ENABLING THE FUTURE FORCE: THE USE OF REGIONAL ALIGNMENT, MISSION COMMAND AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE TO CREATE AN OPERATIONALLY ADAPTABLE ARMY

A Monograph

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Over the last decade, the Army has shifted its focus from fighting wars to capturing lessons learned, updating doctrine and creating concepts that will enable it to project power across the globe in support of national objectives. Among the new terms and concepts are regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence. The difficulty in understanding the relationship between regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence is that there has not been a great effort to explain how these efforts can serve each other as part of a single approach. The U.S. Army would benefit from fully incorporating the three concepts to enable future operations in an ever-changing environment.

The paper demonstrates how the concepts are viewed as an interdependent system rather than as separate ideas and how the symbiotic relationship between regional alignment, cultural competence, and mission command could empower the U.S. Army to accomplish its strategic objectives in a resource constraint environment. Initially, the paper explores the regional alignment concept as a requirement to pursue national strategic objectives. Subsequently, the paper explains the U.S. Army's mission command concept and how cultural competence enables it. Next, the Army's cultural requirements are defined to explain the role of culture, cultural competence, and inter-cultural communications. Finally, the United States' Operation Blacklist and Strategic Hamlet Plans of the Japanese Occupation and the Vietnamese pacification efforts are examined to highlight the concepts and principles that enabled operations and influenced the regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence initiatives.

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ABSTRACT

ENABLING THE FUTURE FORCE: THE USE OF REGIONAL ALIGNMENT, MISSION COMMAND AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE TO CREATE AN OPERATIONALLY ADAPTABLE ARMY, by MAJ Jose R. Vasquez, Army, 57 pages.

Over the last decade, the Army has shifted its focus from fighting wars to capturing lessons learned, updating doctrine and creating concepts that will enable it to project power across the globe in support of national objectives. Among the new terms and concepts are regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence. The difficulty in understanding the relationship between regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence is that there has not been a great effort to explain how these efforts can serve each other as part of a single approach. The U.S. Army would benefit from fully incorporating the three concepts to enable future operations in an ever-changing environment.

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ACRONYMS

ACFLS	Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy
ARIBSS	Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences
ASPG	Army Strategic Planning Guidance
GPNLOP	Geographically Phased National Level Plan
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAC-V	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
NMS	National Military Strategy
NSS	National Security Strategy
OODA	Observation-Orientation-Decision-Action
SCAP	Supreme Commander of Allied Powers
USIS	United States Information Service

ILLUSTRATIONS

> "Success as an aligned force requires embracing mission command as a philosophy, establishing mission command systems to keep hands on the forward problem, and adopting a forward-focused mindset. Mission command enables the regionally aligned force to create shared trust and understanding within the headquarters, build the relationships and teams necessary to support the geographic combatant commander, and develop the flexibility necessary to provide mission-tailored command posts to the combatant command."
>
> —Brig. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby Jr., Mission Command in the Regionally Aligned Division Headquarters

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, the Army has shifted its focus from fighting wars to capturing lessons learned, updating doctrine, and creating concepts that will enable it to project power across the globe in support of national objectives. Among the new terms and concepts are "regional alignment," "mission command," and "cultural competence." A quick search of the Defense Technical Information Center database reveals a series of documents that attempt to define each concept in isolation. However, the strength of the ideas do not lie only in their individual utility, but rather how the concepts can be a part of a mutually supporting method. Used together, they enable the Army to meet national strategic objectives. Regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence can be best understood as a trinity in which each individual concept enables the other.

The explanation of this trinity begins with regional alignment; this is the U.S. Army's attempt to create a force that provides rapidly deployable, tailored capabilities that are consistently available for all requirements.[1] It is the regional alignment concept that emphasizes the need for mission command and cultural competence concepts to operate in unfamiliar regional environments. The U.S. Army's ability to meet all of its assigned requirements ensures

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[1]LTG James L. Huggins, LTG Raymond V. Mason, and MG Luis R. Visot "Readiness Posture of the U.S. Army." *Congressional Briefing*. (Washington DC: House Armed Services Committee, 2013), 5.

that the United Stated maintains a position of relative advantage in the specified region, and it is executed through the U.S. Army's operational concept: Unified Land Operations.[2]

The second concept is mission command; it places the commander at the center of the decision process to exercise authority and direction in a rapidly changing complex environment.[3] Mission command requires the commander to make decisions in context; understand the operational environment; and create mutual trust, shared understanding, and purpose. To enable regional alignment, mission command must not only build trust, shared understanding, and purpose with U.S. forces, but must do so with coalitions from different cultural backgrounds.

Cultural competence is a skill that enables commanders to view the operational environment and understand it in context. Because military operations are human endeavors, and actions are designed to influence human actors, it is important to understand the cultural system that shaped the environment and the actors within it. The regional alignment concept creates the need for cultural competence to facilitate understanding of the operational environment, and in mission command it is important to know what cultural factors shaped the actors to enable communication. By understanding the nature of the cultural milieu and actors within it, the commander is better able to adapt operations and competently communicate actions to achieve intended effects, and regional alignment provides the opportunity and potential.[4]

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[2]Everett C Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 3–17.

[3]U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 1.

[4]Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 38 (n.d.): 42–48, www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jfq/1038.pdf. (accessed March 7, 2014); Wayne W. Grigsby et al., "Mission Command in the Regionally Aligned Division Headquarters," *Military Review*, (November/ December 2013): 2–9, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives /English/MilitaryReview_20131231_art004.pdf. (accessed March 7, 2014).

Connecting Ideas and Identifying Potential

The difficulty in understanding the relationship between regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence is that there has not been a great effort to explain how these concepts can serve each other as part of a single approach. Multiple articles, research papers, and commentaries seek to justify each concept as important, but rarely recognize how effective they would be combined. The research argues that the symbiotic relationship between the regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence enables the Army's strategic objectives.

Regional alignment is a concept that places a selected force in a specified region to enable the U.S. Army's strategic objectives.[5] In achieving the strategic objectives, the regional force must build international partnerships. Mission command is designed to enable decision-making and effectively communicate the best course of action to achieve an intended purpose. It requires the commander to create a shared understanding of the environment and objectives, not only across the staff, but also with multinational partners.[6] Cultural competence provides context to actions within the operational environment. Greater cultural competence enables effective communication, resulting in proficient inter- or cross-cultural communication.

Regional alignment both enables and requires mission command to provide the opportunity to create a shared understanding among international partners. For mission command to be successful, it requires a common understanding not only among U.S. Army forces but also between multinational coalitions, and this enhances cultural competence.[7] Regional alignment also enables cultural competence by exposing soldiers to a foreign culture and providing the opportunity for them to learn the patterns of that culture.

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[5]Huggins, Mason, and Visot, 4–6.

[6]McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," 42–48.

[7]Grigsby et al., "Mission Command in the Regionally Aligned Division Headquarters," 2–9.

Mission command facilitates regional alignment by providing leaders who can create a shared understanding among international partners. Who are better able to grasp the purpose of actions and the effects they are intended to create.[8] Mission command enables cultural competence by creating an environment in which a shared understanding is necessary, where the leader must decipher cultural patterns of the multinational team. In doing so, the leader gains greater knowledge of the cultural biases present in the environment, thereby enabling greater cultural competence.

Cultural competency enables regional alignment by providing context to the operational environment that the force is a part of. The more time and interaction the force has within the regional environment, the more opportunity it has to become more culturally competent. Within regional alignment, cultural competence enables the force to understand the operational environment and adapt relevant operations accordingly. Cultural competence enables mission command by providing context to the environment by enabling communication across cultures. As the leader gains a greater understanding of the environment, that understanding provides greater clarity of the effects cause by actions and supports the decision-making process. Cultural competence enables the leader to communicate effectively to individuals of different cultures to achieve the unity of effort and purpose.[9] To substantiate this claim, this study will focus on the decision-making aspect of regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence by using historical examples.

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[8] Grigsby et al., "Mission Command in the Regionally Aligned Division Headquarters," 2–9.

[9] Allison Abbe, Lisa M. V. Gulik, and Jeffrey L. Herman, *Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders: A Conceptual and Empirical Foundation* (Arlington, VA: United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, October 2007), 1–13.

Proposing a Unification of Concepts

This monograph exposes the utility in linking the concepts and the potential that regional alignment, mission command and cultural competence provide to planners and commanders. The U.S. Army would benefit from fully incorporating the three concepts to enable future operations to support national objectives in an ever-changing environment. Initially, this paper explores the regional alignment concept as a requirement to pursue national strategic objectives. The use of Armed Services Committee Reports, Congressional testimonies, and Army strategic guidance and white papers will define what the Army is attempting to accomplish in the regional alignment concept. Subsequently, this paper explains the U.S. Army's mission command concept and how cultural competence enables it. Army doctrinal publications and journal articles will serve as sources for this portion.

Next, the Army's cultural requirements define and explain the role of culture, cultural competence, and inter-cultural communications. This section serves as a foundation to enable the understanding of inter-cultural communication competence and its place in planning and mission command. Concluding, the United States' Operation Blacklist and Strategic Hamlet Plans of the Japanese Occupation and the Vietnamese pacification efforts are examined to highlight the concepts and principles that enabled operations and influenced the regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence initiatives. United States original occupation plans and reports on Japan and Vietnam will serve as sources for this portion. The use of U.S. Army doctrine and publications, inter-cultural communication theory, and history demonstrate how uniting the three concepts in employing a regional force creates shared understanding to accomplish objectives that advance U.S. strategic interest in a regional environment.

This paper demonstrates how the concepts can be viewed as an interdependent construct rather than as separate ideas and how the symbiotic relationship between regional alignment,

cultural competence, and mission command could empower the U.S. Army to accomplish a broader range of missions in a resource constraint environment.

Regional alignment places the force in a regional area of national interest and enables multinational partnerships. Mission command supports leaders and staffs in creating a shared understanding in a multicultural environment that facilitates decision-making. Finally, cultural competence provides a context and enables communication in the multicultural environment.

OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTS

> "The Army is globally engaged and regionally responsive; it is an indispensable partner and provider of a full range of capabilities to Combatant Commanders in a Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multi-national (JIIM) environment. As part of the Joint Force and as America's Army, in all that we offer, we guarantee the agility, versatility and depth to Prevent, Shape and Win."
>
> —The Army Vision, Army Doctrinal Publication 1

The Army's Vision Statement requires U.S. Army forces to achieve the objectives in the land domain. *Army Doctrinal Publication 1* explains, "The land domain is the most complex of the domains, because it addresses humanity—its cultures, ethnicities, religions, and politics."[10] The U.S. Army must field a force that is capable of creating regional partnerships, able to understand the regional environment, and create a shared understanding among multinational partners to set conditions for the achievement of the strategic objectives. The concepts of regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence serve as the corners of a trinity designed to create the means needed to achieve the strategic purpose.

Regional Alignment—Aligning Means with Ends

> "To be more responsive to all combatant commanders and better enable our joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational partners, the Army is regionally-aligning its forces to provide rapidly deployable, tailored capabilities that are consistently available for all requirements."
>
> —LTG James L. Huggins, Jr. Statement before the House Armed Services Committee

The regional alignment concept seeks to support the U.S. Army's means to political, strategic ends. Strategic theorist Everett C. Dolman has explained that the purpose of strategy is to enhance the position of the state, and in relating military means, to achieve political aims. This

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[10]U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 1: *The Army* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 17–24.

requires both political and military actions to achieve the same purpose.[11] Through aligning forces with indigenous allies and partners, the Army now seeks to nest its purpose with the requirements of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Military Strategy (NMS).

In the 2010 NSS, President Barack Obama emphasized that the nation must "build and integrate the capabilities that can advance our interest and the interest we share with other countries and peoples."[12] The focus has centered on building deeper, more effective partnerships with nations to enable regional success and stability using the different elements of American power. Regional alignment is supposed to enable the Army's ability to provide long-lasting military partnership in selected regions to build alliances through multinational cooperation and coordination.

In the 2011 NMS, Admiral Michael Mullen echoed the need to "deepen security relationships with our allies and create opportunities for partnerships with new and diverse groups of actors."[13] The NMS listed strengthening international and regional security as one of only four national military objectives. The necessity to create opportunities for partnership with diverse groups requires the need for cultural competence. Admiral Mullen further emphasized that leadership is the key to exercising "the full spectrum of power to defend our national interests and advance international security and stability."[14] Finally, he said it also required that forces must be globally available, yet regionally focused, and capable of addressing cultural concerns in host countries. The regional alignment concept answers this call by providing a culturally competent

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[11] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 3–17.

[12] "National Security Strategy, May 2010" (Office of the President of the United States, May 2010), www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/.../national_security_strategy.pdf. (accessed December 31, 2013).

[13]U.S. Department of Defense, "National Military Strategy, February 2011," February 2011, http://www.army.mil/info/references/docs/NMS%20FEB%202011.pdf. (accessed December 31, 2013).

[14]Ibid., 1.

force to collaborate with allies and execute operations using mission command.

The 2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance (ASPG) dictated that the Army "provide modernized and ready, tailored land force capabilities to meet Combatant Commanders' requirements across the range of military operations." [15] The 2012 ASPG force requirement identified a need for a culturally competent force in planning and executing operations. The document outlined training for operational adaptability, the alignment of forces to specific regions, and the adaptation of tailored force packages to provide security force assistance. The first cultural requirement is in training operational adaptability. The ASPG stated that operational adaptability "will require emphasis on mission command and training that continues to emphasize…the Human Dimension."[16] Understanding the human dimension in a region requires cultural competence and the ability to communicate inter-culturally.[17]

The 2012 ASPG also dictated that regionally aligned forces focus on language and cultural training to enable operations in their assigned regions. The Army's adaptation of the brigade as a modular, deployable unit requires that the training and additional cultural specialist be provided to brigade formations. The purpose is to enable tailored force packages and provide security force assistance to the Joint Force Commander.[18] The regional alignment concept requires training that provides a specific cultural understanding of a region, the ability to apply a general cultural understanding to a plan of operations, and the ability to communicate across cultures to accomplish specific objectives, and understand the human dimension to enable mission command.

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[15]John M. McHugh and GEN Raymond T. Odierno, *2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, April 19, 2012), 6.

[16]Ibid., 7.

[17]Abbe, Gulik, and Herman, *Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders: A Conceptual and Empirical Foundation*, 1–4, 34–37.

[18]McHugh and Odierno, *2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance*, 10.

Finally, a reliance on forward positioned forces implies joint actions across the full spectrum of operations with international partners. Military operations may incorporate other U.S. agencies or international partners to include a coalition. In these operations, U.S. planners must determine how agreements are negotiated and enforced. James G. March, professor emeritus at Stanford University, argues that in coalitions, multiple actors must bargain to create the coalition and project power to accomplish the pursuit of varying objectives.[19] Overseas operations require leaders to effectively communicate with actors with different cultural backgrounds. The leaders must also be capable of understanding the effect of communications on the operational environment as well as the objectives that must be accomplished, and then they must communicate the course of action effectively.[20]

Regional alignment is the first step in organizing the U.S. Army can that grasps the broader cultural environment. It simply provides a U.S. Army force as the vehicle by which the combatant commanders plan to drive to their destination. The mission command concept provides the driver, or guiding system. Mission command is the leadership philosophy that drives the force in a regionally aligned environment.[21]

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[19]James G March and Chip Heath, *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 151–160.

[20]GEN Raymond T. Odierno, "The U.S. Army in a Time of Transition | Foreign Affairs," *Foreign Affairs*, (May/ June 2012), http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137423/raymond-t-odierno/the-us-army-in-a-time-of-transition. (accessed August 13, 2013).

[21]Charles A. Flynn and Wayne W. Grigsby, "The Mission Command Center of Excellence: Driving Institutional Adaptability," *Army Magazine*, (February 2012), 37–43, http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2012/02/Documents/Flynn_0212.pdf. (accessed March 8, 2013).

Mission Command—The Guiding System

> Mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of full spectrum operations.
>
> —ADP 3-0, Mission Command

The U.S. Army can expose potential in the operating environment by integrating the three concepts as an interdependent system into the decision making process. Mission command is a concept that consists of two primary ideas. First, it represents a philosophy that emphasizes the commander's role in exercising authority using mission orders to conduct and plan operations. Second, it is a warfighting function and describes the physical system that facilitates the command and control of the force.[22] Mission command's conceptual aspect has a cognitive component and focuses on building teams, building mutual trust, creating shared understanding, enabling initiative, and determining risk. The cognitive aspect then transitions to the physical action by explaining the commander's intent and the use of mission orders to accomplish the objectives or tasks. The warfighting functions aspect of the concept is the system that translates the commander's cognitive vision to physical action by creating a plan that determines tasks, objectives, and how to use resources. In order for operations to be effective, mission command should provide an environment of mutual trust and understanding among commanders, subordinates, and partners.[23]

The cognitive aspect of the philosophy requires the commander to understand and adapt to ever-evolving complex systems. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin E.

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[22]U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 1–5.

[23]U.S. Department of the Army, Army Tactics Techniques and Procedures 5-0.1, *Commander and Staff Officer Guide* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 1.

Dempsey, emphasized in his 2012 Mission Command White Paper that mental agility and superior speed in competitive cycles of decision-making are required attributes for commanders. General Dempsey likened the decision cycle to John Boyd's OODA loop by noting the central theme as "making appropriate decisions more quickly than one's opponent."[24] Frans P.B. Osinga explained that in relation to broad context in creating a thorough process using the OODA loop, that orientation is the central concept in the model. Orientation requires the decision maker to develop, maintain, and reshape his understanding of the environment. Essential to understanding is knowing the cultural traditions of the decision maker and other actors in the system. Failure in the orientation step diminishes the decision maker's ability to interpret the environment. The key to the OODA loop is not necessarily the overall speed, cycling through the loop from start to finish, but rapid and correct orientation resulting in successful decisions and actions.[25] The OODA loop is a useful tool in explaining how a commander's understanding of the operational environment is enhanced by cultural competence in the commander's decision making in this process (see Fig. 1). Cultural competence supports orientation in this process to help the commander form a hypothesis that leads to effective action.

[24]Martin E. Dempsey, "Mission Command White Paper" (U.S. Department of Defense, April 3, 2012), 4.

[25]Frans P. B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 229–238.

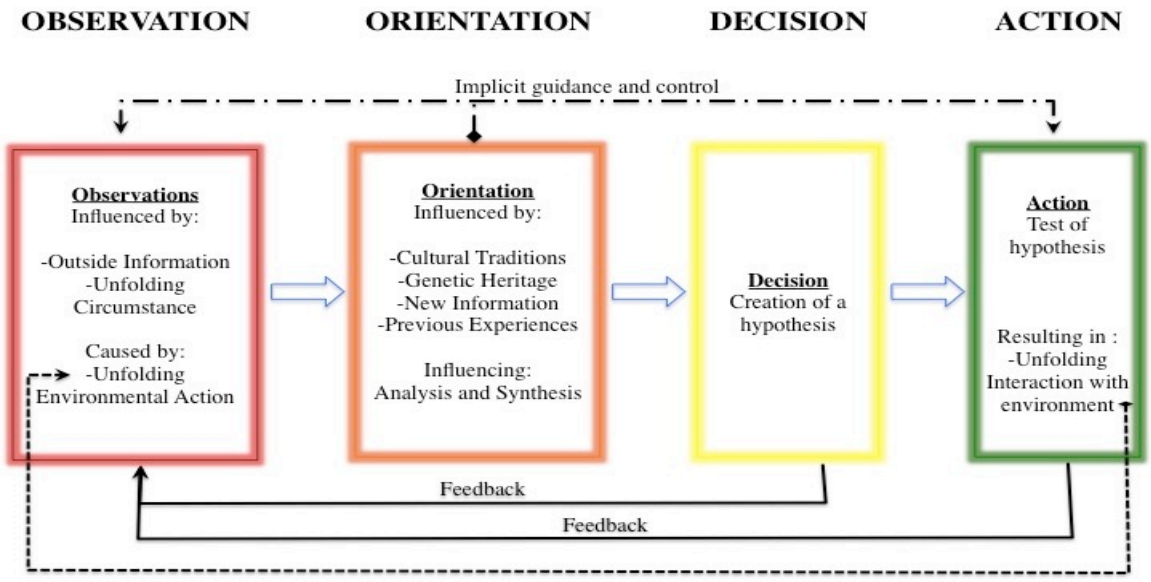

Figure 1. The decision-making cycle explained by the expanded OODA loop

Source: Created by author.

Cultural Competence—The Operating System

Culture is a learned system that guides people through their decisions in life and provides purpose to their actions. Jamshid Gharajedaghi, a systems theorist, likened culture's function to a computer operating system by noting that without a viable and "dynamic culture, a social system is doomed."[26] Culture creates a shared image of the environment among people interpreting and synthesizing the world around them to create a meaningful mental model that provides values and a basis for decision-making. He described the creation of culture as "a blueprint for the production of a predefined order" that is constantly being redrawn to adapt to emerging realities.[27]

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[26]Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam ; Boston: Elsevier, 2006), 122.

[27]Ibid., 121.

Creation of the Operating System

Stella Ting-Toomey, a Professor of Human Communication Studies at California State University, defined culture as "a learned meaning system that consist of patterns of tradition, beliefs, values, norms, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community."[28] By this definition, becoming a cultural expert requires the individual to be constantly active in the community in order to learn the patterns of that culture. According to Brooks Person, a cross-cultural trainer, culture has objective and subjective aspects that can be seen as an iceberg (see Fig. 2).[29] The top portion of the iceberg, the portion out of the water, is anything you can perceive with your five senses. The submerged portion is what cannot be identified by the five senses but creates the logic or foundation for what can be seen at the top.[30] Understanding how the subjective aspect of culture manifests in the objective requires cultural competence.[31]

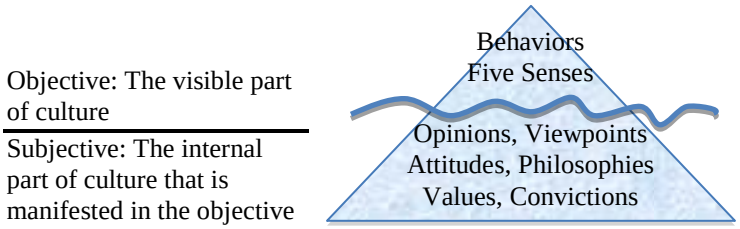

Figure 2. Culture portrayed as an iceberg

Source: Created by author.

[28]Stella Ting-Toomey, *Communicating across Cultures*, The Guilford communication series (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 9.

[29]Brooks Peterson, *Cultural Intelligence: A Guide to Working with People from Other Cultures* (Yarmouth, Me: Intercultural Press, 2004), 15–21.

[30]There are multiple version of the cultural iceberg. Ibid., 1–23.

[31]Ting-Toomey, *Communicating across Cultures*, 9–21.

Brian H. Spitzberg, a Professor at San Diego State University, explained that there are several cultural competence theories that all have three things in common: all assume cultural competence is created through knowledge, motivation, and skills, see Figure 3.[32] The first part of cultural competence is cultural knowledge that enables an awareness of the similarities or differences in a culture, provides context, and comprehension of culture-specific information.[33] Cultural knowledge assists individuals interacting within their culture to understand the underlying causes for observed behavior and anticipate new behavior. Second, the motivational aspect, also referred to as the affective or emotional piece, is the emotive reasoning behind the actions an individual of a specific culture may take in certain situations. It describes how group equality, risk taking, and discrimination influences an individual's attitude or motivation to take action.[34] Third, behavioral skill focuses on the manner in which a culture listens, observes, interprets, analyzes, and evaluates those around them. Understanding these aspects allows people to interact and adjust to the environment around them, both with verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Skills in these three components of cultural competence permit the soldier to communicate across cultures competently. Moreover, cultural knowledge enables the planner to anticipate behavior and understand the effects operations may have based on the cultural environment. The consideration of the motivational part of culture facilitates planning by being able to envisage an individual's attitude towards a plan based on his cultural motivations. It also allows the commander and planner to be mindful of those motivations. The behavioral skill

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[32]Brian H. Sptizberg and Gabrielle Changnon, "Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence," in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Darla K. Deardorff (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2009).

[33]Ibid., 10–15.

[34]Ibid.

portion of cultural competence assists a planner or leader in communicating the purpose of an action to another culture in a manner the can be properly decoded. Together, these three characteristics—knowledge, motivation, and behavioral skill— provide a base for inter-cultural communication.

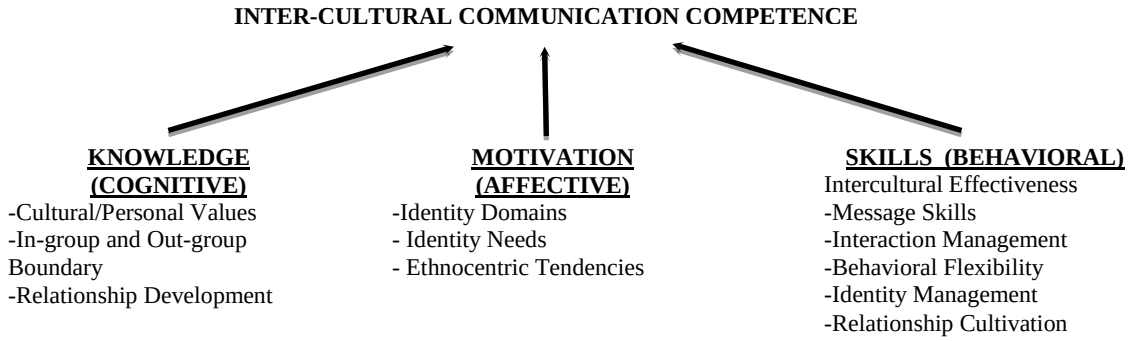

Figure 3. The three aspects of inter-cultural communication competence

Source: Created by the author.[35]

Margaret D. Pusch, Associate Director of the Intercultural Communication Institute, explained that the degree of inter-cultural competence depends on the acquired degree of the underlying elements.[36] Cultural competence is a requirement for effective cross-cultural communication because it assists in noting differences in backgrounds, codes, or conventions, resulting in knowing when, how, and how much to adapt behavior to achieve successful

[35] The figure is a conceptualization of the three aspects of inter–cultural competence from various sources. Brian H. Sptizberg and Gabrielle Changnon, "Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence," in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Darla K. Deardorff (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2009): Margaret D. Pusch, "The Interculturally Competent Global Leader," in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Darla K. Deardorff (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2009).

[36]Margaret D. Pusch, "The Interculturally Competent Global Leader," in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Darla K. Deardorff (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2009), 66–70.

communication.[37] The more culturally competent the individual, the more effective that individual is at communication. A less culturally competent individual is not as capable because the he fails to move past the objective portion of culture. The culturally competent individual is more capable of understanding and interacting with the actors in the environment. This enables the anticipation of the actions and effects of military operations more accurately and then communicate them competently. A simplified conceptualization of inter-cultural communication is provided in figure 4. The triangle represents the cultural iceberg that influences the individual's actions and shapes his understanding. The dot is the individual, who is the communicator between cultures. The arrows represent the individual's cultural competence of others' cultures. The individual from Culture 1 lacks cultural competence and is only able to react to what is observed through the five senses, or objective aspect of culture. The individual from Culture 2 is more culturally competent and is able to connect the behavior observe through the five senses to the underlying factors that caused it, or the subjective aspect of culture. As more actors of different cultures are added this basic figure, it becomes more complex and communication must then take place across multiple cultures. Stella Ting-Toomey noted that because culture is a socially created system of meaning, it is difficult to remain culturally competent without a constant exposure to a cultural system.[38]

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[37]David C. Thomas, *Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Business* (San Francisco, Calif: Berrett-Koehler, 2004), 100–120.

[38]Ting-Toomey, *Communicating across Cultures*, 3–24.

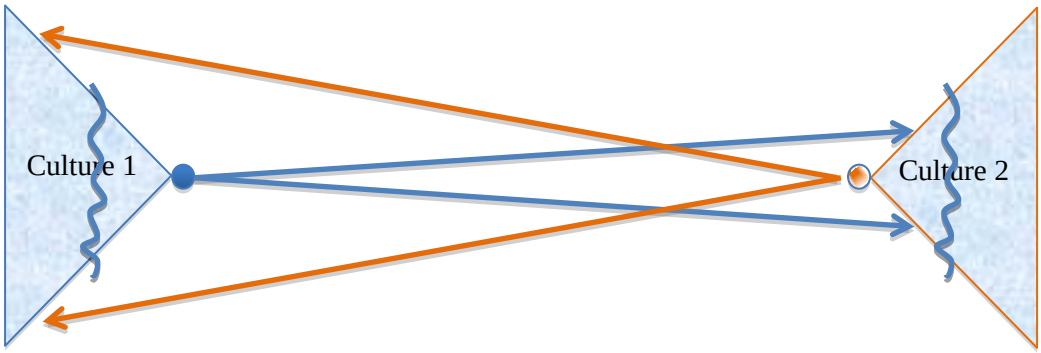

Figure 4. Inter-cultural communication between two individuals

Source: Created by the author.

Army Cultural Requirements

The 2009 *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (ACFLS) describes how "leaders and soldiers have a limited understanding of how culture considerations influence the planning and execution of operations."[39] The ACFLS attempts to increase cultural and language capability by outlining the requirements soldiers must develop over the course of their career. First, the ACFLS differentiates the requirements by placing soldiers into two broad categories, professionals (Tier I) and non-professionals (Tier II). Tier I are soldiers who have higher requirements, such as Foreign Area Officers. Tier II soldiers, such as operational planners or leaders in the general force, only require rudimentary training.[40] The ACFLS assumes that, at some point, the leaders would achieve an advanced and sophisticated level of regional competence or cultural expertise.[41] Developing this expertise is a result of constant training, exposure, and experiences gained in a specific regional environment. The flaw in ACFLS is that

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[39]U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 1, 2009), ii.

[40]Ibid., iii.

[41]Ibid., 83.

it fails to account for the constant reassignment of soldiers to different regions based on change of duty station or deployments that will hamper the development of cultural expertise. Second, The ACFLS list three levels of culture proficiency: cultural awareness, cultural understanding, and cultural expertise.[42] This is because the U.S. Army recognizes that not all soldiers are required to be cultural experts to achieve mission success. Distributing personnel who are culturally proficient within a unit is contingent upon the requirements to accomplish the mission. The ACFLS fails to emphasize the importance of the relationship between the proficiency levels is inter-cultural communication competence. The objective is to communicate a plan of operations to another culture and shape the environment that will support operational and strategic goals in a designated region. The ACFLS attempts to create a guide to develop culturally aware soldiers who can interpret the effects of operations on an environment with the aid of a Tier I soldier. Additionally, the ACFLS is capable of building a base that will require only minor changes to meet Army requirements. A shift from a known point is easier than identifying the point for the first time.

Challenges in Creating a Culturally Competent Force

Failing to expect Tier II soldiers to develop into regional experts is a mistake in understanding time and purpose. The strategic plan fails to account for a soldier's actual career timeline and, more importantly, the constant changes in assignments. The challenge in creating a culturally competent Tier II soldier is because of the lack of time spent learning about a specific culture or exposure to a specific region. A 2007 report from the United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARIBSS) concludes that because of the constant

[42]Ibid., 12–13.

deployed leaders, culture-general competence is a more realistic and more important goal.[43] This causes friction with the AFCLS assumption that an Army Tier II soldier will be provided enough training, exposure, and experience in one specific region to eventually develop into a regional or cultural expert. Army operations over the last 20 years serve as an example of the constant change in regional context that would hamper the development of regional expertise for the Tier II soldiers. Over the last 20 years, the Army has conducted operations in Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and numerous other smaller-scale operations; simultaneously the Army has maintained a presence in Korea, Kuwait, Germany, Italy, and Japan.[44] In order for the Tier II soldier to become a regional cultural expert, the soldier would be required to spend the majority if not his/her entire career assigned to one specific area. It is difficult to make the case that over a period of 15 to 20 years an operational planner or brigade commander will become a cultural expert in multiple regions. Basic cultural training and experience serves as an entry point in any culture, but becoming a cultural expert requires much more time and exposure to a culture. The Army previously identified the difficulty in creating a cultural expert, but the ACFLS fails to address the primary concern of the 2007 report, the lack of time in any particular region to move beyond basic cultural awareness. To accomplish this, the Army must integrate Tier I soldiers, regional specialists, into the unit of action to enable its success in the regional environment. The combatant commander defines the unit of action and it can be as small as a brigade as proposed by the modular concept. However, the purpose of the program must be kept in mind to competently communicate a plan to another nation with a different culture.

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[43]Abbe, Gulik, and Herman, *Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders: A Conceptual and Empirical Foundation*, 34.

[44]Congressional Research Services list over one hundred instances of use of U.S. Armed Forces abroad since 1993; please reference report of a complete list. Richard F. Grimmett, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2004.* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, October 5, 2004), http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl30172.htm. (accessed March 8, 2014).

The ACFLS acknowledges that deploying units will be provided with a percentage of regional specialists, but it does not distinguish between human terrain teams or translators. These personnel support the execution of operations but have a limited role, if any, on the planning of operations.[45] The addition of a regional cultural specialist would potentially provide the brigade with regional expertise from the political-military and strategic perspectives.[46] A 2010 U.S. House of Representatives report found that their previous recommendation of clarifying the relationship of language, cultural awareness, and regional expertise to warfighting competencies, such as operational planning was still lacking.[47] More recently the Commanding General of Army Training and Doctrine Command, Robert W. Cone introduced the seventh warfighting function of "engagement" and emphasized the need to create the skills to influence foreign governments and militaries.[48] The regional cultural specialist must be able to suitably convey the nature of cultural environment and the impact operations will have on it. Ultimately regional alignment dictates that the operating force in the area be culturally competent of the regional environment and communicate between cultures to facilitate military objectives.

Next, the AFCLS outlined the cultural training required for the planner, leader, and regional specialist to understand the cultural implications of military operations on the

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[45]U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy*, 5.

[46]U.S. Department of Defense, "Management of Department of Defense Foreign Area Officer Programs", September 28, 2007, 1, http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/131520p.pdf. (accessed October 22, 2013).

[47]Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, *Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: Bridging the Gap* (U.S. House of Representatives, December 2010), 7, http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=2361fa65-7e40-41df-8682-9725d1c377da. (accessed August 6, 2013).

[48]Gary Sheftick, "TRADOC: Strategic Landpower Concept to Change Doctrine," *Army News Service*, January 16, 2014, http://www.army.mil/article/118432/TRADOC__Strategic_Landpower_concept_to_change_doctrine/. (accessed January 28, 2014).

environment but fell short on applying the concept in practice. The confusion caused by failing to realize that cross-cultural communication is the purpose of cultural training. The ACFLS describes how cultural training enables the Tier II soldiers to create a better plan based on the cultural environment, but fails to consider the integration of the Tier II soldiers into the planning process. More importantly, it assumes knowledge and language drive understanding, but fails to acknowledge that the ultimate goal of cultural training is communication. A U.S. Army Research Institute report, *Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders*, found that an emphasis on knowledge and language skills results in testing focused on memorization and language proficiency rather than on actual competence concerning a culture.[49] This type of testing fails to measure the affection and non-verbal communication skill that provide context to actions and places planning staffs and commanders alike in danger of being unable to communicate their plan or intent across cultures. The addition of a regional cultural specialist supports planning without changing the career structure of the general force officer. Regional alignment requires the commander to understand the cultural implications of the actions taken in the region. This understanding requires the planner to communicate the plan across cultures to get the input of a regional specialist familiar with military planning, and to use mission command in the execution of the plan.

In November 2008, the House Armed Services Committee noted that language skills and cultural expertise were critical requirements but that the military was lacking a comprehensive, systematic approach to develop these needs as explained in the 2008 report, *Building Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DOD's Challenge in Today's Educational Environment*

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[49]Louise J. Rasmussen and Winston Sieck R., "Strategies for Developing and Practicing Cross-Cultural Expertise in the Military," *Military Review*, no. March-April 2012 (April 2012): 34–37, http://www.carlisle.army.mil/dime/documents/MilitaryReview_Strategies%20Culture.pdf. (accessed August 6, 2013).

(2008 O&I Report).[50] The 2008 O&I Report provides four recommendations to improve military language and cultural program management; however, the December 2010 House Armed Services follow-up report, *Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: Bridging the Gap* (2010 O&I Report), finds room for improvement. The first recommendation listed in the report highlights the need for commanders to determine what regional expertise is needed to enable full-spectrum operations to improve their cultural competencies.[51]

Proposing a Unity of Concepts

The U.S. Army should emphasize that the concepts are not designed to compete against each other or separately, but must work in unison to enable success. The U.S. Army must fully incorporate regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence as an interdependent system to enable operations in an unfamiliar environment. The question often seems to be "which is more important?" as opposed to "what aspects of each concept support the others the most?" The regional alignment concept is designed to accomplish national strategic aims in foreign environments using military means. Understanding the political aims, in context, allows the military force to share the same purpose influencing any subsequent decision made by lower echelons.[52] The decisions made by the regional force commander are guided by the philosophy of mission command.

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[50]Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, *Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DOD's Challenge in Today's Educational Environment* (U.S. House of Representatives, 2008), http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll11/id/1394/rec/13), X. (accessed August 6, 2013).

[51]Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, *Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military*.

[52]Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 5–17.

To determine a course of action that can accomplish an intended objective, the commander must understand the operational environment, or what could be described as orientation. Orientation requires a staff and commander who select a plausible schema that best explains the operational environment and then adjusts it as the environment evolves.[53] Successful orientation allows the staff to support the commander in the operations process and aids the commander in determining the best manner in which to inform and influence the actors in that environment. Simply, it provides context to the environment that dictates the appropriate action that must be taken and its anticipated effect. During orientation, there is no guarantee that the staff or commanders are capable of understanding the complex environment with complete clarity; however, there are factors that aid understanding. Among those factors is culture, as cultural competence enables the staff and commander to better grasp the variables that create and affect the operational environment and the actors within it.

Regional alignment facilitates cultural competence by placing a force in a foreign environment with the goals of gaining greater understanding of the region and creating relationships with foreign partners. Cultural competence allows the force to operate more successfully within that regional environment. Mission command complements the regional alignment by providing a system in which the commander can exercise authority and provide direction that can be adapted in complex environments to accomplish the commander's intended purpose. In the regional environment, mission command empowers leaders to adapt actions to achieve their intended purpose. In mission command, cultural competence is the key because it provides context to the decision-making process. These three concepts support each other, and a failure in one limits the potential of the others. The dialogue within the U.S. Army should not be

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[53]Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 236–243.

about which is more important, but rather in a world of limited resources and time, how do we get the best out of all three?

A HISTORY OF CULTURE, COMMAND, AND REGIONAL FORCES: AMERICAN MILITARY EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN AND VIETNAM

The interdependent relationship among regional alignment, mission command, and cultural competence provides the potential for the use of military forces to achieve strategic aims. Though these are not terms that have been a part of U.S. military doctrine in previous years, they do highlight the concepts and principles that have been understood since the Second World War. From a regional alignment perspective, it is obvious that the United States has used its military might since its inception to influence the global environment from the expedition against the Barbary pirates to the latest Iraq war. Cultural concerns that influence planning have been a consideration in military doctrine since the 1940s as is evident in printings like the *FM 27-5 Army and Navy Manual of Military Government and Military Affairs.*[54] The doctrinal requirement that leadership creates a sense of a shared understanding to support mission orders has been a part of Army leadership concepts since General Grant's orders to William T. Sherman in 1864 describing the importance of trust and mutual understanding.[55]

Operation Black List implemented by the US in Japan in 1945 and the American's Strategic Hamlet Program employed in Vietnam in 1961 are used here to examine the interrelationship of these three concepts. The selection of these operations is in part because of their similarity with regards to U.S.-envisioned objectives, which are the prevention of communist influence in the region, the establishment of a democratic government, and the use of land and economic reform policies to create social-cultural change. The planning of the

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[54]U.S. War Department, *United States Army and Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. War Department, 1943), 40–44, http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/mil_gov-civil_affairs.pdf. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[55]U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Field Manual 6-0 Mission Command: Command and Control of the Army Forces* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2003), 40–71.

Occupation of Japan represents the beginning of the final chapter in the United States' rise as a world leader. The Strategic Hamlet Program was the beginning of the most debated and controversial U.S. war. The Japanese and Vietnamese democratization efforts were both influenced by the U.S. perception that the establishment of communist regimes would empower the Soviets and risk losing American influence over these regions.[56] In Japan, General Douglas MacArthur was responsible for the execution of Operation Blacklist, which consisted of demilitarizing and rebuilding of Japan.[57] The Strategic Hamlet Program was a plan introduced in the early 1960s focused on the pacification of Vietnam. The Strategic Hamlet Program's primary goals were to provide security to the rural areas of the country and increase their economic potential.[58] Though the overall objectives for both of these programs had similarities, their political contexts and operational environments were different. The focus is therefore not on why the program failed or succeeded, but on how the understanding of the operational environment influenced the military headquarters' approach.

To start, the initial portion of the case study will provide a brief description of the background of the operations, the political aims that determined the objectives, and the concept of the operation. This description will highlight critical issues that provide context to U.S. objectives. Next, the study will examine the force deployed to the region. The research will focus on their training before arrival in the region and their interaction with their regional partners to

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[56]Russell Brines, *MacArthur's Japan* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1948), 70; "The President's News Conference, July 7, 1954," *The President's News Conference*, July 7, 1954, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9943#axzz2ggNTH8eE. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[57]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, vol. I, Supplement (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), V, 2.

[58]U.S. Department of Defense, "Strategic Hamlet Program," in *United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1971), 20–24, http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/cat/displayItemId.do?queryType=cat&ItemID=CVW01578. (accessed October 12, 2013).

examine the role of cultural competence in planning. The following section examines how the understanding, or orientation, of the environment influences decisions in order to focus on those that effect the local national populace the most and required a greater understanding of the operational environment. It will describe how commanders and their staffs communicated across cultures using the lenses of authority, land, and economy and determine their effectiveness. The final section will evaluate the mission command tenant of building a shared understanding. The case study will illustrate how the effects of operational plans and regional specialists influences the understanding of exercising mission command.

Japan: Reframing Cultural Values

On August 15, 1945, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito broadcasted a message to his people informing them of the empire's official surrender. The surrender meant that Operation Olympic, the allied invasion of Japan, would not be executed. Despite the surrender, the U.S. Third Fleet's staff officers reminded all military personnel that the occupation would be a military operation and executed as such.[59] The Soviet General Secretary Joseph Stalin, U.S. President Harry Truman, and British Prime Minister Clement Attlee discussed the objectives and concerns for the occupation of Japan in the Potsdam Agreements from 17 July, 1945 to 2 August, 1945. Behind the scenes, the U.S. occupation and restructuring of the Japanese nation was greatly influenced by the concern for Soviet Communist expansion and the establishment of a peaceful government ensuring Japan did not become belligerent in the future.

Communism's expansion in Eastern Europe and China during the second half of World War II was perceived by the Unites States as threat to post war democracy in western European and North American allies. The Potsdam Agreements were a political struggle between the

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[59]Brines, *MacArthur's Japan*, 22–24.

Soviets, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The British and American suspicion of Soviet intentions to establish Communist states were post-conflict concerns. The Special Assistant to the Secretary of State Donald Russell communicated in a telegram on 20 July, 1945, his concerns about Soviet intentions in the Far East. Russell emphasized that a compromise in traditional American policy over China, and later Japan, to the Soviets would seriously weaken American international prestige. Russell shared similar views with his colleagues that the Soviets were attempting to "lay the foundation for a sphere of political and economic interest."[60] The belief that Japan would be influenced by Russia, resulting in the loss of political and economic influence in the region, was supported by Japanese actions. The Japanese had been in communication with the Soviets before the Potsdam conference and the Americans were aware of attempts by the Japanese playing sides to improve their situation. The Japanese government attempted to feel out their situation through a series of communiques through the Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union.[61] Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson received this information the day before the Potsdam conference and advised against making any large concessions to the Soviet Union, preventing them from playing a major role in Japanese occupation.[62]

The second concern for the United States was establishing a democratic form of government in Japan. The initial post-surrender policy for Japan, drafted by the U.S. Department of State, listed the ultimate objectives as ensuring "that Japan will not again become a menace … [and] to bring about the earliest possible establishment of a democratic and peaceful

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[60]U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Relations of The United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945: Volume II" (Office of the Historian, 1945), 1227–1230, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Berlinv02. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[61]Ibid., 873–878.

[62]Ibid., 1322–1323.

government."[63] The policy's objectives would be achieved by dictating Japan's sovereignty, demilitarization, encouragement to form democratic and representative organizations, and maintain industries that supported the economy. Carl J. Friedrich conducted a review of the military government in World War II in 1948 and highlighted some of the beliefs held by Americans that influenced the post-war objective for Japan. Friedrich explained that democracies stress individualist aspects, regulation of the economy for the benefit of the people, and insist on unrestricted power of the majority. These principles are often in conflict with each other.[64] The difficulty for the occupying forces was in translating the concept of American democracy to a nation of people whose cultural background had never been exposed to democratic values. General MacArthur emphasized that the plan required planners to understand the conditions of the Japanese environment that would enable democratization. It also required regional specialists to facilitate planning. Finally, any plan would eventually need to focus on accomplishing missions by the U.S. occupying forces and Japanese government representatives.[65]

Operation Blacklist Concept: Transforming Japanese Values

General Douglas MacArthur was named Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) and was responsible for transforming Japan into a modern democratic nation. MacArthur's initial plan was named Operation Blacklist. MacArthur first proposed the plan on 16 July, 1945 at the Pacific Ocean Area conference at Guam. Operation Blacklist outlined the basic concept for the occupation of Korea and Japan. The plan's focus establishing of the military,

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[63]U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan" (U.S. Department of State, September 22, 1945), http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=151. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[64]Carl J. Friedrich, *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1948), 8–11.

[65]Douglas MacArthur, "The Administration of Japan," in *MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader*, ed. William M. Leary (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 235–240.

economic, and political control of the nations the U.S. military occupied. The plan named three primary objectives: seizing control of higher echelons of the occupied nation's government and immobilizing their forces; using the seized strategic centers to control the remaining political center and sea lines of communication; and establishing control of food supply and overland lines of communications.[66] General MacArthur further specified the objectives for Japan at the Allied Council for Japan on April 5, 1946. MacArthur highlighted the need to eliminate the influence of those who led Japan to war, the establishment of peace, security and justice, and to strengthen democratic tendencies.[67] To enable these changes, MacArthur had to realign the Japanese socio-cultural system. MacArthur's plan communicated change by the exercise of authority and legitimacy, implementing reforms in land ownership and use, and creating a new economic system. Operation Blacklist successfully transferred the U.S. plan to the Japanese culture evident in the establishment of authority, land reform, and economic policies. The operation supported planning and execution by providing regional specialists to assist in operations between U.S. forces and the Japanese governing system. General MacArthur required the Japanese Government to enforce the laws, ordinance, and regulations set forth through directives from SCAP staff.[68] In doing so, General MacArthur essentially used mission command to accomplish his plan, apparent in his ability to understand the cultural context of the operational environment.

Operation Blacklist attempted to create a successful interrelationship between the force, cultural competence, and mission command that would transform Japanese culture. The advisory force consisted of military personnel selected and then trained in culture and government systems.

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[66]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, I:, Supplement:1–12.

[67]MacArthur, "The Administration of Japan," 235–240.

[68]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, I:, Supplement:67–74.

Deployment to Japan allowed the force to learn more about the operational environment, creating a shared understanding with the Japanese, and exploiting the similarities in their interest and endeavor.[69] It attempted to grasp the cultural bias inherent in the system and create a shared understanding with Japanese counterparts to enable operations. Shared understanding was key to executing operations because it allowed U.S. forces to communicate the purpose of the operation to Japanese officials. Though there were occasional failures, the overall purpose of creating a Japanese democratic state incapable of waging war against the United States and its allies was accomplished.

Government Aided by a Force

The U.S. Army's occupation of Japan is an example of the military's successful integration of a regionally competent force to facilitate planning and execution of operations. The Japanese historian Ikuhiko Hata concluded American occupation set the course of Japanese history in the post-WWII era perceived by the Japanese as a "generous occupation" and by the Americans as a "successful occupation."[70] In 1968, the Association for Asian Studies identified political, economic, and social changes as factors that allowed the successful occupation.[71] To support these changes, the U.S. Army integrated culturally competent soldiers and advisors into the planning staff at all levels.[72] The training of military advisors began with the selection of

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[69]Kazuo Kawai, *Japan's American Interlude* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 17–33.

[70]Ikuhiko Hata, "The Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952," in *MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader*, ed. William M. Leary (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 315–332.

[71]Grant K. Goodman et al., *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View* (Lawrence, KS: Center of East Asian Studies, The University of Kansas, 1968), 1–39, http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/bitstream/1808/1189/1/CEAS.1968.n2.pdf. (accessed March 8, 2013).

[72]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, I:, Supplement:75–88; Eight U.S. Army, *Provisional Manual For Military Government in Japan* (Japan: Eight U.S. Army, 1948), 1–12.

specialized officers and enlisted men into the program. The program consisted of Civil Affairs Training Schools and a School of Military Government. The military selected personnel to attend the schools based on general background, training, or technical specialty. The vast majority of the selected personnel were combat veterans who had served in the military for some years.[73] Selecting experienced personnel provided the military with soldiers already familiar with U.S. military culture. Understanding of the military framework assisted the regional specialists in understanding the Japanese cultural environment and its relation to American military culture. The regional specialists were able to communicate the U.S. military's intentions to Japanese society. Military Government teams were primarily responsible for creating policies that enabled the Japanese to initiate sociocultural change. Robert B. Textor summarized his experience with socio-cultural change as successful but found great "difficulty in communicating and cooperating because they viewed the world from different cultural stances."[74] Despite the challenges, the regional experts' ability to quickly adapt to the environment and adapt military operations based on the existing situation enabled success in Japan.

The second factor facilitating operations in Japan was integrating the regional specialists into the staff and planning.[75] The available regional specialists were in short supply and not always available at the lower levels. At the theater level, the Military Government Section was integrated into the General Headquarters, United States Army Forces Pacific. A Military

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[73]Arthur D. Bouterse, Philip H. Taylor, and Arthur A. Maass, "American Military Government Experience in Japan," in *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1948), 318–322.

[74]Robert B. Textor served as a Civil Information and Education officer at First Corps headquarters in Japan from 1946-48. Robert B. Textor, "Success in Japan-Despite Some Human Foibles and Cultural Problems," in *MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader,* ed. William M. Leary (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 255–278.

[75]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase,* I:, Supplement:194–230; Goodman et al., *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View*, 1–10.

Government Special Staff Section was also incorporated in the Sixth and Eighth U.S. Armies, and the SCAP required a specific number of civilian experts in its higher ranks.[76] The Special Staff consisted of sixteen departments based on Japanese government structure. [77] The Eighth U.S. Army then created the Regional Military Government Headquarters and Prefectural Teams to coordinate between operational and tactical military units. Japanese regional and district government representatives, and provide the Eighth US Army headquarters with feedback and recommendations.[78] The Military Government teams benefited from the cooperating Japanese officials, but their cooperation was also a response to the team's ability to communicate effectively across cultures by providing tolerant and intelligent guidance. One example was rebalancing the executive and legislative branches of the Japanese parliamentary system. The SCAP staff recognized that the American model was not appropriate and declared the Diet as the highest organ of state power.[79] Using the Diet for governance allowed the Japanese to maintain a known system that was then adapted to meet SCAP requirements, using existing institutions. The integration was not perfect, but the regional experts possessed enough understanding of the cultural environment to provide input to the planning and execution of operations more efficiently than it would have without them.

Constructing a Democratic System

Theodore Cohen, General MacArthur's labor relation chief, explained that in selecting the staff, cultural competence about Japan was required. He explained that selecting personnel

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[76]Theodore Cohen, *Remaking Japan*, ed. Herbert Passin (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 103–107.

[77]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, I:, Supplement:194–230.

[78]Eighth U.S. Army, *Provisional Manual For Military Government in Japan*.

[79]Kawai, *Japan's American Interlude*, 111–132.

with some cultural competence was indispensable, because they enabled the SCAPS' ability of "thinking on a much larger scale … and they intruded almost everywhere in Japanese Government operations."[80] The purpose of the operation was always constant; however, selection of objectives that would achieve the desired outcome was a continuous negotiation. This is evident in the SCAPS' establishing a legitimate governing authority, the use of land reform to dilute traditional forms of power, and restructuring the economy. In creating change, the SCAP issued simple directives that were then carried out by Japanese officials to execute in a manner consistent with the purpose, rather than the task itself.

Establishing a Legitimate Governing Authority

MacArthur had to understand the importance of legitimacy within the operational environment in order to communicate the U.S. plan to establish and create a Japanese government. Russell Brines, an Associated Press member and expert on Japanese and Asian culture who reported on the occupation firsthand, noted General MacArthur's "knowledge of Japanese psychology was invaluable" to the occupation of Japan.[81] By understanding the situation, MacArthur and his staff were able to determine what needed to be to accomplished to support his overall purpose. [82] Authority had to be established at the Allied force level, the U.S. Joint Force level, and finally among the Japanese people. MacArthur understood the importance of legitimacy and took steps to gain it at all three levels.

Initially, authority was established by a memorandum from the State Department and was endorsed by the Joint Chiefs of Staffs and President Harry Truman, giving MacArthur supreme

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[80]Cohen, *Remaking Japan*, 99–118.

[81]Brines, *MacArthur's Japan*, 76.

[82]Ibid., 73–81.

authority over the occupation on 13 September, 1945.[83] International authority was solidified on 27 December, 1945 by the Agreement of Foreign Ministers at Moscow on Establishing Far Eastern Commission and Allied Council for Japan. The commission provided the authority to conduct reconstruction operations in Japan, and was agreed to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, France, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, and the Philippines.[84] MacArthur was able to communicate to Japan that his source of power was legitimate as a representative of the allied forces by receiving the allied nations' support.

Authority in Japanese culture was based on receiving the support of legitimate national authorities. MacArthur exercised authority through Japanese officials and emphasized cooperation through credible Japanese citizens without attempting to undermine them.[85] The Japanese prime minister and the emperor were the only Japanese officials MacArthur frequently met with and had automatic appointments permitting them to accomplish U.S.-required tasks through a Japanese parliament known as the Diet.[86] By doing this, he was able to communicate his intentions, plans, and actions while building legitimacy. The accomplishment of these tasks serves as an example of MacArthur's willingness to accept the mission command concept.

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[83]U.S. Department of State, "Memorandum for the President, Subject: Authority of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers" (U.S. Department of State, December 28, 1945), U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01/023/023_002r.html. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[84]Far East Commission, "Incoming Message to CINCAFPAC: Communique of Moscow Conference, December 27, 1945" (U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, December 28, 1945), U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/03/053/053_001r.html. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[85]Textor, "Success in Japan-Despite Some Human Foibles and Cultural Problems," 265–266.

[86]Faubion Bowers, "The Late General MacArthur, Warts and All," in *MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader*, ed. William M. Leary (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 248.

The erosion of longstanding cultural norms eliminated traditional authority in Japan and facilitated democratization in the initial stages of the occupation. The most influential of these changes was rejecting the emperor myth. Japanese cultural tradition placed the emperor at the center of the universe as a descendent of Amaterasu, the sun goddess.[87] The emperor guided the nation with the Japanese people existing solely for his benefit and the core of the nation's existence. MacArthur realized this was an obstacle to democracy and recreated the emperor's role with the 1947 constitution as a symbol of the state dependent on people's elected representatives. The Japanese emperor maintained his influence as the spiritual leader and a symbol of nationalism.[88] By sidestepping complete rejection of the emperor, U.S. forces were able to integrate Japanese cultural traditions into a new form of government.[89] This allowed the Japanese to retain sacred portion of their culture and adapt to the Emperor's new role in it.

Redistributing Land to Instill Democratic Values

A second manner in which the SCAP staff planners communicated their plan towards establishing democracy was through land reform. The purpose of land reform was to reduce the influence of the wealthy and empower the farmers of Japan, resulting in a more democratic system. In 1947, the Land Reform Program purchased two million acres and resold it to Japanese tenant farmers.[90] This resulted in redistribution of income and ownership that had been centrally controlled by the Japanese privileged class before 1945. Land ownership by an elite few provided the upper Japanese class with great influence over the rural population and control of the

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[87]Anne Johnstone and William Johnstone, *What Are We Doing with Japan?* (New York: American Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1946), 14–16.

[88]Brines, *MacArthur's Japan*, 83–96.

[89]Kawai, *Japan's American Interlude*, 71–90.

[90]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, I:, Supplement:213.

economic system. The feudal lords had established a system that functioned through debt. The rural farmer made up one third of the Japanese population but had little to no input into the autocratic government. Peasants provided the majority of the soldiers but were denied a voice in the decision to go to war.[91]

The SCAP staff planners believed that land reform would improve the position and influence of farmers and restrain the interest of the wealthier class that led to war. Farmers were quick to assert their newfound power and began establishing unions estimated to consist of 5,500 local chapters.[92] The farmers' influence grew to improved positions in voting and holding seats in the Japanese House of Representatives and Councilors. The change in the balance of power enabled the democratization of Japan and proved the SCAP staff's understanding of cultural factors that prevented democracy and enabled the war.

Economic Approach to Diminishing Traditional Forms of Power

Economic policies developed by SCAP planners were designed to promote democratic principles and values. The SCAP's primary concern was eliminating Japan's imperialistic financial system known as *zaibatsu*.[93] This began with the closing of 29 banks and agencies that financed the war effort and removal of their directors and advisors. The new policies prevented influence of the economic system from traditional sources or power. The second task was dissolving the economic system controlled by cartels and control associations that had created a cultural system empowering the elite. The last task was removing legal hindrances that prevented the formation of labor unions, which further degraded the traditional cultural system that

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[91]Brines, *MacArthur's Japan*, 217–220.

[92]Edwin R. Martin, *The Allied Occupation of Japan* (New York: American Institute of Pacific Relations, 1948), 81–92.

[93]Ibid., 72–80.

empowered cartels, control associations, and bank and agency directors.[94] The combined effect of removing the previous economic system allowed a new system to emerge based on more democratic principles.

To support the formation of a democratic Japan, SCAP created an economic system that initially supported and then expanded to meet Japanese needs. To facilitate a free market economic system, SCAP issued a series of directives executed by the Japanese Diet. The 1947 Law for the Elimination of Excessive Concentration of Economic Power created a more competitive system, permitting agents other than the *zaibatsu* to gain economic influence. In the same year, the Diet approved the Law Relating to Prohibition of Private Monopoly and Methods of Preserving Fair Trade and Securities and Exchanges Law.[95] These laws were important because they shaped the Japanese cultural economic environment. All of the laws created and approved through the Japanese Diet were fundamentally American. Implementation of these laws redefined the Japanese economic system influencing cultural changes. SCAP also enabled a change in Japanese culture by eliminating the imperialist system and replacing it with free market economic system. These changes created a governing system that diminished traditional forms of power, allowing for values that were more democratic.

Aligning Action With Purpose

> "Even in areas where our opportunities appear greatest, we are forever faced with the problem of trying to translate Western democratic institutions into Japanese terms and to secure their adoption as something truly Japanese rather than as something imposed by the will of a military victor."
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> —Edwin M. Martin, The Allied Occupation of Japan

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[94]U.S. War Department, *Summation No 1: Non-Military Activities in Japan and Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. War Department, February 15, 1946), 13–15, www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a438651.pdf. (accessed October 12, 2013)

[95]Martin, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 72–81.

Creating a democratic form of government in Japan required shared understanding to allow the use of mission orders in forming a Japanese democracy. Japanese leaders had maintained central control for centuries, creating the narrative that the people's purpose was serving the emperor.[96] Japanese society lacked the basic value system inherent to democracy. By establishing itself as a legitimate authority, SCAP was able to implement land and economic reforms that transformed the Japanese values to create a shared understanding of what a democracy should be. To communicate the purpose, SCAP partnered all forces with Japanese civil and security organizations at multiple levels. Once shared understanding was created, directives provided from SCAP headquarters to subordinate commands and Japanese officials trusting that purpose was understood and would be accomplished.

Creating a shared understanding of purpose was essential to the selection of objectives by the SCAP staff. These objectives, such as the abolition of feudalist Japanese institutions, allowed the Japan's democratization because they emphasized the government's purpose. The U.S. occupying forces' primary concern was the establishing institutions based on democratic models. Selecting objectives that enabled democracy required agreeing on goals, translating them to fit the Japanese scene, followed by adoption of them by Japanese authorities and providing guidance to Japanese in carrying them out.[97] By focusing on the purpose of the objectives and applying them, SCAP was able to account for cultural biases that could detract from the desired end state. The establishment of authority, abolishment of undemocratic institutional organizations, and reforming land and economic systems were a result of adapting objectives. Once common understanding was established, mission orders were used by the SCAP staff to establish institutions and systems that supported democratic principles.

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[96]Brines, *MacArthur's Japan*, 47–50; Martin, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 45–49.

[97]Martin, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 50.

Using directives, rather than detailed instructions, the SCAP was essential in legitimizing the newly established Japanese government. This was only made possible by the understanding the purpose. General MacArthur laid the foundation for this approach in Operating Instructions No. 4, specifically noting that "the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers will exercise control over Japan and the Japanese, to the greatest practicable extent, through the Emperor and the various instrumentalities of the Japanese Imperial Government which prove suitable for this purpose."[98] This required all U.S. occupation forces to achieve change through the Japanese and mostly limited the role of U.S. forces to observing and reporting on Japanese government actions. However, U.S. forces maintained a requirement to engage the Japanese officials and populace to influence their decisions to support democratic reforms. The occupation was not perfect, and on occasion American and Japanese representatives clashed, creating difficulties in communication and cooperation.[99] Despite these clashes, U.S. occupation forces delegated the authority to appoint or dismiss Japanese officials to the Japanese government.[100] The SCAP staff was able to recognize that to accomplish the intended purpose, Japanese authorities would need to be trusted.

Operation Blacklist is an example of a regional force, cultural competence, and mission command enabling each other. Though the details of Operation Blacklist were in continual fluctuation, the purpose was clear: creating a democratic state incapable of waging war against the United States and its allies. The regional force was limited in number but trained in the basic requirements, providing a basis for further action. The force's cultural competence was also limited, but their past experiences as veterans and continued exposure to the foreign environment facilitated learning and led to selection of objectives in context, further aiding in creating shared

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[98]Friedrich, *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II*, 328.

[99]Textor, "Success in Japan-Despite Some Human Foibles and Cultural Problems," 268–274.

[100]General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur. MacArthur in Japan. The Occupation: Military Phase*, I:, Supplement:194–230.

understanding and communicating the purpose of the operation to Japanese officials and people. The U.S. forces success could not have been possible if any of these elements were absent. Fielding an untrained force would have failed to make the most of cultural competence or create shared understanding. Deficiency in cultural competence would have prevented a trained force from deciphering the operational environment and creating shared understanding to facilitate mission command. The lack of shared understanding would require SCAP to conduct operations themselves or delegate tasks to Japanese officials without understanding the purpose.

Vietnam: One Plan, Multiple Interpretations

In 1954, the Vietnamese defeat of the French colonial forces ended French colonial rule over Indo-China. This resulted in the 1954 Geneva Convention between the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France, and other less influential nations to seek a peaceful solution to the Indochinese conflict. The result was the ending of all hostilities in Indochina, and full independence and sovereignty for the Indochinese nations. For the newly independent nation of Vietnam, the resolution included a scheduled election in 1956 to elect leaders and subsequently form a governmental structure. From 1954 to 1955, Vietnam was grouped into two areas separated by a military demarcation line. The separated areas were recognized by the international nations as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam, but was generally referred to as North and South Vietnam respectively.[101]

The Viet Minh were led by Nguyễn Sinh, more commonly know as Ho Chi Minh, and established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945. The Viet Minh played a leading role in the fight against, and eventually defeat, of the French in 1954. From a Viet Minh perspective, the

[101]"Final Declaration on Indochina", vol. XVI, 1047 (presented at the Geneva Conference, 1954, Geneva: Department of State Publication, 1954), http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v16/d1047. (accessed October 12, 2013).

Geneva conference was a disappointment. Not only were the Viet Minh not participants in the conference, but they were forced to rely on the Soviets and Chinese to plead their case for a unified country. The separation of these two areas violated the Viet Minh goal of a unified Vietnam, free of foreign imperialist occupation and influence. Despite the setbacks, the convention provided hope for the Viet Minh in reunification, dependent on the 1956 elections by North and South Vietnamese to determine the form of government and unification. In 1956, the United States impeded attempts of reunification and elections for fear that the communist party, the Viet Minh, would gain control over the both nations. The failure to unify Vietnam set the stage for further escalation of the Vietnam conflict. For the Vietnamese, the Indochinese wars were the struggle for liberation, and the U.S. escalation in force and influence was viewed as another attempt to subjugate the Vietnamese people by an imperial power. In later years, as the conflict escalated, the Vietnamese would refer to America's Vietnam War as the Second Indochinese war For Liberation.[102]

The Chinese and Soviets did not consider the war in Vietnam a war of liberation as claimed by the Viet Minh, but one of a growing threat to their regional security interest by democratic nations. They were concerned with the growing presence of U.S. military forces in the region. The Chinese primary concerns were Taiwan's constant raiding of the Chinese coastline and their belief that the U.S. was attempting to gain control of Indochina to isolate China. Their goals were to prevent the conflict's escalation in Indochina and secure the Chinese coastline.[103] Over the course of the next several years, the Soviets and Chinese would support the Vietnam conflict as a means to prevent U.S. dominance of Indochina.

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[102]Andrew J. Rotter, "The Role of Economic Culture in Victory and Defeat in Vietnam," in *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 9.

[103]Zhang Sulin, tran., "The Declassification of Chinese Foreign Ministry Archival Documents," *Cold War International History Project*, no. 16, Inside China's Cold War (2008): 103–104, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin16_p1.pdf. (accessed October 12, 2013).

The United States and its allies believed that the unrest in Vietnam was a result of Russian and Chinese attempts to expand communism in the Asian hemisphere that served their national interests. On April 7, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower offered several reasons on the importance of Indochina in the infamous "Domino Theory" news conference. The first reason was Indochina's valuable locale and production materials. The economic benefit and proximity to international trade routes allowed any nation that controlled Indochina to dictate terms. The second reason was the fear that a communist dictatorship threatened democratic nations. Indochina's proximity to democratic nations allowed communists to control key materials needed across the world, and to provide communist with the geographic capability to threaten the defensive chain of Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, and eventually New Zealand and Australia.[104] President Eisenhower believed that if Vietnam fell to communism, the rest of Indochina would follow like falling dominos. Eventually, these beliefs led to the escalation of US involvement in the Vietnam War in an attempt to keep the dominos from falling.

By 1961, the reunification of North and South Vietnam failed to materialize, and elections did not take place. The Army had transitioned from a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to a Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MAC-V), emphasizing a larger role in Vietnam. As the insurgent war between the North and South escalated, the recommendations to President Kennedy were to counter the guerilla threat and improve economic stability. General Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow advised the president to increase economic aid and the military capability of South Vietnam. On 15 September, 1965, Geographically Phased National Level Operation Plan (GPNLOP) was published to address the growing pro-communist insurgent threat. The plan consisted of three phases. The first phase entailed military and political training of South Vietnamese forces, economic reforms, and target areas for pacification. The

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[104]"The President's News Conference, July 7, 1954."

second phase was primarily military oriented and involved clear-hold-build operations. The last phase centered on transitioning primary responsibility for operations to the South Vietnamese.[105] Under the plan, the Strategic Hamlet Program was designed to target areas for pacification using the military actions and implementing village economic and cultural reforms. The program's purpose was to strengthen the relationship between the governed and the government in order to stabilized the region.

Strategic Hamlet Concept: Building from the Top Down

The Strategic Hamlet Program's scheme centered on security and economic improvement of the rural South Vietnamese peasant. Several villages were relocated to designated safe zones, allowing organization into a defense force. The combined villagers would be responsible for protecting themselves with the aid and training of the military force assigned to the sector. Once security was established, the plan required the formation of a central civic government that tied into the larger regional government. This step would tie the local government to the national government, increasing buy-in. The goal was to create a secure village with a stable and responsive local government that facilitated economic improvement and made it difficult for insurgents to control or influence.[106] The Strategic Hamlet plan was unsuccessful, however, and failed to unite the Vietnamese people in support of the national government. The military forces failed to properly train and protect the villages; the economic improvement failed to materialize; and corruption was rampant among all levels of government representatives.[107]

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[105]Andrew F Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 65–69; United States, *The Pentagon Papers; the Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, vol. I, The Senator Gravel ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 98–127.

[106]U.S. Department of Defense, "Strategic Hamlet Program," 20–24.

[107]Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 65–69.

The Strategic Hamlet Program highlights the importance of the interrelationship between force, competence, and command. The force that was fielded to advise, though professional, lacked the experience or cultural competence to grasp the operational environment. The lack of cultural competence prevented the U.S. force from understanding the cultural aspects of the operational environment. As a result, the plan was hindered by the lack of regional expertise in the military structure capable of influencing planning. This resulted in planners' inability to communicate the U.S. methods and objectives that had to be executed by a military and people of a different culture. The lack of understanding prevented the ability to create a shared understanding of the situation among U.S. forces and the Vietnamese political and military leaders. In failing the Strategic Hamlet Program highlighted a cultural disconnect between United States, South Vietnamese, and the rural Vietnamese citizen. This lack of shared understanding created a misunderstanding in purpose, and though strategic hamlets were built, they failed to meet their purpose.

A Fighting Force

The Strategic Hamlet Program concept originated from a collection of ideas by the United States based on French, British, Vietnamese, and American experts' opinions and lessons learned.[108] Although the Strategic Hamlet Program had been debated and recommended by experts, the issue was simply that the military itself did not have a trained force to aid in translating strategic policy to actions on the ground. The first concern was the lack of a culturally competent force. The Strategic Hamlet Program required the United States Information Services (USIS) to place personnel at the provincial level. However, the USIS was unable to do so and this resulted in MAAG, and later MAC-V, officers assuming their role. Second, the lack of cultural

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[108]Milton E. Osborne, *Strategic Hamlets in South Vietnam: A Survey and a Comparison* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1965), 20–31.

competence prevented the advisors from creating a shared understanding of the environment with the other actors in the system. Though the failure of the MAAG, and later MAC-V, can also be attributed to other factors such as organizational structure, lack of a capable Vietnamese security force, and lack of administrative procedures and implementation of the program, the cultural disconnect is intrinsic in all of these issues.

Despite the fact that the U.S. Army provided a force to execute the plan, the lack of cultural competence greatly inhibited the understanding of the environment. The lack of understanding caused great difficulties in constructing mutual understanding between the U.S. and Vietnamese forces. The MAAG officers were not prepared or trained to assume this role based on different program requirements. The MAAG advisors were not specially trained personnel, but selected from across the U.S. Army. The lack of cultural awareness by advisors caused friction between the American advisors and Vietnamese commanders.[109] These frustrations at times lead to misinterpretation of actions and events resulting in poor cross-cultural communication. The advisors' misinterpretation often resulted in recommending conventional war solutions to Vietnamese political problems.[110]

The lack of a common vision between the U.S. and Vietnamese forces was another contributor to failure. Thought the MAAG officers were deployed forward into designated areas, their focus on training and improvement of Vietnamese military and providing input to military planning to the local Vietnamese district chief, failed to generate a mutual understanding of the purpose of the operation beyond its military utility. Additionally, the limited partnership mission failed to determine how the Vietnamese could benefit from redefining the role of the advisors.

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[109]Douglas Kinnard, *The War Managers*, 30th anniversary ed. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 87–94.

[110]U.S. Congress, *The Pentagon Papers; the Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, I:16.

The MAAG advisors provided valuable input to the U.S. Army higher headquarters, but as the input moved up, the physical separation added to the lack of a shared purpose between U.S. and Vietnamese forces grew larger. The U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam served as the senior American official for pacification, however MAAG reported to their Washington headquarters. As the conflict evolved, the Joint United States Public Affairs Officer was created to unite efforts, but maintained MACV as separate unit not directly subordinate. This created additional bureaucracy and levels of separations between U.S. and Vietnamese forces. [111] The lack of cultural competence, flawed partnership, and organizational structure that did not share feedback across the whole organization created a lack of shared understanding, purpose and effort.

Culture Matters

In their attempt to translate strategic objectives to actions, planners created a list of tasks that had to be accomplished to meet the Strategic Hamlet objectives. These tasks were to be executed by the Vietnamese district chiefs and supervised by U.S. advisors. A Southeast Asia Program survey from 1964 found that the British Malayan experience had a great deal of influence on the selection and implementation of objective in the Strategic Hamlet Program. The study concluded that the issue with the program was transposing Malayan solutions to Vietnamese problem and failing to consider the differences in cultural environment.[112] The rural Vietnamese citizen and the failure to establish legitimate authority degraded the trust in government; the land policies resulted in alienation of rural sense of community, and the misinterpretation in cultural views on economic gain resulted in loss of trust in the program.

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[111]U.S. Congress, *The Pentagon Papers; the Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, The Senator Gravel ed., vol. II (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 405–514.

[112]Osborne, *Strategic Hamlets in South Vietnam: A Survey and a Comparison*, 52–57.

Disregarding Traditional Forms of Authority

The Strategic Hamlet Program diminished the legitimacy of the South Vietnamese government because of its disregard for traditional authority. The loss of authority was a result of the staff's failure to understand the Vietnamese culture of authority when creating village governments. In June 1956, South Vietnamese president Diem abolished village elections for village councils and replaced them with appointed officials. The act violated traditional authority and created animosity between the people and those appointed over them.[113] The Strategic Hamlet Program further complicated matters by relocating several villages to one hamlet, extending the reach of the government. The 1963 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on the prospects in South Vietnam noted, "administrative deficiencies have also hampered the execution to the program."[114] The reports detailed how appointed officials exploited the rural population, failed to compensate them for materials and labor, and were more concerned with controlling the hamlet population than improving its condition. The villagers' cultural traditions did not allow them to view the appointed officials as a lawful authority. The validity of the government of South Vietnam was further eroded by the populaces' perception that the government was a puppet of the United States. As the U.S. provided more aid to the program, the villagers' beliefs that the South Vietnamese government as weak and dependent on U.S. aid and power increased.[115] The villagers' cultural background dictated that lawful authority stemmed from village elections and the leader's ability to manage their own affairs without depending on others. The Strategic

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[113]U.S. Congress, *The Pentagon Papers; the Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, I:242–269.

[114]U.S. National Intelligence Council (U.S.), "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospects in South Vietnam, 17 April 1963," in *Estimative Products on Vietnam 1948-1975* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council ; G.P.O., Supt. of Docs., 2005), 195.

[115]Rotter, "The Role of Economic Culture in Victory and Defeat in Vietnam," 203.

Hamlet Program violated both of these principles resulting in the loss of legitimacy of the government and the program.

Land Shapes Culture

The importance of land in the Vietnamese culture was not clearly understood and was one of many factors that contributed to the failed operation. The relocation of Vietnamese farmers proved the disconnection between American planners and their lack of cultural understanding. The forced uprooting of villages alienated the local population and disrupted important traditions.[116] The rural Vietnamese cultural values placed a strong emphasis on ancestral lands; these values shaped their perception of time and authority.[117] The concept of concentration of villages was a foreign notion, and it created a great practical inconvenience to farmers by separating them from their fields. As a result, they were unable to devote the needed attention to their crops.[118] The Strategic Hamlet Program uprooted the villagers from their homes, forced them to adopt a new cultural system, and left the villagers feeling frustrated and alienated. The farmers resented the relocation and blamed the U.S. and the South Vietnamese government for implementing the program. The planners failed to account for the subjective aspect of culture, not realizing that the farmers' tie to their land was beyond food production, but was an artifact that shaped their values, attitudes, viewpoints.[119]

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[116]Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 65–71.

[117]John S. Parsons, Dale K. Brown, and Nancy R. Kingsbury, *Americans and Vietnamese: A Comparison of Values in Two Cultures* (Arlington, VA: Advanced Research Projects Agency, November 1968), 6–8, 71, http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/893855.pdf. (accessed October 12, 2013).

[118]Osborne, *Strategic Hamlets in South Vietnam: A Survey and a Comparison*, 52–57.

[119]Rotter, "The Role of Economic Culture in Victory and Defeat in Vietnam," 201–206.

Misunderstanding in Time and Economy

The Strategic Hamlet Program emphasized economic opportunity as a key factor addressing rural concerns. However, American economic concepts were a foreign idea to the rural Vietnamese and were a result of failure in inter-cultural communication. The United States continued its policy of economic assistance down to the military operational level. In the American culture, economic gain was viewed as self-development that enabled greater prosperity in the future. In the Vietnamese culture, it was viewed simply as immediate economic gain. Initially, the plan required the establishment of security and creation of local government to precede economic prosperity. Consequently, prosperity would not be an immediate effect. It would take time to develop and cultivate the new land. The newly establish local government would facilitate prosperity by providing resource that the famer did not have previously such as land, seed, and access to new markets.[120] The Strategic Hamlet Program did not immediately improve the lives the villagers or increase their wealth. The disconnect in communication created a sense of frustration between the two cultures and eroded any previous enjoyed sense of trust. The failure to properly communicate the rate and manner in which economic wealth would be created was a failure in inter-cultural communication and expectation management. Furthermore, the villagers viewed the failure as a broken promise by the U.S. and Vietnamese government.

Build It, and They Will Not Come

The Strategic Hamlet Program was a reflection of American culture in its attempt to implement foreign solutions to Vietnamese problems, resulting in a disconnect in shared understanding. The lack of a common vision then eroded the sense of trust required for mission command to be effective. From the U.S. perspective, constituting hamlets was an attempt to

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[120]U.S. Department of Defense, "Strategic Hamlet Program," 20–24.

provide security in rural areas followed by the creation of economic projects and formation of government systems to develop support for the South Vietnamese government. However, Vietnamese President Diem had a different perspective, believing the hamlets would provide him with a way to consolidate control of the rural population and force the government system from the top down.[121] The difference in perspective is because of differences in cultural assumptions that inhibited the United States' ability to communicate the purpose of the plan. The U.S. believed that constructing these hamlets was the first of three phases to accomplish the final objective. President Diem believed that any actions should have an immediate effect. Diem was unable, possibly unwilling, to comprehend the Americans' rational approach model. The lack of a shared purpose resulted in flawed mission orders.

President Diem's failure to communicate to his officials the importance of the Strategic Hamlet Program resulted in the creation of several hamlets by the South Vietnamese army, but never transitioned beyond the first phase. The importance of the program was not the task of building the hamlets, but for uniting a people. President Diem, impatient with the long process of the U.S. plan, emphasized the strategy of government control rather than pacification.[122] This resulted in the erosion of trust between the United States, Vietnamese leadership, and the Vietnamese people. The inability to understand the subjective aspect of culture led to a different understanding in the creation, purpose and execution of the plan, inhibiting mission command.

The Strategic Hamlet Program was a plan doomed to failure. The U.S. military failed to provide a regional force capable of understanding the operational environment or to provide planning guidance that reflected the unique context of the operational environment. This lack of

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[121]U.S. Congress, *The Pentagon Papers; the Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, I:128–159.

[122]U.S. National Intelligence Council (U.S.), "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospects in South Vietnam, 17 April 1963," 195.

understanding resulted in plans that did not achieve intended effects, because they failed to account for cultural biases and communicated a plan of government control as opposed to democratic prosperity. Even though the U.S. leadership provided mission orders to President Diem, who then delegated down to his military, the U.S. failure to create common understanding between themselves and Diem hampered the program. The failure of the Strategic Hamlet Program can be attributed to the lack of a regionally trained force capable of understanding its environment and create shared vision across cultures.

Case Study Findings—Recognizing Potential by Understanding Context, Creating Unity in Vision, and Crafting Appropriate Plans

It is difficult to select case studies, because no two historical events are the same. The Vietnamese and Japanese contexts were different, however there were some basic similarities. In both countries, the United States attempted to prevent the influence of communism and enable the establishment of a democratic government. In both instances, the United States endeavored to establish legitimate authority through the existing national government, and used land and economic reform policies to advance democracy. There are obvious differences in geographic location, culture and so on, but the importance is not in how they differ, but how U.S. forces' approach to advancing their objectives accounted for the differences. Operation Blacklist managed to account for the differences in culture, because it was able to field a force that was culturally competent and capable of adapting objectives based on the emerging properties in the environment. The Strategic Hamlet was on the opposite end of the spectrum, fielding a force that was unable to understand the situation in context, failing at orientation and unable adjusts objectives as needed. It is important not to attribute success or failures to the professionalism of an army but understand that despite how profession a force may be, the tools at its disposal limit it.

The disparities between the results in Vietnam and Japan can be attributed to the force

and its education. The cultural education of the U.S. forces that occupied Japan proved key in the orientation step of the creating a shared understanding. The U.S. MAAG force was unable to understand the operational environment because it never received adequate cultural training. The education is important, not because it provides answers, but because it provides a foundation from where a planner can begin to ask questions. Though the MAAG advisors provided great insight and recommendations, they lacked the tools to enable them to think beyond ambushes and engagement areas. They needed to understand the purpose of local government and cultural implications of their actions. Unlike the MAAG, the U.S. SCAP staff was able to use integrated knowledge within the organization to account for changes in the operational environment and manipulate objectives to achieve the intended purpose.

The selection of land and economic reforms is evidence of cultural competence within a force. In both cases, land was redistributed to cause an intended effect, and in both instances, it was met with angst and regret by one class of people and with open arms by another. The STRAC staff was attempting to neutralize the Japanese elite class and empower the lower class to reframe the cultural system. The land reform resulted in the elimination of a power base for the elite class and creation of a separate one for the rural Japanese farmer. More importantly, it supported the purpose of the strategic goal, democratization. The Strategic Hamlet Program failed to account for the significance of the land and what it represented. It alienated the rural Vietnamese by imposing on them a corrupt local government that empowered the district governors who were selected by higher authorities, not the populace. The program created a powerbase that aided government control and went against the purpose of establishing a representative government inherent with democracy.

The importance of a culturally competent regional force is that it enables mission command. The SCAP staff was able to communicate a vision of what it intended to accomplish to the Japanese officials. The vision created a common understanding that highlighted the purpose

of operations. Highlighting the purpose enabled U.S. forces to provide the regional and district Japanese officials with mission orders that the officials adjusted to meet the intent. The MAAG forces did not have the authority that SCAP in Japan had, however its failure was not in creating policy, but in understanding it. The MAAG failed to understand that the land and economic reforms did not meet the intended purpose. The lack of understanding was because of cultural competence, but then resulted in failing to communicate purpose to the Vietnamese district officials. Though it was obvious the plan was failing, the assumption was that it was a result of poor execution of the plan, not the plan itself. Had the plan been executed to perfection, it still would have violated the cultural norms and values of the rural Vietnamese.

The case studies highlight the importance of why regional alignment, cultural competence, and mission command are difficult to address separately. The regionally provided force requires cultural competence and must execute it objectives using mission command to be successful. The regional force provides the opportunity to enhance cultural competence and place into practice the mission command philosophy. In this symbiotic relationship, mission command provides the opportunity to gain improve cultural competence by creating a shared understanding across multinational partners and allowing the force to gain experience using mission orders.

CONCLUSION

> "This strategy advances three broad themes. First, in supporting national effort to address complex security challenges, the Join Force's leadership approach is often as important as the military capabilities we provide. Second, the changing security environment requires the Joint Force to deepen security relationships with our allies and create opportunities for partnerships with new and diverse groups of actors. And third, our Joint Force must prepare for an increasingly dynamic and uncertain future in which a full spectrum of military capabilities and attributes will be required to prevent and win our Nation's wars."
>
> —Admiral M.G. Mullen, U.S. Navy, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

The regional alignment, cultural competence, and mission command concepts greatly allow the Army to project power across the globe in support of national objectives. The regionally aligned concept provides options for the U.S. joint force operating is a specific region. A regionally aligned force that is culturally competent and has been provided the opportunity to enhance their competence by aligning and interacting with multinational coalitions provides a foundation for shared understanding. The combined concepts provide a force with capable leaders that can adapt to the operational environment in support of the national effort. The symbiotic relationship between these concepts is what allows the force to identify and exploit potential in the operational environment.

The three concepts enable the U.S. Army to provided a force to deepen security relationships with its allies and create opportunities for partnerships. As the global environment continues to evolve and crises arise, the regionally aligned force is capable of building multinational teams that can achieve unity in purpose and effort as described in the mission command concept. A coalition force that shares a common understanding of the complex environment and has experience working as a team is better suited to accomplish the aims of its governments. A force that lacks this may eventually gain enough knowledge and experience to achieve the mission, but it will require more time and should be viewed as a risk. This is a risk that the White house addressed specifically in the NSS and decided it was not worth taking by

mandating the military to provide a force that was capable of advancing U.S. interest.

The regionally aligned force concept provides options and experience critical to success in a dynamic and uncertain future. The proposed future Army force is designed to deploy to regions of interest to gain an understanding of the environment and influence regional partners to advanced U.S. interest. It is this concept that sets the stage for the requirement of cultural competence and mission command. Interacting with regional partners provides an opportunity for the U.S. forces to understand the environment they are a part of with greater clarity, allowing them to anticipate future actions and effects. In creating shared understanding, U.S. forces are better able to lead its global partners into an uncertain future and help shape it for the benefit of all.

As the U.S. national strategy continues to promote building relationships with other nations and supporting international institutions, the U.S. Army must be prepared to provide a force capable of supporting national strategic objectives. The concepts are still in the process of refinement and initial implementation. Though historical experiences may support their creation and application, further research is required into their current employment, areas for improvement, and utility. Ultimately, the purpose of the concepts is to create a more capable force that can meet the challenges of the future operational environment.

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