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URBAN OPERATIONS: STRATEGIC
IMPERATIVES TO OPERATIONAL METHODS

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ABSTRACT

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Urbanization is a phenomenon threatening global stability. The increasing rate of urban
population growth is creating several elements of destabilization to include increased levels of
ethnic and tribal disputes, excessive demand upon infrastructure, and organized violence. With
a major part of US strategy focused on engagement of terrorism and humanitarian operations,
military intervention in the world's cities is inevitable, thus suggesting the requirement for a
greater in-depth analysis of urbanization and new methods for operations in this complex
environment. Successful urban operations require a sound strategy with clear objectives and a
military force adequately trained and organized for the urban environment. This paper will
examine urbanization and its associated elements of destabilization and suggest strategic
imperatives and operational methods for contemporary urban operations.

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> And the worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative…The General, unable to control his impatience, will order his troops to swarm up the wall like ants, with the result that one-third of them will be killed without taking the city. Such is the calamity of attacking cities.
>
> —Sun Tzu [1]

   With 90 percent of the world's urban growth occurring in developing countries, urbanization is of utmost concern suggesting the need for increased strategic and military focus.[2] The implication of urbanization suggests a greater frequency of military intervention as poverty, ethnic competition, and overpopulation and associated environmental stress create various elements of destabilization. Amid the urban trend of political and social disintegration, religious, ethnic, and clan based organizations are increasingly recruiting disgruntled social groups to wage unconventional war on states and the international community. Unconventional or asymmetrical warfare, as seen in the cities of Mogadishu and Baghdad, aptly represents the likely strategic landscape of future military intervention and the growing significance of urban operations. This paper will discuss the strategic problem of urban destabilization to identify strategic imperatives for military intervention and then examine the operational challenges to suggest unique operational methods for operations inside cities.[3]

URBANIZATION: THE PROBLEM OF DESTABILIZATION

   There are almost 2.8 billion people living in cities around the world, and by 2015 that number will rise to 3.9 billion, almost 75 percent of them living in the developing world.[4] For instance, Mexico City, which had a population of 3.1 million in 1950, surpassed 25 million in 2002.[5] Future population predictions are staggering and represent an alarming trend due to the inherent link between over-population and urban destabilization.

   Henry Kissinger attributes destabilization to industrialization and says, "developing countries have faced the challenge of industrialization which by drawing people from the countryside to the cities, brings with it a weakening of traditional political and social support systems. The urban working and lower middle class becomes a fertile recruiting ground for radical politics or religious fundamentalism."[6] Industrialization is certainly one explanation, however, increased international migration also accounts for a percentage of urban growth. Ralph Peters focuses on the migration of young males and says "the lure of the city disproportionately draws young males—society's most volatile population—seeking opportunity,

adventure, and reinvigorated identity."[7] Rapidly growing urban complexes will generate instability, but the decision for military intervention in such environments is complex. Therefore, to clarify and further understand the challenges of military intervention, it is important to discuss three common elements of urban destabilization: the presence of cultural and ethnic diversity, excessive demand upon infrastructure, and organized violence.

The most common element of urban destabilization is the presence of diverse cultural and ethnic groups each with its own goals and objectives. Ralph Peters defines these urban areas as either multicultural or tribal cities.[8] This is especially true in African nations where tribal clans fragilely co-exist. Somalia exemplifies a tribal city where multiple tribal clans still vie for power within the relatively small city of Mogadishu. Due to entrenched tribal values built upon perceived legitimacy and power, stabilization is a difficult goal. In these complex situations stabilization is not achieved by legitimate law, but by the diffused authority of tribes or groups with mutual interests. Peters defines this dilemma as a "diffusion of real power by ethnic networks, and resistance organizations."[9] Although a perplexing task for military forces, understanding and penetrating these "networks" and "organizations" is necessary for successful intervention.

A second destabilizing element of urbanization is excessive demand upon the infrastructure. In particular, the demand for water requires a stable and relatively wealthy governing system. The New York City water treatment and supply facilities are very capable systems; however, they are technologically complex and require a substantial budget to maintain. Most often, developing countries can not support a New York style system, therefore, the population competes for clean water and those without it suffer from the health effects of contaminated water. According to a 2000 study done for the Secretary of Defense, about 80 percent of all illnesses and 30 percent of all unnatural deaths in the Third World are due to water-borne diseases and consumption of polluted water.[10] The combination of inadequate water supplies and associated health issues create a challenging logistic and medical dilemma for intervening forces that may also be involved in combat or security operations.

Lastly, urban growth is accompanied by a rise in organized violence. By taking advantage of economic poverty, civil unrest, and the ease of unopposed operations, subversive organizations use violence as a tool to gain power. Peter Gizewski identifies three broad categories of violence that are relevant to urban conflict:

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- political violence, involving violence directed against the state and violence by the state against challengers;

- communal and ethnic violence; and

- criminal and anomic violence.[11]

Evidence of Gizewski's categories of urban violence is evident within the United States. Urban areas experiencing periods of high unemployment tend to give rise to greater levels of violence that is often drug related. Competition for scarce resources in economically depressed areas often leads to violence initiated by rival drug dealers intent on protecting neighborhood markets.[12] However, unlike the US, organized violence in developing cities goes unchecked allowing organizations to leverage it as an element of power. Intervening military forces will have to contend with organized crime and violence and summarily establish a process to uphold the law by establishing a capable security effort and legal system, preferably, in coordination with local authorities or indigenous organizations.

The above elements of destabilization do not represent an exhaustive summary, but it is apparent that there is a significant correlation between the factors of urbanization and instability. The often co-existing elements of urban instability ultimately lead to failed economic and governing systems giving rise to a society built upon organized crime and terrorism. As a nation focused on fighting a war on terrorism and promoting humanitarian efforts, US leaders appear to be turning more frequently to military intervention. To fully comprehend the complexity of military intervention, it is critical to understand the primacy of strategic analysis specifically within the context of the urban environment.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

A vision of success for military intervention is often that of achieving lawful stability with few friendly or non-combatant casualties while quickly disposing of undesirable elements of the population. Unfortunately, because military intervention, by nature, is caused by high levels of urban instability, this is often a misperception. Therefore, the following section will present strategic imperatives for intervention using the guidelines developed in the Army War College's Strategy Formulation Model. At the forefront of strategy formulation is defining National Interests and ends (objectives) followed by ways (courses if action) and means (resources).[13] Due to the varied and complex destabilizing elements of urban environments, strategy formulation demands "unique" strategic imperatives for military intervention. Therefore, before considering ways and means of military intervention, it is first necessary to identify the following strategic

imperatives: determine level of national interest and public support, understand the target population, and define the conditions of urban stability.

Military intervention is broadly analyzed by using the following categories of national interests: Survival (critical), Vital (dangerous), Major (serious), and Peripheral (bothersome).[14] Although these categories are situation dependant and often ambiguous, it is important to understand that the complex and brutal nature of urban intervention will challenge national resolve, moral norms, and public opinion. For instance, military intervention may require the application of military fire power resulting in civilian casualties that will be readily visible on the evening news. In addition, urban operations are not conducive to quick victories and often require long term interventions which combined with high casualties is seldom acceptable to the American people. Therefore, a key element of military intervention is the primacy of defining the extent of political support through examining the level of national interest and ensuring the strength and resolve of the American public through aggressive media strategies.

If the level of national interest and threshold of urban instability require military intervention, understanding the target population is the next strategic imperative. Within a military context, intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) closely defines this need; however, the requirement for understanding the population goes beyond the traditional military analysis of terrain, weather, and threat.[15] Contemporary urban analysis demands a full interagency effort to examine the population's concept of social identity, economic prosperity, democracy, law, and human dignity. Furthermore, it is critical to determine the level of instability by defining root causes. A national labor dispute is much different than an ideologically driven insurgency. Within the context of an urban center in a developing country, a US vision unilaterally fixated on a predetermined view of conflict resolution by asserting Western law and human compassion will ultimately fail. Unfortunately, in societies where instability is a way of life, a traditional Western view of stability will not address the causal problems of a diffused and violent urban population. It is critical to accept upfront that Western policy and intentions are often misunderstood when applied to ethnic, cultural, or political strife. Therefore, a comprehensive cultural understanding of each element of the population is critical.

Finally, achieving stability is an end or objective encompassing a multitude of strategic courses of actions and resources. However, the application of military force first requires defining the conditions of stability. What does acceptable stability look like? By recognizing each Somali warlord with invitations to coordination meetings, the Marines attained acceptable stability for relief operations by leveraging clan legitimacy. While each urban scenario differs, destabilized urban centers should first be returned to a construct of stability that is synonymous

with the norms of the society. The concept of promoting "stability that fits the social norms" suggests that forces must first achieve a construct of stability that may include, but not be limited to, establishing acceptable thresholds of violence, corruption, or other unresolved issues. Furthermore, this concept suggests that if a crude political system promotes a form of acceptable stability, that political structure should be embraced. This could be in direct contrast to the current US policy of advocating democracy and human rights, but if these Western concepts are strategically unfeasible due to a diffused power base and unwilling population, intervening forces require alternate and realistic conditions of stability. The current imperative of "defining" stability in Iraqi cities is arguably the most important metric for the future of US occupation.

The primacy of national strategy is critical for intervening forces because it defines end-states and sets clear objectives. However, whether destabilization is due to warring factions, lack of infra-structure, or non-state-actors, urban operations will challenge the best trained forces with an environment defined by a diffused population and unconventional adversaries. Having identified elements of destabilization and "strategic" imperatives, the next section will transition to operational challenges and methods.

MILITARY INTERVENTION: OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

As a tool of national policy, US military forces are designed to accomplish a multitude of competencies in support of national interests. Today, the co-existing phenomenon of urban instability and non-state actors is challenging traditional policy built upon state to state diplomacy and economic incentive. Consequently, military intervention is rapidly replacing interagency efforts as a primary option. The increasing frequency of military intervention in urban areas is also challenging traditional military techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs) suggesting a requirement for forces with unique operational competencies.

The following definitions are presented to introduce and frame the current military perspective of urban operations. Urban Operations are defined in Joint Publication 3-06 (*Joint Doctrine for Urban Operations* (September 2002)) as:

> All joint operations planned and conducted across the range of military operations on, or against objectives on a topographical complex and its adjacent natural terrain where man-made construction and density of noncombatants are the dominant features.[16]

The US Army defines urban areas as "topographically complex where manmade construction or high population density is the dominant feature." The manual goes on to define the urban environment as the complex and dynamic interaction and relationships between its components of terrain, the population, and supporting infrastructure.[17] The definitions similarly capture defining elements such as complex terrain and the presence of noncombatants and large populations. It is evident that the military competencies required to operate in these environments are daunting, especially when considering the preeminence of a diverse and dense population landscape. Therefore, the author suggests that although military intervention in urban areas, by nature, will be physically and topographically complex, the human dimension encompassing unconventional combatants and dense non-combatant populations is the greatest challenge. Arguably one of the foremost asymmetries in urban operations, the presence of unconventional combatants able to leverage the indigenous population greatly increases the complexity of military operations.

An enemy strategy that includes the population is designed to attack the vulnerabilities of Western societal norms. Harnessed by these norms, US military forces operate under international laws and moral obligations to establish clear delineations between combatants and non-combatants. In urban operations where combatants are intermixed within the population, restrictive rules of engagement and constant media attention complicate the application of force. More so than any other form of conflict, the human dimension of friendly, enemy, and non-combatant participants is a primary consideration in urban operations. Using the joint concept of center of gravity, the text will examine the human-centric challenges presented by urban instability and accompanying cultural diversity.

Building from the theories of Carl von Clausewitz, Joint Publication 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operation,* defines the center of gravity as "those characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight."[18] Although the definition is succinct, determining the center of gravity for urban operations is a difficult task. Unlike a traditional nation-state with a standing army, urban areas may contain multiple sources of physical strength through paramilitary or non-military groups that co-equally share political control but are divided by ethnic neighborhoods. Although these groups may exercise power through violence and criminal activities, identifying which group is the center of gravity may depend on dominant ideologies, leader personalities, historical deference to US intervention, or economic control. Furthermore, lacking a clear center of gravity comprised of an elite armored brigade or centralized leadership structure, the traditional military process of focusing effort on an adversary's critical vulnerabilities (critical requirements

which are deficient, or vulnerable to neutralization, interdiction or attack) is equally challenging.[19] Due to this social complexity, US strategy and supporting operational forces, predominantly designed for conventional warfare, are vulnerable to unconventional techniques used by an often elusive enemy.

Joint Doctrine suggests that, as in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Somalia, the US strategic center of gravity is the will of the people.[20] These conflicts clearly demonstrated the restrictions on planning and execution due to the sensitivities of US and non-combatant casualties and their effect on national will. For this reason, the intent of strategic analysis is based upon determining the level of national interest and establishing clear objectives, however, urban operations involving peace and stability are often perceived as less than vital to national interests. A perception of low national interest may lead to political division accompanied by waning public support. Summarily, operational success traditionally measured by accomplishing military objectives is often over shadowed by the requirement to protect the intervening force against unnecessary casualties. Therefore, in cases of urban stability operations, the intervening military force is the friendly "operational" center of gravity and normally the focus of urban adversaries.

Leveraging the advantage of time and the protection of the population, adversaries often maintain operational pressure through focused violence to establish their superiority while discrediting US presence. Intent on destroying the population's trust of US forces, continuous violence lures intervening military units to either blindly strike back with over aggressive force or concentrate more effort on force protection than stabilizing the society. There are many vulnerabilities to military forces inside cities, but the following are the most critical:

- strict adherence to Western law and morality (rules of engagement)
- no knowledge of the urban social structure
- lack of language skills needed to communicate with the population, and
- the presence of unique vehicles and uniforms make them easy targets.

Lacking the traditional advantage of air power or large armor forces in these operations, the human-centric challenge presented by cultural alienation is evident. More importantly, however, cultural alienation favors the adversary making the identification of his center of gravity problematic.

An already difficult task for military planners against an enemy during conventional wars, identifying a center of gravity in urban operations is uniquely complex. Urban operations are

unconventional by nature making it difficult to identify the enemy much less its center of gravity. Operations in Mogadishu and Monrovia exemplify operations where the center of gravity was not a conventional army or critical infrastructure that warranted destruction. Moreover, although the symbolism of palaces and airfields in Iraq were important urban nodes, establishing control and occupation of them did not ensure success. The Army Manual 3-06, *Urban Operations*, suggests that during urban stability operations the civilian inhabitants themselves could be the center of gravity. [21] However, identifying the entire population as the center of gravity covers an overly broad demography suggesting the requirement for an alternative analysis. Assuming there is an adversarial actor with a plan to achieve victory against intervening forces, an organization will employ a physical and moral component composed of organized personnel to achieve specific objectives. However, due to the social dynamics of these organizations, they may comprised of more than one dominant leader, group, or ideology thereby making the identification of center of gravity fleeting.[22]

Although failed urban areas are chaotic, the implication of the above analysis suggests the operational center of gravity will often encompass a dominant group or sub-groups of the population whose negation or leveraging can lead to operational success. However, the presence of multiple sources of power derived from popular support, ideological views, and sometimes international support make the dynamics of urban power complex. For instance, post-war Baghdad most likely has several insurgency groups competing for power and recognition. These environments suggest the requirement for specific social intelligence to identify the most influential group while understanding the dynamics of secondary groups. As seen in Bosnia, Somalia, and Afghanistan, shared power is common within diffused urban societies and only through precise social intelligence can US forces target vulnerabilities which inherently reside in the population. In summary, the proceeding joint definitions and analysis of center of gravity were meant to frame the requirement for unique operational methods based on the human dimension of urban operations. To respond to the asymmetries caused by cultural alienation, the following text introduces operational methods based on cultural adaptability.

OPERATIONAL METHODS: THE REQUIREMENT FOR CULTURAL ADAPTABILITY

> Admittedly, there is a danger of overestimating one's real or potential enemy; there is a greater danger of not recognizing one's enemy at all.[23]

—Paul H. Liotta

This statement by Paul H. Liotta aptly represents the dilemma facing military forces inside cities. The most often asked question is "who is the enemy?" Although the US owns the most technologically advanced intelligence network in the world; social networks, subversive groups, and population dynamics can not be determined by traditional methods such as satellite and unmanned vehicle imagery. Therefore, military forces are routinely sent into urban areas without adequate social intelligence. For instance, Operation Iraqi Freedom represents another contemporary urban operation where after-action items focus explicitly on social intelligence gaps. Lacking a developed social intelligence process, Interagency and Other Government Agencies (OGA) failed to fully understand the intentions of the Iraqi military and population for follow-on stability operations. To summarize the issue, an investigative report by John Hendren of the Los Angeles Times notes that "the biggest deficiency in the coalition's counterinsurgency plan is its lack of intelligence sources who can direct troops to the enemy."[24] Therefore, to address the inherent asymmetry created by unconventional adversaries embedded in a population, US forces require a conceptual shift from relying solely on system based operational solutions to a balanced approach by including methods based upon social and cultural awareness.

Although service and joint programs have examined urban techniques, tactics, and procedures, there is a void in military capabilities to gain social intelligence within culturally diverse and complex urban societies. This is evident by the continued shortages of interpreters and cultural specialists within civil affairs and intelligence units. The lack of organic regional expertise in operational units results in ad hoc language and cultural training during pre-deployment preparation. Hence, once on the ground, military forces often find themselves culturally unprepared for the human dynamics of urban areas. A recent newsletter from the Center for Army Lessons Learned focused on deficiencies in Human Intelligence, Interpreters, and Psychological Operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.[25] Specific deficiencies focused largely on contract interpreters including the lack of knowledge in military terms, physical stamina, and overall continuity between interpreters.[26]

Currently a competency held in organizations beyond the immediate purview of the military, human intelligence capabilities designed for social intelligence gathering represent a crucial element of successful urban operations. To exercise the Fundamentals of Urban Operations per the Army's Urban Operations Manual, such as separation of non-combatants from combatants and understanding the human dimension, social intelligence gathered from close coordination with the urban population is critical and often time sensitive.[27] Government agencies have dedicated organizations for human intelligence, but the size and complexity of

contemporary urban environments require a more robust and persistent social intelligence capability suggesting a greater role for military forces. The author concludes that to leverage the human dimension of social intelligence, there is an increasing requirement to develop, train, and employ more military forces that are culturally adaptive. The following text will present operational methods for cultural adaptation by conventional and unconventional military forces.

CONVENTIONAL FORCES

Due to the inherent cultural and physical attributes associated with various regions of the world, total cultural adaptability by race and dialect would be near impossible for US conventional forces; however, with adequate training, the author suggests conventional forces could attain a greater level of cultural awareness by increased training focused on factional leaders, customs, social incentives, and language. Currently, pre-deployment packages for conventional forces are hastily designed to familiarize units with local customs and important phrases; however, it is evident from operations in Iraq that conventional forces require increased numbers of culturally adaptive personnel for patrolling, check-point duties, and nation building necessary for persistent operations. This suggests the requirement to focus on specific regional social skills by training to higher levels of language and cultural competencies while a greater percentage of personnel become capable of speaking fluent dialects.

In preparation for returning to Iraq and continued operations in the Horn of Africa and Colombia, the Marine Corps is intent on identifying personnel to develop a greater linguist and interpreter population. The intent is to solve the continued deficiency in cultural adaptability. In a recent message, the Commandant of the Marine Corps captures the problem with the following: "Recent operational experience has highlighted the critical importance of foreign language as a warfighting enabler…and the need for a capable cadre of linguists/interpreters to facilitate situational awareness, intelligence operations, civil affairs, and the interaction of Marines with local populations."[28]

The Marine Corps has certainly identified an operational deficiency as a result of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF); however, the future preeminence of urban operations warrants a more aggressive approach for all the services. It appears the requirement for culturally adaptive forces will not only continue in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the continued war on terrorism will demand an increased focus in this niche capability deserving a place as a primary competency for deploying forces. As any training competency, developing culturally adaptive forces requires a continuous process of training and management of personnel. To accomplish this, culturally adaptive methods require robust programs that include garrison classroom

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instruction combined with practical application in target urban areas. Enhanced foreign language programs are only a minimal step for successful urban operations. Further emphasis for cultural adaptability is required and should encompass the following:

- Language development needs to be resident at every installation.[29] The centrally managed Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California has limited capability to train the numbers required for expeditionary operation. Language training needs to become a part of the expeditionary culture. Existing Universities on installations should be leveraged to provide local language capabilities for entire units.

- Greater emphasis on the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program is required. This program currently trains senior officers for regional language development and expertise, but personnel in or returning from these billets are not properly tracked or employed for expeditionary operations. FAO programs require greater visibility by service manpower managers and should be included as a career path for senior commanders being considered for expeditionary forces.

- Fellowship programs for senior level schools should include 1 year foreign service in regions of interest. Many programs could include fellowship tours on embassy staffs.

- Finally, technology will continue to be an important enabler for US Forces, therefore, the author suggests language translation technologies be explored in service labs for employment with operational forces.

UNCONVENTIONAL FORCES

Operations beyond the scope of conventional forces are deserving of unconventional methods comprised of what the author defines as the fifth column. The phrase "fifth column" came from Emilio Mola Vidal, a Nationalist Francist general during the Spanish Civil War. As four of his army columns moved on Madrid, the general referred to his militant support within the loyalist government as his fifth column with a mission to undermine the loyalist government from within.[30] For the purpose of this text, the author suggests that through fifth column methods, the US can achieve operational objectives by leveraging the covert capabilities of indigenous and unconventional forces. Fifth column methods, by nature, are unconventional and designed to leverage tactics and techniques of guerrilla warfare by integrating the social dimension of urban areas into operational objectives. However, unlike the tactics of terrorism and violent coercion directed at the population by rogue guerilla organizations, the fifth column intent is designed to focus on covert social interaction. Mao Zedong's strategies of guerilla operations have been

used as a historical template for fifth column operations and are worthy of mention. He devised cooperation between conventional and unconventional forces with three types strategies:

> 1. Strategic Cooperation: The guerilla army prepares the terrain for the conventional army by harassing the enemy and weakening its rear areas.
>
> 2. Tactical Cooperation: The guerilla army gathers information for the orthodox army while disrupting the communication lines and transportation paths of the army.
>
> 3. Battle Cooperation: This is simply when the conventional and guerilla armies fight side by side.[31]

Currently, penetrating a "Mao like" insurgent organization is a contemporary challenge requiring a devoted unconventional effort solely by national agencies. The urban environment demands a new approach by unifying the strengths of national and military efforts in regards to social intelligence and the targeting of insurgents. National level intelligence, in particular human intelligence (HUMINT), has and will continue to be a highly guarded network; however, due to its sensitive nature and higher-echelon control, operational forces are not able to obtain and integrate this critical information to support operational maneuver. National and military intelligence organizations require integration to co-equally exploit intelligence pertaining to social networks of guerilla or insurgent organization, therefore, to achieve a greater global presence, US unconventional forces need to aggressively build upon current programs while developing new operational methods for cultural adaptability.

Specific mission areas of cultural adaptation are resident within Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations.* The mission areas of Foreign Internal Defense and Unconventional Warfare imply the requirement for cultural adaptability; however, the text suggests that due to the primacy of these missions they require greater emphasis.[32] In particular, emphasis on specialized core capabilities, such as urban infiltration, is an operational necessity for operations inside cities. Joint Publication 3-06 defines infiltration as the following: "Infiltration depends on superior situational awareness and understanding of the urban area, careful selection of objectives, detailed planning, and efficient support and deception. Infiltration is not likely to be attempted by large conventional forces, but rather small units, and a hostile civilian population reduces the prospects for success."[33] Urban infiltration is challenging and a sensitive mission for unconventional forces; however, there is an increasing requirement to develop a capability for urban infiltration into "hostile civilian populations" to specifically negate the asymmetric advantage enjoyed by adversaries. This operational method encompasses

developing a greater number of unconventional forces with the ability to integrate into indigenous organizations.

In summary, unconventional cultural adaptability encompasses further developing special units that are self-sustaining and capable of operations within the target population. To enhance this method, the Special Forces structure requires increased numbers of Special Forces Groups and personnel with a robust and focused training program on cultural adaptability. Through interagency coordination, US Forces would identify the most likely areas of future operations and initiate a persistent social intelligence effort towards that region. By integrating efforts between the applicable interagency organizations and the Combatant Commanders, US unconventional forces would remain regionally engaged to execute national objectives and maintain language, cultural, and social networking information. The primary objective of this method is to provide early strategic and operational awareness by developing sufficient numbers of culturally adaptive military organizations necessary to target "social networks of interest" well before and during crisis planning and execution.

Closely associated to the employment of unconventional forces is the establishment of an indigenous fifth column. Leveraging existing indigenous organizations within a city has certain risks and advantages. Advantages include the ability to provide military assistance without significant numbers of US forces. It also allows operations in ethnically and tribally based environments that may preclude US forces due to closely knit tribal or clan based security efforts. Unfortunately, the risk entails trusting indigenous organizations that normally have their own political or economic agenda that could stray from US objectives. However, a successful example of this method was the employment of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. In 2001 approximately 100 men of the Army's 5th Special Operations Group battled and defeated the Taliban using the indigenous Northern Alliance and friendly Pushtun elements.[34] Another example is the use of 55 Special Operations Troops used in El Salvador in the 1980s.[35] These successful operational methods allowed US forces to integrate into an unfamiliar culture and terrain to execute US strategic and operational objectives.

The growing desire to leverage social elements and organizations of indigenous populations is due to the advantages of their inherent knowledge of the culture and social networks. Elements of the population willing to provide information or fight against target subversives greatly enhance US legitimacy and operational presence; however, to exploit this capability, embedded US forces are preferred to ensure strategic and operational objectives are met and US technology is properly integrated. Currently a niche capability among US Special

Forces, increasing urban instability implies a greater requirement for unconventional methods focused on specialized and persistent culturally adaptive capabilities.

Expanding the program for cultural adaptability for unconventional forces should reside with Special Operations Command. The following are recommended actions for increased capability in this area:

- Identify personnel structure from elements within conventional forces that warrant down sizing, such as Short Range Air Defense (SHORAD) or artillery, and shift this manpower to Special Forces groups to stand-up additional culturally adaptive forces.
- Expand the Joint Special Operations University's Cross Cultural Communications Course. Currently this course targets officers, enlisted, and civilians engaged in or programmed for an assignment requiring contact with foreign nationals, including students, during the accomplishment of their regular duties.[36]
- Establish recruiting procedures that target cultural specific traits. Although advancing technology will enhance cultural adaptability, the human dimension of intelligence, targeting, and interaction with the population may require personnel with pre-existing cultural backgrounds.
- Develop an incentive pay system that establishes monetary benefits for retention in the same manner as other critical occupations.

Due to the frequency of urban operations in today's world, strictly relying on government agencies to be the sole provider of social intelligence does not support the immense scale of human interaction necessary for successful operations. The operational method of cultural adaptability using highly trained conventional and unconventional forces is a critical competency based on gaining social intelligence in culturally diverse environments. To negate the asymmetric advantages enjoyed by an adversary, techniques of cultural adaptability are required to conduct operations inside the adversary's space thereby exposing his vulnerabilities.

CONCLUSION

Global urbanization has not yet fully presented itself as a priority of national and military attention; however, it will shape the strategic landscape in ways that will challenge future societies. With no declining population trend in developing countries, societal catastrophes and human suffering seen today will only multiply in the coming years. There will also be a continued rise in non-state actors that increasingly control the wealth and political structure of traditional nation-states. Hence, failed states with diffused urban centers will set the conditions for increased military intervention. Although small initiatives through transformation attempt to

address military operations in urban areas, a focused strategy is required to understand the unique nature of urbanization and the importance of cities to US interests. Successful stabilization through military intervention requires a strategy that balances the strength of US interests and national resolve against the dynamics of the urban population and conditions of stability. Ralph Peters alludes to the dynamics of urban intervention when he says, "peace can be imposed, but not even a generation of occupation will convince the opposing groups to behave like us."[37] Although one author's perception, military interventions in Beirut, Somalia, and now Iraq, suggests some truth in what Peters states and highlights the importance of strategic analysis focused on the population.

The presented strategic imperatives are critical in achieving an in-depth strategic analysis before employing military forces into cities. However, no matter how favorable the strategic conditions are for military intervention, the operational primacy of "boots on the ground" requires a uniquely equipped force for the complex human dimension of the urban environment. To prepare for the inevitable, the appropriate interagency efforts with progressive military participation must be capable of performing a detailed analysis of cultural norms and societal perspectives within diverse populations before and during the commitment of forces. Once committed, the primacy of employing a culturally adaptive force designed to leverage the population will lead to success in the most dangerous of battlefields; the city.

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ENDNOTES

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