



# TRAINING HUMANS FOR THE HUMAN DOMAIN

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Dr. Steve Tatham  
Mr. Keir Giles





# The United States Army War College

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and  
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**TRAINING HUMANS  
FOR THE HUMAN DOMAIN**

**Dr. Steve Tatham  
with  
Mr. Keir Giles**

**November 2015**

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This manuscript was funded by the U.S. Army War College External Research Associates Program. Information on this program is available on our website, *www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil*, at the Opportunities tab.

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ISBN 1-58487-704-9



## FOREWORD

In this timely monograph, British authors Mr. Keir Giles and Dr. Steve Tatham fuse key lessons from two disparate theaters to argue persuasively for greater education of Army personnel in human terrain disciplines.

Dr. Tatham, an expert in strategic communications and influence operations with extensive experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Mr. Giles, a long-term scholar of Russian military and political decisionmaking processes, both contribute a wealth of accessible examples and anecdotes to argue their case for greater investment in human domain skills, both as an insurance against future conflict and in order to prevail in that conflict should it be joined. Drawing on a range of sources across social science and linguistics, they make the crucial point that both commanders and junior personnel must be not only prepared but also educated to set aside their cultural, social, and even linguistic preconceptions in order to accurately assess the options open to an adversary.

The conclusions they draw are an important contribution to the debate on the future shape of the U.S. Army, and in particular to the training and preparation required for Regionally Aligned Forces. The Strategic Studies Institute recommends this monograph to planners and policymakers considering force structure and training, but also specifically to planners for regional engagement.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute and  
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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

STEVE TATHAM is the United Kingdom's (UK) longest continuously serving officer in information activities. Between 1998 and 2003, he worked in Media Operations, covering conflicts in Sierra Leone (2000), Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003), where he was public spokesman for the invasion. Between 2003 and 2013, he worked in Information Operations and Psychological Operations. Dr. Tatham was the Commanding Officer of 15 (UK) Psychological Operations (PsyOps) Group from 2010-2013, during which time he deployed on multiple occasions to Afghanistan, was involved at the operational level in operations in Libya, and has deployed to East Africa in an advisory role. During his tenure in command, and in a tight fiscal climate, he expanded the PsyOps Group by 81% by demonstrating the centrality of PsyOps to UK military operations to previously skeptical military commanders and budgeteers.

In 2007 he advised the then commander of British Forces in Afghanistan on influence operations when the strategically vital town of Musa Qala was retaken by British and Afghan forces. The Pentagon later described that operation as the "single best thing to come out of Afghanistan." Dr. Tatham is co-founder of the Influence Advisory Panel and in early-2014 left the UK military to pursue a career in business. He is Director of Operations at IOTA Global Ltd, a commercial Information Operations company. Dr. Tatham is the author of two books: *Losing Arab Hearts & Minds: The Coalition, Al-Jazeera and Muslim Public Opinion* (Hurst & Co, 2006) and *Behavioural Conflict: Why Understanding People's Motivations Will Prove Decisive In Future Conflict* (Military Studies Press, 2012). Dr. Tatham

holds both an M.Phil. and a Ph.D. in international relations, both focusing on ideas of influence and strategic communication in conflict areas.

KEIR GILES is the director of the Conflict Studies Research Centre (CSRC), a group of deep subject matter experts on Eurasian security formerly attached to the United Kingdom (UK) Ministry of Defence. Now operating in the private sector, CSRC provides in-depth analysis on a wide range of security issues affecting Russia and its relations with overseas partners. After beginning his career working with paramilitary aviation in Russia and Ukraine immediately following the fall of the Soviet Union, Mr. Giles joined the BBC Monitoring Service (BBCM) to report on political and military affairs in the former Soviet space. While attached from BBCM to CSRC at the UK Defence Academy, he wrote and briefed for UK and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) government agencies on a wide range of Russian defense and security issues. Uniquely, he is a double Associate Fellow of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London, UK, as well as a regular contributor to research projects on Russian security issues in both the UK and Europe. Mr. Giles's work has appeared in a wide range of academic and military publications across Europe and in the United States.

## SUMMARY

This monograph offers an outline for educating U.S. and allied service personnel in fundamental human domain skills and argues against their being overlooked in favor of technical solutions. Experience from Afghanistan and Iraq has demonstrated the vital nature of understanding human terrain, with conclusions relevant far beyond counterinsurgency operations in the Islamic world. Any situation where adversary actions are described as “irrational” demonstrates a fundamental failure in understanding the human dimension of the conflict. It follows that where states and their leaders act in a manner that in the United States is perceived as irrational, this too betrays a lack of human knowledge. The monograph highlights specific elements of psychology, theology, anthropology, sociology, and linguistics as key requirements for the understanding of human terrain, which is necessary for avoiding mirroring – projecting Western assumptions onto a non-Western actor – and therefore failing correctly to assess the options available to that actor.

The monograph argues for stronger Red Team input into planning and decisionmaking. These Red Teams need to be equipped with expert levels of knowledge of all the social sciences discussed – as applied to their target subject – in order to provide reliable and well-founded simulations of adversary decision processes. But over and above this, familiarity with the same principles should be far more widespread both among junior military personnel engaged in any kind of interaction with human allies or adversaries, and among the senior audience assimilating Red Team input into planning.

This is because this input will by its very nature be counterintuitive for individuals not specializing in the region concerned. Commanders will receive advice that appears to make no sense, in isolation from their other data streams and apparently contradicting them. The ability to assess this counterintuitive input grounded in an alien culture and language is a key issue of education, and requires a place in senior officer education planning. The approach could then be exercised in downstream training and predeployment courses.

## TRAINING HUMANS FOR THE HUMAN DOMAIN INTRODUCTION

We have to think differently about how we run operations, and we have to focus them on human objectives.

Major General William C. Hix, Deputy Director,  
Army Capabilities Integration Center,  
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.<sup>1</sup>

“[Armed Conflict] is fundamentally a human endeavor” declares the U.S. Strategic Landpower Task Force in its May 2013 White Paper.<sup>2</sup> After 13 years of bloody counterinsurgency fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, this seems a rather self-evident proposition. But it is not only U.S. strategic planners who feel it is necessary to restate it. The United Kingdom’s (UK) Doctrine and Concepts Development Centre (DCDC) declared in its 2010 “Future Character of Conflict” paper that war would continue to be:

an unpredictable and uniquely human activity in which the adversaries’ logic would not be ‘our’ logic, and thus ‘our’ abilities to understand the adversaries would be challenging.<sup>3</sup>

Why are the two statements apparently **not** obvious? In both reports, all becomes clear just a few short sentences later. The U.S. Landpower Task Force notes that conflict is not “merely a contest of technology” while DCDC notes that:

The rapidly evolving character of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan should not have surprised us . . . but it appears to have been partly obscured by a wave of RMA [Revolution in Military Affairs] -induced hubris after the Cold War. Those conflicts are neither exact

models for every possible future war, but nor are they atypical in that both have re-taught us that the enemy gets a vote.<sup>4</sup>

In short, both organizations are noting that we may have been seduced into believing that advanced battlefield technology would solve all of our problems. “What we’ve seen since the beginning of war in Afghanistan is a revolution equal to that inspired by the introduction of gunpowder, the machine gun or the tank,” says Peter W. Singer, former director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at The Brookings Institution and author of *Wired For War*.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere he notes: “Unmanned systems, unused and unwanted at the beginning, are now saving the lives of thousands of soldiers.”<sup>6</sup> For all that this is true, and technology is now a vital feature of warfighting, in the 5 years after Singer made that declaration on the Army Technology website,<sup>7</sup> that technology did not allow the U.S.-led coalition to prevail against the Taliban, nor did the West’s legacy in Iraq endure as expected in the face of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) rebels. Technology, it would appear, may not be quite as seminal to the outcome as some may have hoped.

It is easy to see why both organizations have felt the need to address basics. In 2003, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld believed that America could rely on precision guided munitions and a light footprint to depose Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Rumsfeld wanted a clinical war that would be swift, decisive, and cheap in both dollars and U.S. lives. He succeeded in disposing of Saddam, but the result is that, 11 years later, Iraq is still a deeply conflict-riven nation. So too in Afghanistan, the ruling



Taliban was ejected quickly enough from government by aerial bombardment and special forces operations. Ejection, however, is not defeat, and in the nearly 13 years that followed the Taliban have most certainly not been defeated, despite the overwhelming technological advantage of the United States and its allies. With so much money having been spent on technology,<sup>8</sup> warfighting from the Western perspective has evolved almost beyond recognition; at the start of this author's military career, many of the techniques and technologies employed on today's battlefield belonged firmly in the realm of science fiction. Nevertheless, numerous studies of contemporary conflict show that the possession of overwhelming firepower, intelligence, and technology is no guarantee of military success.

With technology has come more sophisticated intelligence gathering: there have been enhancements throughout electronic intelligence (ELINT), geographic intelligence (GEOINT), signal intelligence (SIGINT), cyber intelligence (CYBINT), measurement and signal intelligence (MASINT), and more. Even the nature of human intelligence (HUMINT) collection has been transformed. In this context, there is a significant lag in arguably one of the most important intelligence streams for modern warfare – population intelligence (POPINT).

Russian operations in Crimea in early-2014 provide a clear example of how full command of POPINT can lead to swift and decisive strategic gains – in this case, with barely a shot fired.<sup>9</sup> This is in stark contrast to the point made by numerous U.S. and allied commanders in assessments and post-operational tour reports, that deficiencies in this area lead to a failure to leverage other intelligence inputs to actually enhance understanding.

According to General Stanley McChrystal, “We need to understand how the enemy interacts with the people.”<sup>10</sup> Major General Mike Flynn notes that:

Our intelligence apparatus still finds itself unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which we operate and the people we are trying to protect and persuade.<sup>11</sup>

General David Petraeus said as long ago as 2008 that:

What [we’re] dealing with is much more complex and much more nuanced than what we were trained to do. . . . It’s about understanding the human terrain, really understanding it.<sup>12</sup>

Collectively, this gap in understanding gives rise to the entirely misplaced concept of irrationality in adversary actions. Seemingly inexplicable events – for example, a suicide bombing or the rejection of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) projects – are too often dismissed as irrational. This is a word that has featured extensively in reports at every level – patrol, company, battalion, and brigade. But to simply dismiss established human behavior as irrational is to demonstrate a significant failure in understanding the human domain. War is a human endeavor, and humans are rational creatures, even if guided by a logic that follows principles and assumptions different from our own. The challenge, therefore, is to arrive at an understanding of these principles and assumptions.

This speaks of a vital element missing from our collective armories, despite the breathtaking pace of innovation in human domain studies during the post-September 11, 2001 (9/11) conflicts. Indeed an entire new lexicon of conflict seems to have grown up,

together with capabilities to support it; Human Terrain Systems (HTS-U.S.); Defence Cultural Advisors (CULADS-UK); Human Terrain Analysis (HTA); Socio-cultural Analysis; Target Audience Analysis (TAA); “Influence”; the list is long. As Winston Churchill never quite said, never in the field of human conflict have so many acronyms been invented in so few years. But after some 13 years of development of these concepts during war in two countries, it may be that the problem is not the existence of a specific capability, but the attention and resources, or lack of them, devoted to it by command.

This is further evidenced by the fact that the basic principles of understanding human terrain can hardly be described as new. At an operator level, these principles were accessible even before the United States engaged in its 21st century wars. As stated in one U.S. Marine Corps analysis of Russian military campaigns in the 1990s:

The first thing you must do – and it is priority number one – is study the people. You must know the psychological makeup of not only the combatants you might face but that of the local populace as well. Understand your enemy in detail – but not only from a military and political perspective – but also from a cultural viewpoint. If you underestimate the importance of this, you are on a road to decisive defeat.<sup>13</sup>

As in all conflicts, the military has learned and adapted relatively quickly; very often however this adaption has been driven from the ground up. What is required now is for policymakers, too, to properly understand the contribution that new asymmetric capabilities can have if they are properly resourced, and if the tribal inclinations of more conventionally-

minded senior officers to focus exclusively on hard power resources can be tempered and nuanced.

### **A Starting Point for Cultural Awareness.**

A prevalent myth of cross-cultural misunderstanding revolves around attempts by English-speaking car manufacturers to sell into Spanish-speaking markets. Sales of the Chevrolet Nova in Latin America (or the Vauxhall Nova in Spain, depending on your continent) were a dismal failure until the vehicle was renamed. Manufacturers had not reckoned on confusion between Nova and “*no va*,” “doesn’t go” in Spanish. The story is a prime example of delusion based on incomprehension of a foreign culture – not because it is true, but because it is so universally believed, despite not being possible (a Spanish speaker will point out that cars do not “go,” they could instead *functionar* or *caminar*, and furthermore the difference in stress of the two syllables of Nova/*no va* prevents confusion). To drive the point home, Vauxhall Novas were in fact manufactured in Spain.

There are other, factual, examples that make the case equally well. The German aircraft manufacturer Grob was bemused at its failure to penetrate the Russian market in the early-1990s, until they were finally convinced by their local advisers that the Russian word *гроб* (*grob*) does indeed mean “coffin.” Comic tales of incomprehension even between notionally similar languages like British and U.S. English are commonplace. But even these can lead to serious consequences; as, for instance, when:

a surprise multinational nuclear weapons inspection on a suspected nuclear facility in Iraq was fouled up

because Americans counted the ground floor as the first floor while Brits counted the first floor as the one above the ground floor.<sup>14</sup>

The point of introducing these stories is to underline the critical importance of cross-cultural awareness in any human interaction, all the more so in a conflict environment. Precise understanding of what you are communicating to both ally and adversary is essential. Examples are also rife from the current context of engagement in Afghanistan. One problem is the absence of a directly equivalent word for the English noun “reconciliation” – quite a key word given International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) objectives – in the Afghan Pashto language. Interpreters have to make a choice from different words to establish context; that choice, of course, being heavily influenced by their own education and understanding. One of the words they may choose is “surrender.” This will almost always be wholly unsuitable for both sides, but non-Pashto speaking officers may be entirely unaware of what they have just proposed through their interpreter to the other side. Similarly, former British Ambassador to Kabul Sherard Cowper-Coles recalls a briefing note given to the Governor of Kandahar province in 2010. The first page of the note included a bullet point, in English, suggesting that the Governor should “develop a plan for Kandahar,” whereas in Pashto, it offered him “a development plan for Kandahar.”

The final example in this series is one of direct relevance to communicating the aims of any current or planned U.S. military presence in Islamic nations. The phrase that comes so readily to English-speaking lips is “boots on the ground” – yet to some audiences, this in itself can be offensive and convey

hostile intent. According to Mohamed Yehia of the BBC Arabic broadcasting service:

It's not used in Arabic because we have a problem with boots. Footwear in general in Islamic culture has this negative connotation. . . . Boots are something humiliating or unclean.<sup>15</sup>

As all these examples illustrate, a lack of visibility into the cultural and linguistic framework of your audience, and a consequent failure to understand the importance of the right words in context for a particular situation, in a benign environment will be expensive, embarrassing, or just plain confusing. In less benign environments, and particularly in conflicts, this confusion can be dangerous. Even after the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. and allied military personnel still appear to need a much more detailed understanding of why this is.<sup>16</sup>

The challenge, as forces draw down from counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, is to determine which capabilities will endure and what is the right resource balance to strike between a conventional warfighting apparatus and less kinetic options. In the current debate, as preparations for conventional high-intensity warfare are re-emphasized, there is danger of leaving behind valuable lessons learned from counterinsurgency experience—despite the fact that they reach far beyond counterinsurgency doctrine itself.

The UK military is now grading some levels of competency as “expert,” “practitioner,” or “familiar.” This monograph will advance the idea that in future operations, alongside conventional military weapon systems, combat forces must be at a minimum “famil-

iar” with four “ologies” and one “istics”: Psychology; Theology; Anthropology, Sociology, and Linguistics.<sup>17</sup> Levels of this kind of competency are clearly related to the role of the individual, but this monograph will argue that all personnel will require at least this familiarity. Some will need expert knowledge of at least one “ology” and a language, and many more will need practitioner status.

These apparently unconventional and asymmetric capabilities need not only to be protected, on the grounds that mastery of the human domain of conflict requires the involvement and understanding of actual humans; but also expanded because, as demonstrated by the U.S. military’s Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, proper investment in these capabilities has the potential to bring positive results in achieving U.S. aims globally, which are out of all proportion to the expenditure required. This is a reflection of the increasing importance of the so-called “Strategic Corporal.”<sup>18</sup> It is now well-understood that strategic effect can be generated by the lowest rank on the battlefield; once again, the Russian seizure of Crimea provides a clear and topical example. Security camera footage of the confrontation at the doors of the Crimean parliament in Simferopol shows clearly how confrontation and discussion between single individuals determined the bloodless takeover of the building, and hence the exclusion of parliamentarians loyal to Ukraine, and eventually the parliament’s resulting illegal vote to secede.<sup>19</sup>

## THE “OLOGIES”

### Theology.

The issue of God and of religion, and what their role should be in a military context (if, indeed, any role at all) has proved troublesome for Western armed forces as a whole. Of course, these forces have had chaplains among their ranks from the earliest days of organized armed force; but their role traditionally has been the provision of pastoral care to soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Typically the largest denomination among these militaries has been Christian, and thus most ministers and pastors have been drawn from the Christian religion to meet that need. However, over the last 50 years, the cultural and religious mix of post-modern Western societies, and the militaries drawn from them, has changed significantly. As a result, chaplains have been augmented in the militaries of the United States, UK, and others by their equivalent ministers from the Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths. In the UK, the first Muslim “chaplain,” Imam Asim Hafiz, was appointed by the Muslim Council of Great Britain to the UK’s Armed Forces in 2005. Initially his role was exactly that of his Christian colleagues – to look after the spiritual and pastoral needs of Muslim members of the Armed Forces. Yet, he increasingly found that he also became a *de facto* fount of knowledge on Islam to soldiers of every rank, religion, and level of seniority. Slowly his role evolved, and increasingly he found himself deployed on operations – most notably on an extended tour in Helmand province, Afghanistan – to assist commanders in dialog with the Afghan community and religious leaders. Today, he has left his original pastoral duties to others, and is serving



as the Islamic adviser to the three Service Chiefs. This represents a significant change in emphasis, and one brought about by a rapidly evolving operating environment.

That this change took place in the UK Armed Forces underlines its significance. In recent decades, the UK military had followed the trend of officially-encouraged secularism derived not only from a declining sense of the place and importance of religion in public society, but also from the previous Labour governments' emphasis on "multi-cultural Britain."

When former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair was interviewed about the role of religion in politics and began to discuss his faith, he was interrupted by an influential political adviser who declared that "we [the government] don't do God."<sup>20</sup> A senior British cleric declared in 2014 that Britain was now a post-religious society, that Britain was not a nation of believers, and that the era of widespread worship was over.<sup>21</sup> The comments by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, the leader of the Anglican Church, came in response to a letter in a major UK newspaper from 50 prominent public figures insisting that the UK was "a non-religious" and "plural" society and that to call it Christian fostered "alienation and division."<sup>22</sup> Attitudes like this appear to be borne out in surveys of the British Armed Forces:

analysis of new Ministry of Defence figures suggests that atheists and agnostics could overtake Christians in the ranks of the military in just 18 years. The number of Army, Royal Navy, and RAF personnel declaring themselves as Christians fell by more than 10 percent in just 18 months. At the same time, the number describing themselves as 'secular' or 'no religion' rose by almost 9 percent.<sup>23</sup>

Yet this same military recognized the crucial role of religion in conflict.

The U.S. forces reportedly face different challenges and controversies in addressing the issue of religion. In a 2013 report entitled “For God and Country,” former National Security Council member James E. Parco suggested that a fundamentalist brand of Christianity had infused American military culture. Christian fundamentalism, the report declared, was on the rise within the U.S. Armed Forces, a trend evidenced by explicitly sectarian behavior of senior military leaders. Parco described commanders using the power of their positions to evangelize and force a narrow sectarian view on U.S. military institutions and service members, with little to no accountability.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, some groups and organizations are concerned at efforts to moderate religious expression (meaning, in effect, Christianity). One such, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), reports that:

groups are already actively engaged in filing lawsuits against the DOD and its leaders over various concerns about religious expression in the armed services . . . their views on church-state separation go well beyond what the Constitution and U.S. law require. In fact, they endanger the very freedoms the First Amendment was intended to protect.<sup>25</sup>

In the U.S. context too, consideration of how to educate military personnel in religion as an integral element of other cultures first has to contend with domestic controversy. But this is an essential step if those cultures are to be successfully understood and engaged. At a conference in September 2014, Imam Asim Hafiz explained the difference between the West and many of the societies to which Western militar-

ies are deployed. With significant understatement, he told an audience of British military officers that “you are seen as being slightly odd if you start a meeting with a prayer, or if you declare in the office your religious faith and conviction.” He then continued:

Yet in the countries where the UK currently finds itself deployed on operations – all Muslim – you are seen to be odd if you do not start your day or your meetings with a prayer.

The crucial point is that:

if you are a U.S. or British soldier in the Muslim world, there is an absolute belief that you must be a Christian—to profess no religious conviction is beyond most people’s comprehension.<sup>26</sup>

In conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, in mentoring in Yemen, in Somalia, in Djibouti, and in evolving operations against the Islamic State (IS), the absolute centrality of religion for the population is one of the fundamental defining features of the human domain.

Religion is thus central to contemporary operations. Wahid Feroz is an Afghan-born British-educated cultural adviser to the commander ISAF in Afghanistan. At a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) training center in Oberammergau, Germany, he explained ways in which religious nuance could instantly negate the effect of seemingly straightforward messaging. He explained to the NATO Senior Information Operations course that in Afghanistan: “we were stuck on moral messaging . . . don’t commit crime, don’t grow poppies, don’t lay IEDs [improvised explosive devices].”<sup>27</sup> But he had to advise

the commander of the Joint PsyOps Task Group in Afghanistan (CJPOTF) that this messaging was likely to fail because the appeal to morality did not, in fact, resonate in an Islamic context. While the Quran could establish the morality or immorality of certain behaviors—many of them deeply contradictory to Western notions of what is moral—there is also an allowance for pragmatism, one that allows followers to break moral laws if they have to do so to survive.

A detailed knowledge of Islam cannot be expected of every soldier. But familiarity with the different moral framework that it provides is essential for any military personnel operating in an Islamic environment—as the proliferation of “green-on-blue” incidents in Afghanistan testified. Still more so, planners and senior leaders need to have informed advice on the religious context available to them when considering operations in parts of the world other than the Americas and Europe. This implies a recognition that these planners and commanders may not have all the answers to the military problems with which they are confronted, and that solutions may come from unlikely quarters.

In short, our men and women do need to be armed with a more nuanced understanding of the centrality and importance of religion and faith—both to the populations among which operations are undertaken and, perhaps unexpectedly, in the religious values that those same populations will expect our troops to possess. We might call this the need for the development, through education, of a reflexive understanding.

## Anthropology.

British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor wrote in his 1871 book *Primitive Culture* that the full range of learned human behavior patterns should be considered as the study of culture: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”<sup>28</sup> Since Tylor’s time, the concept of culture has become a core focus of the study of anthropology. Since 9/11, there has been a growing acceptance and understanding of the need for cultural awareness and knowledge when dealing with adversaries whose culture is entirely different.

In early stages of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, cultural awareness covered simplistic advice—take off your shoes, don’t eat with your left hand, talk only with men, and so on. Although this is undoubtedly knowledge that all soldiers should have when encountering foreign customs, it is not cultural anthropology—in fact, it has not evolved far from handbooks issued to U.S. servicemen on the cultural differences they would encounter when passing through the UK in 1942-45.<sup>29</sup>

Instead, it is a deeper understanding of the human domain that is vital, and in this area significant improvements were later achieved. According to Major General Ben Freakley, Commander of Joint Task Force 76 in Afghanistan:

Cultural awareness will not necessarily always enable us to predict what the enemy and non-combatants will do, but it will help us better understand what motivates them, what is important to the host nation in which we serve and how we can either elicit the support of the population or at least diminish their support and aid to the enemy.<sup>30</sup>

In a bid to understand the cultural dimension of 21st century warfare, the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO), based at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, began the task of establishing and deploying the Human Terrain System (HTS)—five-man teams comprised of social scientists and military personnel, who could advise commanders at operational and tactical levels on cultural awareness shortcomings. This was not a new idea; in the Vietnam War the U.S. military established, together with the South Vietnamese government, a Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program (CORDS), designed specifically to “win hearts and minds.” CORDS was premised on the belief that the war would be won (or lost) not on the battlefield, but in the struggle for the loyalty of the people. As HTS scheme instigator Jacob Kipp observes: “While history offers many examples of insurgencies worthy of study, the HTS concept has been largely inspired by lessons drawn from the U.S. experience in Vietnam.” A 2007 Department of Defense report on HTS noted:

The local population in the area of conflict—the human terrain—must be considered as a distinct and critical element of the battlespace. Therefore, the Human Terrain Team [sic] seeks to integrate and apply sociocultural knowledge of the indigenous population to military operations in support of the commander’s objectives. In the words of one HTT member, ‘One anthropologist can be much more effective than a B-2 bomber — not winning a war, but creating a peace one Afghan at a time.’<sup>31</sup>

By April 14, 2007, 38 HTS personnel were deployed in Iraq, distributed among five teams. Of those, eight were social scientists, and 13 spoke

Arabic. Their deployment was clearly popular, and they gained involvement in a number of key issues. While their primary task was to provide commanders with relevant socio-cultural knowledge and understanding and to provide specialists able to help integrate that understanding into the military decisionmaking process, there was a secondary task of key importance—the HTS teams sought to minimize the loss of knowledge and local understanding that occurred every time a unit rotated out of theater. The DoD report cited earlier noted:

That soldiers on their second—or third—tours possess inestimable knowledge about the area in which they are operating is undeniable. Yet, as currently organized, combat brigades do not possess the organic staff capability or assets to organize this knowledge ... Therefore, it is the job of HTS to take the knowledge these soldiers have gleaned, to examine the information already being gathered on the ground on a daily basis, engage in original research, and consider this information in terms of broader issues from a different perspective in order to add to the brigade commander's situational awareness of the social, economic, political, cultural and psychological factors at work in the environment.<sup>32</sup>

In a similar manner to the difficulties with religion described earlier, the HTS scheme encountered considerable criticism for entirely domestic reasons unrelated to military or strategic objectives. This came, for example, from the American Anthropological Association, which expressed concern at the teams' ability to "fulfill their ethical responsibilities" as anthropologists. Indeed, criticism of the issue has formed the basis of a whole sector of academic writing, exemplified by "The Counter, Counter-Insurgency Manual," written by the Network of Concerned Anthropologists.

But within a military context, the reaction was different. Colonel Martin Schweitzer, Deputy Commander for Operations of the 82nd Airborne Division, told *The New York Times* that his unit's combat operations in Afghanistan had "been reduced by 60 percent since the scientists arrived in February [2007]," while Colonel David Woods of the 73rd Cavalry told the paper that "you have to evolve, otherwise you are useless."<sup>33</sup> In a fascinating exchange in the journal *Survival*, a U.S. Marine relayed his personal experiences of cultural awareness from operations in Bosnia, Fallujah, and the Horn of Africa, which were then dissected by four anthropologists. At the crux of the Marine's view was that: "Anthropology and ethnography teach us to listen well, ask good questions and develop a broad yet critical understanding of ethnic conflict."<sup>34</sup>

The UK response to this challenge was the formation of the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DCSU) in 2010, taking serving regular and reserve officers and training them in Afghan languages and cultural anthropology. Unfortunately, given normal British resource constraints, the unit only ever had capacity for a tiny number of officers – designated CULADS – and the necessarily extensive training program, lasting over a year, meant that only a handful were able to finally deploy to Helmand. However, the impact of those that did was profound.<sup>35</sup>

Captain, and later Dr., Mike Martin was one of the graduates of that scheme. Trained in Pashtu language and culture, he spent an extended period in the field in Helmand engaging with local people. He concluded that, counter to the prevailing wisdom:

the Taliban were not the 'main drivers of violence'. Instead, conflict was driven by Helmandi individuals,



including local politicians and tribal chiefs, and their personal motivations. It is therefore more of a civil war between clans than a clash between the 'good' government of Afghanistan and the 'bad' Taliban.<sup>36</sup>

This was sufficiently contrary to the received wisdom of the time on the nature of the conflict to show that there had been a basic misunderstanding of human terrain – of the people and their motivations. Speaking anonymously, an experienced U.S. Army officer and cultural expert said, “The absence of a strategy forced us into someone else’s civil war and only now are we trying to figure out what it is all about. Answer – not us.” This unwelcome finding ran directly counter to the prevailing political and strategic narrative for Allied presence in Afghanistan.

This illustrates the often-forgotten necessity for “Red Teams,” which will provide commanders with a view of the same situation from a foreign or enemy perspective. This is the only reliable way of avoiding flawed decisions through mirroring our own perceptions, preconceptions, training, education, and world view onto an enemy for whom all of these things in which decisionmaking is framed may be profoundly different. But the successful adoption of this essential advice requires an acceptance of the counterintuitive. Commanders need to be forewarned, and accept, that they will receive advice that may appear nonsensical, which quite possibly they will hear from nowhere else, and that a leap of faith will be required to have confidence that this advice is grounded in solid knowledge of the human domain in which they are operating. This issue is one of education, and needs to figure prominently on professional training and senior officer education courses.

Although both HTS and DCSU were comparative latecomers to the Afghan battlefield, and both were beset with difficulties—size, funding, controversy, rear support, acceptance by operational commanders—both were tangible demonstrations of two issues. First, Western militaries, could if they wished, adapt quickly to fill gaps in their knowledge and to be agile in their operations. Second, both demonstrated the centrality of people in future conflict. As demonstrated in Crimea in early-2014—and any number of major conflicts that have involved popular or partisan resistance—that centrality is not just restricted to counterinsurgency operations, but extends to more conventional state on state interactions as well.

It follows that detailed understanding of foreign cultures at all levels of seniority is an essential prerequisite for success of the U.S. Army's regionally aligned forces concept. Cultural awareness is fundamental to the aspiration for these forces voiced by General Ray Odierno, to "identify brewing conflicts before they get out of hand . . . better understand the enemy and work more effectively with the host population."<sup>37</sup> The U.S. Armed Forces already benefit from a prototype of these "more culturally sophisticated soldiers" in the form of the FAO program. But the extensive education process that is required to allow FAOs to combine their existing military skills with specific regional expertise, language competency, and political-military awareness highlights the scale of the challenge in delivering even attenuated versions of these competencies across units as a whole.<sup>38</sup>

## Psychology/Sociology.

At the turn of the 20th century, a number of researchers began conducting groundbreaking experiments into human behavior and intelligence. In 1913, Carl Jung began the development of ideas that, in time, would become formalized as analytical psychology. In the same year, John B. Watson published *Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It*, which suggested that human behavior could be determined from conditioned responses.<sup>39</sup> In 1915, Sigmund Freud published his work on repression, and in 1917, Robert Yerkes introduced the first intelligence tests in the United States. In 1954, Abraham Maslow published *Motivation and Personality*, describing the theory of a hierarchy of needs, which has guided so much of this academic sector ever since.<sup>40</sup> In 1961, Albert Bandura conducted his Bobo doll experiment, to determine whether children became violent as a result of television or games, and subsequently linked observational learning to personality development. In 1974, Stanley Milgram published *Obedience to Authority*, presenting the findings of his now infamous obedience experiments.<sup>41</sup>

These experiments were just part of a series conducted throughout this period to consider the relationships between attitudes and behaviors. This research would have deep resonance for contemporary military operations. One early and often-quoted study was conducted by Richard LaPiere, wherein he described 2 years of traveling across the United States by car with a couple of Chinese ethnicity. During that time, they visited 251 hotels and restaurants and were turned away only once. At the conclusion of their travels, LaPiere posted a survey to each of the businesses they had visited with the question,

“Will you accept members of the Chinese race in your establishment?” The available responses were “Yes,” “No,” and “Depends upon the circumstances.” Of the 128 that responded, 92 percent answered “No.” This study was seminal in establishing the gap between attitudes and behaviors.<sup>42</sup>

LaPiere’s findings were confirmed by those of Fishbein and Azjen in 1947,<sup>43</sup> and further work has continued to this day. The unequivocal consensus of this collected research was that attitudes are very poor predictors of behavior. According to one influential social psychology text: “The original thesis that attitudes determine actions was countered in the 1960s by the antithesis that attitudes determine virtually nothing.”<sup>44</sup>

In recent years, that accumulated research and wisdom has coalesced into a process of understanding human behavior and its motivations that has direct relevance to military operations that seek to influence populations. Application of the principles of this research continues to provide counterintuitive but important input into resolving security problems.

The implication for military operations is greater predictability of adversary actions. A deeper understanding of psychological and sociological principles of determining and describing cultural differences would be sufficient to banish the notion of irrationality from post-operational reports. By now, the principle is well-established that kinetic operations are costly, can go wrong, and may lead to unexpected second order consequences; whereas non-kinetic activity, particularly that anchored in human behavior, can have longer lasting and far less expensive outcomes. But to understand what is achievable through these operations, when, and how, takes an

intelligent and questioning customer base. In other words, adopting smarter human domain operations in order to achieve greater effect for less cost once again requires an increased level of education of relatively junior military leaders in the basic principles of human behavior.

### **Linguistics.**

Linguistics is the study of languages, not just the learning of a language. It includes within it numerous other disciplines such as the theory of translation, lexicography, and semiotics (the study of signs and symbols associated with languages). It is a complex subject, but its mastery opens a significant and often underappreciated window of understanding into other nationalities, their ethnicity, lives, culture, history, geography and – most importantly for military operations – the drivers for specific behaviors. An advanced knowledge of principles of linguistics is not a skill required by every soldier; far from it. But ensuring that this knowledge is available to commanders and planning staff facilitates greater and more nuanced understanding of complex military and political issues at senior leader level.

At a simplistic level, it is self-evident that learning another language allows comprehension of what a potential adversary is saying without the distorting effect of translation. But above and beyond this are multiple layers of additional benefit to linguistic knowledge. Deep knowledge of a single language both requires and brings with it an understanding of the culture, traditions, history, and proclivities of the culture in question, since all of these determine how people from that culture communicate with each

other. For example, students of U.S. English must have at least a basic familiarity with the principles of baseball in order to grasp the multitude of idioms in American usage that derive from it. Similarly, until recently, understanding the pronouncements of a certain class of British professional would be impossible without a solid grasp of the rules of cricket. So, too, a deep enough understanding of the languages of potential adversaries implies that the linguist is also an expert in the human terrain of its speakers.

This extends to embracing an entirely different conceptual framework, based on the words that are available to describe different concepts in different languages. Earlier in this monograph, the example was given of the lack of a Pashto word for the English word “reconciliation.” Over and above the straightforward dilemma for the interpreter, this is symptomatic of an entirely different cultural construct: the notion of reconciliation is as exotic to Pashtunwali as many Pashtun customs are to us. Examples can be found from almost any language, with direct consequences for our assessments of adversary intentions. Reporting on Russian “peacekeeping troops,” and how and where they may be deployed, is a case in point. The word “peacekeeping” is the standard translation for the Russian миротворческий (*mirotvorcheskiy*, “peace creating”) – but this masks the fact that “peacekeepers,” for the Russian military, are an entirely different concept to that conveyed by the English word, and a greatly more assertive and violent one.<sup>45</sup> What this means is that knowledge of the target language is indispensable for developing correct advice on adversary culture and decisionmaking and to provide accurate assessments to commanders.

At a still deeper level, physiological studies have found that speaking two or more languages – and the duality of conceptual frameworks it brings – is an asset to the wider human cognitive process. The brains of bilingual people operate differently than those of single language speakers, and, in addition to cross-cultural skills, these differences offer several mental benefits. Professor Boaz Keysar, professor of psychology at the University of Chicago, describes how thinking in a foreign language can enhance decisionmaking.<sup>46</sup> In a series of experiments, Keyser and his fellow researchers found that using a foreign language reduces decisionmaking bias; that the “framing effect” disappears when choices are presented in a foreign tongue. Keysar also proved that, whereas people were risk averse when choices were presented in their native tongue, they were not influenced by this framing manipulation in a foreign language. In summarizing their findings, the authors proposed that these effects arise because a foreign language provides greater cognitive and emotional distance than a native tongue does.

In short, knowledge of language and of the principles behind it is key to success in operations in human terrain, because linguistic constraints and possibilities determine perception, and hence prescribe responses to external influence, including that which the United States and allied militaries would seek to apply. Once again, a very simplistic example is sufficient to illustrate how this translates into practice, and one such example is available if we consider how to say something is blue in Pashto, English, or Russian (i.e., in ascending order of complication). In Pashto, there is no difference between blue and green, so the word شین (*šīn*) can mean either blue or green, depend-

ing on context. English speakers broadly agree among themselves on the extent of the unified color blue, and when it is not green. But Russian goes further and has two words to denote what is perceived as two separate colors where English speakers see only one – Russians refer to голубой (*goluboy*) for pale or clear blue, and синий (*siniy*) for dark or navy blue. It follows from this simple example not only that translation and interpretation inevitably introduce dangerous simplifications to work around cognitive differences; but also that the role of language, and furthermore linguistics, in describing and conveying human experience is absolutely fundamental to understanding human terrain.

## CASE STUDY: GETTING IT WRONG

Intelligence is knowing a tomato is a fruit; understanding is not putting it in a fruit salad.<sup>47</sup>

UK Ministry of Defense,  
*Joint Doctrine Publication-04, Understanding  
Development, Concepts and Doctrine Center*

For a recent illustration of how essential this context of human experience is when predicting behaviors, we can step away from operations and review the decision to train Libyan servicemen in the UK as part of international post-conflict stabilization efforts to disarm and integrate militias in Libya. The intent, as announced by the British Government in July 2013, was that:

UK Armed Forces are to train their Libyan counterparts in basic infantry skills and leadership in order to help professionalise them and help them achieve peace and stability across their country.<sup>48</sup>



This was an entirely reasonable aim, and the initiative as a whole was one recommended in a previous Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) monograph, which stated that:

U.S. and UN expertise in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of armed fighters in post-conflict situations could be of pivotal help to Libya at this critical juncture.

Crucially, however, the monograph continued: “but such support should be provided carefully.” In fact, it recommended that training should be provided not in the United States or the UK, but in other Arab countries.<sup>49</sup>

Almost a year later, the first contingent of Libyan soldiers arrived at Bassingbourn in rural England, to be trained by the Black Watch (3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland).<sup>50</sup> But in the meantime, experts with an understanding of the cultural and social environment from which the soldiers had been drawn – and the one into which they were to be inserted – had warned of severe adverse consequences from the program, including “immigration, security, and reputational risks.”<sup>51</sup> Other studies suggested that far from welcoming the assistance program, the majority of Libyans were against the plans, wishing instead to see the training taking place not in a foreign country, but in their own.

A failure to provide an adequate or appropriate assessment of the cultural and human factors that would govern the Libyan trainees’ responses to their new surroundings led to dire consequences for residents around Bassingbourn and in the nearest major city, Cambridge. With discipline in rapid collapse and

trainees routinely absconding, Cambridge police reported a sudden spike in incidences of sexual assault and rape of both men and women, eventually traced to the Libyan soldiers.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, other soldiers requested political asylum in the UK. With police and additional British Army personnel from another Scottish unit brought in to Bassingbourn to maintain order,<sup>53</sup> the training program was prematurely and permanently canceled.<sup>54</sup>

At any one time, foreign servicemen from a wide range of nations are undergoing training or education in the UK, generally without incident. Public assessments of why the Libyan program in particular had led to spectacular and unmanageable failure focused on the dislocation suffered by the soldiers in Libya during the civil war there: according to the UK's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), testifying before a parliamentary committee, "seeing their country in the state it is now . . . has been quite destabilising."<sup>55</sup> This was no doubt true, but deeper behavioral drivers could certainly be found for the Libyan soldiers who experienced a rapid transition from deeply conservative religious, traditional, and cultural values and pervasive control by an oppressive regime to the perception of a permissive environment in the West. Tellingly, one Libyan comment on the numbers of soldiers being arrested for theft and sexual assault was that "they [the UK instructors] didn't tell us about British law and what's the difference between right and wrong here."<sup>56</sup>

The incident as a whole provides two essential lessons. First, application of cultural understanding would have prevented embarrassing failure, by either taking steps to mitigate the likely outcomes, or avoiding holding the training program in the UK altogether and instead siting it in an Arab country as recom-

mended in the earlier SSI study. Second, this cultural understanding was readily available and widespread. In addition to the expert assessments cited earlier, reviewing informed discussions from mid-2013 on the plans to train Libyans in the UK the following year reveals not only unanimous condemnation of the plan as misconceived and misguided, but also entirely accurate (and again unanimous) predictions of the specific consequences in terms of alcohol abuse, desertion, asylum applications, theft, indiscipline, and rapes in Cambridge.<sup>57</sup> In short, applying cultural understanding in the manner called for in this monograph requires asking those who have that understanding; and then listening to the answers.

### **Language Learning Initiatives – United States and UK Compared.**

In addition to its enviable FAO program, the U.S. Army provides opportunities for its soldiers to learn languages should they so desire. For example, U.S. Army Cadet Command has run the Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency (CULP) program for some years. This takes Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets into foreign cultures and exposes them to other countries' lifestyles and world perspective, with the reasonable intention that this will assist them in their future military roles. In the regular Army, many key influencers such as the U.S. Army military information support operations or MISO cadre already require a second language as mandatory for entry and promotion. This can be a restrictive requirement. It often surprises foreign observers that despite the very high proportion of the U.S. population which is

no more than two or three generations removed from non-English-speaking immigrants, it is estimated that only 18 percent of American citizens speak a language other than English. According to one commentary:

We should care—a lot—about our foreign language deficit. We need diplomats, intelligence and foreign policy experts, politicians, military leaders, business leaders, scientists, physicians, entrepreneurs, managers, technicians, historians, artists, and writers who are proficient in languages other than English. And we need them to read and speak less commonly taught languages (for which funding has recently been cut by the federal government) that are essential to our strategic and economic interests, such as Farsi, Bengali, Vietnamese, Burmese and Indonesian.<sup>58</sup>

The same commentary then quoted the then U.S. Secretary of State for Education Arne Duncan declaring that the language deficit constitutes a “threat to national security.”<sup>59</sup>

In Europe, it is estimated that some 54 percent of the population speak a second language. This does not extend to the UK, whose citizens are famous on the continent for their resistance to engaging with foreigners in their own language. But in July 2014, it was reported that in the UK:

From October [2014], no officer will be promoted to a sub-unit command—effectively any rank above captain—unless they can speak a foreign language, preferably French or Arabic. . . . Better language skills, defence chiefs hope, will be at the forefront of an effort to carve a new, more nimble but sophisticated role for Britain’s land forces.<sup>60</sup>

The move comes as part of the British Army's "international defence engagement strategy," under which—in an initiative akin to the U.S. Regionally Aligned Forces—individual brigades have been assigned different geographic areas of the globe to develop a deep cultural and social working knowledge. Officers and troops in those brigades will be encouraged to participate in diplomatic missions, training exercises, and military deployments in their assigned regions. According to the UK Ministry of Defense (MoD):

bilateral relationships are essential for the army's future focus on defence engagement and from later this year, we will be providing linguistic training to enable all subunit commanders to demonstrate second language skills.<sup>61</sup>

Whenever a major new UK military policy is announced, a prime locus for informed comment and criticism is the entirely unofficial "Army Rumour Service (ARRSE)" website. With due respect for operations security, this forum distils the frank and forthright views of highly experienced serving and retired officers, soldiers, and military experts, unconstrained by the need to follow optimistic official narratives. As demonstrated by the example of the Libyan training scheme cited earlier, it thus provides a reliable indicator of the likely success of any new initiative put forward by the UK MoD, and to some extent those of allied (including U.S.) militaries.<sup>62</sup>

Following the languages announcement, ARRSE lit up. Among the most repeated criticisms were the lack of realism of the initiative due to issues of cost and time. A typical assessment of the cost implications was:

I wonder if this has been thought through. To what standard? 3333 [denoting a NATO military standard for foreign language competency for reading/writing/speaking and comprehension] takes up to 18 months full-time to achieve, depending on the language. Furthermore, immersion language training is most desirable. For Arabic, that generally means a stay in Jordan or Oman, *inter alia*. The cost is also astronomical. A contracted-in tutor is about £50 per hour.<sup>63</sup>

The issue of time available is one that will particularly concern young British officers. Competition for promotion slots, which have always been limited, is becoming even more challenging as the military contracts; and unlike some U.S. services, promotion is far from automatic. Officers' performance reports, vital for promotion, are most effective if they are produced by superior officers from within the subject's own core specialization. It follows that taking time out from role – for instance to attend a university language course tutored by civilians – may now be seen as career suicide even more than previously. The UK's MoD has yet to explain how this will be incorporated into career development programs.

But this lack of realism in introducing the program in the UK obscures its potential utility for a much larger military, for example, the U.S. Army. As noted in a recent SSI monograph, the aspiration toward a much deeper level of regional familiarity and expertise is key to the regional alignment strategy, but depends entirely on fostering relevant talents and regional expertise within line units. The overall aim could be severely compromised if it is indeed the case that “the [U.S.] Army has no mechanism to identify relevant regional talents or experiences such as cultural fluencies, foreign contacts, or travel abroad.”<sup>64</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The examples given in this monograph have focused primarily on experience from Afghanistan and Iraq, since this is where the current techniques of understanding human terrain have been developed and honed. But its conclusions are relevant far beyond counterinsurgency operations in the Islamic world.

As observed earlier, to describe adversary actions as “irrational” is to demonstrate a fundamental failure in understanding of human terrain. It follows that where states and their leaders act in a manner which in the United States is perceived as irrational, this, too, betrays a lack of human knowledge. The principles described herein should be extended to consideration of other actors who are adversarial to the United States, and whose decisionmaking calculus sits in a different framework to our own. This includes such major states as Russia and China.

The case of Russia is most topical because of recent Russian actions in eastern Ukraine, referred to throughout this monograph. Long-term observers of Russian military and political development were dismayed that, despite their informed forecasts, Russian military exercises in 2013 and the operation to seize Crimea in February-March 2014, nevertheless came as an apparent surprise to the United States and other countries.<sup>65</sup> One cause for this appears to have been mirroring; projecting Western assumptions onto a non-Western actor, and therefore failing correctly to assess the options available to that actor. It appears that the copious expertise and experience on Russia available to the U.S. intelligence community at an analyst level was trumped by more senior decisions

that “they wouldn’t do that, it doesn’t make sense!” — based on a U.S.-centric perception of what is rational.

This is symptomatic of the thinning of expertise covering a range of potential conventional adversaries during the focus on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism since 2001.<sup>66</sup> The need is clear for Red Team input into planning and decisionmaking. These Red Teams need to be equipped with expert levels of knowledge of all the social sciences discussed in this monograph — as applied to their target subject — in order to provide reliable and well-founded simulations of adversary decision processes. But over and above this, familiarity with the same principles should be far more widespread, both among junior military personnel engaged in any kind of interaction with human allies or adversaries and among the senior audience assimilating Red Team input into planning.

As noted earlier, this is because this input, by its very nature, will be counterintuitive for individuals not specializing in the region concerned. Commanders will receive advice that appears to make no sense, in isolation from their other data streams and apparently contradicting them. The ability to assess this counterintuitive input grounded in an alien culture and language is a key issue of education, and requires a place in senior officer education planning. The approach could then be exercised in downstream training and pre-deployment courses.<sup>67</sup>

As development of regionally aligned forces continues, the U.S. Army should consider forming closer partnerships with UK units engaged in a similar exercise. The UK’s “Army 2020” program includes elements very similar to the U.S. Army’s plans for regional alignment: specifically:



the Adaptable Force brigades, and some Force Troops Command brigades [will have] assigned responsibilities for world regions. This will enable brigade units to develop understanding of the geography, culture and languages of their specified region.<sup>68</sup>

The accelerated timetable for this force restructuring and transition by the British Army from 2015 may well mean that it pre-empts the United States in some areas. As such, it may in the process provide lessons learned that can be applied in a U.S. context—as well as templates or ideas that can be applied to much greater scale and effect by the U.S. Army.

But as noted earlier, for either of these forces to achieve their aims, focused and relevant education of the humans that man and command them—with no detriment to their careers—is essential. In the UK context, “every soldier involved in overseas activity . . . becomes part of the Defence Engagement mission.”<sup>69</sup> The same is no less true for the United States.

All this demands greater flexibility of mind and diversity of approach at all levels of command, which, in turn, demands the higher level of training in operations in human terrain noted earlier, as an integral part of junior leader education. In this respect, there is much to be learned from the FAO program, and many of the attitudes and approaches of FAOs should be adopted as mainstream rather than being relegated to the career niche that they occupy.

In effect, in FAOs, the U.S. Army and other services already possesses a highly-trained pool of cultural advisers who can be used as a nucleus to raise the more general level of cross-cultural human terrain awareness. Another accelerator for this process would be the retention of reservists with specialist knowledge of the human terrain of potential adversaries.<sup>70</sup>

## **Specific Additional Policy Recommendations.**

- Religion has been a defining factor of the U.S. wars since 9/11; it is likely to continue to be one in future conflicts in the Middle East and Africa. U.S. forces need to maintain a developed understanding of the religious context in which they operate, including enhanced self-awareness of the population's perception of them. All personnel need to be theologically aware before deployment. Further, the role of service chaplains – especially from non-Christian faiths – deserves greater operational focus. While pastoral care will remain the core duty of chaplains, their knowledge and experience should continue to be leveraged to enhance planning for operations in human terrain.
- The effectiveness of HTS/DCSU has been greatly underestimated and clouded by controversies that had little to do with the effectiveness of the programs. These are important roles, and they must be afforded authority and access accordingly. Participation in these programs must not be a career inhibitor.
- In addition to its direct operational utility, the learning of a foreign language provides many downstream advantages for both the individuals and their services. Foreign language learning opportunities should be fostered and facilitated and, once again, should not be career inhibitors.

The latter point illustrates a crucial issue of planning for the human domain that FAOs understand, but that must be explained more broadly to nonspecialists at all levels of seniority. This is that there exists no universal model of communication applicable to all groups and cultures. All communication efforts must be tailored to the local dynamics and with respect to the behaviors one is seeking to change. Because audiences are multifaceted and cannot be grouped as a population, influencing the differing component groups of a society requires precisely targeted methods and approaches. One message—no matter how culturally relevant—does not fit all.

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17. The author has articulated the need for these skill sets in many previous papers but is grateful to Dr. Dave Sloggett, an independent consultant to the UK Armed Forces, for this particularly resonant phrasing.

18. This is a term that seems to have multiple "fathers"; many attribute it to Lieutenant General Peter Leahy of the Australian Army who wrote in 2002 that: "The era of the strategic corporal is here. The soldier of today must possess professional mastery of warfare, but match this with political and media sensitivity." However some 3 years before, General Charles Krulak of the U.S. Marine Corps wrote on exactly the same subject in his paper, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," *Marines Magazine*, January 1999.

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