# INFLUENCING THE FORGOTTEN HALF OF THE POPULATION IN COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

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**INFLUENCING THE FORGOTTEN HALF OF THE POPULATION IN
COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS**



by



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# ABSTRACT

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As the Army continues to operate in complex environments, involving extended kinetic and non-kinetic contact with indigenous populations, it is critical for the Army to understand and appreciate the capabilities and potential of indigenous women as peacemakers and peacekeepers. The Army would be well served to support indigenous women in active efforts to bring a moderate voice into the public dialogue, as well as to positively influence women so they bring a moderate voice into the private sphere. Women and their needs should be specifically addressed. This discussion highlights the internationally recognized importance of women in conflict resolution, then presents an overview of actions the Army has already undertaken that recognize the importance of women in the cultural landscape. An overview of patriarchal culture follows, which examines factors the Army needs to know about women in patriarchal societies, then addresses challenges the development community and military face when engaging women. This discussion concludes with practical recommendations for the Army to use to engage the moderate voices of indigenous women and to influence them in a positive manner regarding the actions and intentions of the U.S. military.

INFLUENCING THE FORGOTTEN HALF OF THE POPULATION IN
COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS


> Muslim women's voices can help us win the war against terror by
> tempering their societies long-term… Many quasi-democracies of mostly
> male participants are overly influenced by extremism and do not benefit
> from half the population's input. In other words, the hand that rocks the
> cradle could also moderate the nation[1]

—Rachel Bryars


Introduction:  Stories of Iraqi Women[2]

Following the initial euphoria after the United States' (U.S.) 2003 invasion of Iraq,

many Iraqi people gradually withdrew behind their sectarian and tribal divides. However,

some worked across divides to try to improve the lives of everyday Iraqis who had long

suffered under the neglect of Saddam Hussein's regime. Nesreen, a woman and a

doctor, was insistent upon getting the local hospital operational again. She worked with

the U.S. Army to identify critical hospital requirements, like emergency power

generation and emergency medical equipment, for Commanders' Emergency Response

Program (CERP) funding. Undeterred by dangerous conditions, she traveled repeatedly

to Baghdad in search of basic medical supplies and lobbied actively for needed medical

equipment. Upon bringing the hospital to an operational status, Nesreen worked with

local Army units to facilitate medical civic action programs at the local hospital. Her

status in the community was further reinforced when male city council members

identified her to join the city council as a member based on her contributions to the

community.

Like Nesreen, Raja was not content to sit by and simply watch developments. As

U.S. forces undertook a program to construct schools, Raja worked to ensure that

school projects incorporated Iraqi children, regardless of sect, tribe or gender. She worked to fairly distribute school supplies and to get local teachers back into classrooms. She worked through her husband to gain acceptance for the local Army unit to facilitate formation of a local women's organization.

Iraq, and indeed the rest of the world the Army operates in, is filled with women like Nesreen and Raja who have the capabilities and potential to make significant contributions to peacemaking and peacekeeping. While local Iraqi men were concerned with divisive issues such as the Sunni-Shia divide and identifying former Ba'ath party members, these women looked for ways to bring the population together and to support all members of society. Greater participation by women in Iraq based on a shared stake in economic and social development may help to moderate the regional, ethnic, and religious divides. The senior coordinator of the U.S. State Department's Office of International Women's Issues observed "a great spirit of unity among Iraqi women."[3]

As the Army continues to operate in complex environments, involving extended kinetic and non-kinetic contact with indigenous populations, it is critical for the Army to understand and appreciate the capabilities and potential of women like Nesreen and Raja. It is also important for the Army to understand that despite the oppressive appearing nature of many patriarchal societies, women wield great influence outside the public view. The Army would be well served to support indigenous women in active efforts to bring a moderate voice into the public dialogue, as well as to positively influence women so they bring a moderate voice into the private sphere. Women and their needs should be specifically addressed. Women are a large segment of the population that have a major influence, but are easy to overlook.

This discussion first highlights the internationally recognized importance of women as peacemakers and peacekeepers, then presents an overview of actions the Army has already undertaken that recognize the importance of women in the cultural landscape. An overview of patriarchal culture follows, which examines factors the Army needs to know about women in patriarchal societies, then addresses challenges the development community and military face when engaging women. This discussion concludes with practical recommendations for the Army to use to engage the moderate voices of indigenous women and to influence them in a positive manner regarding the actions and intentions of the U.S. military.

Women as Peacemakers and Peacekeepers

It is only fairly recently that the international community, including the United States, has recognized the importance of women as peacemakers and peacekeepers. Women's importance in these roles is directly related to the disproportionate amount of harm that both women and children experience in war. In conflicts today, civilians are increasingly targeted resulting in 80 to 90 percent civilian casualties, with 80 to 90 percent of these being women and girls. Women and children are the big losers in war, but women persevere in conflict and post-conflict situations to protect families and restore normalcy.

Stephanie Hampton, a human geographer, describes the actions of women facing the horrors of conflict and its immediate aftermath.

> Under extreme conditions of deprivation of the basic necessities of life and the constant threat of violence, it is often left to women to gather any remaining family and seek safety, sustenance, and shelter. When the family is secured, women's attention turns outward to the community where they organize themselves to provide schooling, medical care, and support groups for traumatized persons.

Ms. Hampton asserts that women are major stakeholders in war. Women are victims, but much more significantly, they actively seek to restore normalcy and redress grievances in war's aftermath.[4]

In 2000, Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message for the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace included the following:

> But women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it. When society collapses, women play a critical role in ensuring that life goes on. When ethnic tensions cause or exacerbate conflict, women tend to build bridges rather than walls. When considering the impact and implications of war and peace, women think first of their children and their future, before themselves.[5]

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security, recognizing that regardless to which culture they belong, there are gender distinctive characteristics of women that can be key to making and keeping peace. These include collaboration skills, ability to work across ethnic, political, and religious lines for the common good, and willingness to use available resources for social investment.[6]  Rather than categorizing women as helpless victims of conflict, this resolution acknowledges their active role in preventing and resolving conflicts and in peacemaking.

In 2006, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) prepared a special report addressing the role of women in stabilization and reconstruction. This report asserts that women are both the primary victims of conflict and also bear the burden of reconstruction. Women not only pursue practical reconstruction initiatives, such as infrastructure repair and clean water supply, they also pursue intangibles such as repairing relationships and fostering traditions, laws and customs. When women are

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placed in decision-making positions post-conflict, they operate in a manner that promotes good governance, insisting upon transparency, accountability and fighting corruption. Recent research shows that engaging women as peace builders both advances women's rights, a democratic ideal the U.S. government (USG) pursues through the Department of State (DoS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and also leads to more effective programs, which promote a more sustainable peace.[7]

USIP acknowledges that the United States government (USG) has made important progress in recognizing the importance of including women in stabilization and reconstruction operations, but asserts that there is much to be done across the government, to include the Department of Defense (DoD). The USIP report specifically recommends that DoD develop the internal capacity of the U.S. military to "recognize and address gender issues during war and in postwar reconstruction."[8]

Relevant Army Doctrine and Training

The U.S. military will continue its involvement with the indigenous populations of countries in crisis. As recent experience shows, this is an extremely complex and somewhat daunting task. Force-on-force conflict in pursuit of purely kinetic effects against a known enemy seems simple and straightforward in retrospect. The military has learned that culture matters and that despite toppling a regime, military forces on the ground were behind from the start in Iraq. In its usual way, the military has identified a shortcoming in capabilities to conduct Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) and Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, and is both

implementing lessons learned during ongoing operations and seeking myriad solutions

for the future.

Arguably, the most significant step the Army has undertaken to address these

shortcomings is the publication of FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. Indeed, in the foreword,

Lieutenant Generals' Petraeus, U.S. Army, and Amos, U.S. Marine Corps, acknowledge

it has been over 20 years since either service addressed principles and guidelines for

counterinsurgency operations in a manual devoted exclusively to the subject.[9] FM 3-24

addresses engagement of women in the following terms:

> In traditional societies, women are hugely influential in forming the social
> networks that insurgents use for support. When women support COIN
> efforts, families support COIN efforts. Getting the support of families is a
> big step toward mobilizing the local populace against the insurgency. Co-
> opting neutral or friendly women through targeted social and economic
> programs builds networks of enlightened self-interest that eventually
> undermine insurgents.[10]

The manual addresses women in several areas. In Chapter 1, which provides an

overview of COIN, the essential nature of cultural knowledge is reinforced, to include an

observation that American ideas of normal are not universal and different societies have

different norms concerning gender.[11]  Chapter 3 addresses the critical nature of

understanding the operational environment in COIN, with a specific focus on

understanding the people with an emphasis on socio-cultural factors, to include society,

social structure, culture, power and authority.[12]  The manual briefly addresses

considering the role of women in developing logical lines of operation for essential

services.[13] Despite a strong paragraph in Appendix A, "A Plan for Action", of how hugely

influential women are in COIN operations, FM 3-24 does not address women, nor how

to influence them, in great depth.

The Army introduced Human Terrain Teams (HTT) in September of 2007. These five-person teams are designed to work at the Brigade Combat Team level. They are unique in that they rely heavily on civilian expertise, to include anthropologists and social scientists. The intent of the teams is to provide an interpretation of the cultural landscape that will aid commanders and Soldiers in making the right decisions on the ground in COIN operations.[14] A U.S. News and World Report article articulates the need for these teams:

> The military has come late to appreciate the role that social connections play in Iraqi society, where divisions are not just geographic or religious but also familial and tribal. Understanding those kinds of connections, a key aim of anthropology, can be critical to forging alliances, assessing intelligence--and, military officials add, avoiding unintended consequences.[15]

An HTT operating in Afghanistan clearly saw the implications of gender when they noticed that a large numbers of widows, created by conflicts, had to rely on their sons for financial support. Recognizing that these young men could easily turn to paid insurgency to meet this financial requirement, the HTT developed a job program so that these widows could support themselves.[16] In this case, HTT actions had a positive influence both on women directly and in discouraging potential insurgents.

Accounting for gender is not easy, nor is it an area of expertise for the military. Each culture is markedly different so there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. At the same time, this is not an issue the military can afford to ignore, in light of the relative size of the women's population and their ability to influence men in their society. Take Iraq for example: population demographics indicate that in 2006 there were 26.8 million Iraqis, with men outnumbering women by only 230,000. The ratio of males to females aged 15 to 64 was 1.02; basically the population is evenly split. Afghanistan is much the

same, with a total population of 31 million with 740,000 more men than women and a

1.05 ratio of males to females aged 15 to 64.[17]

What follows is an examination of some key cultural aspects to highlight the

power that women in patriarchal societies wield, but that westerners do not see or may

not think is there. That power, which manifests in influence on men in society, can be

neutral, supportive, or actively work against U.S. military efforts. Imagine the untapped

power of 13 million Iraqi women positively influencing husbands, children and extended

family regarding U.S. military actions and intentions.

What's Missing?  What the Army Needs to Know about Women in Patriarchal Societies

There is a wide range of social attitudes regarding women across patriarchal

societies. Different cultures have different views on traditional roles for women, modern

opportunities, and religious interpretation of the rights of women. It is these differences

that make the understanding of each culture the Army operates in so critical.

Engagement with women in one area may be very different in another area, despite the

fact that the two societies may both be patriarchal and practice Islam. Take for example

the cases of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudi Arabia is one of the most oppressive patriarchal societies in the world.

Women are rarely seen in public, and when they are, they are in extremely conservative

dress, to include a shapeless black abaiya (gown), hijab (head scarf) and burqa (face

covering). All restaurants, public buildings, and even private homes are strictly

segregated. Women are forbidden to interact with men to whom they are not related. In

2007, a Saudi gang-rape victim received a sentence of 200 lashes and six months in jail

for being in a car with an unrelated male when they were attacked. Only 7 percent of

Saudi women work and they are strictly segregated when they do. This is a tremendous waste of human capital on the part of the Saudis.[18]

Contrast this with Iran, a country many assume is extremely oppressive. Iran has actually become more liberal towards women following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. This is based on a number of factors. The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) brought women into the work force and they remained there. Former Iranian presidents' Rafsanjani and Khatami spearheaded a program for economic liberalization and integration into the global economy. This resulted in the development of a sizeable modern middle and working class. Although women are discouraged from public roles, they are not banned from the public sphere as they are in Saudi Arabia. The government of Iran recognized the importance of controlling spiraling population growth and enacted family planning at the national level, which effectively empowered women. Agitation in the 1990s by Islamic and state feminists has resulted in the removal of restrictions to education and employment, resulting in 33% of public sector employees being women in 2004. Women may serve in the parliament and there are women's affairs offices in each government ministry. Despite all this, women are still required to wear hijab and there are many onerous restrictions on their movements and dress in public. However, women in Iran have framed their grievances in Islamic terms and continue to actively work to secure women's rights.[19]

Most westerners assume that a veiled woman is repressed and essentially powerless. The military observes these women in patriarchal societies that abound in North Africa, the Middle East and South and East Asia or in other terms, the AFRICOM, CENTCOM and PACOM geographical operating areas. Patriarchy places men in all the

public, power-based roles in society, to include government, religion, the military, education, and industry. Conversely, women are denied access to these roles.[20] Despite being denied access to traditional power roles, women in a patriarchal society actually exert significant influence in the home and in their networks, which include extended family and other women.

It is easy to point to religion, specifically Islam, as the culprit dictating an inferior status for women in these societies. However, the role of patriarchal culture has perpetuated the inferior role of women to a much greater degree than religion.[21] The uniform control and subordination of women perpetuated in a patriarchal society cuts across cultural and religious boundaries.[22]

Gender in patriarchal societies is just one more aspect of today's operating environment that generates a need for cultural understanding within the military. Western culture biases the military layman to evaluate women in these areas very simplistically. He either assumes women have no influence so they are not worth any time and effort, or, there is a desire to emancipate the woman behind the veil from repression. This discussion aims to provide some insight into the strong influence of women in a very oppressive appearing patriarchal culture.

In very basic terms, patriarchal society has two spheres, the public and private. Men operate in both, while women operate predominantly only in the private sphere. The mere fact that women in these cultures are rarely seen in the public sphere does not mean that they are not influential in the private sphere.[23]

Consider the example of Bedouin women of the Negev in Israel. Men guard the land and receive visitors in the public sphere. In the private sphere, women farm, are

responsible for domestic livelihood, relations with neighbors, and the marriage of daughters. These are complementary roles, each critically important, each contributing to the well-being of the family.[24]

A study of agricultural families in Afghanistan reinforces the concept of public and private spheres. Both sexes play critical roles in the functioning of the family. Women are not simply in the background: they are responsible for finances, household management, and the welfare of the family. Men make the decisions in respect to the public sphere and are responsible for community dealings and interaction outside the family. In the home women often exert significant influence over the family.[25]

In the Middle East and North Africa networking is very powerful for women as they seek a common solidarity and consciousness. Networking is an alternative form of power that is not observed in the public sphere. This network is not limited within the nuclear family, but crosses family lines and the community. Networking actually increases women's power and reduces their dependency on men. It allows them to exercise their own power and independence within their society. Through networks, women use information as power, controlling information and using it to further their own interests.[26] Imagine the power of networks of women if they perceive U.S. military action as either positive or negative?

A difficult concept for Americans to grasp is that Arab women do not necessarily want to threaten the social order. The most visible symbol of oppression, from a western perspective, is covering in the form of the veil. Many Arab women see the veil as providing both the freedom to move about in a patriarchal society as well as freedom from sexual harassment.[27] Not visible in the public sphere is an extremely strong

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traditional family system that Arab women highly value. This is a system with complementary sex roles, a system that provides women protection and honor. Women trade submissiveness, propriety, and honor for protection. Most Arab women want certain things, like education, healthcare, clean water, and basic services but they do not want to detach from the traditional family system.[28]

In the Middle East and North Africa the western concept of empowerment can be very dangerous for women. Empowerment, as defined by the United Nations Development Program, aims to eliminate gender inequities through targeted actions in the social and economic spheres, the civil and political rights spheres, and through development.[29] In seeking empowerment women can easily lose existing power. Because of this, they work within the patriarchal culture and look for acceptable ways to break into the male public sphere. One of the most effective ways for women to do this is through male sanction of their activities.[30]

It is also important to understand that during conflict, women may play significant roles that are completely outside gender norms. However, in the post-conflict period society usually limits women again; the roles they filled in conflict do not expand their options or influence in the public sphere.[31]

An additional dynamic in the post-conflict gender equation is Islam overlaid on a patriarchal society. The politicization of Islam has resulted in a rejection of Western culture and a desire to return to a very non-secular, pure society based on religious norms. The basic concept is that emancipated women are a reflection of insidious western culture creeping in and women must be put back in their place.[32] Probably the

best-known example of this is the brutal repression of women in Afghanistan when the Taliban took power from the Mujahideen.

## What the Army Needs to Do

Despite the complexities of culture and gender, there are "soft power" possibilities the Army can use to positively influence indigenous women and bring their moderate voices to bear. The second order effect of this positive influence the Army desires is for women to influence others within the private sphere. For the purpose of this discussion, "soft power" refers to non-kinetic actions targeted at women.

The Army has virtually no expertise in the application of "soft power" in matters of gender except those learned on the ground during current operations. This begs the question of why the Army should even concern itself with this issue. Ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan both find military personnel on the ground interacting directly with indigenous people, long after conventional combat operations are over. Recognizing that there is a period of time when the operating environment is non-permissive or semi-permissive during which the military will operate with few external resources, it is incumbent upon the Army to prepare to face those challenges in all areas, to include gender.

There are two overarching concepts that the Army must understand in engaging women. First, there are distinct differences between humanitarian assistance, development, and military operations. Second, the military should not attempt to engage in the empowerment of indigenous women, but should take a supporting role as required in the interagency effort. A critical distinction the military should understand is the difference between strategic gender interests and practical gender interests.

Non-kinetic military actions do not fit neatly into humanitarian aid or development categories, even though the military may be involved across the entire spectrum. Humanitarian aid or assistance is short-term immediate action to save lives and alleviate suffering, and is purely altruistic. Development activities are longer-term and intended to address underlying socio-economic conditions.[33] Development activities are not entirely altruistic; there is usually a political or economic agenda. The President's National Security Strategy states, "USAID's work in development joins diplomacy and defense as one of three key pieces of the nation's foreign policy apparatus."[34] Both of these activities differ from military operations. However, if the military is on the ground, it must learn how to effectively work with both the humanitarian and the development communities.

Tensions between the humanitarian, development and military professions are inherent. All three professions work in each other's jurisdictions, sharing the same "contested aid space."[35] The military when responding to humanitarian crises is usually there quickly with many assets. The humanitarian community is there simultaneously or shortly after the military. Humanitarians have no choice but to accept the military, but the military must accept humanitarians as neutral, impartial agents that are not under military control.[36] The development community will arrive later. The military does not want to own the aid space, but military activities should be complementary. At the execution level, the military should look to assist the humanitarian community and set the stage for the development community in pursuit of long-term development goals.

The term empowerment is often associated with women in patriarchal societies. However, empowerment is a complex undertaking with second and third order effects

best left to another profession, in this case USAID or the United Nations (UN). Like development, the military does not have the expertise to engage in empowerment of women in other cultures. A useful construct for use in military operations is the separation of gender interests into practical and strategic. Practical gender interests are those that allow one to better one's situation within the overall system. These are such things as access to clean drinking water, medical care and education. Strategic gender interests are those that involve a structural change to the system itself and are akin to empowerment. In terms of a patriarchal society they may include issues of legal status, political representation in governance activities, and women's suffrage. The military may become involved in many empowerment activities as process facilitators, but the strategic plan should come from experts within the development community, which focuses on strategic gender interests at the national level.[37]

In a December 2006 monograph written for the U.S. Army's Strategic Studies Institute, Dr. Sherifa Zuhur examines policy formulation on women in Iraq post-conflict. Prior to the rise of the insurgency in 2004, Iraqi women identified practical gender interests, things essential to physical survival, as their priority. Women were interested in water, electricity, security, and income if widowed, before education or political rights, which are strategic gender interests.[38]

Understanding these two concepts, complementary efforts in contested aid space, and practical versus strategic gender interests, will allow the Army to operate more effectively engaging women in SSTR and COIN operations. As illustrated in the following statement by Marine Master Sergeant James Allen, military units operating at the tactical level clearly understand there is the potential to positively influence men in a

patriarchal society through women: "We want to empower the women to the point where they can have a positive influence on the men, when they're alone, in the home…."[39] Given this, units will pursue this effect to the best of their abilities. There is a whole infrastructure above the tactical level that can and should support and guide these efforts. This infrastructure could also benefit from some refinement and further development. A critical consideration is the fact that there is minimal culture and gender expertise within the military and the closer one gets to actual execution on the ground the further one gets away from this expertise. There is a critical requirement to share this expertise in a useable manner to the lowest tactical level.

At the strategic level, combatant commands must take the lead in facilitating efforts to influence indigenous women. The concept for Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs) at the geographic combatant command level evolved from the failure of interagency planning for post-conflict operations in Iraq. JIACGs should be a key enabler at the strategic level in addressing gender influences and issues. These groups bring a wide variety of subject matter expertise to planning and execution efforts.[40]

The UN development community has experienced struggles with addressing gender issues in post-conflict environments and has advocated the involvement of gender advisors.[41] Arguably this expertise should also reside in the JIACGs at the Combatant Command level, not necessarily as a separate individual, but potentially as adjunct qualifications or as a reach-back resource for operational level planners. Regardless, the military must seek out this information for subordinate units to assist efforts on the ground prior to the influx of the interagency experts.

At the operational and tactical level, the concept of anthropologists supporting the military through Human Terrain Teams bring culture and gender expertise right into the Brigade Combat Team (where teams are available). HTTs should include a detailed analysis of women in their cultural intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). This analysis should follow the IPB framework within FM 3-24, but an analysis of women should be interwoven throughout. Units with the support of their HTTs should then determine how to both engage and target women. Additionally, as in Information Operations, women should be considered throughout every Logical Line of Operation (LLO). For example, examine the impacts of women on the security LLO. If the Army can provide security for women and girls in schools, women may advocate positively for the Army in the home.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), like HTTs, are another attempt to operate more effectively in SSTR and COIN operations. PRTs are a civilian-military interagency effort spearheaded by the Department of State. These teams provide an interface between the USG, U.S. and coalition partner militaries, and provincial and local governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. These teams are focused on reconstruction, to include delivery of essential services and building local and regional governance capacity. PRTs are structured with a staff with a wide variety of capabilities. Several team members will be invaluable in addressing both the practical and strategic gender interests of women. These team members include the USAID representative, the governance team and the bilingual culture advisor.[42] Units working in conjunction with PRTs have the potential to significantly influence women in their area of operations.

Another critical resource for tactical level units should be civil affairs units and teams. Arguably the one military occupational specialty that is designed for the cultural complexities the military is currently experiencing and will face in the future is Civil Affairs. Training civil affairs personnel in gender issues provides an invaluable tactical and operational level resource to commanders on the ground. Such training should be incorporated both into the institutional training base for civil affairs, but should also be a continuous process through preparation for deployment to specific regions of the world. Civil affairs planners at the operational level should be able to reachback to JIACGs at the combatant command level and work directly with PRTs in theater. The hierarchical structure of civil affairs units lends itself to development of more specific gender knowledge at the brigade level that can be furnished to civil affairs teams operating with tactical units.

Similar to the military the development community is struggling with the missing "gender link" as well. Women and their needs are easy to overlook as civil society in countries around the world reflects men and their needs. Based on this, development agencies can "overlook and underutilize a human resource" in terms of women. Women comprise half the human race but take a secondary place in the world's cultures. [43]

The U.S. Institute for Peace (USIP) pamphlet, "The Role of Women in Stabilization and Reconstruction," consolidated lessons learned involving gender and development. Although these lessons learned are development focused, there is also great application for the military to use in pursuit of practical gender interests.

At the strategic level, USIP advocates collecting and sharing lessons learned related to gender and development across the government.[44] DoD should be an active

participant in this process, sharing the military's lessons learned and disseminating those from other government agencies within the department. What is critical at the strategic level is the translation of government-wide lessons learned into knowledge the military can specifically use. In the case of the Army, recommend translation of this knowledge be incorporated into Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). For example, within TRADOC, these lessons learned could be immediately shared through the Center for Army Lessons Learned.  In the longer term, TRADOC would determine what key gender knowledge was meaningful enough to be incorporated into doctrine as well as into institutional training and combat training center scenarios.

Outside the Services, the combatant commands must also address gender lessons learned, albeit from a somewhat different perspective. Combatant commands are engaged in the here and now. JIACGs should play a key role in filtering lessons learned to glean key items that are applicable to ongoing operations and archive others that may apply to their geographic region for possible future use.

USIP also advocates gender training across the government.[45] As the military, and specifically the ground forces of the Army and Marines, engage indigenous local populations much more in-depth than previously imagined, the military has recognized that U.S. forces much become much more proficient in cultural understanding and awareness. However, the depth and detail of gender training should be tailored to the appropriate level. Indeed, the military's mission does not call for every service member to become an anthropologist or gender specialist, but in order to accomplish the missions of today and the future the military must develop more knowledge on the subject and tap into more expert resources.

Consider this statement from U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Jennifer McNamara, "Right now, we're relationship-building, listening to these women…building trust."[46] The cultural subject matter expertise found in a JIACG is a long way away from CPL McNamara on the ground, but culture and gender issues touch military units at the lowest level.

One of the most effective ways USIP has found to engage women in a given culture is to establish connections with women's organizations where they exist. Resources available to find these organizations include DoS and USAID, the UN, and non-governmental organizations. Each country and region will differ in the extent to which these organizations are developed and at what level they are found. Organizations found at the national level will most likely be focused on strategic gender interests of interest to the development community.[47]

At the tactical level the most effective way to address practical gender interests of indigenous women is through direct interaction and consultations with women in the area. Women should be involved in needs assessments, project design and monitoring project impacts. Embarking on projects just because they seem like they will benefit women usually does not, or if they do, there are usually second and third order effects to be considered.[48]

Take for example a situation in Iraq where a battalion focused on reopening the local hospital, to include securing emergency power generation and acquiring needed basic medical equipment. Upon starting a local women's group under male sanction a month later, one of the women's basic complaints was the lack of female doctors to see women patients at this hospital. At first blush, this seemed like a strategic gender

interest problem: women aren't allowed to go to medical school or at least not in sufficient numbers to treat female patients. However, in this local area, the problem was much more practical. Women doctors had no childcare available so they could not leave home to treat patients at the hospital. This was a practical gender interest that could be solved.[49]

From a practical standpoint, the U.S. military will continue to find itself in non-permissive or semi-permissive environments where ground forces are engaging the local populace with little to no hands-on support from other agencies initially. In these environments, it remains critical to address the needs of the entire population and to not overlook the needs of women. The key non-kinetic effect the military should be seeking is to positively influence women who will in turn advocate in the positive in the private sphere regarding U.S. military efforts and activities. Tactical units should address practical gender interests while planners at the operational and strategic levels should function in a supporting role to assist key interagency players address strategic gender interests. This envisions the establishment of a coherent interagency effort in a given operation that includes gender as a focus.

At the tactical level, local women must be part of the process when working practical gender interests, however units must understand it can be very difficult to secure access to women in patriarchal societies. It is a radical departure for women to break their silence in public, so women's groups can serve as a conduit for women to communicate their practical needs. However, often women's organizations do not exist at the local level. If not, one of the most effective ways to bring women into the process is through male patrons. If male community leaders sanction this type of engagement,

women will venture out of the private sphere to participate in the public sphere with other women.

Where this is possible, it is important to understand the composition of the women in a given group. Based on the nature of patriarchal society it may be difficult to meet with a cross-section of women of different ages, social status, education levels, and urban and rural areas, but the more diversity the better. Once units engage directly with women, they will be able to identify both practical and strategic gender interests. When units initiate projects without regard for women and their needs, desired effects may not be achieved. Development literature is rife with examples of western expectations regarding projects being completely out of touch with indigenous women's realities. The key to overcoming this is to encourage the participation of women as decision-makers.

There are four questions which women should be asked to get a complete gender analysis of proposed projects: (1) Do women desire the proposed project and will they benefit from it? (2) How can the project be improved before initiation to more adequately support the knowledge and skill level of the planned users? (3) Are there any potential unintended negative effects for women? and (4) If negative effects do occur, how can they be mitigated?[50]

Adaptation of part of UNSCR 1325, which advocates increased roles for women in peacekeeping forces, may support tactical units in efforts to engage indigenous women. As units use military lawyers to engage judges, or military police to support police force reforms, military women are a powerful tool with which to engage indigenous women. Units without women should coordinate with those that have them

for support.  Military women should coordinate with HTTs and Civil Affairs teams to determine how best to work with indigenous women. They should also coordinate with civil affairs teams and PRTs to understand long-term interagency development goals. These activities should always complement the commander's plan for the area.

Conclusion

A Marine Battalion Commander involved in the invasion of Iraq and post-conflict operations recalls,

> We didn't give special consideration to engaging the women…My concern was not stepping where I shouldn't step, or dragging a woman in there that would anger the local men,[51]

The Army, and indeed the entire interagency effort in SSTR and COIN operations, must be well beyond this point by now. It is critical to recognize that women make up half the population, that they are predisposed by their very nature to peacemaking, and that they have a significant ability to positively influence the other half of the population towards U.S. efforts in their countries. Multiple lessons learned have resulted in positive outcomes addressing U.S. shortcomings, to include the publication of FM 3-24, and fielding of JIACGs, HTTs and PRTs. The Army must leverage what is currently in place to effectively address the needs of indigenous women, a powerful force that can work in tandem with the military and bring a moderate voice to U.S. efforts in SSTR and COIN operations.

Endnotes

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[48]Basu.

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[51]Hunt and Posa.