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Cultural Intelligence for the Commander: A necessary ingredient.

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature:

14 February 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Cultural Confusion; A historic perspective.....	7
The Emerging Threat	10
Operation Iraqi Freedom.....	12
Recommendation	15
Conclusion	19
Footnotes.....	21
Bibliography	22

ABSTRACT

“By possessing strong cultural understanding, commanders transform seemingly random and irrational enemy activity into describable and semi-predictable acts”.¹ Virtually all commanders embrace the notion that being forewarned is forearmed. It has always been important to have a complete understanding of our adversaries’ culture. It is even more important now that we have been alerted to the emerging terrorist threat and are decisively engaged in the full spectrum of military operations.

The need for J2s to consolidate and incorporate cultural intelligence into their enemy assessment to improve the value of credible and actionable intelligence to the Regional Combatant Commander (RCC) has never been greater. The 21st century is upon us, and we are now arrayed against distinctive adversaries with dramatically different cultures. This new threat increases the nature of issues intelligence is asked to address and the nature of the information that bears on those issues. One significant source of information that has been under utilized is that of the adversary’s culture. If intelligence is truly about knowing the enemy, we need to rethink how cultural intelligence can be used to support operations. Today intelligence systems and processes remain tuned to the Cold War. Subsequently, paradigms established by theater J2s do not assess or effectively analyze the cultural aspect of an enemy’s values, beliefs, or behaviors to the effort required. Our current inability to factor cultural background into our analysis leaves us subject to unnecessary ignorance and indecision. Lack of cultural intelligence will lead to misperception, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of the enemy that could have adverse effects on military operations. On the other hand, a firm grasp of the adversary’s culture can facilitate achieving operational objectives with far less consequences. Culture profoundly influences the intent and actions of our adversaries. Instead of treating it as an obstacle to be “worked around” we should strive to use it as an asset – a lens that can help us identify their critical vulnerabilities.

I knew where every enemy tank was dug in on the outskirts of Talil... Only problem was, my soldiers had to fight fanatics charging on foot or in pickups and firing AK-47s and RPGs. I had perfect situational awareness, what I lacked was cultural awareness. Great technical intelligence, wrong enemy...

*A Unit Commander, 3d ID,
2003*

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

During the Cold War US intelligence focused on an enemy with similar capabilities. As the two super-powers sought to outdo one another, both the US and Russia understood any conflict could mean mutually assured destruction. During this time, when total war was the strategy, there wasn't a real requirement for intelligence analysts to spend tremendous amounts of time on cultural considerations. In many respects, having a single near-peer competitor greatly simplified intelligence efforts. The problem with that symmetric approach is that it continues to bias the way we gather intelligence today. Both countries placed an emphasis on preserving life and their way of life. The similar value system meant that American intelligence analysts paid attention primary to the enemy's military forces. Hence, every intelligence system, process, and analytical approach was tailored accordingly. This will work only as long as they suit the environment in which they were designed. If the threats have changed, then the system must adjust as well. While there is truism in that the intelligence community would prefer to conduct intelligence operations as was done in the last war, the harsh reality is that we cannot.

Since the Cold War's end, the US military has emerged as by far the worlds most capable. As the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003 demonstrated, reinforced in the Balkan War of 1999 and the Afghan War of 2001, the US military is so successful in waging conventional war that America's adversaries are, at present, seeking shelter at the extreme low end of the traditional spectrum of conflict. While cultural intelligence is applicable in conventional operations, it is especially important in military operations other than war where people and intent may become the center of gravity. With small wars, coupled with limited objectives, it has

become vital for the intelligence analyst to study the adversary's culture and communicate those key elements that effect planning and executing operations to the Regional Combatant Commander (RCC).

In Thomas Barnett's book, The Pentagon's New Map, he makes a strong argument that many of tomorrow's hotspots will reside in what he calls "the Non-Integrating Gap". This geopolitical "ozone hole" is described by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder, and, most importantly, the chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of terrorists.² The fact that the Global War on Terrorism may likely place US forces in many of these countries within the gap, accentuates the need for various J2s to address the myriad of intelligence shortfalls in these areas. Both breadth and depth of cultural knowledge of these Third World societies is called for.

The cultural forces at work in this emerging world are an important consideration. There are fundamental differences in the way varying cultures perceive conflict and fight wars. Cultural analysis, that accurately accounts for these variations, and subsequently communicates them in intelligence estimates and assessments, will better support the rational decision making process. If theater J2s do not absorb these distinctions and adequately articulate them to the RCC, future combat operations may win the fight, but actually end up undermining the strategic and operational objectives they're assigned to support.

Culture is defined as "a set of shared learned values, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, modes of living, customs, and symbols."³ Culture is the "lens" through which the enemy views the world. It is central to what the enemy sees, how the enemy makes sense of what is seen, and how he is willing to express it. In other words, culture is an inherited way of life that interpreted correctly can enhance intelligence estimates, which can translate into reducing the fog of war. Cultural factors are dynamic aspects of society that have the capacity to affect military operations. They include religion, ethnicity, language, customs, values, practices, perceptions, and assumptions, and driving causes like economy and security.⁴ Culture also includes experience. These factors create a cultural environment that US forces must navigate. Many use

the words “culture” and “society” interchangeably. While culture and society relate to one another, they are not the same. They are interdependent and one cannot exist without the other.

Culture is learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving in a society. Culture includes customs, folkways, manners, mannerisms, etiquette, behaviors, body language, gestures, celebrations, milestones, dress, outlooks, perceptions, and thought patterns. It is embodied in history, art, myths, legends, and heroes. It addresses appropriate responses to situations. It determines the circumstances and quality of apology, retribution, reward, punishment, equity, commiseration, disdain, shame, guilt, congratulations, and pride. It selects and applies social sanctions and reward. It expresses itself in superstitions, outlooks, perspectives, conventional knowledge, and points of view. It encompasses the sense of time, individuality, possessions, sharing, self-worth and group-worth. It establishes the social hierarchy, defining roles by sex, age, position, religion, wealth, family, and profession. In essence culture defines what is and is not okay, accepted and normal. ⁵

This encompasses the “cultural sphere” of the battlefield commander’s interests. If the cultural intelligence is not tailored to meet the needs of the commander, it will have limited usability and will make no contribution to military planning and execution. The function of understanding an enemy’s culture is not a separate intelligence discipline in itself, nor is it one dimensional, but rather an element that is fused within the all source analysis process to create the complete picture of what is known about the enemy. Cultural intelligence supports every phase of a major operation, theater security engagements, nation building, and many other operational endeavors.

To appreciate how culture is relevant at the operational level, one must recognize that culture determines how an adversary will perceive the world, thus potentially determining how and why he may act. Understanding the how and why, can simplify the tasks of designing courses of actions to deter, defend, or defeat the adversary. More importantly, operations guided by cultural intelligence can reduce the expenditure of resources, decrease the amount of time required for a given operation, and limit the number of casualties. Given that Non-Western societies comprise two-thirds of the world’s population, this underscores the importance of “knowing our enemy”. Culture could then become the prism through which the J2 community observes and assesses all adversaries.

At the operational level, we have struggled to carefully amass the “lessons of the past and present”. They provide perspective as well as context for appreciating the value of cultural intelligence and its significant effects on both planning and executing military operations. Since we face new and unique challenges, studying lessons learned based on past experience will not be good enough. Countering rogue elements or non-state actors that pose non-linear and unconventional operational challenges emphasizes non-linear, unconventional thinking. Already, we have paid an inordinate price for small lapses in cultural intelligence. The intelligence community needs to adapt. It requires that the J2 reassess Cold War paradigms and develop new methods in a multi-polar world of smaller, but no less lethal threats. These actions can largely influence the future stability, peace, and security within a given Area of Responsibility (AOR).

CULTURAL CONFUSION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The war with Japan was not just a conflict between opposing powers, but also between vastly different cultures. There are fundamental differences in the way states behave in war. If intelligence analysts do not understand these differences or ignore them, they risk underestimating the response of the enemy and jeopardizing mission accomplishment. Let us examine the lack of cultural intelligence in the Pacific during World War II which left us unprepared for some of the challenges that we faced in that theatre.

Japan's samurai heritage and the samurai code of ethics known as Bushido help to explain the wartime culture of no surrender. Unlike Western culture, considerations of right and wrong did not stem from religion, but rather from bushido codes that governed the conduct of the Japanese warrior or samurai.⁶ These principles emphasized honor, courage, loyalty, self-sacrifice, unquestionable reverence for the emperor, and contempt for defeat.

The Japanese educational system inculcated these values into the Japanese culture and national ideology and it was evident that they were working on a different operating system than ours.⁷ Although samurai warriors were long gone by World War II, their values had been preserved in Japan. This produced

a new breed of samurai warrior, the Kamikaze. Kamikaze attacks were organized suicide missions in which various types of warplanes were flown into an enemy target. Members of the Japanese military were under the impression that their primary purpose in life and the greatest glory they could achieve was to give their lives for Japan, and in particular, the Emperor. They were indoctrinated from an early age to revere the Emperor as a living deity.

Within this framework, the supreme sacrifice was regarded as rational. The greater good of all Japanese became the preferred mentality, emphasizing collective well-being over individual well-being. To come home defeated was shameful and recognized universally as the greatest dishonor. While not entirely equivalent to success, death was accepted as an honorable acknowledgement of defeat. Dying saved one's family and friends from this humiliation. The use of human suicide as an instrument of war stressed devotion to country and a willingness to die for the cause. This Japanese cultural system yielded a military that was rigid, extremely disciplined, and unquestionably devoted. The notion of self-sacrifice was not adverse to Japanese culture. The Japanese did not attach a stigma to suicide; it was preferred over a life of shame. The Japanese culture was developed and greatly affected by Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism. These religious ideologies undoubtedly helped influence military thinking and were often adapted to local circumstances or the unique political-military situations in which the Japanese found them.

Later in the war, Japan's objectives were limited to inflicting such losses in order to force a negotiated peace. Surrender was out of the question. Each Japanese commander's vision, influenced by the emperor, permeated throughout the ranks creating a mental state that accepted death. Once the Japanese military lost a multitude of pilots in the war, it found itself faced with the lack of time to train pilots to replace those lost. However, it took little time to train a Kamikaze as he had no need to learn to land the plane. Subsequently, the Japanese turned these "pilots" and their planes into guided missiles which were more efficient than "dumb bombs". While the strategy behind the Kamikaze was born purely out of

desperation,⁸ the willingness to implement and execute was imbedded within the Japanese culture and traditions.

The concepts of Bushido still are alien to and difficult for Westerners to comprehend. Western societies would consider Japanese Kamikazes the exemplification of the Japanese disregard for human life and absolute commitment to the victory of their nation above the rights of the individual. This is because Westerners have a different concept of the natural order of people in the world than do the Japanese. As this demonstrates, culture plays a major role in forming the thought processes of any potential adversary.

We must embrace cultural intelligence as a way to understand our adversaries. With the exception of extremists and religious zealots, most Americans value their lives over most causes. The high value placed on human life makes the thought of death almost unthinkable. The American soldier will try to preserve life at any cost. Therefore, we need to be careful not to “mirror image”. We cannot realistically expect our cultural values to reflect in our adversaries no more than they can expect us to have their same value system. What may appear to us as illogical or insane only signals the need to examine cultural aspects of the fight.

Intelligence during World War II was in its infancy. There was no coordinated intelligence gathering. The Navy had its intelligence and the Army had its intelligence. Both, however, lacked understanding of the enemy’s thought processes. Without this significant factor, the allies (Americans in particular) superimposed their own values and thought process on the Japanese when analyzing their next move. Inevitably, this lack of understanding cost many American lives before the Americans realized the depth to which the Japanese were willing to go to win.

Parallels to this type of cultural behavior have emerged in the Middle East in human suicide bombings, martyrdom for Allah, and terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, while the Americans eventually caught on during World War II, cultural analysis of the enemy has fallen off. How many more American lives will

be lost before we accept the fact that we live in a multi-cultural world where not everyone thinks like we do? It is imperative that intelligence systems incorporate significant cultural scrutiny into all aspects of painting the battle-space. Only then can a RCC institute effective plans and operations to obtain the desired end states.

THE EMERGING THREATS

September 11, 2001 opened the eyes of many commanders to the fact that we were facing a new kind of enemy. Failed States, terrorists and other disaffected groups are the new bogeymen of democracy and peace. In the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) we face an adversary that is primary non-state, transnational, decentralized and incredibly more difficult to identify with. The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism states that for intelligence to succeed in this war on terrorism, the US must not rely only on technical intelligence, but renew its emphasis on other types of intelligence needed to get inside the organizations, locate their sanctuaries, and disrupt their plans and operation.⁹ While not specifically mentioned, cultural intelligence is an implied task. The military intelligence effort devoted to combating terrorism is unique in comparison to conventional intelligence operations in support of conventional maneuver war. Intelligence preparation of the battlefield, order of battle, and templating forces will still be applicable but will have new meaning and applications. Now, instead of looking for an armored division or a submarine, we are attempting to find and fix people who are not susceptible to modernized collection efforts. The intelligence community at large is continually focusing on the acquisition and use of technology-driven intelligence systems. However, as the intelligence community becomes more mesmerized by technology, it is getting further away from the human dimension of this war. Particularly, it is losing focus on the cultural influences that define who the true adversary is and what his intentions are. Technology can help to lay out enemy capabilities, but explaining why an adversary acts as he does is beyond the scope of even the most advanced computer. Understanding the cultural motivation that drives

these budding adversaries may be our best guide to predicting intentions. The J2 organization has a golden opportunity to make a decisive difference in this war but must be willing to move past old habits and embrace culture as a force multiplier.

This enemy now brought into close proximity, stems from cultures that we typically know little about. This lack of cultural consciousness can afford the enemy the element of surprise and expose our vulnerabilities. Intelligence analysts need to think more like homicide detectives who focus on solving puzzles by looking for clues that are not readily obvious. All source intelligence, colored with insights into the cultural nuances of our adversaries, is crucial to provide indications and warning of possible attacks, improve the selection of military objectives, provide meaning to rules of engagement, identify the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, and institute valuable employment of operational functions to support mission success. It is also critical to illuminating key vulnerabilities that can be exploited and leveraged to prevent, preempt, and disrupt their activities before they occur.

Terrorists' actions are guided by their cultures. A suicide bombing, equivalent to the Kamikaze of the 20th century is one viable instrument of war for terrorists. Hassan Salame, the commander of the suicide bombers who carried out the wave of bombings in 1996 that precipitated the defeat of Prime Minister Shimon Peres and the elections of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, stated in an interview that a "suicide bombing is the highest level of jihad, and highlights the depth of our faith. The bombers are holy fighters who carry out one of the most important articles of faith."¹⁰ This shows that a superficial probing of the problem set will not be effective unless the analyst delves deeply into its cultural and ideological roots.

From a US intelligence analyst's view, we should not rest content with saying simply that these differences are so great that it is impossible to understand such people. There are many sciences that have good proof that even bizarre behavior does not prevent one's understanding it. The intelligence community can build to a body of expertise that can adequately analyze and interpret these cultural differences, as well

as cultural similarities, that in turn can provide leverage or an operational advantage to the RCC. Awareness of cultural differences and recognition of cultural differences at work are the first steps to “knowing the enemy”.

Cultural intelligence will prove indispensable to military efficiency in the GWOT. Historically, military planners and intelligence analysts often viewed cultural factors on the battlefield as insignificant and simply remain on “cultural cruise control”. This attitude cannot be accepted as recent operations have illustrated. In a Parameters article, Dr. Paul Bellutowski, of the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, wrote “Understanding culture may help to answer important military and civil questions such as the will of the enemy to fight, the determination of resistance groups to persevere, or the willingness of the populace to support insurgents or warlords.”¹¹ In the post Cold War world, the most important distinctions among people are not ideological, political, or economic. They are cultural.¹² Intelligence organizations directly supporting the RCC must embrace this reality and make significant strides in modifying intelligence operations to account for the facets of culture. Our enemy and the nature of war have transformed and so must we.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

For almost three years now, American soldiers have been serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. While Saddam’s dictatorship was toppled very quickly, America’s finest still battle daily with a formidable enemy- an enemy that most Americans think should be thankful to the US, should be cooperating with us, and should share our goals for their country. Americans may have won the battle in Iraq, but we struggle daily to win in its aftermath. Why has this task proven so daunting to the highly skilled and trained coalition troops (particularly the Americans)? The answer lies somewhere hidden in the cultural intelligence, or lack thereof for the region.

The initial “cultural awareness training” for deploying troops proved to be ineffective. American Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors were advised only on the social niceties of the area. They were never trained on the ramifications the cultural factors could have on battlefield effectiveness. The general culture of Iraq is assigned to those indigenous to the country of Iraq and sub- cultures within its distinct regions.

It had been over 10 years since the first Gulf War. Why is it then that the American soldier was still so poorly prepared for what awaited following major combat operations? The answer is simple. Despite historical lessons, American intelligence did not develop a sophisticated understanding of the social nuances of Iraq. This lack of cultural awareness is the structural weak link in the intelligence chain. While some agencies or armies have periodically developed and produced cultural publications, these have typically been limited in scope, and often based on outdated collection and written to serve only the needs of a specific operation.¹³ Disillusioned Soldiers and Marines have returned home reporting they were ill-prepared for the Iraqi response. The American military culture and Iraqi culture are so divergent that any gap in our knowledge becomes a significant disadvantage in the field.¹⁴ When they possess strong cultural understanding, commanders can transform seemingly random and irrational enemy activity into describable and semi-predictable acts.¹⁵

In an effort to overcome a lack of expertise or data on our adversaries, the intelligence analyst will resort to “mirror imaging”. They expect that other societies will behave as though they have the same culture and values system as themselves due to incomplete or incomprehensible intelligence on the enemy. Or they tend to be ethnocentric, the tendency to interpret and evaluate behavior and objects to reference one’s own culture.¹⁶ Ethnocentricity communicates an attitude of superiority.¹⁷

Marine Major Alfred Connable cleverly summed up some of the most obvious differences between American culture and Iraqi culture in his paper, “Marines are from Mars, Iraqis are from Venus.” He drives home the fact that Iraq is a developing third-world country and Iraqis are survivors. Overwhelmingly, they

do not have fancy homes, retirement savings accounts, or fast sports cars. They do not dream of a vacation next year. They simply exist from meal to meal and day to day. Their natural instinct is to do whatever they need to survive, for the moment.

This idea is crucial to understanding the insurgency in Iraq. Iraqis have a difficult time grasping the idea of the future and tomorrow. They, therefore, are not planning for the long term well-being of their nation. Built into the Iraqi code of honor is a strong sense of manhood and family, incorporating taking care of the family. To an Iraqi man, the end almost always justifies the means. It may not matter what unscrupulous deed must be accomplished to provide for his family, make money, and maintain his honor. It is this drive that inherently prevents most Iraqis from unadulterated loyalty to a political leader or government. They are always looking for a better opportunity. The only loyalty an Iraqi has is to his family and to God. To all others, he owes nothing.

Most Iraqis are guided by the strong Islamic tendency to accept fate. Because they readily accept their fate as God's will, few see any real call to excel. If they are a dishwasher, it is God's will and they never strive to own the restaurant. This clearly opposes the American concept of an honest dollar for an honest day's work. To an Iraqi, getting by is good enough.¹⁸ This can lead to tensions when Iraqi nationals are working side by side with coalition forces who expect they (the Iraqis) will have the same work ethic.

Living in a communal society, Iraqis grow up sharing resources to help increase survivability. If one member of a group is killed or imprisoned, some of these pooled resources have been reduced. Because they survive in a group, an attack on one is an attack on all.¹⁹ This pooling of resources also leaves little room for individualism. Iraqis rarely choose their path in life or their mate. Americans clearly underestimated the tribal system in Iraq. To weaken or kill any member of a tribe weakens the tribe as a whole. Similarly, to dishonor a tribe weakens its creditability and its power. Iraqis take this dishonor very seriously. To compensate, they will either negotiate or attack to redeem their honor. This loyalty to family and tribe was

not anticipated by Americans on Iraqi soil. American soldiers, believing they were doing good, removed Saddam from power, disarmed his armies, and killed many Iraqis in the process. Each of these Iraqis was a member of a family and a tribe leaving other members disillusioned and angry at the Americans.

The Iraqi people have grown up in a culture of war, dictatorship, and mistrust. To them, war is all they know. It could best be described as organized chaos. Despite the best efforts of the United States, most Iraqi people do not trust the Americans. They are unable to relate too many of the promises of prosperity that America makes to them. This lack of trust underscores the hurdles that we must still overcome to help Iraq become a strong and independent state.

The development of successful cultural awareness programs and the study of cultural factors to support military operations require a lead time that may be measured in years.²⁰ It is not something that after a quick search on the internet one would be an expert at the next morning. Establishing a successful cultural intelligence arena will require the embodiment of subject matter experts. Persons from particular regions, who could easily recognize the peculiarities of a society for what they are truly worth and disseminate the “corrected analysis” to the battlefield would make the best analysts.

Many of the first American troops in Iraq had no idea of what they would encounter when they emerged among the Iraqi people. This is unacceptable. With over ten years since the first gulf war, American intelligence should have built a database of significant and insignificant idiosyncrasies of the Iraqi people. Military operations in non- Western cultures such as Iraq and Afghanistan cannot be conducted successfully without carefully analyzing the ramifications and predicted responses of the indigenous peoples there. This human factor cannot continue to be ignored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The RCC expects a great deal from his intelligence. Changing threats mandate modification to existing practices. We need to make every effort to strengthen the ability to gather and incorporate cultural intelligence in our operations.

Breaking traditional paradigms will pay dividends in assessments to the RCC. There are systemic challenges in valuing the importance of cultural intelligence that must be addressed and improved. The following recommendations do not offer all the answers to the subject discussed. All of these pieces exist, but many have been allowed to atrophy or have been used in an outdated fashion. When we combine knowledge gained through cultural analysis with a threat's innate capabilities, we will improve our ability to develop effective operational level intelligence assessments and plans. It is a critical link to "knowing thy enemy."

First and foremost, the intelligence cycle needs to be expanded and realigned to adapt to the changed circumstances and threats of the 21st century. Specifically, there should be measures to the intelligence cycle to incorporate culture. The traditional intelligence cycle consists of (1) requirements, (2) collection, (3) processing, (4) analysis, and (5) dissemination. The process has cultural "blindness" and this lack of cultural attention is an institutional shortcoming.

This process turns requests for information into finished intelligence products supporting the commander's Priority Intelligence Requirements. It is well established and proven effective but remains tailored to support traditional operations.

While cultural factors have relevance and should permeate in all stages, the analytical stage is where cultural intelligence will have the biggest payoff. In an effort to improve this stage, the following are but a few initiatives that would assist in drawing out the right conclusions concerning our adversaries: 1) Develop "culture cells" whose personnel do not require clearances. This culture cell would be a group of analysts that role play the adversary to reflect the mode of thinking by the enemy. They would look at the situation from the enemy's vantage point and produce recommendations that could approximate the cultural norms. In many J2 staffs our regional experts are few and are often only one deep. With the many technological advances, this cell could be situated anywhere in the world. The ideal candidates would be educated people

from another culture. One might be a first generation immigrant while another might be a person on a work visa. Their purpose would be to read local newspapers from their native countries, watch native television reports, and report to the J2 analysts their take on the information they are subjected to. Having been raised abroad, these individuals would have a unique perspective on world events. 2) Increase information sharing with subject matter experts, all of whom need not be in the military. A national data base should be established listing subject matter experts in certain areas of the world. This information could be readily accessible to everyone. As much of the information about culture would be open source. This unclassified information could be accessed at the drop of a dime. If a commander had a question about the religious practices of a group in a particular area, they should be able to access the experts through the internet and receive pertinent, up to date information in a timely manner. By pooling and categorizing this information, it will increase the level of confidence and reliability of the information provided to the commander. 3) Finally, exploit the capabilities of our allies or host countries. Some of our allies have easier access to other cultures or have talent in certain collection techniques that we may be weaker at. The bottom line is we need to consolidate the cultural intricacies from all sources to better prepare our commanders with the intelligence they need to know.

My second recommendation calls for cultural aspects to be institutionalized within the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (JIPB). JIPB defines the methodology employed to reduce uncertainties concerning the enemy, environment, and terrain for all types of operations. The existing JIPB process does not specify the inclusion of key pieces of culture, and is currently integrated merely as a secondary thought. This deficiency imparts many “blind spots” that could have adverse effects on the battlefield.

JIPB comprises an iterative four-step process: (1) Define the Battlefield Environment, (2) Describe the Battlefield Effects, (3) Evaluate the Threat, and (4) Determine Threat Courses of Action (COA).²¹ It

assists in organizing and analyzing information on adversaries, terrain, and environment to enable a commander to “selectively apply and maximize his combat power at critical points in time and space on the battlefield.”²² While this alone will suffice for the conventional fight, it will remain incomplete in MOOTW without the assimilation of cultural intelligence.

The need to develop formal cultural JIPB methodologies for inclusion in staff planning doctrine is paramount. This could follow the steps of current JIPB methodology with modification to consider the cultural sphere, cultural effects, and cultural threat templating. This process would allow us to identify culturally related centers of gravity, target areas of interest and critical vulnerabilities of future enemies. It would bring to bear better facts and assumptions. Overall, it will provoke thought about the full range of analytical issues involved.

While the current JIPB pattern provides a good foundation, it needs to be modified to account for the challenges US forces are currently faced with. Until an alternative prototype is available, the intelligence analyst must resort to individually integrating cultural considerations in all aspects of their daily activity.

Finally, we need to grow existing capabilities already present in our military inventory that serve as “force multipliers” in cultural awareness and cultural intelligence. These include but are not limited to human intelligence, special operations forces, foreign area officers, linguists, analysts, and civil affairs. Each of these specialties receives a degree of cultural education that make them more valuable today than ever before. Although imperfect, these capabilities can do things that our satellites and electronics cannot. They bring cultural aptitude to the decision making process. Both the institutional and first hand knowledge of these subject matter experts have to be linked to the intelligence process to maximize their input.

While these unique capabilities can be found at the operational level, the size and scope is so limited that they cannot deliver all the support demanded of them. Many efforts taken by all services are underway to rebuild these important capabilities but it will take time. However, these steps need to become more

macro and not only address the events in the Middle East, but include a rich appreciation of the entire spectrum of potential hot spots. The dramatic geopolitical changes resulting from the end of the Cold War produced a plethora of potential adversaries, traditional and nontraditional, at the operational level.

... if we had better understood the Iraqi culture and mindset, our war plans would have been even better than they were, [and] the plan for the post-war period and all of its challenges would have been far better...we must improve our cultural awareness...to inform the policy process. Our policies would benefit from this not only in Iraq, but...elsewhere, where we will have long-term strategic relationships and potential military challenges for many years to come.
Ike Skelton, in a letter to Donald Rumsfeld, October 23, 2003²³

CONCLUSION

We are at cross roads on the role of cultural intelligence in supporting military operations.

Obviously, there is a huge cultural divide throughout a RCC's area of influence that do not necessary relate to grid points on a map. A RCC needs to know everything about old and new threats and culture is a big part of this. While there has been considerable movement on the "intelligence front," to better understand the enemy of the 21st century, we still have a long way to go. We have remained in an intellectual "comfort zone" due to our primary mindset of fighting the last war instead of puzzling out the current one. Changes in the intelligence business must go beyond redrawing the organization chart or increasing more of the same techniques.

Terrorists, insurgents, and other rogue elements do not utilize traditional means to communicate, or keep themselves out in the open where it is convenient for us to take a photograph. Instead they maintain a closed organization that is difficult to penetrate. For too many years, the intelligence community has been primarily dependent on technical means as the silver bullet—satellites, airplanes, and ground stations- which have left us poorly prepared to answer some of the most important questions in the operations we face today. Traditional intelligence requirements will remain critical, but they will also remain insufficient

against an enemy that is different and continues to evolve. In the conflicts our forces face now, the big war vintage intelligence apparatuses are inadequate and must be augmented with an untapped source.

It is time for intelligence organizations supporting the RCC to reevaluate those aspects of culture. Commanders are demanding trends and developments that directly impact operations, assessments of key variables and the forces at work in those situations, insights into the motives and goals of our adversaries, and risks and opportunities for actions taken. Cultural intelligence has immense relevance to the increasing demands placed in this area. Culture was previous only used as icing on the cake if the analyst ever got around to it. Today, cultural intelligence has expanded well beyond the icing and comprises a large part of the cake itself.

It is imperative to “bore-sight” intelligence to account for culture at the operational level. History is rich with costly examples of how important it is to consider an adversary’s culture when attempting to know the enemy. The paradox is, “why have those lessons not been fully implemented”? The answer may lie in the assertion that it may take yet another “cataclysmic” event such as 9-11-01 to initiate a radical transformation in the way we conduct intelligence operations.

To meet this challenge, the J2 supporting the RCC must redefine existing paradigms and start to invest in cultural intelligence to reap the benefits. The key is our ability to get the most out of the varying cultures with enough sophistication to demonstrate that the context matters. It would be tragic for an intelligence analyst with the collection assets to measure precise enemy capabilities, to miss the next Kamikaze attacks or fail to perceive the real threat due to a lack of cultural understanding. As Gen Anthony Zinni (USMC Ret.) stated, “the lesson learned (in Somalia) that kept coming out was that we lacked cultural awareness. We needed cultural intelligence going in.”²⁴ Cultural Intelligence is no longer a subject of debate: we must make it a key ingredient within our intelligence processes or pay the price.

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- ²Barnett, Thomas P.M. "The Pentagon's New Map," *Esquire*. March 2003. (NWC 3066)
- ³Payne, J. Richard. *The Clash with Distant Cultures: Values, Interests, and Force in American Foreign Policy*. New York: New York State University Press, 1995. pg7.
- ⁴ABCA Cultural (Awareness) Intelligence Project Team. 29 November- 3 December 2004. (Presented at Pell Center Workshop: "Prepared for Peace? The Use and Abuse of 'Culture' in Military Simulations, Training and Education." December 6, 2004. Newport, Rhode Island).
- ⁵Special Operations and international Studies Political Military Analysis Handbook. Ft. Bragg, NC: United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. 2004. Chapter 13.
- ⁶Paine, Sally, "Strategies in the Pacific" (Lecture presented at the Naval War College for Strategy and Policy, Newport RI, 27 Sept, 2004.)
- ⁷Paine.
- ⁸Hoyt, Edwin, *The Kamikazes*, New York: Arbor House, 1983, pp. 13-30
- ⁹National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, February 2003, pg16.
- ¹⁰Post, Jerrold M. "Know thy Enemy" Profiles of Adversary Leaders and their Strategic Cultures, USAF Counter proliferation Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, November 2002
- ¹¹Bellutowski, Paul. *Parameters*, Spring 96. p34
- ¹²Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilization and the remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. pp21.
- ¹³ABCA Armies Program Office. "developing a standardized Cultural Factors Database." 2 December 2004. (Presented at Pell Center Workshop: "Prepared for Peace? The Use and Abuse of 'Culture' in Military Simulations, Training and Education." December 6, 2004. Newport, Rhode Island).
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- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Connable, Alfred, Major. "Marines are from Mars, Iraqis are from Venus." 30 may 2004. (Presented at Pell Center Workshop: "Prepared for Peace? The Use and Abuse of 'Culture' in Military Simulations, Training and Education." December 6, 2004. Newport, Rhode Island).
- ¹⁹Ibid.
- ²⁰ABCA Cultural (Awareness) Intelligence Project Team.
- ²¹Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, Field Manual (FM) 34-130* Washington, DC: GPO, 8 July 1994. 1-1.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Wunderle, William, LTC. " Through the Lens of Cultural awareness: Planning requirements in Wielding the Instruments of National Power." (Presented November 17, 2004 at The Santa Monica forum conference center, Santa Monica, California).
- ²⁴Ibid.

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