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Newport, RI**

**CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS AWARENESS: THE KEY TO  
ANALYZING AND COMBATING THE RELATIVE COMBAT  
POWER FOR ISLAMIC BASED TERRORISM**

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

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

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**(14 February 2005)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Terrorism will never be eradicated, the best we can do is to manage it. The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) is a unique war because we are targeting non-state actors with no defined geographical boundaries. Moreover, this enemy is quite different in belief and philosophy from Western values. The approach in dealing with this type of threat has to be fourfold. First, we must understand the issues that bring about such hatred against the United States. Second, we must conduct cultural awareness/cultural intelligence training for all military personnel deploying to combat GWOT and in the regional standing joint force headquarters. Third, we must make changes to our planning documents to include culture and religion as factors of Space, Force and Relative Combat Power. To bring about unity of effort in this area, a greater emphasis must be placed on Interagency and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) cooperation. This cooperation will solve some of the short term deficiencies. Fourth, we must conduct aggressive “strategic communication” to deter future terrorist recruitment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Know the enemy and know yourself; and in a hundred battles you'll never be in peril. When you're ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. But if ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril.

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

The United States military is a force that has no near-competitors. Our technological superiority, better-quality equipment, and training are no match for terrorists or insurgents. The expeditious victories in Afghanistan and Iraq have validated this point. However, some sort of quick military victory has not translated into a political victory or peace because of the unique nature of the warfare at hand. In this post-Cold War era, religiously motivated terrorism by non-state actors with no defined geographical boundaries is one of the greatest challenges to our military. Sun Tzu's central premise is that the ability to achieve military and political success rests on clear analysis of all factors relating to the conflict at hand. To effectively combat Islamic based terrorism, it is critical to understand the basic beliefs, religious motivations, the culture, and psyche. In dealing with Islamic based terrorism we *DO NOT* know the enemy. This is one of the main reasons that has kept the flame of *Jihad* against the infidel United States alive, resulting in non-pacification and non-capitulation of Muslim terrorists. The enemy doesn't know us either and this is the reason why they have not been successful in defeating us like "they defeated the Soviets" or accurately assessing our Center Of Gravity (COG).

Critics might ask why this is important to the combatant commander and how it can make a difference on the battlefield. Terrorism is here to stay, it will never be eradicated, the best we can do is to manage it. Most of our future conflicts whether

actual combat, Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) and Stability and Support Operations (SASO), will most likely be in failed or failing states in the Islamic region of the world or “Gap.”<sup>i</sup> Just by the very nature of this fact, these states will be an ideal breeding ground for terrorists who, to counter the imbalance in conventional military power, will resort to asymmetric means. When we try and analyze the cultural or religious situation through Western values, we invariably “under assess.” Therefore, the approach in dealing with this type of threat for the war fighter has to be a re-evaluation and reformation of training and the planning process to incorporate culture and religion as factors Space, Force and Relative Combat Power. At a minimum, at the combatant commander level, this change must incorporate the following steps: First, we must understand the issues that bring about such hatred against the United States. Second, we must conduct religious and cultural awareness/cultural intelligence training for all military personnel deploying to combat Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and in the recently mandated regional standing joint force headquarters. Third, we must make changes to our planning documents to include culture and religion as factors of Space, Force and Relative Combat Power. To bring about unity of effort, a greater emphasis must be placed on Interagency and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) cooperation. This cooperation will solve some of the short term deficiencies. Fourth, we must conduct aggressive “strategic communication”<sup>ii</sup> to deter future terrorist recruitment and win the hearts and minds to ensure enduring peace.

## UNDERSTANDING ISLAMIC CULTURE

We have to have a deep understanding of the culture because it affects our decision-making. Cultural intelligence is the greatest initial need of the commander on the ground and the one that leads him into more problems.

General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC  
Commander-in-Chief, Central  
Command

The author took an informal poll in a Naval War College (NWC) class, which consisted of officers ranging from O-3 to O-6.<sup>iii</sup> Most of these officers at some point in their careers had been to the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) and I was amazed to find out that the majority of them did not even have a cursory awareness of Islamic culture. This matters at the working level in theater.

During Operation PROVIDE COMFORT in Somalia, General Zinni, USMC, made the observation that he was a negotiator and a diplomat.<sup>iv</sup> In order to successfully negotiate and communicate with people of a different culture than ours, the combatant commander, his staff and the soldiers who deal with Muslims on a first hand basis must understand the differences. Therefore, it is critical to start by briefly explaining *true* Islam in order to thwart biases and enable effective interaction.

Contrary to popular belief, Islam in its purest form is a religion of peace, freedom and harmony. Therefore, any association of violence and terrorism with Islamist and fundamentalist Muslims is a misnomer and contradiction. A proper term would be radical or militant Muslim. There are two sources of guidance in Islam: the Quran, which is the divine guidance from God revealed to Prophet Muhammad through angel Gabriel, and the other is the Hadith. In 870 AD, some 238 years after the revelation of the Quran, the first of many books of Hadith was published.<sup>v</sup> Hadith is a term used to

denote the purported sayings and acts, traditions, of Prophet Muhammad and can be equated to the Christian Gospels of Mark, Mathew, Luke, and John in the sense that they were not written by Jesus and in some cases they utilized second hand information. Today, the overwhelming majority of Muslims accept Hadith books as a divine source of religious laws besides the Quran, even though numerous Hadith narrations contradict the Quran. It is Hadith, which make a mockery of Islam because it is interpreted to suit the political or religious goal of an organization and Quranic verses are abused in an attempt to conform to various Hadith narrations.<sup>vi</sup> It is the teaching of the Hadith that terrorist organizations exploit to their advantage.

In addition to advocating religious freedom, 1400 years ago, the Quran effectively ended the cruel pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide, granted women the right to own property before and after marriage, retain her maiden name, accept or reject marriage proposals, get education, vote and negotiate divorce. It condemns suicide and declares that oppression is worse than murder and that killing of one innocent person is like killing all of humanity.<sup>vii</sup> Prophet Muhammad said: Whoever kills himself with a blade will be tormented with that blade in the fires of Hell and on the day of resurrection.<sup>viii</sup> The widespread acceptance of Hadith and ignorance about the Quran has allowed cultural influence to be substituted as the holy word of God. The covering of a woman's face; the woman's dress; treatment of women as second class citizens; cutting hands for thievery; religious police; the beard; the head covering; excessive divorce rights for men and none for the woman; and terrorism are tied to Hadith. None of this has any support in the Quran. Educated and or open minded Muslims and Islamic scholars understand that the West and specifically the United States adhere to the

principles laid out in the Quran more so than any country in the Islamic world; a fact beyond comprehension in the Islamic world. Our divorce, inheritance, charitable giving and rights of women are in accordance with the teachings of the Quran.

The Western misconception of the difference between Allah and God is widespread. Islam is a monotheistic religion that draws its roots from Adam and Eve. The Quran is considered the Final Testament in a series of books that include the Jewish Torah and the Christian Bible. Moses and Jesus are both prophets of Allah so to differentiate between Allah and God is a gross fallacy.

It is important to understand a big difference in the way the West views a nation/state as compared to the Islamic world. In the West, the basic unit of human organization is the nation/state which is then subdivided in various ways, one of which is by religion. The Islamic world however, identifies themselves as Muslims first and tends to see not a nation subdivided into religious groups, but a religion subdivided into nations.<sup>ix</sup>

## **CURRENT ISSUES AND GRIEVANCES OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD**

British journalist Robert Fisk in an article in the *Independent* on 22 August 1998, wrote,

The use of the word “terrorist”-where Arabs who murder innocents are always called “terrorist” whereas Israeli killers who slaughter 29 Palestinians in a Hebron Mosque or assassinate their prime minister, are called extremists-is only part of the problem. The who and the how are important. But the “why” is usually something the West prefers to avoid. . . . Why the enemies of America hate America?<sup>x</sup>

When U.S. and other Western leaders describe [Osama Bin Laden] OBL as a terrorist problem, not a religious issue, they mislead their public. . . . They are also misleading when they fail to explain that policies issued by the U.S. and the West for decades in the

Middle East and Muslim world generally are seen by many Muslims as anti Islamic. For the little they pay attention to international affairs, Americans tend to believe U.S. foreign policy is benign and characterized by generosity, altruism, support for the underdog, concern for human rights, and advocacy of democracy. Americans are surprised when ungrateful foreigners try to knock down our airliners, blow up our skyscrapers, sink our ships, and kill our servicemen and drag their nude and mutilated bodies through the streets. . . . We must accept that there are many Muslims in the world who believe that the U.S. foreign policy is irretrievably biased in favor of Israel, trigger happy in attacking the poor and ill-defended Muslim countries, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and so forth; rapacious in controlling and consuming the Islamic world's energy resources; blasphemous in allowing Israel to occupy Jerusalem and U.S. troops to be based in Saudi Arabia; and hypocritical and cruel in its denial of Palestinian rights, use of economic sanctions against the Muslim people of Iraq, and support for the Muslim world's absolutist kings and dictators. . . . Until this fact is accepted, America will not be able to defend itself.<sup>x1</sup>

The enemy's strategic COG is its ideology and a critical requirement of the COG is to fuel the hatred for the United States and maintain unity amongst the Muslims. It is vital for the combatant commander and his staff to be aware of the important issues that unites the Muslim community and ignites this anti-Americanism. Until there is some sort of resolution or commencement of a peace initiative to defuse the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, which for decades has polarized the Islamic world against us, there will be anti-American sentiment. This polarization has generated sympathy, popular support, motivation and recruiting fodder for extremists, such as OBL, exploiting poor and disillusioned individuals to launch devastating attacks against U.S. interests. Every actor in the Middle East believes that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be resolved before progress against terrorism can be made.<sup>xii</sup>

## **HOW HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?**

There are numerous examples in history where a misunderstanding or underestimating of adversary capabilities has proved disastrous. Vietnam, Beirut, Mogadishu

and the Soviet Union's involvement in Afghanistan and Chechnya all serve as recent reminders. Americans went into Iraq on the loose premise of spreading freedom and democracy. The question is, how are we doing, and do the Iraqis feel free? Our expectation of being received as liberators was highly flawed and the occupation is acting as a poster for future terrorist recruitment. The November 2004, 17-day Battle of Fallujah, was the deadliest sustained urban fighting for U.S. troops and was an indicator of the enemy's resolve against a formidable force. That they were willing to die instead of surrender, provides an explanation to their thought process and the effect religious fanaticism can have. The recently released Defense Science Board Task Force report indicates that the United States has zero credibility among Muslims and that we have failed to explain policies to the Muslim World.

Opinion surveys conducted by Zogby International, the Pew Research Center, Gallup (CNN/USA Today), and the Department of State (INR) reveal widespread animosity toward the United States and its policies. A year and a half after going to war in Iraq, Arab/Muslim anger has intensified. Data from Zogby International in July 2004, for example, show that the U.S. is viewed unfavorably by overwhelming majorities in Egypt (98 percent), Saudi Arabia (94 percent), Morocco (88 percent), and Jordan (78 percent). The war has increased mistrust of America in Europe, weakened support for the war on terrorism, and undermined U.S. credibility worldwide. Media commentary is consistent with polling data. In a State Department (INR) survey of editorials and op-eds in 72 countries, 82.5 % of commentaries were negative, 17.5% positive.<sup>xiii</sup>

In the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld's memo of October, 2003, he stated that defense officials and military commanders lack a good set of measures to determine how well they are doing in GWOT. He went on to say, "Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror."<sup>xiv</sup> The reason for this ambiguity and inability to assess the situation stems from the fact that in Iraq, the Americans did not take into account the religious and cultural factors during the Commander's Estimate of

the Situation (CES) process and failed to effectively communicate our intentions. This has had a direct effect at the tactical level, where a negative perception by the people of Iraq can mean the difference between U.S. casualties or a situation handled without the use of force. The grade on how we have done so far in understanding the Islamic culture as it relates to Relative Combat Power and effectively communicating our intentions is an unequivocal “F.”<sup>xv</sup>

### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Americans need to understand the historical and religious context in which OBL and his supporters have acted as well as why these forces emerged . . . the U.S. needs to listen and take heed of explicit warnings both that the OBL style of warfare is here for the long term and that the U.S. can no longer rely on its continental breadth, friendly neighbors, and broad oceanic shores to insulate it from dastardly acts of those Islamists who mean harm, to us.

Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the future of America.*

What I observed emphasized what I had learned during my two years as an advisor to the Joint Staff J3, Saudi Arabian Ministry of Defense and Aviation as well as extensive travels throughout the Middle East; as Americans, we tend to have an ethnocentric belief that we are superior. This attitude, which may be helpful to win wars on the field of battle, can often work against us in sustaining the peace. . . . An analysis of training I observed during the Mission Readiness Exercises at Joint Training Readiness Center has revealed a negative trend in the cultural preparation of our leaders and soldiers getting ready to deploy to Iraq.<sup>xvi</sup>

If ignored, cultural and religious factors can undermine mission success and prevent us from developing a feasible strategy to achieve our objectives. Successful incorporation of these factors is equally vital to tactical planning as to campaign and strategic planning. Today, the typical unit-level religious and cultural training is not adequate.<sup>xvii</sup> It does not address the thought process of the enemy, their religious convictions, or their anticipated reaction to our maneuvers and the “why.” And, more importantly, how to make them submit to our will or win enduring peace, because

winning the peace requires tact, diplomacy, and religious and cultural awareness. Americans must understand that the values of people from other organizations and nationalities will directly affect their understanding of any given situation. The combatant commander must conduct unit level exercises with members of coalitions to gain an understanding of their culture and form long term relationships. One trap to avoid is determining cultural awareness by listening to what the elites think, as in the case of exiled Ahmed Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress. The emphasis should be about what the common people think and believe to be important. This author proposes the following measures to be taken at the operational level:

#### 1. CONDUCT CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS AWARENESS TRAINING:

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

Congressman Ike Skelton (Democrat-MO)  
House Armed Services Committee

Our military regularly participates in a coalition environment. This provides a great training ground to utilize the foreign forces to research and develop Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) for religious and cultural intelligence. These military operations are filled with cultural conflict potential, not only between foreign military personnel and local populations, but also between nationalities within the foreign forces.

Cultural intelligence is the incorporation of cultural and religious factors into meaningful analysis to support the commander's decision making. By understanding an enemy's thought process; better educated analysis is conducted of potential actions and

reactions. Cultural Intelligence is not a separate intelligence discipline, but instead a fused product of all-source analysis. Cultural interpretation, competence, and adaptation are prerequisites for achieving a win-win relationship in any military operation.<sup>xviii</sup>

Cultural training should be broken down into four levels of awareness which may coincide with phased operations and the knowledge level requirement at different tactical/operational hierarchies (see Figures 1).<sup>xix</sup>

- A. Cultural Consideration** - Incorporation of generic cultural and religious concepts in common military training, knowing how and why to study them and knowing where to find cultural and religious factors and expertise. This level of training should be conducted for all military personnel and should encompass Islamic issues discussed previously.
- B. Cultural Awareness** - Exposure to basic cultural issues such as cultural niceties, survival language skills, “do and don’t.” This level of training should be conducted during pre-deployment for all deploying forces.
- C. Cultural Understanding** - Deeper awareness of the specific culture and religion that allows general insight into thought processes, motivating factors, and other issues that directly support decision making. At a minimum, this level of training should be conducted for essential personnel.
- D. Cultural Competence** - Fusion of cultural and religious understanding with cultural intelligence that allows focused insight into current operations. Cultural competence infers insight into the intentions of specific actors and groups. This level of training should be conducted for Decision Makers.

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Cultural Competence results from the intimate knowledge of an adversary's (or allies') motivation, intent, will and tactical methods. Success results from the ability of leaders to think and adapt faster than the enemy and soldiers who thrive in an environment of uncertainty, ambiguity, and unfamiliar cultural circumstances. The more unconventional the adversary (and the further away from U.S. cultural norms), the more we need to understand their society and underlying cultural and religious dynamics to prevent mission failure (see Figure 2).

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The lesson learned [in Somalia] that kept coming out was that we lacked cultural awareness. We needed cultural intelligence going in. . . . What we need is to understand how societies function. What makes them tick? Who makes the decisions? What is it about their society that's so remarkably different in their values, in the way they think, compared to my values and the way I think in my western, white-man mentality? . . . Sometimes the policy-makers don't understand political and cultural realities on the ground.

Gen Anthony C. Zinni (USMC Ret.)  
National Defense University, August 8, 1996

In Somalia, Aideed was a well respected General, who was viewed by some locals as George Washington or Mandella of Somalia. Gen Zinni explains that a failure to understand the culture led to the misidentification of Aideed as a "warlord," which exasperated an already tenuous situation. The result was grave misperception, miscommunication, and misinterpretation sometimes with fatal consequences for U.S. personnel. Cultural and religious awareness should be the basic requirement for SASO, post-conflict reconstruction, working with coalition partners, allies, international agencies, and NGOs, Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Civil Affairs, Information/Influence Operations, Effects Based Operations and Engagements and

Bilateral negotiations. According to the Marine Corps Intelligence Agency, over 50% of all requests for information from I Marine Expeditionary Force are culture related.<sup>xxi</sup>

## **2. REFORM THE PLANNING PROCESSES**

Currently, U.S. joint and service doctrine does not stress the consideration of any type of cultural awareness and competence factors during the deliberate planning process or crises action planning. When cultural factors are addressed in doctrine, it is usually in reference to working together with coalition partners and not specifically how cultural factors could affect enemy reaction and impacts on our selected Course Of Action (COA).<sup>xxii</sup>

The NWC CES (NWC 4111G)<sup>xxiii</sup> discusses the factors of Space and Force, but overlooks linking religion with culture.<sup>xxiv</sup> After establishing the relationship between religion and ideology and the enemies COG, it will be imperative to add this factor to the variables. Also, religious convictions and ideology must be included in the relative combat power of the opposing force because it is an intangible factor that plays a large part in threat morale and affects GWOT operations.<sup>xxv</sup> Figure 3 is recommended as a modification to the CES process, which incorporates the Cultural and Religious factors.<sup>xxvi</sup>

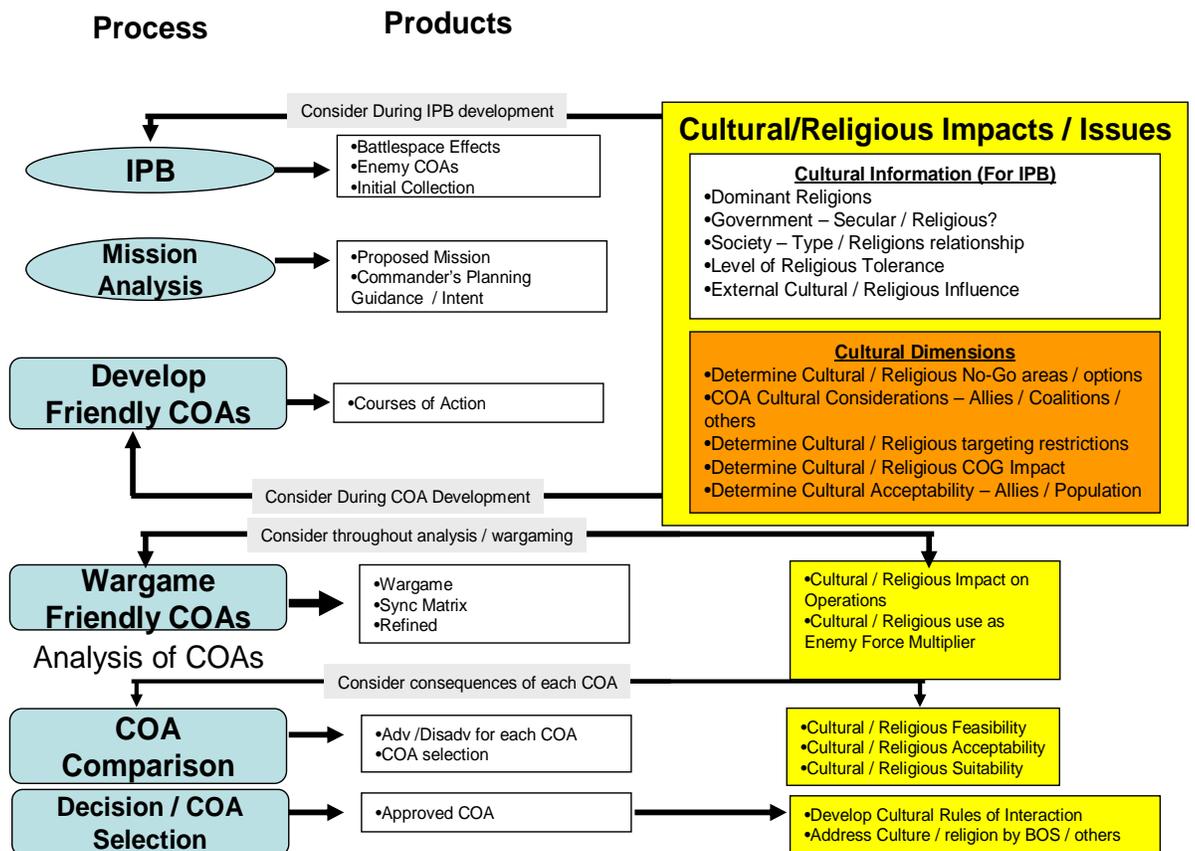


Figure 3: LTC Wunderle's Modified Commander's Estimate of the Situation

The Universal Joint Task List (UJTL) communicates mission requirements to commanders and planners. The UJTL identifies the need to collect strategic and operational information and exploit this information. The checklist does not identify culture or religious fervor as an area of collection.<sup>xxvii</sup> Additionally, in determining the enemy's COG, religion is not included.<sup>xxviii</sup> The UJTL requires a coordination of Information Operations (IO). Aggressive "strategic communication" to counter the enemy's propaganda and to push the American message to the masses will reduce enemy

morale and weaken their COG. The UJTL establishes training requirements for commanders and the forces. At a minimum, cultural, religious and ethics training must be added to the list.

The Joint Task Force Headquarters Master Training Guide (CJCSM 3500.05A) provides a framework to plan and execute military contingency operations, determine the enemy's COG and develop a COA. This guide, like the UJTL, is lacking in that it does not place emphasis on religious passions, especially in developing the operations estimate in combating terrorism.<sup>xxix</sup> This publication must also be changed to incorporate the changes recommended for the UJTL.

Improvement in intelligence gathering to provide "actionable" intelligence to tactical commanders must be the focus of every agency. Intelligence derived from all sources regarding the cultural, religious, social, political, and economic aspects of governments and civil populations, their demographics, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events must be added to the planning publications. Religion and culture may be the best guide to understanding the intentions of the enemy and religious and cultural ignorance can expose weakness and vulnerability to the U.S. tactical COG. Figure 4 shows an updated Cultural Competence chart for all levels of command.<sup>xxx</sup>

### **3. CONDUCT "STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION"**

We do not have a good track record. In the historical context the U.S. foreign policy for the Islamic region has been based on convergence of common interests from time to time. The Muslims are disillusioned and skeptical of the U.S.

U.S. President, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism 2003*

The world's unsophisticated and uninformed Muslims neither understand the altruism of the U.S. foreign policy nor that the policy is designed for their own good.<sup>xxxi</sup>

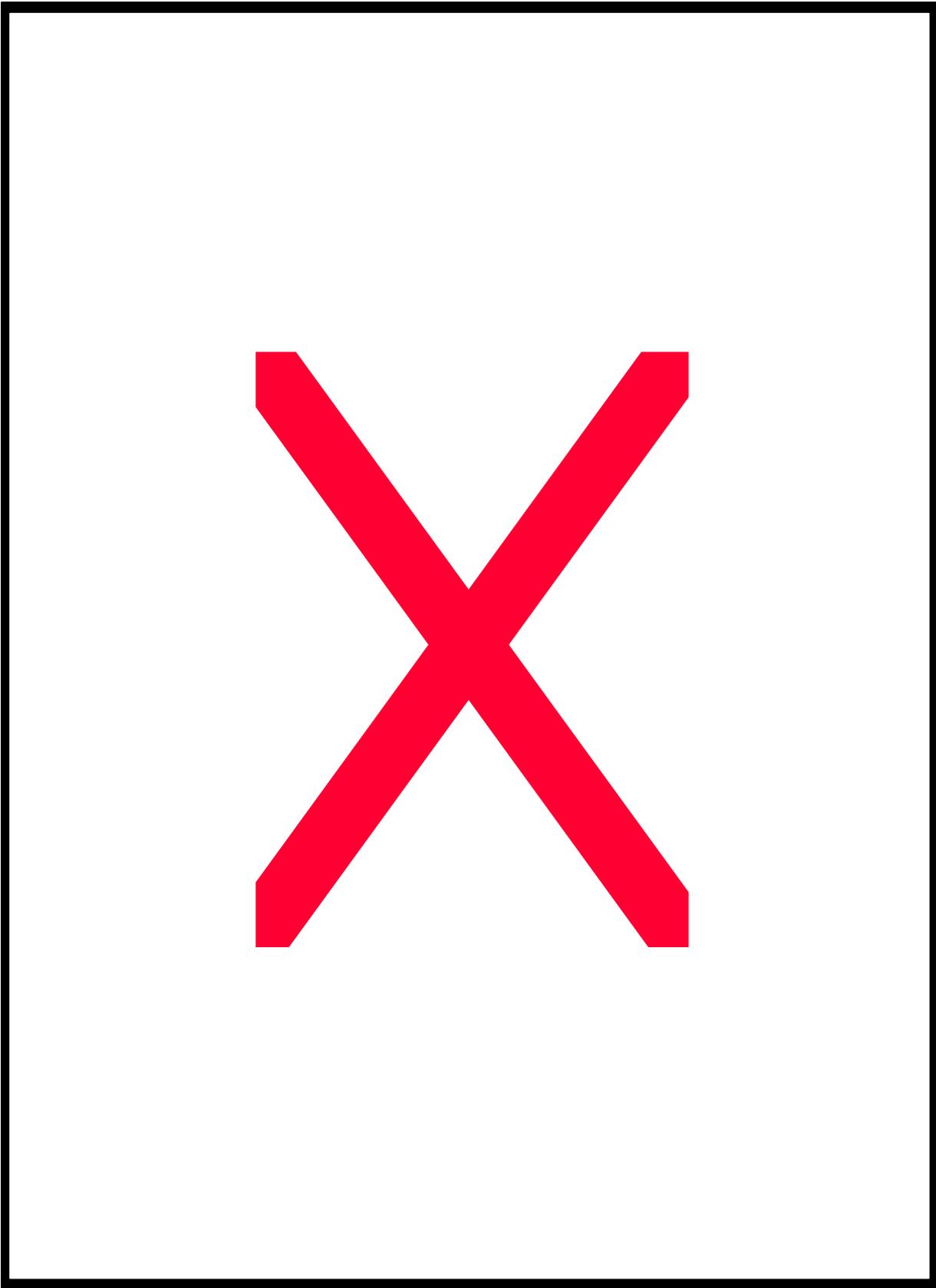


Figure 4: **Cultural Competence Across the Spectrum**

There is great mistrust in the Islamic world of the true intentions of the United States and her foreign policy. In the post-Cold War era, when there was no reason to maintain the support of our allies in South Asia, the United States abandoned Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is during these times of despondency and despair that the popularity and strength of Al-Qaeda grew and flourished. Post Gulf War I, the lack of U.S. support for the Shiites and Kurdish insurgency against Saddam Hussein, led to ethnic cleansing and great suspicion of American sincerity.

The 9/11 Commission report states that, the resentment of America and the West is deep, even among leaders of relatively successful Muslim states.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Negative attitudes and the conditions that create them are the underlying source of threat to our forces and a manifestation of a pervasive atmosphere of hostility.

Americans need to attack the hearts and minds of the Muslim world through “Strategic Communication,” to assure them that American values are not at odds with Islam. In order to maintain U.S. public support for the war effort, a similar campaign must simultaneously take place for the hearts and minds of Americans. During the early months of occupation, cultural isolation in Iraq created a tragic barrier which separated Iraqis from the inherent goodness and intentions of U.S. soldiers. An effective and aggressive PSYOP and IO campaign at the operational level must be executed. This type of campaign could assist in removing the stereotypes and biases in the Muslim world and separating the vast majority of non-violent Muslims from the radical-militant Islamist-Jihadists. But American efforts have not only failed in this respect: they may also have achieved the opposite of what they intended.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The Defense Science Board Task Force report found deficiencies in the DOD's PSYOP and public affairs (PA) activities.<sup>xxxiv</sup> To overcome the short term deficiencies, the author proposes the combatant commander's take the following measures with religious and cultural factors at the forefront:

- Combatant commander, theater security cooperation plans and operational plans must have a PSYOP and IO contingency built in. In most cases, State/Country teams and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel are already in theatre before the military deploys. The plans should get a "chop" from the agencies to obtain a sanity check. Beginning in April 2002, the State Department conducted a year long study on "The Future of Iraq," costing \$5 million. The results of the study foresaw many of the problems that have plagued postwar Iraq, but Pentagon officials ignored the warning. Had the United States given the report a serious consideration, the military would have been more attuned to the cultural and religious aspects of the terrorist threat they face now. There must be synchronization amongst the efforts of different agencies to prevent duplication and promote Economy of Force.

- NGOs and civilian contractors must be solicited to increase our understanding of the religious and cultural situation. Cooperative NGOs can be an invaluable source of information because they are keyed into gossip and information networks and have personal links in the community. To bring about Unity of Effort, the coordination between the various intelligence gathering sources mentioned above must be coordinated and prioritized at the combatant commander level. To overcome the shortage of local linguists, utilize the State/Country team and CIA personnel.

- Improved coordination between Military Public Affairs (PA) and operational and tactical PSYOP activities is essential. To boost public diplomacy, PA, PSYOP and open military information operations must be coordinated and energized to correctly analyze the combined impacts of audience, message, means, daily influences including content analysis, agenda and biases, relevance and credibility. A determination must be made of the key audience and the numerous targeted audiences that can be affected differently or influenced by the same message. The influence campaign must precisely determine what the targeted audiences should see, the desired impact, and whether to question and doubt the information they get from their own governments?<sup>xxxv</sup>

- Employ theatre chaplains and local religious, ethnic or cultural leaders and representatives from sports, entertainment, and music to act as spokespeople in order to be a credible source of information for the targeted audiences. Religious counsel and cultural awareness could alleviate a repeat of the Abu-Ghraib prison type scandal, where tactical ineptness led to a strategic problem and negative publicity.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

- Regional web sites aimed at providing open source information supporting the U.S.

Government and Coalition policies must be utilized. The media must be tactfully utilized to portray a favorable view of our on-going operations and aid in counter-propaganda. Coherent efforts to use radio and television to reach the populace must be in place. This has been one of the most inexplicable failures before, during and after the Iraq war.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

- The most challenging part is to develop the metrics for success of the influence campaign. Americans must be able to determine the impact that can be seen, measured, and evaluated. The message must not just be delivered but the audience should be heard

for feedback. By gaining an understanding of culture and religion as previously suggested, Americans will be successful in utilizing correct language, symbols, and images that resonate with the targeted audience.

## CONCLUSION

These are now culture wars that we're involved in. We don't understand that culture. I have spent 15 years of my life in this part of the world. And I'll tell you, every time I hear somebody talk about this, or one of the dilettantes back here speak about this region of the world-they don't have a clue. They don't understand what makes them tick. They don't understand what our role is in moving this away from a disaster for the entire world, and for us and our interests.

Gen Anthony C. Zinni (USMC Ret.)  
Naval Institute Forum, 4 September 2003

Internal conflicts stemming from religious, ethnic, economic or political disputes will remain at current numbers or even increase in numbers.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

War is a struggle of wills and understanding your enemy so you can devise an effective strategy to combat the threat and strike at his COG. It is possible to defeat the enemy, destroy its industry, and occupy its land. Yet, if the spirit of resistance burns in the heart of its people, victory cannot be claimed. It might be possible to subjugate an enemy in the short term, but who can doubt that trouble will arise in the long run.<sup>xxxix</sup> It is equally important to know his strategy so you can anticipate and counter his moves. In fighting Islamic based terrorism, America has failed to understand the Islamic culture and the motivation it provides to continue the struggle of wills. Stereotypes and biases have impeded objective critical analysis and the only way to overcome that obstacle is with increased levels of cultural and religious understanding for all personnel engaged in GWOT. Troops must understand how locals view the world, what is important to them, what is worth living, and dying for.<sup>xl</sup> In order to influence the hearts and minds of the

enemy and maintain American public support, the United States must engage in an aggressive PSYOP and IO campaign.

If the Americans do not want to repeat their past mistakes, a learning culture must be created, where intellectual preparation is just as important as tactical preparation. Currently the study and integration of cultural and religious factors are not in the planning doctrine. Until we come up with TTP to incorporate culture and religion into our decision-making process and in our operations, the effectiveness of our missions will continue to suffer. To overcome the personnel shortages and deficiencies and achieve Unity of Effort, we must place greater emphasis on Interagency and NGO cooperation. In combating and succeeding against Islamic based terrorism, military forces must adapt to operating in non-western social contexts and transform the planning processes in order to accurately assess intangible factors that have a large bearing on the enemies Relative Combat Power. Americans need to discard their Imperialist hubris and assess the situation from the enemy's perspective.

Crucial to success in combat is an understanding of one's opponent as he is, rather than as Americans would like him to be. This is intelligence in the largest sense. It does not rest on satellites, UAV's, reconnaissance aircraft, and electronic surveillance . . . it provides little that is of value in understanding the enemy's intentions, his motivation to fight, and the strength of his will-factors that matter most in war . . . good intelligence gathered by thinking human beings can make the difference in victory or defeat . . . this war is one in which culture and politics matter as much as technology. Political and cultural knowledge require immersion in the language, history, and contemporary life of a region. . . . Americans must pay particular attention to how their low-tech enemies define victory and defeat. That calculus may prove very different from their own.<sup>xli</sup>

On 21 October 2003, Major General (RET) Robert H. Scales Jr. USA, testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, noted that our military possesses the technological means to conduct net-centric warfare, but it lacks the intellectual acumen to

conduct culture-centric warfare and this should be the area of immediate focus for the combatant commander's to win the GWOT.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> The “Gap” is a term used by Professor Thomas Barnett in his book, *The Pentagon’s New Map*, to describe regions that are plagued by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder, and most important-chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of global terrorists.

<sup>ii</sup> The term “Strategic Communication,” is borrowed from the 2004, DOD, Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communications. The scope of this report covers the Strategic, Operational and Tactical levels of command.

<sup>iii</sup> O-3 to O-6 represents military officer rank echelons. In the Navy, an O-3 is a Lieutenant and an O-6 is a Captain. In the Army, Air Force and Marine Corp those ranks equate to Captain to Colonel.

<sup>iv</sup> Major General Anthony C. Zinni, “Non-Traditional Military Missions: Their Nature, and the Need for Cultural Awareness and Flexible Thinking,” *Perspectives on Warfighting*, 6 (1998): 250.

<sup>v</sup> The author was born and raised in Pakistan and immigrated to the United States at the age of 18. The author is a practicing Muslim who has studied the Quran and the Hadith.

<sup>vi</sup> Rashad Khalifa, “War on Terrorism.” *Submission.Org*, December 2003, <<http://www.submission.org/ISLAM/free-USA.html>> [05 November 2004].

<sup>vii</sup> Holy Quran, verse 4:29, 2:191,217 & 5:32.

<sup>viii</sup> Prophet Muhammad, quoted in Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 153.

<sup>ix</sup> The author would like to use a personal anecdote to explain this concept. The author took his wife, a Christian American to Pakistan for a visit. Whenever, she met a westerner, her first question was “Are you an American and not are you a Southern Baptist?” In comparison, when the author travels overseas or even in the U.S., when he meets an Easterner, his first question is “Are you Muslim and then the country of origin?” The way Muslims identify themselves, foremost is by religion and then by country/state. Every Muslim is a brother or sister first, and then a countrymen.

<sup>x</sup> Robert Fisk, “As My Grocer Said: Thank You Mr. Clinton for the Fine Words, . . .” *Independent*, 22 August 1998, 3.

<sup>xi</sup> Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the future of America* (Washington D.C.: Brassey’s Inc. 2002), 17.

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>xiii</sup> Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communications* (Washington, DC: 2004), 15.

<sup>xiv</sup> Donald Rumsfeld to General Dick Myers and Paul Wolfowitz, 16 October 2003, “Memorandums of Donald Rumsfeld,” Washington, DC.

<sup>xv</sup> This is the author’s opinion based upon the post-hostilities insurgency and insecurity in Iraq and the U.S. Negotiators Global Report Card published in CSEG Recorder’s article, *How to Negotiate with Anyone, Anywhere Around the World* (March 2001). In the article, F. L. Acuff, states that Americans are poor international negotiators because in order to be a good negotiator, one must understand how one differs from others in terms of cultural traits, values and assumptions. The U.S. Negotiators Global Report Card assigns a grade of “D” to synergistic approach, cultural I.Q., adapting the negotiating process to the

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host country environment, patience, listening and building solid relationships and a grade of “F” to linguistic abilities.

<sup>xvi</sup> LTC William Wunderle, “Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: Planning Requirement in Wielding the Instruments of National Power,” (Power Point presentation, U.S. Army, Fort Bragg, NC: 2005) 1.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>xviii</sup> The cultural and religious awareness training section is a modified version from the Power Point presentation of LTC William Wunderle, “Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: Planning Requirement in Wielding the Instruments of National Power,” (U.S. Army, Fort Bragg, NC: 2005). The factor of “Religion” has been added to his Power Point presentation.

<sup>xix</sup> Figure 1: Modified version of LTC William Wunderle, “Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: Planning Requirement in Wielding the Instruments of National Power,” (Power Point presentation, U.S. Army, Fort Bragg, NC: 2005) 10.

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>xxii</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>xxiii</sup> NWC 4111G is a Naval War College Commander’s Estimate of the Situation Workbook published by the Joint Military Operations (JMO) Department.

<sup>xxiv</sup> JMO Department, Naval War College, Commander’s Estimate Of The Situation, NWC 4111G (Newport, RI: 2004), 1-8.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-12, B-1, B4 thru B6.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Figure 3: Modified version of LTC William Wunderle, “Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: Planning Requirement in Wielding the Instruments of National Power,” (Power Point presentation, U.S. Army, Fort Bragg, NC: 2005) 72.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Manual, Universal Joint Task List (Washington, D.C.: 01 July 2002), B-C-C-21 thru 22, E-A-7, E-A-20, E-A-59 thru 60, D-4 thru 5, D-19 thru 20, D-29 thru 30, D-34 thru 35.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Ibid.*, B-C-A-33, B-C-B-37 thru 38, B-C-C-44 thru 45.

<sup>xxix</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Manual, Joint Task Force Headquarters Master Training Guide (Washington, D.C.: 01 June 2003), 3-II-1, 3-II-4, 3-II-16, 3-II23, 3-II-71 thru 73.

<sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Anonymous, Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the future of America (Washington D.C.: Brassey’s Inc. 2002), xvi.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, quoted in The 9/11 Commission Report (New York London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 362.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Department of Defense, Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communications (Washington, DC: 2004), 40.

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- <sup>xxxiv</sup>, *Ibid.*, 95.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-38.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Department of Defense, Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communications (Washington, DC: 2004), 19.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, Iraq and Conflict Termination: The Road to Guerrilla War?, Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, DC: 28 July 2003), 21.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Congressional Research Service, Report on Terrorism and the Military's Role in Domestic Crisis Management: Background and Issues for Congress (Library of Congress: 2001), CRS-4.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Joseph L. Strange and Richard Iron, "Center of Gravity: What Clausewitz Really Meant," Joint Force Quarterly, 35 (October 2004): 25.
- <sup>xl</sup> Major Susan Seaman, "The Increased Importance of Cultural Intelligence in Today's Military Operations," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 2003), 3.
- <sup>xli</sup> Williamson Murray and Robert H. Scales Jr., The Iraq War (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003), 240 – 241.

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