricula toward more persistent, continued career learning at the point of need, involving greater online based level 5 digital literacy, learner-centric interactive training involving meaningful professional reflection and concretization and contextualization of military experience, and use of Socratic methodologies in dynamic instructional strategies. The future of 3C development at the TCC and meeting the mission of the Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy in integrating culture and language will depend upon the further development of cultural training products like Army 360 and the IMT/BCT video. ❄️

# Cultural Marksmanship



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**by Mr. William Parrish**

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Your ability to adapt to culture began the first time you interacted with another person. Many life events test our ability to adapt to cultures, though few of these life events are as severe as the transition from civilian to Service Member. Your drill sergeant served as your cultural coach in that transition; teaching you appropriate ways to interact with other people in your new military culture and teaching you skills this culture expected you to possess.

One of the critical skills expected of a Soldier in our military culture is Basic Rifle Marksmanship. This article examines the fundamentals of Basic Rifle Marksmanship and applies them as a model for intercultural interactions. FM 3-22.9, Rifle Marksmanship, M16-/M4-Series Weapons, advises us that “before a Soldier approaches the firing line, he must understand and apply the four fundamentals: Steady Position, Aiming, Breath Control, and Trigger Squeeze.” Imagine the firing line as interaction with someone from a culture other than your own and then apply these principles to the meeting—with some modifications to make them less kinetic!

The **Steady Position** involves being comfortable and keeping your weapon steady. In an intercultural interaction your weapon is your ability to think. It’s easy to get rattled, and so makes your weapon (that is, your brain) unsteady when you can’t understand the cultural cues you are getting from another person. It’s also easy to feel uncomfortable when you don’t know about your operational environment (OE). Knowledge about the OE enables your understanding of cultural cues and so enables you think clearly, to keep your weapon steady. If you can’t get a good shot group on your target, you check your steady position. If you are consistently confused by another culture, review your knowledge of that culture.

**Aiming** is a combination of focus and alignment. You focus on the target, place the front sightpost where you want to hit and ensure it is in line with the rear aperture. Where the target is the other culture, the front sight-post is your objective in the interaction. In a cross-cultural exchange the rear aperture represents all the laws and values that govern your behavior as an American Soldier. Our cultural aim is a focus on the cross-cultural interaction while aligning our military objective with our American military cultural laws and values. If your cultural aim is off you’ll get repercussions from the other culture or from your own culture you were not expecting. If you can’t get a good shot group on your target, check your aim. If you consistently get an unexpected reaction from a person from a culture other than your own, or from your own culture, reevaluate your knowledge of your own culture and your understanding of the objective.

**Breath Control** requires the marksman to be aware of a generally unconscious action—their breathing. It

requires the firer to pause, squeeze the trigger, and then resume their natural cycle of breathing. It is control. It places a slight pause before an action. In a cross-cultural interaction, if the situation allows, take a breath before you speak or act. Slow things down. It’s helpful to remember when you are interacting with others they are also interacting with you. Each of you is having a cross-cultural experience and each of you is a little bit uncomfortable. Inserting an intentional pause before you speak or act will help each of you feel a little more at ease. In shooting, if the round is consistently hitting above or below center-mass, you check your breath control. In your cross-cultural exchanges, if you consistently feel out of control, you check your thinking to help you control the event.

**Squeezing the trigger** is the “do it” part of marksmanship. The trigger squeeze should be an intentional and controlled action, almost gentle, applying even rearward pressure on the trigger until the round is fired. The cultural aspect of the trigger squeeze is your choice to engage the people of another culture one-on-one. It’s your choice to speak with them and to interact with them at the personal level.

FM 3-22.9 reminds us “A Soldier’s marksmanship proficiency depends on proper training and application of the basic marksmanship fundamentals.” Cultural marksmanship requires the same training and application as rifle marksmanship: you have to do it, do it right, and do it regularly to be confident and successful at cultural marksmanship. ✨

*Mr. Parrish served in the U.S. Army as a Noncommissioned Officer in a wide range of worldwide assignments from the Cold War era through the War on Terrorism. He currently serves as an instructor and training developer at the TRADOC Culture Center, Fort Huachuca, Arizona.*



# *Intergenerational Communication Across Cultures*



**by Donald Stump**

## **Introduction**

Communicating across generational gaps between cultures can be difficult because of different developmental timelines of the societies composing these cultures. Generational differences within a culture may not be the same as those of another culture. In order to shed some light on this often overlooked difficulty for the warfighter, I propose that generations within a different culture be identified and strategies for better communications between cross-generational cultures be explored. An exploration of the broad baseline generational categories within our own country will serve as an example of what com-

munication strategies we should address for other cultures.

## **Generational Profiles in the U.S.**

In the U.S., currently four major generations are identified, focusing on the different ages of communicators. It should be noted that these four demographic groups are very broad categories, and there are sub-categories that could be created using any combination of nationality, gender, religion, education, age, or other socioeconomic life-experiences that may offer a different way of thinking or reacting to a

set of circumstances. These various factors provide the basis for the systematic construction of cross-cultural or cross-generational frames of reference.

<i>Traditionalists</i>	1925 - 1945
<i>Baby Boomers</i>	1946 - 1964
<i>Generation X</i>	1965 - 1980
<i>Generation Y or Millennial Generation</i>	1980 - 1994

Let's look at the profiles of the generations named in the table. A man walking down the street hears a loud air siren (such as was used during WW II to alert the public of an oncoming air attack) may look up remembering how to get to a shelter, or he might become very sad because of the previous loss of a family member. These Traditionalists, born between 1925 and 1945, have a very distinctive set of values. They are team players, indirect in communicating, and are loyal to an organization. They respect authority, are dedicated, respond well to directive, and adhere to rules.<sup>1</sup> Valla comments that: "This group not only survived the Great Depression of the 1930s, but was instrumental in shaping the United States as an economic and military power. Patriotism, teamwork, 'doing more with less,' and task-orientation are the values that very much define this generation."<sup>2</sup>

In comparison, Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, remember the wide implementation and growth of television that shaped their whole way of looking at the world. In fact, most of this generation does not remember a time when a television was not in the home. In 1946, cars cost around \$1,400, gasoline was 21 cents per gallon, and the minimum wage was 40 cents per hour.<sup>3</sup> Growing up in the Cold War era, this generation came of age during the most dramatic social changes that the U.S. had ever seen. This generation worked for the civil rights movement, equal rights for women, social justice, free love, rock music, and so much more. This adaptive generation values individual choice, community involvement, prosperity, ownership, self-actualization, health, and wellness.

Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, grew up in a time of technological revolution. Take the computer for example. Traditionalists had computers the size of homes, Baby Boomers had computers the size of rooms, but Generation X had home computers that were now desktop appliances.<sup>4</sup> Hand held calculators, automatic laser check-out

systems, floppy disks, dot-matrix and laser printers, computer word processors, Pong (the first video game), gene splicing, and Post-It<sup>®</sup> notes are just a few of the technological breakthroughs that happened when Generation Xers were still just children. What really sets them apart from the previous two generations is that they had the curiosity of youth to learn how to effectively use computer technology.<sup>5</sup> Also, this period witnessed the rise of "latchkey kids" who didn't spend that much time with their parents. The result was that they became typically self-reliant and goal oriented individuals. Another factor that is hard to overlook is their way of thinking "globally." For the first time, this generation started to see how each individual had a responsibility to the world. The green movement took off with the X Generation, with the support and encouragement of their Baby Boomer parents, and was passed on to subsequent generations.<sup>6</sup>

Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1994, also known as the *Echo Boomers*, *Millennial Generation*, or *Generation Next*, have a mind-set that is dominated by 'always on' or 'always connected.'<sup>7</sup> They have never known a time when cell phones, e-mail, cable television, video games, and computer networking did not exist, and they have always multitasked. The Internet, with its instantaneous connection to a multitude of useful and useless information, has always existed for this generation. The Y Generation has always been able "to communicate instantly across national and international borders through 'electronic mail' or 'e-mail,' to call on the resources of famous libraries, museums, or data bases, and to acquire information about commercial products, services, and practical concerns with just a few clicks of a keyboard."<sup>8</sup>

One of the biggest misconceptions about Generation Y is that they lack social skills. In reality they communicate quite well and with more people than any other generation, but in a different way (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or MySpace).<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, this generation is known for very poor face-to-face communication skills and is stereotyped as being socially isolated. This generation carries on with a globalized mind set, but to a higher degree than Generation X. Some surveys suggest that as much as 61 percent of this generation feels a definite responsibility to make a positive change in the world.<sup>10</sup>

At times, communicating effectively within one's own generation is difficult, but a new level of complexity arises when there is a generation gap, and this can be made even more complex and challenging when communicating with someone from another culture. There are many strategies that could be used for better cross-generational communication: be flexible (keep an open mind), avoid generational jargon, be attentive, practice active listening, show respect, and don't reference generational events. Two strategies that could be used for all situations, experiences, and even when dealing with other cultures to better communicate are having respect and keeping an open mind.

◆ **Respect.** Yes, this seems obvious, but to have true respect for an individual, one must let go of misconceptions, generalizations, and preconceived ideas about what type of group they appear to belong in.<sup>11</sup> It is not easy to let go of assumptions and judgments, but as Kate Berardo and Simma Lieberman gracefully point out, "Life is richer and your observations and reflections of people more accurate if you can move away from simple classification and allow for individual variations."<sup>12</sup> It is then that one can find true respect for someone by recognizing their own individual merits.<sup>13</sup>

◆ **Keep an open mind.** It is so often true that a serious breakdown in communication happens when one party decides what is best without considering all possible solutions to a problem. For example, it is not always best to use a phone call when communicating if a text message or e-mail will get the job done faster and without any miscommunication. Older generations have a tendency to pick up the phone. Younger generations are known for using e-mail or text messaging to avoid any face-to-face communication that might be uncomfortable, even if the situation demands interpersonal conversation. No matter what generation you are from, all solutions to a given problem, not just the solution that worked the last time or the one that you think will work the first time, should be considered before making a final decision.

## Conclusion

It is important to be aware that there are cross-generational communication differences within every culture. These kinds of differences compound

the complexity of cross-cultural communication. Learning different ways to show respect to different generations within different cultures is an invaluable tool for all communication. Under any circumstance, keeping an open mind to new ways of thinking and doing things is a frame of mind that not only opens doors of communication, but also innovation. ✨

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# Religious Engagement and Diplomacy:

## Training the 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S. Military Chaplaincy



**Chaplain (Colonel) Thomas C. Vail, PhD**



*The views contained in this article are solely those of the author.*

### Background

Religious leader engagement by military chaplains is a hotly debated and contested battle ground within the U.S. Armed Forces. The issues revolve around whether a military chaplain is suited to conduct religious leader engagement due to his/her training and education, background or calling. Fears of losing non-combatant status and becoming an intelligence gathering apparatus for the U.S. military or information operations or extension of American foreign policy abound.<sup>1</sup> Despite these contentions, the world has changed and the ability of the military chaplaincy to adapt to the changed conditions is critical to facilitating religious discussions concerning peace and reconciliation around the world.

One of the loudest complaints registered by chaplains is that ‘they are ill-equipped, unprepared and untrained’ as specialists in conducting religious engagement operations. This is probably an accurate statement. Many commanders, as well as senior military chaplains, are concerned about a chaplain conducting engagement operations and vehemently oppose doing so, whereas, on the other hand, some commanders heartily embrace doing so.<sup>2</sup>

Compounding the debate, the Air Force Chief of Chaplains strictly limits religious leader engagement of Air Force chaplains to only taking care of the religious and spiritual needs of Air Force personnel, in spite of his approval of the new Joint Publication 1-05, Religious Affairs in Joint Operations that clearly lays out this responsibility.

However, the chaplaincy needs to ponder what the National Security Strategy (NSS), May 2010 states:

*We will draw on diplomacy, development, and international norms and institutions to help resolve disagreements, prevent conflict, and maintain peace, mitigating where possible the need for the use of force. This means credibly underwriting U.S. defense commitments with tailored approaches to deterrence and ensuring the U.S. military continues to have the necessary capabilities across all domains—land, air, sea, space, and cyber. It also includes helping our allies and partners build capacity to fulfill their responsibilities to contribute to regional and global security. While the use of force is sometimes necessary, we **will exhaust other options** before war whenever we can, and carefully weigh the costs and risks of action against the costs and risks of inaction<sup>3</sup>*

Religious engagement and diplomacy is a means to meeting this goal. Furthermore, Religious Support Teams (RST) can assist with addressing the sources of radicalism through dialog, peace building and developing religious diplomatic skills. As the NSS further suggests:

*...we **must address the underlying political and economic deficits** that foster instability, enable radicalization and extremism... reorient and strengthen our development agenda; to take stock of and enhance our capabilities; and to forge new and more effective means of applying the skills of our military, diplomats, and development experts. These kinds of measures will help us diminish military risk, act before crises and conflicts erupt, and ensure that governments are better able to serve their people<sup>4</sup>*

Furthermore, the JP 1-05 states: *Religious affairs in joint military operations **will require a variety of***

**actions supporting** different types and phases of operations. Close coordination should be maintained among the RSTs of the combatant command, Service components, JTFs, and other subordinate units involved in joint military operations.<sup>5</sup>

Religious engagement and diplomacy is one of those actions. The chaplain's role in military operations has grown in proportion and importance due to need for the integration of soft power as the primary means to facilitate a lasting peace. Integrating religious and cultural considerations in planning and activities at the tactical, operational and strategic level is extremely important for success of any diplomatic, economic or military endeavor. Religious engagement and diplomacy is largely overlooked in the professional and educational development of chaplains and chaplain assistants or religious program specialists. But this training needs to become a regular developmental requirement in order to provide commanders a well trained, capable, and ready resource to successfully ply the murky waters of relational connectivity, social networking, and cultural and religious conflict resolution.

In addition to the responsibilities described in Chapter II, JP 1-05, Fundamentals, Relationships, and Duties, the list below is meant to illustrate some of the special considerations that RST members may need to consider; the list is by no means an exhaustive list. RST activities may include:

- ◆ *Liaison and coordination activities throughout the operational area and with subordinate units in support of the commander's theater security cooperation program. This includes participation in humanitarian and civic assistance missions.*
- ◆ *When directed by the commander, establishing relationships with appropriate local religious leaders in consultation with the combatant command chaplain.*
- ◆ *As requested or directed by the commander and consistent with their noncombatant status, building and maintaining partnership capacity by assisting other militaries in establishing or improving their own military chaplaincies.*
- ◆ *Building relationships and collaborating with other government agencies, NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).<sup>6</sup>*

This paper explores the concept and issues concerning the chaplain's role in military operations

as a 'religious diplomat' and proposes a set of joint courses for training chaplains and chaplain assistants/religious program specialists in religious diplomacy. The three courses are designed to meet the needs of tactical, operational and strategic military religious leaders in the art of providing advisement to the commander and staff on and conduct religious leader engagement.

## **Religious Diplomacy: A Snapshot**

Religious diplomacy is the influence of religious leaders facilitating a constructive dialog that builds bridges between conflicting parties leading to understanding and reconciliation. Conducting religious diplomacy eventually leads to negotiations between the conflicting factions that aim toward building peace.<sup>7</sup> Chaplains are facilitators that build understanding between people. As trusted agents, chaplains are generally understood as having a foot in two worlds: celestial and temporal. Owing allegiance to a greater celestial force that transcends the temporal powers opens the moral framework to mend human brokenness in ways heretofore not considered. Pastoral and spiritual care extends to healing social and relational discord leading to a transformation of all parties involved in the conflict. In addition, chaplains who have a fairly well established sphere of influence in the community whether military or civilian, tend to have an apolitical posture. They are perceived as reconcilers and re-humanizers of fractured relationships and have the capacity to mobilize local, national and international partners for peacemaking and peace-building. This powerful combination of capabilities provides an immediate conduit for chaplains to actively engage in conversations that transcend cultures and conflicts.

Moreover, chaplains possess theological resources that others in uniform do not. They have a redemptive historical meta-narrative that provides a powerful means to contextualize and transcend conflict by providing hope, making suffering dignified and meaningful. Chaplains also promote the promise of genuine healing and embrace the power of sacred tradition(s) and stories giving a depth and breadth to the perceptions of human pain. As morally grounded yet fundamentally pragmatic peace builders, chaplains accept the notion of unity through the diversity and plurality of life (i.e., culture, ethnicity.) They embrace all parties in the dialog, and understand how forgiveness is a prerequisite for re-

storative relationships, and how social justice is the basis for right ordering relationships. This unique combination of characteristics enables chaplains to conduct religious diplomatic operations at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

The primary mode of intervention focuses on creating dialog. Dialog is the conduit to heal the wounds of history, managing the collective memory of the people who have suffered great loss, thus releasing the mental constraints of suffering, pain and anger. The dialog humanizes the 'other.' In addition, dialog seeks mutual understanding and harmony. The dialogical journey is one of building respect and understanding through a growing awareness of the other. Moreover, learning to accept the tension between the past, present, and dreams of the future creates the potential for harmony. Thus, the dialogical process is innately a humanizing process and is an essential component to building understanding and placing each of the actors into an empathic and sympathetic state. Furthermore, retributive justice often common in a conflict setting becomes replaced by restorative justice. Restoration of constructive relationships leads to a reduction of emotional intensity bringing the conflicting parties into agreement to find ways to resolve conflict.

Moreover, dialog is the process of 'seeing through' the discourse leading to an understanding of the meaning and influence of assumptions on self and others. Placing assumptions alongside the discourse leads to self-awareness and catharsis. This dialogical process is premised upon the following assumptions:

- ◆ All parties must be considered equal.
- ◆ There must be abstinence from coercion of any kind.
- ◆ There must be both empathic reasoning and listening.

Beginning the dialog with conflicting parties takes courage along with a critical, self-reflective understanding of the religious diplomat's assumptions, values, and worldview. The religious diplomat must then lay the ground work for all of the participants' discourse by striving to build in each participant of the conflict a spirit of compromise, coexistence and mutual respect. Without these three peace building characteristics embraced by each of the actors in the conflict, a meeting to work through the conflict will not stand much chance of succeeding. Thus, the

chaplain must be patient. Since each of the parties must see the outcome of discussions as a win-win for all parties, patience and persistence are requirements. Advising the commander of the longitudinal requirements with conditions based benchmarks rather than time based benchmarks will allow the dialog process to work.

Extensive pre-dialog preparation is critical to success. The chaplain will need to conduct a thorough assessment of history, culture, religion, social mores and values, political affiliations and beliefs of all the actors. He must thoroughly examine the world-views (values and assumptions), and conduct a reasonable social network analysis considering all of the personalities (qualities, character and beliefs) and their connections.

Establishing reasonable goals for each engagement is crucial. Expecting too much from initial and following discussions can lead to discouragement and disillusionment. Setting the conditions by formulating a coherent strategy that fits within the cultural environment along with tactical, operational, and strategic plans is vital to shaping lasting effects. Building relationships with each of the actors prior to collective meetings is important to test the waters, establish boundaries, identify issues and motives, and simply to get to know one another in order to create trust. Trust and good-will should not be underestimated. Both have the power of transcending pain and suffering. The context for holding a meeting is essential. The meeting location has to provide both physical and psychological safety for all participants. Even the structure of the meeting room must be carefully considered to ensure that all participants feel and believe they are equal.

During the dialog, the religious diplomat needs to conduct appropriate introductions. Introducing someone varies by culture. Creating a 'positive first impression' is very beneficial and assists in reducing tension and anxiety. Setting the context and ground rules for dialog along with providing an overview and history of the problem gets all of the cards on the table. Further, each of the parties has to agree to the common ground rules for the dialog. Listening carefully to all parties' (content or nonverbal) conversations is no easy task, especially when using translators. The nuances of language and culturally relevant contextual clues and nonverbal cues can be easily misunderstood. It is impor-

tant to identify and name assumptions and ensure that all parties are heard, leading to finding common ground and identifying remaining unresolved friction points. Assuming that not everyone has the same vision and version of the conflict is important. Clarifying positions, sometimes over and over again, will help not only gain understanding but shape the conditions for future dialog. Closing the dialog is just as important as opening the dialog. Unfinished business can be a good thing to get all the parties to meet again at some point in the future.

Obviously, dialog is a continuous process and conflicts are resolved not in a single meeting but through a series of meetings, often over many months, or in some cases years. Following a meeting, the chaplain will need to reassess progress or lack of progress, identify outstanding issues, assumptions, opinions, or barriers, and carefully review all the participants' attitudes, including his or her own. Once the dialog is assessed, formulating new strategies, goals and setting the conditions for future dialogs will need to take place. Therefore, integration of this approach within tactical, operational and strategic plans will cement the importance and identify appropriate resources required for commanders to leverage on non-kinetic means to resolve conflicts. In doing so, commanders could well see a reduction of costs and perhaps establish a lasting peace.

## **Joint Religious Engagement and Diplomacy Course(s)**

To develop chaplains as religious diplomats I would like to suggest the Joint Religious Engagement and Diplomacy Course Program or JREDC. The defining philosophical assumption for the JREDC is the scholar-practitioner model. This model provides a fundamental means to conceptualize and structure the critical reflective balance between praxis and theory, thus providing the religious leader the ability to actively engage in a continuous practice of life-long learning.

The JREDC will be scholastically grounded in current and past theories and research of religion and religious diplomacy, as well as conflict resolution and associated knowledge domains. This will thereby broaden, deepen and expand each chaplain and chaplain assistant or religious program specialist's thinking and integration of best practices of engagement in dialog through critical-reflection, critical analysis of policy execution, plans develop-

ment, religious and cultural factors in conflict, and the nature of religious diplomacy along with a comprehensive review of the literature.

Competent religious diplomats shape and influence dialog through social networking, leveraging goodwill, advocating for humanitarian concerns and persuasive storytelling. Collaboration, building co-creative partnerships, sharing information and facilitating dialog are the competencies underlying successful religious diplomats. Collaboration is a multidimensional concept and may be considered at its most basic level as interchangeable with teamwork. Collaboration is as much an art as it is science, embracing goal setting, problem solving, planning, co-creating policy and processes that are beneficial for the community. Additionally, every military spiritual leader is connected to a specific faith community and webbed within the fabric of the community's relational matrix and worldview. Distinct as each faith community's worldview might be, religious diplomats need to be able to interconnect similarities, embrace and enfold differences, as well as synergize a multitude of perspectives with reverence and respect simultaneously transcending his or her worldview.

Below is a list of the required competencies, keeping in mind that as the individual moves up the operational spectrum increasing levels of sophistication and training are required:

1. Managing conflict.
2. Shaping the environment.
3. Facilitating dialog.
4. Collaborating with all conflictual parties.
5. Communicating messages that foster good will and understanding.
6. Connecting people, agencies and activities.
7. Analyzing culture, social networks and actors.
8. Researching the literature for solutions.
9. Influencing perspectives.
10. Orchestrating peaceful conflict resolution.

## **Overview of the Program**

The JREDC will have three distinct courses. Each in-resident course will be comprised of 6 modules lasting for 9.5 days, or approximately 70 hours of classroom instruction. Resources and presentations can be easily tailored to meet the pressing requirements at each level. Guest subject matter experts can provide a rich source to illuminate each mod-

ule, providing a rich source for learning and discussion. Here is a list of suggested courses:

<p><b>1. Joint Religious Engagement and Diplomacy Course (Basic)</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To train junior RSTs on how to conduct religious engagement and diplomacy operations at the tactical level.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To familiarize RSTs with the tactical spectrum of religious engagement and diplomacy operations.</p> <p><b>Concept:</b> Create a 2 week functional course to provide instruction in the basics of religious engagement.</p> <p><b>Target Audience:</b> 03/04, E3-E5</p> <p><b>Course Length:</b> Two weeks, offered 4 times a year. 6 blocks of instruction (76 hours of instruction). Delivery Method(s): Lecture/symposium, practical exercise.</p> <p><b>Class size:</b> 15 chaplains/15 chaplain assistants/RPs.</p> <p><b>Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct cultural assessment.</li> <li>• Conduct social network analysis.</li> <li>• Assess conflict.</li> <li>• Identify actors.</li> <li>• Conduct initial interviews.</li> <li>• Plan dialog.</li> <li>• Conduct dialog.</li> <li>• Assess dialog.</li> </ul> <p><b>Course Outline (Blocks of Instruction):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict management and peace building. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Theory and practice of conflict management and peace building.</li> <li>o Establishing relationships.</li> <li>o Facilitating dialog.</li> <li>o The power of collaboration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Building a communication strategy.</li> <li>• Cultural, operational, and social network analysis.</li> <li>• The unique challenges of HA/DR operations: integrating NGOs, FBOs, and IGOs into planning and peace building operations.</li> <li>• Principles of religious engagement and diplomacy.</li> <li>• Case study analysis.</li> <li>• Practical exercise.</li> <li>• Exam.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>2. Joint Religious Engagement and Diplomacy Course (Advanced)</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To train midgrade RSTs on how to conduct religious engagement and diplomacy operations.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To familiarize RSTs with the operational spectrum of religious engagement operations.</p> <p><b>Concept:</b> Create a 2 week functional course to provide instruction in the advanced theory and practice of religious engagement.</p> <p><b>Target Audience:</b> 04/05, E6-E8</p> <p><b>Course Length:</b> Two weeks, offered twice a year. 6 blocks of instruction (76 hours of instruction). Delivery Method(s): Lecture/symposium, practical exercise.</p> <p><b>Class size:</b> 15 chaplains/15 chaplain assistants/RPs.</p> <p><b>Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan cultural assessment.</li> <li>• Report social network analysis.</li> <li>• Facilitate conflict resolution.</li> <li>• Supervise religious engagement and peace building.</li> <li>• Coordinate religious engagement and peace building.</li> <li>• Assess effectiveness of religious engagement and peace building.</li> <li>• Identify legal and policy issues with religious engagement and diplomacy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Course Outline (Blocks of Instruction):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced theories of conflict management and peace building.</li> <li>• Operational art, cross-cultural communication and social network analysis.</li> <li>• Operational challenges of HA/DR Operations: integrating NGOs, FBOs, and IGOs into planning and peace building operations.</li> <li>• Advanced principles of religious engagement and diplomacy.</li> <li>• Case study analysis.</li> <li>• Practical exercise.</li> <li>• Exam.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>3. Joint Religious Engagement and Diplomacy Course (Senior)</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To train senior grade RSTs on how to lead religious engagement/diplomacy at the strategic level.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To familiarize RSTs with complex spectrum of religious engagement operations in the strategic environment.</p> <p><b>Concept:</b> Create a 2 week functional course to provide instruction in religious engagement and diplomacy at the strategic level.</p> <p><b>Target Audience:</b> 05/06, E8/E9</p> <p><b>Course Length:</b> Two weeks, offered once a year. 6 blocks of instruction (76 hours of instruction). Delivery Method(s): Lecture/symposium, practical exercise.</p> <p><b>Class size:</b> 15 chaplains/15 chaplain assistants/RPs.</p> <p><b>Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct cultural assessment.</li> <li>• Direct social network analysis.</li> <li>• Direct conflict resolution.</li> <li>• Direct religious engagement and peace building.</li> <li>• Ensure the effectiveness of religious engagement and peace building.</li> <li>• Analyze legal and policy considerations with religious engagement and diplomacy at the strategic level.</li> </ul> <p><b>Course Outline (Blocks of Instruction):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geopolitical aspects of peace building and religious engagement.</li> <li>• Strategic art, cross-cultural communication and social network analysis.</li> <li>• Strategic challenges of HA/DR Operations: integrating NGOs, FBOs, and IGOs into planning and peace building operations.</li> <li>• Integrating religious engagement and diplomacy into strategy.</li> <li>• Strategic case study analysis.</li> <li>• Practical exercise.</li> <li>• Exam.</li> </ul>
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## Conclusion

A 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S. military Chaplaincy requires a series of courses designed to prepare military religious leaders with the knowledge, skills and aptitudes required to navigate the turbulent waters of the complex asymmetrical environment. These courses are a means to do that. Commanders who have access to such skilled religious leaders will greatly benefit by being able to reduce the need for the use of kinetic weapon systems. American foreign and domestic policy makers will have greater flexibility and situational awareness to manage religious, cultural, and social engagements at each level of the Department of Defense and perhaps throughout the government. Of all the lessons learned from our international and national challenges facing the U.S. military, to avoid the impact that culture has on creating and sustaining conflict between religions, as a fundamental purveyor and shaper of human beliefs and behaviors, these recommended courses are a must in the professional development of U.S. military religious leaders. Finally, religious engagement and diplomacy is a critical capability needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in support of the National Security Strategy. The end result of fully embracing this discipline could be saving lives from the wars that will not be fought, and partaking of the peace from conflict that will be reduced or eliminated. 

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## Resources

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The John Jay Institute at <http://www.johnjayinstitute.org/>.

Heartland Alliance for Human Need and Human Rights at <http://www.heartlandalliance.org/>.

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom at [http://www.uscirf.gov/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://www.uscirf.gov/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1).

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The cost of cultural missteps can be large. Below is an example from the Horn of Africa at [http://oversight.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=4928&Itemid=47](http://oversight.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4928&Itemid=47). The complete GAO report may be found at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10504.pdf>.

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# *Army Culture Training: What Works, What Doesn't, by the Numbers*

Cultural

Awareness

Understanding

Expertise

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**by David Tannenbaum**

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In November, 2004, the Army saw a need for culture training and created the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center (TCC) for this purpose at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. For a generation, our military strategists had been preoccupied by the Cold War. The enemy was the Soviet Union; the likely battlefield would have been Europe, were there a land war. Russians and Europeans are not very alien to Americans. The origins of American majority culture can be traced to the large number of European immigrants who came to the U.S.<sup>1</sup> However, by the early 2000s, the Army found itself sending troops to distant corners of the globe, to countries like Iraq and Afghanistan that had never contributed large numbers of immigrants to the U.S.; people whose histories, religions and worldviews remained largely unknown to Americans. And in the age of instant global personal communica-

tions, the cultural errors of our troops, and worse, were being exploited by our enemies with great strategic consequence.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

The purpose of Army culture training is to prepare Soldiers to interact successfully with people from foreign cultures while accomplishing the mission. This may be on any level, from personal interaction to strategic planning and policy formulation. But how to train Soldiers on the cultures of distant lands and unfamiliar peoples? There was no Army doctrine for culture training, no military occupational specialty (MOS) duties and tasks that pertained to cultural expertise. In the absence of doctrine, the newly formed TCC defaulted to the standard TRADOC model of training developed for other fields which was centered around lecture presentations based on constructivist theory that depend heavily on expert or non-expert instructors and PowerPoint presentations.<sup>5</sup>

According to the TRADOC model, each lesson must have a clearly stated training objective whose

attainment is observable, measureable, and quantifiable.<sup>6</sup> That objective must enable the soldier to perform a task or duty, but there were no tasks or duties in culture training, leaving the effectiveness of that training ill-defined and nearly impossible to measure. The Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy has gone a long way toward resolving these problems by defining three levels of cultural competence: cultural awareness, cultural understanding and cultural expertise, but even this document says little about effective methods for achieving these levels of competence and determining when the soldier can be said to have attained them.<sup>7</sup>

What does effective culture training look like? Most likely, it will not look like other Army training. Most Army training is oriented toward imparting a skill, be it a physical skill (operating weapon systems or communications equipment) or a cognitive skill (analyzing intelligence data). Negotiating the minefield of culture may require skill, but that skill differs in at least one significant way from other militarily useful skills. The successful operation of a weapon system has a clear result—destroyed target. Operating communications gear has a clear result—A message transmitted or received. Even the successful analysis of intelligence data has a clear result—correct prediction of enemy action. But cultural success?

At one level, this may mean avoiding offence to nationals where our forces operate. It is a basic principle of logic that a negative cannot be proven. One cannot demonstrate when offence was avoided, let alone establish a causal relationship with actions that led to that avoidance. At another level, cultural success may mean devising a military strategy that takes into account the cultural history, worldview and attitudes of the people whom it affects, and that leads to American military success and the advancement of our national interests. Again, we are faced with the problem of proving a negative. How can we determine whether any other strategy would not have achieved the same end? In this second example, it may be possible in principle to devise a controlled experiment to determine the effect of cultural considerations in strategy design, but the conduct of that experiment—the application of several military strategies, and observation of the results—might prove to be immoral, unethical and prohibitively expensive in terms of lives and national treasure.

The essential problem of determining the effectiveness of cultural training is that culture will always involve dealing with people. Among their other characteristics, people can be irrational, deceptive, self-deceiving, emotional, forgetful, etc. People cannot be relied on to behave consistently or predictably, or not to deviate from past patterns of thought and action for identifiable causal reasons. The approach that works with Sheikh A may not work with Sheikh B. What works with Sheikh A today may not work with Sheikh A tomorrow, and for no good reason. Success or failure in the domain of cultural skill is, therefore, unavoidably subjective. This characteristic alone puts culture training apart from virtually all other Army training and throws into question the applicability of the TRADOC model of attaining observable, measureable and quantifiable training objectives.

True to the TRADOC model, the TCC devises assessment tools (generally written tests) to determine if its students have attained the stated training objectives of its lessons. It has also developed rubrics to judge student performance in more advanced role-playing exercises. However, beyond that TRADOC requirement, the TCC has also surveyed its students to solicit their subjective opinions of the lessons that they received. While the Training Evaluation Form may not be rigorously validated according to established survey methods, it has served as the TCC's only measure of student satisfaction with the training received. The TCC has assumed that as highly competent military professionals, our students are the best judges of usefulness, applicability, and appropriateness of our training to their individual MOSs and missions, though as is sometimes the case, students do not always know what is best for them. Judgment, too, is subjective. The survey uses student judgment of satisfaction as a proxy for effectiveness. The use of this survey was never a requirement of TCC training, so not all of our training is represented in the data.

The survey form has undergone one significant modification since its inception which makes comparisons between earlier and later data difficult. In its early form, in use from March 2006 to October 2009, the survey asked students to give their opinions, ranging from 1 (I disagree strongly) to 5 (I agree strongly), of the following five statements for each

lesson in their program of instruction (POI). Scores of 2 and 4 omitted the word “strongly.” The central value of 3 on the initial version of the form represented “I have no opinion”:

- ◆ The instructor stated the objectives at the beginning of training.
- ◆ The training objectives were met.
- ◆ The instructor was knowledgeable on the subject matter.
- ◆ The instruction was understandable and clear.
- ◆ The instructor allowed sufficient student–instructor interaction.

For each lesson, students were also asked to provide written comments.

In addition, student opinions were solicited of their training overall by asking them to use the same 1 to 5 scale to address the following five statements:

- ◆ The location of instruction provided an environment conducive to learning.
- ◆ The instruction was presented in logical sequence.
- ◆ The training offered relevant topics and issues.
- ◆ The films selected to accompany the training were appropriate and informative.

Here, too, students were asked for their written comments.

In February 2010, this modified list of questions was adopted for each lesson in the POI. The intention behind this change was to shift the focus from instructor performance to training effectiveness:

- ◆ The instructor made the training objectives clear at the beginning of training.
- ◆ The training objectives were met by the end of the lesson.
- ◆ I know more about this topic than I did before the lesson.
- ◆ The form and content of the lesson made this training effective.
- ◆ The instructor was effective in presenting this training.
- ◆ This training is relevant to my mission.

While the meaning of the high and low scores did not change, a central score of 3 now meant “I neither agree nor disagree.” As ever, students were still asked to provide written comments on each lesson.

The questions on the overall course hardly changed at all:

- ◆ The location of training provided an environment conducive to learning.
- ◆ The training was presented in a logical sequence.
- ◆ The training presented relevant topics and issues.
- ◆ The media selected (if any) to accompany the training were appropriate and informative.

Results from these surveys were divided into two categories based on class size. TRADOC defines two categories of class size: small groups (up to 16 students) and large groups (more than 16 students), and prescribes different methods of instruction for each.<sup>8</sup> In its training, the TCC made only slight accommodations to class size. For example, certain classroom activities, including role-playing exercises, are more difficult to implement in a large group. Also, the use of recorded media (films) seems to keep the attention of large groups more effectively than uninterrupted lectures. The TCC developed no guidelines for these accommodations to class size, which was left largely to instructor discretion. The academic literature on the effect of class size on student course evaluations also draws a distinction between classes that are larger and smaller than 20 students, only slightly larger than TRADOC’s differentiation at 16 students.<sup>9</sup> Since the literature on class size and evaluation scores is more germane to the present topic than TRADOC’s instructional strategies, student evaluation data from classes larger and smaller than 20 students were analyzed separately. The method used was to calculate the weighted mean of responses to each question for each lesson, with the number of votes cast as the weighting factor. A simple average of those means was used to determine the overall level of satisfaction with each lesson.

Literature on students’ evaluations of academic courses suggests that students will express the highest degree of satisfaction when class size is smallest, all other factors being equal.<sup>10,11</sup> Evaluation scores generally decrease with increasing class size until class size reaches 20 students. Thereafter, evaluation scores tend not to change appreciably as class size continues to grow. At various times, as the TCC collected data using its survey forms, these predictions were realized. However, by the time the *orig-*

inal survey form fell from use, the results differed somewhat from those predictions.

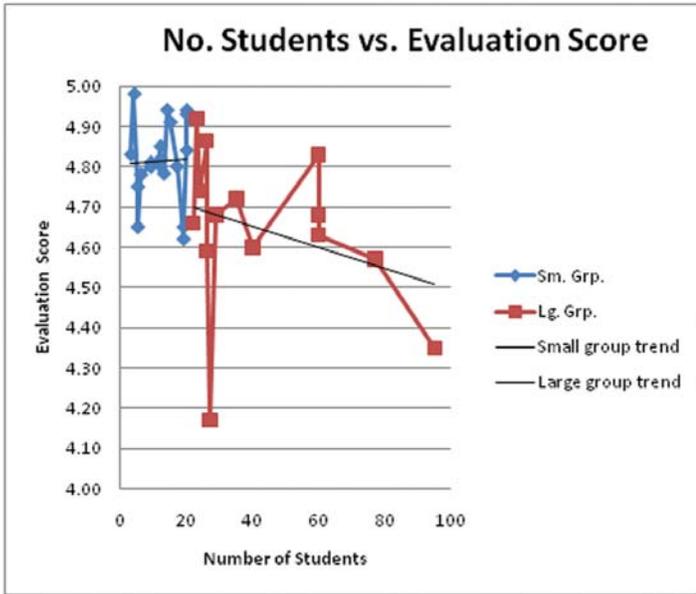


Figure 1. Class Size vs. Course Evaluation Score

Note that POI evaluation scores given by classes of up to 20 students trend toward independence from class size, and average about 4.81 on the 5-point scale. Evaluation scores given by larger classes are generally lower, and tend to decrease with increasing class size. However, it must be said that this sample of 33 results is rather too small to be considered statistically robust. Nineteen small groups and fourteen large groups contributed these data. Note the relative sparseness of the large group data. Nevertheless, the median class size in these data is 20, exactly the dividing line between small and large groups.

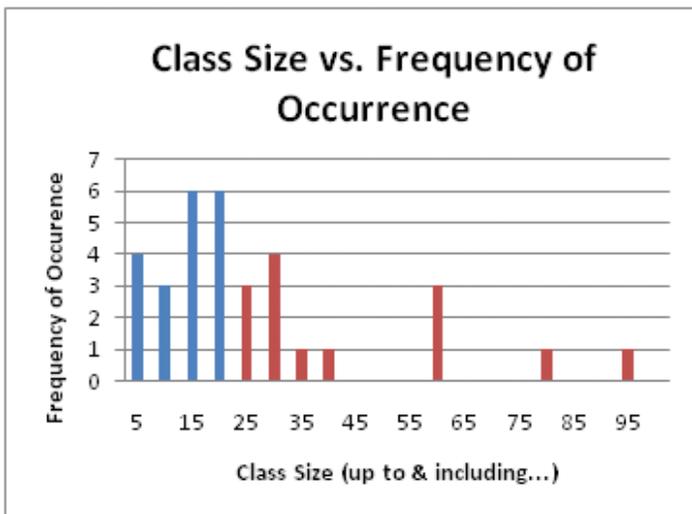


Figure 2. Class Size vs. Frequency of Occurrence

The likely cause of the trends seen in the data is group dynamics. Smaller groups, regardless of their

purpose or composition, encourage closeness and solidarity among group members; larger groups allow greater distance, alienation and disengagement between individual members. However, there are many differing factors among the many POIs that are represented in the evaluation data. In an effort to tease out the most influential factors, the following were considered:

- ◆ Number of students in each class vs. evaluation score.
- ◆ Ratio of students to instructors vs. evaluation score.
- ◆ Number of lessons taught per day on average vs. evaluation score.
- ◆ Lessons assigned per instructor during the POI vs. evaluation score.
- ◆ Days of training in the POI vs. evaluation score.

No account was made of the contents of each POI, whether they included lessons from the TCC’s training support packages (TSPs) on the Horn of Africa, Trans-Saharan Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, Asia or any components or subsets thereof. Neither was the identity of the instructor and his teaching style considered.

Conventional wisdom might suggest that smaller student-to-instructor ratios should yield higher evaluation scores because of more individual attention. That wisdom might suggest that fewer lessons per day would satisfy students more, as would fewer days of training. Both would tend to lessen the students’ workload. Furthermore, conventional thinking might suggest that the fewer lessons assigned to each instructor would improve his classroom effectiveness, both because of better, more focused preparation, and decreased fatigue in the classroom. Few of these conclusions are supported by data.

The total number of students in a class, as well as the ratio of students to instructors, influences what may generally be described as classroom crowding. In and of itself, crowding is not necessarily a bad feature in classroom instruction. A degree of crowding may encourage closer communications between the instructor and students. Surprisingly, the data does not support the hypothesis of the benefit of low student-to-teacher ratios.

The data also do not support the hypotheses regarding both instructor and student workloads. Both the number of lessons taught per day on aver-

age during the training and the number of lessons taught by each instructor, also on average, appear to be randomly distributed with regard to evaluation score. The number of days of training, however, shows a surprising result. Students have a slight preference for longer POIs, as the upward slope of the trend line indicates. It is not clear that this trend is statistically significant. However, if it is, its roots may be found in every cultural subject matter expert's (SME) frustration: When the SME teaches, he must convey to his students in a matter of only a few hours the wisdom and experience that he gained through years of firsthand contact with the cultures on which he is expert. Longer training clearly is more satisfying for the instructor. Apparently, it is more satisfying for students as well.

Overall, however, the strongest influence on student satisfaction with their training is class size: Smaller is better. Large and small group data show interesting stability trends in time during this period when the original survey form was in use.

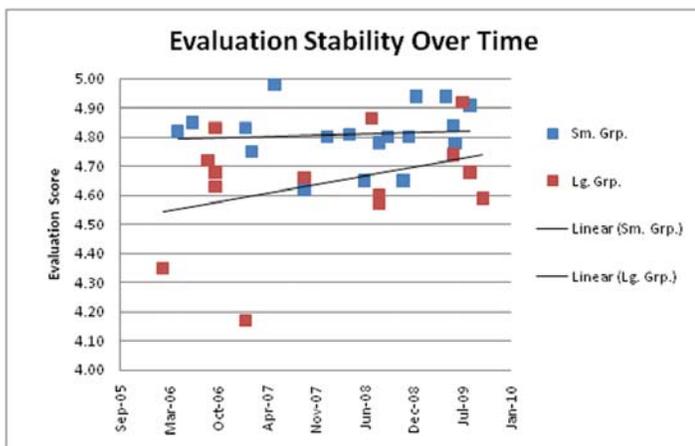


Figure 3. POI Evaluation Stability through Time

A linear least squares fit to the small group data shows great stability through time, averaging approximately 4.81, while the same analysis of large group data shows marked improvement from 4.55 to 4.74. It is ironic that during this period, Fort Huachuca made Small Group Instruction (SGI) mandatory for all instructors, while no training in large-group instructional techniques was required. For the TCC at least, this mandate ran contrary to the principles of Pareto analysis: Identify the greatest problems and focus first on their solutions.<sup>12</sup> The TCC was already good at SGI; training in those techniques yielded no appreciable improvement in evaluation data. Instead, the TCC had a relative weakness in large group instruction that would

appear to have been ameliorated by increased instructor experience. The TCC implemented no instructional methods and made no policy changes that would affect the quality of large group instruction during this period.

In February 2010, the TCC started using the revised survey form, which is more focused on training effectiveness than on instructor performance. Data collected with this new survey, though few, have begun to show similar trends.

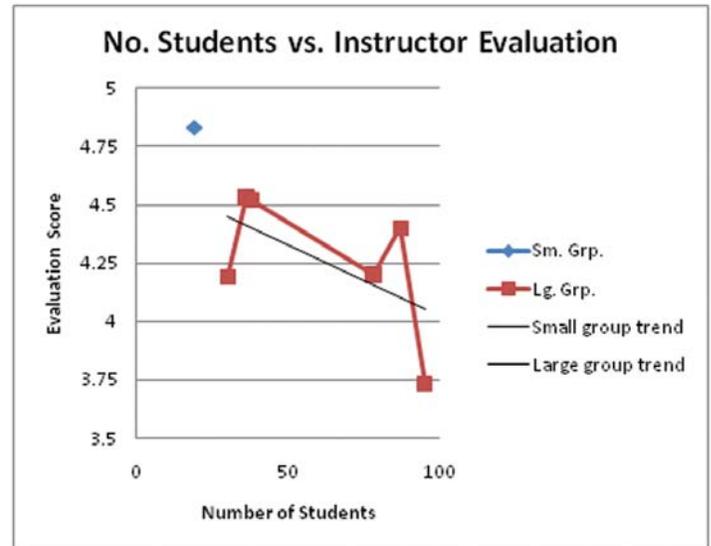


Figure 4: Number of Students vs. Evaluation Score

Note that the highest evaluation score by far yet recorded on the new survey came from the smallest class to use the form. Note also the very different distribution of class sizes to use the new form compared with that of the old form (Figure 1). This is largely a result of the decline in requests for train-the-trainer (TTT) instruction at TRADOC schools around the country. TTT classes are generally limited to 30 students or fewer. The instruction is generally 40 hours long, the longest course that the TCC offers. Instead, recent training requests have favored pre-deployment training. Deploying units tend to be larger than the training cadres that might receive TTT instruction. Median class size in these data is 38 students. Even at this point, the TCC does not require the use of the survey, so these data too, are a random sample of all training given by the TCC's instructors.

The new survey allows analysis of the relevance of the TCC's training to the Soldiers who receive it. In separate sections, the survey asks them about the relevance of each lesson to their individual mis-

sions, and about the overall relevance of the POI. A discrepancy between these two scores might suggest, for example, that students felt that the training was relevant in some abstract sense, but was not relevant to each of them individually. The greatest factor influencing this discrepancy seems to be the students' sense of mission and whether they were deploying to the region on which they were trained, or if the topic was selected for them by their course director as something that would be good for them to learn. Bottom line: Attitude matters.

Beyond the analysis of student evaluation scores, students' written comments also reveal interesting and valuable aspects of their opinions of the training. Individually, students' comments help instructors to identify opportunities to improve the contents and delivery of their lessons. However, text analysis of the aggregate of students' comments also yields valuable statistical insights. It has long been evident that many students' attitudes toward the TCC's training were not in line with the attainment of our lessons' training objectives. Specifically, many students treat our training as country briefings, not as culture lessons. The distinction is important. Briefings are merely informational, and put the burden of conveying information on the briefer. Lessons, on the other hand, require students to demonstrate, through the satisfactory completion of an assessment, that they have achieved the lesson training objectives. Training puts the burden of learning on the student. These very different attitudes affect students' expectations in the classroom, and likely affect their satisfaction with the training that the TCC delivers, as reflected in the evaluation scores they give their training.

With the implementation of the revised survey form, text analysis was conducted on students' written comments. Two lists of words were identified, one that reflected the preconception of the lectures as briefings, the other that reflected the preconception of the lectures as training. Those word lists included:

- ◆ Briefing: Brief, briefing, briefer, info, information, informative.
- ◆ Training: Lesson, learn, instruct, instruction, instructor.

In the analysis of word use patterns vs. evaluation scores, it was noted that the ratio of occurrence of "briefing" and related words to "lesson" and

related words, correlated more strongly with students' evaluation scores for certain questions more strongly than with overall scores. Those correlations are revealing. Often when students used words like "briefing" more frequently than "lesson," there was a discrepancy between their perception of the lesson having achieved its training goals and their feeling of having learned something about the lesson's topic. The goal of all TCC lessons, designed in accordance with TRADOC standards, is student learning. There should be no discrepancy.

When students expected a lesson, they felt that the lecture achieved its training objectives, and that they knew more about the topic after the lesson than they did before. When students expected a briefing, they felt less strongly that the lecture achieved its objectives, though they might still feel that they knew more about the topic after the lesson than they did before. The correlation between the ratio of the uses of "lesson" vs. "briefing" and the feeling that the lesson's objectives were met is 0.86, a strong correlation in such sparse data. The TCC knows what works and what does not in the realm of culture training: smaller classes, longer POIs, and positive attitudes toward learning. The data analyzed within this paper demonstrate that. However, what usually happens is that the TCC designs training in accordance with TRADOC standards, then we deliver it in some compromised form.

The TCC determines the number of hours of training required to master a topic, but we deliver the number of hours of training that a requesting unit can squeeze into an already stressful training program. To address the problems of time pressure on training programs, the Army has explored the alternative methods of delivering culture training. Among them are *Smart Cards* (two-sided folding cards that summarize in 1500 to 1800 words the culture of a nation or region), *Smart Books* (100 to 200 page flip books—PowerPoint presentations on paper) and *Readers* (200 to 300 page academic studies of selected countries). The TCC has no data on the effectiveness of these products.

The Army has also developed interactive media instruction (IMI), or computer gaming simulations that allows Soldiers to learn while playing culture games on their own time. The assumption behind this individual training is that the young generation is accustomed to playing computer games, so a

well-designed computer simulation will convey necessary knowledge and skills to young soldiers via a medium that already appeals to them. In a discussion of one of these products, a representative of TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA) said that his IMI product, the Virtual Cultural Awareness Trainer, was being tested for reliability.<sup>13</sup> That is, the product was being tested to see if consistent input choices by the user would yield consistent outputs from the simulation.

This is standard practice in the objective, quantified world of software engineering. However, it runs completely contrary to the problem of Sheikh A today and Sheikh A tomorrow posed at the outset of this paper. Real people are not reliable automatons, they are not consistent in behavior. One of the greatest complaints about our increasing reliance on computer communications technologies is that, as they allow us to communicate more rapidly and more broadly than ever before. Paradoxically they break the simple bonds that have bound people since time immemorial: physical closeness and even contact; the art of polite conversation and civility; logical instead of heated argumentation; careful composition of prose; eloquence. These details matter very much to many of the cultures that the TCC teaches about, but we fail to provide an object lesson on their importance every time we talk about them—or let our computer avatars talk about them—without demonstrating them. If we use computers to train Soldiers to deal with people, we will succeed in nothing other than to train them to deal with computers. This is a failure to perceive one of the pitfalls of our own culture. It is also an attempt to follow a cultural trend when we should be taking the cultural lead.

Many of the cultures that the TCC studies and teaches are not technologically advanced. Socially, many are very conservative and traditional. Short of the constructivist ideal of cultural immersion training—an approach that is being used by several Army activities, among them the ROTC's Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency Internship program,<sup>14</sup> it seems the best means of conveying the cultural SME's deep understanding of the culture is to spend some time with him, in a small group, slowly gleaning insights and assimilating them. That kind of wisdom cannot be rushed, nor can it be mass-produced. It is more a slow process of education than it is a body of knowledge that may be

imparted in a brief training session. Wisdom gained in this way would likely be idiosyncratic, individualized and highly subjective. ✨

### Endnotes

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by Bruce Wood and Charles Morrison, PhD

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## Introduction

Fourteen hundred years ago, a Chinese military thinker advised that, in effect, if a commander knows both the enemy and oneself, his forces will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if he knows only himself, the probability of losing is fifty percent.<sup>1</sup> In this short article it is impossible to fully develop the evolution of cross-cultural competency as a basic training goal for the contemporary soldier. However, we will trace the outlines of “knowing” the enemy from the U.S. entry into World War II to the present by highlighting attempts by the War Department and later Department of Defense to provide training materials to U.S. forces in wartime. We will see that attempts have been made to a greater or lesser degree, but that integration of culture awareness and cross-culture competency as part of individual training has only recently become systematic.

Until recently, the development of training materials for general purpose troops during wartime reached its peak during the period 1941-1946. There was another period of high production from 1988-1998, and the current one from 2006 to the present.

Generalized open source but static information has been abundantly available from the Library of Congress, State Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency, among other official sources for

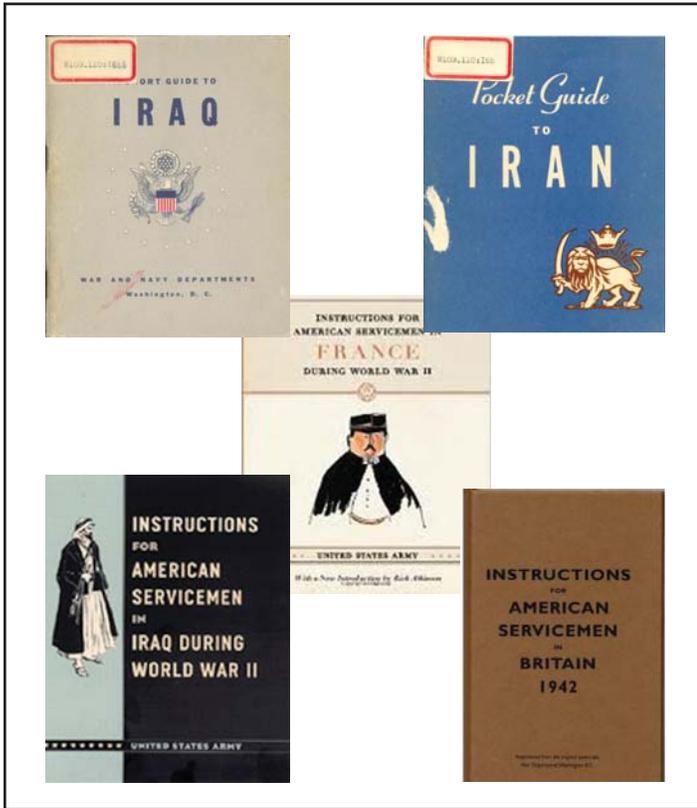
decades, though not in formats corresponding to Army training methods. The focus here is information specifically designed for use by general purpose troops. Some organizations’ specialty missions of course received training in culture and language as a matter of doctrine, but not until recently did cultural awareness become part of the professional military training and education of general purpose troops.

## World War II (1941-1946)

Unlike subsequent wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, WW II is distinguished by total war on a global scale. Furthermore, the enemy constituted belligerent nation states (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Romania, Bulgaria) aspiring to empire and global hegemony. Worldwide operations of the War and Navy Departments necessitated a sudden need for massive amounts of information on the affected populations, and for dissemination of information to Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in appropriate forms.

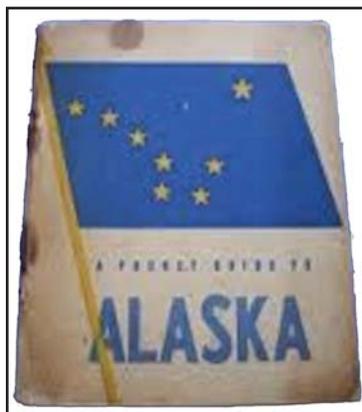
Never before had the U.S. marshaled its intellectual resources under central control so completely. “World War II was the largest and most violent armed conflict in the history of mankind,”<sup>2</sup> and to provide information on the history, culture, geography, and economies of practically every corner of the world academic specialists and civilian experts were mobilized. The result, among other resources, were the *Pocket Guide*, *Short Guide*, and

*Introduction* series produced by the Special Services Division, perhaps better known for its motion picture work.



### Korea (1950-1955)

The Korean War (or the United Nations’ “Police Action”) was by definition limited to the Korean Peninsula. The military objective was to defeat a single belligerent state, the People’s Republic of Korea. Although Civil Affairs had a role, cultural competency was unnecessary in light of the initial objective—the Yalu River. However, in 1950 the *Pocket Guide to Korea* was issued (the year before the *Guide for Alaska*).



### Viet Nam (1961-1975)

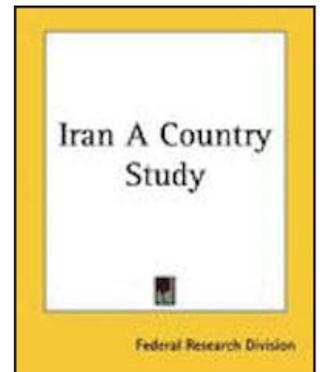
Because the conflict was originally characterized as a guerilla war against a national government, the notion of interaction with native culture was inherent from the initial phases. The shift from an advisory and training role for American soldiers to

combat operations moved the emphasis to militarily defeating the Communists. Of this war it was said that “underdevelopment carries its own kind of invulnerability,”<sup>3</sup> as escalating tactical force was brought to bear, first against the communist insurgents, then against the People’s Republic of North Viet Nam regular.

By the Tet Offensive in 1968, the focus of operations was increasingly on conventional regimental and division-size units involved in direct combat. Culture training was ad hoc when available at all, and most cross-cultural interaction was confined (after 1967) to military and civilian components of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support mission (‘hearts and minds’).

### Iraq and Afghanistan and Post Cold War (1990-present)

With the end of the Cold War, information on nation states, and the rise of U.S. military hegemony as the pre-eminent world power, the Department of the Army (2004-06 by J-5) funded the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress to produce the Army Area Handbook Program, later known as Country Profiles, and currently in online form as Country Studies.<sup>4</sup> A total of 101 titles were produced. Two notable geographic weaknesses of the Country Studies are the absence of most U.S. allies and many of the West Africa states. Culture is not the primary focus of Country Studies, the data are static. Granular cultural information was—and remains—mostly in the domains of subject matter experts and special operations forces.



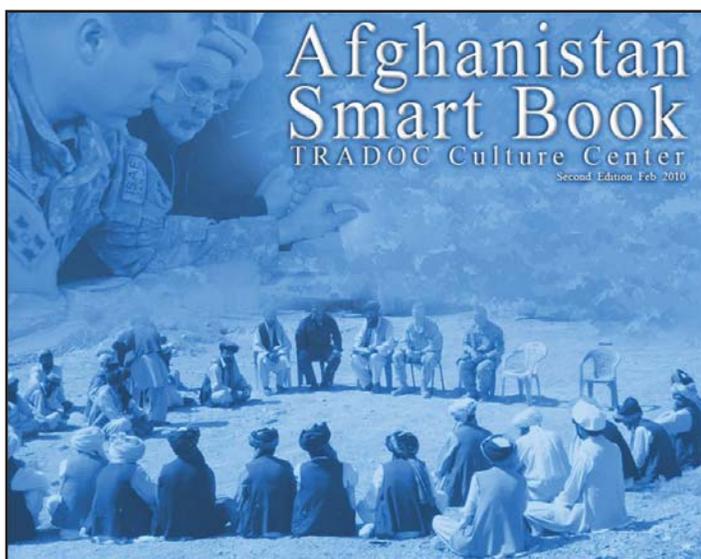
Operation Desert Storm primarily utilized Cold War era training for conventional maneuver warfare which was derived from NATO planning using doctrine assuming the adversary to be the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union’s previous military support to the Republic of Iraq and the limited objectives of the Coalition made cultural considerations superfluous. At the tactical level, culture training was irrelevant to the objective of destroying Iraqi ability to resist. However, as it developed, 1990 was the prelude to the “The Long Small War” in which the U.S. is presently engaged.<sup>5</sup> After 21 March 2003

Operation Iraqi Freedom (now “New Dawn”) made it obvious that the ensuing insurgency and irregular warfare, with U.S. forces cast in the culturally potent role of “foreign occupiers” of territory both Iraqi and Islamic, required more cultural competence than training doctrine had provided.

Operation Enduring Freedom in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan began with Special Operations Forces, differing from Iraq by the absence of a prior functional nation state. Eventually, the training shortcomings of U.S. general purpose troops collided with inherent Afghan xenophobia and traditional conflation of Islam with Pashtun culture values. The U.S. and its NATO allies moved toward providing culture training throughout their forces.

## Conclusion

By 2005, responding to the increasing need for general cultural competence training at all levels in Iraq and Afghanistan the Army and Marines began the development of culture training programs of instruction. Training materials were produced by the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command’s Culture Center and the Marine Corps’ Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning. They eventually became part of professional education from recruit to captain with an eye as to how culture, in fact, shapes the battlespace. Several professional institutions have also developed their own programs for field and general officers.



The notion of the “Long War,” a period of engaging theological and ideological non-state actors in asymmetrical armed conflict, has in most quarters

of current military thinking replaced the “find ‘em, fix ‘em, kill ‘em” tradition that characterizes Western warfare.<sup>6</sup> ✨

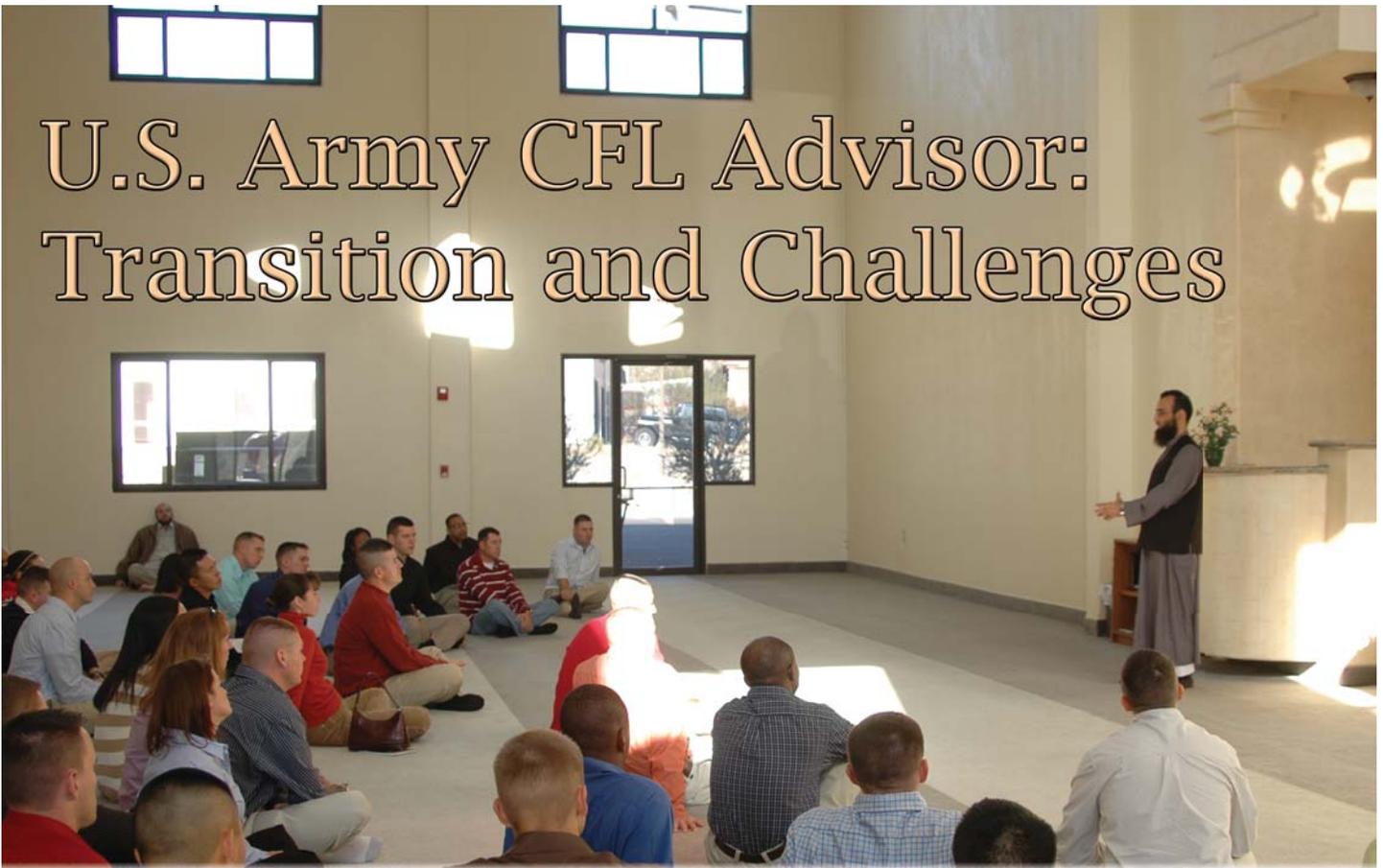
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*Charles Morrison, PhD, served the TRADOC Culture Center as an instructor and developer of training materials for six years. He was instrumental in developing the original culture training curriculum for Professional Military Education in 2006 and expanding and improving that product over the next four years. Three years of service in the U.S. Army gave him firsthand insight into the needs and interests of Soldiers, combined with 27 years as an archeologist for the Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management and Indian Affairs) which gave him an extensive understanding of the requirements for developing working relationships with many cultures. He holds degrees in Anthropology and Public Administration.*

# U.S. Army CFL Advisor: Transition and Challenges



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by **El-Rayah A. Osman, PhD, CFL Advisor, Soldier Support Institute, Fort Jackson, South Carolina**

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## **Introduction**

The main goal of this article is to discuss the challenges I face as a Culture and Foreign Language (CFL) Advisor, as well as to trace my transition from teaching sociology and economics for more than fourteen years at the university level to my new position as a CFL Advisor to the U.S. Army at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Additionally, I will offer a brief discussion of what I have learned about the evolution and the current views of integrating cultural education and training in the U.S. Army. I will also offer some suggestions on how cultural education and training can be most effectively integrated into Army operations.

I am excited to be a part of and at the service of the U.S. Army for a number of reasons. First, it is an honor to work with Soldiers to infuse culture into their professional education and training. Second, this opportunity will allow me to use my teaching skills to teach a different audience than I am use to as a college professor. Third, through this unique opportunity I will gain new skills that I can use in my classes in the college environment. Finally, the position focuses on two areas—culture and language—that have been of special interest to me since I was a student in college. In spite of my excitement, however, the transition from an academic environment to a military setting was not without trepidation.<sup>1</sup> The Soldiers and officers have done an exceptional job at making me feel at home and becoming part of the team and I am learning from them every day.

In reality, any new position offers opportunities and poses challenges. One of my weaknesses is that I have neither military education or training, nor

had I previously worked in a military environment. However, I came to this assignment with an open mind and I was promised (that promise was realized) some initial in-house training through a Staff and Faculty Training course focusing on course development and instruction in a military setting. Additionally and luckily, I was not the first CFL Advisor working for the U.S. Army. So far, I have been able to draw and learn from the rich experience of six cultural advisors with excellent and diverse backgrounds and training. The Solider Support Institute (SSI) Leadership, Commanding General, Deputy Commander, and Chief of Staff have made my job easier and provided every type of assistance possible. I am grateful for that.

### **Teacher or Cultural Advisor?**

In my short time with the U.S. Army as a CFL Advisor, I have realized that there are major differences between teaching in college and teaching a military audience. First, the college audience is relatively homogenous in that the students are younger and have less experience than those in a military classroom. Students in a college classroom have more or less the same education level and practical experiences in life. When teaching a college class, in most cases I assume that the students have little or no background in the topics of discussion. For example, in an Introduction to Sociology course, the topics discussed will be more or less the same each semester with only slight updates.

In contrast, the Army Professional Military Education (PME) is continuously revised with changes in doctrine and current military operations. Military students are diverse in their education and life experiences, experience in the workforce, as well as from exposure to other cultures. The teaching style implemented for the military audience is more engaging and encompasses a more interactive learning environment. Often, I will need to integrate culture-related lessons learned from previous operations in order to enrich the class discussions.<sup>2</sup> In addition, college-level classes usually last about four months. Military classes are generally shorter, with just a few days and sometimes only a few hours of class time devoted to culture. This means that the culture classes have to be both effective and efficient in educating the military students about cultural concepts, given the limited amount of class

time. As a CFL Advisor, one of the challenges I have faced when instructing a typical culture class is learning to cover a large amount of material in a relatively short time period.

### **Civilian or Military Culture?**

Another distinction I made during my transition was that between civilian and military culture. Civilian culture is broader and more general and less structured than military culture. Military culture is a sub-culture of the dominant civilian culture. Both cultures have beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors. However, military culture has its unique set of beliefs (Soldier's Creed), values (the Army Values), and norms and behaviors. The Army is more task-oriented and values efficiency more than the average civilian.

These differences led to the development of different definitions of "culture" among members of civilian and military culture. "Based on 160 definitions compiled by Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn in 1952, the word "culture" is used mostly in three senses: first, the excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities; second, an integrated pattern of human knowledge and behavior that relies on the capacity for social learning and symbolic thought and third, the set of shared attitudes, goals, practices, and values that characterizes an institution, group, or organization."<sup>3</sup>

In military culture, the third definition or explanation of culture is considered more useful and practical because Soldiers need to understand why a group of people acts, reacts, behaves, or perceives things in a certain way.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, a civilian may believe that the first definition of culture is just as important and practical as the third definition of culture because civilians are more diverse in their cultural consumption. The goals of military personnel tend to be more influential in nature than those of the typical civilian. For example, a Soldier working on an operation in a foreign country would be more concerned with learning about interactions and effective communication with the local people than their appreciation of the fine arts because he/she is focused on introducing a novel idea, concept, or premise to the local people. In contrast, a civilian may prioritize the fine arts and humanities of a foreign land over the basic values and beliefs of the local people because his/her goal is to simply expand his/her knowledge of that culture or country.

## **Historical Integration of Culture in the U.S. Military**

Students of history and military scholars have argued that there are real challenges and many difficulties associated with decision making just based solely on culture, race, or ethnic group. This was evident on many occasions when the Army showed little understanding of the targeted group's culture. For example, in the late 1800s the military decided to use African American Soldiers to fight the Spanish American War because they were thought to be immune to Caribbean diseases. In another example, in World War I the Army leadership selected white Southern officers to lead an infantry division of mostly black Soldiers because the military assumed that they (white Southerners) had more contact with, and thus were more familiar with, their subordinates. In both examples, military judgments were not sound, resulting in failure because the decision makers paid little attention to the culture of the target population.

However, there are also historical culturally-based decisions made by the Army. For example, the Army used the Navajo "code talkers" during World War II to ensure secure communication. In this case the Army used culture and language to its advantage. Also in the Vietnam Conflict the Army interacted with local civilian leaders which helped in gaining the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese. However, despite the effort to engage local culture in the overall U.S. military strategy, the North Vietnamese achieved strategic success by using intelligence and tactics of deception.<sup>5</sup>

## **The Current Surge for Culture: Victory not by Fire and Maneuver but by Winning Hearts and Minds**

In the 1990s and earlier decades, the U.S. military focused more on technological advancement to outpace other countries. When the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan reached the counterinsurgency stages, this led to a realization that an understanding of the people, their culture and their motivation was central for military success. In late 2003 Congress held a hearing to examine the lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom. A finding at the time was that cultural and language training for Soldiers was inadequate. In order to meet the current and future needs of conflicts, and fill this gap, Congress directed the Department of Defense

to make cultural education and language training a priority.<sup>6</sup>

Also prominent in this debate was the military voice advocated by retired Major General Robert Scates who made a strong case in 2004 for a better understanding of the enemy's culture and mind set and stated this may have aided in the nation building phase.<sup>7</sup> Anthropologist Montgomery McFate and others have also made the case for the military utility of understanding adversary's culture.<sup>8</sup> In short, the case was made that victory in current and future conflicts rests on understanding enemy's actions, behavior and motivation. Operational success requires more cultural and language education and training in the military. The question then becomes, How do you integrate culture and language within the military mindset? Two alternatives are discussed below.

◆ **Global Scouts or Socio-cultural Experts or Both (Which Bullet to Use?)** There are many options for infusing culture and language training in the military, taking into account the resources and the many commitments of the Army at the time. One approach, proposed by MG Scates in his 'culture-centric warfare' concept as part of the intelligence reform of the military, was to create a cadre of global scouts who are well educated, fluent in foreign languages, and comfortable living in strange and remote places. He also called for funding them sufficiently and protecting their career advances. Many military experts believe that MG Scates' proposal is an appropriate solution; however, they argue that this transformation is too costly for the military given the engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan and other commitments around the globe. This proposal would also require more time to develop.<sup>9</sup>

Employing professional anthropologists to aid in integrating culture and language in military training is another approach. According to McFate, the U.S. military, as well as economic, diplomatic, information, and economic elements have not explicitly taken into consideration the adversary culture. She recommends that anthropologists would help address this shortcoming for two reasons. First, anthropology is a social science that focuses on understanding non-Western tribal societies and that the pri-

mary aim of anthropology is to understand behavior in societies from their own perspective.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to Scales' "global scouts," anthropologists are already highly trained in their field and some are willing to use their knowledge and expertise for interests of the Army. However, the employment of anthropologists in the military presents challenges. Some anthropologists are not interested in national security. More importantly, most anthropologists feel that they are morally obligated to protect the privacy of the subjects they study. Employment with the military would violate this ethical standard, thus increasing anthropologists' skepticism and suspicion of the military operations.<sup>11</sup>

◆ **Human Terrain System.** An important approach for achieving more effective decisions in the area of operations using accurate social, economic, and cultural data is the Human Terrain System (HTS). This option is a hybrid approach that combines both civilian and military expertise to help provide better, more accurate information to commanders on the ground and also assist in the planning and implementation of stability and reconstruction operations.<sup>12</sup> The concept for HTS was developed by McFate and Jackson and received a strong support among returning combat veterans who were unhappy with both the quantity and quality of their cultural training.<sup>13</sup>

HTS was based on seven components: human terrain teams (HTTs), reach back research cells, subject matter expert networks, tool kit, techniques, human terrain information, and specialized training.<sup>14</sup> The backbone of the HTS is the five-member HTT that is embedded in each forward-deployed brigade. The HTT will provide the brigade commander in the area of operations (AO) with ethnographic and socio-cultural data showing unique cultural features, focused study on any issue needed by the commander, and links to official data and academic experts in the U.S. to find out answers to questions from the commander and staff. More importantly, the team and the data are transferable to the incoming unit.<sup>15</sup>

Proponents argue that the introduction of HTS and its human teams is critical in culturally empowering deploying brigades once they enter the

AO and it is the people-centric approach that is needed to win the hearts and minds.<sup>16</sup> Although initial assessment showed that HTT led to a significant reduction in force to force operations, some military analysts claim that it is too early to assess the success of the program.<sup>17</sup> An opponent of HTS raised a number of concerns in his recent assessment of HTS. First, he argued that the program is inconsistent with the current military doctrine and does not acknowledge the improvements in military cultural capabilities. Second, he claimed that the military adapted to the environment after initial setbacks between 2001 and 2003 in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also stated that deploying academics with combat units may undermine the civil-military link that the military is hoping to build with social scientists. Finally, he argued that the program put a heavy burden on the military budget. For all these reasons HTS should be discontinued and refocused upon a more sustainable culture program.<sup>18</sup>

### **Culture and Foreign Language Centers**

The U.S. military has created four centers for culture and language training, each using differing methods for integration of cultural concepts and ideals. The centers emphasize the importance of cultural competence and learning about cultures of interest more than language proficiency because the understanding of culture is a broader and more applicable skill than the acquisition of a language, which takes more time to master and also decays over time.<sup>19</sup> For example, the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command's Culture Center (TCC) believes that cultural competence is a skill set that is easily gained and transferred from one region to another, while learning a language is less transferable and more time consuming. For this reason, the TCC has prioritized cultural competence in the cultural training of Soldiers over regional competence, which encompasses language proficiency. The TCC has created a number of short cultural training sessions for deploying troops in addition to a set curriculum that is devised for integration into current PME.

The Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) defines culture as "those aspects...that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military

actions that influence the culture of an area of operations.”<sup>20</sup> CAOCL thus limits the definition of culture to operational culture and pays little attention to language training. In fact, two influential books published recently by scholars at the Marines Corps University Press did not mention language as a critical component of cultural training.<sup>21</sup> The CAOCL has developed pre-deployment culture training programs similar to those of the TCC. Both the CAOCL and the TCC were established to fulfill the culture-awareness needs of deploying forces in addition to infusing culture education into the existing PME.

The Air Force Cultural and Language Center (CLC) operationalizes culture in terms of family, kinship, religion, gender, history, politics, language, and economics. It also prioritizes the importance of culture training over language and regional competence because it is quickly learned. However, it classifies both training routes for culture and language as separate but “complementary.”<sup>22</sup>

The Navy’s Center for Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (CLREC) has developed cross-cultural competency training in addition to some culture-specific training. Its Operational Cultural Awareness Training (OCAT) covers topics regarding a nation/country to include ethnic groups, history, people, languages, religious influences, society and norms, behavior and etiquette, and geography.<sup>23</sup>

In sum, all branches of the military have a shared philosophy: “Big ‘C’ (culture), little ‘l’ (language).” This means that language plays a minor role in the training of Soldiers. In my opinion, language is an important medium through which one learns about aspects of a particular culture. In fact, the best way to learn about a culture is by communicating with those who embrace that culture, thus making language proficiency very important in the understanding of culture and the acquisition of important cultural concepts. Language should be of equal importance as cultural competence in the culture training of U.S. Soldiers because the language learning process itself leads to effective intercultural communication. In addition, Soldiers’ basic knowledge

of a language will be greatly appreciated by the local people within the AO, resulting in widespread acceptance of the military’s influence and success of the mission in that particular area. Efforts to speak the language will allow Soldiers to gain the respect and trust and divert attention from the differences between the locals and Soldiers encouraging a focus on the similarities.

In order to build on the capabilities of the military’s culture centers, CFL Advisors were hired to provide relevant subject matter expertise for Army personnel and organize and coordinate all culture and foreign language activities, as well as provide culture and foreign language assessments at their specific center/school. They also work to make the military aware of the importance of culture awareness in the success of military missions.

So far, the Army has filled six out of fifteen CFL Advisor positions. These individuals are making progress towards the mission of increasing cultural awareness among members of the military. Over time, this group of advisors will make their imprint in the area of culture on the Army.



## Conclusion

The transition from an academic position to that of a CFL Advisor to the U.S. Army has so far been an exciting and enriching experience for me. I have received incredible support from the SSI as well as the ACFL Office. The advice and support of the CFL Advisors I have met has contributed greatly to my adjustment to the new position. During this short period, I have learned about Army culture and the multiple missions the Army has embarked upon.

The focus on cultural and language training and education is of equal, if not more, importance to technological advancement in fighting insurgency as well as executing humanitarian and peacekeeping missions of the Army. I intend to use my skills and expertise to enhance the cultural training and education of Army Soldiers in order to contribute to the success of these missions. 

## Endnotes

1. I am not the first academic to be anxious when joining a military setting. See, for example, Pauline Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," *Military Review*, November-December 2008, 72.

2. The Army established Centers for Lessons Learned in addition to publishing articles by both Army personnel and social scientists in journals such as *Military Review*, the *Marine Corps Gazette*, and the *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, creating forums for commanders, Army leaders, and civilians.

3. Gerardus Wykoff, "CSM Forum," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, PB 34-10-1, January-March 2010, 3-4.

4. Ibid, 3.

5. This section draws heavily on Patrick Porter, "Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War," *Parameters*, Summer 2007, 45-58 and Hershel Holiday, "Improving Cultural Awareness in the U.S. Military," U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, 2008.

6. Holiday, 10.

7. Major General Robert Scales, "Culture Centric Warfare," *Proceedings*, U.S. Naval Institute, 2004. Accessed at [http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI\\_1004\\_Culture-P1,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_1004_Culture-P1,00.html).

8. Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Force Quarterly* 38 (2005), 42-48 and McFate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship," *Military Review*, March-April 2005, 24-38.

9. Holiday, 13.

10. McFate, Anthropology and Counterinsurgency.

11. Holiday, 16-18.

12. Ibid, 18-20.

13. Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson "An Organizational Solution for DOD's Cultural Knowledge Needs," *Military Review*, July-August 2005, 18-21. See also Major Ben Connable, "All our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," *Military Review*, March-April 2009, 57-64.

14. Jacob Kipp, et al., "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Military Review*, September-October 2006, 8-15.

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16. Ibid, 15.

17. Holiday, 19.

18. Connable, 57-59.

19. Jeff Watson, "Language and Culture Training: Separate Paths?" *Military Review*, March-April 2010, 93-97.

20. Barak Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* (Quantico: Marines Corps University Press, 2008), 15.

21. Ibid. Paula Holmes-Eber, et al., (2009) *Applications in Operational Culture: Perspectives from the Field* (Quantico: Marines Corps University Press, 2009), 15.

22. See Watson.

23. Christopher Wise, "Navy's Center for Language, Regional Expertise and Culture," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, PB 34-10-1, January-March 2010, 18.

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# What a Chaplain Learned about Culture



by Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, Ret.) Mike Maleski

While serving in Vietnam, I often heard comments like, “When will these people learn to speak English!” “Why don’t they trust us?” “Why are there so many Buddhist temples?” “Don’t these people know we are here to help them?” As I reflect back on what I heard and saw in Vietnam I realize how unprepared I was to interact with Vietnamese culture. My experiences were like those of thousands of men and women who have served in the U.S. military. We were prepared to engage the enemy on the battlefield but woefully unprepared to engage their culture.

I now think back on how badly we treated the people of Vietnam at times. We often talked harshly about them and spoke of them as being inferior to “us” Americans. Indeed, anytime that we got a rocket attack we became even more suspicious of “those” people. Once, when a booby-trap was discovered, we accused everyone, and made life even more difficult for them. We often felt like we were not appreciated for helping to make their country free.

One of the first things I did to help me better understand Vietnamese culture was to seek out my chaplain. I knew that the chaplain was sensitive to the needs of the men and women in his unit. He was always there for us and seemed to have answers to our questions. The chaplain was able to provide cultural information that allowed me to better understand the Vietnamese people. He taught me about the many different religious groups in the country and explained the following things to me.

- ◆ Vietnamese people are not unlike Americans. Initially I did not agree with his statement until he explained it in more detail. The chaplain said that the Vietnamese people valued many of the same things that Americans do. They have a high regard for their family members and want to provide for them. They have a much higher regard for their elderly than many Americans do. They want their children to get a good education and live in relative safety.
- ◆ The Vietnamese people celebrate special events in their lives just as Americans do. They rejoice at wedding ceremonies, and at the birth of their children, and mourn when a loved one dies. He went on to say that the actual ceremonies may be different from what we are use to, but they hold the same significance as our own cultural ceremonies. During the holidays they get together with family and friends and enjoy a meal together. They tell stories about relatives who are deceased and honor them during this time.
- ◆ The people of Vietnam will act and behave in a manner that is totally acceptable and normal within their society. Our Chaplain, Chaplain Peterson, told me that if something looked strange to me it might actually be perfectly acceptable behavior or a norm of their society. (I must confess that I was taken aback the first time a young Vietnamese man wanted to hold my hand when talking with me. I later found out

that this was normal between males and was a sign of friendship.) I also learned that the people in the villages acted differently than those in the larger cities like Saigon. People in the villages had a greater respect for animals, the land, and their families. However, they were cautious of any person from outside of their village because they did not want reprisals from the Viet Cong at night. Another lesson I learned from the chaplain was not to misjudge the age of Vietnamese teenagers. While Americans might call a teenage boy someone who is 14, 15, or 16 years old, in Vietnamese society they are considered men.

- ◆ In just about every town or city you would see Buddhist temples. The majority of the Vietnamese people practiced their Buddhist faith on a fairly regular basis. The chaplain again pointed out to me that I should respect their religious faith as well as any other faith they believed in. He asked me how I would feel if foreigners came to my home town, and were disrespectful of my personal religious beliefs. In a nutshell he told me to practice the “Golden Rule” when interacting with another person’s personnel faith. This advice proved to be very good and I tried to treat all people with dignity and respect.

One of the greatest experiences I had in Vietnam was helping the local Catholic orphanage. I had the privilege of helping by providing food, clothing, and school supplies that were sent to me by my church back in the States. During the holidays we were able to have cookouts and play games with the children. Christmas was a very special time because we played Santa Claus to the children and gave them some very nice things that they needed. The experiences I had at the orphanage gave me a very positive cultural understanding of how people needed to be treated regardless of what country I was in.

During my time in Vietnam I felt a call to ministry and was greatly influenced by my unit’s chaplain. He had such a loving and caring spirit about him and genuinely cared for his people. After I returned home I got married and began college. After earning my BA in Education, I enrolled in Seminary and completed my Master’s degree, which meant I could apply to the military and become a chaplain. However, it would take several years before I became an Army Chaplain. I served as a chaplain in the Arizona and Pennsylvania Army National Guard

and in the Delaware Air National Guard. Then I was recalled to active duty on September 11, 2001 and remained on duty until my retirement in 2009.

During the first Gulf War I was assigned to a Military Police company and had to give religious and cultural briefings to the soldiers before they deployed to Iraqi. In the years following the Gulf War I have had numerous opportunities to give religious and cultural briefings to both soldiers and airmen. I have been able to utilize all the latest cultural briefings, lessons learned, and testimonies from those who have returned from the area of responsibility (AOR). When I reflect back on all resources I had available to me, I have come to some interesting conclusions:

- ◆ Chaplain Peterson was forty plus years ahead of his time in dealing with culture. Little did I realize at the time that he had understood the values, behavior, beliefs, and norms of the Vietnamese.
- ◆ Soldiers need to pay close attention to non-verbal communication because it reveals a lot about how a conversation is going.
- ◆ Soldiers need to understand that culture awareness is not culture compliance!
- ◆ Soldiers need to separate the “bad guys” from the general population who only want stability for themselves and their family.
- ◆ Soldiers need to treat people with dignity and respect whenever possible.
- ◆ Soldiers need to be culturally aware of the predominant religion, customs, and ceremonies in their AOR.
- ◆ Soldiers need to find out what locals value.
- ◆ Soldiers are guests in a foreign country.
- ◆ Soldiers need to remember that relationships help build rapport with the locals.
- ◆ Soldiers should try to learn a few words or phrases of the local language.

As I look back on my military career as a chaplain I have come to one conclusion concerning cultural awareness training. If cultural awareness training helps to save one soldier’s life, then it has been worth it. I have had the experience of going with my command to inform a young wife, parents, or next of kin that their loved one was killed. I often wondered if there was something more we as chaplains could have done in the area of cultural awareness to prevent a death. ✨



## Introduction

The U.S., because of its geography, is largely isolated from contact with other cultures which have vastly different values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms than our own. Americans, if they do not want to, could spend their whole lifetime without being forced from their secure social “bubble.” Many who do travel go to places already significantly “Americanized” like Cancun or Cozumel and do not ever get out of their cultural comfort zone. In order to receive a genuine understanding of ourselves we need to step outside this bubble—we might become disoriented, but nothing worthwhile is ever easy.

We can learn about other cultures through books and the classroom, but in order to really understand ourselves, to get a glimpse of who we are, we have to leave our cultural comfort zone without the option of return. In this article I will highlight my own experiences in Brazil and how they have contributed

to an understanding of myself, my own culture, and cross-cultural insight.

## Cultural Journey: Brazil

An hour after dawn we were reaching our destination. It had been a long overnight bus ride and I was ready to be rid of that confining seat and stuffy air from the rain. We had just descended from the highland areas down to the plains near the Atlantic coast. I had already been in Brazil for a month and had had my share of cross-cultural experiences, many funny ones, but the next hour on the bus would change me for a lifetime.

As we were nearing Rio de Janeiro I got my first glimpse of the extensive *favelas* (slums) that surround this international vacation destination. Most have heard of the famous Copacabana beach, seen pictures of the giant *Cristo* (Christ) statue that overlooks gorgeous Rio, or viewed the week long *Carnaval*

festival on TV. These are the images that you will see in the travel brochures. What you won't see in the brochures are the favelas that populate Rio's hillsides and periphery. Perhaps, if you watch the news or read the international section of any newspaper, you might have seen the recent raids by the Brazilian military and police in these slums to eradicate the gangs that have become the de facto power brokers in these areas. These are also images not in the brochures.

Nothing would change me more than that next hour on the bus. It was like watching the National Geographic channel picturing children swimming in a river

black from contaminated runoff, or one of those non-profit advertisements you see on late night TV of a village in Africa strewn with garbage and a malnourished child, but this I was seeing for myself first-hand. This was real, and as we cruised by row upon row of structures which looked like bombs had struck them, I began to physically feel sick. The occasional garbage filled water channel would cut between the rows of houses and littered dirt streets. These images I have, five years later, are still as crisp as on that day.

It wasn't only the poor living conditions that I was witnessing, it was the expanse of them. The fact that it took at least an hour going freeway speeds to pass them by was what impacted me the most. Needless to say, after that hour I began to appreciate what life I was given by my circumstances of birth.

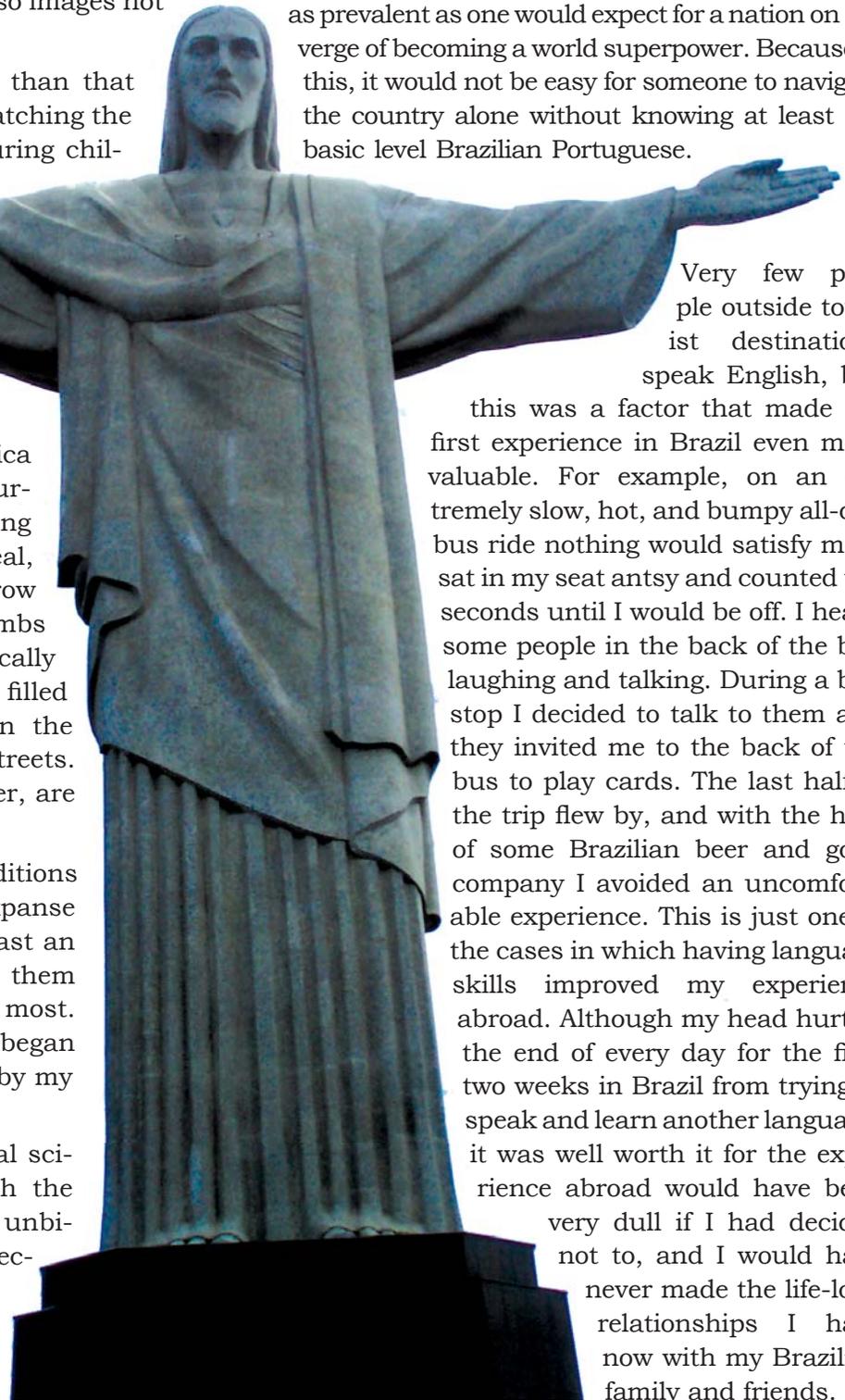
In college I had studied the social sciences, and they provided me with the background to look at people in an unbiased manner and from their perspective. But the classroom and books are not enough when we attempt to learn about foreign people and cultures. One must experience

these people and places first hand. Any Soldier who has been deployed, any civilian who has had a similar experience, knows what I am talking about. The nausea I felt when I gazed upon those slums was actually my first real experience of empathy, a feeling which we cannot teach nor truly understand through words.

Although Brazil is very modernized, English is not as prevalent as one would expect for a nation on the verge of becoming a world superpower. Because of this, it would not be easy for someone to navigate the country alone without knowing at least the basic level Brazilian Portuguese.

Very few people outside tourist destinations speak English, but

this was a factor that made my first experience in Brazil even more valuable. For example, on an extremely slow, hot, and bumpy all-day bus ride nothing would satisfy me. I sat in my seat antsy and counted the seconds until I would be off. I heard some people in the back of the bus laughing and talking. During a bus stop I decided to talk to them and they invited me to the back of the bus to play cards. The last half of the trip flew by, and with the help of some Brazilian beer and good company I avoided an uncomfortable experience. This is just one of the cases in which having language skills improved my experience abroad. Although my head hurt at the end of every day for the first two weeks in Brazil from trying to speak and learn another language, it was well worth it for the experience abroad would have been very dull if I had decided not to, and I would have never made the life-long relationships I have now with my Brazilian family and friends.



Language is not only important to build relationships, but if you do not know the language, you may misinterpret emotions while observing other cultures. For example, when I first observed my girlfriend and her mother converse I had the feeling they did not have a good relationship for I believed, from their actions, that they were arguing and fighting constantly because of the high level of emotion in their communication. What I was seeing was the famous Latin American passion which is visible in many contexts, but before this I had only heard about it and it took an experience to understand what it really meant. It wasn't until I learned some basic Portuguese did I find that I had been misinterpreting passion and emotion for anger or discontent.

The hospitality I experienced in Brazil also had an impact on me. I'm from the "Land of Lakes," but the "Minnesota nice" which you might have heard about does not hold a candle to the hospitality I experienced in Brazil. For example, I was invited to a party of a friend of my girlfriend. I knew no one there, but by the end of the short night I had made friends with everyone, some twenty-odd people, something that had never happened to me in the States. Additionally, the first time I met my girlfriend's father, he took me for a tour of his house and offered to lend me some clothes. I accepted a couple of his shirts but when he offered me his speedo bathing suit I declined politely as he kept insisting, and all the while my girlfriend laughed hysterically. After saying "No, thank you" a number of times I accepted because it dawned on me he was demonstrating his approval of me through the gift-giving, and I did not want to offend him and damage the relationship. At his house I was also provided breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks in between.

These are just a couple of the many examples of hospitality I received there, and the fact that these people have a lot less than people in the States do, they were genuinely eager to share what they had. This is what has been labeled "relationship-oriented" in culture training but you will not really know what this means until you experience it for yourself.

It is also common that when people from the U.S. visit other countries they often expect things to run as they do back home. If you do, you will always be disappointed while traveling. This is not always negative though. For example, days after arriving in

Brazil I went to the gas station to get a pack of cigarettes. When I got to the counter to ask for them, I butchered the Portuguese language and I had to revert to pointing and trying to pronounce the color of the cigarette package while the cashier patiently worked with me to get what I wanted. The line behind me was getting so long that I started feeling sheepish for taking so much time, but finally she grabbed the right brand. The whole time I was expecting that she would become impatient and help the next customer but she made sure I got what I wanted. When I turned around there were no agitated faces. This was a breath of fresh air for I had been used to the urgency of everything in the U.S. which is often expressed by impatience—especially when it comes to an individual who has language barriers.

So, anyone who really wants to be "cross-culturally competent," have real empathy and truly experience another culture, needs to just go, learn the language, and talk and interact with the people. Additionally, those who want to try to get an understanding of another culture have to undergo "culture shock," and be uncomfortable in their own skin in another culture. Only when this happens do we get a true understanding of who we really are and our own culture, which is the first step to becoming cross-culturally competent. ✨

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# My Cross-Cultural Experiences on the Reservation



by Miguel A. Rodriguez



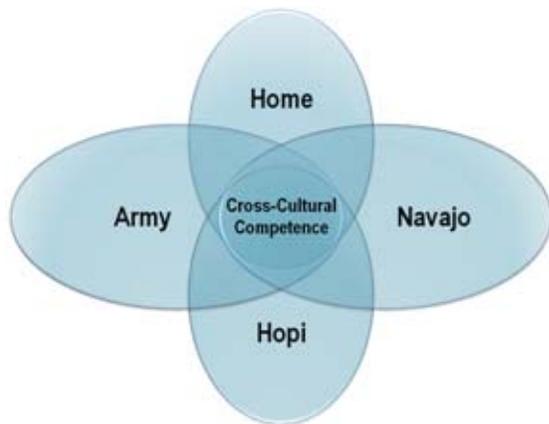
## Introduction

My experience in cross-cultural awareness and communication spans four different but overlapping culture zones. Not only was I raised in California in a bicultural home (Hispanic-American), I have had over 20 years of personal experience with peoples in three other distinct cultural environments. I was a drill sergeant for three years in the US Army, as well as a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) instructor in Arizona on two different Native American Indian reservations. Common to all these environments was my mission to teach and to reach my students. The same basic teaching methodology was applied to the course of instruc-

tion in the Army as on the Navajo and Hopi reservations, but in the latter two cases, methods were shaped in response to the cultures of the students. My cultural competence and effectiveness to reach and teach my students depended on the features of the particular cultures encountered, and my ability to learn from and accommodate these cultural differences in my work and in my thinking.

My understanding of the importance of culture was later sharpened at the TRADOC Culture Center when I became acquainted with the formal underpinnings of the study of culture, and this led me to see how military mission effectiveness is favorably

impacted by incorporating awareness of the contact culture into planning.



### Home Culture

I was born in central California. My parents, U.S. citizens, made many sacrifices in order to improve the lives of our small family. One big sacrifice was that I lived with my maternal grandmother in Mexico when I was little. It was not until I was five years old that my parents felt economically secure enough to send for me. I was happy in Mexico with my extended family, but happy to be with my parents, too. When I started school in the U.S., I began to learn English and soon forgot my Spanish. In fact, I remember consciously deciding to speak only English. Although I had no brothers or sisters, I had numerous relatives in California, and we got together frequently on the weekends which were totally devoted to family. However, my parents saw more opportunity in southern California, so leaving the family behind, we moved when I was in seventh grade. Even though we lived apart, we would get together at reunions.

### Army Culture

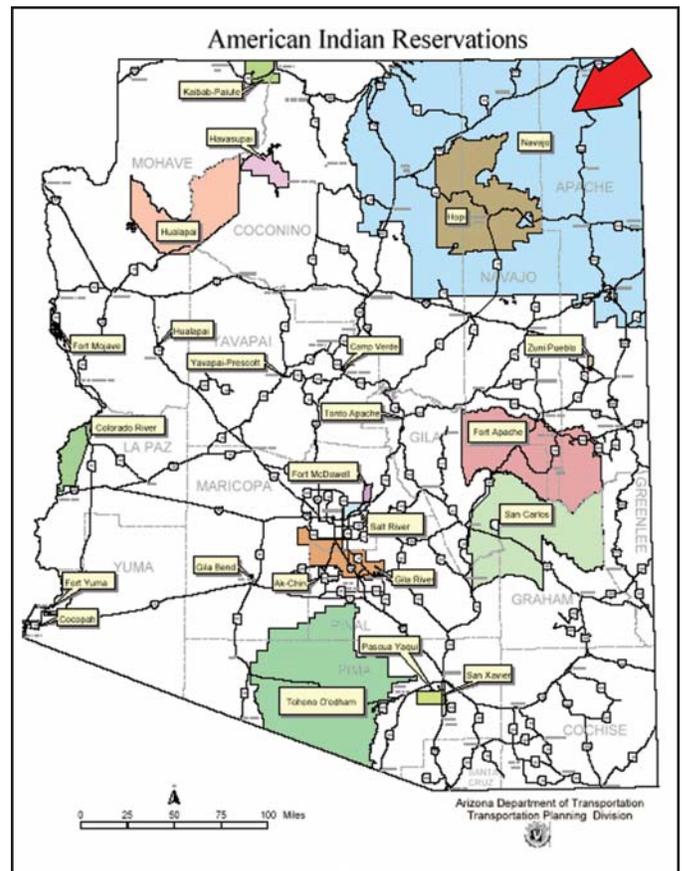
I enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school. This pleased my parents on two counts. My dad, the youngest of five brothers, had dropped out of school after eighth grade to take care of the family farm, but his older brothers had all enlisted to serve in World War II, now his only son had finished high school and sought opportunities in the military.

The Army became my new family, but Army culture was team culture, and instead of extending laterally to relatives, it was organized in a hierarchy of ranks. Still and all, we were family, and if anything happened we would “take care of it here.”

Your team was where your loyalties lay no matter what. Buddies shared experiences and stuck with each other. My general cultural awareness grew as a result of meeting guys from different backgrounds. I was surprised to meet young men who could speak Spanish as well as they could speak English, and I tried to recover the language I had lost.

### Navajo and Hopi Cultures

Soon after leaving the Army I became a JROTC instructor in Arizona on two different reservations. My own competence in teaching effectively in a culturally different environment began at *Pinon*, on the Navajo reservation in the northeastern part of the state. It was like living in a third world for the students—cars and buses sometimes couldn’t even get to their homes—so they had to walk. No electricity, nor running water. Some areas had wells, so families would drive their pick-up trucks with water containers and pump the water. We teachers, however, lived pretty well in triple-wide trailers, funded and supplied by the school district.



“Home” is the reservation. From Flagstaff traveling east, you see a sign “Entering the Navajo

Reservation” beyond which there is just desert. Flagstaff real estate companies want to purchase the land back from the Navajos because of the scenic views; the land is pristine, unused, unspoiled. Even though I was stationed in Arizona three or four times, I never realized that the largest reservation in the U.S. was in northeast Arizona. I never knew of their history, like the *Long Walk*, which changed their culture tremendously. I never knew about the government decision to give them that piece of land, isolated and desolate compared to Flagstaff.

The Hopi live on land completely surrounded by the Navajo Nation. They are Pueblo Indians, not plains Indians, as compared to the Navajo, a more warrior oriented tribe. The Hopis and Navajos have a working agreement; the Navajos occupied the surrounding areas to protect the sacred ritual spaces of the Hopi lands.

On the “Res,” the Navajos were at first very standoffish, while the Non-Natives on the Res were very receptive. Teachers came and went and turnover was quite high. But as we stayed on the Res and came to know the Navajo, they eventually became much friendlier. They started overlooking the pull of their own culture when they begin to identify something better to work toward.

The Hopi were opposite to the Navajo. There, teachers were not regarded as an imposition. We were integrated more into the society, but society was very traditional. The Hopis were very receptive, but the non-native people on the Hopi Res were very standoffish. The Hopi had a low turnover of teachers. Self-awareness was high. Non-native kids on the Hopi Res were not as friendly as the Hopi kids. Hopis put the teachers on a higher level of importance and were treated with a lot more respect. The turn-over rate was not as high. For instance while the Navajo would lose 50 percent of their non-native teachers every year, the Hopi would lose only 1 or 2 teachers per year.

On the Navajo Nation, one had to be very patient with the students and their culture, but once they got to know you they would accept you into their family, as a guest of their tribe. On the Hopi Reservation, it was very easy to be accepted. Teachers were accepted by the Hopis as members of the community with something meaningful to contribute to their people. (By way of contrast, anthropologists traditionally did not work well with the Hopis, as the

Hopis thought they wanted something from them, to take away their secret culture. Navajos worked better with anthropologists as they may have figured they had something to gain from them in turn.)

I had my own stereotypes to overcome when I first went there. For example, I assumed that my Navajo students would prefer Native American music, but when I asked one young man, ear buds in place, what he was listening to, he turned his Walkman over to me, and I discovered that his choice of music was Metallica, a heavy metal group popular then among the general population. I realized then that I had been stereotyping their culture.

Although these youngsters connected seamlessly with the general population in their choice of music, their attitudes toward other things was very different. I found, through talking with them and their parents, that they had what I would call old-school ideas about family. In general, many of their ideas were about twenty years behind the times in terms of our own ways of thinking, especially on social issues like child abuse and alcohol abuse. They were similar to the way we were in the 70s and 80s about these issues.

Drug use was different than in the rest of the U.S. Peyote specifically was used in a ritual ceremony. It was for them a medicine to be used ceremonially to help them with problems or issues. I had one man come to me and tell me he didn’t want to reenlist in the Army. We had a peyote ceremony. They drank, ate, and chewed on peyote all night long to discuss the decision. By morning time they came out with a decision. This was one part of the ceremony, that because of my Army culture, I could not attend.

As we started teaching, our program became very popular. We had all ranges of kids: academic, athletic, regular students and students with special needs. Everyone was looking at our instructors as a way to become more disciplined. We also unexpectedly fulfilled a parental role. A lot of kids were missing a parent at home. Families were disrupted and there were a lot of single families. Mixed mothers or fathers—sometimes the father was in jail, or sometimes the father was the parent because the mother would be dead. It seemed like their life-spans were not as long as ours, medicine and medical facilities were not as advanced as ours. Because of that they looked toward the JROTC program as a way of mentoring and role modeling for their children.

There, I discovered a new way of family organization. Of course, it was more like my own family than like the Army, but there were significant differences. For one thing, the families are extended, but organized into matrilineal clans for general support and identity. A man moves to his wife's home, and it is she who owns livestock and land. A newborn belongs to the mother's clan, but identifies with the father's clan.

Growing up, I had chores, like cleaning and doing yard work, and I would get in trouble with my parents if I didn't do them on time or the right way. But my responsibilities were nothing compared to Navajo kids. Every morning before school they had to feed the livestock and clean up, and then walk to the bus stop, which was often a matter of miles away.

At first we JROTC teachers did not understand why our students seemed so slow in class. We thought they were lazy. But when you find out about their culture, it is easy to see that it would be wrong to say Navajo kids are lazy. But it was because they were tired after doing so much work at home. A lot of kids were falling asleep in class, especially on Mondays. We later found out that they had to participate in ceremonies on the weekends, beginning Friday afternoon, lasting until Sunday night. Come Monday morning, they were exhausted. We found this was a cultural thing we had to accept and work with in order to be effective teachers. It was culture first, family second, everything else, third. They were trying to meet so many demands, and there was just not enough time.

Speaking of time, I later learned that even ideas about time are cultural. My parents were pretty strict about my getting things done on time, but we could relax when we were with family. Of course in the Army a soldier's time is regimented and there are many suspenses and deadlines. Navajo sense of time was called "Indian Time." Although the animals were attended to according to their need, for people it was always Indian time on the reservation, even in school. For example, if a parade was supposed to start at nine in the morning, it might really start at 0930 or 0942, or whenever everybody had assembled and was ready, after they had taken care of other family business.

Once we knew the cultural norm, we could adjust our program and policies to accommodate these

norms. The Navajo were also not aware of the restrictions that current pedagogical practices imposed on teachers. These parents counted on teachers to discipline their children, even physically, and parents were not sympathetic with my not being able even to touch students as a sign of affection, let alone correct them by physical punishment.

I mentioned that my parents were pretty strict. I was raised to respect their authority as well as my teachers. If I did something wrong at school, I got in trouble at home, too. Army organization is created along a hierarchy of authority and discipline is clearly defined, and strict. But on the Navajo Reservation at a parent-teacher conference, if a teacher told a parent that their child was not doing so well, the parent expected the teacher to correct the situation by doling out the discipline. They believed that the teacher was an extension of the parent, and told the teacher to discipline the child.

In Navajo land, mom and dad were disciplinarians, but on the Hopi Reservation, twenty miles away, it was totally different. The aunt and uncle disciplined the children, not the parent. It took me four months to find out that we had to call the aunt and uncle to discipline the child. You would tell the Hopi student that you were going to call his or her parents, and they would just say 'okay' and continue what they had been doing wrong in the first place, but when you told them you were going to talk to their aunt or uncle, then they would listen.

Culturally, the Hopi people are arranged into matrilineal clans, too, but it plays out differently than with the Navajo. For one thing, children belong to the mother's clan, but the women in the father's clan name the baby. Some people have admired the fact that discipline comes from the aunts and uncles because that keeps the focus on the family but lets the children see their parents as very loving and not to be feared. So, as teachers, once we knew the cultural norm, we could adjust our JROTC program and policies to accommodate these norms.

The first year of the JROTC program, we presented student evaluation plans, and syllabi for the kids—grading, goals, etc. Kids at first really didn't understand it. We had to reword it for them—This is how we are going to teach you, show them the book; a few days later, this is how we are going to counsel you, a few days later, this is how we are going to grade you.

The following year, we introduced our classes in the Navajo language. Introductions in Navajo really accelerated the learning—even just an opening introduction in their language. Trying to communicate in someone’s language shows them that you care. You may not understand it well enough, but they will reciprocate and make the effort. Once I began using Navajo language, the kids, even the harder kids, began opening up.

One of the things that helped us in their disciplinary issues in the classroom was their culture. Everyone in the class was a family member. Everyone in the class will help out with management of the class as with family members. Sometimes family problems overflowed into the classroom. If kids began rebelling in class, then their peers would step in to mediate and assist us.

Education has an important place in all four of the cultures I have experienced. My parents made sure I did my homework and always encouraged me to finish high school. The Army pushes education, too, and that is how I wound up with a degree in broadcasting and journalism over and above all the training required just being a Soldier.

The Navajo are very adaptive and receptive to outside influences. They try to be competitive and are open to new ideas. For example, they put money from their casino profits into scholarship funds, guaranteeing tuition payments for any Navajo student who qualifies to go to college. While they look beyond the reservation and understand the importance of getting an education, I noticed that many Navajos prefer to return to the reservation.

Even though Native Americans are a minority in Arizona and they form their own Nation, they proudly serve the U.S. military. In fact, more Native Americans from the reservations serve per capita in the military than any other populations in the U.S. That tradition of service goes back to the Navajo and the Hopi Code Talkers. They have a tradition of service in the Army and the Marine Corps that most people don’t know about. When the first female Navajo war casualty, Laurie Piestewa died, ceremonies for her were conducted on the Reservation. They brought the body back and had the ceremony at her graduating school, with both military personnel and medicine men in attendance. As a cultural aside, any time you attend a funeral, you have to get smoked with cedar to get

rid of the bad spirits that may have attached to you. They have one site where the funeral rituals are conducted, and another site where they burn the cedar and people walk up and get smoked on the arms, under the armpits, the groin, the legs, and the bottom of the feet.

Hopis however, have a cultural dilemma about serving in the military, more than the Navajos. They were in conflict with both being Hopi and being in the military. Before they join the military, they go through a traditional cleansing ceremony to wipe away their Hopi cultural identity, and then, after serving 4, 10, or 20 years, they go back through another cleansing ceremony to wipe away the military cultural identity and restore their traditional Hopi Identity. There are some Hopis who suffer mental illness because in their minds they can’t separate their Hopi identity from the things they had to do in the military.

I went through a cleansing ceremony at a sweat lodge with the Navajo. It had four parts, about ten to fifteen minutes per part. The first part was to get to know the other members in the lodge. The second part was to bring out why we were all in the sweat lodge. The third part was praying and the fourth round, the warrior round, was for singing and chanting. The person running the sweat lodge faces east at the head of the lodge, with a bucket of water and a sage branch. The steam would rise up above the rocks and go to the ceiling, then go down your back and up the other side. It would completely surround you with heat. The sweat lodge was steamed with nine lava rocks, representing a woman’s nine months of pregnancy. Three stones were put at every round. The sweat lodges were hot, not comfortable, but it was the most refreshing thing to actually sweat and then come out and lay down on the sand, looking at the crystal blue sky. The reason for this process was for healing. It was a place to let out your issues and discuss them among the people. At this ceremony, we went in to try to discuss a better way of running things for the kids, the man who ran the lodge was a drug coordinator for the school district.

When we taught JROTC, we had many different programs. Our curriculum was very well developed. We started off with history—American history, then military history, leadership classes, physical fitness classes, navigation classes, and then brain based

programs When General Colin Powell spoke of the importance of JROTC in isolated communities in helping kids, JROTC became a big hit on the Res. The Navajo leadership and families realized it was a way for their kids to become better citizens. In fact, in Northern Arizona, there are significant JROTC programs in major reservation high schools, while outside the Res the schools are looking at getting their own programs because of the success of these programs on the Res.

As training proceeded, we attempted to incorporate Navajo standards of education and their language into our program to make it better. When we taught land navigation, the elders wanted us to teach the kids how to track like they did in the old days (tracking, night navigation, footprints on the ground, etc.) The Elders realized some of the old skills had been lost, and we were teaching the kids some of the old ways and in turn we were learning about their culture.

The program was so successful that we had to create after school programs. Kids were often absent in school, but not in JROTC. They appreciated and sought the discipline that JROTC offered. We offered them opportunities to become better, to excel in color guard, physical fitness, drill teams, marching teams, and brain-based programs. Our instructors were seen as role models, and our teaching had application beyond the classroom.

In all, there were 150-180 students in the JROTC per year, 30 to 35 per class, and after school, about 10-30 in each program. We had six programs in all: a Color Guard team, Physical Fitness, Marksmanship, Parade Team, two marching teams (male and female), as well as two drill teams—six altogether. It was a level two school, under 500 kids. At least a third of the whole student body was in JROTC at any time—a very popular program. We even had gang members in our program. The kids on the teams wanted to become better and a majority of our teams were successful in their competitions. One of the teams came to me to say thanks for being there, because they won a trophy and in their entire life they never won anything.

As we became more accepted into the culture, we had the opportunity to go to their traditional celebrations and ceremonies such as PowWows and Hopi Kiva ceremonies. A Kiva is a sacred area that

only natives might normally attend. Since they believed a teacher is part of their culture, they invited us into their kiva. The Elders frowned on this because the Kiva is considered sacred, but teachers would still be allowed inside.

The first time I attended such a ceremony, I thought the celebration would last a couple of hours. In fact, the ceremony started at sunset and didn't finish until sunrise. This was something new to me. One of the surprising things was that many of the people participating in the ceremony were our students. They all wore costumes with masks so that we couldn't tell, but the following week they would tell us they saw us. Then we went one step further and were invited to participate in their ceremonies. We became part of a team who volunteered to dance in one of the school ceremonies. We had the largest dance group of them all. We did a simple dance in a big circle and as we were dancing, people would bring out containers of food and place them in front of us. It turned out the food was not for you, but for your partner, because you dance so well. I didn't understand this at first—the offering was for the partner. There were many small things that at first we were not aware of but once becoming aware we had to make sure we understood it and adapted to them.

One of the saddest things was the passing of a life. We had incidents in each school where we lost a cadet. We learned they had four days of mourning: one day to pray, one day to cry, one day to remember, and one day to rejoice, sing, and then they had to forget about it, otherwise the spirit wouldn't go where it was supposed to go. The students followed these rituals in school—pictures of the deceased were put up in the class the second day, and on the third day pictures went away. After the fourth day, everything about the person had to go so that the spirit could find its way. As a non-native, I thought it was a very neat way of dealing with death. Learning these death rituals helped me to better prepare myself for death.

Having the ability to mentor a child and be a good role model, to look for and offer suggestions, recommendations, and advice before mistakes were made. That was what was most important to me. It was a fulfilling job because not only did you teach American culture and military culture, I, in turn, learned about two special cultures. 

# Cultural Awareness and the Challenges Ahead

by Raphique Antar



When I first came to the United States to attend college 27 years ago, I had no idea about the behavior or the norms of the “Americans,” because no one ever taught me about American culture. The only cultural awareness I received was through the black and white Western movies that Morocco purchased from the French Government that were dubbed in French or had French subtitles, as well as television programs from the seventies such as *Kojak*, *Columbo*, *Dallas*, *Dynasty* (the series), *Rich Man*, *Poor Man*, or *Shaft*.

I came to the United States in the early eighties, and one of my first American cultural experiences happened to me in a large department store. I decided to visit an indoor mall and walk the aisles of the department stores. As I entered the first store, an African American man kept looking at me. I thought maybe it was my afro that got his attention, or maybe my height (I’m six feet seven inches tall,) or the fact that I was drinking a Coke.

Then it hit me, and I started to panic. Yes, all six feet seven inches of my body panicked. I thought,

“Oh my God, I am going to be attacked.” All of those images from those movies that showed black people selling drugs and attacking men and women in the streets of New York City flashed through my mind.

I was about to run for the door when he gave me a nod moving his eyebrows in an upward motion. I didn’t know what to do. I could not understand what he was trying to convey to me, so I looked up thinking that he was giving me a head’s up or warning me about something above me. He looked surprised, as if to say what an idiot I was!! And I was acting like one. He repeated his gesture and waited for my reaction, then finally gave up and left.

When I got home, I told my wife what happened and asked her to explain. She laughed, and informed me that the man was trying to be kind and was saying hello. That’s when I realized that that was the way some people said “hi” or “what’s up” in the U.S. My wife told me that the proper response would have been to emulate his gesture. But that’s not the way we say hello back in Morocco. “If he wanted to say hello, he should have come closer, and offered to

shake my hand,” I said. My wife, understanding how Moroccan men greet each other, and how reserved Minnesota men are, then said, “Please, for the love of God, no matter what you do, do not touch or hug a man when you are saying hello. That’s not usually how men greet each other here.”

Are you laughing yet? Remember, this was my first week in Minnesota, and there were so many new things for me to learn and adjust to, including mosquitoes, wearing a winter coat that weighed more than I did, and understanding why men in Minnesota go fishing when it is forty degrees below zero. But seriously, the most difficult thing for me to get used to was the reserved way that people interacted with each other.

Eventually, I got over my Minnesota culture shock, learned the language, and embraced my new cultural environment. You may feel the same culture shock during your first days of duty in Afghanistan.

Remember, this too shall pass. Many of our young soldiers have no awareness about other cultures. So, when they hit the ground in the area of operations, they have a multi-dimensional and challenging duty. Defeat the enemy and win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. How do we accomplish the latter?

It may be as simple as understanding the cultural differences in a greeting, just like the example I gave when I first came to Minnesota. For American men (like myself), when someone infringes on our three foot personal space, tries to hold our hand, or hug us we tend to become very uncomfortable. For Afghan men, that’s the way they connect with you and show that they like you. From previous experiences, we know that the population is the center of gravity when it comes to counterinsurgency operations. If soldiers use common sense and apply what they learn during their cultural awareness training they receive before deployment, then they will have enough cultural understanding to operate effectively among the population.

Army values are already in place. Those values are universal and fail-safe. Although Afghanistan’s culture is very diverse and complex, it is not impossible to understand because the average Afghan is no different than the average American. They love their families and work hard for them and want to be treated with respect.

We sometimes worry so much about offending, that we forget to just relax and approach every situation with common sense. The challenge is not whether we can defeat the enemy, that’s the easy part. It is to get the Afghan people to help find the bad guy, defeat the common enemy and establish a legitimate government and the rule of law. This can be accomplished by understanding the culture and using everyday common sense. ✨

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Becoming an American helped me understand more about my previous culture. Living in the United States for several decades shaped the individual that I am today.

Learning how to be part of a new environment required accepting, changing, experiencing, and applying on my part. The more I became immersed in American society, the more I understood the previous culture that I grew up in. This is important for me as part of my process of understanding cultural diversity and of how being part of a multi-ethnic society shaped my way of thinking and perspective.

Upon migrating from Saudi Arabia to the United States, cultural and linguistic challenges were part of adjusting to my new surroundings. What that really has meant was simply that I realized that I had to change. How much change was I willing to undergo in order to adapt to the new environment? This was a question that I could not have answered early on, but is one that I can only reflect back on after many years to find the answer.

All these transformations did not come about without challenges. My deliberate decisions to let go of being dependent on some aspects of the previous culture and to take on new ones has helped shape my transition. While some choose to immerse completely in a new culture, many choose to partially adapt to the new environment and maintain much more of their original culture. It is a personal choice that varies from person to person, based on circumstances, as well as the conditions to which an individual may be subjected.

Growing up in Saudi Arabia with a Saudi father and a Christian Lebanese mother sensitized me to

cultural differences early on. I grew up in a society where folks noted anything that was different. Most everyone is of the same ethnicity; all practiced the same religion, and had many cultural similarities. They ate mostly the same foods, dressed the same way, and enjoyed the same type of activities. In the Saudi society, foreigners are not easily accepted into the group yet those who are members by birth have a lifetime membership. The nomadic way of thinking dominates the society. Low tolerance for differences is widely observed.

Everyone is highly encouraged to attend the Friday noon prayer. Not only on Friday but every day, five times a day. The call to prayer invites all. During that time streets are usually deserted and everything slows down. Shops close and businesses take a pause. It is indeed a way of life where the society has integrated these pause times within the daily routine.

The Saudi society is a secretive one. More than two people are a crowd, and public announcements are not a preferred method of communicating. The personal approach is much more effective. Formal meetings and official business achieve their objectives during breaks where the participants conduct small sidebar conversations. The Saudi people are described as collective rather than individualistic. Saudis identify with the life of the nomad, the practice of Islam, and family ties. Older folks are well respected and cared for. Elders had the final word in my home when I was growing up. Saudis like most Arabs rarely experience living alone even though they frown upon crowds. Their offspring typically do not leave home. Men usually will get married and bring their wives to live with his parents. It is typical to see the extended family throughout. No elder couples live alone.

Although I realize that this is quite natural, I find it quite interesting how folks try to bring with them a piece of their old culture when they migrate to a new one. Food is one such item. In many communities throughout the United States, a replica of the old country is often created where one may walk down the streets of a Chinatown, a Little Italy, and so on, and read street signs in different languages, eat foods of the different regions, and experience many of the characteristics that are indicative of those cultures.

Some immigrant communities strive to maintain and strengthen the influence of their culture of origin. In my old culture I find that they are very slowly doing away with the old and bringing in the new. Forget standing in line waiting for hot fresh bread to come out of the oven, folks now prefer the presliced bread stuffed in plastic bags stacked on supermarket shelves. McDonalds, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Taco Bell have replaced the good freshly made foods in the old country bakery.

Little Americas are sprouting up everywhere even in the Middle East. Globalization is here in a world that is shrinking everyday by means of technology. Today, teenager and young adults can carry a small iPod in Riyadh, while eating grocery store bread, and instantly get the latest and greatest entertainment, news, and events.

In the past, the Saudi government controlled the flow of information in the country. Today, this task is much more challenging as information pours in through many portals, primarily the Internet. The insatiable appetite that people have for information sharing has brought the country much closer to the rest of the world and the world closer to the country. Blackberries have become a tool that teenage boys and girls use to communicate together in a society where males and females are strictly prohibited from mixing or communicating unless they are related. Online chatting and other tools such as Facebook, have changed the way people interact and have enabled a more fluid method of communication. Some cultural traditions are still strong. Marriage is mediated and arranged by the families. No marriage takes place without the consent of the family. Folks meeting online for example, still have to engage the consent of their families when it comes to marriage.

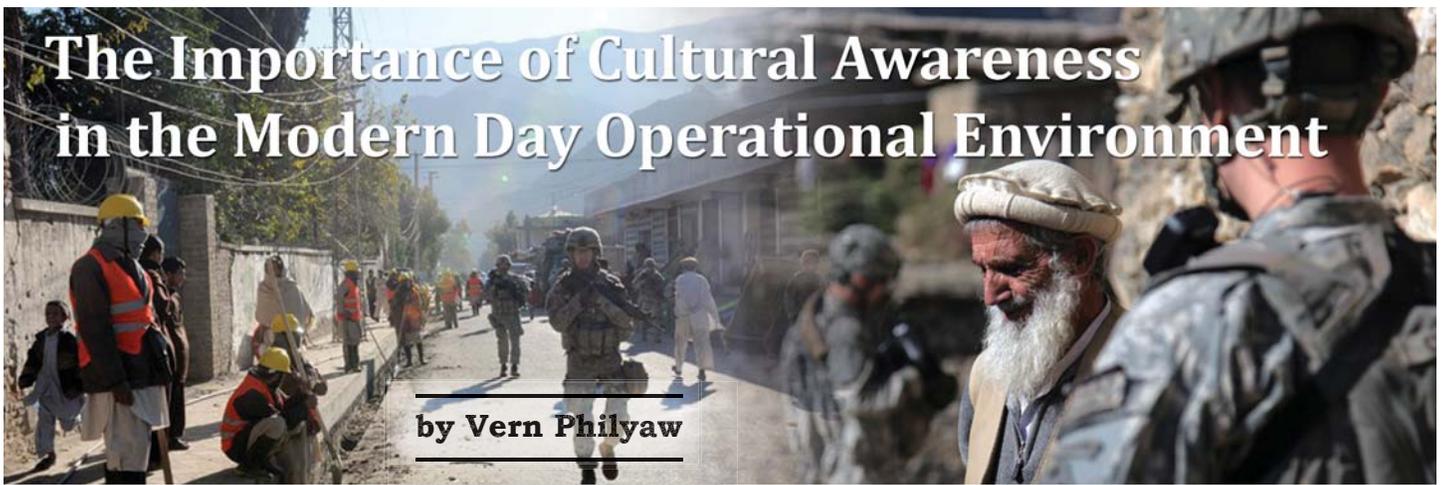
In my own personal experiences, I have seen many cultural changes. I see the world as coming together

closer and closer. This is viewed as a good thing by some, while others prefer to see their traditions remain intact, untouched, and unchanged.

However, those who today strive to uphold staunch traditions are forced to use the very technological platforms that they are blaming for the erosion of their society's norm, from their point of view. While on one hand they would prefer to sway the minds of their supporters and sympathizers via personal interaction, they recognize their need to disseminate their material in the broadest band as possible. They also understand that many of their prospective listeners are young and tech-savvy. It is said that change is constant and, in time, this opens the possibility for peaceful integration of technology advancement while maintaining favorable traditions.

Some want to cripple the ability of those who speak out against any sort of change to their traditions and norms. Unfortunately, many of them have become accustomed to such tactics of censorship throughout their lives, either personally or through friends and family. What they are not prepared to face is the ability of their high-value audience to embrace unfettered openness. The lack of censorship in the tech world encourages and educates their target audience. In cyber space, instead of controlling the message as a single source, many of these pro-traditionalists are only a single voice for all surfers (in and out of the group) to investigate. Therefore it seems apparent to me that the entire world will benefit from more, not less, education and less, not more, censorship. And I could only have come to this determination through my upbringing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and, most importantly, later my blessing of becoming an American. ✨

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As a result of the 9/11 shock to our system sustained at the beginning of this decade, the United States currently finds itself at a cultural crossroads. We need to give kudos to our successes, as well as seek solutions to our problems.

### **The Doctrinal Warfighting Focus**

The post-cold war intelligence perspective might be characterized as “better living through technology.” Through Signals Intelligence and Imagery Intelligence, among other technologies, we had shifted our abilities to long range monitoring devices. Human Intelligence (HUMINT) was viewed as Cold War and old hat. It was easy to justify budgeting for a new piece of hardware with its specifications sheet versus the “tea leaves reading mentality,” as HUMINT information gathering was considered at the time. Another argument in favor of technologies was that few of our then current “spy types” could blend in anywhere other than Europe, by reason of language skills or appearance.

In an attempt to give credit where credit is due, I acknowledge that after 9/11 the Department of Defense initiated one of the quickest and most extensive changes in the doctrinal warfighting focus for all its Armed Services in the history of the U.S. Cultural Awareness blocks of instruction were soon to follow.

To say that Cultural Awareness classes, and now instruction in cultural competence, have had an uphill battle is a major understatement. Part of the problem has been due to command attitude. Leaders tend to focus on their ‘mission’ as the primary and singular focus of their units, including the scheduling of training time. Soldiers are not stupid. They notice when leadership is truly behind the issues, or

when it is merely perfunctory because it is “mandatory.” I have personally sat through block after block of mandatory training: EEO/Sexual Harassment, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol/Drug Abuse Prevention, Financial Management, etc. Many instructors taught with the same lack of concern that the leadership expressed. It was deemed okay because the training objective was met. Unfortunately, when cultural awareness is lumped in with this group, soldiers automatically revert to a predetermined biased attitude.

The argument can be made that similar to EEO/Sexual Harassment; cultural awareness is a challenge because many Soldiers bring their personal biases to these classes. (But if sick people, or at least people who have concerns about their health, are supposed to go to doctors, why shouldn’t people with certain biases be given the opportunity to challenge the very issues they are biased about in the first place.) Soldiers merely warm chairs and keep their personal views to themselves, to the relief of their classmates and unfortunately some of the instructors. Another factor that inhibits free expression is that too often cultural awareness is taught in a ‘Death by PowerPoint’ format.

Cultural awareness should be taught in a small group forum setting. It is not just about presenting facts but more importantly, perspectives and, at times, attitudes need to be addressed. In a perfect forum, Soldiers should be challenged in a way that invites them to contribute, as long as they remain professional, either positively or negatively, to the classroom without fear of retribution. Negative input, as a rule, usually sparks more class discussion than positive input. Instructors should view this as a teaching opportunity, as usually if one Soldier

has the nerve to challenge a certain point, there are usually at least three more that feel the same way but do not want “to rock the boat.”

Another oft-given argument against cultural awareness and competence is that some leaders and Soldiers see it as being diametrically opposed to the mission of the military. “We are not the UN or the Red Cross, we are going overseas to destroy threats to the security of the U.S. and its Allies. How does this class help me do that?” Since the end of the Cold War Era, current doctrine has the U.S. military involved in peacekeeping, country rebuilding, police actions and a multitude of other similar operations around the world that most Soldiers are honestly ill-equipped to handle.

That is where cultural awareness comes in: to help provide some of the tools for their toolbox to successfully perform those missions. And what exactly are those tools? A few from the Core Curriculum blocks of instruction at the TRADOC Culture Center are *Introduction to Culture*, *Cross Cultural Communications*, *Cross Cultural Negotiations*, and *Cross Cultural Rapport Building*. There are also region-specific blocks.

### **A Specific Example**

Unlike what some Soldiers believe (and unfortunately still some leaders), the purpose of cultural awareness is *not* to get you to “kumbaya” with the enemy. We realize that there are certain objects and persons within the operational environment that are designated as “kinetic targets,” but cultural awareness is not attempting to impede this mission in any way. To the contrary, proper cultural awareness understanding has the potential to accentuate the unit’s combat effectiveness. The issue at hand: How does the proper application of cultural awareness help me with my mission down range? Nothing brings a lesson home like real world examples.

Spring, 2008 in Mosul, Iraq, the main U.S. Army unit in charge of the city was being replaced. Identical to the outgoing unit, the incoming unit had two combat maneuver units taking over security of the city that is divided by the Tigris River. One unit was taking over the eastern side and the other the western side. Both units had completed the relief-in-place (RIP) process. In RIP, the outgoing unit spends the first half of the transition time teach-

ing and showing the incoming unit what it needs to survive, and spends the second half watching and evaluating the performance of the incoming unit before it leaves.

Over the next year those two units, separated only by the river, had very different experiences. Unaffiliated Military Intelligence (MI) units began to notice that on the eastern side significant activities (SIGACTs) (KIAs, CIAs, IEDs/VBIEDs/SVBIEDs, etc.) were continually on the rise. They also began to notice that SIGACTs on the western side (even when compared with the preceding unit) were continually on the decline. The MI units also discovered that the eastern unit could not conduct dismounted patrols in neighborhoods due to the constantly high threat level. Their western counterparts, however, could not only conduct dismounted patrols, they were actually being *warned* by the locals when they were in danger of being ambushed! These MI units did deeper research and eventually found the problem.

Back when both units began their RIP process, the western incoming unit trained very studiously and respected the ‘lessons learned’ taught by the outgoing unit as to how to deal with specific nuances of each neighborhood under their control, good or bad. To the contrary, their eastern counterparts showed complete disdain and totally disregarded the RIP process. They came in with the perspective of the combat environment in 2004 instead of 2008. All were treated on the eastern side as if they were the enemy, and what they got was 2004-era casualties.

### **A General Example**

During the practical exercises of various cultural awareness classes that I have personally taught during the past three months, I have witnessed repeated occurrences in which the experiences of company level officers mirrored two sides of a similar scenario. They were each members of units deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan. They were either part of a unit that accepted and employed cultural awareness, or they were part of a unit that ignored and disregarded application of cultural awareness principles. Those who were ‘culturally unaware,’ as compared to the preceding unit, experienced a marked increase in hostilities. Those who were ‘culturally aware,’ as compared to the preceding unit, experienced a marked decrease in hostilities.

## Impact of the Media

Earlier I stated that the U.S. military is currently involved in peacekeeping, country rebuilding, police actions and a multitude of other similar operations around the world that, honestly, most Soldiers are ill-equipped to handle. They are also ill-equipped to deal with the international media coverage that such assignments inadvertently present.

Today's soldiers or units that commit a cultural faux pas, unintentionally or otherwise, run the risk of receiving fifteen minutes of fame on an *Al Qaeda* or *Taliban* propaganda website or becoming a 'star' on *YouTube*. And with the speed of technology this could be uploaded to CNN and disseminated in their state-side hometowns *before* any offending soldier has even arrived back at his base camp from the mission.

Some may think I am over dramatizing the media situation, but the enemy captures the footage of cultural mistakes made by our forces it undoubtedly will be used in at least a two-fold manner, specifically for recruiting purposes to strengthen their numbers, or generally, to attempt to sway the local populace against supporting 'The Occupiers.' The local populace is usually already under the threat of death to begin with if they are found to be 'aiding and abetting' U.S. forces in any way. It is difficult enough to elicit support in local villages without the additional hindrance of propaganda footage of actual acts committed by our forces. One must only consider the damage done by Abu Ghraib to the interrogation community.

## Cultural Competence is Logical

From an intelligence gathering perspective, being culturally aware is logical. Many of our present day enemies have the ability to blend in with the local populace. Cultural understanding can assist this problem in one of two ways. Either we understand the cultural nuances of the local area and can identify the enemy ourselves, or we are accepted by the local populace enough that *they* identify the enemy for us. In these ways proper cultural understanding has the potential to accentuate the unit's combat effectiveness.

On the subject of local population cooperation and support, many Americans echo a belief that "we do so much for those people, why don't they help us find the enemy, it is to their benefit!" The problem is that many times the enemy is indigenous to

the area, as compared to U.S. forces who the locals readily identify as foreigners, and know will eventually leave. Also as I stated earlier, the local populace is usually already under the threat of death to begin with if they are found to be "aiding and abetting" U.S. forces in any way. It is asking a lot of a populace to risk its life on the *hope* that a foreign military will be willing and able to protect them.

When Soldiers show up for the first time in their village, the locals only see the uniform and what it represents to them, for better or worse. Just like most Americans when they look at a foreigner, their own personal cultural lens dictates what they "see." In both cases change only happens when one or both sides begin to communicate, build rapport, negotiate, and eventually understand the perspective of the other. If Soldiers are successful in making cultural inroads with the locals, it is possible that the locals will see them as people, as individuals and not as generic cut outs of the U.S. military war machine.

## Summary

Throughout our history, our military has been the catalyst for national level changes of attitudes. I feel that once again our military must bear the mantle of great responsibility. Because the military spends so much time overseas as compared to the rest of America, they are the best equipped to grasp and understand the advantages of learning and implementing cultural competence.

Many Americans unfortunately glean their cultural perspective from the media. This is counterproductive, as many times the media feed their various fears and biases. It is hard to criticize other countries and their cultural issues if we do not first understand and eventually unravel our own. There are many reasons that justify the importance of cultural awareness and cultural competence in the modern day operational environment; however, it is possible that the most important reason may be the simplest and the oldest: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. ✨

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# In Step with the Sons of Iraq

by Martin Scott Catino, PhD



Dr. Martin Scott Catino and Analyst John Jacobs having a light moment with the Sons of Iraq-Abu Ghraib, October 2009.

First light breaks the darkness of a Baghdad night with a sovereign determination that intrudes into the crevices of war-blighted lives stirring to meet the mortal challenges of a new day. The diverse worlds of East and West find common ground in Iraq through a culture of progress, which reaches deeply into the determined energies of American service personnel as well as ordinary Iraqis seeking to bury the memories of a cruel despot named Saddam Hussein. As a cultural specialist, each day last year on my tour during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) brought new challenges to find the light that brightens the path through the uncertain ground we call human terrain.

Mid-September 2009 was no different. One mission during that time, a Key Leader Engagement (KLE) with the Sons of Iraq (SOI) in Abu Ghraib, stands out among the others. The urgency of the moment, the costs of losing a valued partner, and the fact that these friends of the Government of Iraq (GOI) were embittered, all added to that unique moment in time. The purpose of this short essay is to underscore the steps that we as cultural specialists used to successfully engage our alienated partners.



While there is no formula to use in every KLE, there are certain principles that find ready application in many similar occasions. The following steps worked well for us during that critical meeting. These steps will most likely work well for you also.

**Step 1: Prepare.** Familiarize yourself with the major cultural issues—the history, facts, and events—occurring in your area of responsibility (AOR).

A large portion of the Sunni population prior to 2005 either openly supported Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) or tolerated its presence. This open and tacit support for AQI not only created a major security threat to Coalition Forces (CF) but threatened the very emergence of the GOI, which sought to create legitimacy and public support by creating security and providing a better life for Iraqis. This hostile or permissive population also allowed AQI to have sanctuary for further operations into Shia areas and populations throughout Iraq, thus gaining operational depth.

In general, the Sunni population felt betrayed, marginalized, and angry that it no longer dominated Iraqi politics as it had prior to toppling of Saddam Hussein. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 involved the compliance of Shia political parties and leaders in Iraq (as well as tolerance from Iran at first), particularly the aid of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq. The majority Shia popu-

lation had much to gain and the Sunni population, which dominated Iraqi politics for decades under both the British and Saddam Hussein, had much to lose. The implementation of democracy meant simply this: the Sunni population would be voted out of power. This indeed occurred and the Sunnis compounded the problem by boycotting the early elections. The result was not only a loss of power at the hands of Shia politicians, but also at the hands of Kurdish leaders, who moved into Sunni areas of Iraq and occupied government seats vacated by boycotting Sunni, such as Mosul. Bottom line up front: Many Sunni were very angry at the CF and the GOI.

During this time, AQI overplayed its hand and used its partnership with Sunni tribal leaders to push out the Shia leaders and install and bolster AQI leaders, including foreign leaders, who held little respect for Iraqi, tribal, or local culture; often criticizing it, disrespecting it, or outright destroying it. Dead bodies began to show up in the streets of Iraq. The CF found that tribal leaders used their militias to counter AQI presence, and thus the Anbar Awakening began in earnest in 2006. USF, CF, and the GOI quickly embraced the movement and placed it under Baghdad's control. Most importantly, the many young Sunni fighters/militias received government pay checks for their service of fighting AQI. Many hoped to become full-fledged members of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) or Iraqi Police. The GOI made many favorable promises at first regarding the SOI—and these promises were not forgotten by the SOI.

The GOI later claimed that the SOI were too often ineffective, infiltrated with AQI, and playing both sides. Indeed, the GOI did promise to pay the SOI after the U.S. Forces (USF) stopped paying them (a transfer of sponsors), which occurred in 2008.

In late 2009, the SOI in Abu Ghraib, mostly Sunni, claimed that the GOI was not paying them regularly as promised. They complained of irregular pay, nonpayment, and lower wages than promised. They also claimed that they were not treated as equals, were insulted openly, and were not trained and integrated with ISF, or given the respect for the great sacrifices and shed blood to support the Shia government in Baghdad, led by Nouri al Maliki.

The SOI also claimed that the ISF was not protecting their areas but instead gave protection to Shia areas. Feeling neglected, disrespected, and insulted, as well as vulnerable to insurgent violence,

the SOI openly and tacitly hinted at either switching their allegiance to AQI or at the very least becoming more tolerant to AQI in their area. Like many Middle Easterners, the SOI believed we (USF) could fix almost anything because we were “American,” citizens of the only global superpower—and rich. This unrealistic opinion of American power and reach only compounded the problems of the moment.

Given the severity of the situation in which the SOI was embroiled, the issue rapidly “went up the flag pole,” and our team found ourselves in the middle of the problem. We could have allowed these Iraqi leaders, or some of them, to come to our post at Camp Liberty, Baghdad—which was not an uncommon practice—in hope of a quick fix.

Nonetheless, the cultural terrain was visible. Sunni mistrust and suspicion of Shia leadership and power was ancient, and was renewed in contemporary hostilities that predated the rise of the Maliki government. This mistrust was the very lens through which the SOI viewed the Baghdad leadership. Loss of wages caused shame and loss of face, both among the community and among family members. Balancing power, weighed carefully like a merchant selling produce in an Iraqi souq, was an art that tribal and political leaders had mastered almost instinctively through their “cultural DNA.”

This synopsis of events involving the SOI in our AOR is not just an abridged Situational Report, but rather the first step in engaging them and learning the history, facts, and events pertaining to their problem. Without this preparation we could not have seriously answered their questions, appeared interested in their lives, and engaged effectively their cultural values. In order to enter a KLE or the human terrain of another society, the issues must be understood.

**Step 2: Plan.** Be prepared for a response that is both understandable to the local populace and within the Commander's Guidance.

Our team of cultural experts had an outstanding member who understood the SOI very well. John Sargon Jacobs, a Human Terrain Analyst, was an obvious choice to lead the communication of that KLE. “Johnny,” as he preferred to be called, had the *wasta* (skills, influence, and respect) among the local tribal sheiks to carry the day. And he did. Thus finding the right person to put out front is critical. Too often any Arab speaker took the post during

KLEs, regardless of country of origin, dialect of spoken Arabic, Arab rivalry, or understanding of the human terrain. Finding the person to put out front is critical to the response during a KLE. Johnny was the man, and our message came through his personality as well as his spoken words.

Establishing fact was next in importance. We planned to avoid the rush to judgment, the feeling that we knew a lot, and the American penchant of wanting to “fix things.” Instead, we planned to give empathy where empathy was deserved, articulation of grievances when it was called for, and clarification where it was needed. If all we could do was get the facts straight, record them accurately, and communicate them to command, then we could count the days as a success. Our preparation held no false promises—and we planned to give none either.

Most importantly, we had prepared to connect the dots, gaining information and passing it along to the right people. All too often during KLEs the problems, although diverse, had a common factor. One side was not communicating directly or fully with the other. This slippage was no mere error, but a gap exploited by enemy, exacerbated by one’s own prejudices, and left to fester over time. During that meeting with the SOI, we carefully followed the chain of communication involved in the grievance, documented the flow of information, and made sure later that the right people were notified.

Choosing the right front person, active pursuit of facts, and readiness to find the communication chain may not seem like much of a preparation. But the simplicity and flexibility of that preparation is often invaluable.

**Step 3: Approach.** Be very considerate of approach, the very means you use to engage the individual, individuals, and issues at hand.

The *approach*, the process of initiating and responding to requests is critical in many cultures, including the Middle East. Who should go to whom? The consideration is often overlooked, inconsequential one could say, and of little value. Yet in many eastern societies the approach demonstrates authority, humility, respect, and courage. Taking the initiative to go to our allies could communicate that we respect them, are willing to brave the dangers of travel across hostile terrain leaving behind the comforts and protection of our base, and demon-

strating respect for our partners by visiting their headquarters.

Inviting them to our forward operating base (FOB) would not have been construed an act of hospitality. AQI and other Sunni insurgent groups were targeting the SOI not infrequently, making travel risky. What message would have been communicated if would have invited these already endangered allies to our FOB? No doubt this thoughtless and innocent act would have been construed as an act of inconsideration or worse, indifference to their situation, thereby setting a negative atmosphere for engagement.

Consider the cultural consequences of the approach, and use it accordingly.

**Step 4: Isolate the Issue.** Isolate the key players and be aware of secondary and third order effects.

The issue with the SOI came to a head through the following people—and they needed to be identified:

- ◆ *The local tribal Sheikh.* He was very influential and had turned against AQI. He was among the very first Awakening leaders in Iraq and was irate over the situation, having not been honored for this leading role in opposition to Sunni extremism, a problem we had seen before. His decision to oppose AQI was no small matter. Such a decision was no doubt made with the consideration that the GOI and CF were the dominant powers, more likely to support rather than oppose tribal power, and would in the short and longer term sustain the role of tribes rather than crush them under the name of Allah and Islam, as AQI and its like had attempted.

Tribal sheikhs like this often had much to lose. With the loss of funds coming from the GOI came a loss of respect, loyalty, and *wasta* among his tribe and competing tribes. Typically, sheikhs have challengers within and without the tribe waiting to exploit such losses. We feared that even if he did not turn against the GOI, he would send them a message by allowing the level of insurgent violence to rise as he opened the doors, perhaps ever so slightly, to the many networks (social, economic, security, and political) running through his domain. He could do so with impunity, and with a poker face if necessary.

- ◆ *The leader of the SOI Abu Ghraib.* He was the most vocal, being very angry but controlled, and pressing the CF to give redress to the issue. He

openly threatened to switch sides. Later he demanded a solution in a very loud voice. He was also asking us in rapid fire questions (made faster by the interpreter's translation) about "Why did the U.S. invade Iraq and find no weapons of mass destruction (WMD)?" "Why does the U.S. tolerate Iran and its WMD programs and not invade it?" And he added: "Matters were better under Saddam than now."

He held one card in his hand, and did not worry about showing it to us: "We will switch sides." No one on our side wanted that. But he did not need to play that hand. We knew it ahead of time. The secondary and tertiary order of effects would be simple: a rapid erosion of security in his area.

◆ *The Iraqi police chief and his subordinate* were also in the mix wanting the issue to be resolved, noting that the security of their area was at stake. He often looked composed and listened carefully to the others. He was a representative of the GOI, but was also at the mercies of local powers. He wanted a resolution to the problem that would support the status quo. A switch in allegiance would make his job (and life) far more precarious.

Identifying the important players in KLEs is not always that simple. Informal relationships, hidden networks, and political rivalries obfuscate the truths that are often elusive. Nevertheless, this process is unavoidable for success.

**Step 5: Contact.** Clearly communicate your position, objective, and authority (if appropriate), understanding that non-verbal actions are just as important as verbal.

Amid the hum of up-armored vehicles, anxieties clenched under necessary commitments and hidden perspiration, and a host of requests for intelligence/information, one can easily forget the importance of communicating clearly your relationship to U.S. command and leadership. Your rank may not do it clearly, and explanation may be necessary for your foreign hosts. The security risks may limit your ability to communicate. But when possible, clearly declare your relationship to the command so that the importance of the engagement will be known to your audience. In other words, let your audience know that you have the commander's ear (if that is the case), and that you will forward the information to people who will listen, and can act if so decided.

Also, successful KLEs involve clearly communicating your purpose of the mission. Yes, you have been taught correctly to avoid stating your business in the beginning of negotiations. Small talk, patient discussions about apparently incidental issues, and preliminary conversation are all very important in Mideast cultures. It is an act of self control as much as learning about the persons conducting official business. Your host is indeed testing your character and patience. But somewhere in the meeting, communicate your objective clearly. In order to foster understanding, particularly if it is not implied and understood by the context of your meeting, you need to take this step. On that day, we asserted pointedly: "We are here to try and understand your situation and report back to command. We have heard of the courage and dedication of the Sons of Iraq but are not aware of the important circumstances of your case. In order to allow our commanders to make the best decisions, we must establish the facts and the opinions that you are presenting to us today."

Moreover, do not hesitate to address gross misperceptions of your hosts. We as American service personnel often hesitate to discuss controversial issues. Avoiding religion and politics are often standard practices in American cultural context. Yet, these religious and political issues are often major obstacles to effective communication and need to be addressed for clarification. True, there are topics and subjects that are "not your lane," but belong in the realm of higher command and the echelons of the Department of State. But where applicable, address the erroneous views that obstruct your mission. In our case, we addressed the false notion that the U.S. had unlimited resources and held complete control of the GOI. We noted that our limited resources, information—in addition to the sovereignty of the GOI—all affected our mission and the ability for resolution. Our Iraqi hosts took note of our comments. Perhaps they did not understand or believe us, but clarity of communication necessitates blunt statements about realities.

**Step 6: Listen.** Listen rather than act. Act only if you have to.

Attentive listening is often considered to be a highly respectful action on the part of any foreigner in a host country. Again, avoid the rush to speak, to act, and to fix things. Listen carefully and note the wording, context, and expressions used during the KLE.

However, do not remain aloof. To merely record events, main points, and accuracy of context too often leads to miscommunication. A lack of energy, emotion, and vocal volume communicate, in Mideast context, a lack of concern. Often your Iraqi hosts have studied your culture and communicative behavior, and may not be overly concerned about apparent apathy. But vivid expression resonates with your hosts, and allows them to more readily and easily digest your message.

At the beginning of our meeting with the SOI and their partners, the SOI leader noted that we should not be offended at his raised voice and body language, for this was typical in Iraqi culture and not indicative of anger toward us. I responded that my Italian-American heritage is similar, and I welcome his energetic communications, which would make me more “at home.” We all laughed at the lightness of the moment and then continued our discussion.

Another point is salient: Use sincere praise and not flattery. Such compliment is not inappropriate in the context of many Middle East societies. Do not flatter your Iraqi hosts. Let your words be sincere, honest, and truthful. But do not mince them either. During our discussion an awkward moment arose when the point was communicated very clearly by the Iraqis: “We are risking our lives for the GOI and Americans, and what are we getting in return? Our situation is not improving when we are denied the compensations and benefits of partnership.” Several of us heard the point and understood the implication that the American people are not respecting the great sacrifices of the SOI. We answered immediately: “Many Americans believe you (SOI) are heroes for resisting the inhumanity of AQI, and believe that your bravery is exemplary and the very foundation of the new Iraq.” The comments were well received for the sincerity in which they were offered.

#### **Step 7: Double-Take**

Be very careful of post-discussion questions, statements, and agreements, for these are often important moments that foreign cultures use to modify agreements or statements made during the official meeting. Light conversation after meetings is often not light. The discussions afterward, in cultural perspective, are often more important than the “official” meeting. Many meetings have been altered, amended, or abrogated during the postscript to a meeting. Be sure not to take that time casually. Be

sure to offer no additional changes, agreements, and arrangements; rather, use the time to strengthen the agreements or outcomes of the meeting. In our case, the post-meeting discussions were very light, as friendship followed an agreement to look further into the issue and not make rash decisions.

**Step 8: Review.** Review the event, seek advice, and disseminate information as ordered.

The after action review (AAR) is not just an exercise in military formality. During a formal review of KLEs many contextual and subtle messages are gained. Look at the notes, the pictures, and the key topics discussed. You may find further that you not only missed substantial points but that you can identify trends in the engagement that portends future outcomes.

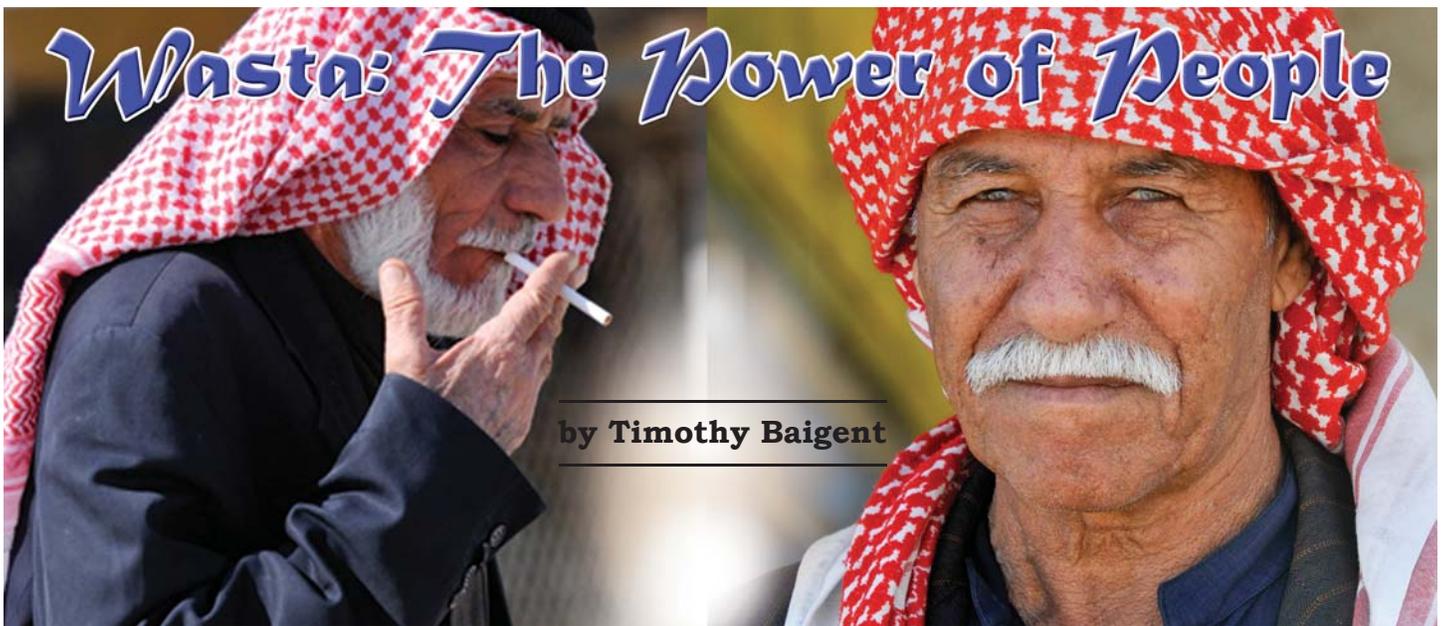
Seek additional review from outside eyes. I mean we should be careful not to rely on just our own team, but seek additional points from the Red Team, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PSYOP, Civil Affairs and others knowledgeable on your subject. Again, you may have missed a message or misinterpreted one.

Moreover, your insights and AAR do little good if they do not get to the intended targets, not just up the chain of command. Look for others who could gain from your experience if it was indeed different in quality or direction. Information sharing is still needed in earnest, and we should all do our part.

### **Conclusion**

The Key Leader Engagement with the Sons of Iraq in Abu Ghraib ended in success. Not all of our KLEs went that smoothly. Furthermore, the SOI continues to face hardships in Iraq to this day, and thus our work was not conclusive. But the lessons learned were important. The principles outlined in this essay can certainly add to the efficacy of cross cultural communication in Iraq and the region. ✨

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Six months prior to the start of Desert Storm I was on my way to Bagdad on the once weekly flight. As a six foot one, two hundred and twenty pound Arizona redneck, I stood out like the one black sheep during shearing season. The overweight, Kalashnikov-carrying Iraqi police officer got a very large smile as the aforementioned redneck came sauntering off the plane. With thick leathery hands, an officer separated me from the herd and guided me to an empty room. Between me and the now locked door was my counterpart of equal weight but lacking about eight inches. He looked me in the eyes and stated the word that we both knew was coming...*bakhsheesh* (or bribe). It was clear that I was about to be fleeced.

The challenge of cultural understanding was one that I learned firsthand during many years in the Middle East. Being asked for a bribe was nothing new. The wheels of the Middle East are greased by many a dollar, lira, mark and yen. In all honesty I really understood this man's need for it as well. Saddam's Iraq was a cruel world. Survival was paramount and opportunities were few. If it were me that was on the other side of this situation, needing to feed my family, I can't say I would not do the same thing. That being said, credit cards issued from U.S. banks could not be used in Bagdad. I needed all the cash I had to get through the week and make it to the only flight out the next week. Battle lines were drawn as I told him 'no,' and that I would be keeping all my cash.

Pride and power are vital parts of the Arab culture. The people are very proud and, let's be honest,

in many ways might makes right. My vertically challenged diet phobic counterpart was not going to let this unarmed white demon off that easy. After all, this was his homeland and he had the gun. It was then made clear to me that if I was going to proceed to the next step, and most likely the next payoff, I would need to give him what he was asking for and the tax for my stubbornness had now gone up. My response was "No, what is your name?"

You could see the Brahma-Hereford mix come out as my newfound comrade did not react well to my challenge. I was in a battle I had to win. Giving up my money could mean I might not make it the whole week. Having been in the Middle East about seven years at this point, I was not fazed as I was told that if I wanted to leave Iraq I would be paying his toll.

I understood the ever so important concept of *Wasta*. This is the most powerful word in the Arabic language. If you don't understand it, your time will be filled with strife. If you grasp the concept and can use it correctly the doors of heaven will open up to you. *Wasta* is the word that means you have a man in the middle. A powerful friend that will help you with what you need. In the Middle East it is all about relationships. Build them! Make powerful friends! They will keep you safe and provide you the tools needed to be effective.

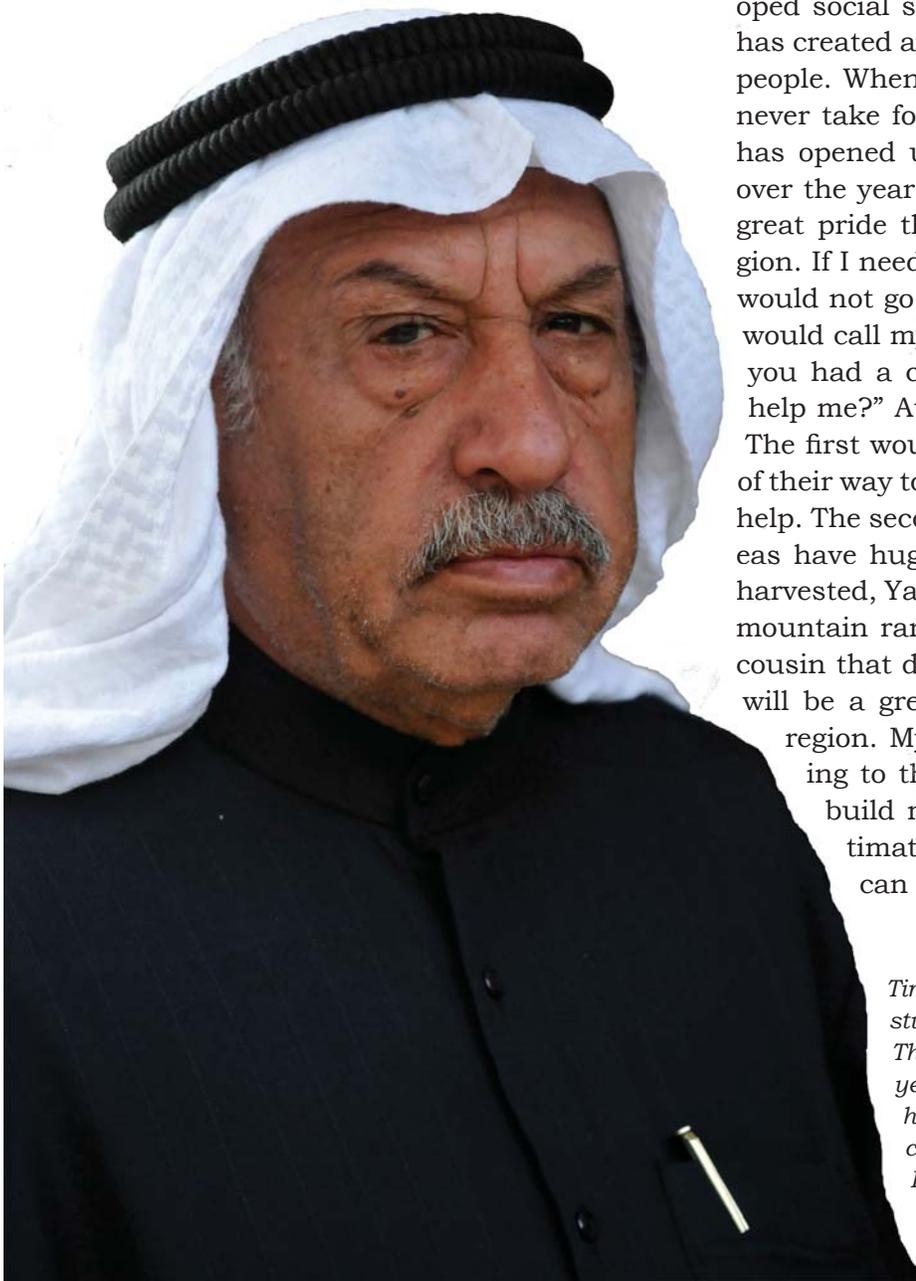
Here were a few things that I knew for sure. For this guy to be a guard he did not have big powerful *Wasta*. As a white Westerner in Iraq just prior to the start of the war I had to be crazy or know someone. I looked my friend square in the eye and told him

he could have his bribe but there was one catch. He was going to need to go to the phone and call the National Olympic Committee of Iraq. He was to ask for Uday Hussein and tell Uday that he would not let me out without payment. Uday would come down to the airport, and deal with the situation. I could see his face turn white. This Arizona cowboy had more than his 8 seconds as he went from sheep to be fleeced to PBR champ being escorted through every way point in the airport by his personal Brahma-Hereford mix. The power of Wasta must not be underestimated. Grasp it and use it...no bull will be too strong to ride.

This all begs the question as to how I got to know Uday Hussein. Honestly I did not know him. I was working with the National Olympic Committee, of which Uday was the head. Uday knew that my letter from them was more than enough to circumvent my current difficulties. The implied power of this letter was more than enough to get me past not only this person, but would have the exact same results when I was leaving Iraq and was stopped for my exit *bakhshesh*. I do not recommend using wasta if you don't have to, but in a pinch it might become an acceptable risk.

How does one develop wasta? In Central Asia that is easy. People in this region have very well developed social skills. They can talk your ear off. This has created a society where everyone knows a ton of people. When I would build a relationship, I would never take for granted who they might know. This has opened up many doors that I never expected over the years. As previously mentioned, there is a great pride that exists in the people from this region. If I needed something, a permit for example, I would not go to the permit office and wait in line. I would call my friend and ask, "Ahmed, did you say you had a cousin in the permit office who could help me?" At this point two factors would kick in. The first would be the local pride. They will go out of their way to find a way to show me that they could help. The second factor is that people from those areas have huge families. If you need organic, hand harvested, Yak milk from a producer in the Cherskiy mountain range, then there is an Arab who has a cousin that does that. Understanding these factors will be a great help for you in your work in this region. My final words of advice for anyone going to the Middle East or Central Asia are to build relationships and never ever underestimate what doors a common stonemason can open for you. ✨

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# Tactical Application of Cultural Knowledge

by Major Marc Meyle, U.S. Army



Most Military Intelligence professionals agree that cultural knowledge and competence is critical to success in our current full spectrum operations as well as likely future military operations. The need for this competence spans the spectrum of our military, from the infantryman walking the streets of Kandahar to a Marine in Bangladesh for hurricane relief to the Commander-in-Chief determining our national strategy. Which level is more important is an unanswerable question that depends upon one's operational perspective. This article will focus on the tactical application of cultural knowledge and highlight some of its inherent challenges.

FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency Operations, and numerous command guidance directives specify that leaders and Soldiers must learn and understand the culture of the host nation in which they are deployed. But exactly where is the return on this knowledge investment at the tactical level? It is surely not as tangible as time committed registering the company mortars, or rehearsing Battle Drill Six, but it can be as effective to achieve success.

Would additional cultural training prevent high visibility blunders such as the Quran shooting incident or Abu Ghraib? Likely not. Most often, effects of cultural competency are one of many variables in a situation and are often intangible to measure, especially the positive effects. How do we improve a company commander's ability to negotiate with a tribal leader, when even the results of a meeting may or may not be related to his/her cultural competence? Positive or negative results can be attributed to the actions of a severely disgruntled or opportunistic local individual just as easily as to a Soldier's cultural competence.

Cultural understanding of the operating environment is strongly promoted and reinforced in most tactical units that I have dealt with. In my opinion, the warmonger mentality of "just bomb all of

them" is virtually non-existent in our force today, even though unfortunately this stereotype still exists in some social circles. However, a quandary often develops between mission accomplishment and culturally smart operations when operating within a foreign population. Sometimes it is nearly impossible to conduct the assigned task while maintaining a culturally competent posture. A catalyst for some of these predicaments can be found in our own military lexicon. In most cases it serves us very well, as task and purpose can be relayed throughout different echelons while still retaining definition and intent, but it can also become a double-edged sword.

The best example in current operations is the joint task *Secure*. FM 1-02 defines "Secure" as *to gain possession of a position or terrain feature, with or without force, and to make such disposition as will prevent, as far as possible, its destruction or loss by enemy action*. It is easy to "armchair quarterback" operations with CONUS comfort level and hindsight but to tactically apply cultural competence while *securing* is rarely a simple endeavor.

I personally experienced this dilemma and its cross-cultural dynamic while on my most recent deployment to Mosul, Iraq in 2009. During a routine command update, a subordinate commander reported that the downtown fish market area was experiencing a recent upswing in economic activity. Pedestrian traffic, street vendors, and construction projects were all steadily increasing. All these indicators were tangible measures of effectiveness in our *economy line of effort* within the campaign plan. In the spirit of reinforcing success, the higher commander issued a directive to ensure the market remained secure. To paraphrase the guidance, "We can't allow a spectacular attack to upset this progress, we need to secure the fish market." The task and purpose, though not formally issued in

a FRAGO, was intimidated as: *Secure in order to enable continued economic activity.* How does an armor company commander accomplish this mission? He does what he has been trained to do, and if he's been trained according to doctrine, he takes possession of the terrain and makes a disposition that prevents destruction by the enemy.

The next day, my unit patrolled the area, and from the turret perspective of the lead MRAP, I saw traffic control points on the main avenues of approach, including M2 Bradley fighting vehicles at 200 meter intervals around the area and dismounted patrols in and around the commerce areas. The M2s were scanning the crowd with their 25mm guns, the checkpoints were searching vehicles and the patrols were walking in tactically smart formations. My immediate perception (and the likely perception of the population) was that of a siege. The enemy did not attack, but the economic activity decreased in a noticeable manner, presumably out of simple fear. The task was accomplished well, but the purpose was not attained.

Were these actions respectful to the population in the manner that we promote in our cultural awareness training? Probably not, but it all depends on context and perspective. It is easy to say that the commander should have reduced his signature, aimed his weapons away from the crowd and convinced host nation security forces to conduct the checkpoints and dismounted patrols. This action would likely decrease the unit force protection posture, which in turn would increase the chance of taking casualties.

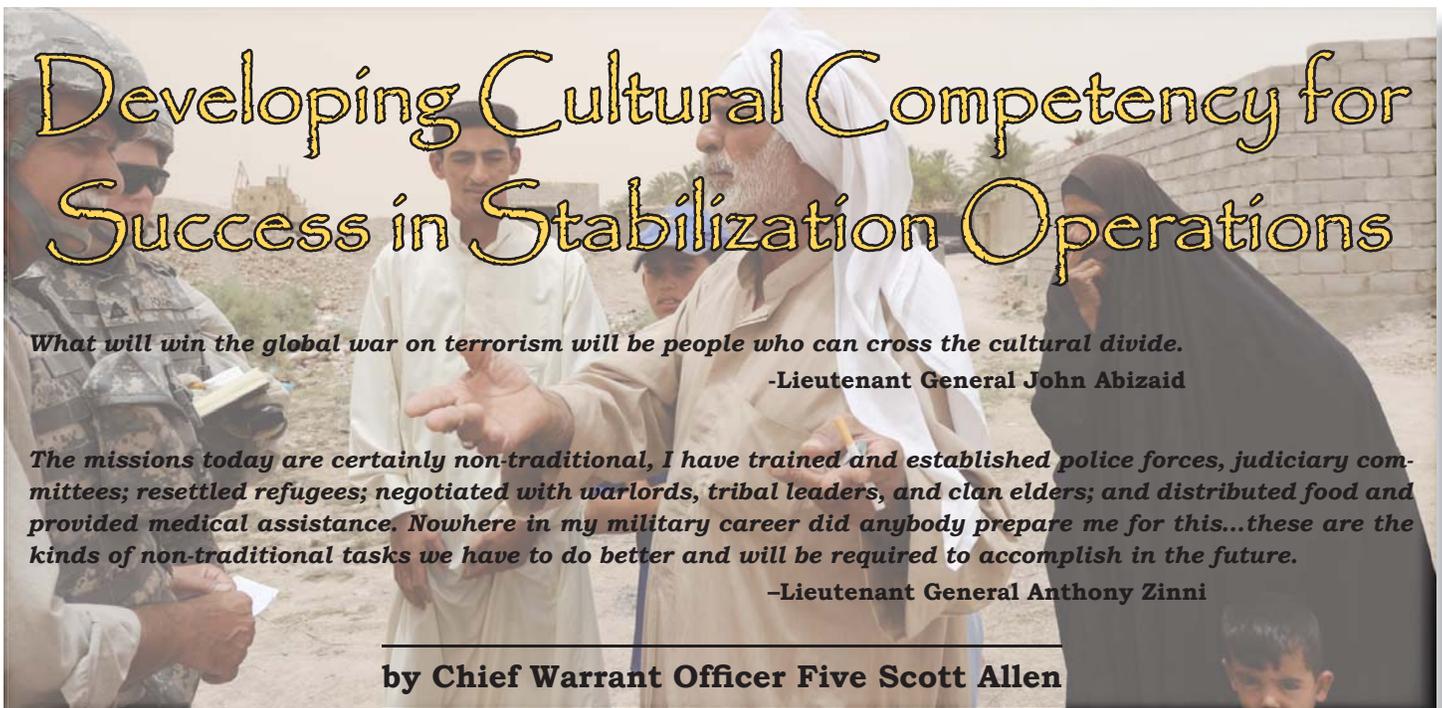
Do we really expect this? Put yourself in the company commander's boots—he lost two Soldiers the week prior to a vehicle borne IED and most likely had just finished writing letters of condolence to their families. Is it realistic to assume the additional risk to Soldiers in exchange for creating a more culturally palatable perception that may or may not affect anything? Given the same situation I likely would not. This is a paradox of counterinsurgency operations and cultural competence that has no easy solution or remedy.

Here is another situation involving the application of cross-cultural competence. Two months later the provincial elections were approaching and in one of the command updates, the MND-N Commander gave guidance: *“Assist the Iraqi Security Force (ISF). Secure the elections to promote government legiti-*

*macy,”* and then added that we could not be seen as interfering or influencing the process in any way. He further explained that we were to help physically secure/fortify the polling sites beforehand and help the ISF develop concentric layers of security around each. In this case, the election occurred successfully; both task and purpose were accomplished. One of the reasons for this success may be that the concept of “not interfering with elections” is culturally familiar to us Americans and the vision of what it looks like is tangible, or perhaps the higher commander's explicit instructions set the conditions better than the fish market situation. Regardless of the reasons that led to each result, this is the dilemma our Soldiers find themselves in daily.

The answer is not to second guess decisions, rewrite doctrine, or prescribe how to integrate culture into operations. Our challenge is to equip leaders and Soldiers with the knowledge, resources, and ability to apply cultural competence in tactical planning and execution. We need to design training applications that address this “gray area” between task and purpose. Training primarily to avoid a cultural faux pas was necessary during the initial years of our current operations, but that demand is now minimal. The fact that our current standards of measurement aren't very effective in assessing cultural competency should not deter our pursuits. If our training is feasible, applicable and presented correctly, the return on a cultural competency investment will emerge in Soldiers' decisions and actions in the complex situations in which they operate. 🌟

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# Developing Cultural Competency for Success in Stabilization Operations

*What will win the global war on terrorism will be people who can cross the cultural divide.*

**-Lieutenant General John Abizaid**

*The missions today are certainly non-traditional, I have trained and established police forces, judiciary committees; resettled refugees; negotiated with warlords, tribal leaders, and clan elders; and distributed food and provided medical assistance. Nowhere in my military career did anybody prepare me for this...these are the kinds of non-traditional tasks we have to do better and will be required to accomplish in the future.*

**-Lieutenant General Anthony Zinni**

**by Chief Warrant Officer Five Scott Allen**

## Introduction

To achieve success in stabilization operations such as Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. personnel from all levels and all organizations must have significant and specific cultural competencies. They must be able to grapple with a high level of cultural complexity under continually changing and often ambiguous conditions. To effectively develop these competencies, personnel from all levels and organizations should go through intense, integrated and measured cultural competency training activities prior to and during deployment. Deploying personnel are often given cultural awareness (CA) briefings, read-ahead materials, and quick reference tools; however, this is not sufficient. Personnel must have repeated opportunities to develop specific cultural competencies in realistic, relevant, and challenging scenarios. As part of pre-deployment training, key personnel should be trained to collect and access cultural intelligence in a way that realistically mirrors how they will be expected to collect and access cultural intelligence while deployed

For this article, *culture* refers to the set of beliefs, values and behaviors and the way of life shared by the members of a group, organization, tribe, society, or nation. Iraq is a culturally complex nation, with diverse ethnic, religious, educational, political, and tribal cultures that often overlap. While

these cultures are relatively stable in their beliefs, values and behaviors, other factors that affect interactions with these groups can change significantly, quickly, and often. To be culturally competent, personnel must have access to current cultural intelligence.

As a Military Intelligence debriefing operation in Baghdad from the beginning of the stabilization operations in Iraq to the end of 2003, our strategic debriefing intelligence collection operation debriefed Iraqis from diverse backgrounds at least eight hours a day, seven days a week. Other units and operations have had similarly sustained contact with the Iraqi people. This intense, deep interaction with the people of Iraq and the drive to accomplish our mission eventually resulted in our team developing cultural competency in dealing with the Iraqi people.

Because of our office location within the previous Republican Palace in the Green Zone, we interacted with and observed U.S. personnel and senior leadership from many agencies and organizations. Many in senior leadership positions had access to consulting academics and other cultural experts, and were very capable individuals with excellent foundational and advanced cultural competencies. However, too often they did not have continual, intense, immediate, and broad contact with the people of Iraq, which re-

sulted in their relying on past assumptions, knowledge, and experience which were often outdated or did not apply to the specific person or group with whom they were dealing. This in turn led to their misreading of key indicators, misinterpretations of regional atmospherics, misunderstanding various groups' intentions, and missteps in national policy. These senior leaders needed access to the most current, specific cultural intelligence. They also needed to move beyond cultural understanding to cultural competency and proficiency.

Our debriefing team also worked with soldiers and other U.S. personnel from various agencies and organizations whose jobs required frequent interaction with the people of Iraq, but they sometimes lacked the cultural competencies to deal effectively with the people of Iraq. Our team received CA training during pre-deployment and each member of the team had relatively extensive experience with other cultures (All soldiers on our team were linguists who had lived several years in their foreign language countries.) However, our team members often had to overcome a steep learning curve before developing specific cultural competency in doing our jobs in Iraq. Our interpreters also had to develop cultural competencies specific to operating in Iraq; because, while they were almost all native Arabic linguists and U.S. citizens, few were of Iraqi heritage. Some also often had to overcome debilitating prejudices about specific cultural groups in Iraq. Without these cultural competencies, many personnel, including our team, misjudged people, misunderstood situations, and made significant mistakes.

### **Competency: Be, Know, Do**

The term *Competency*, for the purpose of this article, aligns with the *Be, Know, Do* leadership paradigm of the U.S. Army. It includes values, attributes, knowledge, skills, character, and attitudes. Competency is not merely awareness or knowledge. It is also not exclusively intellectual. For example, emotional maturity and the ability to adapt and empathize are critical to the development of cultural competency.

The development of cultural competency requires both general and specific knowledge, skills, and traits. During our debriefing operations, we observed that certain traits were essential to cultural competency. Some of the essential general traits of cultural competency we observed were deliberate-

ness, awareness, authenticity, adaptability, creativity, integrity, and maturity.

### **Traits of the Culturally Competent**

*Deliberateness* is the ability to align one's behaviors with one's desired results. Fear is the primary enemy of deliberateness. When afraid, people often fall back on behaviors that are familiar and too often pathological. Impairment from alcohol, drugs, lack of sleep, and extreme emotion can also debilitate one's capacity to be deliberate. Those debriefers who had the discipline to act deliberately were better able to function effectively in the cultures of Iraq.

*Awareness* is a necessary but not sufficient trait for developing cultural competency. To work effectively with the people of Iraq, personnel obviously have to be aware of the specific culture of the people with whom they are working. They also have to be aware of their own beliefs, values, and behaviors and how these compare and relate to those of the person or group with whom they are interacting. This quality and level of awareness is unobtainable to those whose fear makes them overly rigid or judgmental. Awareness should be seen as being on a continuum. Being defensively judgmental is indicative of lower-levels of awareness. Also, one can have an intellectual awareness of many aspects of other cultures without really understanding the other culture. The deepest levels of awareness require significant behavioral changes.

*Authenticity* to some might not seem relevant or important to cultural competency; however, our team found that being authentic was necessary in dealing effectively with the people of Iraq. People from cultures that are relationally-based rather than transactionally-based are often keenly sensitive to the authenticity of others' commitment to the relationship. We found that the Iraqis were generally skilled at detecting insincerity and that they looked for proof of sincerity. The complexity of the problem of being inauthentic in relational cultures is magnified because these cultures often have face-saving practices that obscure the offense to those from transactional cultures. The clash between transactional and relational cultures often results in operational failures in stabilization missions. Iraqis used indirect ways to avoid cooperating with those they suspected of being inauthentic. The better debriefers with our operation developed the ability to deter-

mine when a person was fading away from cooperating due to a lack of trust.

*Adaptability* is the ability and willingness to make changes when one's actions are ineffective. With respect to cultural competency, the alternative to adapting is rigidly holding to one's own cultural views and behavior without regard or awareness of the other culture. U.S. personnel must be trained to the standard of observed and demonstrated adaptation. All cultural competency training must test to the standard of changing the trainees' perceptions and performance. If not, we risk that we will give many people just enough cultural training to provide them with ammunition to support their prejudices and their resistance to change.

*Creativity* is related to adaptability and it requires many of the same skills and attitudes. While creativity is not as essential to developing cultural competency as adaptability, it is essential to being effective in conditions requiring cultural competency. In stabilization operations, one is required to think and act beyond one's own culture. Planning and operations must be developed from the unfamiliar perspective of the other culture. Listening openly to people from the other culture can help one discover creative and effective solutions. Many of the competencies required to operate in foreign cultures, such as openness and courage, are the same competencies required when discovering and executing creative solutions in one's own culture. Personal courage is foundational to creativity and cultural competency because it allows one to take the risk of leaving the stability of one's own culture to explore effective solutions in the context of unfamiliar cultures.

*Integrity*, one of the Army values, was essential to cultural competency in Iraq. For many Iraqis and for the Iraqi culture in general, Islam and its standards of behavior are very influential. When U.S. personnel did not practice personal integrity, it directly undermined the stabilization efforts. In our debriefing operations and while working with Civil Affairs units in Iraq, we talked with Iraqis who told stories of how the behavior of specific American civilians, soldiers or leaders in and out of Iraq had influenced their view of the U.S. "occupiers" generally. More specifically, our debriefers found that those Iraqis with whom we worked lost trust in the relationship when we did not act with integrity. For Iraqis, hon-

oring friendships is an important value. This often requires considerable sacrifice. I saw Iraqis risk and lose their lives to protect friends. Friendship is not a casual commitment to most Iraqis. Personnel should be aware of the commitments they are making when they work with Iraqis. Understanding the expectations, nature and depth of relationships in a culture and effectively utilizing that understanding is a very complex activity, but cultural competency is inherently complex.

*Maturity*, relative to cultural competency, refers to the psychological and emotional development necessary to function effectively in a foreign culture. In addition to the areas previously discussed, a person must have a certain level of maturity to function effectively in foreign cultures. An inexperienced person who has limited experiences beyond his or her own culture is at a disadvantage compared to a person who has experience adapting to other cultures. Experience with other cultures does not necessarily lead to competency within those cultures, but without experience, it is unlikely that a person will function effectively in foreign cultures.

## **Cultural Intelligence Collection and Dissemination**

Developing and maintaining cultural competency across combined stabilization operations requires new processes and tools for the effective and continual collection and dissemination of cultural intelligence. Stabilization operations require more inclusive participation in who contributes to and receives cultural intelligence. In addition to including academic, historical, foundational, and general information, this system must provide for the collection and dissemination of very specific cultural intelligence from a broad selection of sources with direct and deep contact with the populace.

The system should provide a continual read on individuals, organizations, tribes, religions, demographics, atmospheric and other intelligence that influences cultural factors in theater. The processes and tools for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating cultural intelligence must be ubiquitous and accessible. Personnel must be able to report and receive cultural intelligence from the system quickly and easily. Processed cultural intelligence products must be broadly and immediately re-disseminated on both a push and a pull basis and in formats and ways that are logical and accessible to all.

Based on our experience in country, cultural intelligence was collected inconsistently or not at all. Some of the personnel with the deepest and most prolonged contact with the Iraqi people did not have the expectation or means of collecting and reporting what they knew. The existing intelligence processes, and tools were unavailable to key personnel or were not used effectively for collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating cultural intelligence.

Leaders should identify those key personnel and units that have contact with indigenous people. They should consider the depth of contact, breadth of contact, and the capability of collecting, analyzing, or disseminating cultural intelligence of these people and units. Leaders should make these people a part of the cultural collection and dissemination process. All personnel who will have significant contact with indigenous people should be trained as collectors of cultural intelligence, so they will become an integral part of the combined collection effort.

## Conclusion

Even before the events of 9-11, some realized and warned that the new battlefield would be primarily asymmetrical and that CA would be critical to success on that battlefield. As the U.S. continues into the new generation of military operations other than war, nation building, stabilization operations and complex asymmetrical cultural conflicts, U.S. personnel must go beyond CA to cultural competency.

Many of the personnel of our strategic debriefing operation were able to develop and achieve a level of cultural competency necessary to effectively collect intelligence and participate effectively in stabilization operations in Iraq. We observed that personnel who were deliberate, curious, aware, authentic, adaptable, creative, honest, and mature were more likely to develop cultural competency. We also experienced that the principles, processes and tools used to collect, analyze and disseminate cultural intelligence needed to be rethought, redesigned, realigned, retooled, or completely redone. Collection, analysis and dissemination of cultural intelligence in stabilization operations must be more broadly based and easier to access and use.

As the U.S. military enters this new era of complex operations centered on cultural conflicts, all personnel must courageously create new solutions that recognize and utilize the complexities of

the new battlefield. By doing this, we will be able to bridge the cultural divides and realize the victory that comes only through undaunted understanding and courageous cooperation. 

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# Socio-cultural Lessons from Eurasia and Afghanistan

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by Mahir Ibrahimov, PhD

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*What is culture? Soviet culture, Western culture, Iraqi culture, Afghan culture, military culture, corporate culture, generational culture...Becoming aware of cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is based on experiences, values, behaviors, beliefs and norms, as well as collective memories and history.*

## Cultural Shift in the USSR

Soviet culture was an ideologically driven, atheist based set of norms and behaviors. Despite all efforts at homogenization, the Soviet Union remained a deeply ethnic place. We were defined by our heritage; but according to the government, we were citizens of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). There was an unofficial hierarchy between the Russians and non-Russians. The Russians were treated with greater respect. In the former Soviet Army ethnic Russians created *zemliachestvo* or *gruppovshchina*, their own enclave within the unit that persecuted other ethnic groups. Critical thinking and independence were not only discouraged in the Soviet Union, it was dangerous and could be punished.

On 11 March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party and de facto ruler of the Soviet Union. The world changed. When he came to power the Soviet economy was failing, worsened by miners' strikes. Store shelves were empty; some of the Soviet republics continued to call for greater independence, and ethnic conflicts in Transcaucasia (which includes Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan) were accelerating.

Gorbachev transformed the Soviet Union. His policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) gave the populace a sense of power and a taste of freedom that was the ultimate undoing of the seventy-year old union of republics. For the first time, representatives of foreign countries came to the Soviet Union to invest and exchange goods and ideas. The entire structure of Soviet society, as I had known, began to shift. At the time I was unsure how I felt about it. Fortunes were being made, but it seemed as though the people making them were the same people who had been in power under the old system.

Independent newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations popped up. The *Ploshad Nogina* (Nogin Square) where I worked was situated across from a quiet park. Before Gorbachev's reforms an el-

derly woman used to sweep the square every morning. Every morning I would say hello to her and she would reply, "Good morning, son." Then the character of the *Ploshad Nogina* changed. It became a gathering place for the new Russian businessmen complete with cell phones, laptop computers, and prostitutes. Clothing styles, and even the manner of talking to other people, changed. Life became louder and more frenetic. Restaurants popped up along the plaza like mushrooms.

Perestroika, in theory, should have led to greater debate and understanding among the different populations of the Soviet Union; instead it created an opportunity for many to express long held ethnic hatred with little fear of reprisal. People like me were jeered at on the street, and one time I was threatened while waiting in line to purchase food.

It's all in the language, in the definitions, in the types of words you use: comrade instead of friend; micro rayon (micro-district) instead of home or apartment; Azeri or Armenian or Georgian instead of citizen. The heat and fire from the mixing of races and ethnicities in the U.S. created a melting pot. In the Soviet Union those same elements only served to create greater friction and separation among its peoples. During perestroika things turned ugly and unpredictable. The children of communism had never been taught how to deal with freedom, and the State as a parent had been too restrictive during their youth.

The release of state control over all things created a vacuum. The population acted as ill behaved teenagers who no longer needed to heed rules of common civility. The disintegration and ultimate demise of a socialist society as a system was a good thing, but its unexpected and unintended consequences led to a proliferation of ethnic conflicts. It occurred first among the peoples of the former Soviet republics and later in the Middle East, which was no longer controlled through the balance of power between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Gorbachev intended to enter history as a great reformer, I doubt

he ever intended the country's demise, but his reforms contributed to the process that was inevitable. When he realized the consequences it was too late. As Gorbachev himself used to say *protsess poshel* Russian for “process began.”

## The Soviet Experiment in Afghanistan

I met Nikolai at the Medvedkovo metro station in a suburb of Moscow in November 1988. Moscow still was the capital of an empire that was destined to collapse in just few years. Nikolai was telling me about his past experiences in Afghanistan as a former spetznaz (Soviet Special Forces) member. Seven hundred members of this elite spetznaz, under the commander named Ruslan, stormed President Hafizullah Amen's palace in winter 1979. That marked the beginning of the ten-year Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The reason for the invasion: The Soviets decided that the pro-Soviet Afghan president was not pro-Soviet enough.

Afghanistan once again became a battleground of empires. Many years later I would be fascinated to learn from the BBC that Ruslan, who now lives in Moscow, and a woman, who as a girl had survived the onslaught in the Afghan president's palace, would be connected through VTC. More than thirty years later she was asking Ruslan difficult moral questions. Almost everybody in the palace was murdered that night as part of the former Soviet military doctrine, which ultimately led to more than one million Afghan deaths, destruction of the country, and loss of hearts and minds of Afghans.

Nikolai is a huge, athletically built guy in a primitive wheelchair that he moves with his hands. He returned from Afghanistan after being ambushed by Afghan *Mujahedeen* (holy warriors) and lost legs. Despite his youth he seemed to be completely lost and morally devastated. He blamed the West and China for the support of mujahedeen and Afghans for the betrayal. He was telling me that many Afghans were calling them friends and brothers but then turned against them and joined the insurgency. He was repeatedly asking what went wrong and why the “internationalist duty” of the Soviets was not appreciated and welcomed. He said that the country was making huge sacrifices: militarily, politically, and economically. Yet he still believed in the popular notion in the country that Afghanistan was going to become the sixteenth Soviet Republic of the USSR and he still considered himself a proud

Soviet citizen. “Nobody can defeat our country, our country is the greatest!” he proudly declared.

He showed me the brochure (below) given to him and his comrades as a part of the Soviet counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics in Afghanistan. More than twenty years later I see the equivalent of those materials with “do’s” and “don’ts” disseminated to U.S. troops being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The brochure, published in 1987, contains prohibitions for Soviet troops serving in Afghanistan:

*Do not enter into unsanctioned contacts; do not visit private stores or individuals to buy goods, alcoholic beverages or drugs; do not take your clothes off for sunbathing in front of locals; do not try to talk to local women; do not accept any gifts from local officials or individuals; keep the secrecy while discussing military topics, be aware that many Afghans are fluent in Russian.*



The country of which I was then a citizen no longer exists. The Army, in which I served, luckily before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, is also gone.



The author in the Soviet Army, 1974-1976, and in Iraq, 2004-2005, where he served as a cultural advisor and interpreter for several U.S. military units.

The Accords of 14 April 1988 included the principles of non-interference and non-intervention, the voluntary return of Afghan refugees, and interrelationships for the settlement of the situation. The phased withdrawal of foreign troops was supposed to begin on 15 May. The U.S. and the USSR also signed a declaration

on international guarantees, stating they would both refrain from any form of interference and intervention. In the first three months, it was reported that some 50,183 foreign troops had withdrawn, another 50,100 left between 15 August 1988 and 15 February 1989. During the withdrawal, troop convoys came under attack by Afghan fighters, 72 Soviets were killed.

The total withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan was completed on 15 February 1989. In a symbolic move, Lieutenant General Boris Gromov, commander of the Soviet contingent in Afghanistan (equivalent to U.S. Commander in Afghanistan, General Petraeus) was the last to leave the country. I remember the TV images when he turned the last time towards the Afghan territory and walked away. He was the last Soviet Soldier to walk from Afghanistan back into Soviet territory.<sup>1</sup> These images of the Soviet troops withdrawing from Afghanistan over the bridge to the former Soviet Central Asian Republic still live in my memory.

## **Cultural Challenges for U.S. Missions in Afghanistan**

Operational experiences in Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq have highlighted critical gaps in the Army's capability to influence and operate effectively within different cultures for extended periods of time. Battlefield lessons learned have demonstrated that language proficiency and understanding of foreign culture are vital enablers for full spectrum operations.<sup>2</sup>

Globalization, Internet networking, and instant access to worldwide news media have encouraged the merging or partnering of ideological groups that oppose the U.S. and/or U.S. policies. These groups operate in pan-regional and multi-regional battle spaces comprised of numerous cultures, both friendly and hostile. It appears likely that during the next decades the operational environment of our troops will be characterized by persistent and unpredictable conflicts in battle spaces teeming with multiple foreign cultures. The Army must be prepared to effectively operate along with our multinational and host nation partners against sophisticated and adaptive adversaries in order to achieve U.S. objectives. This dictates that Soldiers of every rank must become 'culturally astute' about the areas in which they operate.<sup>3</sup>

The new U.S. strategy advocates a military strike and further increasing civil development while mak-

ing the protection of civilians a higher priority, an endeavor to attain more popular support in order not to repeat the mistakes of the unsuccessful Soviet experience in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in a survey of Afghan cities, a report released by Pentagon in April 2010 classified 21 Afghan cities as being in support of the government, while 48 other cities were cited as inclining to back the Taliban forces. The report also highlighted the current state of the insurgency, its strengths and weaknesses.

**Strengths.** The speed and decisiveness of insurgent information operations (IO) and media campaigns remain not only the insurgents' main effort, but also their most significant strength.

Organizational capabilities and operational reach are qualitatively and geographically expanding.

The ability to intimidate through targeted killings and threats in order to force acquiescence to their will.

The strength and ability of shadow governance to discredit the authority and legitimacy of the Afghan Government is increasing.

Improvised explosive devices (IED) use is increasing in numbers and complexity. IEDs are as much a tactic and process as they are a weapon. Insurgents' tactics, techniques, and procedures for conducting complex attacks are increasing in sophistication and strategic effect.

According to the report insurgent **weaknesses and vulnerabilities** are as follows:

The insurgency includes multiple locally-based tribal networks, as well as layered command structures, which at times can make coordinated execution difficult.

Persistent fissures among insurgent leadership persist at the local levels.

The insurgency is dependent on many marginalized/threatened segments of the Pashto population.

The insurgency is over reliant on external support.

Insurgent violence against civilians and respected figures can be counterproductive.<sup>5</sup>

When I talked to Nikolai some 20 years ago I realized that he was still missing the main point about why the Soviets, with a powerful military establishment, were losing the war, even though they were winning the battle to some degree. The main reason was that they did not manage to "win hearts and minds" of the local populace although they made

extensive use of Soviet ethnicities similar in cultural heritage to Afghanistan's. Yet, these Soviets were predominantly associated with ethnic Russian "infidels" by the locals and Mujahedeen.

Nikolai told me that when insurgents ambushed and captured ethnic Russian troops they would behead them. When Soviets of Tajik, Uzbek, Kirgiz or other Central Asian origin were captured, the insurgents would sometimes give them copies of the Holy Book and let them go if they acknowledged their allegiance to Islam and Koran. The degree of alienation towards Soviets was very significant. They could never overcome it despite their active COIN activities, conducted mainly by culturally and linguistically well trained KGB and elite Special Forces units operating inside Afghanistan. The Pentagon report acknowledges that we are also having problems in the same area but we are making efforts to overcome them.

### Taliban "Hearts and Minds" Campaign

Published July 2009 by the self-proclaimed Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, *Bylaws for the Mujahedeen*, outlines a Taliban code of conduct. This is the Taliban leader Mullah Omar's COIN guidance, a population centric strategy that is exactly geared towards "winning hearts and minds" of the local population and maintaining their loyalty. It says:

- ◆ Keep people and their property safe. Do not let those who love money take our local people's property and cause them problems.
- ◆ Keep good relations with your friends and the local people, and do not let the enemy divide/separate you.

The Taliban leadership also clearly defines its tactics towards the coalition forces:

- ◆ We do not have to beat ISAF militarily; outlast international will to remain in Afghanistan.
- ◆ Continue population outreach and protection programs.
- ◆ Continue successful asymmetric operations.
- ◆ Expand lethal IED and high-profile attacks to deny ISAF freedom of movement.
- ◆ Make the main enemy the U.S.

Afghan Taliban directives also include prohibitions on:

- ◆ Mistreating the population.
- ◆ Forcibly taking personal weapons.
- ◆ Taking children to conduct jihad.

- ◆ Forcing people to pay donations.
- ◆ Searching homes.
- ◆ Kidnapping people for money.

This book is given to each Taliban fighter as guidance. It has thirteen chapters, 67 articles and lays out what one can and cannot do.

Following are some key quotes that outline the new code of conduct:



*On asylum:* "Every Muslim can invite anyone working for the slave government in Kabul to leave their job, and cut their relationship with this corrupt administration. If the person accepts, then with the permission of the provincial and district leadership, a guarantee of safety can be given."

*On prisoners:* "Whenever any official, soldier, contractor or worker of the slave government is captured, these prisoners cannot be attacked or harmed."

"The decision on whether to seek a prisoner exchange, or to release the prisoner, with a strong guarantee, will be made by the provincial leader. Releasing prisoners in exchange for money is strictly prohibited."

"If the prisoner is a director, commander or district chief or higher, the decision on whether to harm, kill, release or forgive them is only made by the Imam or deputy Imam."

"If a military infidel is captured, the decision on whether to kill, release or exchange the hostage is only to be made by the Imam or deputy Imam."

*On civilian casualties:* "Governors, district chiefs and line commanders and every member of the Mujahedeen must do their best to avoid civilian deaths, civilian injuries and damage to civilian property. Great care must be taken."

*On suicide attacks:* "Suicide attacks should only be used on high and important targets. A brave son of Islam should not be used for lower and useless targets. The utmost effort should be made to avoid civilian casualties."

*On unity:* "Creating a new mujahedeen group or battalion is forbidden. If unofficial groups or irregular battalions refuse to join the formal structure they should be disbanded. If a governor or leader has in the past had a unit or active group in another province, they should bring it to the attention of

the leader of that province. That leader should then take over command of the group.”

*On relations with the Afghan people:* “The Mujahedeen have to behave well and show proper treatment to the nation, in order to bring the hearts of civilian Muslims closer to them. The Mujahedeen must avoid discrimination based on tribal roots, language or their geographic background.”<sup>6</sup>

Below is an English translation of some quotes from the speeches of Mullah Omar. These quotes are also part of the Bylaws:

Dear Mujahedeen Brothers:

All your intentions and deeds should be according to God’s edicts and the Prophet’s guidelines. Stand like steel when confronting the enemy. Incidents (failures) and propaganda should not shake your will. Be sincere to your friends (fellow fighters) and civilian populace; sustain the strong bonds of loyalty and brotherhood, so that the enemy must not succeed in achieving his evil goals of splitting our ranks. In your work and operations take good precautions and consultations, and use wisdom and intelligence. Do not let your personal beliefs, emotions, haste, and carelessness interfere (in your judgment), when punishing someone. Protecting people’s lives and property is a major goal of Jihad. Governors should not harass people for their own personal and material gains.

Below is the a translation of a ‘night letter’ (threat letter) which was addressed to the people of Laghman Province.

### **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Announcement**

Greetings to the Muslim and Mujahedeen residents of Laghman Province

Respected Friends

God has said “oh Muslims, do not associate and become friends with Jews and Christians (Americans, British, and other infidels) because their friends are those who support them (as we see them). And whoever became friend with them will therefore be considered one of them. And their end result and death will be like them (Jews and Christians)”. So we announce that:

1. Those people who live in Laghman Province and work with them (Americans, British, and others), should stop working there and cooperate

with Taliban and Mujahedeen. Otherwise, they should leave Laghman and go and live with their American overlords. If not, they do not have the right to complain later (they will take the consequences).

2. It is being announced to all those people who cooperate with the infidels, aggressors, and traitors, to stop their shameful acts and instead work for and support their beloved country and preach on behalf of the true children of the land. They are responsible for the dire consequences if they do not obey these commands.
3. It should be said to the informants that they have been exposed and they do not have any place to run and hide. And we warn them not to side with the Americans in persecuting and martyring ordinary civilians, children, elders, and women. Otherwise, God willing, they will not be able to run from the Mujahidin.
4. Muslims in general, (religious) scholars, Mullahs, and Imams should understand that according to the above quote from the Quran, they cannot perform at the funeral ceremony of an informant and traitor because such people belong to them (infidels). So our Muslim brothers should understand this issue (in a religious sense) and should not participate in the funerals of people who are traitors of their nation and faith. (Religious) Scholars, Mullahs, and Imams should seriously consider their own safety as the results may not be pleasant.

It is the duty of Mullahs and Imams to announce this message to their followers.

Translator: Farooq Babrakzai, PhD  
FOB–Mehtar Lam (Laghman) (2009)

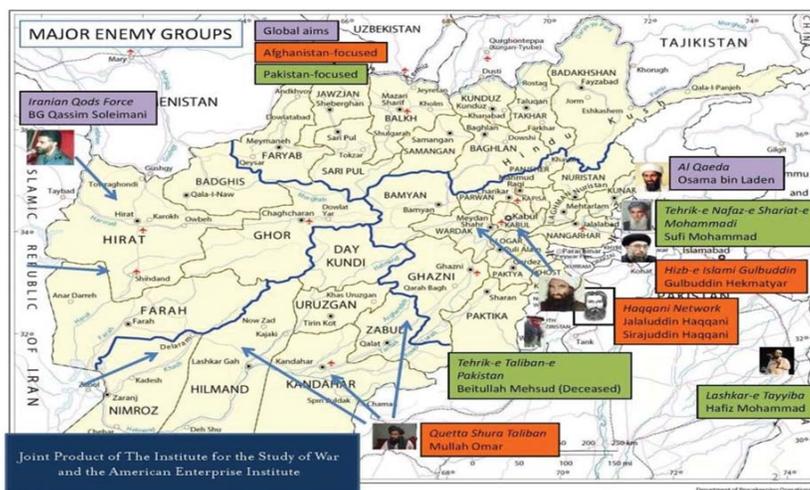
These examples indicate major efforts by Taliban leadership to “win hearts and minds,” while endeavoring to intimidate the local populace to prevent it from cooperating with Afghan government and coalition forces. Coalition forces are facing tremendous security and IO challenges from a sophisticated and adaptive enemy well versed in the local psychology, culture, and traditions.

But the insurgency in Afghanistan is not monolithic and unified. Many leaders of different groups are allied with the Taliban and Al Qaida at this time, the main reason is that their tactical and strategic interests presently coincide. They are supported by

the same elements of Pakistan's ISID (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate) and other Pakistani and regional forces as was the case during the anti-Soviet jihad. But this time support is mainly focused on a strategic counterbalance to India and other countries. Compared to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, however, when mujahedeen were supported at least by two major powers such as the U.S. and China, the current Afghan insurgency does not seem to enjoy the kind of consistent state-level support from major powers such as China or Russia.

There were some unconfirmed reports of the Shia Islamic Republic of Iran supporting a Sunni Taliban insurgency. But if the foreign forces withdraw it's believed that different insurgency groups would turn their guns against each other vying for power as happened after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. The confusion on which "strategic side" the U.S led coalition forces are on also fuels the Afghan and Iraqi insurgency. The removal of Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq created a vacuum in the regional strategic counter balance towards its archenemy, the Shia Islamic Republic of Iran.

The map below shows the diversity of the enemy and insurgency network and operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The new U.S. strategy justifiably focuses on both Afghanistan and Pakistan, because of their historical and strategic ties.



## Iraq and Afghanistan Insurgencies Compared

As the map above shows, Al Qaida (from Arabic "base") is an organization with global aims. It could operate, if the opportunity arises, in any corner of the world. It is seen as a decentralized franchise network with multiple branches mainly active in the

Middle East, Central and South Asia, and Africa. Their leaders, Osama bin Laden and his deputy Dr. Aiman Al Zawahiri, are believed to be closer in their ideology to the concept of the conflict of civilizations, actively using the "Islamic factor" as the banner for mobilizing new recruits. Their weakness was clearly reflected in Iraq when the declared Umma (Islamic brotherhood), mostly of foreign fighters belonging to Al Qaida, did not get their desired support within the local population. The factor of alienation also played a role when around 100,000 former Iraqi insurgents, formerly allied with Al Qaida, turned against them. Why did it happen?

Although former insurgents in the predominantly western Iraqi province of Anbar are Sunni Muslims, similar to the members of Al Qaida, the majority of homegrown Iraqi insurgents were not attracted by the Islamic political slogans of Al Qaida. They were mostly former Baath party members with an ideology based on Pan-Arab nationalism rather than Islamism. Saddam Hussein himself was considered a secular politician who was trying to explore the "Islamic factor" at some point for political reasons.

Second, compared to Afghanistan, the more educated and urbanized population of Iraq had already enjoyed close political, military, economic and cultural ties with the West in the past. These factors made Iraq relatively more prepared for co-operation with Western governments and coalition forces. The growth of other insurgency groups in Iraq and the growing influence of Iran make the future of Iraq very uncertain.

The third factor is the terrain and difference in histories of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Afghanistan mostly consists of rugged mountains; plains in north and southwest. It's landlocked. Geography and history played a significant role in the socio-political, economic, and cultural formation of the country. It also affected the Afghan psyche, its social differentiation. Today one can say that

Afghanistan is mostly at the medieval socio-economic level of development with very diversified tribal and ethnic societal systems. The above factors significantly explain why many experts and policy makers expect that the task of stabilizing of Afghanistan is going to present more challenges than in Iraq.

## Main Personalities within Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan

Along with Taliban, the majority of the insurgency groups in Afghanistan are homegrown, united under the same Islamic banner and against the predominantly Western coalition forces. This is their strength, because it is very easy to justify their actions against the “foreign invading factor.” Their knowledge of the local indigenous cultures and psychologies are additional advantages for the very diverse insurgency network. Among them are:

◆ *Warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.* Established *Hizb-i-Islami* to counter growing Soviet influence and occupation in the Eighties. Allied to the Taliban. Studied engineering at Kabul University in the 1970s. His goal is the independent Islamic state and restoring Afghan sovereignty. Fighters have a reputation for being more educated than the Taliban. “Hizb-i-Islami will fight our jihad until foreign troops are gone from Afghanistan and Afghans have set up an Islamic Government.”



◆ *Jalaluddin Haqqani.* Anti-Soviet war veteran. Early advocate of the “Afghan Arabs” to join the Jihad against the Soviet Union. Elements of the Haqqani network work closely with al Qaida. Reportedly based in Waziristan. Supported by Pakistan’s ISID. He is now an old man and day to day operations of the network are conducted by his son Sirajuddin or Siraj Haqqani.



The map of the enemy and insurgency groups shows the Pakistan focused Taliban, Tehrik-e Taliban-e. Tehrik-e-Taliban-e does not pose a direct threat to the coalition forces because their main goal is the struggle against the Pakistani state and its establishment. In 2007, Baitullah Mehsud (reportedly killed by U.S. air strike) had formed Pakistani Taliban groups into a single organization. He was replaced by Hakimullah Mehsud (from the same Mehsud tribe). The group, also referred to as the “Pakistani Taliban,” have strong links to al Qaida. The reason for the organization’s Pakistani focus is the perception that the Pakistani government be-

trayed the Pakistani national interests collaborating with the West and coalition forces.

Strategically their goal in the fight is the West and its ideological concepts. But one should remember that Taliban as the movement was created by Pakistani politicians at the time of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was allied with the West. It was created as a strategic tool and counterbalance vying for influence in the region mainly against India. Ironically the Pakistani Taliban was believed to be behind the assassination of Bhutto, the main architect of the movement. Former ISID Chief General Hamid Gul was directly involved in creation and support of Taliban and other Islamist groups, according to Ahmed Rashid, the author of *The Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*.<sup>7</sup>

Hamid Gul considers that if the West has to negotiate with the Afghan insurgents they have to deal only with Mullah Omar, because he is the only principal leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan. But one can argue against this for two reasons. Although Mullah Omar is still the primary spiritual leader, he is not the primary political day-to-day operations leader of the insurgency. Secondly, he is the creation and a tool of mostly Pakistani intelligence services and likely continues to exist due to their support.

But for many ordinary Afghans, especially of the Pashto tribes of the East and South, as well as for Taliban fighters and other homegrown insurgents of Afghanistan, the symbolic charismatic image of Mullah Omar fits perfectly in the Afghan ethno-cultural psychology in the same way as the charismatic “Mad Mullah,” Fakir of Ipi (Mirza Ali Khan) who battled the British during the First Anglo-Afghan War of 1839-1842.<sup>8</sup> This period marked the “Great Game,” a power struggle between Russia and Britain for dominance in the region. Britain occupied Afghanistan and used it as a buffer to protect British India from Russian influence. Ultimately this power struggle resulted in the 1893 Durand Line Agreement between the Government of colonial British India (now Pakistan) signed by Henry Mortimer Durand and Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan to delineate their respective



Source: RAND Corporation

spheres of influence. About 1,610 miles long, this line continues to be an area of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan but very few across both borders, especially among Pashto tribes, recognize it.<sup>9</sup>

The Afghan Taliban is presently intensifying its IO among the locals based on its knowledge of the local customs and culture, and nuances of the local psyche. The outcome of the coalition forces efforts will depend on their ability to gain the trust of the ordinary Afghans. It will require a skill set of knowledge and abilities to prepare Soldiers for living and working in a new country, preventing culture shock, easing the transition, and creating awareness of different cultural and individual styles to maximize operations. Operating in indigenous cultures rather than in a bipolar strategic environment of Cold War era (traditional war fighting) adds new dimensions to military's missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Operating in joint interagency, intergovernmental, multinational (JIIM) environments requires a new more sophisticated set of knowledge and skills that are very different.

## The Pashto Influence

As was the case during anti-British and then anti-Soviet Jihad, the insurgency in Afghanistan is comprised of Pashto tribes. Between the two main Pashto tribal confederations Durrani and Ghilzai, the home-grown insurgency mostly consists of Ghilzai tribes. There has been animosity between the two throughout the history of the country; the Durrani mostly in power including late Zahir Shah, the last king of Afghanistan and current President Hamid Karzai. Mullah Omar, who was born in 1961 in Kandahar, the leader of the Taliban movement is a Ghilzai, of the Hotak tribe.

That's is why the Sun Tzu's maxim, "Know your enemy," is very important in the current fight in Afghanistan. Understanding cultural factors such as *Pashtunwali* (way of the Pashto) is very important in understanding the Pashto dominated Afghan society and in ultimately succeeding.

What is Pashtunwali? It's an unwritten or informal set of religious, ethnic, tribal and moral norms which were formed over the centuries among the Pashto tribes. This way of life to a greater extent is preserved among the so called "Hill Pashtuns" or "Highlanders" who live in the mountains and are naturally isolated and historically more independent than the so called

"Lowlanders." These are Pashtuns who live on the cultivated and irrigated plains and tend to be more integrated into the Afghan governance and society as a whole, and more subjected to external influences.

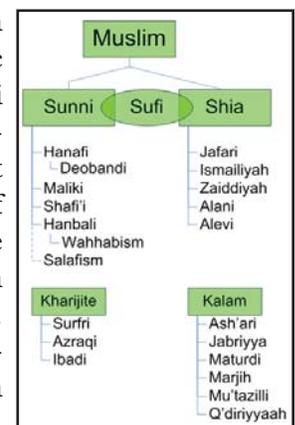
The main elements of Pashtunwali include:

- ◆ Badal–Right of blood feuds or revenge.
- ◆ Nunawati–Right of a fugitive to seek refuge and acceptance of his bona fide offer of peace.
- ◆ Melmastya–Hospitality and protection to every guest.
- ◆ Isteqamat–Persistence.
- ◆ Ghayrat–Defense of property and honor.
- ◆ Namus–Defense of one's female relatives.

Another feature of Afghan and specifically Pashto character: Do not show you emotions, impatience, anger etc. because it's considered a sign of weakness. Personal relationships, trust and most importantly deeds are crucial elements of "winning the hearts and minds" of the Afghan people. Knowledge of the local culture and customs would be the ultimate factors in winning the local populace.

## Islam in Afghanistan

Afghans predominantly follow the Sunni Hanafi school of Islam. The Taliban movement belongs to Hanafi School with a strict interpretation of Islam, known as Deobandi, which does not recognize any innovation or modification within Islam since the time of Prophet Mohamed, including Shiism, which emerged later. That explains to a certain extent the tense relationships between the Shiite dominated Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sunni Taliban government that existed during the second part of 1990s until the beginning of 2000s. Right is the structure of the religion of Islam with its main branches and sects. Sufism, a mystic interpretation of Islam, is also common in Afghanistan.



My recent contacts with Afghan expatriates included one originally from the Pashto area of north west Afghanistan and another one from Nuristan. As always, I enjoyed their first hand experiences and assessments of different Afghan socio-cultural and political situations. One of them told me the story about al Qaida members, mostly of Arab origin, who

moved to the Southern province of Kandahar, the spiritual home of Taliban, and settled there. In early 2000s, during the U.S. bombings of the area many of them were killed. The locals buried them and over the years residents have been visiting the burial sites regarding them as sacred. The perception is that that the foreign Muslim mujahedeen came to Afghanistan and died for the Afghan cause fighting the infidels.

Also according to the expatriates, Taliban and Al Qaida are not really formalized organizations anymore by traditional definition, but rather ideologies which influence the military doctrines and foreign policies of Western countries. These ideologies continue to attract those who oppose the Western culture and way of life for different reasons. Al Qaida is a global terror network and Taliban is homegrown, mostly an Afghan/Pakistan Pashto tribal based movement. It seems that it is easier to justify the fight against Al Qaida than Taliban, because Taliban and affiliated groups say that they fight against the foreign invasion trying to restore Afghanistan's sovereignty.

### **The “Taliban Factor” as Viewed in Arab Media**

The Arab media widely covers the socio-cultural, political, and strategic aspects of the Taliban phenomenon which has become a source of encouragement for many Islamic and jihadist organizations around the world. The outcome of the fight is of special importance for the future strategic balances not only in the region, but globally as well.

*Psychological features of the movement.* This includes obstinacy and the ability to stand up to and face very tough circumstances and hardships. These are applicable to the Afghan people in general and the people of Kandahar in particular, the Southern province of the country where the movement was born. There is a very popular game in Kandahar where two competitors place burning coals in their hands. The winner is the one who is able to continue holding the coal until it burns out.

*Internal and external factors that led to the prominence of Taliban.* The internal factors include: the civil wars, the chaos that took place after the defeat of the Soviet Union, corruption, lack of security, and the rapidly attained wealth of the war lords.

The external factors are:

- ◆ **Pakistan.** Pakistan was seeking to exert and maintain an influence on the government of Afghanistan to facilitate economic and trade relations with central Asian republics because the post-Soviet Mujahedeen government of Rabbani and Masoud was not cooperating with Pakistan from Pakistan's perspective actively enough. That was one of the primary reasons why Pakistan unsuccessfully gave aid to Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, his Hizb-i- Islami group and Afghan Uzbek leader General Dustam. When the Taliban movement became prominent, Pakistan lost the opportunity to support it.
- ◆ **The U.S.** In the beginning, the U.S. selectively fought some radical Afghan war lords, while at the same time relying on those groups which would be easier to control and influence. Another goal has been to prevent the spread of the Iranian influence in the central Asian republics which have the second biggest oil reserves in the world after the Arab gulf.

According to the Arab media the movement had several goals, which have since gradually undergone changes and adjustments. They were declared by the movement's spokesman Mullah Abdul Mannan Niyazi on 3 November 1994 after capturing the town of Spin Buldak. The main goal then was to restore security, collect weapons from other groups, and eliminate check points that extorted people.

After the spread of Taliban control to other Afghan provinces, the movement declared its new goals. On 4 April 1996, Mullah Muhammad Omar declared that the movement's goals were:

- ◆ Establishment of an Islamic government that follows the examples and teachings of the four rightly guided Caliphs, rulers of the Islamic Caliphate.
- ◆ Islam would become the religion of both the people and the government.
- ◆ The constitution should be based on Islamic Shari'a.
- ◆ Choosing Muslim scholars for important government positions.
- ◆ Destroying the roots of fanaticism and tribal nationalism.
- ◆ Protecting the people of the Book (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) and their properties.

Preserving their rights which are given by the Islamic Shari'a.

- ◆ Improving the political ties with all the Islamic countries and organizations according to the rules of Shari'a.
- ◆ Women should wear hijab (headscarf) in all sectors of Muslim society.
- ◆ Fighting crime as defined by the Taliban such as using drugs, and viewing forbidden pictures and films.
- ◆ Introduce the independent Islamic Courts which should oversee government institutions.
- ◆ Establishing a trained Army to protect the Islamic state against external aggression.
- ◆ Political and international activities should be based on Quran and Sunna.
- ◆ Development of the state economy based on Islamic principles.
- ◆ Appeal to Islamic countries to help rebuild Afghanistan.
- ◆ Collecting Zakat (Islamic taxes) and spending it on the projects and public services.<sup>10</sup>

### **Pipeline Politics and its Regional Implications for Afghanistan**

The strategic pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), was inaugurated in 2005. It was the first major pipeline bypassing Russian territory, beginning in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, transiting through the territory of the former Soviet Republic of Georgia towards the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. From there oil is taken by tankers to the world markets. Having up to one million barrels per day capacity, the pipeline has an even more important strategic implication. It will strengthen the political and economic independence of the countries of the region from possible resurgent Russian ambitions. But even before the completion, it had also marked the beginning of the new "Great Game" with global and regional powers such as the U.S., China, and Russia vying for influence in the area. Once again the region became very attractive for global geopolitics, enhanced by the discoveries of natural resources in Afghanistan such as natural gas, oil, marble, gold, copper, chromites, etc.

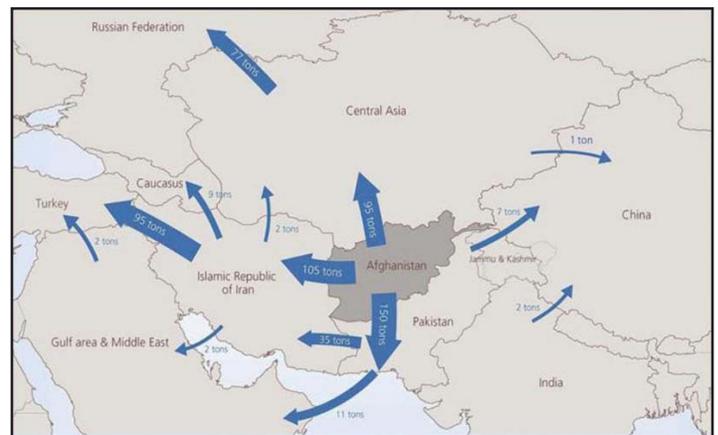
But Afghanistan's significance stems from its geopolitical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. This potential includes the possible

construction of oil and natural gas export pipelines through Afghanistan, which was under serious consideration in the mid-1990s. The idea has since been undermined by Afghanistan's instability. Since 1996, most of Afghanistan has been controlled by the Taliban movement, which the U.S. did not officially recognize.

John J. Maresca, Vice President for International Relations of the Unocal Oil Corporation (USA), in testimony to the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on 12 February 1998, concluded his Congressional testimony with the following statement: "Developing cost-effective, profitable and efficient export routes for Central Asia resources is a formidable, but not impossible, task. It has been accomplished before. A commercial corridor, a "new" Silk Road, can link the Central Asia supply with the demand—once again making Central Asia the crossroads between Europe and Asia.<sup>11</sup> While the hope is that export pipelines could provide an economic boost to the region, thereby bringing peace and prosperity to the troubled South and Central Asia, Caucasus and Caspian regions in the long run, the fear in the short-term, is that the fierce competition over pipeline routes and export options will lead to greater instability. During my diplomatic service in Washington D.C. and Ambassador Maresca's tenure at the Department of State, we had numerous discussions on the issues of pipeline politics and U.S. policy in the region.

### **Other Challenges**

Among other major challenges within Afghanistan are corruption, criminal activity, and a huge illicit opium trade. The map depicted below shows the extent of heroin flow from this relatively small country, making it a regional and global challenge. There are two main problems. The Afghan economy is heavily



reliant on opium cultivation, which does not allow other sectors of economy to normally develop, and it feeds the insurgency and contributes to instability of the country and region.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

The operational challenges in Afghanistan are extreme; the strategic implications for all of Eurasia are profound. U.S. fighting forces must understand and use the socio-cultural lessons learned from Soviet history in Afghanistan; and, at the same time understand the strategic effects operations may have in the region in order to achieve success. This calls for military leaders and Soldiers to acquire a sophisticated set of skills that are different from the Cold War era. Leaders and Soldiers must understand the context of the factors influencing the JIIM operational environment.

They must act within the contexts they find themselves, always assessing and adapting their actions based on the interactions and circumstances of the enemy and environment. The military must be able to fluidly transition from one type of operation to another based upon the assessed circumstances while consolidating operational opportunities with the strategic enterprise.<sup>13</sup> ✨

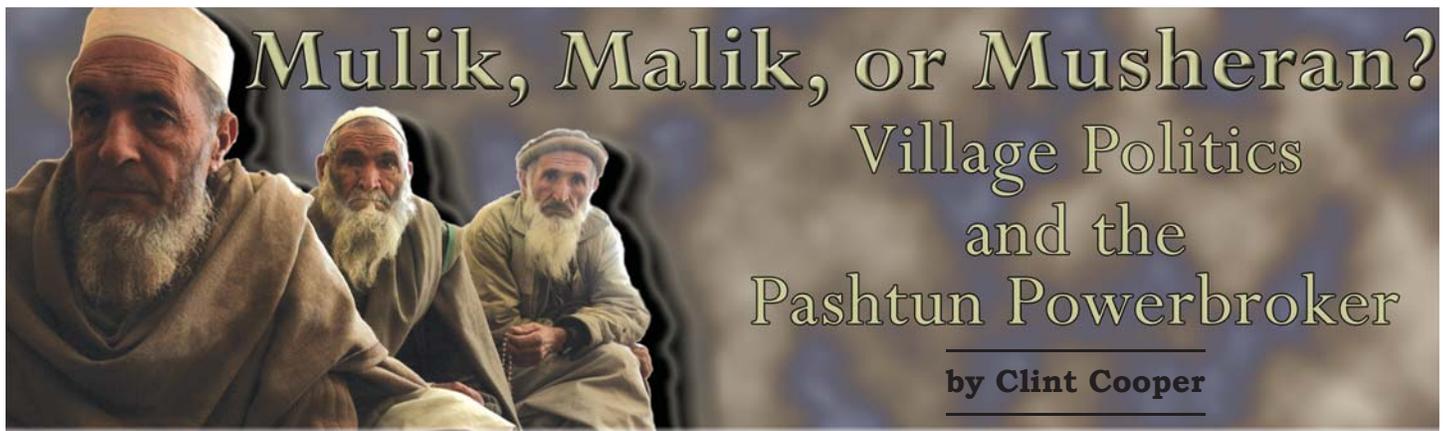
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## Introduction

One of the most challenging aspects of getting anything done in Afghanistan, and in particular Pashtun areas, is trying to identify the one individual who can make a decision and speak for the village as a whole.

***“Who is that one individual who can get things done? We need to start construction of the bridge next Tuesday at noon; can you meet us with twenty villagers who are willing to work so we can start construction?”***

Many times an unfortunate American patrol will arrive in a village with good intentions only to be frustrated with the seemingly complete lack of leadership and decisiveness on behalf of the Afghans. By doing this we forget the most important aspect of all. These first engagements should focus on building relationships and trust and trying to figure out the how the structure of leadership is functioning within the village.

We as Americans like to make plans, set goals, and form a timeline to get things done. We want to meet with an Afghan counterpart who is like minded. Unfortunately, there is rarely an individual in any one village who can make an informed decision for the village as a whole. At times there are many who seem to be in charge and all will smile, make promises, and tell you that they can make things happen. But who are you actually talking to—a corrupt land owner, a wealthy businessman, or the actual village leader? Finding that one true powerbroker can be elusive. You might find a government appointed official, but if he is from another tribe or another area, he will rarely have the trust of the locals and may not have any more power than extends past his front porch.

Traditionally, most rural Pashtuns have attempted to avoid contact with state legal institutions and have preferred to make decisions and resolve conflicts by holding their own *jirga* (or *shura*). A *jirga* is a traditional political mechanism for solving disputes through a tribal council of elders and religious heads. It is strongly intertwined with the Pashtun tribal economy, social values and beliefs, politics, and customary laws. A *jirga* is very communal and democratic in nature, having elders arrive at decisions through consensus.



**Jirga (Shura) - A traditional mechanism of conflict resolution in Afghanistan, Ali Wardak, 2003.**

## Village Power Brokers

Even though you might identify a tribal leader or a village elder, that individual rarely has the authority to act for the village as a whole. There are three traditional roles of which to be aware.

**Mulik**—The chief representative of the village. This position, or office, was created under King Zahir Shah. It fell into disuse around the time the Soviets invaded and has not been resurrected. Sometimes

these old political structures still function. You could ask to see the *Mulik* and he might in fact show up. In many villages the *Mulik* is still there and is very much functioning in that capacity, at least in his immediate vicinity. Many times this is an individual with a title only who holds limited power or authority. However, leadership can many times be based on the charisma or the respect for a particular individual. So based on personal strength alone, he might, after all these years, still hold a position of authority.

**Malik**—Usually the richest person in the village, a wealthy landowner. *Malik* can be a title or respect, either real or demanded. A *Malik* has not necessarily been selected to represent the interests of the village and may or may not have the interests of the village at heart. For example, under the Taliban, the *Malik* was responsible for such unsavory tasks as providing children for the Army, or taking bribes to exempt them.

If a patrol asks to speak only with the *Malik*, some villagers may think the U.S. Army is not interested in their well-being, and only wishes to talk to people who are wealthy and powerful. This could reinforce a sense of injustice and frustration among the people. In addition, if Taliban-era *Maliks* have maintained or regained their power, they are not likely to be our best supporters. *Maliks* do in fact hold much power and at times can get things done.

But we need to ask ourselves whether this power comes from opium, criminal activity, political corruption, or possibly even worse. General Petraeus wrote: “In situations where there is no alternative to powerbrokers with links to criminal networks, it may be preferable to forego the project.” But, based on your needs this might be the only way to get your mission accomplished. It takes constant assessment of possible cause and effect scenarios to determine an appropriate course of action.

**Mesheran**—Elders. These are the people in the village who have traditionally held the authority and respect of the villages. A *Malik* may or may not be a *Mesheran*. Even though they should hold the power in the village, often their influence has been undercut by those with their own interests in mind. There is a great respect for age and experience in Afghanistan and most of the time the village elders have the general respect of the village.

Afghanistan’s Upper House of Parliament is called the *Mesherano Jirga* (Council of Elders). The members are appointed by the President. The Lower House of Parliament is called the *Wolesi Jirga* (Council of the People). The members are elected by popular vote. This is all based on the traditional way of making decisions by consensus, the way it is done in the village.

## Impact of Current History

To make things more frustrating, history has muddied the waters even further. You can blame the failed interaction with the Soviets, the Taliban, and even the U.S. Recent history has had a huge impact on this traditional Pashtun leadership structure. When the Soviets or the Taliban walked into a village and asked for a village leader, they might have had much differing intentions than those of a U.S. patrol. An Afghan will think, “What do they intend to do with the village elder: Kidnap him, kill him?”

U.S. Soldiers should be carefully aware of such things as non-verbal communication. If appropriate, weapons pointed down, eye protection off, gloves off, simply smiling and using local greetings can work wonders. Security is always the top priority so certain Soldiers might want to leave things like eye protection on to make themselves less approachable while performing security duties. Overall Soldiers need to clearly explain their intentions, and try to constantly alleviate the fears and concerns of the Afghans.

***“We are here on behalf of U.S. Agency for International Development with the intention of distributing wheat seed. This is a special insect and drought resistant variety particularly suited for this area. Who can we meet with to better facilitate the distribution of this wheat seed and make sure it gets to the proper farmers?” This versus, “We need to see the village Elder!”***

Afghans have been described as opportunists, but overall are survivalists. They consider the implications of working with Americans today when the Taliban might be there tomorrow. There is less a sense of national identity, and more of a sense of loyalty to the family, tribe, or ethnic group. This is where they owe their allegiance. If there is a wrong to be made right it is up to you and yours, and you and yours only, to make it right again. The only sense of justice is what you can manage to put together on your own. Hence, the Pashtun proverb: “I against

my brother; my brother and I against my cousin; I, my brother, and my cousin against the stranger.” There is another old saying about Afghans, “You can rent an Afghan, but you cannot buy him.”

Also, because of the many decades of warfare, lack of security, and political vacuums, refugees coming back to Afghanistan after spending years in places like Pakistan or Iran may simply not have the traditional structures in place. As well, often more powerful and corrupt individuals have taken over their land and have completely ruined any pre-existing power structures.

Afghanistan, like many countries with tribal societies, is a high power distance society. Members do not see themselves as equals but as subject to those in power. Hence, there is a tendency to gravitate towards powerful individuals such as kings, dictators, or warlords. Having an individual point of view or opinion can be foreign to them. It is not uncommon to hear things like, “I don’t know how I feel about President Karzai, but I know that we as a tribe support him.”

In the many training scenarios that we as soldiers receive before being deployed overseas we all want the correct answer after the training exercise is over. The truth is that a correct answer simply does not exist. It takes time to map these power structures to see what is in place and what is functioning. It can take days, weeks, and even months to figure out how best to use these alternate leaders to our advantage.

As Americans, generally speaking, we trust an individual until that person proves that he is not to be trusted. In Afghanistan you are automatically not trusted until you can prove that you can be trusted. Often you are not selling America or Americans, but yourself as an individual. Afghans need time to figure out what our motives are and need to develop the relationship of trust first, well before business can move forward. Afghans, unlike Americans, are rarely concerned with a timeline.

A concerted effort needs to be made to clearly outline the intentions of the patrol to alleviate any fears or concerns, and to work on developing that all important relationship of trust. Hours of talking about trees, goats, and the weather woven in with gallons of Afghan black tea is really the only way to work towards getting things done. This can be perceived as

a huge waste of time to most Americans, but in fact, you are giving an Afghan time to evaluate you and figure out whether or not he wants to trust you and work with you.

## Recommendations

- ◆ Patrols should understand and use all three terms: *Mulik*, *Malik* and *Mesheran* in reference to leadership when asking about the village powerbroker. It is important to find out which terms have the most relevance for the people in the village and why. If in existence, using the *Mesheran* would be the preferred avenue of approach.
- ◆ You can ask indirect questions such as, “If there was a dispute over water access for irrigation in the village to who would you go to get this issue resolved?” Always remember that this can be a long drawn out process taking multiple visits over an extended period of time.
- ◆ Patrols should keep in mind that Afghans use a collective decision making process. In addition, although it would be nice to have one “go-to guy” in the village, this is probably not the best way to obtain accurate information about the village. It is unwise to assume that there is one form or another of functioning leadership within the village until it can be verified with a little time and effort.

## Conclusion

Until villagers begin to trust the U.S. Forces operating in their area and feel less threatened by insurgent activity, they are not likely to volunteer much information. It is probably going to take multiple visits, conducted over an extended period of time to gain the trust and confidence of the people. Significant gains are not likely to be achieved in the first couple of visits. These first engagements should focus on building relationships and trust. ✨

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# Afghanistan:

## The Downfall of an Educational System and its Cultural Impact



by Fawzya Khosti and M. Yasin Khosti

### Introduction

Over the last three decades Afghanistan has taken a significant cultural beating. Recently, the international community has made various efforts to address issues such as “economic impediments, social expectations, and cultural dictates.”<sup>1</sup> International support for Afghanistan ranges widely. It includes military support to provide short term and long term safety and security; healthcare to address physical and mental health issues; financial assistance to ensure economic development, and monetary support towards the development of Afghanistan’s educational system. As the international community attempts to salvage Afghan culture, elements of individualist culture emerge within a collectivist society, creating a shift in cultural orientation. Pressure from the Taliban and Al-Qaida’s fundamentalist approach imposes on Afghans the expectation that education will be extinguished.

### Impact of War on Afghanistan’s Educational System

Afghanistan’s history is rich, diverse, and expansive. Its educational history is just as noteworthy. However, due to influences beyond Afghanistan’s control, the educational system has suffered immensely in recent years. This demolished educational system lacks appropriate funding and is unable to provide appropriate and internationally competitive education.

Foreign assistance to Afghan education is not a new concept. In fact, the international community provided assistance as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the early years of formal schooling. For example,

the U.S., Turkey, and India were among the first donors. France, Germany, England, Japan, and Egypt, as well as a handful of others, contributed by underwriting some of the educational expenses as well.<sup>2</sup> Once Afghanistan joined UNESCO in 1948 the Afghan educational system became directly linked to other international educational organizations and bilaterally to various governments providing Afghans with new educational opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

Early in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Afghanistan created a positive and thriving educational system. For example, in 1956 there were 762 schools in Afghanistan boasting an enrollment of about 121,000 students. Of these students, approximately 111,000 (92 percent) were enrolled in elementary schools.<sup>4</sup> Although the enrollment numbers were low, the number was reflective of poverty rather than a negative attitude toward “modern” schooling. By 1975, the number of teachers was estimated to be 17,600, teaching a robust number of 650,000 elementary school students in an estimated population of 15 million.

In the early seventies (1973-4), approximately 11 percent of Afghans were literate (males 18.7 percent/females 2.8 percent).<sup>5</sup> This included 2 percent of males and 1 percent of females as high school graduates. Even though the numbers were low, the relatively higher rates of return to investment in schooling brought a great amount of pressure to bear on the government to expand educational places.

To reduce the pressure on the education system and the labor market the government instituted an examination at the end of the eighth grade to “select out”

students. This examination, called the *Concours*, was modeled after similar achievement tests in France, and was initiated by a UNESCO-UNDP and the Afghan Government educational reform program.<sup>6</sup> Sadly, the primary aim of the *Concours* was to prevent most children from entering the ninth grade, in order to fulfill a political commitment with Iran. The pool of dropouts was to be captured by the vocational schools to provide the training necessary for development of a network of railroads that was to be financed by the Shah of Iran. Ultimately, there was no significant funding from Iran. No vocational schools were built, and consequently, no railroads were built. This injustice later became one of the battle cries of the Soviet supported coup in April 1978.



In addition to the above, themes in textbook production in Afghanistan became contentious. Several major themes emerged in textbooks produced during the 1960s and 1970s in Afghan history, as well as on the Dari and Pashto languages.<sup>7</sup> There was, for example, an expectation that the language and dress of the culturally dominant Pushtuns (Pashto speakers, the ruling ethno-linguistic group in the country) were to be emulated by all the Afghan children. The formal code of conduct, the *Pashtunwali*, was promoted as the new norm. Those who ruled Afghanistan, the Mohammadzai clan of the Barakzai tribe, were culturally superior, according to the implicit message of these texts. Last, glorification of pre-Islamic events and personalities and discussions implying superiority of the Western culture constituted the third theme within the texts. As a result, children at the end of their education knew more about Europe than Asia, the history of Islam, or Afghanistan's neighbors and the minorities within the country.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, education within Afghanistan lacked objectivity.

Interestingly, children of Afghan refugees schooled in Pakistan found extensive coverage of Islam, albeit from the Pakistani point of view. In addition, the textbooks portrayed Russians and Americans as the enemy; thus creating an environment of distrust and hostility in an already stressful situation.

The Russian atrocities in Afghanistan have contributed to the idea that Russians are the enemy and this idea has received a stamp of approval in the refugees' texts that is unprecedented in the history of Islam or the Afghans. Thus, the Russians were portrayed as the enemy, and the belief was fostered that they were in fact the enemy forever.<sup>9</sup> In 1992, the Afghan resistance forces, referred to as Mujahiddin, entered Kabul and since then most schools have remained closed in Qandahar, Kabul, and the eastern parts of the country, primarily because of factional fighting among the Mujahiddin.

Afghanistan has experienced a plethora of significant setbacks in the development of its educational system, primarily due to the Russian invasion in the early 1970s, and, consequently, the infiltration of Taliban and Al-Qaida within Afghanistan. The result has been the erosion in the quality of education due to wars, poverty, and population growth. In fact, in more recent years, education has focused primarily upon religion, and has become skewed to promote specific political views.

## Conclusion

Prior to decades of war, Afghanistan's educational system gave rise to an expansion of internationally competitive professionals, for both men and women. This trend created an atmosphere of success through dual-income families, a rising middle class with enough income to purchase homes and cars, improving standards of health, an increasing interest in other cultures, and internationally competitive professionals. Through education, an understanding and appreciation of Afghan history, language, traditions, and culture created a renaissance of emerging national pride.

Therefore, just as war has diminished the many educational resources focused on Afghanistan, fear and distrust has worked to destroy the pride and culture of the Afghan people. For various reasons, the international community has infiltrated Afghanistan with Russian, Pakistani, American, and Saudi Arabian, and other cultures. Afghan cul-

ture, as known in the pre-Taliban era, has become nearly extinguished. With the re-establishment of adequate, internationally competitive education, Afghanistan may have an opportunity for a revival of its culture, traditions, and national pride. ✨

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# African Indigenous Styles of Conflict Resolution: Endorsing the Compromise without Compromising Yourself

by Anatole Balma, PhD

## Introduction

A good negotiator is one who knows when, where, and how to endorse a compromise. The African Palaver is a form of mediation-negotiation used to prevent a crisis from erupting, or as a means of resolving a conflict. It functions around consensus-building and long-lasting reconciliation of all parties involved. It is a traditional method to avoid unresolved conflict by means of a humanistic, liberating and empowering approach. An African saying teaches that: "There is no such thing as two individuals not getting along well; all they have to do is to sit for a sincere dialogue." It is essential that such an endeavor be conducted with fairness, open-mindedness, and transparency. The third party, therefore, is neither a referee nor a facilitator; he is the active third party. It brings in the fundamental values that are essential to consensus-building and social cohesion. Thus, for all these reasons, agreement, harmony, conciliation, good understanding, and peace are the major pillars of the African Palaver.

There is an African culture as well as an African identity, and the two combine to form "Africanness." People of African descent share unique and distinctive attributes characterized by friendliness, hospitality, dignity, and consensus-seeking principles. Traditional African society is based both on the

community and on the individual person. However, community comes first and the individual comes second. The foundations of these communities are dialogue and reciprocity. The group takes priority over the individual, it must do so without harming him and must allow him to prosper as a person.

In this realm, an individual's intrinsic qualities are valued as he is valued within his own community. The self in the Western hemisphere is perceived as something inside a person, a vase of mental properties and powers. From the African standpoint, the self is conceived as something outside an individual, a strong bond to the natural and social environment. The self has little determination outside the community. A person's identity is defined by his ties to his family and community, yet it encompasses a comprehensible perception of himself as a distinct individual with volition.

There is an intrinsic sense of personhood and communal membership. "I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am." In such a subtle setting, discovering the proper way to endorse a compromise without compromising the individual or the community is a complex interaction requiring the ability to disagree without being disagreeable. This article will explore the concept of African traditional mediation-negotiation under the Palaver Tree.

## History

Julius K. Nyéréré, former president of Tanzania, writes that the African Palaver is an exhilarating endeavor, “the elders sit under the big tree and talk until they agree.” But how does it work? A little bit of history to start with is in order.

Post-colonial African societies kept many of their social organizations and stratification well after independence; one such system is the traditional way of rendering justice. The judicial system throughout the continent is a dualistic one combining the Napoleonic code (the imported European rule of law), and the traditional African judicial system comprised of mysticism and orally passed down to future generations. The meaning of the word palaver has changed through history. From its Spanish roots, *palabra*, it meant discourse, speech, or conflict during the colonial era. Today in post-colonial Africa, it means dialog, discussion, a conflict resolution instrument. Colonial masters called it conflict because most often when they wanted anything done they had to rely on the local chief through a translator who was not always a professional and therefore not always accurate in leading the exchange between the colonial master and the local chief, often resulting in heated arguments, contentions, and misunderstandings. Palaver means discussion. Its main purpose is not to indicate who is wrong and who is right but to stop violence, appease parties in conflict, and restore peace through a therapy of discourse.

## Cultural and Social Values of the Baobab Tree



A baobab tree.

As mentioned earlier, Palaver is a traditional practice of social gathering aimed at creating new bonds, solidifying existing bonds, and reinforcing fairness, justice, and peace through dialogue, discussion, respect of identity, esteem, and community values that the parties hold very high. As such, it is a genuine social institution of which the entire community shares values, trust, and deference. This traditional practice also aims at resolving conflicts without any of the parties having to lose face. In Africa, this gathering takes place under and in the shade of a tree, the palaver tree. Throughout the continent, quite often the palaver tree is a baobab tree, in the shade of which important decisions dealing with daily life, special issues, and unforeseen problems affecting the harmony of the community are discussed and resolved.

The baobab tree, “*adansonia digitata*,” is a revered personality that fills nature. Its life expectancy can reach up to a thousand years. Baobab is from the Arabic word, “*buhibab*”, meaning numerous grains. The baobab tree embodies inestimable cultural and social values. It is full of symbolism and mysteries. Griots and drummers in Africa used to gather under the baobab tree to pass on tradition and culture to the younger generation through recitation and narration. The baobab is the ideal gathering place for elders when they are faced with the unknown. The baobab tree is sometimes simply known as the palaver tree, the lie detector, the gardener, the watch dog, the depository of the truth.

In Senegal for instance, drummers and griots were buried inside the baobab tree. Griots play an important role in an oral society such as the Sere community in this part of the world, but with regard to social stratification and ranking, griots and drummers were at the very bottom of the social scale. Despised yet feared, griots and their family members were not supposed to be buried in the open in a field because the soil would become barren and make plants and trees in that field unable to bear forever.

Upon their deaths, a very special ceremony was organized to bury griots and their family members. It consisted of dressing up the dead body and carrying it out to a baobab tree. With the corpse by the baobab, a group of male youngsters would rush into the hole of the tree and start a fierce fight inside the hole until a winner was declared. The last two

fighters standing would then take the corpse and lay it inside the hole, while the other fighters gave a standing ovation. Those two would be regarded as heroes and the young girls in their community would cheer and greatly admire them. Of course, the losers would be ashamed and would have to fulfill the demands of the winners until another similar ceremony was organized.

Similarly in the Dakoro region of Burkina Faso, the Dogon people have the same practices to this day with the difference that the central characters are not the griots but people infected with leprosy. In this instance, the ideal place of burial was a baobab hole that would let the sun in. The corpse was then lowered vertically and stood up facing the west and the sunset, in the belief that they were forever rid of the curse of leprosy. People infected with leprosy were not supposed to be buried in the open field for they would taint the water from the rain and infest the crops and the drinking water. Considering its size and life expectancy, the baobab tree in African imagery is filled with majesty, magnificence, and splendor; and that's what makes it the ideal place for discussions and conflict resolution.

### **Modus Operandi and Mechanisms of the Palaver Tree**



**Drummers, depository of orality.**

All societies and communities are subject to crisis and conflict, and Africa is no exception. Whether facing an identity crisis or a social or economic conflict, it is essential to have a means of conflict resolution and that is why people on this continent have come up with the palaver tree. Long before the arrival of colonialism, the forefathers of the palaver

tree were proactive enough to include specific guidelines alongside sacredness, mysticism, symbolism, and imagery when conducting this kind of discussion under the palaver tree.

In such a forum, consensus was achieved and all members agree to disagree without being disagreeable. Dialog was used as a favored means to long-lasting peace agreement and conflict resolution. This approach is a judicial must. The scheme was then agreed upon, structured, and institutionalized as an assembly represented and symbolized by a palaver tree. Each village, clan, ethnic group, or community would send representatives wholly vested with judicial powers and trusted to attend the open forum and be the spokespersons of their respective groups. Those emissaries were chosen and trusted for their sense of moral value, integrity, and intellect. The forum was characterized by an absolute and public acceptance of differences in opinion, perspectives, views, and beliefs.

Protection was guaranteed to stakeholders and so was freedom of speech. Constituents were allowed to make their cases, defend their viewpoint, but all agreed to submit to the settlement that was to be rendered through the palaver under the tree. One of the functions of the palaver was to convince through discussion and dialogue rather than by means of coercion. Through history and experience, Africans always seek to build consensus and unanimity so that they avoid never-ending differences and unresolved disputes. As a matter of fact, unanimity was not always guaranteed; merely reaching an agreement was celebrated so that harmony and peace would prevail. There were instances where there was no winner but constituents would always abide by the rulings.

### **Palaver in Modern Africa**

◆ **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa).** The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by the Government of National Unity to help deal with what happened during the apartheid era. The conflict during this period resulted in violence and human rights abuses from all sides. No section of society escaped these abuses.

The TRC was a court-like restorative justice body assembled after the abolition of apartheid. Witnesses who were identified as vic-

tims of gross human rights violations were invited to give statements about their experiences, and some were selected for public hearings. Perpetrators of violence could also give testimony and request amnesty from both civil and criminal prosecution. Overall the TRC gave South African citizens a chance to express their regret at failing to prevent human rights violations and to demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation and to a new kind of future in a widely inclusive, inviting, welcoming, and accepting South Africa.

The TRC sharply contrasted the Nuremberg Trials after World War II and other *de-Nazification* measures. Because of the perceived success of the reconciliatory approach in dealing with human rights violations after political change either from internal or external factors, other countries have instituted similar commissions, though not always with the same scope or the allowance for charging those currently in power. The success of the “TRC method” versus the “Nuremberg method” of prosecution (as seen used in Iraq) is open for debate.

◆ **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Liberia).** Securing peace and reconciliation in postwar Liberia was the task in which the Accra-brokered Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003 sought the transitional justice mechanism of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the country. The basis for creation of this mechanism is that key leaders, who dominated the recent past either in belligerent capacities or for substantial supports to the crisis, would be given their day to reveal their actions or knowledge about the ugly chapter in Liberian history.

The objectives and purpose of the Commission were to promote national peace, security, unity, and reconciliation by investigating gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law as well as economic crimes, such as the exploitation of natural or public resources to perpetuate armed conflicts, during the period January 1979 to October 2003.

The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission had to determine whether these were isolated incidents or part of a systematic pattern and to establish the antecedents, cir-

cumstances, factors, and context of such violations and abuses. It also had to determine those responsible for the commission of the violations and abuses and their motives, as well as their impact on victims. The TRC Liberian style became a forum that addressed issues of impunity, as well as an opportunity for both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences in order to create a clear picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation and long-lasting peace.



Grass and Cows.

◆ **The Gacacas in Rwanda.** The traditional form of decision-making in Rwanda is the *gacaca*, a Kinyarwanda word meaning “grass.” If your cows were eating my vegetables, both you and I would be called to a meeting of the village elders, who would doubtless be sitting on the grass, under the shade of “the big tree,” to quote Julius Nyerere. And they would talk and talk, until they came to a verbal consensus. To the African, “Majority rule was a foreign notion.”

Rwanda has now adopted this gacaca as the means by which to overcome the legacy of the genocide. The ringleaders of that atrocity still go to the United Nations’ court in Arusha. But the other suspected criminals, possibly as many as 100,000 people, are being asked to confront their victims or their families. Depending on the severity of the crime, those guilty of lesser crimes are sentenced to complete a community service order which benefits those aggrieved. In fact, the gacacas are like mini-Peace and Reconciliation Commissions in every village in

the land, and each works on the basis of a verbal consensus.

The gacaca courts system has allowed the population of the the same area to work together in order to judge those who have participated in the genocide, to identify the victims, and to rehabilitate innocent people. The gacaca Courts system became the basis of collaboration and unity, mainly because when the truth was known, there was no more suspicion, the perpetrator was punished, and justice was rendered to the victim. Innocent prisoners could be re-integrated into Rwandan society. The Rwandan genocide was orchestrated by Rwandans against their brothers. It is then the responsibility of all Rwandan—with no exception—to rebuild their society, to settle the disputes related to that genocide, especially through the trials of the presumed authors and the reparation of the damage caused to the victims. Overall, the gacacas have been able to fulfill their mission, to restore conviviality among Rwandans, and prepare their hearts and minds to work for their own and the country's development.

## Conclusion

Culture provides a benchmark for beauty, good, and truth during the process of mediation, negotiation, self-regulation and peace. Any kind of peacemaking endeavor ought to involve prevention, resolution, reconciliation of heart and mind, and most of all, forgiveness of parties involved in a dispute. It is about long-lasting consensus building, preventing a conflict from bursting out, or avoiding unresolved conflict. It is important that such an enterprise be conducted with fairness, open-mindedness, and transparency. Altogether the final result is built on a compromise. Mediation can take place at any level of a conflict resolution in order for facilitation and compromise to be effected.

Understanding the cultural standpoint of the conflict will provide the mediator with valuable tools in managing the differences. Gradually inviting the parties to make concessions, benchmarking, organizing the demands, ranking the priorities, highlighting the moral and ethical values, and coming to an agreement and to a compromise without compromising oneself would be the path in the long road to a mission success. The bottomline here is that one trusted with a mediation-negotiation assignment with Africa

as a setting requires a clear grasp and understanding of African mediation-negotiation methods and mechanisms as well as African thought, philosophy, and mindset. A Ghanaian proverb teaches us that “you can bury a cadaver, but you cannot bury a palaver.” ✨



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# Leveraging African Traditional Rulers for Mission Success in Africa



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by **Zachary Angafor**

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His Royal Highness, Angafor Mombo-oh III,  
Paramount Chief of Bambui, Cameroon

## Introduction

For several centuries before colonial rule, African traditional rulers were held in very high esteem as custodians of African culture and heritage. Although colonial rule and now the pressures of modernism and western approaches to government threaten their influence, African traditional rulers are still the font and bedrock of African culture. They are highly respected and are seen as the embodiment of wisdom, power, and character. As custodians of their tribal stools, cups, and shrines, African traditional rulers are duty bound to uphold and enhance the values and beliefs of their communities. Some have considerable political and economic clout and play useful roles in maintaining peace and security in their communities, brokering low level conflicts, and assisting as auxiliaries of their governments with regard to security and development. Chiefs and kings or sultans and emirs are therefore potent forces in Africa. In some countries such as Ghana for example, their institutions are recognized by the constitution.

This article will take an introspective look at these rulers and the potential roles they might play in the success of our military operations in Africa. (Sultans and emirs are the Muslim equivalents of kings and chiefs.) I begin with the premise that Africans are culture bound and that in spite of modernism and the adoption of western life styles and systems of government, Africans still have a strong and emotional attachment to their core values, beliefs, and norms, as well as to the traditional rulers who incarnate them. To note just two examples, Africans living in the West still maintain an emotional attachment to their culture. Here in the U.S, for example, some organize tribal Cultural and Development Associations where they meet regularly to re-live and revalorize their respective cultures and heritage. In fact, some Africans living in the West actually return home to canvass and take up nobility title-ships in their tribes.

Also, despite their positions as heads of state and government, many leaders of African countries still pay full allegiance to tribal rulers from whom they believe they can get the blessings, power and wisdom they need to be able to rule their countries well. It is, in fact, common practice in many African countries for the leaders and politicians to consult traditional rulers regularly for inspiration and guidance. Thus, in a good number of such countries, kings or sultans are potent power brokers. And in some other countries, they might be the actual power behind the executive and/or the legislative arms of government. Early in 2010 in Nigeria, for example, the powerful Sultan of *Sokoto*, *Sa'ad Abubakar III* and some influential northern emirs reportedly stalled plans by the Nigerian Senate for the removal from office of ailing President *Umaru Yar'Adua* of northern origins.<sup>1</sup>

Against this background, understanding and recognizing the central role of traditional rulers in African culture as well as the power they wield in their kingdoms and at the national level could greatly enhance the success of the operations of our military personnel on the African continent. This should, however, not be construed to mean that all African traditional rulers wield enormous power outside their tribes or that they are all regarded with equal esteem in the entire continent. The degree of authority and respect commanded by a traditional ruler on the continent varies from one tribe to another and from one country and region to the other. In this article, our discussions will be limited to traditional rulers in some countries of the west and west central African coast.

## Brief History

The rise, and in some cases, the demise of chiefdoms and kingdoms in Africa differ from one country to another and from one region to the other.

Generally speaking, most African chiefdoms and kingdoms pre-date colonial rule, and some have existed for several hundreds and, in fact, thousands of years. Examples include the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana that has existed since the 15<sup>th</sup> century; the 17<sup>th</sup> century Sokoto Sultanate of Nigeria; the 16<sup>th</sup> century Bamun kingdom and the six-hundred-years old Bambui chiefdom of Cameroon. To date, the leaders of these kingdoms and chiefdoms and several others in Africa have been highly respected, consulted, courted, and solicited for traditional “blessings” and nobility title-ships in their kingdoms by their respective heads of state, politicians, and businessmen. The Sultan of Sokoto in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria, the *Asantehene* of Ashanti in Ghana, the Zulu king in South Africa, and the kings of *Nso* and *Bamun* in Cameroon are good examples of some African kings for whom politicians and businessmen are at their beck and call.

A chiefdom is “an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief.”<sup>2</sup> The paramount chief is assisted in the administration of the chiefdom by sub-chiefs, village councilors, noblemen, and probably a council of elders. Also referred to as tribes, African chiefdoms, or emirates in the case of Muslims, have been the fulcrums of political power from time immemorial. Kingdoms or Sultanates, on the other hand, are larger units. They are made up of clusters of chiefdoms or emirates and are ruled by monarchs. Some monarchs, for example, King *Mswati III* of Swaziland exercise absolute power while others are assisted in their administrative work by paramount chiefs or emirs, nobles, and advisers.

The two most important symbols of authority and culture in African chiefdoms and kingdoms are the royal stool and the cup. Most royal stools and cups are as old as the chiefdoms and kingdoms themselves and are passed down through the generations from one king to another. The stools are often carved from wood or made from bronze and embellished with gold. In some cases, they are empowered with human or animal blood, herbs and substances that are believed to have magical powers. The stools also have visual expressions of kingship and the forces, such as human and animal symbols of a leopard, lion, elephant or python that are believed to sustain the king.

Another purpose of the symbols and decorations on the stools, as well as other possessions of the king, is to distinguish him from his subjects. The cups could be the horn of a buffalo or made from ivory, gold, and wood. The cups also undergo similar rituals like the stool. Both the stool and cup are regarded as the spiritual powerhouse and unifying force of the tribe. In a majority of African chiefdoms and kingdoms, the stool is taken out only on special occasions, for instance, during an annual tribal dance or when the chief or king dies or is “missing” as most Africans refer to the death of a king. Still in some other tribes, after the coronation of a new king, the stool is hidden deep in the palace and is seen only by the king and his trusted advisers.

Apart from the chief and king, the stool and cup in many African tribes can never be touched by a “commoner.” They are only touched by designated noblemen who have undertaken some ritual initiation. The cup is used by the king who is also the chief priest of the tribe for performing libation during important ceremonies such as invoking the powers of ancestors for the protection of the tribe and solemnizing relations between communities.

There are many and varying stories about the origins of the stool. In the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana, for example, the stool is said to have been conjured from the sky by a fetish priest.<sup>3</sup> Regarded as the soul and heart beat of a tribe, the stool, cup and shrines must never be violated or desecrated by anyone. During his coronation, the new king vows to defend these valuable objects of the tribe. Thus, like the flag and constitution of a country, the stool, cup, and shrines are held sacred and the king, together with his entire tribe, would fight and die in their defense. In fact, history has it that in the Ashanti tribe of Ghana, the Ashantis allowed their king to be exiled in defense of their stool. In other African countries, kings who abuse the stool have been killed by their subjects. It was the case in Cameroon on January 19, 2006, when the king of *Big Babanki*, a village in the north western region of the country was dethroned, bundled and burnt to death by his subjects for allegedly abusing the stool. The late king incurred the wrath of his people for allegedly destroying ancestral shrines, selling historic and culturally valuable and priceless artifacts of the village, and seizing and selling the lands of farmers with impunity. Our military personnel should therefore be

aware that any person who desecrates a shrine or abuses a stool in an African village does so at his own risk and peril.

### **Etiquette and Rapport Building**

The first and perhaps the most important step for our military personnel to build rapport and good working relationships with African kings is for them to know and endeavor to put into practice some basic etiquette and do's and don'ts of an African king's interactions and relations with the public. Members of the U.S. Peace Corps are masters at this game and strategy. Before our Peace Corps volunteers take up assignments in Africa, and even during their stay there, they always take immersion courses in African culture and more specifically in how to interact with African traditional rulers. This partly explains and accounts for the resounding success of the Peace Corps in Africa.

Royal etiquette varies from one African tribe to another, but basically they are the same. African kings or sultans command a lot of loyalty and reverence. They live in palaces that may have as many as 40 or more buildings, some of which are exotically decorated with works of art and crafts. In addition to the quarters of the king and his wives, the palace also serves as the spiritual and cultural center of the kingdom. It is the pinnacle of all mystical and ancestral worship and houses some of the most powerful shrines and secret societies of the kingdom. In addition to his numerous wives (30 or more in some cases), the king also has servants in his court. The servants are responsible for protocol, security, and running of errands for the king. They are also his eyes and ears in the kingdom. As the supreme authority of the land, the king has access to all the secret societies in the kingdom and their inner-workings. He personally knows all the heads of major lineage groups in his kingdom, and has the power and authority to summon them for consultation concerning any issues, such as witchcraft or crime in their respective families. Thus, through the king alone, a visitor can have a good feel of a kingdom of several thousand people and the values, beliefs, and norms that condition and influence them.

African kings generally grant audiences on most days of the week, but it is always advisable to make contacts with a palace representative or protocol officer for preliminary arrangements. Visitors are

obliged to wear caps before entering some palaces, but forbidden to do so when entering other palaces. In general, women must not wear pants when visiting an African king as this is regarded as a sign of disrespect for the king. However, female military personnel might be tolerated in some palaces if the pants are part of their official uniform.

It is traditionally obligatory in most African kingdoms to always have some gifts when visiting a king. Gifts usually include drinks, textiles, works of art and crafts, or money. When ushered into the palace, the visitor may be taken to a waiting room if the king is not sitting on his throne. Once the king makes his appearance, the visitor or visitors must stand up and remain standing until he sits down.

Although regarded as the father of the entire kingdom, not everyone has direct access to the king. And apart from his wives, adolescent children, and some noblemen, no other person touches the king. He will never offer a handshake to his subjects and may only do so to non-natives if and when he is out of his palace and kingdom. Apart from their advisers and wives, some African kings do not talk directly to their subjects and visitors. They can only do so through a "linguist" or an intermediary even when the subject or visitor is sitting in front of them.

In general, African kings do not eat in public, and they are forbidden to visit the weekly markets in their kingdoms, which partly explains why it is advisable to take along some gifts when visiting. Before leaving the palace, it is recommended to give the royal protocol and security officials a tip. They will remain to sing their praises of the visitor to the king. Difficult as these courtesies may be to a non-native, an African king will truly appreciate it if the visitor shows some knowledge and respect for them. A stronger bond and working relationship may also be built if the visitor can, for example, speak a few words of the king's language. Above all, never make promises that can never be kept. And avoid any condescending attitudes that might be the beginning of the end of a potential good working relationship.

### **Collaborating with African Traditional Rulers**

Before colonial rule and modernism, the activities and authority of African traditional rulers were mostly limited to their tribes. For example, they acted as chief priests offering sacrifices to their

tribal ancestors to appease and plead with them to intercede for the welfare of their people. Over the years, and more specifically since colonial and post-colonial rule, their roles as mere custodians of the culture and heritage of their communities have undergone significant changes.

During British rule in Nigeria, for example, power at the local level was left in the hands of kings and chiefs in a system of “indirect rule.” In practice, indirect rule was known as “Native Administration,” with the king or chief at the top, and a core of local officials below him.<sup>4</sup> During the decades of centralized one party rule on the continent, kingship was comparatively unpopular, but since multi-party democracy has not proved itself a panacea for Africa’s political problems, kings are now making a major come back.

Africa is a ‘basket case’ of failed states, from Somalia on the east coast to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the center to Mauritania on the west coast of the continent. “In sub-Saharan Africa, the widely hailed wave of democratization that washed over the region in the early 1990s has ended up producing dominant-power systems in countries such as Mauritania, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Tanzania.”<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, western democracy and style of government have, to a large extent, failed in Africa. And as the continent tries to reinvent itself politically, traditional rulers have once more taken center stage. At the continental level, for instance, a Forum has been formed of kings, sultans, princes, sheikhs, and mayors of Africa. Working hand-in-hand with the African Union (AU), a regional organization that promotes peace, stability, and the economic development of the continent, the Forum of Kings and Sultans is unequivocal in the role it intends to play in present day Africa. “The fate of the African peoples is in the hands of traditional leaders and the heads of states and governments of the African countries who are called today to move forward to achieve progress and adapt to the changes that characterize the world,” the Forum said in its declaration during the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the AU summit meeting in Libya on July 1, 2009. At the national level, Associations of Traditional Rulers have mushroomed in countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon. African traditional rulers and governments are thus once again working hand in glove to pull the continent out of its political, economic, and security quagmires.

## Conclusion

In a continent where over 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas, the importance of traditional rulers in the administration of an African country cannot be overemphasized. As leaders in their respective tribes, African traditional rulers know better than anyone else the terrain, its people, and the values, beliefs and norms that motivate their behaviors. Also, they are better disposed to know the various groups or networks operating in the clan, tribe or region that are, or may be, threats to peace and security. In light of the foregoing, it is evident that in addition to mainstream government officials, African traditional rulers could play a vital and determining role in the success of our operations on the continent if our military personnel leverage their power and knowledge of the African terrain. 

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# Shamans, Ghosts, Fireworks and Other Dangerous Things: The Dialectic of Tradition and Trans-nationalism in the Development of Greater Asia

by Hugh M. Lewis, PhD

## Introduction

A motorcycle accident occurs in a crowded intersection in downtown Bangkok and the bystanders immediately step in to diffuse blame and pressure mutual apologies to keep tempers from flaring up. A white-gloved traffic cop in a similar context in downtown Tokyo merely points to an errant driver who pulls politely over to receive a courteous traffic ticket. A group of school children in downtown Jakarta cross a busy intersection amidst a stream of cars, trucks and motorcycles without traffic lanes and cross-walks, and though cars whiz by within inches, the kids arrive safely on the other side, as they do each day. What do all these incidents share in common?

A policeman in South Korea is distraught over losing his job, being discovered for taking bribes, and goes berserk on the streets with hand grenades and an assault rifle, killing and wounding scores of innocent bystanders. Old women in Georgetown, Malaysia, sit around and poke and pester a half-senile senior compatriot, known to suffer from *latah* (hyper-startle reflex syndrome), in order to laugh at her and publicly embarrass her mercilessly as she swears and dances uncontrollably. Factory women in Indonesia suddenly develop mass hysteria and run amok until the factory has to be temporarily closed down. How do we reconcile these kinds of erratic events with the former incidents that seem aimed foremost at maintaining social control and preservation of social dignity?

Asian cultures and societies share a long standing set of traditions many of which have remained

resilient to many changes as a result of modernization and westernization. Many of these traditions are centered in the family and kinship system, as well as in religion and religious values that reinforce these central social institutions of the family. One of the central roles of traditional culture has been to provide means of conflict mediation and stress resolution upon multiple levels of social existence in which the outcomes of events might otherwise be uncertain and potentially dangerous.

Such tradition provides in this sense a security net and safe haven for those whose feelings of angst and insecurity might otherwise threaten to become overwhelming. This sense of tradition in the Asian world is not fundamentally different from traditional cultures world round, but there are common themes, and it seems, common outcomes that are representative of Asian civilization, whether of Hindu or Sinitic or of some other origin.

Except for mainland China, where trance performance and shamanism has disappeared since the advent of communist party control in 1949, Great Asian religions and societies that embrace these religions have not detached themselves from indigenous precursors, but have largely sought to amalgamate these other systems of belief into the larger tradition. Hence, in Chinese tradition, Taoism and Buddhism are often indistinguishable in practice from spirit-animism and spirit-mediumship that appears to derive from precursory customs and belief systems. Similarly, we find such widespread religious syncretism with other religious traditions throughout Asia—Islam, Christianity, or Hinduism—and even

between these great religious traditions that overlap in the same areas.

We may explain the role and function of religion in a society in many different ways, but we must in every case or instance recognize the social consequences of religious practice and belief. Spirit medium-ship involving shamanistic performance and including spirit-possession and trance is a common means by which people sort out social or personal problems, and deal with underlying issues in a manner of ritual expression and mutual expectation that is on one hand dangerous, but in another sense becomes “safe” by means of highly ritualized contexts. In trance, shamans may behave in an expressive manner normally taboo, and may elicit from their clients responses that would in any other context be deemed inappropriate. Female shamans in village Korea engage in lewd sexual postures and may joke and taunt the men in a manner, language and behavior that would normally be obscene and unacceptable in everyday Korean village life. We may extend this function to embrace religion in a wide variety of forms and contexts, both formal and informal, across the entire arc of Greater Asia, including those nations and cultures of Western and Central Asia.

### **The Role of Traditional Culture in Conflict Mediation in Greater Asia**

For purposes of clearer definition, Greater Asia encompasses those cultures that are indigenous to the Asian continent, and that are extended out into the Pacific and into the Indian Ocean, less the intrusion of European cultures into Russia. Within this entire compass there is a general trend towards patrilineal descent groups (or alternatively, bifurcate merging or “Iroquois” systems in South Asia or “Hawaiian” or generational ambilineal descent groups throughout the Pacific). The role of religion is in reinforcing cultural tradition and in regulating relations between people and between people and the natural and supernatural worlds. It is consonant with traditional descent groups, kin-based village structure and clan-based social organization upon multiple levels.

Unlike western cultures, that have largely been influenced by the Greco-Roman tradition of rational philosophy as well as by Judeo Christian doctrine, in eastern cultures there is generally no clear distinction between the functions of church and state, or between the role of religion in regulating the spir-

itual and supernatural worlds and the role of religion in regulating practical affairs in everyday life. In fact, we may say that in Eastern religious philosophy, practical means often serve spiritual ends, and spiritual means often serve practical ends. We may say that in Greater Asia there is an overall tendency for there to be no clear rational demarcation symbolically between the sacred and the profane, between the esoteric and the public, or between the mystical and the commonplace.

One consequence of this is that religion largely serves a jural role in regulating relations between people, and also, simultaneously, becomes used as a mechanism for justifying and maintaining social and psychological harmony in everyday group life. Eastern religious traditions therefore play a critical role in mediating potential conflict in everyday life at all levels of social organization. This function is served ceremonially and ritually, as well as in the ordering of the vernacular world of the practical and necessary.

We see this function of eastern religious philosophy and theocratic practice in the exceptional and noticeable cases when it breaks down. We can identify a set of factors under which such breakdown can be expected to occur:

- ◆ Political factionalization and decentralization and political competition within a society, due in the main to parties or clan groupings or tribes competing for political control, often precipitated by a crises of succession of power.
- ◆ Temporary suspension of normal religious order in everyday life and the advent of religious anti-structure, often due to economic depression or collapse, natural disaster or tragic life events.
- ◆ Social-psychological reaction to acculturation, particularly, from the standpoint of eastern traditions, of westernization and modernization that threatens to rend the basic social fabric of social tradition that is defined and regulated by religion.
- ◆ Invasion by a foreign people or nation, or at least the perceived threat of some out-group coupled with relative economic deprivation or insecurity.

Historically, throughout Greater Asia, when these sets of events occurred, a breakdown of the normal religious function in ordering society resulted. It

can be argued that these kinds of event structures would adversely affect any society or people. While this statement is in general true, it is the nature of how it tends to affect Greater Asian societies, and the social and psychological consequences in terms of religious response and reaction, that renders the problem interesting anthropologically and worthy of further critical consideration.

### **Traditional Religious Systems and Kinship Organization of Greater Asian Societies**

This relationship between religion, social structure and structural dynamics of Greater Asian societies reflects the history and origin of Asian civilizations and the consonance of the role of religion in the integration and organization of social life throughout the larger region. In clan organized society, religion is used to create mythologies and associated ritual practices that serve to symbolically and ideologically legitimize hierarchical kingship and fictive relationship of descent (sibs or clans) that tie together otherwise separate and potentially competing lineage descent groups. In turn, religion serves to define individual identity within this class organized system as an assemblage of statuses, as an extension of identity in the extended family or descent group. The kin-group or descent group is corporate in structure, larger in life than that world encompassed biographically by the individual, and religious worship tends to reinforce this larger corporate identity as well as the individual's identity in relation to it.

Common identity is reinforced through ancestor worship and veneration of the earth, constituting a common ethno-cultural basis of religious identity. These ritual institutions preclude reciprocal social relations with people outside of one's own corporate groups, in which kinship becomes a model for defining and sanctioning a personal field of social relationships for the individual. Other institutions, social, political, economic or religious, within which the individual may have multiple roles, may interconnect in a hierarchical manner and serve to tether together at a higher level the otherwise divisive and horizontally stratified system of corporate descent groups.



In theory, the principle of integration of the society is that all of these levels become expressed at the same time in every relationship or activity—people thus become stratified within a complex web of relationships that are non-identical and non-reciprocal, usually hierarchically arranged. Personal identity becomes an assemblage of statuses, and the individual owes a divided sense of allegiance across a number of intersecting networks and organizations. There occurs as a consequence of such social integration a complex process of social stratification in which “members of the society are distributed in different, non-identical schemes of allegiance and mutual dependence in relation to administrative, juridical and ritual institutions.”<sup>1</sup>

Individual allegiance within a number of intersecting organizations serves to reinforce the overall

structure. Personal identity becomes conceived as “an assemblage of statuses” and moral obligation becomes situationally defined and relative, based upon a sense of perceived social shame and an emphasis upon collective conformity of the individual.<sup>2</sup>

One consequence of this kind of structure is that individuals participate in *gemeinschaft* type social relationships in which social capital, reciprocity and status-honor play large roles in the definition of one’s (and one’s group) social identity. Kinship becomes a defining organizational principle of society that permeates all levels and all areas of social organization. Kinship takes on a jural function in everyday life and social structure, valorized and sanctioned by religious belief and practice, expressed in interpersonal relationships as relative rights and obligations, situationally defined, and owed between different roles between people. One’s place is fixed in society incontrovertibly on the basis of one’s parentage, and descent organization serves to disambiguate and regulate over the reproductive rights of women and, thus, of the reproduction of the social body overall.

In this case, religion provides a central system of symbolization that serves the ends of kinship and descent as fundamental organizational principles of society, in which the family as descent group provides an arrangement by which the individual in society achieves a legitimate identity, by which gaining a living, setting up a family and preservation of health and well-being is achieved. Many of the conflicts found within family and kin-based organization become expressed through religious symbolism and ritual activity. Health and well being become expressed symbolically and maintained through religiously based traditional medical systems as well as through shamanistic healing rituals. Gaining a living becomes the pursuit of one’s familial interests in alignment with larger state identity, without a sense of religious or moral contradiction or “corruption” that we, as Western outsiders, prefer to label it.

Because religion reinforces the kinship principle, kin-relations come to embody a moral imperative and sense of obligation that tends to preclude a moral identity upon a higher level of social organization. Instead, higher level corporate identity is a symbolic projection, religiously and ideologically legitimized, of one’s own kin-based relations. We may refer, in state societies, to the moral relativity of kin-based societies, what has been called “situational

morality” and “relational identity” and the kind of familial amorality that occurs as a consequence of state organization of kin-based systems.

In this sense we may refer to Clifford Geertz’s definition that: “Religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”<sup>3</sup>

From this standpoint, religion in Greater Asia is taken seriously to the extent that its symbolisms and mythologies are rarely questioned for their existential veracity or ideological legitimacy. Instead, they are taken at face value as de facto true and real. In this sense, worldview in Greater Asia does not draw a clear boundary between the natural world and the world of the supernatural, but that these worlds interpenetrate one another and these boundaries are definitionally, symbolically and behaviorally fluid more than solid, and are regularly mediated through customary ritual and sanctioned practice on a daily basis.

## **New Nationalisms and Traditional Civilizations**

One moral consequence of this general kin-based orientation in Greater Asia has been the lack of widespread development of democratic social institutions, or of a high degree of social egoism or individualism as is typical in western societies. Nor what can be referred to as formal secondary legal institutions that might be said to be the foundation of rule of law and of rights based and highly individualistic societies. Instead, what we have in Asia, before the rise of modern nation states within the last half century, has been the predominance of hierarchical societies bound by religious traditions that extended back millennia, and an emphasis upon arbitrary and autocratic authority as well as upon values emphasizing social responsibility and collective identity over that of the individual. Individual interest becomes expressed via group identity and ritualized social interaction.

A challenge of nation building across Asia has been in overcoming generally authoritarian ethos and domination by a single ruling party, usually controlled by a single ruling individual or faction. Another chal-

lenge is the cultivation of a broad-based system of law and order regulating relations between people, instead of warlordism, praetorian authoritarianism, and the coercion of traditional customs, mostly based upon deep-seated and deeply rooted religious traditions and tribal village customs. While we find across contemporary Asia transplanted models of political and governmental organization, mostly modeled after the West, we also find social-structural patterns still deeply entrenched and bound by religious and kin-based traditions

Development of modern nation states throughout Greater Asia has meant a prolonged period of structural instability and infighting for power, and usually the ascendancy of a single dominant party or coalition with an authoritarian military regime during which normal democratic processes are all but suspended. When the state is seen as but the extension of the family, as but a larger model for the realization of a sense of paternalistic ego at the center of a large kin-ship system, or as symbolic child, parent, sibling, cousins or aunts and uncles, then the expectations of familial obligation and reciprocities are transferred and projected, perhaps diluted but more or less intact, upon the offices, representatives, titles and expectations of larger state authority.

In fact, by and large, modern nation states in Greater Asia have achieved national integration and ascendancy over other institutions in large measure by the ideological displacement of the symbolic function of traditional religions, and in general the cooptation or usurpation of the authority and legitimacy of these religions by the secular and ideological interests of the state. In communist nations, this transition was accomplished more or less in a violent manner by the destruction of temples and the persecution and execution of priests. Even in a few anti-communist nations we find the targeting of religious institutions and authorities as a potential threat to the autocratic power of the state (The Republics of South Korea and Taiwan). In many modern states, religious minorities become targeted for systematic discrimination, repression and persecution.

Today we find no true theocratic states in Greater Asia (with the exception perhaps of modern Iran and former or provisional Tibet) though in almost all nations in Greater Asia we still find the strong role played by religion, religious ideology and religious

organization in the articulation of state authority as well as in the everyday dynamics of these societies. It matters little whether the predominant religion of the state is Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism or Confucianism or Christianity imported from the West—the developmental dynamics and outcomes remain similar in most if not all cases.

The role of religion in these nations has only gradually become eclipsed by the structural development of these systems as a result of modernization, urbanization and industrialization, and by the rapid displacement of the majority of its population from hinterland and rural regions into rapidly growing metropolitan areas. We find this trend occurring in even relatively remote and underdeveloped nation-states, as, for instance, in Mongolia. A tremendous role in shifting consciousness away from traditional religion has been that played by modern media, even if in most of these nation-states much programming remains devoted to religious themes, myths and the dissemination of religious based doctrine and traditional cultural values.

We can speak therefore of a socio-structural dialectic between things modern and things traditional, between the rise of new nationalisms and the proclivity of Asian peoples far and wide to cling to cherished and tried and true traditions. This dialectic has often been expressed in different regions of Greater Asia, in terms of separatist movements, millenarian and syncretistic movements, cult religious movements and political struggles between competing parties, in terms of riots and demonstrations, and strong-armed police reactions to riots. It can probably also be found to permeate the different forms of media and to constitute a central mythological theme that becomes dialectically reiterated again and again through song and dance performance, the arts, the movies, through television and radio, through news articles and book publications.

### **Polythetic Classes of Nationally Dangerous Things**

It might come as a surprise to most westerners that Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Chiang Kai-shek and Dr. Sun Yat-sen were all believed to have been members of Chinese secret societies, possibly throughout their life-times. Secret society membership provided them all, at least during the early phases of their careers, the access and opportunity to mobilize resources to their respective party causes that

they may not otherwise have gained. It is written that with the collapse of the Ching Dynasty, and the establishment of the Republic of China, the Chinese secret societies lost their reason for being and became eclipsed as potent political forces, to become mere underground criminal organizations devoted to prostitution, gambling and racketeering. During its early stages of development at least, evidence suggests that the Chinese People's Communist party depended heavily upon secret societies for their recruitment and their underground organization, as did most warlords, as well as, somewhat later, the formation and consolidation as effective military organizations of both the early Kuomintang and the first Red Army.

Contemporary mainland China fears more than anything else the unbridled spirits of its own teeming masses. A totalitarian and single-party system, it relies upon the extraordinary but quite ordinary Chinese characteristic of cooperative solidarity to achieve conformity and a sense of normality to its party platform in the world. It has adapted to its own means the Confucian worldview and ethos, rooted in the model of kinship relations and ancestor veneration. Nevertheless, in the everyday world of the Chinese, contradictions arise on a daily basis that tend to disrupt and rend the uniform and seemingly complete Chinese communist worldview. I have had many a midnight conversation with angry young Chinese men whose family home had been violated by authorities in search and seizure over religious texts (Falung Gong or Christian literature), or the bulk of whose family's peasant production had been regularly confiscated by higher authorities.

The restless spirit of the masses is made evident during Chinese New Year, when all families return home and for weeks at a time virtually the whole of China closes down for holiday season. It is particularly expressed, I believe, in the Chinese love and obsession with fireworks and firecrackers, which can be heard on a continuous basis, day and night, in increasing frequency throughout Chinese New Year holidays. I do not believe there is any containing the Chinese, of all ages, during this season, with fireworks exploding willy-nilly anywhere and at almost any time, and otherwise poor families appear to spend almost an entire year's savings in a few iterations of these firework displays that are symbolically intended to drive away errant spirits and



recalcitrant ghosts in order to usher in good fortune in welcome for the new year. And of course, it has probably dawned on the proper paramilitary authorities within the Chinese government that it would be a short stretch of the imagination from obtaining and shooting off fireworks to making and planting real bombs that might do significant damage to an office, a car or a railway, in the modern day "rectification of names" between heaven and earth.

Spirit animism, shamanism, spirit possession and trance, witchcraft and sorcery, mysticism and asceticism remain grassroots traditions found throughout Greater Asia, and these complexes of belief, ritual and performance have gone hand-in-hand with official state religion and religious ideology and serve to both validate and provide anti-structural reinforcement for the normative and normalizing function of these major state religions. Many of these practices form the basis of cult and millennial movements that are often glove-in-hand with underground secret society organization, which organizations in traditional kin-based society can be seen as providing lateral reinforcement, or complementary filiation to the horizontal cleavages of such societies or where the principle of kinship and lineage structure are not strongly expressed.

It is interesting that these organizations in turn have become transformed as modern global corporations, and have become some of the main purveyors in the world of trans-national contraband (human

trafficking, drug smuggling, black marketing operations, copyright and patent/trade secret theft and espionage, and weapons bartering.) While no longer having a direct political goal expressed through organized rebellion or indirectly through support of such political movements, Chinese secret societies have connected to other underground organizations in the world and continue to operate covertly within many economic, political and social arenas upon local, regional and international levels, to advance their interests, and to have a mostly adverse influence upon the developmental outcomes of these social institutions in various nation states.

One consequence of globalization and development of post-industrial state societies is that urban areas, particularly, whether we are in mainland China, Japan, or in the Middle East, feature a complex form of social stratification tending toward the nuclearization of the family and the atomization of the individual (with attendant alienation and anomie.) This complex stratification might be called “holothetic” in the sense that one finds information about the whole contained in the specialized parts or pieces. There is a sense that traditional labels and distinctions (classes, castes, ethnocultural groupings, or religious differences) no longer adequately convey sufficient information about the composite and rather heterogeneous nature of most social organizations and ethnocultural groupings. We find within modern nations broad polythetic classes or labels representing ranges of different people across entire spectrums of difference based upon key discriminators of age, education, ethnicity, gender identity, etc., and we find different classes overlapping and to some unknown degree, isomorphic with one another, albeit in indirect and complex ways.

If we seek profiles of individuals, who for instance may be predisposed to join terrorist organizations or who may be inclined to become true believers in a radical cult movement, we may find a suite of similar traits, but distributed across a relatively wide spectrum of people coming from a range of different backgrounds. In other words, we might find a surprising number of different people coming from wholly different cross sections of society, yet drawn to the same kind of membership in a party or club or other organization, at least in part measure due to a similar set of shared but seemingly disparate and otherwise unrelated discriminators.

This is no less the case in contemporary social settings in Greater Asia, except that there are probably intermediate levels of kin-based or kin-extended social organizations and corporate institutional settings that we would have to contend with and take into our account. Also, the motivational factors and predisposing discriminators may be fundamentally different in profile than if drawn from a western social framework. Religion and religious motivation, shading into ideological (political party) frameworks, can be expected to play a greater role with fewer idiosyncratic (individualistic) factors compared to similar kinds of profiles from western frameworks.

### **Global Prospects for a Greater Asia**

It is doubtful that there will be a radical shift of patterns of social stratification and organization, or of collective consciousness or cultural traditions or worldviews in Greater Asia at any time in the near future. No amount of inundation of western media or the Internet will change the cultural life-ways of these regions overnight. We should expect the challenge of familial amoralism in Greater Asia, and its influence in widespread corruption within and between nation states, to remain core problems for a very long time.

Greater Asia may be said to comprise almost one half of the human population of planet earth. The nation states of Greater Asia constitute a mosaic of continental puzzle-pieces across the southern reaches of the Asian continent, and extend thence eastward and southward to many far flung island nations. Each of these nation-states has a unique culture, a unique history and society, and a unique structural “situation” in the world that must be understood primarily in its own terms. There in fact seems very little in common between, on one hand, Arabian and Central Asian societies and East or Southeast or South Asian societies. Hindu civilization and politics of the Asian subcontinent is nothing like Japanese civilization and politics or Korean civilization and politics. And yet, a valid claim can be made that in almost all cases, with but few noteworthy exceptions, all of these nation states, as well as most ethno-linguistic or ethnocultural groupings within these states, share similar social features in terms at least of the relationship of their respective religions to the kin-based organization of their traditional societies, and the social-structural patterns of interference that these relational complexes have

entailed for the modern development of these nation states.

With modernization and economic development that comes from increased participation in the global economy, we see several trends in the gradual but dramatic shift in the societies involved. Increase in economic security leads to less reliance upon political or military solutions, with values of economic achievement increasing with the realization of increasing economic opportunities, along with the rise of rational risk-taking behaviors associated with this realization. These patterns in turn lead to a sense of greater political stability (no need for strong-arm police protection from others who would steal one's wealth or take one's life in the night) and in turn begetting increasing democratization of the society in political pluralism, increased involvement in the democratic process and increasing stability of succession by democratic process. Paradoxically, with this enhanced and widespread economic security and opportunity we find associated as well lower birth rates and lower rates of infant mortality, longer term rates of education, and higher rates of literacy, etc.

Associated with these kinds of trends in development, we find the rise in Asia of family based or kin-based or kin-modeled business corporations that achieve international standing (for instance, South Korean *Chaebols*, historical progression of Japanese *Zaibatsu*, *Keiretzu*, and *Sogo shosha*, Chinese Big Business Families, Hongs and Kong Si's.) We find similar descent group "clannishness" of many sectors of the Indian economy, including Bollywood, the government, medicine, the military and business. In the rise, development and articulation of these corporate business organizations, we see a close association and involvement in politics and a large degree of nepotism.

It is perhaps a misunderstanding to apply in unmodified form across the board David McClelland's notion of achievement motivation developed in western societies, focused upon the aggressive individualism of the independent ego, to societies of Greater Asia in which the ego is part of a larger kin-based corporate entity.<sup>4</sup> This takes us back to the distinction of Max Weber between the capitalism of western societies founded upon the Protestant Ethic and the collectivism of eastern societies founded upon Confucianism.<sup>5,6</sup>

## Greening the Military with Semi-Soft Value Strategies

We may distinguish between general strategies of force, of power and value. Strategies of force are what are used in wartime, and involve conventional and traditional military deployments to achieve a desirable outcome through the threat or use of weapons. Power strategy is a strategy of control and political change that is normally achieved in peacetime, but which may involve at times the resort to war. Value strategy can be generally thought of as a socio-economic strategy that is focused upon the problem and challenges of human development, which, if successfully met, at least in theory would obviate the need for more violent measures.

Mainland China has been in the last decade pursuing globally a strategy called "soft power" (in implicit contrast to the "hard power" strategies of the Western states, involving the concept of "walking softly and carrying a big stick.") Not to equivocate over terms or their propaganda potential, what is critical to apprehend is that mainland China has become increasingly involved in global politics, often intimately, all around the globe, and has been very aggressive in pursuing its strategic interests, part of which involves critical resource acquisition (including critical knowledge as a resource.) While the China experts debate the capacity for China to extend itself beyond its own borders, or even its own current state or capacity for developmental growth, what is clear is that China has a powerhouse global economy and has become a major player on the International chess board with stakes in many different nation-states around the world.

Mainland China is certainly not the only nation of Greater Asia that we need to be paying attention to—all the nations of Asia, and even the tiny states of the Pacific, need to be attended to, each in their own unique situation and manner. A flash-point can come in almost any remote area, and can cascade to catastrophic consequences if unchecked and unmonitored.

It has become time to turn swords into ploughshares and bullets into computers and cell phones. Modern warfare is, by virtue of its lethality, its expense, and its destructiveness, obsolete in human systems. This is especially the case when it comes to the development, deployment and destructiveness of weapons of mass destruction.

Increasing socio-political security of human systems leading away from patterns of authoritarianism and towards increased democratization can only be gained through enhanced socio-economic stability that is defined primarily and substantively in the socio-cultural terms of the society and people in question. The fastest and best road to the solution of the chronic human problems of poverty and overpopulation is through effective and appropriate development programs that are based upon the following factors:

- ◆ The availability of a cheap and abundant (virtually unlimited) supply of functional energy.
- ◆ Food-production that makes available and abundant enough food to feed a population at adequate levels of healthy nutrition.
- ◆ Universal education that carries on from early childhood into adulthood, and that crosses social boundaries of age, gender, class, or ethnic or religious identity.
- ◆ Sufficient mixed economies that entail widespread employment and productive labor for a population.

What is most critical about any such development program is that it is primarily the responsibility of the people of the host nation to undertake in their own way, with the help of outsiders who may underwrite and provide critical direction at least to part of the undertaking. To merely dump aid upon a foreign people without a developmental program or plan of action in place, or to superimpose alien and culturally superficial frames of reference, is to invite an incurable form of coca-cola cargo culture, of learned dependency, and a widespread collective syndrome of secondary gain of the internally colonized other, that precludes any hope or possibility of initiative or entrepreneurial motivation or adaptive innovation on the part of the host people.

Any strategy adopted as a matter of foreign policy, to combat the ills of terrorism and insurgency, would best focus on long-term development programs that would be viable in a decade or in several decades and that takes into close account the socio-cultural dynamics of the host (“target”) people. The role of any military force in such a context would be to support, protect and promote such development programs and strategies, and, if greened enough, possibly initiate and undertake such development. This entails a fundamental strategic-to-tactical shift in mission

thinking and military worldview. It would also entail, I believe, a revolutionary paradigmatic shift in Training and Doctrine, as well as in fundamental military organization. Each dollar spent in such a manner, would, in the long run, entail many development dollars of economic security and political stability in return, and a priceless peace bought through enhanced international and global security. The global alternatives may well soon prove to be unaffordable for all humankind, military and civilian alike. ✨

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# Muslim Populations in East Asia

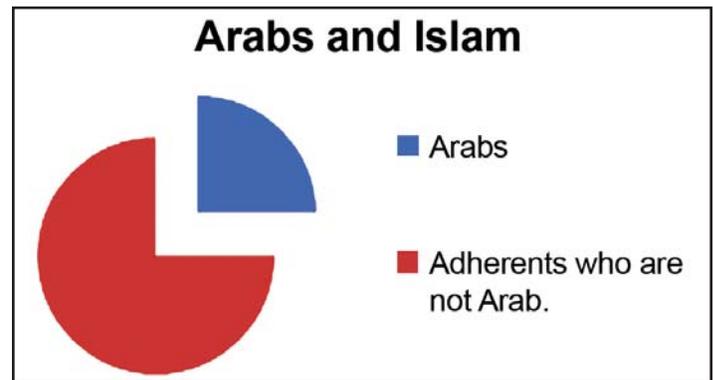
by Marion Margraf

## Introduction

Cross-cultural competence—acquiring critical, useful understanding of an alien culture—encompasses practice in various kinds of involvement with people in the target environment, language proficiency, and regional knowledge. Well informed is well armed in cross-culture contact. Even the most junior soldier today understands that enhanced culture knowledge and capabilities increases the effectiveness of forces supporting readiness in the contemporary operating environment, and knowledge of the status of Muslim communities worldwide will be an ongoing priority regardless of the current threat level for a particular country.

We cannot afford to neglect areas that are not experiencing attention-getting conflict at the moment, or those not demanding immediate engagement. Military readiness in cultural competence is the insurance that enhances favorable outcomes and goes hand-in-hand with battle preparedness. A working knowledge of subcultures in a potential area of operation is essential to the planning and execution of any mission.

Islam as a basis for action figures prominently in our current areas of military engagement. It is the religion rightly associated with Arab peoples, although not all Arabs are Muslim adherents. At least 5 percent of Arabs are Jews or Christians, and while the remaining 95 percent of Arabs are Muslim, this population of approximately 300 million people in 25 countries constitutes only 25 percent of the total number of Muslims in the world.



News media reporting has especially centered on the way that the Muslim faith is professed in Iraq and on the Arabian Peninsula. Most of us are familiar with reports on the conflict between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq, and aware that Islam in Saudi Arabia, where the Prophet was born and died, is very conservative. We have read about Somali youth returning to Somalia from the U.S., and we follow al-Qaeda stories wherever they lead us, from Yemen to the Khyber *Pakhtunkhwa* in Pakistan. We keep up with the regulation of Muslim female garb in various countries, even to include France, or to reactions to the Danish cartoon representation of the prophet Mohammed.

We search for relevant connections between the role of Islam and events in our own country from the motivations of the detainees at Guantanamo to the Fort Hood shooter and the Christmas bomber. We debate the advisability of a mosque near Ground Zero in New York City, trying not to give the appearance of linking religion with terrorist culpability, but

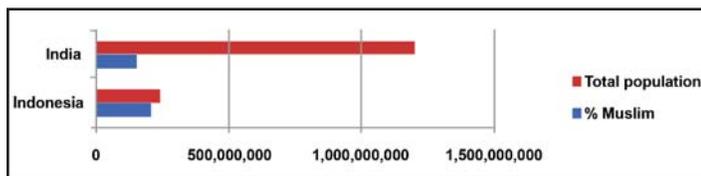
also trying to offer all religions the same status and protections that our Constitution decrees.

The status of Islam in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and even in India, with its fairly recent high profile bombings in 2006 and 2008 in Mumbai, has received robust news coverage. Less well known among the general public is the history and present status of groups that profess Islam farther east. Muslim communities stretch north and east through Central Asia from Turkmenistan to Kyrgyzstan, following the Old Silk Road. News reports from these areas are few, not because they are unimportant to the global audience, but because more vivid news overshadows them. And even less well known except to specialists is the history and current status of Muslim communities east and southeast of the Bay of Bengal—in the Far East and Southeast Asia. These societies display a wide disparity not only in strength of numbers but also in the cultural and political positions they occupy in their home countries, and each has its own history.

In the centuries following the death of Mohammad in 632 CE, Islam spread north and east out of the Arabian Peninsula by conquest into empires that had long competed for control of the lucrative trade routes between the Mediterranean and Pacific. This trade has always been a key impetus to the spread of Islam. Although these empires eventually succumbed to conquest, Islam penetrated not just the Middle East, but also west to Africa and Spain, and east to India and island nations in the Pacific. In fact, “[a]s merchants and teachers, Muslims were even more persuasive than they were as soldiers”—especially in the East.<sup>1</sup>

## Demographics

Indonesia and India are home to the greatest concentrations of adherents. Indonesia has a population of more than 240 million people, of whom 85 percent (204 million) profess Islam. Of India’s nearly 1.2 billion people, 150 million are Muslim.



The majority of remaining Muslims in the world lives in the Near East, Central Asia, and in the Far East. All countries in the Far East have Muslim

populations, even if only transnational groups at present, but the historical and contemporary populations represent unique profiles. In terms of numbers, Islam (mostly Sunni) is the most widely practiced religion in Southeast and Maritime Asia, although adherents account for majorities in only three countries—Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. It is the official religion of Malaysia and Brunei.

The strength of Muslim communities in Far Eastern Asia owes much to topography. In Burma, traders from India populated the western coast of present-day Myanmar, but because the Irrawaddy Valley runs along a north-south axis, as do mountain chains, further eastern settlement was hindered. However, opportunities for trade lured Muslim seamen and mullahs farther south, leading to the establishment of Muslim communities in southern Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The loop of seafaring trade routes wended through the islands of the Pacific, moving up through the Philippines, and, with waning effect, to Taiwan.

## Mainland Muslim Communities

One should keep in mind that many Asian Muslim populations are, in fact, ethnically mixed. Households denoted as Muslim might represent legacy faith, but it might also be the case that one spouse adopted Islam upon marriage, or both might be converts to the faith. Muslim populations in Southeast Asia are generally diverse and multicultural due to steady migration of peoples along the coasts and intermarriage. Once in a country, there is also a tendency for Muslims to settle in urban areas, even inland cities, because of trade opportunities. This is reinforced by Islamic dietary restrictions which require sanctioned ways to butcher meat, prohibit the consumption of pork, and to allow market preparation of other *halal* (permitted) foods. As numbers grow, a sense of community develops naturally, which leads to construction of mosques and schools, and creation of formal ties to government.

## Islam in Burma

Muslim adherents in Myanmar, which struggles with ethnic tensions, represent only 4 percent of the country’s population, where the overwhelming majority religion is Theravada Buddhism mixed with persistent elements of animism (traces of which persist in the Muslim community, too). They are concentrated in Northern Arakan State along the

western coast of the Bay of Bengal in five neighboring townships close to the border with Bangladesh. Ethnically, this community is primarily *Rohingya*, and their language is similar to the *Chittagonian* spoken across the border in Bangladesh.

Like all minorities in Myanmar who struggle with ethnic tensions, the Rohingya do not enjoy full citizenship. Not only do they suffer human rights violations within their own country, they suffer as well as refugees in Bangladesh and Thailand, countries to which they have fled. At least a half-million has left Myanmar in the last thirty years; the first wave occurred in 1978 during the persecution experienced at the hands of the Myanmar Army during the *Nagamin* (Dragon King) Operation. At that time, most people fled to Bangladesh, but there are approximately 110,000 in refugee camps along the border with Thailand, too. Indonesian authorities have reported on several occasions in the past two years rescuing Rohingya at sea, refugees evidently towed out to sea and abandoned by the Thai military.

### **Muslims in Thailand**

Of Thailand's nearly 66 million people, about 4 million are counted as Muslim, which is almost 6 percent of the population, and it appears that the number is growing due to high fertility rates. This population is made up of native Thai people who speak Thai in the home, but also includes other languages and many other ethnicities, a result of migrations from the north, west, and south. In the mountainous north and in certain urban areas there are enclaves of Muslims of Chinese origin. Ethnically mixed Chinese-Burmese and Pakistani-Burmese are dispersed throughout the northern provinces. As noted above, Burmese Rohingya refugees cluster in camps in the south.

We commonly think of the southernmost border provinces as the home of most of Thailand's Muslims, but in fact, populations exist throughout the country, with large concentrations in Bangkok. People in the south, where in the 1800s the Malay Pattani kingdom was established, are predominantly of Malay heritage, speaking a dialect of Malay. In all of Thailand's Muslim groups, and in the south particularly, Islam exhibits syncretic elements from pre-Islamic religious practices, indigenous cultures, and Buddhism. Provincial councils for Muslim affairs and a five-member National Council for Muslims

provide a formal connection to the government of Thailand. A number of banks, schools, and food companies cater to the Muslim population.

Violence in the last decade from an ethnic separatist insurgency in the south has threatened national security. The causes of discontent range from historical ethnic resentments between Malay and Thai peoples, charges of human rights abuses perpetrated by local police, and accusations of culturally insensitive practices in matters of language or business practices vis-à-vis Muslims. The government and the insurgents accuse each other of corruption and criminal activity, but specific demands on the part of the latter have not been forthcoming. It is true that levels of educational and economic attainment in the south are lower than the rest of the country. The precise sources of this conflict are not clear, but at least when the guerrilla activity started, the impetus seemed to spring from local animosities. Connections to foreign Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda or the Indonesia-based *Jemaah Islamiyah* were not identified, although it is unlikely that Islamic separatist organizations have not infiltrated the Thai movement. Suspicion that drug money funds the insurgency is also well-founded.

### **Muslims in Laos and Vietnam**

The number of Muslims in neighboring Laos, where the majority religion is Buddhism, is fewer than 2,000, less than one percent of the country's total population. Residence is primarily in the capital, Vientiane. Most are merchants, or managers of meat shops, a natural choice, so that they can control their dietary obligations.

Population figures are similarly low in Vietnam. About two-thirds of the 157,000 Muslims are Cham (of Malay origin) who emigrated from Cambodia in the 1800s and settled in the Mekong Delta area. The remaining Muslims identify themselves as being of mixed ethnic background. In 1976, after the fall of Saigon and the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, many Muslims migrated to Malaysia, others to Yemen. Because there are no religious schools for Muslims in Vietnam, and because command of Arabic is weak or absent, Islam here retains or has taken on practices from other religions. In general, educational attainment is low. The government of Saudi Arabia contributed to the building of Vietnam's largest mosque, in *Xuan Loc*, in 2006. (Saudi support of mosques is widespread in the East.)

## Cambodian Khmer

The other small country in mainland Southeast Asia is Cambodia, where close to 250,000 Muslims live among 15 million people. As mentioned in relation to Vietnam, Cambodia is home to the Cham, or Khmer Islam. The religious practices of these traditional Muslims are overwhelmingly syncretic, being heavily influenced by indigenous beliefs in the supernatural and the powers of magic.

It is claimed that although they observe Muslim festivals, they do not follow other customary practices, such as praying five times a day nor showing much interest in making the Hajj to Mecca. Muslims in Cambodia who have intermarried with Malays, on the other hand, are conservative adherents. Friction erupted between the two groups in the second half of the 1900s. Muslims in Cambodia suffered losses during the Pol Pot persecutions of the 1970s.

## Islam in Mainland China

In the upper left quadrant of the flag of China a large yellow star appears, bracketed on the right by four smaller yellow stars. The large star represents the Han majority ethnicity, and the other stars stand for the Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and Hui. The Hui are one of ten distinct Muslim groups that China officially recognizes. The Muslim population of the People's Republic of China numbers 21.5 million in a country of 1.4 billion, 1.6 percent of the total. However, figures from Chinese census data, which conflates ethnic identity with religious practice and does not take into account converts to Islam, indicate that the population is probably closer to 50 million. There are currently over 30,000 mosques in the country, the majority of them (over 23,000) in the province of Xinjiang alone. There are many halal (*qingzhen*, or *pure, clean*) restaurants throughout the country that do not serve pork.

Islam has been present in China for over 1,300 years. It was first introduced at ports on China's southeast coast. Later, overland trade along the Silk Road contributed to an exponential increase in converts. Historians note that an influx of Persians, Arabs, Central Asians and Mongols by land, and subsequent intermarriage with locals, was instrumental. However, it should be noted that locals also converted for the economic opportunities and access to new alliances the new religion provided.

The majority of Muslims in China today are Sunni and follow the Hanafi (or *gedimu* in Chinese; *qadim* in Arabic) school of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Hanafi jurisprudence is known for its openness and tolerance of other Islamic sects. Hanafi teaching emphasizes belief over practice, and should be differentiated from the fundamentalist Salafi (Wahhabi) School. The Indo-European-speaking Tajiks of Xinjiang province, however, constitute a small minority of Shi'a (of the Ismaili sect). There are approximately 41,000 Tajiks living in Xinjiang, according to the 2000 national census.

Sufism has been practiced in China since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It profoundly influenced the Hui and Uyghur communities, presenting a direct challenge to the established Sunni practice. Still influential in China today, particularly within the Hui communities, Sufism represents an experiential attempt to directly interact with the godhead through practices such as meditation and chanting. The experiential nature of Sufism dovetails neatly with pre-existing Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and mystical Christianity. Sufi tenets elevate belief over practice. Practitioners are even known to forgo adherence to the five pillars of Islam in their attempts to directly interact with Allah. Informal Sufi networks have been credited with providing an avenue for personal Islamic practice within a sometimes harsh, officially atheist, communist state.

Today Islam is professed by the Hui, Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Uzbek, Tajik, and Dongxiang. The majority of Chinese Muslims reside in the northwest, which includes the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Muslims living in Han areas are mostly Hui. They have a very similar life style and appearance as their Han neighbors, and they are the only Muslim group which speaks Chinese as its native tongue. In contrast, the Uyghurs are culturally and linguistically much different from the Han Chinese and speak Turkic languages.

Some Uyghur Muslims state that they have faced various levels of restrictions on their religious practices. Imams are required to attend political training every year to retain their licenses, and religious texts and sermons are censored. In 2005, Uyghur activist Rebiya Kadeer was released from prison after a five-and-a-half year sentence. She created a trading company in northwestern China and has been very

open about her criticism of human rights issues. The Chinese government believes she is involved in the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a Uyghur separatist organization, by rallying and providing financial support to it. Though Kadeer denied this accusation, the meeting between her and President George W. Bush in 2007 was blasted by the Chinese government.

The Chinese government recognizes the ETIM as a terrorist organization. This decision was officially endorsed by the U.S. in 2002. China maintains that Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda have provided training and funding to Xinjiang separatists. Critics maintain that China is using the U.S. led War on Terrorism as a pretext to repress the ethnic and culturally distinct Uyghur. It should be noted that the areas where the Uyghur live are not only rich in natural resources but also border several unstable Central Asian nations (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.) Recent attempts on the part of the government to relocate Han peoples to the northwest have escalated ethnic tensions.

The Chinese Communist Party maintains oversight of the nation's Muslims through official arms of the party, the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Islamic Association of China. The Religious Affairs Bureau appoints every imam in the country, decides who leads Friday prayers, and has set a quota of 2,000 annual hajjis (those who make the annual pilgrimage to Mecca). The number of annual hajjis is rising (recent estimates range from 7,000 in 2004 to over 10,000 in 2007), as Chinese Muslims are able to maintain visas to Saudi Arabia via neighboring countries such as Thailand and Pakistan.

Religious orthodoxy is on the upswing within Chinese Muslim communities. The Chinese government actively supports relations between certain communities (particularly the Hui) and the Middle East. This links into China's overall energy policy, which hinges on friendly relations with oil-rich Middle Eastern and African Islamic nations. A correlate of this is an increase in formal religious education among Chinese Muslims. Between 1,000 and 1,500 Chinese Muslims are currently studying at Islamic universities abroad. Thousands of Hui have pursued higher education in Arab countries and have returned with a stricter interpretation of Islam. More Hui are growing beards, and more women are

choosing to wear the hijab (veil) as markers of an increasingly pan-Islamic identity. Within the Uyghur community, Islam is promoted as an identity marker that distinguishes them from the majority Han. As tensions increase between the two communities, it should be expected that a stricter Islamic identity will be promoted.

Islam in China, like elsewhere in the Muslim world, has undergone periodic episodes of reform, in which new practices have supplanted old ones, usually in an attempt to introduce a "purer" strain of religion. The Chinese government has repeatedly stepped in to arbitrate, and as the official sponsor of all religions, has consistently acted to determine normative practice. However, as economic and political ties to the Arabic Islamic world intensify, Muslim communities are feeling themselves empowered, and the central government's ability to regulate religious practice is weakening. The contemporary era of globalization has produced a new generation of transnationals studying and working abroad. Record numbers of pilgrims are making the hajj, and scores of Chinese Muslims connect to the global *ummah* (faithful) via the internet and satellite media, thus ensuring that China's Muslim populations will be of continuing critical interest outside China.

### **Islam on Taiwan**

The present-day population of Muslims in Taiwan is extremely small in the island nation of 23 million. First introduced at maritime ports on China's southeast coast 1,300 years ago, Islam in Taiwan can be traced back to the 1600s. This is when Muslim adherents from the southern Chinese coastal province of Fujian joined the rebel *Koxinga* against the Manchu-ruled Qing Dynasty, and his military campaign to drive the Dutch from Taiwan. Despite the fact that Islam was not well developed on the island at that time, some historical traces of Islamic activities can be found in *Lugang* and *Tamsui*, where most of the descendants of these settlers resided. Interestingly, many of these people still observe some Islamic doctrines such as the prohibition of eating pork, even though they do not regard themselves as Muslims.

Over the years, some descendants of these early Muslim settlers converted to other religions, while others maintained contact with Muslim communities on mainland China, up to the beginning of Japanese colonial rule. The colonial government's

strict control over religious activities resulted in the severing of ties between Muslims across the Taiwan Strait and was a factor in shrinking the island's Muslim population.

Another major influx of Muslim followers into Taiwan came during the Chinese Civil War in 1949 when 20,000 Muslims fled China with the Nationalist government to Taiwan. Even with differences in custom, contact between these Muslim followers and locals became more frequent through the *ummah* with whom they met regularly in Lishui Street, near the Taipei Grand Mosque.

By the 1960s, there was more frequent contact among locals as well as ongoing efforts to create diplomatic ties with Muslim countries. Recognizing that the meeting site on Lishui Street was inappropriate for holding religious and diplomatic events, the Director General of the Chinese Muslim Association Bai Chongxi and the Minister of Foreign Affairs George Yeh suggested the construction of an Islamic-style mosque, a proposal which was later approved by the Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang, or KMT) government. With funding from the Shah of Iran, the King of Jordan, and the KMT government, the Taiwan Grand Mosque was completed in 1960.

Currently, the Muslim faith has more than 140,000 followers in Taiwan, including 80,000 foreign laborers from Indonesia and as many as 53,000 local Muslims. One point worth noting is that some local Muslims are descendants of KMT soldiers who migrated from Burma and Thailand to Taiwan after the Communists took control of China. In recent years, the Muslim community has expanded with the arrival of thousands of Indonesian workers and foreign students studying in Taiwan.

In Taiwan, both male and female followers can attend religious services on the ground floor of a mosque. This stands in contrast to the custom in other Muslim countries where only male Muslims can join the service, while females are allowed to pray only on the second floor of a mosque.

Taiwan Muslims have formed several organizations to help resolve issues resulting from the needs of religious practice. Primary among them is the Chinese Muslim Association, which has also played a helpful role in the nation's diplomacy with Muslim countries. Besides the Taiwan Grand Mosque, Taiwan's Muslim community is also served by the

Taipei Cultural Mosque as well as by mosques in Taoyuan, Taichung, Tainan, and Kaohsiung.

## **Islam in Mongolia**

Just north of China lies Mongolia. Of the country's population of 672,000, about 33,000 (5 percent) are identified as Muslim. Most Muslims in Mongolia are Turkic speaking peoples, primarily Kazakhs, found predominantly in the westernmost provinces of *Bayan-Ölgii* and *Khovd*. They operate Islamic schools and receive assistance from Kazakhstan and Turkey.

Islam was introduced to Mongolia in the 1200s CE, during the time of the great nomadic empires. After Genghis Khan conquered Afghanistan, he returned to Mongolia through Transoxiana, where he encountered Islamic mosques and was exposed to the teachings of Islam. Traditionally, the majority of the Mongol elite during the post-imperial period favored Islam over other religions. But after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty, most Mongols returned to traditional shamanistic worship, even though trade relations with Muslim peoples remained important. Muslim Kazakhs began entering western Mongolia in the late 1800s, many escaping persecution from the Russian Czarist government. Mongolia's newly formed Bogdo Khan Government of 1911 CE, gave patronage to the Kazakhs and admitted them into western Mongolia. However, many Kazakhs were forced back into China in 1932 after they attacked Mongolia at the behest of the Nationalist Chinese in an attempt to wrest Mongolia from Soviet control.

Muslim populations in Mongolia began increasing in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through high birth rates, and were tolerated by the Communists of the Mongolian People's Republic under the new reform government of 1940. However, the Muslim population decreased somewhat in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union, when many Kazakhs of western Mongolia sought repatriation to Kazakhstan. There are small Muslim populations in the capital *Ulaan Baator*, among other cities.

## **Korean Muslims**

Muslim communities in the Koreas represent less than one percent of each country's total population. The history of Islam in the present Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) up to July, 1950 is the same.

Seafaring Islamic traders made contact with the Kingdom of Silla in the 600s CE. Some of these traders settled in Korea and established Muslim communities. Korea is referenced in Islamic geographical surveys from the 800s. Muslim traders over the ensuing centuries periodically entered, settled and established families in Korea, and at least one Korean clan—the Chang family from *Toksu* village—claims descent from a Muslim. It is known that Uyghur traders who accompanied invading Mongol armies set up vast trade networks, and at least two settled in Korea to found surviving lineages there. The *Deoksu Jang* clan traces its lineage to a Central Asian Muslim sent as an aide to a Mongolian princess. He settled in Korea and married a local woman, from which union over 30,000 Koreans today claim descent. The *Gyeongju Seol* lineage of about 2,000 descendants also traces itself back to a Central Asian settler, presumably Muslim, who was originally a part of the Mongol empire. All traces of Muslim culture or religious influence from these early contacts are thought to have disappeared during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897 CE), although Islamic influence in Korea began again during the 1800s with Korean settlement in Manchuria.

Islam was reintroduced to South Korea as a result of troops of the Turkish Brigade serving with the U.N. command during the Korean War. This resulted in the establishment of the Korea Muslim Society in 1955 and the Korea Muslim Federation in 1967, consisting nowadays of about 45,000 adherents who converted during the Korean War. There is a mosque in Seoul and smaller mosques in other major cities. This population has been recently augmented by approximately 100,000 Muslim foreign workers mainly from Bangladesh and Pakistan, but also from nations in the Middle East and Central Asia (Iran and Iraq) as well as from Malaysia. It is estimated that there may be currently as many as 200,000 Muslims in Korea.

## **Muslim Malaya**

Islam was introduced to the Indonesian Archipelago in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by seafaring Muslim traders from the Indian subcontinent and the coasts of Africa and Arabia. Islam had spread throughout the region of the Nusantera (Indonesian Archipelago) by the 1200-1300s. Sufi missionaries carried the faith to northeastern and eastern Sumatra, and then to Java. Ninety-nine percent of Muslims of the

Nusantera are Sunni, following a relatively relaxed form. Islam in this region is considered moderate, gauged by the traditionally strong roles played by women in positions of authority and power. Islam spread from west to east generally, and followed lines of least resistance among the islands.

Islam in Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore is very similar to the Islam of Indonesia, particularly in the eastern coastal regions of Sumatra where the ethnic Malays have settled. (A different colonial history under the British prevailed in the area of present-day Malaysia, in contrast to the Dutch policies of Sumatra and Kalimantan.) In 1963 the British established the United Federation of Malaya, which originally comprised peninsular Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak, Brunei and Singapore. Brunei did not wish to be a member of the Federation, and later Singapore separated as well, leaving only the state of Malaysia a federal republic. The first several years of the country's history were marred by a communist insurgency, but during the 22-year term of Prime Minister Mahathir bin-Mohamad from 1981 to 2003, Malaysia was successful in diversifying its economy from dependence on exports of raw materials to expansion in manufacturing, services, and tourism.

Peninsular Malaysia borders Myanmar and Thailand, and the insular portion of the country is along the northern coast of Borneo in the Indonesian Archipelago. Its population is nearing 30 million, of whom more than 60 percent are Muslim. As mentioned before, Malaysia's constitution designates Islam its official religion. The other religions are Buddhism (about 20 percent), Christianity (9 percent), and Hinduism (6 percent).

Islam in the Nusantera and Maritime Southeast Asia is complex and multifaceted. Traditionally, it has been characterized by syncretism with local spirit-animism and Hindu-Buddhist religions traditions, and has followed a relaxed practice. In local village life in Java, Sumatra and Malaya, the law and customs of the village, or *adat*, tended to hold equal or greater importance to the law of the Koran. In Malaysia and the northeastern coasts of Sumatra, daily life for the Malays was centered on rural or fishing villages under the authority of a local leader. A number of villages were associated with a mosque whose imam held authority.

With Malaysian nationalism came a significant shift in Islam, from a more relaxed and mixed form,

with relatively high rates of intermarriage between Muslim and non-Muslim populations particularly in the countryside, toward an increasingly fundamentalist interpretation in response to the stresses of modernization in Malaysia.

Deep interethnic cleavages between the Muslim majority and the non-Muslim minorities, and proselytizing by Saudi-backed mullahs at Arab-financed mosques contributed as well. This has led to a tendency among Muslim populations of Malaysia to an increasingly strict call for the institution of Sharia Law and a Sharia court system as the national political authority. Religion has become a primary marker of ethnic identity and solidarity for the Malays vis-à-vis the non-Muslim minorities (Chinese and Indians) who compete economically and politically with the Malays.

At the time of independence, nationalism in Malaysia was dominated by the Muslim Malay majority. They controlled all facets of the government—education, the military, the paramilitary, police organization, and health systems. Then as now, two significant minority groups, the Chinese and the Indians, comprised almost 40 percent of the total population. They represented a threat to Malay dominance, particularly in most economic sectors, because these minorities had controlled most of the economy of the area, though they have become increasingly disenfranchised from political participation. The ethnic divisions between the three groups—the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians—became most pronounced by religious-based differences, and for the Malays, their pro-Malay national identity (Malaysia for the Malays, not for Malaysians!) Islamic identity in the public arena became associated with Malay ethno-national identity. Markers of ethnic identity (the head-dress for women, in particular) became the basis for defining ethnic solidarity and political-ethnic unity vis-à-vis the Chinese and Indians, who were, and by and large who remain, more open and more relaxed about their religious practices.

From the late 1960s until now, Islam in Malaysia has grown increasingly fundamentalist and modernist in orientation, with a strong trend toward traditionalism and Santri Islam. There has been greater ethnic separation, particularly as defined along religious lines. To replace the current dual legal system for Malays and non-Malays with Sharia law would

cause an eruption of ethnic violence throughout the country.

### **Abangan and Adat in Indonesia**

The history or culture of Indonesia cannot be adequately grasped without an understanding of the roles that religion has played in the development of modern Indonesian identity. Religion has long served as the basis for social organization of many groups in Indonesia, and has critically influenced the interactions between the different groups and their identities.

The central challenge of modern Indonesia has been to integrate and unify a religiously and culturally diverse nation, permitting religious freedom, but separating religion from politics. This is a challenge in a majority Muslim nation where it is inherent to the orthodox Islam worldview that religion is an integral part of law.

Indonesia is a secular state that officially recognizes five major religions: Islam, Christianity (in the forms of Catholicism and Dutch Reformed Calvinism), Confucianism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Other religious groups must register with the Ministry of Culture as non-religious social organizations. No person, except some exempt hill tribes, the Batak and other *orang asli* (“people without religion”) are permitted to be outside of a religion. Interdenominational intermarriage requires one or the other spouse convert to the same religion, unless the marriage vows are taken outside of Indonesia.

Religion has always been a vital and constructive part of the traditional Indonesian ethnocultural framework. The early state-civilizations that arose in the Indonesian archipelago gained their symbolic legitimacy by means of the religious sanctioning of a state priesthood. Prior to this, a complex spirit-animism formed the symbolic basis of traditional ethnocultural identities throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

This traditional spirit complex underlies all of Indonesian ethnocultural identity, and forms a foundation for the development of religious life throughout the country, regardless of the other religious identities that may overlay and interact with this complex, resulting in the syncretization of different religious symbologies and traditions throughout the region.

As a result, religious orientation throughout Indonesia, regardless of ethnic differences in language and custom, and degree of Islamic or Western influence, shares a similar profile that can be characterized as “synthetic” and “syncretistic” in orientation and function, borrowing and integrating beliefs and practices from different religious frameworks and traditions and mixing these together in everyday life with multiple levels of understanding and practice. Another way of looking at this is to see that the boundaries between religious groups are traditionally fuzzy and overlap considerably. Religions may interact in complex and unexpected ways in everyday life, organized as it is around calendrical rites.

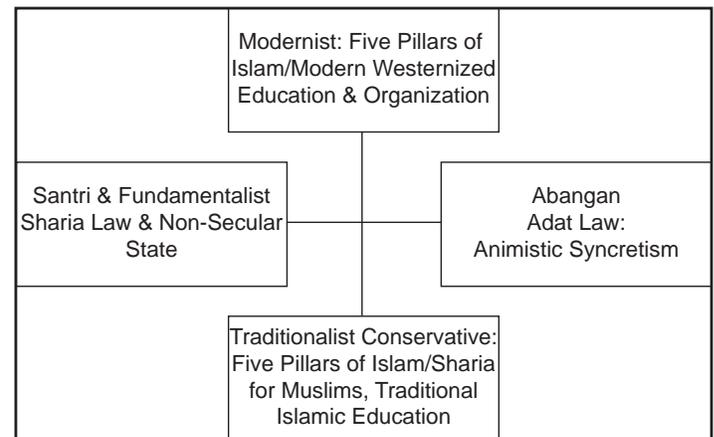
Though Indonesia is expressly a secular state constitutionally and officially, the predominant religion is, almost without exception in the many islands that constitute the Indonesian archipelago, Islam. More than 85 percent of Indonesians, or about 204 million people—more than in all other Muslim nations combined—profess Islam, mostly a relatively moderate form of Sunni Islam. Only a small minority practices Shi’a Islam, (about 1 million or 1 percent of the Islamic population of Indonesia).

Muslims represent the majority populations on the islands of Java, Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, coastal Kalimantan and North Maluku. They represent the minority populations in Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, parts of North Sumatra, inland Kalimantan and North Sulawesi, as well as on minor islands and Bali.<sup>1</sup>

Recent trends in Indonesia, under the influence of Arab-funded conservative charities, have been toward a more orthodox and conservative interpretation of Islamic doctrine. A 2006 poll showed that 58 percent of people surveyed believed that adulterers should be stoned compared to 39 percent in 2001. Fundamentalist orientations have been politically active since the founding of modern Indonesia as an independent republic, and have periodically advocated, sometimes quite strongly, for the founding of a non-secular Sharia based state. This advocacy was outlawed under President Suharto’s New Order, but has re-emerged with modernization and democratization trends, especially in the last decade.

Islam is expressed in Indonesia along two axes: modernist versus traditionalist, and fundamental-

ist versus customary village practices. Generally, modernists advocate an orthodox view of Islam, observing the Five Pillars of Islam and uphold the authority of the local imam. They support modern secular education for their children, while conservatives tend to advocate a traditional Muslim education. Fundamentalists believe in a non-secular state based upon Sharia law, while those who are more closely tied to village practices often do not even practice all of the Five Pillars of Islam, and readily integrate local animistic spirit beliefs, including magic, witchcraft, and spirit-possession, into their daily lives. In understanding these dimensions, it must be realized that there is much overlap between the categories. It is not surprising to find Muslim Indonesians in some public aspects quite conservative and fundamentalist, and in other, more private aspects, often quite modern or village-centered in orientation.



**Multiple Dimensions of Islam in Indonesia**

Aceh, long the stronghold of orthodox Islam in Indonesia, remains a special state in which Sharia law is specifically authorized by the semi-autonomous state. Hence Aceh is the only province in Indonesia with Sharia courts, even if Acehnese clerics have taken a rather moderate approach in the application of Sharia punishments.

Islam in Indonesia is considered moderate in part because women are generally accorded a greater public role, both domestically and outside the home, compared to most other Muslim nations. It has not been unusual to have Indonesian women assume public leadership roles, as well as to manage household affairs. In addition, otherwise conservative or fundamentalist Indonesian groups reckon kinship and residency pattern through the female, rather than the male, line.

The national government holds an exclusive monopoly on the organization of pilgrimages to Mecca, under the Department of Religious Affairs, setting a quota on the number of pilgrims at any one time.

The first Islamic state in the Indonesian archipelago was the Kingdom of *Pasai*, founded in about 1267 CE. From Pasai in Sumatra, Islam spread by intermarriage of a princess to the Sultan of Malacca, who quickly came to control the Straits of Malacca, and hence monopolized the spice and pepper trade. Islam became established in the Straits by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as well as along the coastal regions of the Malay Peninsula. The Hindu Mahajapit empire of central and eastern Java was in decline by the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, and was eventually conquered by the Sultanate of Demak in 1520. At this point Islam began to spread throughout Java, influenced by the Nine Saints (Wali Songo: *Wali* meaning “Trusted Ones” or “Guardians” or “Friends of God” and *Songo*, number nine in Javanese). Most of these men were of royal families, called “*raden*” or “*sunan*” (honored). The original Muslim mystics came to Java from India via present day Aceh, and date to 1419 AD. Many of the Wali Songo had Chinese ancestry, and though credited with the founding of Islam in Java, Chinese traders and Islam were long present before their arrival. People make local pilgrimages to their grave sites today.

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic principalities came to replace Hindu and Buddhist states and populations in most of Java and Sumatra, largely through policies of amalgamation and assimilation involving conversion with marriage. Only the island state of Bali and neighboring areas remained as traditionally Hinduized kingdoms in the Indonesian Archipelago. Outlying or Ulu Islands would remain largely animistic in tribal religious orientation until conversion to either Islam or Christianity by the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Historical evidence of the founding and spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago is sketchy and fragmentary. The manner and dominant mode of conversion remains an issue debated by scholars of the subject. In Indonesia, even today, the process of Islamization is gradual and continuous within each population and region. Conversion of a potentate or leader does not necessarily entail conversion of the entire community. In general, Islam spread from Western and Northern Indonesia, and worked its

way through complicated trade, political and social networks eastward, eventually coming into competition with Christianity, which had actually been established under the Dutch and the Portuguese, and tended to work from eastern Indonesia westward.

Dutch colonization of Indonesia brought a form of protestant Christianity (Dutch Reformed Church); this coming into competition and frequent conflict with Islamic communities. In response, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic reform movements began that played a key role in the formation of modern national Indonesian identity.

Transmigration programs, begun with the Dutch and continued by the Indonesian Republic until the late 1990s, served both to decrease the relatively high population densities in heavily Muslim areas, and to increase the number of Muslims in traditionally non-Muslim areas of Indonesia. This often politically displaced the local communities by making them into voting minorities. This sense of cultural, political, religious and to some extent economic displacement, has served to fuel inter-ethnic conflict between transmigrant and indigenous communities, especially in Maluku, Central Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Papua, with the religious cleavage being the most salient dimension of the conflict.

In general, the moderate and diverse versions of Islam found throughout Indonesia reflect the complex history of the founding, spread and development of Islam in Indonesia. Early introductions of Islam to Java, the central region of power in the Nusantara, probably took the form of Islamic mystics of the Sufi tradition, gaining ready acceptance and local integration with Adat and local ethno-culture. While both elites and common people adopted Islam uniformly along the coastal regions of Sumatra, largely in contradistinction to the Hinduized kingdoms, Islam in the interior of Java was adopted gradually first by the elite, and largely as a formal context for the incorporation of Javanese spirit culture. These processes resulted in the kind of dimensional tensions that occur in Islam in modern Indonesia, yet still expressed in Javanese society as the contrast between Santri and Abangan Islam. The Santri are not just people devoted exclusively to Islamic doctrine, but literally Muslims who removed themselves from a secular world to focus exclusively upon devotional activities in Islamic schools called *pesantren*, or “*place of the santri*.”

*Muhammadiyah* is the main “modernist” social organization, with a constituency of about 30 million Indonesians. It has branch offices throughout Indonesia, and runs mosques, prayer houses, clinics, orphanages, poorhouses, schools, libraries and universities. They have recently politicized, endorsing a member candidate for the national presidential elections.

*Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) is the largest “traditionalist” organization, with about 40 million followers, as well as being Indonesia’s largest organization and possibly the world’s largest Islamic organization. It conducts activities similar to those of *Muhammadiyah*, as well as running a majority of Indonesia’s boarding schools. It has offices throughout Indonesia, but is most strongly represented in rural Java. Many of its followers practice a form of Islam infused with traditional Javanese culture, rejecting a liberal or dogmatic interpretation of Islamic doctrine. The organization strongly advocates religious moderation and communal harmony, and shows great deference to the teachings of senior NU religious leaders, or *ulama*.

There are many other Islamic organizations that run the gamut in representing the diversity of Islamic views and orientations found throughout Indonesia. The *Islam Liberal Network* (JIL) promotes a pluralistic and liberal interpretation of Islamic doctrine. At the other end of the spectrum are fundamentalist groups like *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) and *Indonesian Mujahedeen Council* (MMI) advocating a pan-Islamic caliphate or the implementation of Sharia law in a non-secular Indonesian Islamic State. These fundamentalist organizations tend toward the radical and sometimes violent extremes like the *Front Pembela Islam* or *Jemaah Islamiyah* (Islamic Congregation) dedicated to the founding of a pan-Islamic state across Southeast Asia integrating Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Southern Philippines.

Besides Islamic organizations, there remains a small Islamic minority practicing the *Ahmadiyah* interpretation of Islam. It maintains 242 branches throughout Indonesia. In 1980, the Indonesian Council of Ulamas (MUI) issued a fatwa declaring that this sect of Islam was heretical. There remain as well other messianic Islamic groups active in Indonesia, which tend to be syncretistic in orientation, largely also considered heretic in Indonesia by

formal Islamic organizations. Conservative Islamic organizations streamlined and merged into a single Islamic political party, the United Development Party (PPP) which actually served to further split the Indonesian Islamic community along political lines. The Islamic Defenders Front was a radical group based in Jakarta that staged raids on nightclubs and bars, and attempted to barge into foreign-owned hotels to expel Americans and Israelis. Though not officially recognized, many Indonesians secretly support such organizations.

### **The Bangsamoro of the Philippines**

Muslims represent 5 percent of the population of the Philippines. Often designated as *Moros*, they are a multilingual ethnic minority in the southern Philippines. The term *Moro* came from the Spanish word for moor, denoting a Muslim people of Berber or Arab descent in North Africa. This term is resented by some Muslim Filipinos because they feel it has the negative implications of being pirates, repulsive, and sinister. Currently most Moros reside in southern and western Mindanao, southern Palawan, and the Sulu Archipelago.

During the period that the Philippines were under control of the U.S., the Bureau for Non-Christian Tribes was set up to deal with ethnic and religious minorities, especially the Muslim population in the south. This bureau dissolved at the time of independence in 1946, but the government realized that an agency similar to it was necessary to handle the Muslim minority. So the Commission for National Integration, the predecessor of the Office of Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities (OMACC), was set up. The functions of the OMACC include acting as the bridge between the central government and Muslim communities, addressing various issues facing the Muslim communities, ensuring the participation of Muslim population in national building, and preserving and developing the culture and well being of the Muslim Filipinos. Every year, the OMA helps Muslim Filipinos to go to Mecca for the hajj. However, many Muslim Filipinos see the OMA as merely a government institution set up to control and assimilate Muslim population.

In most Muslim communities there is at least one mosque where the muezzin calls out five times daily at certain hours to summon Muslims in town to prayer. However, not all Moros follow all five pillars of Islam as strictly as others. The less ortho-

dox Moros neglect performing daily prayers, offering alms, or keeping fast during Ramadan. Strict adherents or not, Filipino Muslims do observe all festivals and holy days of their religion, and celebrate extravagantly.

In common with Muslim societies in the Pacific islands, but in contrast to orthodox Islam, the community in the Philippines provides women with relatively more freedom. Many Moro women go to work and socialize with people outside of their homes daily. The only obvious restriction is that Muslim women usually stay in the back of mosques, behind men, during prayers.

Since the Republic of the Philippines is a predominantly Roman Catholic nation, laws prohibit polygyny and divorce. In consideration of Islamic customs, and to mitigate tensions between the central government and Muslim community, Muslims are exempt from these proscriptions. Although nowadays a Muslim man rarely has more than one wife, he is allowed to have up to four wives as long as his wealth is sufficient to support all of them.

Islam in the Philippines has absorbed indigenous elements. Most Moros believe that malevolent or benign spirits have an effect on one's life. To avoid evil spirits and attract good fortune, they make offerings to various spirits and carry out rituals that are not abiding to Islam on important events.

## Summary

This survey of the Muslim populations of East Asia clearly shows that the practice of Islam outside the Middle East and Africa is not unitary, but instead rich, diverse, and complex, a fact which should dispel the tendency to make facile universal characterizations of the faith or its adherents. Islam is as diverse as the communities which profess it.

Received in East Asia as Islam has been, by people following autochthonous practices and subject to political vagaries and a variety of influences from other religions, major and minor, not to mention the extremely diverse topography, this summary journey is not meant to be exhaustive, but gives an indication of the high degree of difficulty of making generalizations about Islam as a basis for action. Instead, it underscores the urgency to keep our current regional knowledge of the faith up to date by engaging in meaningful contexts with people in the target environment, by acquiring their languages,

and by continuing to research and compile relevant information about these regions in a way that is useful to military planning. ✨

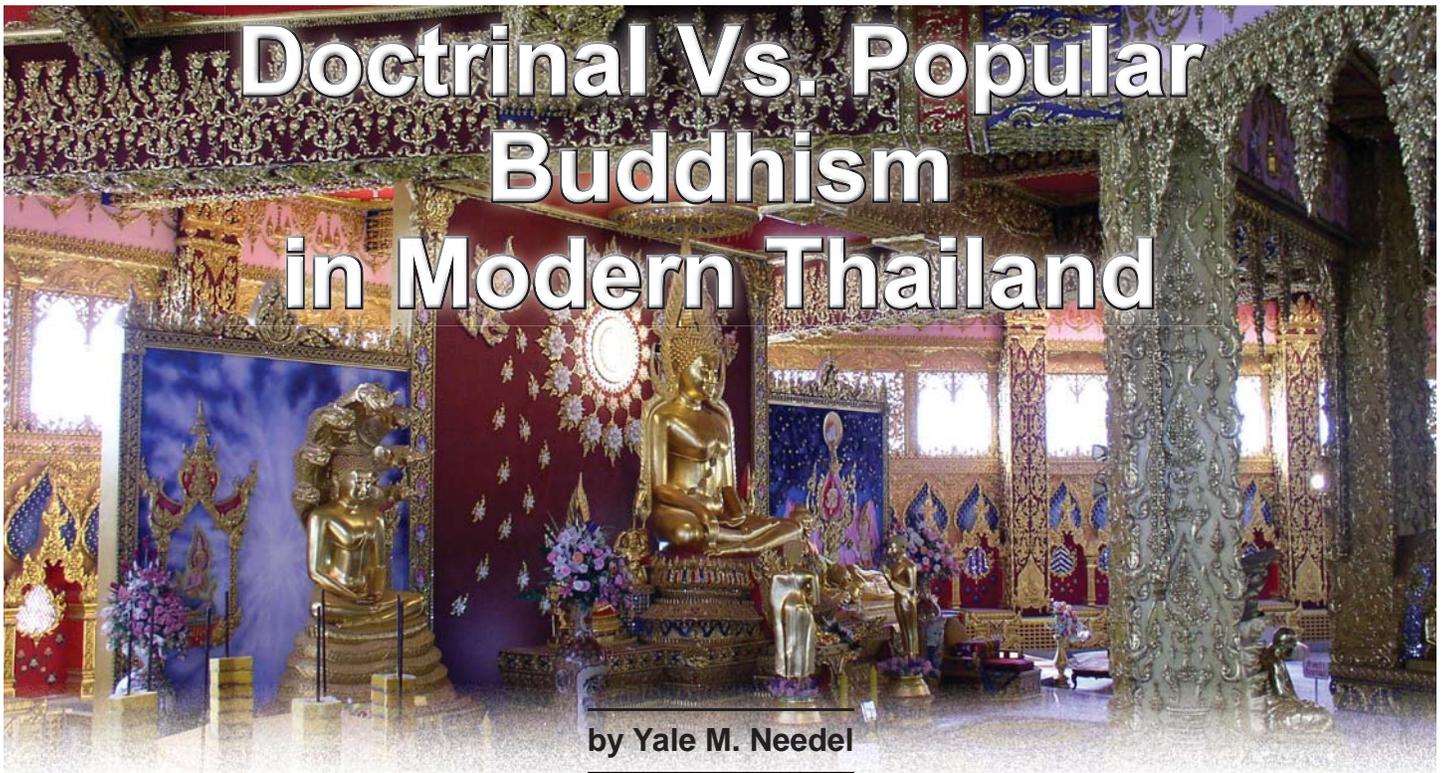
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# Doctrinal Vs. Popular Buddhism in Modern Thailand

by Yale M. Needel

Buddhism has been an integral part of the life and society of Thai Buddhists, it is the root of Thai culture and way of life for the people. In order to appreciate the importance, role, and influence of Theravada Buddhism on the life of the Buddhist populace, it is necessary to understand other structures or fabrics that are integral parts of Buddhism. Important components are the Buddha, *Dhamma* (San: *Dharma*; teachings and methods of the Buddha that lead to Enlightenment), *Sangha* (community of monks), *wat* (monastery), and *upasaka* (lay disciples).<sup>1</sup>

*Dhamma* has always been the most influential teachings for guiding the life of Buddhists. The teachings are found not only in the Pali Canon or the *Tipitaka* (San: *Tripitaka*; "Three Baskets," the entire collection of Buddhist writings and scriptures) and *Sutta Pitaka* (Discourses of the Buddha), but also in such religious literatures as the *Jataka* Tales (chronicles and myths of the Buddha's previous incarnations). The *Dhamma* component is an abstract aspect and serves as the heart of Buddhism. The *Sangha* and the *wat* are in close proximity with the people and interact with society in daily life.<sup>2</sup>

The close association and continuous relationship between Buddhism and society is based on the concept that a society is a conglomeration of tangible composition and such abstract elements as virtue, goodness, morality, and ethics.<sup>3</sup> There are continuous

interactions between the tangible and intangible components. In order to maintain the society's functionality and structure, there must be an interdependent and supportive relationship of different compositions of Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> Lacking any of them would cause imbalance in society. For example, the village community without a monastery and monks to teach the people would result in low morality and spirit of the inhabitants. Similarly, if the monks in the community do not strictly adhere to the *Dhamma* and keep to their duties and to the Code of Disciplines (*Vinaya*), the people's morality and spirit will become lax.<sup>5</sup>

Social relationships in the community would also become weak, unstable, and in conflict if there was no religious institution to instruct and guide them. Social relationships are not always in harmony and conflicts may arise from time to time. Resolution of such conflicts is achieved by means of adaptation and adjustment of the existing social structure and function in order to maintain society. Alternatively, there might be a replacement of the structure and function of the old society by a new one.

Interaction and the interdependent relationship of the *Sangha* and lay society is another aspect of the relationship between society and religion. The *Sangha* is the most important and traditional Buddhist institution that is closely interacts with the people; it plays an essential role, both religious and secular,



in the life of the people. It provides spiritual sanctuary for the people when they need comfort.<sup>6</sup> In the secular sphere, monks render services to rural and remote communities. They help in teaching the children, healing the sick by traditional methods, and leading the villagers in various development efforts.

Reciprocally, the lay community provides the monks with necessities for their well being so that the monks do not worry about earning a living. Such an interdependent and mutual relationship contributes to a situation in which each party has to be flexible and adaptable to change. An accommodating and adaptive ability is an indispensable quality of the structures within a society that makes possible maintenance of the society. The structural and functional definition of Thai social order is maintained through the regulation of official governmental bodies such as the *Sangha*, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Ministry of Education (to an extent.) Every component of Thai society is inter-reliant, interacting, and contributing to the system maintenance in a given situation.

Following Robert Redfield's concept of "Great and Little Tradition,"<sup>7</sup> Thai society's appreciation of Buddhism can be divided into two broad categories: Doctrinal and Popular Buddhism.<sup>8</sup>

◆ Doctrinal Buddhism refers to the teachings of the Buddha and practices contained in the Pali Canon *sutta* (San: *sutra*; "discourses") and related literatures. Doctrinal Buddhism is thus believed to be original. Its followers will refuse principles, practices, and teachings that are not contained in the Pali Canon. They perceive belief in magic, supernaturalism, spirits, deities, and other forms of animism including beliefs and

practices adopted from other faiths, as heresy. The followers of Doctrinal Buddhism are few but generally highly educated.

◆ Popular Buddhism refers to a Buddhism that is permeated by other religions and belief systems. It includes animism, Brahmanism, and beliefs in ghosts and spirits. The practices and teachings of Buddhism and other belief systems are so well interwoven that only the highly educated among the faithful can distinguish Buddhism from the others.

Despite the conviction among several scholars that Redfield's concept is antiquated and too basic for modern analytical application to the academic study of Thailand and Southeast Asian in general, it is nevertheless quite relevant to the interpretation and discussion of modern Thai society, specifically the social structures found in large cities and urban communities which exhibit a unique form of Buddhist beliefs and practices known as "Popular Thai Buddhism."<sup>9</sup> This form of Buddhism indicates the ever-changing domestic economic, religious, and social environment in modern democratically ruled Thailand while still maintaining deep-rooted beliefs and practices that in the past, was common only among villages and small rural communities.

Religious rites, an important structure and function of a religion, can differentiate between the complexity of Doctrinal and Popular Buddhism. Followers of Popular Buddhism tend to rank rituals high. Their rituals are a combination of Buddhist, animistic, and Brahmanical elements. On the contrary, followers of Doctrinal Buddhism are more concerned with Buddhist ritual and less with the importance of non-Buddhist ones.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of Buddhists in Thailand follow Popular Buddhism to some extent. This phenomenon can be explained in the context of the belief system at every level of society. Even in the most primitive societies, human beings could hold on to a belief system. Such a belief system may be animism in various forms, including beliefs regarding natural occurrences. By the time that Theravada Buddhism was introduced to Southeast Asia, there already existed indigenous belief systems and religions among the people. When they accepted Buddhism, they also kept their old beliefs and practices. Because of its flexible quality and liberalism, Buddhism easily absorbed certain elements of existing belief systems

into its mainstream practice. What developed from this process is known as Popular Buddhism.<sup>11</sup>

The teachings of the Buddha display variety in their levels of sophistication, purpose, content, and specialties. For example, the *Cattari Ariya Saccani* (Four Noble Truths) explain natural phenomena that will be with every person from birth to death. It describes the nature of *dukkha* (suffering), including sorrow and frustration of every kind; the origin of problems and suffering by way of *paticca samuppada* (causality); the extinction of suffering (*Nibbana*, San: *Nirvana*); and the path leading to the extinction of suffering (*Ariyo Atthangiko Maggo*; the Noble Eightfold Path).<sup>12</sup> There is even a teaching that guides people to live comfortably without sacrificing the accumulation of wealth and success called the *Dittdhammikattha Samvattanika Dhamma* (virtues conducive to benefits in the present). It teaches the people to be energetic, industrious, and “watchful” concerning their properties, to associate with good people and live efficiently.<sup>13</sup> The Buddha also encouraged people to follow the path to success. This appears in a particular teaching called the *Iddhipada* (basis for success).<sup>14</sup>

However, the overall purpose of the teachings of the Buddha can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ *To enlighten the lay[man] about the nature of life from birth and existence to death.* This includes an explanation of the origin of life, existence after birth, and survival until death. The teachings also deal with ways to lead one’s life happily in harmony with nature and how to minimize and cope with suffering arising from illness, death, disappointment, separation [anxiety], and other misfortunes one could encounter.
- ◆ *To explain and prescribe ways for people to live together mutually on the individual level, as well as on national and global levels.* The teachings to achieve this purpose deal with the prescriptions for social relationships between individual and individual, social relationship within the family, between teacher and students, between employer and employee, between religious personnel and the people, between government and subjects, and between state and state.
- ◆ *To give guidance as how to apply the teachings of the Buddha to improve daily life.* The prescriptions are designed to be understood and workable according to the nature of problems,

including the level of appreciation of the people’s individual needs. Therefore, there are levels in the teachings of the Buddha, (i.e. basic truth, middle and sophisticated truth, both in everyday and supermundane states.)<sup>15</sup>

The dissemination of the teachings of the Buddha to people at different levels of appreciation requires specialized methods to suit each group. Preaching *Dhamma* to intellectuals and educated people who are keen on Buddhism and wanting to apply *Dhamma* to improve their lives, the monks and propagators have to select and transmit a sophisticated *Dhamma*.<sup>16</sup> The *Dhamma* for the followers of Popular Buddhism was simplified and made easy to understand. Simplified laws of *Kamma* (San; *Karma*; the law of cause and effect) and stories from the *Jataka* Tales and *sutta* are an effective means to educate them. However, Phra Rajavoramuni points out that “whatever the teaching methods are, all teachings are related, for [the essence of] the teachings derives from the same truth and the ultimate purpose is identical. In fact these teachings are identical in purpose but given different labels. The truth is disseminated selectively and in different forms.”<sup>17</sup>

While the future of Buddhism depends on the good and proper education of the monks and novices, currently most of the Thai monks and novices, the great majority of whom are in rural areas, count among the less overall educated people in the country. Moreover, the traditional system of monastic education under charge of the *Sangha* has been in a state of rapid decline. Many large Pali language schools have closed, while those that continue, suffer from sharply decreasing numbers of students, a majority of which are Western. By contrast, modern schools



for monks and novices, both those unrecognized and those passively recognized by the *Sangha*, including those which teach exclusively secular subjects and those run by outsiders, lay parties, and even businessmen, enjoy a rapidly increasing number of monks and novices as their students to the dissatisfaction and out of the control of the *Sangha*.<sup>18</sup>

The *Sangha* in Thailand, in comparison with ecclesiastical institutions in other countries, is well organized. Thousands of monasteries and over a quarter of a million monks and novices are unified under the same administration. With this national organization of the *Sangha*, the Thai monkhood enjoys the full recognition and official support of the state and the uniformity of all ecclesiastical affairs and religious activities including education, rituals, and observances. With a religious organization and hierarchy paralleling that of the secular government, full cooperation and agreement between the *Sangha* and the state are secured. Under these circumstances, the monks have been able to play several important and necessary roles that contribute to the unity of the people.

Thai Buddhism is increasingly individualized; everyone practices and adapts it arbitrarily for his/her own benefit with less and less intervention from the state, *Sangha*, or even one's family and community, as was previously the norm. With such an attitude, Buddhism is easily used to please oneself or dissolve one's personal desire without concerns for others, nature, and the spiritual dimension.<sup>19</sup>

It is highly likely that Buddhism will continue to be reduced to a personal level of teaching, particularly in Thailand. However, this is nothing new. In the past, the benefits of the Five Precepts (*Pancha Sila*), for example, were always explained only on the personal level, contributing to a peaceful and happy individual life, while the benefits to society were rarely mentioned.<sup>20</sup> Though there are several teachings on one's obligation to society, they were less emphasized than teachings on person-to-person practice. ✨

#### Endnotes

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