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# Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture: A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel

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Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture: A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel

**MARINE CORPS STUDIES PROGRAM SUPPORT**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture:  
A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel**

Contract #M00264-06-D-0003  
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### ABSTRACT

Recent Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have spurred the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to more formally come to terms with the need to consider and take into account the local context within which its operations are undertaken. The Marine Corps has focused on articulating the concept of Operational Culture and incorporating it into the planning and execution of operations.

The objectives of the Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture: A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel Study, were to describe, evaluate, and improve the way the Marine Corps integrates Operational Culture into the planning of missions and operations. The intent was to develop and apply an Integrating Framework to help Marines distill relevant cultural knowledge and effectively map it to the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) for missions and operations.

The study was sponsored by the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) and chartered to “employ conceptual models and analytical frameworks grounded in social science and military environments to develop and apply a tool that can enhance the ability of Marines to integrate relevant Operational Culture into mission and operations planning.” This charter was intentionally issued to ensure the study proceeded from a sound foundation incorporating academic rigor, theoretical underpinnings and the contributions of specific disciplines. Consequently, the study took the form of a scientific inquiry led by social scientists, and the products and the form of the report itself reflect that approach.

The study involved four tasks: Document the Status of Operational Culture and Its Application to Planning; Assess the Effectiveness of Operational Culture and Its Application to Planning; Develop an Integrating Framework to Enhance the Application of Operational Culture to USMC Planning; and Apply and Evaluate the Integrating Framework. The report is structured to comprehensively address all the tasks assigned to the study.

The report begins with a detailed description of the approach to reviewing the documents, procedures, and processes that are intended to support the application of Operational Culture in the MCP, as well as the observed processes and reported (via interview) drivers affecting the actual application of Operational Culture in planning processes and products. This is followed by an assessment of the current approach to applying Operational Culture to the MCP at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level and identifies valid constructs and valuable contributions that should be retained and/or capitalized on in the CAOCL processes and products. Next, the report details the approach to developing the prototype Integrating Framework in detail and documents its underlying concepts and theories. This chapter also documents the methodology for developing a planning vignette against which the Integrating Framework was exercised. Subsequently, the report describes the initial utility of the Integrating Framework in the context of a demonstration application conducted by the Study Team and review of the concept by external stakeholders to solicit comment and critique. Finally, the report presents thoughts and options for practical enhancement of the initial Integrating Framework concept to enhance its potential benefit by Marine planners.

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### Executive Summary

#### Introduction

The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) nominated and subsequently sponsored a study through the Marine Corps Study System, administered by Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) Operations Analysis Division. The study, entitled *Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture: A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel* produced documentation and analysis of how Operational Planning Teams (OPTs) access, analyze and use cultural information in the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP). Based on this work, an *Integrating Framework* for Operational Culture was developed with the aim of supporting and enhancing the used of cultural information in OPTs.

The study's sponsor, the CAOCL, was established in 2005 as the central Marine Corps agency for training and education on regional Operational Culture and language. The articulation of the construct of Operational Culture is found in the seminal publication, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Practice*.<sup>1</sup> In this text, Operational Culture is defined as:

*"...those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military operations that influence the culture of an area of operations."*<sup>2</sup>

The organizational mission states: "CAOCL, as the central Marine Corps agency for Operational Culture, will ensure that we are a force of Marines - globally prepared, regionally focused - fully capable of effectively navigating the cultural complexities of the 21st century operating environments in support of assigned missions and requirements."<sup>3</sup> In line with this mission, the objectives established for the Trans-Sahel study are to describe, evaluate, and identify opportunities for improvements in how OPTs integrate Operational Culture into the planning of missions and operations. The goal is to develop an Integrating Framework that will help Marine planners to identify mission-relevant cultural information and effectively utilize it within the MCPP. This study supports the CAOCL, as the Center of Excellence for training and educating Marines, to best provide cultural information generated from the Five Operational Culture Dimensions framework<sup>4</sup> (environment, economy, social structure, political structure and power, and belief system) for use in mission-oriented planning efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Salmoni, B. A. and Holmes-Eber, P. (2008). *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*, Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 44

<sup>3</sup> United States Marine Corps, Training and Education command, Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (2006). *Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning Center of Excellence Charter (CAOCL COE,)*, Quantico, VA

<sup>4</sup> Salmoni, B. A. and Holmes-Eber, P. (2008). *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*, Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press

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The dilemma presented by the CAOCL in their submission to the Marine Corps Study System is an apparent gap between concepts set forth in the *Operational Culture for the Warfighter* text and the requirements of the Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP 5-1) *Marine Corps Planning Process*. It seems that though the text is useful to OPTs for developing information based on the Five Dimensions framework, planners may find that the information generated [or provided by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)] does not directly or intuitively apply within the steps of MCPP. The question becomes, how should subject matter be “pushed” to planners to better support MCPP requirements? Or, alternatively, should planners have the frameworks and tools to best “pull” what they require from their available resources? This was the starting place for the Trans-Sahel Study.

To address these questions the study employed cycles of fieldwork, including document review and analysis, participant observation and in-depth interviewing, interspersed with stakeholder engagement and concept building. Because the study was designed to achieve the best possible utilization of study products, it employed a highly participatory research approach that falls within a general category of operations research practices called “soft OR” and, more generally, action research methodologies. Although the study yields many important insights, two overarching findings resonate throughout. First, thinking frameworks able to generate continuous learning are desirable as support tools for OPT tasks and activities where the effort is to access, analyze and use cultural information. Second, efforts such as this lay the groundwork for continued cross-organizational cooperation in support of USMC planning teams using MCPP.

## Methodology

Methodology speaks to the overarching principles guiding the conduct of a study. In the case of the Trans-Sahel study, three interrelated principles formed the foundation of the research approach:

- A Utilization Focus - where the emphasis is on research activities and results that are meaningful and useful to those participating in the research endeavor. Work done with a utilization focus is done “*for* and *with* specific intended primary users and for specific, intended uses.”<sup>5</sup> The research processes employed are transparent, repeatable, and include key stakeholders, in this case the study sponsor CAOCL and other member of the Study Advisory Committee.
- An “*Emic*” Perspective - where data collection and analysis does not take a detached, mechanistic form rather insight is gained by understanding a subject on its own terms. In this study it meant spending time with planners and the CAOCL educators and advisors in order to understand the terms that they use, the meanings and values they hold, and to see the requirements for Operational Culture through their eyes.
- An Action Orientation - where the research activity drives toward the development of new or adapted organizational processes and approaches. Through stakeholder collaboration where reflection on current practices and requirements are compared with desired

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<sup>5</sup> Patton, M. Q. (2008). “*Utilization-Focused Evaluation*,” 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

outcomes, decisions are made for practical action toward improving or enhancing Operational Culture application in MCPP.

A Trans-Sahel Study map, depicted to the right, was created to visually represent various activities undertaken during the course of the project. Based on concepts and the generalized process and flow of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)<sup>6</sup>, the map shows the primary processes used within the study - observation and reflection, and practical action - which are fully consistent with the methodological principles set forth above.

Reading the map from the point where the Study Team enters the system, the aim is to understand the problem context, background and situation, from the *emic* perspective as described above. This is done iteratively with cycles of observation and reflection that are facilitated through constructing conceptual models and visualizations of important concepts. A site of practical activity, in this case Marine Corps University (MCU) is selected where the situation can be studied closely. With stakeholder participation, action is undertaken to impact the situation. In this process, concepts are developed and refined through experimentation and reflection.

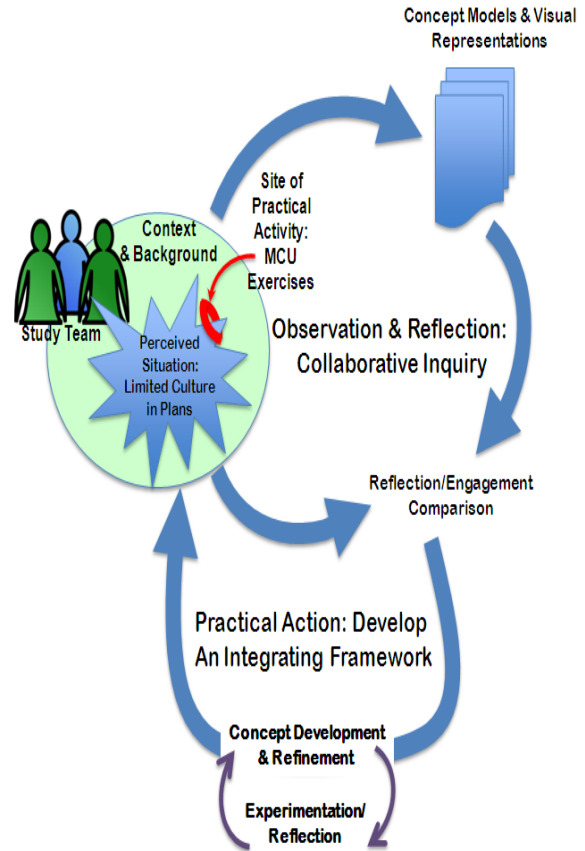


Figure 1. The Trans-Sahel Study Map of Soft Systems Methodology

## Study Tasks and Outputs

The conduct of the study required four tasks. Each is described very briefly below and their associated outputs are presented.

### *Task 1 – Document the Status of Operational Culture and its Application to Planning*

The objective of this task was to identify and explore the issues, concerns, and problems associated with the current level of cultural consideration given in the MCPP. Completion of this

<sup>6</sup> Checkland, P. (1995). "Model Validation in Soft Systems Practice," *Systems Research*, 12(1), 47-54

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task included a background study of important Department of Defense (DOD) and Service level documents to assure the Study Team grasped the context for the study question. The Study Team also engaged in extended conversations with many of the CAOCL staff members and received the organizational mission brief from the Director. The second component of this task was the field study of MCU exercises, which included extended participant observation and in-depth interviews with experienced planners. The goal of the field study was to gain deep insight into how planners work and how they understand their requirement for Operational Culture information within the MCPP. The full description of Task 1 can be found in Chapter 2 of the study report.

#### *Task 1 Outputs: Observations based on the field study*

Key observations with regard to culture education and training:

- While there are highly articulated requirements for “culture” at all levels of planning and across many operational types and operational environments, as a concept, there is significant ambiguity in the use of the term “culture” across the defense community.
- Development of language and regionally focused culture skills are seen as key to military success in a variety of environments. However, the most clearly articulated and consistently implemented component of this requirement across the services is aimed at language acquisition.
- Operational Culture is a uniquely Marine Corps construct that places the focus on operationally relevant aspects of culture, versus cultural knowledge in general. Operational Culture speaks to culture “writ large,” through its Five Dimensions framework, going beyond religion, ethnicity and belief systems to include social, political, economic and environmental relationships and dynamics. The CAOCL continues to refine and develop the Operational Culture construct and has more recently articulated elements of regional and international dynamics, as well as Military-to-Military and Civilian-to-Military interactions and engagement.

Key observations with regard to planning practices and requirements for culture information within the MCPP:

- Because there is no shared or well-defined construct for culture, there are likewise no clearly articulated best practices or procedures to evaluate or build on when considering integrating supports, nor are there agreed upon metrics for establishing what constitutes a good plan with regard to its use of culture.
- More cultural information/data is not necessarily helpful. In fact, planners seem to have access to excellent cultural information. Still, they struggle to grasp the relevance of much of the cultural information provided to them. If planners do not have a good grasp of the questions they should be asking, they will not necessarily know how to utilize the information being supplied.
- Cultural knowledge development and use specifically in the planning context is minimally specified. The United States (US) Marine Corps (USMC) is just beginning to address needs specific to planning activities. Cultural education, culture support capabilities and special

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staff functions specifically for planning (e.g. cultural advisors and green cells) are in early exploratory phase. The CAOCL is providing significant leadership in this area.

### *Task 2 – Assess the Effectiveness of Operational Culture and Application to Planning*

Working from the observations of Task 1, the Study Team engaged stakeholders through presenting data from the field study and collectively reflecting on the findings. Called Reflective Practice in the study map, it included building models and developing visual representations based on what was seen, heard and observed in the field. Reflective Practice is a means for going beneath the surface of seemingly everyday activity; in this case, the norms of OPT planning practices; especially those directed at the integration of Operational Culture within the MCPP. The models act as tools to enable stakeholders to explore what may be seen as problematic, to question the status quo and to begin envisioning actions that are both desirable and feasible. The full description of Task 2 can be found in Chapter 3 of the study report.

### *Task 2 Outputs: Findings emerging from cycles of observation and reflection*

Reflecting on the field study allowed the Study Team and stakeholders to produce two sets of very important findings that would shape the “practical action” portion of the study. First, a set of conclusions regarding proposed requirements or critical elements for planning supports was articulated:

- Pursuing a single, large integrating tool will not provide a silver bullet for the integration of Operational Culture. OPTs require a range of techniques, methods and approaches to support effective application of operational culture.
- Integrative supports must be planning-focused and seamlessly work within the USMC planning culture and practice. Planning supports must blend with existing planning logic, including the use of planning language, concepts and products.
- Socio-cultural complexity in current operating environments is a given. It is less about getting the answer right, than asking the right questions and initiating (and maintaining) the right conversations.
- “*Design*,” and its implications for conceptual planning, especially “*Problem Framing*,” offers a clear opportunity for the enhanced integration of culture in planning. “*Design*” thinking sets the stage for broad consideration and early inclusion of Operational Culture, including creating a space for innovation in use of culture concepts and products.

Second, themes emerged from the analysis and reflection that directed the Study Team to additional research and inform development activities. Proposed as three “practices” to capture the idea that OPTs have ways of “thinking, being and doing” relevant to Operational Culture, the thematic/analytical constructs advanced are:

- *Designing* - those practices that support effective “*Problem Framing*” and continuous learning and re-learning throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. The focus is on the creative ways OPT members create and share knowledge in the team, shifting attention away from a product focus. It is a reframing of “*Design*” as a product

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itself and the idea is planners engage in design in order to learn, versus learning in order to produce a “*Design*.”

- *Learning* - which captures both the ways that OPT members evaluate information as meaningful, useful or relevant and how they proceed to integrate important cultural elements into the various activities and steps of the MCPP.
- *Aligning* - which is intended to capture the way in which teams create shared meaning and develop agreements, both within the OPT and with other actors in the operating environment thereby supporting integration of plans and unity of effort within an operation. This element is especially relevant in the Joint and Interagency operational environment.

### *Task 3 – Develop an Integrating Framework to Enhance the Application of Operational Culture to USMC Planning*

In Task 3 the Study Team conducted research across a broad range of social science literatures to bring a variety of concepts to bear toward theorizing and extending the analytic constructs articulated above. The knowledge gained formed the basis for the development of a conceptual-level, prototypical Integrating Framework to enhance the inclusion of Operational Culture in the MCPP as well as support the work of educators, curriculum developers and deployed advisors who seek to support improved integration of Operational Culture in the MCPP. As part of the development activities, the Study Team also applied a rigorous process to support the creation of a Mauritanian vignette. This vignette provided an opportunity to practice and learn from applying the Integrating Framework. The full description of Task 3 can be found in Chapter 4 of the study report.

The Integrating Framework for Operational Culture is proposed as an MSTP-like pamphlet intended to support planning staffs, especially the Green Cell, in their effort to develop plans that thoroughly consider all non-combatant actors in the operating environment (e.g. local population, other US Government (USG) agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Organizations, etc.). The approach is to 1) leverage the centrality of “*Design*” in the new MCPP for improved integration of Operational Culture, 2) emphasize the “*Problem Framing*” step of MCPP for rigorous application of Operational Culture, and 3) impact the “*Commander’s Initial Intent and Guidance*” as the catalyst for carry-over of Operational Culture into the remaining steps of the MCPP. Figure 2 illustrates this approach.



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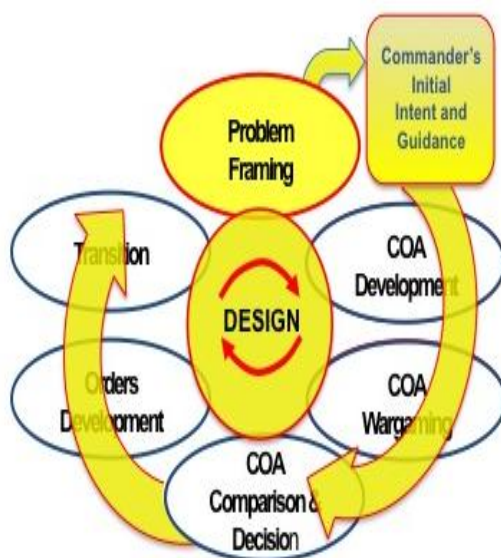


Figure 2. Approach for an Integrating Framework for Operational Culture

Consistent with the conclusion that planning supports must blend easily within existing planning logic, the Integrating Framework seeks to support planners as they consider their requirement for cultural information from the perspective of ongoing planning activities and mission essential tasks. Further, because culture is less an object to be apprehended than a continuous learning process to be engaged, planning - beginning with a proper framing of the problem - sets the context for continuous learning that must extend through all steps of the MCPP and across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. Indeed, the authors of the MCPP state “*Since no amount of subsequent planning can solve a problem insufficiently understood, problem framing is the most important step in planning.*”<sup>7</sup> To this end, the study team directed its effort at the “*Problem Framing*” step of the MCPP, where the end result is the Commander’s articulation of his initial intent and guidance. It is in this early statement of operational concept that the Commander sets the tone for the remainder of the planning effort with regard to what is important and how the operation is envisioned going forth. Initiated with the “*Commander’s Orientation*,” the key elements articulated within the “*Problem Framing*” step of MCPP are “*Design*” (including the “*Design Dialogue*”), “*Understanding the Environment*,” “*Understanding the Problem*,” and the “*Commander’s Initial Intent and Guidance*.” These are depicted in the image below:

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<sup>7</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). “*MCWP 5-1, Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-1

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Figure 3. Key Elements of the Problem Framing Step of the MCPP

*Task 3 Outputs: An Integrating Framework for Operational Culture concept, grounded in social theory and practice*

The application of social science and management literature highlighted some well-studied phenomena of social organizational work and provided the Study Team with principles worthy of applying within the Integrating Framework. In the development activities, elements of theory and practice tailored for the “*Problem Framing*” step of MCPP are incorporated, specifically addressing conversation types for OPTs working in complex environments, the organic and iterative nature of team learning in developing an understanding of social and cultural issues in an operational environment, and sensemaking practices that support building shared understanding and narratives about planning problems.

Specifically, the Integrating Framework includes the following:

- **Techniques** for facilitating and sustaining **creativity** and **learning** within the “*Design Dialogue*;”
- A **method** for enabling **systematic consideration** of the operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural context of the operation for “*Understanding the Environment*;” and
- An **approach** for **systemic sensemaking** for “*Understanding the Problem*” where the operational context ranges from familiar and well-understood situations to conditions that are highly dynamic and uncertain.

The development of the planning support as a “framework” is intentional, and is expressly different from a single methodology, approach, or a tool. The Integrating Framework is positioned as an integrated conceptual structure that will function as a guide or support to planners as they engage in Operational Culture learning during the MCPP. Built upon a Foundational Inquiry, it is intended to be a jumping off point that will support OPT’s design activities as they iteratively refine their understanding of both the environment and problem across multiple steps of the MCPP. The Foundational Inquiry is one element of the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture which is fully detailed in Appendix A of the study report.

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The Foundational Inquiry is simple but not simplistic, and is described in brief below:

<b>WHAT?</b>
<p>Clarifies the purpose of the mission and catalogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People, places, and things in the environment; and</li> <li>• Threats and assets present in the environment.</li> </ul>
<b>SO WHAT?</b>
<p>Describes the importance of the “what” identified previously and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps the relationships between people, places, and things; and</li> <li>• Describes the way those relationships work (their “dynamic”).</li> </ul>
<b>NOW WHAT?</b>
<p>Frames people, places, things, and relationships in the environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies opportunities that can be leveraged for mission success; and</li> <li>• Leaves planners prepared to explore specific courses of action upon receipt of Commander’s Guidance.</li> </ul>

Table 1: A Foundational Inquiry Forms the Basis for the Integrating Framework

*Task 4 – Apply and Evaluate the Integrating Framework*

The objective of this task was to apply the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture to the Mauritanian vignette that was developed as part of Task 3 activities. The vignette, based on a fictional Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) operation, presents a variety of missions that planners may encounter in such an operation in that area of the world. The goal was to experiment with the Integrating Framework and evaluate its ease of application as well as its utility. Noted in the Trans-Sahel Study map as “experimentation and reflection” within the Practical Action loop, the Study Team applied the element of the Integrating Framework developed specifically for “*Understanding the Environment*” with regard to Operational Culture, and reflected on the experience. The full description of Task 4 can be found in Chapter 5 of the study report. The Mauritanian HA/DR vignette and the results of its application can be found in Appendices B and C respectively.

*Task 4 Outputs: Outcomes of Applying the Integrating Framework and Feedback from MSTP Reviewers*

In working through the inquiry method for “*Understanding the Environment*,” the Five Operational Culture Dimensions as articulated by the CAOCL play a central role. However, to ensure the five dimensions function as more than a mechanism for developing additional data, an approach is needed to help the OPT create *knowledge* - defined as data put to practical use - and innovate with regard to deriving the operational implications of the understood cultural context. Linking cultural information with the learning that would be gained in other staff actions,

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especially Task Analysis, helped to keep the focus appropriately on operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural environment. The application demonstrated that the method was useful for identifying important factors that were not otherwise self-evident and their relationships to the various Lines of Operation (LOO) tested.

In addition to an internal review of the Integrating Framework, feedback was obtained from the study stakeholders on the Study Advisory Committee and the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP) staff. Overall, the feedback provided was very positive. With regard to the “*Design*” element of the Integrating Framework one stakeholder suggested the following:

*This entire section on Design Dialogue is outstanding. Many of the dynamics that you discuss we see time and time again in OPTs. This should be required reading for 0505s [SAW students].*

Additional feedback was received regarding the need for the OPT to have more information about how the Integrating Framework carries forward through other steps of MCPP, specifically for “*Course of Action (COA) Development*” and “*COA Wargaming*” steps. These were mentioned but not highlighted in the prototype. The fact stakeholders saw this as an explanatory gap points to the need to make the reasons for this systematic approach to Operational Culture more clear in terms of how it better prepares planners for “*COA Development*” and “*COA Wargaming*,” as opposed to just “making them smart” on all the socio-cultural issues in the operating environment. Concern was also expressed regarding how time constraints would play into the usability of the Integrating Framework and whether it was scalable. Simultaneously it was pointed out that “*Understanding the Environment*” is an on-going activity and does not stop with the “*Problem Framing*” step. To this end, the Study Team included additional discussions within the text that more clearly positioned the Integrated Framework as scaffolding for continuous learning that occurs across planning, execution, and assessment.

Table 2 below explains the inner workings of inquiry method for “*Understanding the Environment*” showing the purpose of the three-part Foundational Inquiry framework, the method of applying it, and the relationship of the results to the “*Problem Framing*” step as well as throughout the entire MCPP.

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WHAT?	SO WHAT?		NOW WHAT?
Threats & Assets	Relationships	Dynamics	Options for Impact
<p><i>Explores the question: Why are we here?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepens exploration of the Commander’s orientation &amp; orders from Higher Headquarters. Looks at the question “Why are we here?” from multiple sites within the environment</li> <li>• Helps understanding of problem parameters including what is within control, influence or concern.</li> <li>• <b>Threats/Problems:</b> Describes “needs,” “gaps,” “and “threats” including sources and current behaviors/efforts that reinforce the problems and needs.</li> <li>• <b>Assets:</b> Identifies assets, resiliencies, and strengths inherent to the environment that might be leveraged.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Explores the question: What are the relationships between people, places, and things in the environment?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps and describes relationships between key elements of the operating/problem environment (including between people and places/things).</li> <li>• Identifies <b>key influencers</b>, and who or what they influence.</li> <li>• Relies heavily on the <i>Five Dimensions of Operational Culture</i> to help define boundaries of elements of the environment and describe their relationships to each other.</li> <li>• Results in understanding of locals’ priorities. Takes the “emic” perspective.</li> <li>• Highlights and refines important questions about the environment and relationships within it (information/intelligence requirements).</li> </ul>	<p><i>Explores the question: What effect does a change in one part of the system have on other parts?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes “dynamics” of relationships between elements within environment system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Looks at direction of change and its characteristics</li> <li>○ Looks at feedback effects on key elements and reverberations in other parts of the system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identifies <b>mechanism</b> of influence and change in systems of social, economic, physical and informational environments.</li> <li>• Analysis of dynamics includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nature of effect</li> <li>○ Source of effect</li> <li>○ Magnitude of effect</li> <li>○ Speed of effect</li> <li>○ Response to effect</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Explores the question: What does success look like in this context?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes societal norms and relates this to desired future states</li> <li>• Refines boundaries of action (what is within control/ influence). Also characterizes operational constraints and restraints</li> <li>• Considers the influence various actions might cause on the system. Focus is on influence and feedback mechanisms.</li> <li>• Specifies primary mechanisms through which opportunities can be realized.</li> <li>• Identifies <b>opportunities</b>, and links opportunities to relevant assets, resulting directly in actionable options.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Stimulates reflexivity in thinking. Guides generation of initial Requests for Information (RFIs) and initiates relations with other USG agencies, cultural advising and reach-back resources.</i></p>	<p><i>Generates “2<sup>nd</sup> order” RFIs and encourages ongoing conversations with other actors and supports knowledge sharing. Supports visualization and mapping of relationships.</i></p>	<p><i>Facilitates observation of patterns and feedback mechanisms and highlights sites of potential instability in the environment.</i></p> <p><i>Gets the OPT developing narratives and visualizations early for how the environment works. Supports Center of Gravity (COG)-like model building.</i></p> <p><i>Helps to establish the Commander’s Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs).</i></p>	<p><i>Supports identification of assumptions and limitations, and points to resource requirements. Helps to establish ongoing conversations and sources of data.</i></p>

Table 2. Reflections on the Method Applied for “Understanding the Environment”

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### Way Ahead

It is intended that the Integrating Framework be further refined with use over time by USMC students, planners and those in the supporting establishment. As the current study comes to a close, it also leaves in place a platform and approach for ongoing action-based research and development. Should USMC stakeholders desire to refine the current prototype, the next action-research/action-learning cycle is prepared to begin.

To move forward in this way, the CAOCL might take the role of proponent and “champion” for the effort, and conduct a more widespread solicitation of feedback on the prototype. Armed with such feedback, an updated or second-generation prototype could be deployed at the next School of Advance Warfighting (SAW) or the Command and Staff College planning exercise. Either of these would be excellent sites to observe the actual use of the concept, and will set the stage for additional improvement. In this way, the relationship between the CAOCL and the MCU might be expanded, and the collaborative work between the MSTP and the CAOCL, which was begun during the study, might continue.

Undoubtedly, an important part of the effort will be moving some of the Integrating Framework elements that are still highly conceptual into more directly, operational planning tools. Again CAOCL might “champion” this effort and continue efforts with MSTP to further integrate Operational Culture products and tools into the MCPP. A toolbox would be especially useful in the elements of the Focusing Inquiry that capture the “So What?” - Specifically those that help planners visualize and discuss relationships and dynamics inherent in the Operational Culture context.

Finally, in keeping with the evaluation model proposed above, next steps should also begin to capture the capabilities necessary for supporting the Focusing Inquiry. This would include both capabilities that should be developed within OPTs - like navigating forms of conversation and enhancing learning - as well as those capabilities that are likely external to the OPT but are needed for sound implementation of the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture. This may include the identification of partnering organizations that can provide reach-back support, or creating solid mechanisms for active participation of needed experts within the OPT.

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# 1 Study Overview

## 1.1 Context and Background

The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) is the central Marine Corps agency for training and education in regional studies, foreign language studies, and Operational Culture. On-going engagements in various parts of the world have highlighted the importance of preparing Marines to face the challenges of operating in a diversity of cultural and social environments. The increased emphasis on preparing for activities across the range of military operations, including integrated planning and operations with other United States (US) Government (USG) agencies, has introduced additional challenges to providing Marines with the Operational Culture knowledge necessary to make decisions in the planning and execution of military operations.

To assist in the future development of products that will promote Operational Culture and to promote the improved consideration and inclusion of operationally relevant cultural knowledge across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum, the CAOCL requested a formal study via the Marine Corps Study System. The study described below was designed to support the development of conceptual models and analytical frameworks, grounded in social science and an understanding of military environments, with the intent to enhance the ability of Marines to integrate relevant aspects of the socio-cultural environment into the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP).

## 1.2 Objectives and Scope

### 1.2.1 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to describe, evaluate and identify opportunities for improvements to the way the Marine Corps integrates Operational Culture into the MCP. The goal is to develop an Integrating Framework that will help Marine planners to identify mission-relevant cultural information and effectively utilize it within the MCP. This study supports the CAOCL, as the Center of Excellence for training and educating Marines in the cultural domain, in understanding how to better provide cultural information generated from the “Five Dimensions” framework (environment, economy, social structure, political structure and power, and belief system) for use in the MCP.

### 1.2.2 Scope

The study focuses on the development and evaluation of an Integrating Framework to support the improved application of Operational Culture to the MCP at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level. The Integrating Framework is tested on a fictional vignette set in Mauritania of the Trans-Sahel and addresses multiple Lines of Operations (LOOs) within a Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) mission.

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### **1.3 Assumptions and Major Factors for Consideration**

#### **1.3.1 Assumptions**

The Marine Corps must remain prepared to effectively operate in a wide variety of stability, disaster, counterterrorism, conflict prevention and other types of operations for the foreseeable future. Further, such operations are expected to involve a variety of Host Nation (HN), local, interagency, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and International Organizations.

#### **1.3.2 Major Factors for Consideration**

Resources for providing cultural detail that are specific to a particular operational context may be limited to those organic to the Marine Corps unit assigned to the operation. Additionally, time will most often be constrained and operational decisions will be made in the face of significant uncertainty. Understanding such constraints on planners and the Operational Planning Team (OPT), the study focuses on approaches and support tools that enhance cultural analysis and effective integration of relevant cultural factors into the MCPP.

### **1.4 Methodology**

The technical approach set forth below leads to the development and demonstration of an Integrating Framework with the ultimate aim of: 1) improving the ability of OPTs at the MEF level to effectively consider and incorporate relevant aspects of Operational Culture to their plans; and 2) supporting the operational effectiveness of advising, training and education programs of Operational Culture. The goal is to go beyond the current emphasis on description and definition of cultural factors and to promote the application of cultural knowledge to achieve operational success in actual or exercise environments. The intent is to improve the ability of OPTs to make sound judgments across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum, with full regard to the cultural context in which they occur.

It is expected that this effort will have a two-fold impact on the Marine Corps: 1) planners will be better equipped to consider the cultural context and then formulate effective plans which include the culturally relevant dynamics and; 2) the CAOCL educators and curriculum developers are equipped with knowledge to foster improved analysis, application and synthesis of Operational Culture within the MCPP.

The basic approach to implementing this effort is as follows:

- Identify and explore the issues, concerns, and problems associated with the current degree/level/effectiveness of cultural consideration given in the MCPP;
- Conduct a field study that looks for evidence of Operational Culture in both the MCPP and planning products produced by students at Marine Corps University (MCU);
- Create models and visualizations to support reflection, dialogue and collaborative sense-making among stakeholders with regard to the Operational Culture and the MCPP; and

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- Propose a “way ahead” in the form of a conceptual-level, prototypical Integrating Framework to enhance the inclusion of Operational Culture in the MCPP as well as support the work of educators, curriculum developers and deployed advisors who seek to improve the integration of Operational Culture in the MCPP.

Because the study is designed to achieve the best possible utilization of study products, it takes a highly participatory approach and falls within a general category of Operations Research (OR) practices called “soft OR” and, more specifically, action research methodologies. Borrowed and adapted from Checkland’s concept of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM),<sup>8</sup> the Trans-Sahel study map is depicted below:

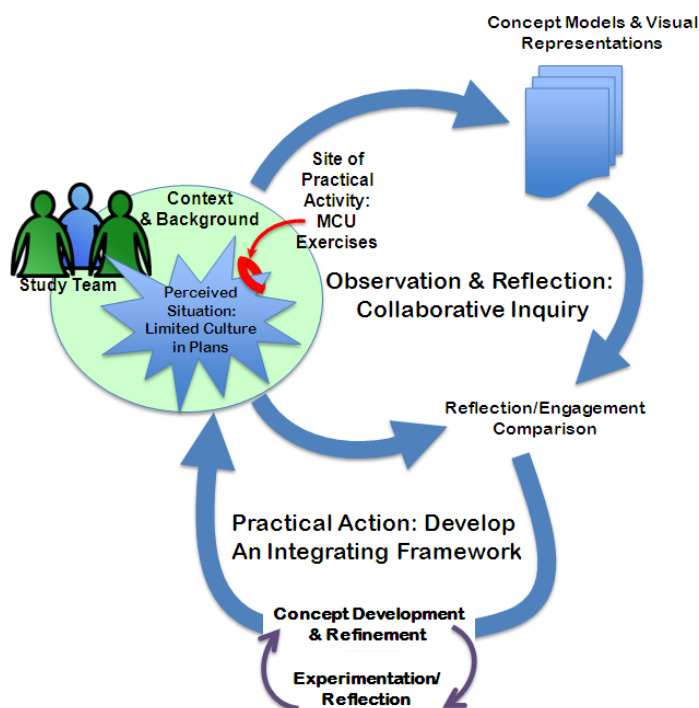


Figure 1-1. Trans-Sahel Study Map of Soft Systems Methodology

As researchers we enter the perceived situation (i.e. the perceived lack of effective application of Operational Culture within the MCPP) via the practical activity of MCU planning exercises, and view it from the inside. We then engage in a process of iterative model-building to both generate reflection within the Study Team and as a means to involve our stakeholders in sense-making about what we are seeing and the implications it has for the development of the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture. This approach is especially complementary to the Rapid Assessment Processes (RAP) where the aim is to move quickly from the situation as it is observed to a definition of the most important or desirable elements of the system on which to act.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Checkland, Peter (1995). “Model Validation in Soft Systems Practice,” *Systems Research*, 12(1), 47-54

<sup>9</sup> Bebee, James (2001). “Rapid Assessment Process: An introduction,” Lanham, MD: AltaMira

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### 1.5 Performance

**1.5.1 General.** The study is performed per the provisions of Marine Corps Order (MCO) 3902.1D.

#### 1.5.2 Tasking

##### 1.5.2.1 Task 1 – Document the Status of Operational Culture and its Application to Planning

This task provides for the research and collection of information necessary to support the execution of other tasks and the preparation of the study's final report. The product of this task is a section of this report that provides a detailed description of the products, procedures or processes that are intended to support the application of Operational Culture in the MCPP, as well as the observed processes and reported (via interview) drivers impacting the actual application of Operational Culture in the MCPP.

This effort involves the following subtasks:

- Publication Review - In order to establish a common, shared understanding of the current requirement for Operational Culture and its application to the MCPP, the Study Team reviews key National security documents, Joint and US Marine Corps (USMC) operational concepts and doctrine.
- Documentary Review - In this sub-task, the Study Team identifies and reviews non-doctrinal materials produced by CAOCL and other Marine Corps organizations specifically related to cultural and planning concepts. The book, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*, as the primary text for the USMC concept of Operational Culture is the centerpiece of this task. Likewise, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process* is a key document in this task.

The documentary review, along with the review of publications creates the context for observation and supports the development of probes for the in-depth interviews.

- Participant Observation - The Study Team engages in observation of planners both in the schoolhouse environments and in experimental contexts. The organizational ethnographic approach produces “thick” descriptions of the social and organizational scenes – allowing deep insights into the planner's practices, procedures and processes. The understanding gained forms the basis for the identified themes and organizational behaviors specific to the MCPP. The ethnography of the organization of planning allows the capture of words and meanings in the actual interactional context in which they are used. This knowledge is critical to developing a tool that blends with the culture of planning practices used within the Marine Corps.
- In-depth Interviewing - The Study Team conducts a series of in-depth interviews with Marine planners in various MCU courses and those with MEF level planning experience that are based in Quantico during the study period. The Study Team deploys a purposive

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sampling approach to access planners with specific experiences or expertise relevant to the study. Interviewees are invited to nominate others for participation. These interviews are aimed at eliciting the individual experiences of planners, and developing an in-depth understanding of how Operational Culture is experienced or accessed during the MCPP. The substantive frame for the interviews is generated by the Study Team in consultation with the sponsor and informed by both the documentary review and the observations. The interviews are transcribed and analyzed for key themes and markers (important pieces of information given by respondents, often while talking about something else) to support the development of insights into problematic aspects of commonplace practices in the planning context.

The research methodology applied in this task is based on RAP, which uses techniques of fieldwork (observation and interview) and intensive team-based qualitative inquiry. RAP employs a triangulated approach to data-gathering and analysis where the initial analysis is followed by several cycles of additional data collection, followed by more analysis. The outcome is a well-rounded analysis that accommodates the positions and experiences of multiple stakeholders without prolonged fieldwork. Further, RAP is an approach that pays as much attention to the way results are obtained as to the results themselves, thus producing a transparent product that can be replicated by other researchers.

### **1.5.2.2 Task 2 – Assess the Effectiveness of Operational Culture and Application to Planning**

Working from the findings of Task 1 developed through the RAP approach, the Study Team engages in a reflective practice of building models and developing visual representations of what is seen, heard and observed in the field. The models allow us to question the situation, to explore what is seen as problematic, and to pursue action that is both desirable and feasible. This practice supports the participation of stakeholders in refining concepts for further study and directing practical action. The product of this task is a section of the final report that provides an assessment of the current approach to applying Operational Culture to the MCPP at the MEF level, and identifies valid constructs and valuable contributions that should be retained and/or capitalized on in the CAOCL processes and products.

Using the RAP approach the Study Team identifies emergent themes early in the study, refining and updating them through stakeholder engagement and visualization over the course of the research. As the key themes are updated and revised, the Study Team uses the analytic constructs to drive the early conceptualization of planning supports. The efforts of this task ultimately articulate a useful set of groupings that synthesize the research in such a way as to identify and assess those practices that support the inclusion of Operational Culture in the MCPP – driving the development of the Integrating Framework.

In addition to the analysis of empirical products of fieldwork, the Study Team considers current and developing products and activities undertaken by the CAOCL according to the analytic constructs. The result of this analysis allows the CAOCL to draw from the study constructs to inform the development of new materials, approaches and capabilities that support Marine Corps

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planners. Formal planning processes as embodied in the MCPP, focused at the MEF level, are also assessed in terms of their ability to accommodate the inclusion of Operational Culture considerations. Further, selected approaches of other USG agencies are considered with regard to their possible applicability and adaptation for use in Marine Corps planning efforts.

#### **1.5.2.3 Task 3 – Develop an Integrating Framework to Enhance the Application of Operational Culture to USMC Planning**

Applying the analytical results from previous tasks, the Study Team develops an “Integrating Framework” concept aimed at enhancing the application of Operational Culture within the MCPP. Additionally, as part of Task 3 a Problem Structuring Method (PSM) is deployed that produces an expert generated study of the Trans-Sahel. The output of this study forms the basis of a vignette against which the Study Team exercises and refines the Integrating Framework. The product of this task is a chapter in the study report that describes the Integrating Framework in detail and documents its underlying concepts and theories. This chapter also documents the methodology for developing the planning vignette against which the Integrating Framework is exercised (Task 4). Both the Integrating Framework and the Trans-Sahel vignette are outputs of Task 3 and can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

The Study Team creates an Integrating Framework with the aim of enhancing the consideration of and application of Operational Culture in MEF level OPTs. The Integrating Framework maps to planning logic as set forth in MCWP 5-1 and helps planners to comprehensively and effectively analyze relevant aspects of the cultural context of the operation under consideration. The Integrating Framework then enables these operationally relevant aspects of culture to become integral inputs into the MCPP.

In developing and exercising the Integrating Framework concept, the Study Team first employs a PSM to support full exploration the operational context in the Trans-Sahel. After a review of the relevant literature, and in consultation with study stakeholders, General Morphological Analysis (GMA) is the method chosen for this effort. The PSM/GMA as well as the method used for the identification, vetting and selection of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) is detailed in the GMA Workshop Report, found in Appendix D.

#### **1.5.2.4 Task 4 – Apply and Evaluate the Integrating Framework**

The purpose of this task is to apply the Integrating Framework developed in Task 3 to a specific test case and to evaluate its desirability, viability and feasibility for enhancing the application of Operational Culture in the MCPP. As a support tool, the Integrating Framework takes the form of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP)-like instructional pamphlet, which provides a semi-structured set of steps, practices and principles to guide analysis, evaluation and synthesis for “*Problem Framing*.” The product of this task is a demonstration of the outputs of the application of the Integrating Framework guidance to the vignette developed in Task 3. The Integrating Framework is presented to the MSTP staff/planners for feedback and the results of their assessment included in the report.

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The Trans-Sahel vignette developed in Task 3 included six LOOs within a HA/DR effort presenting a rich and diverse set of planning problems requiring Operational Culture application. Further, the test case involves interagency engagement across elements of the USG, bringing an added level of organizational cultural complexity, as well as the obvious geographic and cultural challenges of operating in the Trans-Sahel region. Systematic consideration of the operational environment will be used to elicit operationally relevant culture knowledge requirements according to the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture.

The Integrating Framework is assessed, both internally and by study stakeholders for its perceived desirability, viability, and feasibility in terms of enhancing the consideration and effective application of Operational Culture into the MCPP in the specific context of the test case.

## 1.6 Structure and Style of the Report

This report is written to be thorough, logical and concise while also making the research, analysis and practice visible. It is laid out in the same chapter sequence as the tasking discussed in the study overview and makes liberal use of appendices as a means for elaborating in areas that are important, but which might be confusing if left in the main body of the report.

The report takes the form of what we call the Team Reflection Application and Experimentation (TRAE) narrative. The TRAE approach best reflects the nature of the inquiry undertaken in this study and is consistent with our Technical Approach, as well as the use of the RAP. Further, because this effort is focused on the development of a support tool based on the field study, the work falls under the OR approach known as “action inquiry.” In action inquiry, the aim is to “listen” to the developing situation and move toward accomplishing whatever tasks appear to have priority, all the while building in space for re-vision and re-action.<sup>10</sup> This report captures the action inquiry process.

### 1.6.1 Elements of the TRAE Report Form

This is a particular style of reporting is based on David Kolb’s experiential learning cycle<sup>11</sup> in action inquiry, shown below, where the activities of each element of the learning cycle are captured in an element of the report.

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<sup>10</sup> Torbert, W. R. and Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2004). *Action inquiry: the secret of timely and transforming leadership*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler

<sup>11</sup> Kolb, D. A. and Fry, R. (1975). “*Toward an applied theory of experiential learning*,” in C. Cooper (ed.) Theories of Group Process, London: John Wiley

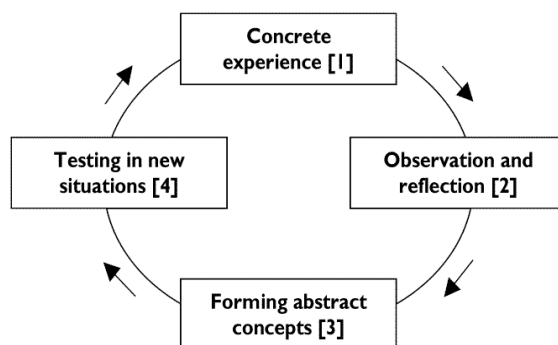


Figure 1-2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

1. Concrete Experience (CE). In this part of the report the Study Team briefly describe what occurs during the research and in the field experience. Because the study generates a substantial set of empirical materials, the Study Team select elements and examples from the fieldnotes that we want to highlight for their ability to represent and provide the context for key analytic categories discussed later in the report. It has elements of description that are similar to ethnographic fieldnotes and will also capture relevant thoughts and perceptions of the researchers as they arise. Applying analysis or judgment is avoided in this section of the report. It is written in a present, active voice, to give the reader a “here-and-now” sense of the experiences. *Task 1: Document the Status of Operational Culture and Application to Planning*, is represented in the Concrete Experience section of the TRAE report.

2. Reflective Observation (RO). In this part of the report, the Study Team captures its RAP discussions. Building directly from the observations reported in CE/Task 1, we ask ourselves: “What did I observe in the experience and what possible meanings could these observations have?” The key task here is to gather as many observations as possible by looking at the experience from different points of view. This is where models and visualization of concepts, along with stakeholder engagement, are critical. It is also important to surface assumptions that may adversely impact the research, and a team approach to the inquiry is especially helpful for this. RAP specifically employs a team approach for this precise reason: research rigor is enhanced due to the “triangulation” that occurs within the team itself (i.e. the multiple perspectives). In this way RAP also speeds the research process. In RO we seek to go below the surface of the concrete experiences to explore the values, practices and beliefs operating within the research context and subject them to a closer look. There are many questions generated in the RO, and these form the basis for the next step. *Task 2: Assess the Effectiveness of Operational Culture and Application to Planning* is represented in the Reflective Observation section of the TRAE report.

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3. Abstract Conceptualization (AC). While reflecting on the field experiences, the Study Team begins to draw linkages to theories and concepts that support their understanding. By reviewing the theoretical material, the team begins to extend the concepts and draw parallels to the practical aspects of the planning endeavor. The concepts both provide insight into the field experiences and nurture creative, developmental work to proceed. This is the section where we integrate our Study Team-developed theories and/or models to assist in making sense of what we saw and heard, and to develop and design an Integrating Framework for Operational Culture in the MCPP. *Task 3: Develop an Integrating Framework to Enhance the Application of Operational Culture to USMC Planning* is represented in the AC section of the TRAE Report.

4. Active Experimentation (AE). In this section of the report, the Study Team takes the Integrating Framework, still in conceptual form, and begins to experiment with it. In this instance, we exercise the Integrating Framework against the Trans-Sahel vignette developed during the project specifically for this purpose. In this way, we can exercise the concept developed in the preceding section (AC) and refine them at the theory/practice nexus. We report on our experience applying the Integrating Framework and provide insights into possible improvements and next steps. The Study Team elicits feedback from MSTP Senior Staff and other planners and compiles these comments and critique for the report. *Task 4: Apply and Evaluate Integrating Framework* is represented in the AE section of the TRAE Report.

The TRAE integrates the four learning perspectives and presents the action-inquiry and learning process in a fluid sequence. The aim is to make the inquiry and learning visible through richly documented and well-linked sections, focused on the field encounters. The successful TRAE has a focal issue and a story line, which is carried through the entire report such that the reader can gain full appreciation of how the study progresses to its final products. In this case, the path from the field observations and team assessments, to the concepts studied and applied to the development of the Integrating Framework is traced. The TRAE report is an example of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

Below, we map the sections of the report to the Trans-Sahel study map further delineating the activities of the study that are reported on in each section of the TRAE.

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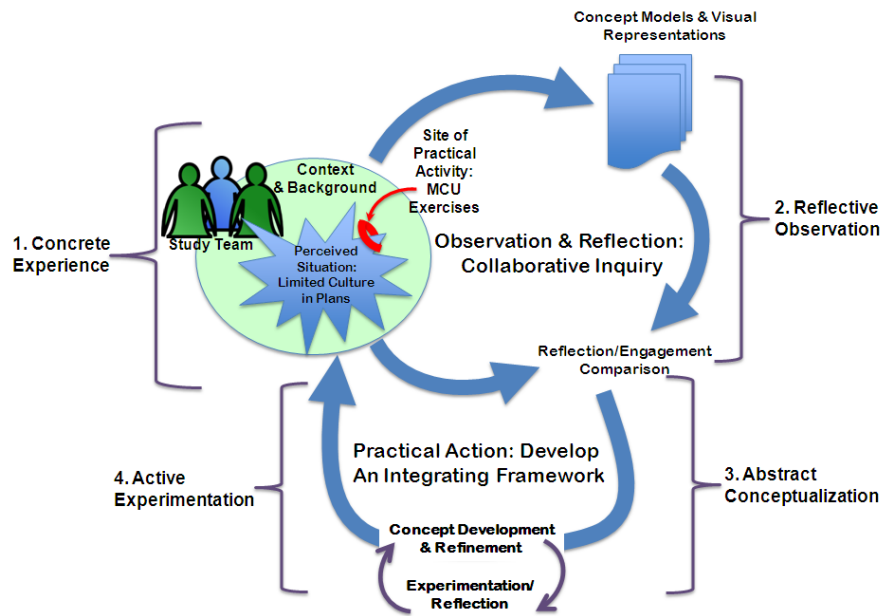


Figure 1-3. Elements of the Report Related to the Trans-Sahel Study Map

Ultimately, the TRAE responds to the need for representation in qualitative inquiry to take a “tone” different from that of more traditional OR and systems analysis. Here the researcher is situated squarely within, and actively “shows up,” in the research - its process and products - and the path from inquiry to analysis to action, is made transparent. The aim is to increase engagement with the work and the ideas with the hope of generating follow on inquiry and novel application among Marine Corps stakeholders.



## **2 Task 1: Document the Status of Operational Culture and its Application to Planning**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The objective of Task 1 is to conduct research and collect the empirical materials necessary to support an assessment of the degree to which Operational Culture is currently considered and applied in the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP). Called Concrete Experience (CE) within the study narrative, this chapter does not attempt to capture in full detail all that the Study Team saw, heard, observed or noticed over the course of the study. Rather, the Study Team focuses on to key findings that emerged during the execution of the task. These comprise the raw materials that support remaining study activities - specifically participatory activities of reflection and action - that ultimately lead to the development of the Integrating Framework described in Chapter 4.

Per the Trans-Sahel study map, the activities of this task are centered on understanding the context in which the “perceived situation” is embedded (i.e. the perceived lack of effective application of Operational Culture within MCP) and directly observing the actual application of Operational Culture within the MCP. To accomplish this, we see that two interrelated lines of inquiry are required: 1) a background study of the situation context and 2) a field study of the organizational practices of United States (US) Marine Corps (USMC) Operational Planning Teams (OPTs) and their current application of Operational Culture. The methods applied to each of the lines of inquiry include:

- 1) Background study of situation context
  - Publication review
  - Document review; and
  - Organizational mission brief interviews
- 2) Field study of OPTs application of Operational Culture
  - Participant observation; and
  - In-depth interviewing.

As depicted in the Trans-Sahel Study Map, a “site of practical activity” is selected for the field study, as it is impractical to study all planning efforts occurring across the USMC. The Study Team, in consultation with the Sponsor elect to focus on Marine Corps University (MCU) students and experienced planners who are primarily located in Quantico during the study period. This is an especially practical decision given 1) the strain on Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) planners due to current operations and 2) the revisions of MCP, which are currently underway, are being tested within MCU exercises.

Figure 2-1 below captures the strategy the Study Team takes in completing this task and highlights significant elements of organizational practice observed during the planning exercises (e.g. “*Design*,” culture advising, Green Cell). Though the execution of this task is iterative and occurs to some degree throughout the study, it represents the primary focus during the initial

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months where early concepts are formed. The direct outcomes of this task include a set of initial organizing constructs that form the basis for reflection and conceptual model-building (Task 2) and shape the action focus of the study effort.

BACKGROUND: PUBLICATIONS & DOCUMENTS						
BACKGROUND: CAOCL Mission Brief & Internal Interviews			BACKGROUND: Mission Briefs Other USMC Organizations			
FIELD STUDY: OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS						
EXERCISE: ELEMENT:	EWS	SAW		MNE 6		JFCSC
		Sp '10	F '10	LOE 1	LOE 2	
Commander/Design	✓	✓	✓			
Culture Advising	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Green Cell	✓	✓			✓	

Figure 2-1. Task 1 Research Strategy

## 2.2 Background Study: Understanding the Situation Context

The Study Team develops its understanding of the problem context by reviewing various publications and documents as well as through discussions and interactions with the CAOCL’s Director and staff. Further background is obtained by exploring the missions and activities of other USMC organizations whose organizational mission implies the use of cultural constructs. This background understanding provides the base knowledge for a focused field effort of participant observation and in-depth interviewing specifically targeted at the integration of Operational Culture in the MCPP.

### 2.2.1 Publication Review

The Study Team begins the project by orienting to Department of Defense (DOD), Joint, and Service-specific concepts related to culture. The Study Team uses this as a means to both establish a common understanding among, as well as to understand the context in which an organization like the CAOCL is established. The Study Team finds an extremely large set of documents that apply to the domain of the study. After reviewing many of these, the Study Team agrees that the following subset represents an especially significant group of official documents that should guide the project. Documents identified include:

- “National Security Strategy” (2002 & 2010)
- “Quadrennial Defense Review” (2006 & 2010);
- “Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025” (2008);
- USMC Concept: “The Long War - Send in the Marines” (2008);
- USMC Concept: “Unified Action Through Civil-Military Integration” (2009);
- “Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations (SSTR), Joint Operating Concept” (2006);

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- *“Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats, Joint Operating Concept”* (2007);
- US Joint Forces Command, *“Joint Operating Environment”* (2008);
- *“Military Contribution to Cooperative Security (CS), Joint Operating Concept”* (2008); and
- US Joint Forces Command, *“Capstone Concept for Joint Operations”* (2009).

These documents are rich with description of future operating environments, requirements for the force, and guidance for action. These documents also help us to make sense of initial conversations with our CAOCL Action Officer who has directed us to look at future operating environments and a variety of missions. He also points us toward a deeper understanding of what it means to operationalize culture to support end states that require shaping, influencing, manipulating or controlling actors in the operating environment. We highlight just a few key ideas that demonstrate what the Study Team takes from these strategic-level documents and carry forward into the rest of the study:

- US forces must better *“understand foreign cultures and societies and possess the ability to train, mentor and advise foreign security forces and conduct counterinsurgency campaigns.”*<sup>12</sup>
- The DOD must significantly improve *“organic capability in emerging languages and dialects, a greater competence and regional area skills in those languages and dialects and a surge capability to rapidly expand its language capabilities on short notice.”*<sup>13</sup>
- The USMC must ensure that Marines are *“specifically trained and broadly educated to understand cultures and populations, to thrive in chaotic environments, and to recognize and respond creatively to demanding situations.”*<sup>14</sup>
- The USMC will take a prominent role in mitigating instability through shaping and enabling phases of operations where shaping is described as *“enhancing the security capabilities and alleviating underlying conditions that give rise to instability”* – collectively referred to as building partner capacity.<sup>15</sup>
- The USMC must be prepared to integrate a variety of actors – Host Nation (HN), Partner Nations (PNs), Intergovernmental Organizations, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as well as the private sector and other US Government (USG) agencies into planning for complex contingencies and crises.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Department of Defense (2006). *“Quadrennial Defense Review Report,”* Washington, D.C.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Defense (2005). *“Defense Language Transformation Roadmap,”* Washington, D.C.

<sup>14</sup> Department of the Navy, Office of Naval Research (2008). *“Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025,”* Washington, D.C.

<sup>15</sup> United States Marine Corps, Commandant of the Marine Corps (2008). *“The Long War, Send in the A Marines: A Marine Corps Operational Employment Concept to Meet an Uncertain Security Environment,”* Washington, D.C.

<sup>16</sup> United States Marine Corps, Combat Development Command, DC, CD&I (2009). *“Concept for Unified Action Through Civil Military Integration,”* Quantico, VA

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- “The Joint Force must create conditions that enable long-term diplomatic, informational, and economic means to gain the popular support of friendly elements and undermine the popular support of adversaries.”<sup>17</sup>
- The Joint Force must be responsive and adaptive to new operational environments, especially those involving interagency or multinational partners.<sup>18</sup>
- The Joint Force must “advance constructive security initiatives and build transnational and partner nation capacity and capabilities” as necessary and also “contribute to US and international initiatives to alleviate the underlying conditions, motivators and enablers of violent extremism and destabilizing militancy.”<sup>19</sup>

### 2.2.2 Document Review

In preparing to go into the field, the Study Team gather key “practitioner-level” documents – that is, those that are designed to take strategic or doctrinal concepts and demonstrate their application in ways useable by Marines. The Study Team quickly determines that the two most important documents for the purposes of this study are the CAOCL’s flagship text for Operational Culture, “*Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*” and the Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*.” Because the aim of this action-oriented research is to bridge the concepts and practices put forth in “*Operational Culture for the Warfighter*” to the MCPP, the full Study Team takes on a thorough study of these two documents.

Operational Culture is a uniquely Marine Corps construct and is defined as: “Those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military actions that influence the culture of an area of operations.”<sup>20</sup> “*Operational Culture for the Warfighter*” presents a five-dimensional framework as the theoretical grounding for Operational Culture. The five dimensions of Operational Culture are an integration of three separate anthropological models and are visualized as a set of overlapping domains: Physical Environment, Economy, Political Structure, Social Structure, and Belief Systems. Used heavily at the MCU, this construct is designed to help Marines link culture to the MCPP.

The MCPP is in the process of revision at the start of the study, and so the Study Team uses the Functional Working Draft as its guide to the planning process. The draft presents a planning overview that is a significant departure from the then-current (approved) version of MCPP, the most immediately notable change being the change in the first step of the process – from “Mission Analysis” to “*Problem Framing*.” Further, the Functional Working Draft of MCPP drops the “Commander’s Battlespace Area Evaluation” and introduces a new element, “*Design*,”

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<sup>17</sup> Department of Defense (2007). “*Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats, Joint Operating Concept*” (Version 1.0), Washington, D.C.

<sup>18</sup> Joint Forces Command (2008). “*Joint Operating Environment*,” Suffolk, VA

<sup>19</sup> Department of Defense (2008). “*Military Contribution to Cooperative Security (CS), Joint Operating Concept*” (Version 1.0), Washington, D.C.

<sup>20</sup> Salmoni, B. A. and Holmes-Eber, P. (2008). “*Operational Culture for the Warfighter, Principles and Applications*,” Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 13

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which is seen as central to all steps of MCPP as well as occurring throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. The concept of “*Design*” is an integral process within the new “*Problem Framing*” step of MCPP and comprises the bulk effort within conceptual planning.

MCWP 3-33.5, “*Counterinsurgency*,” is another practitioner’s document the Study Team finds is used by USMC planners. This document puts forth the concept that the civilian population is the “Center of Gravity” (COG) in a counterinsurgency, an idea that has traction in many other types of operations. MCWP 3-33.5 establishes doctrinal emphasis on cultural “awareness” across the spectrum of operations and recognizes it as becoming increasingly important for US military forces. It provides conceptual-level planning guidance and describes logical Lines of Operation (LOOs) typical in counterinsurgency operations.

A US Army Field Manual (FM) that we include in our review is FM 3-07 “*Stability Operations*.” Released in 2008, the FM places a heavy emphasis on cultural considerations for planners and operational forces conducting stability operations. FM 3-07 is also notable for its emphasis on the activities of non-DOD agencies and the importance of military cooperation and engagement across efforts in the operating environment. Referred to as the “whole of government” approach, it emphasizes effective collaboration across departments and agencies to achieve a unity of effort toward a shared goal.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.2.3 Organizational Mission Brief Interviews

To establish a common understanding of the USMC organizational approach to culture and planning, the Study Team conducts a series of interviews with the CAOCL staff and other USMC organizations. An initial group interview with key CAOCL staff provides the current context of the study sponsor’s efforts to incorporate Operational Culture into the MCPP (see Appendix F). We also receive the mission briefs and interview a select group of Action Officers from other USMC organizations that utilize cultural concepts to achieve their missions.

*The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL):* The CAOCL Director presents the organization mission brief dated 16 September 2009. It is entitled, “Regionally Focused, Globally Prepared.” He explains that it is the organizational mission to ensure Marines are equipped with operationally relevant regional, culture and language knowledge to allow them to succeed in the Joint and combined expeditionary environment. To implement this mission, the CAOCL establishes programs addressed to Marine Corps schools. He acknowledges that while the CAOCL is not the exclusive agent of culture and language in the USMC, it is the “belly button” for Operational Culture across the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) construct. The CAOCL’s partners and customers include organizations like the Marine Corps Information Operations Center (MCIOC), the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA), the regional Marine Forces (MARFORs), and the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group (MCTAG). The Study Team

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<sup>21</sup> Department of Army, Headquarters (2009). “*FM 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance*,” Washington, D.C., 1-6

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hears several things during the brief that help understand, at the initiation of this study, what the CAOCL is about as an organization.

The CAOCL early organizational life was largely centered on the provision of pre-deployment training to Marines preparing for current operations. The director explains that it was General Mattis who championed the need for Marines to better understand the human terrain in which they were operating. As an organization, they are emerging from this period of rapid response to unmet needs. The director suggests, “Now we can take a breath.”

From their perspective, understanding culture isn’t about being nice, sympathetic, or empathetic. “It is about winning... We want our Marines to be *Culturally Effective*, not *Culturally Sensitive*.”

In an effort to institutionalize the Operational Culture construct, the CAOCL has settled on one framework – the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture. “I think it was a good decision. It provides stability and a solid path,” the director explains. “This model isn’t 100% correct, but it isn’t 100% wrong. It is significant because it plants a flag.” As a uniquely USMC concept it offers a “framework and model for thinking about cultural factors, which can be used in operational planning, education and training.”

In addition to pre-deployment training, the CAOCL is responsible for the Regional Culture and Language Familiarization Program (RCLF), which is a career Marine program to build regional expertise. They are also responsible for Navy and Marine Corps (NAVMC) 3500.65, “*Operational Culture and Language Training and Readiness Manual, (Short Title: Culture T&R Manual)*,” which is a mission-based manual establishing core mission essential tasks and required events for training for all Marine and Navy personnel in units interacting with a foreign population.<sup>22</sup>

The director outlines current the CAOCL efforts by saying, “We really are training and education-based, because it tends to be the agent of change in organizations.” However, he explains, the CAOCL is also trying to be more responsive to the USMC needs and is trying to provide more direct support to the commanders.

In closing the director reflects on the organization’s short history and notes that while the CAOCL’s charter instructs the organization to operate across the DOTMLPF spectrum the staff is aware that “We’re impacting beyond our immediate boss’ purview. Not just TECOM [Training and Education Command], not just MCCDC [Marine Corps Combat Development Command], but the entire Marine Corps organization.”

*Other USMC Operational Culture Stakeholder Organizations:* As we learn from its Director, the CAOCL is not the exclusive agent for culture in the USMC. In order to understand how other organizations are using culture and how they might be impacting or interacting with USMC

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<sup>22</sup> Department of the Navy (2009). “NAVMC 3500.65, *Operational Culture and Language Training and Readiness Manual, (Short Title: Culture T&R Manual)*,” Washington D.C.

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planning, the Study Team requests tabletop mission briefs with stakeholder organizations. The organizations identified (in blue) and their relationships are depicted in Figure 2-2 below:

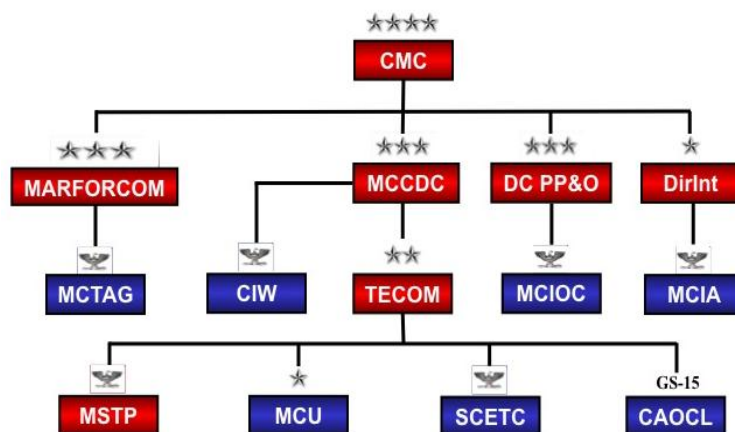


Figure 2-2. Marine Corps Operational Culture Stakeholders

The Study Team learns that most of the organization's staffs are well aware of the Operational Culture construct and many use the Five Dimensional Framework in some form. Several of the organizations are directly involved with planning, though in various capacities. For example, the Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC) and MCTAG support planning at different levels, focused on Security Cooperation and building partner capacity, respectively. The two organizations primarily plan for training and education, and use a different planning method altogether (see Appendix E). The MCIOC supports the MEFs and various training exercises with their Information Operations (IO) planning teams. At the time of our briefing, their support to the MEFs are very limited, though the MCIOC hopes to expand their support to MEF staffs with Psychological Operations planning teams in the near future.

## 2.2.4 Observations on the Situation Context

The Study Team identifies four key observations from our background study of the situation context that have significant implications for the remainder of the effort:

- 1) *While there are highly articulated requirements for "culture" at all levels of planning and across many operational types and operational environments, as a concept, there is significant ambiguity in the use of the term "culture" across the defense community.*

The lack of conceptual development in the culture domain across the Services is somewhat surprising to the Study Team. Because there is no shared or well-defined construct for culture, there are likewise no clearly articulated best practices or procedures to evaluate or build on when considering integrating supports, nor are there agreed upon metrics for establishing what constitutes a good plan with regard to its use of culture.

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- 2) *Operational Culture is a uniquely Marine Corp construct that speaks to culture “writ large,” going beyond religion, ethnicity and belief systems to include social, political, economic and environmental relationships and dynamics.*

Operational Culture is the accepted USMC construct for culture. The CAOCL has made a commitment to the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture, so this study will fully employ this construct and not seek to critique, alter or modify it. However, it is clear that as the Five Dimensions are used in practical situations, the understanding of both what is contained within the dimensions and the breadth of concepts that they cover, as well as how they interact, continues to grow.

- 3) *Though the text “Operational Culture for the Warfighter” does not directly address Military-to-Military or Civilian-to-Military cultural-interactive issues, the CAOCL as an organization is attempting to be responsive to these USMC requirements.*

It seems that the main text articulating Operational Culture was written largely in response to operational needs at the time of its publishing; specifically operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Its focus is on local cultural considerations, and does not develop examples or applications for the Military-to-Military engagement as well Civilian-to-Military requirements of future operating environments, which will be part of this study. These are examples of the mission areas in which the Five Dimension of Operational Culture are being stretch and expanded upon through application over time.

- 4) *Both the CAOCL as an organization, and the MCPP as a fundamental activity within the USMC, are undergoing significant change during the study period.*

The fact that both of these elements within the study are undergoing periods of dramatic change deeply affects the way the study is conducted. Because there are no static aspects of the central concerns of the research, it is of very little utility to apply standard assessment/evaluation approaches. For maximum utilization, the methodology selected must be one that fundamentally “comes along side” the organization and applies Operations Research (OR) as a means to support their endeavor. Also, in this kind of research environment it is impossible to define the study end state up front. Rather, it is a co-constructed, emergent property of stakeholder engagement with study processes and products.

### **2.3 Field Study: Observing the Application of Operational Culture in OPTs**

The field study allows the Study Team to gain understanding of the organizational culture of USMC OPTs: how they think, how they work and what they care about or focus on within their planning activities. The goal is to obtain the “insider” perspective, such that development efforts produce products that fit seamlessly within USMC planning logic and practice. Additional non-USMC (Multi-National and Joint) observational activities are undertaken as they provide the opportunity to observe specific activities of interest to the Study Sponsor.

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### 2.3.1 Participant Observation

The Study Sponsor facilitates the necessary introductions that allow the Study Team to gain entrance into the various observational settings. The practical area of activity identified for the study is that of exercise and experimental planning contexts, primarily in the Professional Military Education (PME) setting. A set of observations occurs both within and outside of the USMC:

- *Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) – Barbary Dreadnaught*: EWS is a nine-month course of PME for career Marines. Typically attended by Captains, the course emphasis is on “combined arms operations, warfighting skills, tactical decision-making, and Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) in amphibious operations.”<sup>23</sup> Barbary Dreadnaught is an end-of-semester planning exercise set in North Africa. The scenario includes repelling a recent invasion by a neighboring country and, while fairly kinetic in orientation, includes operations in and among the local people.
- *School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) – Pacific Challenge*: provides a graduate-level PME for selected field grade officers of the Marine Corps, other Services and other nations. The program “focuses on contemporary military history, amplifying problems that military leaders have faced as well as the subsequent influence their solutions have had on military institutions.”<sup>24</sup> The course is taught in a seminar format where the emphasis is on active learning and problem solving. Students have an option to receive a Master’s degree as part of their studies. Pacific Challenge is the capstone planning exercise of the SAW and occurs during the last weeks of the course. It is set in the fictional country of Indolaysia and exercises planning for Phase IV (Stability) operations within a complex socio-cultural environment.
- *Multinational Experiment 6 – Objective 4.3 Cultural Awareness*: The Multinational Experiment 6 is a two-year program led by US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), conducted in conjunction with coalition partners. Emphasizing the comprehensive approach, the particular line of study in Objective 4.3 is focused on cultural awareness. The stated goal is to “Develop an improved ability for the coalition forces and partners to produce cross-cultural awareness of the operational environment in order to contribute to a shared situational understanding.” The specific line of inquiry is led by the Spanish Army and asks the questions, “How can we integrate cultural awareness into operational planning, interagency planning, and into the intelligence procedures.”<sup>25</sup> The effort includes two loosely experimental actions that are better described as discovery-oriented events:
  - Line of Effort (LOE) 1.1, in which one OPT is given one week of general culture training and one week of applied cultural training, prior to the exercise, and given a culture Subject Matter Expert (SME) during the planning exercise. The other OPT receives neither training nor cultural support.

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<sup>23</sup> Marine Corps University Foundation (n.d.). “*Expeditionary Warfighting School*”

<sup>24</sup> Marine Corps University Foundation (n.d.). “*School of Advanced Warfighting*”

<sup>25</sup> MNE 6 Documentation, provided by email by Joint Forces Command (n.d.). “*Study issue 3: Integration of culture awareness into operational and interagency planning process, and into the intelligence procedures*”

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- LOE 1.2, in which a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) simulates in-theater planning for rapid execution. The PRT has access to Human Terrain Team products (US Army), Cultural Advising (CAOCL) and Red and Green Profiling (Swedish National Defense College) at set intervals during the experiment.
- *Joint and Combined Warfighting School (JCWS) – Purple Solace*: The students of the JCWS (typically Majors and Lieutenant Colonels) are receiving their second phase of Joint PME in anticipation of a Joint assignment. The goal of the school is to instruct students on “the integrated strategic deployment, employment, sustainment, conflict termination, and redeployment of Joint forces. The school accomplishes this through exercises and case studies in a Joint seminar environment.”<sup>26</sup> The exercise Purple Solace is set in a West African country and has the Joint Task Force planning for Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) operations where regional instability and border clashes are exacerbated by large movements of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

### 2.3.2 In-Depth Interviews

Integrated directly within the field experiences of participant observation are opportunities to engage exercise participants directly, without significantly disrupting the flow of the action. During all of the exercises, the Study Team is able to interact with and to ask clarifying questions of the participants within the context of the exercise. This allows the Study Team to delve deeper into the reasons for certain practices and to the meaning of various terms used in OPTs. Gaining the greatest possible insight into the “culture” of the OPTs is the goal of participant observation.

In addition to the in-exercise conversations, several in-depth, follow up interviews are conducted with experienced planners. These include Senior Mentors, MCU faculty, and one former SAW student who has taken command of a battalion (see Appendix G). The observations along with data from the interviews comprise the empirical materials used to generate the summary observations presented below.

## 2.4 Elements of OPT Practice Relevant to the Application of Operational Culture

Three practical elements of activity within the planning environment emerge as the focus of the observations and interview, and have specific relevance to the application of Operational Culture within the MCPP. They are: 1) “*Design*,” 2) Green Cells, and 3) Cultural Advising and are described in turn below with examples from the field study.

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<sup>26</sup> The National Defense University, Joint Forces Staff College (n.d.). JCWS Mission Statement

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### 2.4.1 “Design Dialogue” and Continuous Learning

*“If I only had one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-nine minutes defining the problem, and one minute finding solutions.”*

Albert Einstein

(Observed on the wall of the large briefing room at the SAW)

During the course of the study, a major effort is underway within the USMC to re-write the MCPP. The Study Team observe both the EWS and the SAW using the MCWP 5-1 Functional Working Draft and both offer very different interpretations of how “Design” plays out in planning practice. At the EWS we observe how the student OPT leader works within the OPT to stimulate critical thinking and productive learning while in the SAW we are able to observe interactions between the OPT leader and the Commander during briefings. Both offer important insights to the overall “Design” process and how early practices are developing. Key observations with regard to the implementation of “Design:”

- The Commander sets the tone for how “Design” will occur in OPT by the quality of the questions he asks and the concern he shows for certain details.
- An important aspect of design is the Commander’s questioning that helps him in parsing facts from assumptions.
- Working toward set products which may or may not effectively support learning, can derail “Design” and critical thinking in the OPT. (*“If I only had one hour to save the world, I would spend one minute solving it, and fifty-nine minutes building the PowerPoint brief.”* – heard by a SAW student in the Green Cell.)
- It is unclear to its practitioners to what degree “Design” is a product or a process, or the emphasis that should be placed on either. It is experienced as very “conceptual” at this time.
- The ambiguity introduced by “Design” appears, at least initially, difficult for student planners to manage. There is a tendency to give in to a task-focused effort early within the process.

### 2.4.2 Green Cells - Providing for the Independent Will of the Population

Green Cells are being used in schoolhouse exercises to specifically support OPT consideration of the population, or to account for the “independent will of the people.”<sup>27</sup> There are no established best practices for how to “do” a Green Cell, and its composition can vary based on available staff and SME support. Still, the idea that there would be a designated resource assigned to study the Operational Culture of the operating environment is seen as very important among student planners that we observe.

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<sup>27</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). “MCWP 5-1, Marine Corps Planning Process,” Washington, D.C., 2-6

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In the Barbary Dreadnaught exercise, the OPT leader has set aside one individual, specifically separate from the Red Cell, whose only role is to present the population's point of view – “to call BS on the plan,” he says. He thinks this approach of having both Red and Green [cells] creates a necessary tension between the enemy actions and the population's actions, encouraging the planners to balance that tension in “*Course of Action (COA) Development*”, “*COA Wargaming*” and “*COA Selection*.” The OPT Leader selects a student who he believes is best suited for the role – one with no particular background in cultural education and who is not necessarily familiar with the countries of interest, but one with the “personality to thrive in that role.” He says his decision was not Military Occupation Specialty (MOS)-driven; rather it was “personality-driven.”

The SAW Green Cell has three student planners from the OPT who are complemented by three liaison or SMEs. One is an anthropologist and Operational Culture expert from the CAOCL, one is an instructor in the SCETC's Civil Military planning course, and one is from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Military Affairs (OMA). During “*Problem Framing*,” each of the planners presents his/her own framework for understanding the green/cultural layer: Five Dimensions; Area Structures Capabilities Organizations People and Events (ASCOPE)/Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Information systems (PMSEII) matrix; and the Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF). The SAW students are familiar with all of them, and try to leverage each framework during their sessions together.

Key observations with regard to the implementation of Green Cells:

- Current supports to Green Cells are either too difficult to understand (“*You need a PhD to understand these!*” – comment from an EWS student) or only seem to generate information that describes the cultural context.
- There is often a disconnect between the information and the plan and a struggle to determine the operational relevance. More information does not mean more integration (into the plan).
- The skill set required to function as an effective member of a Green Cell has not been determined. One Senior Mentor suggested that the Commander needs a way to know who they have in their organization that may be good in that role.
- The products of Green Cell activities and the exact nature of what they provide within the OPT has not been determined. A SAW senior staffer suggests that for the Green Cell to “stick” it needs its own language – “*It can't just repeat the country study.*” He says that it is not different enough from what a good IPB [Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace] in this (exercise) environment should produce.

### 2.4.3 Cultural Advising - Helping Planners Locate the “So What”

Each of our planning observations offers the chance to observe Cultural Advising, and every one demonstrates a unique approach to implementing the role. The approach to advising is clearly different depending on the background, experience and personality of the individual and the effectiveness of the advising will be related to their individual understanding of the cultural

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knowledge needs of military organizations generally, and the intricacies of planning processes in particular. We characterize (roughly) the styles we observe as follows:

- Area-specific knowledge, expert style – provide lots of detailed information, hopefully some of it “sticks” or is usable.
- Area-specific knowledge, facilitator style – ask a lot of questions, engage in a conversation about what is needed and how cultural information will be used, help planners think about their problem using cultural principles.
- Positioned with the OPT leader, providing expert decision support.
- Seeking out ways to influence staff functions in areas where culture has significant impact.
- Directly advocating for a “correct” action (versus a more facilitative role).

Key observations with regard to the implementation of Cultural Advising:

- There (currently) are no Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or best practices about how to function as a Cultural Advisor (CULAD). The style and effectiveness of advising is largely personality-driven at this time.
- Even when possessing significant cultural knowledge, CULADs may not be able to impact planning or decision-making.
- The drive toward particular, often pre-set, planning products can directly limit the impact cultural information will have on the MCPP. Many of these products are not designed to accommodate this kind of thinking (e.g. “*I have [the cultural] understanding but maybe we can translate that more into the slide?*” and, upon being provided some important cultural information, one OPT member replies, referring to a PowerPoint template, “*We don’t have the tools to go into that.*”).
- The mental models (especially language and metaphors) that planners draw from might be incompatible with mental models used by non-military CULADs or SMEs.

## 2.5 Organizing Constructs for Continuing Inquiry

Following the field study, which includes both extended observations and follow-on interviews, the Study Team identifies a set of constructs that is initially useful for thinking about and discussing Operational Culture in relation to the MCPP. Framed as a set of practices, these initial ideas are categories of supportive activity types or practices that support the effective application of Operational Culture in the MCPP. These can only be described as notional at this point, but they allow the Study Team to focus attention and increase engagement among stakeholders with early study findings. These initial constructs are defined as follows:

- *Integrating Practices* – those practices that help the planner to be effective in discrimination, appraisal, and synthesis with regard to the cultural context within which he operates.
- *Evaluating Practices* – those practices that allow the planner to critique ideas, make recommendations, assess value and make choices.

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- *Designing Practices* – those practices that support effective problem framing and continuous learning and re-learning throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum.

These constructs are carried into the Reflective Observation of the study narrative, which capture the Task 2 study activities, in Chapter 3.

### 3 Task 2: Assess the Effectiveness of Operational Culture and Application to Planning

#### 3.1 Introduction

The objective of Task 2 is to assess the empirical materials collected as part of the background and field studies of Task 1. Called Reflective Observation (RO) within the study narrative, this chapter captures more of the iterative nature of the observation-reflection-action practice of the Study Team, and other study stakeholders, as they look closely at how Operational Culture is currently applied in the MCPPP.

Because there is really no way to know in advance of interacting with the system all of the relationships that will be important, creating pictures that support the participation of multiple stakeholders and allow a “multi-voiced” conversation about the situation is especially helpful. Through initial model-building and the process of actively engaging stakeholders to assist in refining and updating the models, the Study Team move toward developing integrative supports to planners for Operational Culture. The Study Team collectively identifies strengths in current planning practices as well as threats to the improved application of Operational Culture in planning. The drive of this approach is towards utilization where the products of the research activity are of greater value to Marine Corps stakeholders because they have been active in generating them.

Figure 3-1 below shows the initial study strategy with the added elements of collaborative and reflective practice engaged during the project in the form of various team meetings, Interim Performance Reviews (IPRs), workshops and informal meetings with stakeholders.

BACKGROUND: PUBLICATIONS & DOCUMENTS							
PROJECT TEAM MEETINGS	BACKGROUND: CAOCL Mission Brief & Internal Interviews			BACKGROUND: Mission Briefs Other USMC Organizations			
	FIELD STUDY: OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS						
	EXERCISE:	EWS	SAW		MNE 6		JFCSC
	ELEMENT:		Sp '10	F '10	LOE 1	LOE 2	
	Commander/Design	✓	✓	✓			
	Culture Advising	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Green Cell	✓	✓			✓	

Figure 3-1. Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Beginning with the conceptual constructs that emerge out of Task 1, the Study Team develops and extends each idea. Ultimately, this process leads to a set of refined constructs that form the basis for the next task, where the Study Team engage a broad literature to support the development activities. The initially identified constructs are basically discussed in turn below,

though the Study Team quickly finds that they include interconnected elements that make pure categorization unnatural if not impossible. The organizing constructs carried forward from Task 1 and discussed below are:

- Integrating Practices;
- Evaluating Practices; and
- Designing Practices.

### 3.2 Reflective Observation - Integrating Practices

*Integrating Practices* - those practices that help the planner to be effective in discrimination, appraisal, and synthesis with regard to the cultural context within which he operates.

The Study Team develops the idea of Integrating Practices to capture the observation that, in accounting for Operational Culture in planning, that simply doing a good analysis along the lines of the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture is not quite enough to ensure that cultural considerations are fully integrated across functional aspects of planning. In witnessing students applying the Five Dimensions and utilizing the guiding questions in the text, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*, the Study Team sees that the questions are very helpful for generating description of elements of the operational environment and generating discussion. It is noted in more than one observation that information generated within the cultural analysis is not clearly different than what should be produced in a solid Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (IPB). The ability to describe component parts of the cultural environment, however, do not appear to have a clear connection to the relevance for the rest of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP), specifically how it should shape Courses of Action (COA), and how to determine the impacts of interactions and dynamics within the operational environment. It seems that the standard approach to analysis, the breaking of something into its component parts, is not an effective practice with regard to Operational Culture. The Study Team wonders how Operational Culture analysis should look. *In what ways must the analysis of the cultural environment go beyond description? How can the analysis better produce actionable knowledge that is useful for other planning activities? In what ways should a cultural analysis be different from and enhance or complement an IPB?*

In recalling the strategic concepts encountered, the Study Team notices that most of the culture-related terminology – whether it be cultural awareness, cultural intelligence, cultural astuteness, and cultural competence – speaks to the need for planners to possess some sort of actionable knowledge, in order to function as required in the complex operational environments described. The emphasis in meeting this requirement falls in the training and education domain, and the focus is clearly on educating the individual. Certainly a well-educated Marine Corps that is “specifically trained and broadly educated”<sup>28</sup> in culture and language will be a better prepared force especially when directly interacting with foreign populations. The Study Team wonders,

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<sup>28</sup> Department of the Navy, Office of Naval Research (2008). “*Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025*,” Washington, D.C., 10



though, about what is required to *plan* for culture. *Is individual knowledge of a culture enough? What additional knowledge, skills and abilities are required? How is planning for operations in complex operational environments different than just knowing about the environment?*

The Study Team creates an image based on Bloom's Taxonomy of learning objectives to explore and discuss these issues. Bloom was an educator who developed the taxonomy to help others plan and evaluate curriculum. Initially proposed as a hierarchy of increasing mastery of a particular subject, the authors of the revised taxonomy shown below suggest that the highest three levels of cognitive skill may actually develop in parallel.<sup>29</sup> The Study Team finds this revised taxonomy extremely helpful generating discussion among partners and stakeholders and in thinking about the ways in which Operational Culture knowledge must be used and applied in the MCPP.

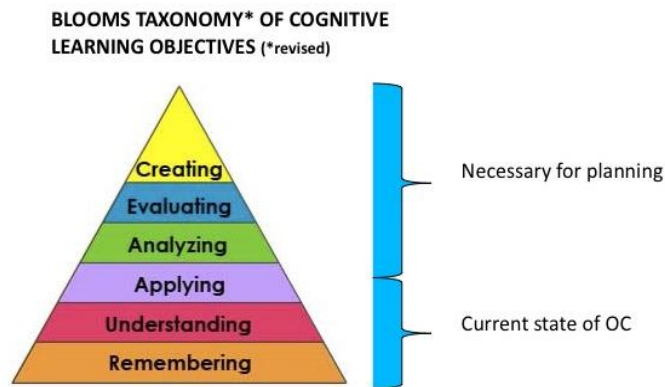


Figure 3-2. Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning Objectives

Using this diagram, the Study Team reflects on the current state of Operational Culture and planning. Based on observations and discussions, the Study Team sees the current state of use of Operational Culture to not be much above the understanding rung of the learning hierarchy, with some signs of inconsistent application.<sup>30</sup> The Study Team observes a similar level of application at the Multinational Experiment (MNE), where the planners have received two weeks of focused education on the cultural aspects of the operational environment as well as the social and political dynamics. Even with this focused education, the planners, while demonstrating a significant awareness of culture factors in the operational context, had trouble carrying the ideas through to the logical, forward-leaning conclusions. The report of the MNE contends that trained planners were not able to "operationalize" cultural factors and that the cultural factors did not impact the thinking with regard to the planning process, though they were described in rich detail.

<sup>29</sup> Anderson, L. W. & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). "A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives: Complete edition," New York: Longman

<sup>30</sup> There are many web-based resources for learning about Bloom's Taxonomy in general and the Cognitive Domain specifically. The version used for this study is found at: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html#revised>

The first three levels of learning appear readily achievable with really good Operational Culture education, like that offered at the Marine Corps University (MCU) or in pre-deployment training, by the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) experts. It seems that the CAOCL has refined and nearly perfected the delivery of this kind of education. However, to produce an effective plan, higher-level cognitive skills are required. *Is the only way to achieve this level of cognitive ability with regard to Operational Culture through years and years of education? Is it possible to focus education for culture, specifically aimed at culture in the MCPP? What might this look like? Who, in terms of specific Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), functional area, personality, etc., should be the target of this kind of education?*

The Study Team is reminded of a slide from a CAOCL brief and provides a version of it in Figure 3-3 below. It suggests that readily observable behaviors and practices of a culture represent only a small amount of what culture actually is. To understand these observable aspects of culture and to operate effectively with regard to them (i.e., basic do's & don'ts of culture) takes several years, but that a deeper understanding of the culture, its patterns and dynamics, that which would undoubtedly be needed for effective planning, takes much, much longer to learn.

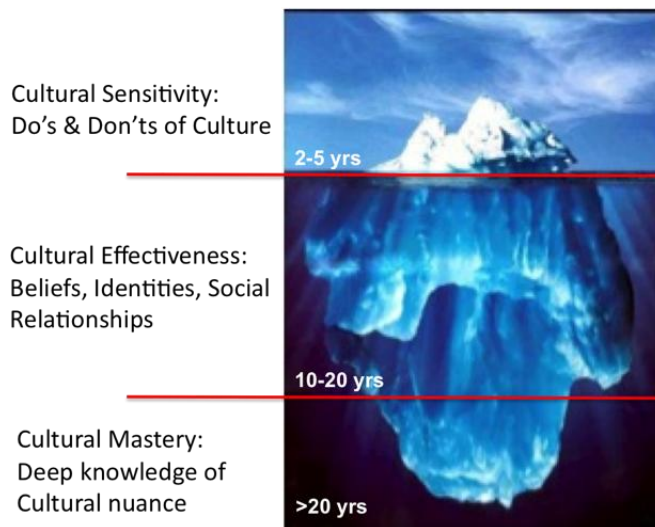


Figure 3-3. Knowing Culture: The CAOCL Iceberg Metaphor

Even when Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), those that have deep cultural knowledge, are available to support Operational Planning Teams (OPTs), the results in terms of actual planning considerations can prove limited. In the Barbary Dreadnaught exercise, even though the students have two very knowledgeable individuals supporting their understanding of the operational environment, it seems that they have trouble connecting the information they are being given with its relevance to the task before them. In the end, they latch on to one piece of information based on an historical example of the adversary's behavior and build an entire operational narrative around it. In this case, it has come to be the belief that once the enemy realizes that they are surrounded, they will put down their weapons and go home, as had happened in a conflict some 50 years prior. When it comes time to wargame COAs though, two different maneuver tactics are considered. The basic assumption about how the operation will unfold never comes

into question. *How must SMEs interact with planners and in what form must the provision of information take for it to best be considered in the MCPP? What practices must an OPT employ in order to reveal and test assumptions? What other supports can help planners learn about and use Operational Culture?*

In reflecting on these two examples the Study Team realizes that just because there is very good information available – and there is no shortage of information available about the cultural domain – does not mean that an operational planner will know how to use it or choose to use it. Certainly the way cultural information is presented is important. One of the SMEs had seemingly encyclopedic knowledge, but could not seem to point the planners directly to what was operationally relevant – Operational Cultural knowledge. The other SME, however, supplied cultural detail but also gave the “so what” of culture and advised planners more directly as to the implications for what specifically was being provided to the plan. Still, Operational Culture ended up minimally considered. *What is keeping planners from effectively using Operational Culture? Are there practices or processes within MCPP itself that inhibit the consideration of cultural factors? In what ways is Operational Culture not “resonating” with Marines in the planning context?*

Another difficulty observed in using the Operational Culture knowledge gained during early steps of the planning process, is the extent to which the student planners are able to consider second- and third-order effects. The SMEs present at the exercises attempt to make the students aware of the possible connections between their actions and associated effects in the operational environment that they might not intend to create. For example, in explaining the local economy and the use of certain critical trade routes and tourist centers in the country, the SME asks the students to consider the negative outcomes to the local economy with respect to particular COA. Later, students are overheard discussing this very issue, to which the comment arises, “*Well, sorry I’m f-ing up your day, but I am trying to save your country.*” So the Study Team wonders: *Are there elements of the United States (US) Marine Corps (USMC) culture itself that make considering cultural factors less relevant? In what ways is the expeditionary mindset of the Marine Corps an asset with regard to the integration of Operational Culture into the MCPP? In what ways might it inhibit cultural consideration?*

Considering second- and third-order effects of actions in a particular operational environment forced us to recognize that beyond integrating – the practice of holistic analysis with attention to relationships and dynamics – is an additional set of practices that support the weighing of multi-dimensional factors and decision making in the face of significant socio-cultural complexity. Within the study these are called *Evaluating Practices*.

### **3.3 Reflective Observation - Evaluating Practices**

*Evaluating Practices* - those practices that allow the planner to critique ideas, make recommendations, assess value and make choices.

The Study Team begins building rich pictures to examine ideas about how Marines should be thinking of the environment to account for Operational Culture. The importance of

interrelationships and dynamics with regard to the Operational Culture quickly become the focus of our discussions. The Study Team agrees that planning decisions should account for the effects of action, both planned and unplanned with regard to Operational Culture, and to do this accounting requires the knowledge of relationships and dynamics in the environment, as well as critical thinking that allow a planner to project their knowledge to a possible future state. Because these Operational Culture relationships and dynamics are not readily observable and require expertise in the specific culture that will likely not be organic to the OPT, the members and staff must have some idea of what they need to know and why, who or where they can obtain the information as well as how to use it. In the example demonstrated in Figure 3-4 below, an action that initially might seem to only entail a personal loss can now be projected to escalate into a critical stability issue within the province when Operational Culture in the form of interrelationship and social dynamics is accounted for.



Figure 3-4. Thinking Through Down-Stream Effects<sup>31</sup>

Planners armed with this type of knowledge can better advise their Commander regarding options and risks. So, evaluating Operational Culture speaks to both cognitive ability with regard to a subject and also critical thinking when faced with a complex planning problem. First you have to care, then you have to have access to the necessary information, then you have to know how to use it. This is what second- and third-order effects are, what are called down-stream effects. *How do planners currently consider second- and third-order effects? Is there a way to present Operational Culture information that better fits with planning logic, or are whole new ways of practice required? What would make a planner care, or not care, about such down-stream effects?*

Though the USMC is implementing the Regional Culture and Language Familiarization (RCLF) program, it is still in its infancy. This means, according to the iceberg model, that it will be years before there are Marines with the competence to provide OPTs the kind of cultural analysis

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31 Salmoni, B. A. and Holmes-Ebert, P. (2008). *Operational Culture for the Warfighter, Principles and Applications*, Quantico, VA, Marine Corps University Press

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necessary for effective Integrating and Evaluating Practices. In the meantime, the availability of a Cultural Adviser (CULAD) is potentially a powerful force multiplier for the OPT. Still, as demonstrated in our observations, this individual will certainly need special understanding of the MCPP, to bridge the gap between understanding the Operational Culture and the development of an effective plan. Alternatively, OPTs will need individuals and leaders who are either equipped or naturally gifted to know what information they need, how to elicit it from area experts, and how to effectively apply it within the planning steps. These ideas are relatively new and best practices have yet to be developed, let alone systematically studied, so the Study Team wonders: *How should this gap be bridged? What supports could be provided to both the OPTs and to CULADs that might reach across the Operational Culture/MCPP divide? What types of people (personality and skills) are most effective for this bridging function? How should these roles be handled and where should they “sit” in the larger scheme of the OPT?*

One mechanism the Study Team observes within the OPT for bringing both Integrating and Evaluating Practices to the MCPP is the standing up of the Green Cell as a cross-cutting function of the OPT. According to the new MCPP, the Green Cell is designed to account for the “independent will of the people” as well as develop considerations for other actors in the operational environment (e.g. other US Government (USG) organizations, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Host Nation (HN) organizations and institutions, etc.). However, as mentioned previously, there are no best practices for Green Cells currently implemented. In fact, in Appendix D of the MCPP where the planning diagrams for each step of the process are illustrated, the Green Cell shows up as an activity in the first set of diagrams associated with “*Problem Framing*” (step 1 of the MCPP), there are no products or outcomes of this activity defined and it is never mentioned again in the six pages of injects, activities, and results delineated. As the Study Team and stakeholders have spent a great deal of time discussing Green Cells, a significant number of questions are developed as part of the reflective process. A representative subset of these includes: *What type of people should be selected for the Green Cell? What are the products of the Green Cell? What processes will support the work of the Green Cell? How are the results of Green Cell efforts effectively integrated across the rest of the staff functions? Are there risks to implementing Green Cells? How should Green Cell analysis interact with intelligence products?*

First and foremost, it is the OPT’s job to support the Commander’s decision making and his development of a Concept of Operations (CONOPS). The Commander relies on the OPT to conduct a systematic, coordinated and thorough planning effort. Clearly, given both current and expected operational environments of the future, Operational Culture is a critical if not central component of such planning efforts. Further, the OPT must carefully uncover and evaluate assumptions with regard to the cultural context so that the Commander is fully informed of the operational risk that he takes on. This can be a challenge because our own culture becomes a powerful lens through which we experience our world, meaning that planners have to at once be learning about a new culture and simultaneously reflecting on how their learning is being shaped by their own cultural lens. The Study Team is able to observe some of the students demonstrating this type of self-reflection and awareness, but it is not implemented systematically throughout the planning effort. Because we agree that this is an important component of evaluating practice, the Study Team wonders: *How might reflection, reflexivity and reframing*

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*with regard to Operational Culture be implemented more consistently in the OPT? What kind of supports, behaviors or processes could help to assure that assumptions have been adequately evaluated?*

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 5, “*Planning*,” demonstrates with a powerful visual (reproduced below in figure 3-5) the importance of Evaluating Practices.

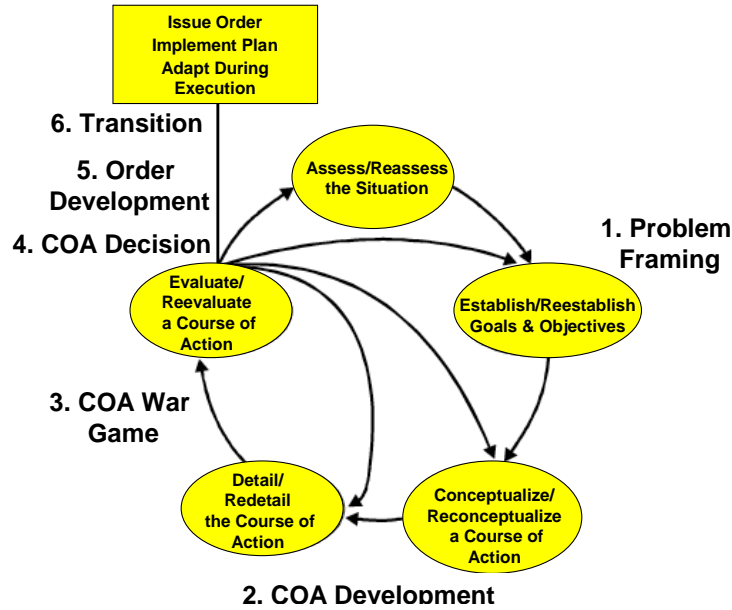


Figure 3-5. The Marine Corps Planning Process

Here, it is the ability to effectively evaluate that drives the reconsideration of every other activity in planning. The Commander exercises judgment and develops a hypothesis, or visualization, based on his understanding of the environment and the problem obtained through dialogue with the OPT. The “*Design*,” according to the MCPP, is the Commander’s “conception and articulation of a framework for solving a problem.” As planning continues, the Commander will be evaluating OPT efforts by asking questions like: *Does the plan speak to the mission? Is the plan effective in meeting mission requirements? Does it avoid or minimize second- and third-order effects? Does it include mitigation activities that address unexpected or unintended consequences of execution?* Evaluating Practices are concerned with identifying the right things to do, and then, figuring out how to do them right.

In other words, planning requires “creating” which in turn requires continuous integrative and evaluative practice in the context of the mission or operational requirements. In this way, the CONOPS can be achieved and prepared for implementation. Returning to Bloom’s hierarchy, this activity indeed requires the highest levels of competence in a subject, even if the notion that effective analyzing, evaluating and creating can be achieved in parallel. So the Study Team wonders: *Is it possible that the collective action of team learning could achieve effective results with regard to the consideration of Operational Culture, even in the absence of any individual with a high level of cultural competence? Has the focus on individual learning with regard to*

*Operational Culture caused us to overlook the opportunity to enhance team learning in the planning context? How might team learning be supported? How is team learning different from, and how is it similar to, individual learning?*

With this reflection – integrating and evaluating begin to make sense as learning practices such that “*Design*” could occur – the discussion of Designing Practices with a reframed view of what such practices entail begins.

### 3.4 Reflective Observation - Designing Practices

*Designing Practices* - those practices that support effective “*Problem Framing*” and continuous learning and re-learning throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum.

In observing students grapple with the meaning and implementation of “*Design*,” it is clear that when in doubt about how to implement “*Design Practices*,” the power of the well-established steps of MCPP is their fall-back. Though all of the observations have occurred since the implementation of the Functional Working Draft of the MCPP, the Study Team gets the distinct sense from follow-on conversations that what was observed may not be too different than what would have observed the year before. Managing the ambiguity of “*Design*” proves difficult, and the OPTs seem to find comfort in focusing on tasks and product development. The Study Team observes an interaction between the Commander and the OPT leader during briefing sessions and note a kind of conversational exchange, the “*Design Dialogue*,” that is not typical to a briefing format. The OPT leader shares the learning of the staff with the Commander and the Commander, in turn, asks a series of questions, revealing what his concerns are, what he needs to know more about and where he wants the OPT to focus its efforts.

As the Functional Working Draft and later, the final version of Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*” (24 Aug 2010) is studied, the Study Team notes that “*Design*” is presented in fairly ambiguous terms. It is unclear the extent to which “*Design*” is intended to be a process and the extent to which the focus of “*Design*” is on the product – the Commander’s Operational “*Design*”. “*Design*” is described as both belonging to and being driven by the Commander, and as fostering collective understanding and the “power of organizational learning.”<sup>32</sup> The Command climate set by the Commander is what allows “*Design*” to occur. In reflecting on the status of “*Design*” in the MCPP the Study Team asks: *What are the practices that constitute effective “Design” within the OPT? What are organizational level behaviors, and what are the individual level behaviors needed for effective “Design?” How is the “Command Climate” created and maintained in “Design?” What is “open and frank dialogue?” What are its purposes, components and how is it achieved?*

In working with our CAOCL Action Officer, the Study Team discusses an operational “*Design*” developed as part of the Joint Forces Command and Staff College (JFCSC) exercise. In this case, the Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander is engaged in an operation in support of other USG

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<sup>32</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). “*MCWP 5-1, The Marine Corps Planning Process Coordinating Draft*,” Washington, D.C., 2-1

agencies leading a response to a disaster in Cameroon. As shown below in Figure 3-6, the Commander’s concept must account for a variety of actors and efforts occurring simultaneously in the operational environment and must have a grasp of the Operational Culture to achieve mission success.

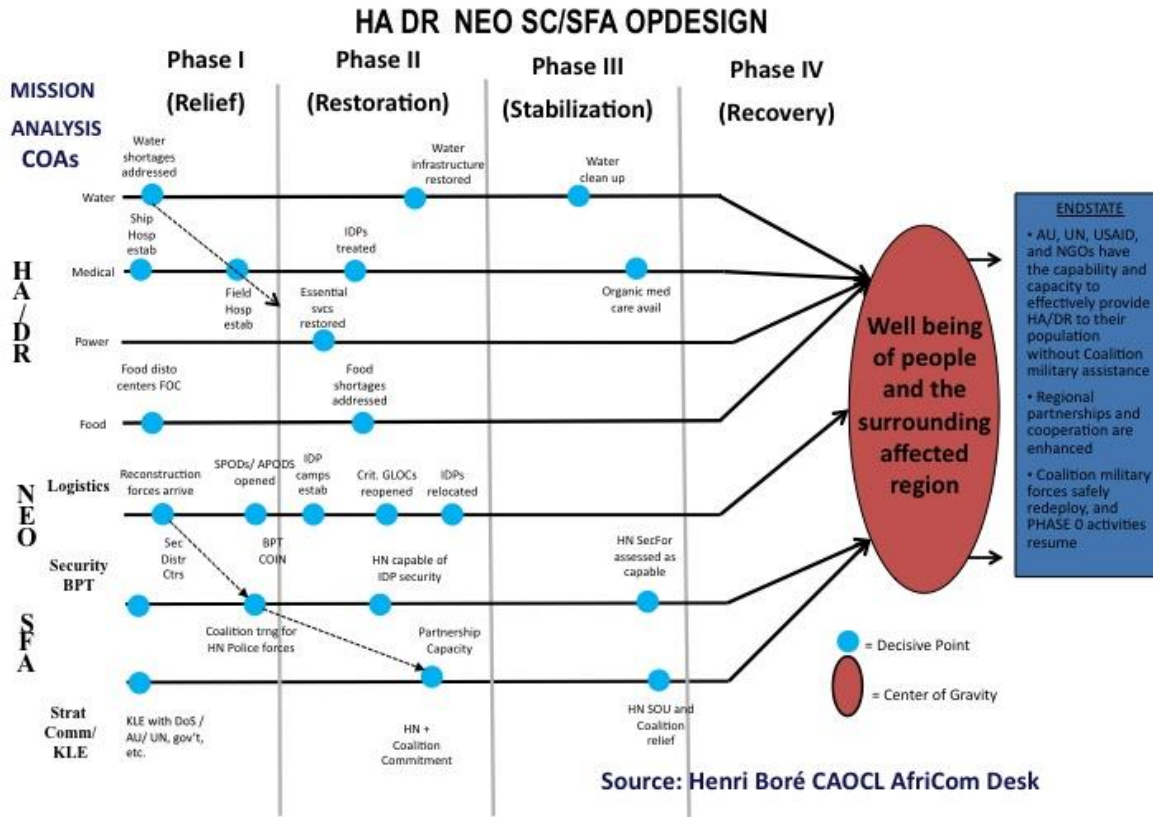


Figure 3-6. JFCSC Operational “Design”

In studying and discussing the “Design” visualized above, we note several things. First, an Operational “Design” as a concept for solving a problem has many “fuzzy” elements that must be defined and delineated through further planning. The meanings intended within the decisive points, the Center of Gravity (COG) defined and the end state desired all require significant planning efforts to flesh out the details. Indeed, if the goal of planning is to support the “exercise of initiative” of those implementing the conceptual plan, there is a great deal of room for Operational Culture to be incorporated or omitted in functional and detailed planning. The second thing that we notice is the interrelationships between the various efforts. It is clear that these elements must, to some degree, be planned in conjunction with other elements of the plan. The timing and “down-stream” effects and outcomes will significantly impact other elements of the concept. The “Design” concept certainly requires the initiative to engage in continuous learning and integrated planning. The Study Team wonders: *Does Operational Culture remain important as planning continues? What is necessary to keep Operational Culture a central element of functional and detailed planning? How is ongoing learning and refined definitions (e.g. of decisive points and end states) accounted for in the CONOPS?*



Another important element of Operational Culture that shows up in complex contingencies like the ones exercised at the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) and the JFCSC is the need for integrated planning with other USG, Coalition partners, and HN elements. In discussions with the representative from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) at the JFCSC and in follow-up meetings; we learn that the OFDA approach to operations often includes a “strategic pause” which allows disaster responders to observe the natural response, indigenous to the locality, which emerges in the period immediately following an event. The Study Team also hear of stories where, in an effort to just do something, the military unwittingly create significant problems in the operational environment that undermine the overall recovery. In fact, one student in the JFCSC environment was overheard saying, “*If I’ve got helos and can bring food and water to help those people, I will. If something bad happens to them, it is not going to be on me.*” So the Study Team wonders: *How should considerations of the Operational Culture include the interagency and coalition organizational culture environment? What types of conversations must occur to allow these varying organizations to work effectively together? How should they align their operational “Designs?” What behaviors and actions are required to enact a “whole of government” and comprehensive approach to complex contingencies?*

These reflections help the Study Team to see clearly that Operational Culture has relevance that extends far beyond a basic understanding of the norms, values, beliefs and social patterns of the local population in the operational environment. The operational environment also includes the organizational cultures of other actors and must be accounted for and navigated effectively to assure unity of effort and mission success. Ultimately, the priority to work well with other organizations, especially when the military is not in the lead of an operation, depends on the strong leadership of the Commander in establishing his intent and guidance during conceptual planning. If the Commander does not say that it is important very early in the planning process, these factors will likely not be accounted for in the remainder of conceptual planning, let alone in functional and detailed planning. The flow of the MCPP illustrated in Figure 3-7 below helps the Study Team to consider how “*Design,*” while being a central process, ultimately leads to a CONOPS that is the direct result of the “*Commander’s Initial Intent and Guidance*” carried over into the remaining steps of the MCPP.

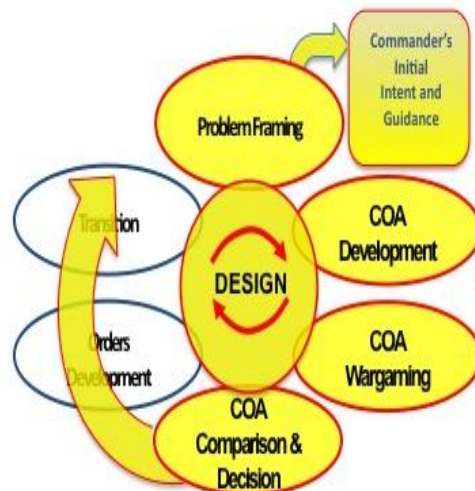


Figure 3-7. The Marine Corps Planning Process

Our study of the MCPP is bolstered by the Study Team observations, interviews and informal conversations with planners and study stakeholders. The importance of establishing the need for Operational Culture consideration throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum early in conceptual planning is uncontested. Supporting OPTs and Commanders in the effective consideration of Operational Culture during the “*Problem Framing*” step is the first step in assuring that Operational Culture will be effectively accounted for in all facets of the plan.

### 3.5 Refining Organizing Constructs and Preparing for Practical Action

Taking into account our reflections of Integrating Practices, Evaluating Practices and Designing Practices, the Study Team creates a revised version to the Bloom’s Taxonomy. In contrast to Bloom’s construct where the application is to the individual, in the Study Team revised model the application is to the OPT. This change in application focus is shown below in Figure 3-8.

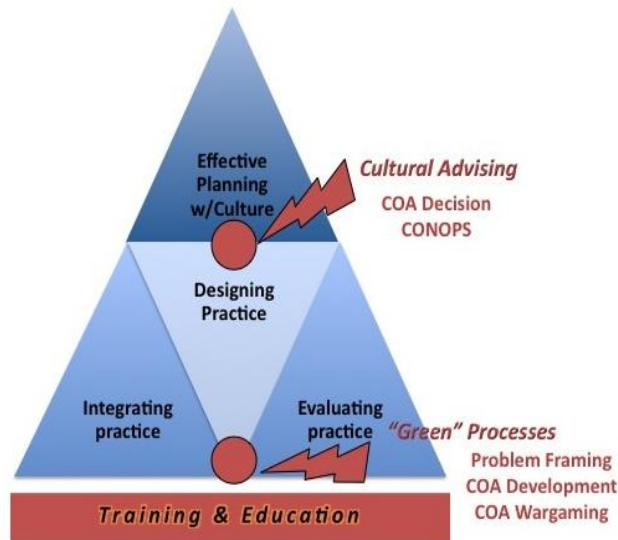


Figure 3-8. Organizing Constructs

In this image we hope to capture the intent behind the MCPP assertion that “*Design Dialogue*” “can foster a collective level of understanding not attainable by any individual within the group.”<sup>33</sup> In the Study Team model, training and education is at the base because OPTs will always require some level of baseline knowledge directly applicable to their operational environment to operate successfully there. Given the often severe limitations on time, the Study Team surmises that this training and education would be focused and directed, using well established best practices to get planners as individuals up the first three rungs of Bloom’s hierarchy (remembering, understanding and applying). Immediately above that in the Study

<sup>33</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). “*MCWP 5-1, The Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-1

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Team model are the elements of Integrating Practices and Evaluating Practices, which constitute the learning within the OPT as a group. Figure 3-8 above positions the role of Cultural Advising and Green Cells within the designing and learning practices. With regard to “*Problem Framing*” in the MCPP, OPT learning is directed at an enhanced understanding of the environment and the nature of the planning problem. This learning ultimately carries over to other steps of MCPP.

The MCWP 5-1 states, “To achieve this understanding, “*Problem Framing*” requires both the judgment of synthesis and the systematic study of analysis.” The Study Team learning model elaborates on those concepts by suggesting that “systematic study of analysis” be reframed as Integrating Practices to account for the need to understand culture holistically, as existing within a set of relationship and societal patterns that shape the underlying dynamics of the operational environment. Where analysis suggests a breaking down of culture into component parts, Integrating Practices suggest those approaches planners use to take multiple perspectives and consider a variety of contextual factors when studying Operational Culture. Likewise, “judgment of synthesis” is enhanced by the Study Team concept of Evaluating Practices, which speaks to the ways that planners comprehend the Operational Culture options and is able to project into the future and consider the down-stream impacts of actions.

The Study Team also chose the word “practice” for each of the elements to highlight the fact that steps and processes often do very little to illuminate the actual way that team learning occurs. *What are the routines followed? What are the characteristics of a productive conversation? How do teams make sense of their findings and agree on the content of their products? How do they manage disagreement, and how do they effectively innovate?* It is the answer to these questions that reveal the hidden nature of the practices employed by OPTs to get planning done. The Study Team agrees that productive practices cannot be assumed and that it is important to consider what constitutes good practice and how it can be supported, for even well-established processes for producing the learning of integrating and evaluating will be undermined in the absence of attitudes, values and behaviors that engage critical inquiry and critical thinking for Operational Culture in a sincere and sustained way.

Finally, the central position held by Designing Practices in the Study Team model is representative of the belief in the role Designing Practices can play in effective planning. Here, the Study Team is specifically moving away from the focus on “*Design*” as a product and direct attention to those practices that get the OPT and the Commander to the realization of the CONOPS or Operational “*Design*.” Specifically, designing the bridging set of practices that supports the quality of the learning in both Integrating and Evaluating. The Study Team OPT learning triangle suggests changing the reframed concept of “*Design*” from this sense – ***Learning, in order to “Design” (as in produce a CONOPS)*** – to that of ***Designing, in order to Learn***. Further, in the Study Team model, sense learning, like “*Design*,” occurs in all steps of MCPP and throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum.

As the study moves toward practical action aimed at supporting the improved integration of Operational Culture into the MCPP, the Study Team is reminded of the statement made in MCWP 5-1:

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*“Since no amount of subsequent planning can solve a problem insufficiently understood, “Problem Framing” is the most important step in planning”*

This exhortation along with the Study Team observation of the rush to task-oriented planning activities in the “*Problem Framing*” step and how that leaves Operational Culture minimally considered or altogether dropped in “*COA Development*,” confirms the Study Team focus on the MCPP “*Problem Framing*” step as an important initial area to improve the consideration Operational Culture. The Study Team agrees, along with stakeholders, that the “*Commander’s Initial Intent and Guidance*” is a critical catalyst for the carry-over of Operational Culture into planning and execution. If the Commander does not include the importance of Operational Culture up front, nobody in the OPT will care about it and the Operation Plan (OPLAN)/Operation Order (OPORD) would not include it.

The MCPP “*Problem Framing*” step can be visualized as shown below in Figure 3-9.



Figure 3-9. MCPP “*Problem Framing*” Step

The planning effort begins with the “*Commander’s Initial Orientation*.” Learning occurs through integrating and Evaluating Practices, engaged in the work of “*Understanding the Environment*” and the problem. The learning leverages Designing Practices, of which a primary mechanism is dialogue.<sup>34</sup> The outcome of the “*Design*” effort for “*Understanding the Environment*” is the “*Commander’s Initial Intent and Guidance*” that reflects the OPT’s effective integration of Operational Culture considerations in their “*Problem Framing*” effort.

The Study Team refines the analytic constructs in preparation for deeper study in Task 3, and adjusting the terms as follows: 1) Designing, which is reframed to further emphasize Design Practices versus its products, 2) Learning, which includes both Integrating Practices and Evaluating Practices, and are combined in light of their tightly coupled relationship relative to Operational Culture learning, and introduce 3) Aligning, a new term which aims to capture another important practice in which teams create shared meaning both within the OPT itself, and

<sup>34</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). “*MCWP 5-1, The Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-1

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with other actors in the operating environment in order to attain integration and unity of effort across the Operation Plan (OPLAN).

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## **4 Task 3: Develop an Integrating Framework to Enhance the Application of Operational Culture to USMC Planning**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The objective of Task 3 is to develop an Integrating Framework to be applied as a support tool that will bridge the gap between the academic concept of Operational Culture as set forth in the text, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*, and its effective application in the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level. The technique we used to do this is referred to as Abstract Conceptualization (AC) within the study narrative.

The chapter is organized into two parts. Part I takes the refined organizing constructs developed in the previous chapter and seeks broadly applicable theory from the academic literature that allows the Study Team to deepen and extend the concepts and ultimately draw practical parallels for application to the development of an Integrating Framework. The Study Team does not attempt a full review of the literature; rather, in keeping with rapid assessment and utilization-focused work, the Study Team touches on key concepts found to be especially useful for development efforts. Each of these relevant concepts and how they apply to understanding of the planning practices is briefly described. The balance of Part I describes the Integrating Framework concept, which is put forth as a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP)-like pamphlet addressing activities of the “*Problem Framing*” step of the MCP in three parts: “*Design Dialogue*,” “*Understanding the Environment*,” and “*Understanding the Problem*.”

Part II reports on the methods used to develop the vignette against which the Integrating Framework is exercised and refined in preparation for distribution to study stakeholders. Specifically, the Study Team is provided with an example storyline by the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) Action Officer, which becomes the model for the development of a scenario vignette that will provide the Study Team with an experimental “test bed” against which we can apply the Integrating Framework concept. The intent is to create a reasonably complex operational vignette that allows experimentation with the Integrating Framework and supports its refinement based on what is learned. The vignette is developed through a rigorous approach that uses a Problem Structuring Method (PSM), a professional and seasoned facilitator, and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). The final vignette is set in the Trans-Sahel country of Mauritania and includes a complex humanitarian emergency further exacerbated by an acute natural disaster.

### **4.2 Part I: Develop an Integrating Framework**

This section of the narrative describes the concepts drawn from social science and management literature to support the extension of the planning constructs developed in the previous chapter. Because these constructs are developed while reflecting on and modeling ideas related to planning practices observed, they are naturally related to each other. Because of this, though a

social science literature presented may be posed as supporting the Study Team thinking within a particular construct, it will undoubtedly have elements span thinking across multiple constructs simultaneously, and as such, the designations are inevitably artificial. Still, for the purposes of narrative ease, the constructs identified and discussed in turn below include:

- Designing Practices;
- Learning Practices; and
- Aligning Practices.

#### 4.2.1 Abstract Conceptualization - Designing Practices

In the previous chapter our reflections on the central element of “*Design*” within the MCPP and the practices observed relevant to “*Design*” led the Study Team to more fully explore “*Design*” as fundamentally a set of practices versus simply an effort that drives toward a product – i.e., the Commander’s Operational “*Design*.” In this section the Study Team deepens the understanding of concepts related to the construct of “*Design*,” and explores how these might shape or support an Integrating Framework for Operational Culture.

The Study Team discovers that the decision to position “*Design*” as a central construct of the MCPP is part of a larger move toward “*Design*” thinking within the MCPP. Indeed, there is a tremendous amount of discussion currently occurring in the defense community related to “*Design*.” This discussion typically builds on the now popular idea of the “wicked problem” put forth in the seminal article by Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber entitled “*Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*”. In this article a wicked type of problem is described as possessing a set of traits that defy definitive problem formulation and thus do not lend themselves to traditional analytic approaches. “The formulation of a wicked problem is the problem! The process of formulating the problem and of conceiving a solution (or re-solution) is identical, since every specification of the problem is a specification of the direction in which a treatment is considered.” These authors suggest that to work effectively with wicked problems, things must proceed “as an argumentative process in the course of which an image of the problem and of the solution emerges gradually among the participants, as a product of incessant judgment, subjected to critical argument.”<sup>35</sup>

Dealing effectively with wicked problems requires that we work in new ways altogether. Often referred to as “ill-structured,” wicked problems have no definitive solutions. We have to interact with the problem, learning about it as we go, in order to define and redefine our conception of what the problem is. This process of iterating a problem definition is directly formative of the solution developed. The greatest risk to success in approaching the wicked problem, according to authors who write about them, is attempting to “tame” them in order to make them amenable to technical or mechanistic type solutions. Taming a wicked problem usually involves carving out some distinct subset and calling it “the problem,” stripping away or ignoring complex interrelationships, and applying standard analytic techniques. Taming in this way is tempting for

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<sup>35</sup> Rittel, H. W. and Webber, M. M. (1973). “*Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*,” Policy Sciences, 4, 155-169

military planners because their problems are often so complex and uncertain it is more reassuring to act as if there is a knowable problem “out there” and that a really rigorous planning effort will produce the correct solution. In military planning, the process itself has been largely shaped over many decades by the technical construction of forces and their deployment and employment in actual and potential major combat operations. The behaviors required in planning for wicked problems often come into direct conflict with the process and products typically seen in military planning.

John Schmitt, a Marine who authored the popular paper “*A Systemic Concept for Operational Design*,” also challenges the notion that “*Design*” should merely be thought of as conceptual planning. Schmitt suggests that the focus of “*Design*” is a deep inquiry into the “nature, factors and dynamics of the problem situation, which should inform the initial establishment of aims, objectives and intentions and the development of broad concepts of action.”<sup>36</sup> He suggests that “*Design*” is fundamentally “problem setting” and that it is actually done outside the planning process. This approach, while more consistent with the United States (US) Army’s approach to “*Design*,” has not been taken up by the Marine Corps where “*Design*” has been situated within the planning process itself. Where Schmitt suggests that “*Design*” logically precedes planning, the authors of the MCPP seem to suggest that all of planning is fundamentally a “*Design*” activity. This is a very important distinction as Schmitt’s approach would have a select group of individuals go about the task or “setting the problem” up front, which then, presumably, allows planning to carry on in a procedural and technically efficient style. In the MCPP, “*Design*” occurs throughout planning, though the MCPP authors admit it is heaviest in its application during conceptual planning. The implications for “*Design*” being engaged in this way suggest the need for the whole of a US Marine Corps (USMC) planning staff to engage in “*Design*” principles and practice.

So, what are these “*Design*” principles and what are the practices that support them? Richard Buchanan draws out the relationship between art and science in “*Design*” and suggests that at its core, “*Design*” is an “art of experimental thinking” and posits “There is no area of contemporary life where “*Design*”... is not a significant factor in shaping human experience.”<sup>37</sup> From this perspective, “*Design*” is an activity available to everyone and is suited to the problems of everyday experience as well as complex planning problems. Buchanan discusses the “*Design*” concept of “placements,” which he distinguishes from categories. Placements are a means by which a designer applies context and shape to a specific situation, which gives initial orientation to the thinking. Placements are different from categories, which have fixed meanings that are widely accepted within a given framework. “Placements,” he says, “have boundaries to shape and constrain meaning, but are not rigidly fixed and determinate.”<sup>38</sup> Placements help to generate new perceptions and new possibilities to be tested when applied in novel ways to new situations. In this respect, placements might be thought of as a flexible repertoire or toolbox for “*Design*.”

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<sup>36</sup> Schmitt, J (n.d.). “*A systemic concept for operational design*”

<sup>37</sup> Buchanan, R. (1992). “*Wicked Problems in Design Thinking*,” *Design Issues*, 8(2), 8

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 13



The concept of placements for designers could be conceived of as corresponding to the “*Commander’s Orientation*,” which in MCPP creates the initial space for creative possibilities to emerge and for testing of ideas. The extent to which those initial orienting placements are truly orienting constructs versus fixed categorizations will define what possibilities are generated. This is consistent with what the MCPP describes as the “command climate.” A skilled Commander who is knowledgeable of “*Design*” understands that he sets the stage for what follows with his orientation “placement.” Likewise, the Operational Planning Team (OPT) and staff, and perhaps especially the OPT leader, can generate “*Design*” thinking by establishing placements which are flexible but relevant as initially guiding constructs to support “*Design*” thinking in the staff.

An excellent example of a planning construct that was probably once a placement, but over time has taken on the rigidity of a category, is the Center of Gravity (COG) analysis. As a specific set of categories (critical capability, critical vulnerability, etc.) the COG approach works well for kinetic, force-on-force combat operations. However, applying that same categorical structure to other types of operations, especially those with significant non-kinetic aspects and the associated wider range of considered actors, is dangerously limiting and does not support “*Design*.” In these cases, it would be better for planners to have natural or spontaneously developed placements guide their thinking.

Another characteristic of “*Design*” is the use of “boundary objects” as a means of communication between participants in the “*Design*”/planning space. These boundary objects are the early prototypes of “*Design*” ideas that reify (make abstract ideas more concrete) the work of the designer to expand the participation with their ideas. The prototypes do “work” in the “*Design*” space in that they are the subject of engagement, mobilization, revision, contestation or impasse.<sup>39</sup> The importance of model building and early prototyping of ideas in “*Design*” is well-established. The group practices around how these models are managed are also important to the effectiveness of planning. The ability of planners to leverage their prototypes for participation within the OPT without forcing ideas onto a situation takes skills of reflection and reframing to sustain the momentum for “*Design*” thinking and learning in the OPT.

Donald Schön promoted an art or practice for people doing professional work like planning. It involves what is called “reflection-in-action” and he referred to people who use it as “reflective practitioners.” The reflective practitioner says Schön, engages in a “conversation with a unique and uncertain situation. . . . The process spirals through stages of appreciation, action and re-appreciation. The unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changed through the attempt to understand it.”<sup>40</sup> This description corresponds nicely with how Jeff Conklin models the cognitive activity of a designer working in a problem-solution space considered “wicked,” where there is extensive iteration between the appreciation of the situation and the formulation of a solution.<sup>41</sup> This kind of reflection in action is critical to effective “*Design*” practice. The practice of dialogue, as described in the MCPP, is likewise able

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<sup>39</sup> Luck, R. (2009). “*Does this compromise your design? Interactionally producing a design concept in talk*,” *CoDesign*, 5(1), 21-34

<sup>40</sup> Schon, D. A. (1983). “*The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*,” Basic Books: USA

<sup>41</sup> Conklin, J. (2006). “*Dialogue Mapping: Building shared understanding of wicked problems*,” Wiley: Sussex

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to encourage the reflection necessary to support “*Design*” in groups. In fact, the MCPP states that the primary mechanism of “*Design*” is the “*Design Dialogue*.”

Dialogue, if practiced effectively, is a means by which OPTs can generate breakthrough creativity in the face of operational complexity and uncertainty. Researchers and theorists who study teams working with wicked problems suggest that in the course of their work (in this case, of forming a plan) the conversation eventually reveals that there is fragmentation of thought within the group. Often a group will go along for quite a while believing that they are all “on the same page.” When it is discovered that this is not so, a decision will be made as to whether to drive toward reaching an agreement they can live with (this is called “satisficing,” which means examining alternatives until a most obvious, attainable, and reasonable solution with adequate level of acceptability is found, and stopping the search there instead of looking for the best-possible or optimum solution) or if they will explore the nature of the differences emerging between them. These differences in understanding within the team are typically the result of assumptions that have operated below the surface of thought. David Bohm wrote, “Normally we do not see that our assumptions are affecting the nature of our observations. But the assumptions affect the way we see things, the way we experience them, and, consequently, the things that we want to do. In a way, we are looking through our assumptions; the assumptions could be said to be an observer in a sense.”<sup>42</sup>

Dialogue processes and characteristics are quite well described. Edgar Schein suggests, “Dialogue can be thought of as a form of conversation that makes it possible, even likely, for participants to become aware of some of the hidden and tacit assumptions that derive from our cultural learning, our language, and our physiological makeup.”<sup>43</sup> William Isaacs describes this group conversation space as a “container” which can be understood as “the sum of the collective assumptions, shared intentions and beliefs of a group.”<sup>44</sup> Dialogue is a demanding endeavor. He points out, “Dialogue requires the challenging stance of being both an observer and a participant at once. Its aim is to produce ultimately insight into and necessarily a change in the formative ‘ground’ out of which experience emerges.”<sup>45</sup> With practice, participants gain the skill to move beyond simple reflection to a more active awareness of the moment. Edwin Nevis says, “Awareness is not the same thing as introspection. True awareness is the spontaneous sensing of what arises or becomes figural, and it involves direct, immediate experience. Introspection by contrast, is a searching, evaluative process in which parts of the experience are held up for examination.”<sup>46</sup>

The impact of mental models on “*Design*” efforts in planning, especially incorporating Operational Culture, might represent the most critical vulnerability for USMC planners.

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<sup>42</sup> Bohm, D. (1996). “*On Dialogue*,” L. Nichol, (ed.), New York: Routledge, 69

<sup>43</sup> Schein, E. H. (1999). “*Process Consultation Revisited: Building the helping relationship*,” New York: Addison-Wesley, 201

<sup>44</sup> Isaacs, W. (1994). “*Dialogue*,” In Senge, P., et. al., (eds.), The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building the learning organization, 360

<sup>45</sup> Isaacs, W. (2001). “*Toward an Action Theory of Dialogue*,” International Journal of Public Administration, 24(7&8), 709

<sup>46</sup> Nevis, E. (1998). “*Organizational Consulting: A Gestalt Approach*,” Cambridge: GIC Press, 23

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Developing planning practices that actively and effectively address the power of mental models to shape how planners read and respond to the environment will be critical to success in future operational environments. “As we become more observant and reflective,” says Edgar Schein, “we begin to realize how much our initial perception can be colored by expectations based on our cultural learning and past experiences. What we perceive is often based on our needs, our expectation, our projections, our psychological defenses, and most of all, our culturally learned assumptions and thought categories.”<sup>47</sup> Knowing how to uncover and challenge assumptions within the MCPP assures that the Commander is not assuming risk that he is unaware of. Over time such practices become naturalized within the planning culture and are second-nature to the participants. Further, the experience of dialogue can result in greater ease of decision making, implementation and assessment as groups continue working together. Overall, the opportunity for higher creativity and higher functioning is present in a group that effectively utilizes dialogue.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Abstract Conceptualization - Learning Practices

In the course of our fieldwork and related reflections, the idea of “Learning Practices” came to capture the dual constructs of the “Integrating” and “Evaluating” practices that we saw student planners engaging in. In a world where information is ubiquitous and innovation is required for planners, continuous learning becomes a core competency. In seeing how students work with Operational Culture information, whether that be in a group-learning environment as in a Green Cell or more broadly through the “*Design Dialogue*” within the OPT, it seems most effective when it occurs in a very holistic way. For example, a Green Cell engaging in Operational Culture learning may take a deep dive into a specific element of religious beliefs, but then begin discussing that belief as situated in a historical narrative that locates the origins of a related element, which just as quickly becomes linked to the current political climate. This is to say that learning for Operational Culture proceeds with analysis, synthesis and evaluation occurring simultaneously. Further, the application of Operational Culture seems improved when the discussions occur organically to the sense-making process around missions and tasks. Jeff Conklin provides ample corroboration for these observations, saying, “Given that a wicked problem is an evolving set of interlocking issues and constraints, a linear approach to solving such a problem simply will not work. Opportunity-driven problem solving allows for the natural and spontaneous flow of attention by an individual or group. It permits sudden changes of topic or focus; welcomes new insights, regardless of whether they appear to pertain to the problem or the solution; and allows for the emergence of new pieces of the problem, even if they seem to make the process more challenging.”<sup>49</sup>

In observing this way that OPTs work in general, and how they work and learn specifically with regard to Operational Culture, we found several bodies of literature useful for helping us think

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<sup>47</sup>Schein, E. H. (1999). “*Process Consultation Revisited: Building the helping relationship*,” New York: Addison-Wesley

<sup>48</sup>Isaacs, W. (1994). “*Dialogue*,” In Senge, P., et. al., (eds.), *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building the learning organization*

<sup>49</sup>Conklin, J. (2006). “*Dialogue Mapping: Building shared understanding of wicked problems*,” Wiley: Sussex

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about supporting their efforts. First is the literature on situational awareness that comes out of studies of US Air Force (USAF) pilots. The concepts within situational awareness helped us to establish some terms to discuss what goes on between getting Operational Culture information and using it effectively for operational planning. Another body of literature that was helpful comes from organizational learning and management literature that discusses collaborative sense-making within organizations. And finally, the Study Team drew on helpful ideas from recent developments in evaluation research, which offer simple inquiry frameworks for continuous action-learning in highly dynamic and uncertain environments.

Situational awareness is a term of art used by USAF pilots beginning as early as World War I and is described by Barry Watts as the “ability of opposing aircrews to develop and sustain accurate representations of where all the participants in or near the air combat arena are located, what they are doing, and where they are likely to be in the immediate future.”<sup>50</sup> Embracing situational awareness shifted appreciation of what drives successful air-to-air engagements away from “the element of surprise” and towards John Boyd’s well-known “Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) loop.”<sup>51</sup> More broadly applied, situational awareness came to refer to the generalized ability to collect and sort vast amounts of information to determine the best Course of Action (COA). It is especially useful for describing the awareness needed in highly dynamic environments, where many decisions are required across a fairly narrow space of time and where each task has interdependency with other tasks.

Mica Endsley puts forth the most commonly cited theoretical framework for situational awareness. This framework uses a nested model where situational awareness is depicted as comprising a hierarchy of three components of increasing situational awareness: perception, comprehension, and projection.

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<sup>50</sup> Watts, B. D. (2004). “*Clausewitzian Friction and War*,” McNair Paper 68. Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University

<sup>51</sup> Boyd, J. (n.d.) “*Discourse on Winning and Losing*,” Retrieved from: <http://www.ausairpower.net/JRB/intro.pdf>

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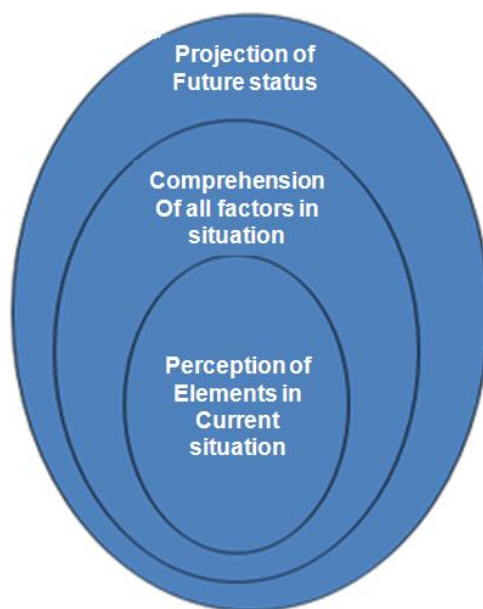


Figure 4-1. Endsley's Nested Model of Situational Awareness<sup>52</sup>

Perception in the situational awareness models speaks to the ability to read cues from your sources of information. For pilots, this is typically an instrument panel, which has been pre-designed to provide all of the necessary information to fly a plane. In addition to just having the data available, you must be able to perceive cues that something important is happening. For Operational Culture the parallel would be having an instrument – like a Cultural Advisor (CULAD), or area expert or good intelligence information – but it would also include recognizing how and why a piece of information is important. If a planner does not understand the questions he should be asking and why, it is likely that even when the proper information is available, he would not perceive its relevance. Comprehension in this model refers to how people combine and interpret pieces of information to build a relevant picture of the situation. This has to do with both attending to the operationally relevant information and integrating it with other information properly in order to realize its significance in the larger system. Finally, at the most proficient level of awareness is projection, which according to Endsley, is the ability to “forecast future situation events and dynamics... [which] allows for timely decision making.”<sup>53</sup>

Endsley's model can be useful for understanding how situational awareness can enhance the planning and execution of an Operational “*Design*.” In complex operational environments, Lines of Operation (LOOs) inevitably interact or overlap. This makes situational awareness an essential element for planners building an Operational “*Design*.” While an individual planner

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<sup>52</sup> Endsley, M. R. (2000). “*Theoretical Underpinnings of Situation Awareness: A critical review.*” In M.R. Endsley and D. J. Garland (Eds.), *Situation Awareness Analysis and Measurement*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

<sup>53</sup> Endsley, M. R. (2000). “*Theoretical Underpinnings of Situation Awareness: A critical review.*” In M.R. Endsley and D. J. Garland (Eds.), *Situation Awareness Analysis and Measurement*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

might only be concerned with establishing the essential and implied tasks of a single decisive point, or with only one part of the LOO, he needs to be aware of what other elements and tasks are being executed in the mission as a whole. Endsley's nested model is a helpful way to visualize the idea that, more than just collecting information, knowledge is created as the work of integrating and aligning with long-term objectives and goals occurs.

Where Endsley's work is directed toward the study of situational awareness of individuals, OPTs benefit from collective sense-making to build their situational awareness. With their "reading" of the situation, the OPT through Designing Practices (creating boundary objects and engaging in dialogue) give shape to the situation as they see it. As Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld suggest, "Situations, organizations and environments are talked into existence."<sup>54</sup> When it comes to Operational Culture, sense-making is the activity that links the OPT's culturally contextualized "*Understanding the Environment*" and "*Understanding the Problem*." Because operating in an environment where the culture is very unfamiliar provides an unending flow of novelty, much of the planning effort is aimed at building situational awareness so that projections can be made about how the environment will respond to the actions associated with carrying out the missions and tasks. To consider Operational Culture, even during deliberate planning, is to begin the "experience" of interacting with another culture. Weick et al. claim "To focus on sense-making is to portray organizing as the experience of being thrown into an on-going, unknowable, unpredictable streaming of experience in search of answers to the question, 'what is the story?'" Operation Plans that consider Operational Culture is effectively getting the OPT prepared for continual learning. The danger within the OPT is to try and "tame" the planning problem. When OPTs do this it is usually a reaction to the seemingly unmanageable ambiguity and uncertainty within the Operational Culture environment. Weick and Sutcliffe suggest that "mindfulness" is the practice that can replace the tendency to "set" the problem or the plan. They say that mindfulness is "essentially a preoccupation with updating."<sup>55</sup> What setting the plan or problem does is convince planners that through their hard work, they have crafted a solution and their belief in this solution leads to a set of expectations. These expectations can easily set off "defensive routines" in organizations where, even in the face of disconfirming evidence, leaders will convince themselves that their expectations are being met. Chris Argyris says that "Defensive routines exist: they are undiscussable; they proliferate and grow in an underground manner; the social pollution is hard to identify until something occurs that blows things open."<sup>56</sup> Weick and Sutcliffe suggest "Mindfulness and updating counteract many of the blind spots that occur when people rely too heavily on expectations."

The important element of sense-making is that it occurs as an organizational process when the unexpected happens. As Weick says, "Discrepant events or surprises trigger a need for explanation, or post-diction, and, correspondingly, for a process through which interpretations of

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<sup>54</sup> Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M. and Obstfeld, D. (2005). "*Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking*," *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409-421

<sup>55</sup> Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M. (2001). "*Managing the Unexpected: Assuring high performance in an age of complexity*," San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

<sup>56</sup> Argyris, C. (1993). "*On Organizational Learning*," Cambridge, MA: Blackwell

discrepancies are developed.”<sup>57</sup> Sense-making is the means of continuous collective updating that takes planners from their growing knowledge of a situation during planning, through execution and assessment. Fundamentally then, incorporating Operational Culture into the planning process means planning for continuous learning. Further, to truly foster organizational learning, this ongoing learning must be more than instrumental or “single-loop”, where planners are simply responding to the effects of their actions. Rather, commanders must create the climate where planners can question the very nature of the values underlying the action and ask, “Are we doing the right things?” versus just “Are we doing things right?” This is what Argyris and Schon calls double-loop learning and which they suggest is how real organizational learning occurs.<sup>58</sup>

Consistent with sense-making as an on-going learning practice in OPTs is a particular form of inquiry coming out of the evaluation research literature, which supports the continual updating of knowledge within the organization across planning, execution, and assessment. Called “developmental” evaluation, this is an inquiry approach especially suited to situations of high uncertainty and according to Michael Patton, is built on the “principles for operating in complex adaptive systems.”<sup>59</sup> This approach specifically focuses on *what is being developed*. It supports adaptation in complex, uncertain, and dynamic conditions, rather than seeking to impose an unnatural order onto a complex problem.

An effective Inquiry Practice, though, involves more than asking questions – it is an intentional process of framing important questions, systematically gathering information relevant to the questions, and using the information to draw credible conclusions that can help shape action. A developmental Evaluative Inquiry approach to complex problems likewise involves several factors: a context for questions; a framework for questions; a focus for questions; and different levels of questions. According to Michael Patton the most basic form of evaluative inquiry asks: **What? So What? And Now What?** When applied to development, innovation, or social change, this deceptively simple line of questioning is a powerful tool for continuous learning and adaptation. Adapting this approach for use in cases where the definitions applied regarding the operational end states are evolving as learning occurs over time, this simple Evaluative Inquiry approach can form the basis of the continuous learning at all levels of command. For OPTs with the right Command Climate, it can be effective through the continuum of planning, execution, and assessment.

Initially, this basic or Fundamental Inquiry will help a planner think critically about how a particular mission will impact, interact with, and be affected by the cultural context – that is, to identify the aspects of the cultural context which are operationally relevant. As steps of the MCPP go forward, new information is found, new insight through learning is gained, and established thinking inevitably becomes challenged and must be revised. For this, the same Evaluative Inquiry is used (What? So What? Now What?), but now, the focus is on comparison.

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<sup>57</sup> Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

<sup>58</sup> Argyris, C. and Schon, D. A. (1996). *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

<sup>59</sup> Patton, M. Q. (2010). *Developmental Evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*, New York, NY: Guilford Press

During deliberate planning using the MCPP, such a Comparative Inquiry will inevitably help to surface assumptions and expectations about how the Operational Culture environment will behave and respond; both baseline conditions and targeted outcomes will inevitably be revised during this process.

Figure 4-2 below demonstrates how such a comparison might occur against an operational “Design” with multiple LOOs, some of which are led by other US agencies or coalition/Host Nation (HN) partners. It represents an elaboration of the same Evaluative Inquiry (What? So What? Now What?), with emphasis on comparing baselines with benchmarks and outcomes. This Evaluative Inquiry helps planners think about comparison between actual results and hoped-for outcomes as new data and understandings of the environment emerge throughout the change process. In the figure 4-2, the baseline represents the conditions assumed prior to engaging in the intervention. Prior to intervention, an “ideal” is set – the goals or vision that represent the endpoint of the intervention. To achieve this “ideal,” benchmarks are set to gauge progress as the intervention moves through space and time. The Evaluative Inquiry asks evaluators to continuously reassess their initial baseline and their version of the “ideal” as the intervention progresses. This allows planners to reconcile what they had thought was going to happen with what actually emerged as the result of the intervention.

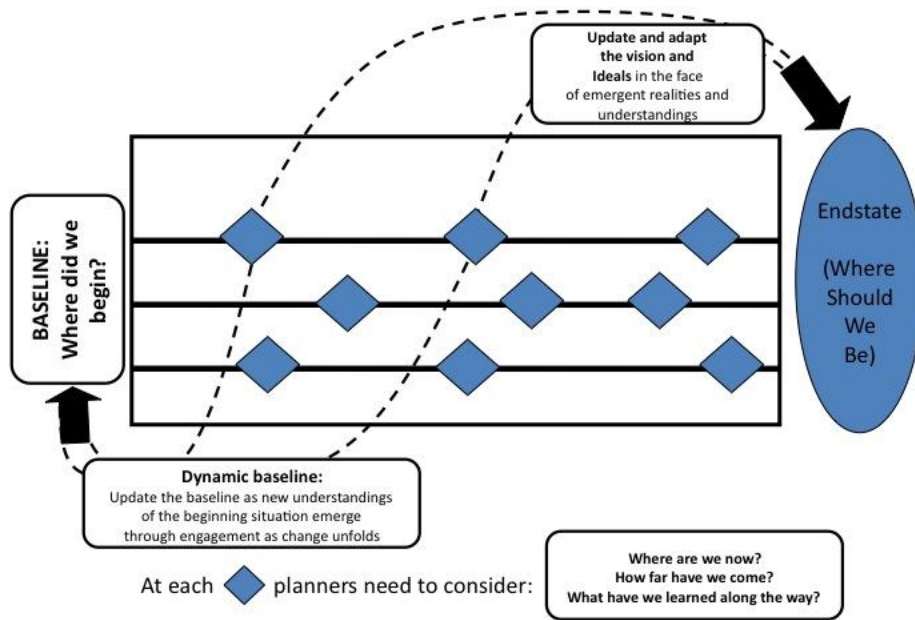


Figure 4-2. Comparative Evaluative Inquiry Applied to Operational “Design”

Developmental Evaluation as a practice is attuned to both linear and non-linear relationships, both intended and unintended interactions, and both hypothesized and unpredicted outcomes – all of which exist in a mission and operation. Over time in an extended operation, social systems and social institutions will undoubtedly change. Considering these changes is central to Developmental Evaluations. Monitoring for changes in such systems has planners look for data



that illuminates relationships to help provide feedback about the operational context. It is necessary for a planner to capture *and transmit* this feedback, because this knowledge broadens and deepens understanding of the operational environment in ways that can help improve and inform future engagements in the Area of Operation (AO). Awareness of how systems are changing over the course of an operation keeps planners adaptive and responsive to the context to better support the overall success of the operation.

#### 4.2.3 Abstract Conceptualization - Aligning Practices

An additional construct that emerged over the course of the study is that of Aligning Practices. Aligning Practices first became visible to the Study Team as planners were observed interacting with civilian actors in the (exercise) planning environments, in workshop environments, and in small group working sessions. The differences in their respective thinking were so dramatic that they came into view very quickly in every instance. Given their dramatically different organizational values and the varying approaches resulting from those values, it is not difficult to imagine how much work would be required to create a plan with Operational Culture fully integrated. Upon reflecting on the field experience, the Study Team was able to see that Aligning as a practice was just as relevant as the OPT itself. We were able to recognize that much of the frustration and lack of coordinated effort the Study Team witnessed had to do with being unable to align for productive interaction.

Aligning does not imply consensus, but it does imply a willingness to share knowledge across time and space and to break down barriers to that which would limit this sharing. Aligning is a way of accounting for the diversity among actors – in their vision, priorities, and commitments – through sharing these organizational priorities and having them acknowledged, respected and engaged. In aligning, says Mark Addleson, stakeholders come to own the problem together and through the work of making meaning about the situation, they are able to make commitments to each other and take action.

*“What they see as problems and solutions, hence the actions they take, depend on how they make meaning, together. The problems and solutions, which both come out (emerge) in the course of their negotiations, have as much to do with their interest, their attitudes to what is going on, their relationships with one another, as with data, or “objective facts.” When they are organizing, questions like whose interest will be served, who has the power either to prevent or permit them doing what they want to do and whether and how those people are likely to use their power are at least as important to the participants in framing their problems as deadlines and financial considerations.”<sup>60</sup>*

While complex operational contexts clearly present all sorts of wicked problems for a multitude of actors, the actual action of the actors working in a common problem-solution space is the

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<sup>60</sup> Addleson, M. (2010). *“The work of Organizing with Giant Hairballs and Wicked Problems,”* In Management is Dead: Taking Charge at Work, Forthcoming, Unpublished draft, supplied directly by the author

picture of *social complexity*. Jeff Conklin defines social complexity as being “a function of the number and diversity of players who are involved in a project. The more parties involved in collaboration, the more socially complex it is. The more different those parties are, the more socially complex.”<sup>61</sup> Social complexity might be represented by an image like Figure 4-3 below, though in the case of planning for a complex contingency, with many more actors.

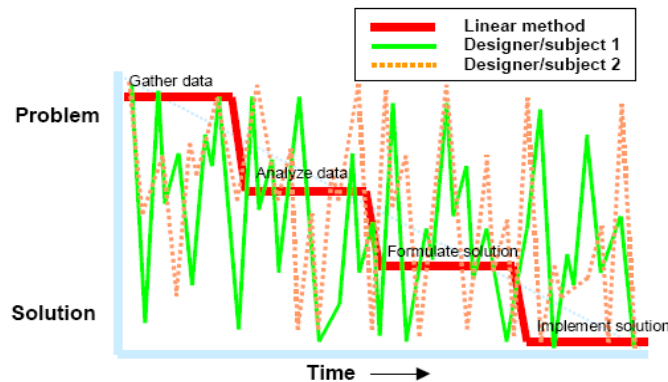


Figure 4-3. Imaging Social Complexity

In the figure above, two designers working the same wicked problem can be seen to be at different places in their thinking and ascribe different meanings at any particular time. At any moment, they are found at different places with regard to the problem and have differing views about what to do next. Overlaying the technocratic “waterfall” approach to analysis and problem solving, we have an image of how the work actually proceeds in a complex environment. As described earlier, a planner/designer iteratively moves through understanding a problem and devising a solution. When Donald Schön wrote about the reflective practitioner, he was primarily describing how an individual works with a wicked problem. However, complex operational contexts never involve single parties acting alone. These contexts, as described earlier, most typically involve a multitude of actors from different cultures, with different languages, responding to differing organizational missions, priorities, assumptions and beliefs. Reflective Practice alone does not provide an adequate theory of action for the highly social nature of work in complex settings.

We now arrive at the central purpose of *Aligning*: How do people either planning for, or operating in these complex environments, deal effectively with both the wicked types of problems they face *and* the social complexity they encounter? If we consider the action of two individuals working with a problem (as in the figure above) and multiply that action several times over, we can imagine how work may occur at cross purposes leading to, at best frustration

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<sup>61</sup> Conklin, J. (2005). “*Wicked Problems and Social Complexity*,” In Conklin, J. (ed.), Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems, Wiley: Sussex

and at worst outright detriment, to the overall group effort. Several authors have described this occurrence within organizations as “fragmentation”.

Fragmentation is the outcome of the varied and unaligned perspectives, understandings, and intentions of the stakeholders. Fragmentation is the antithesis of cooperation and exists deep within the “culture and practices of project work”<sup>62</sup>. Diane Rawlings describes collaboration needed for effective learning and aligning as “require[ing] reciprocity, a give-and-take among team members and across the organization that transcends position, role or function”.<sup>63</sup> In order to minimize the effects of fragmentation for groups working in complex social environments with wicked problems, actors need make time for Aligning Practices, which fundamentally include more conversations, more shared stories and more meetings. Though we love to complain about all the meetings that are a part of organizational life, Jeff Conklin and William Weil suggest a need to adjust our notions of “worthy versus wasteful enterprise as we navigate problems: Given the complex nature of today’s planning problems, commitment to developing a high level of skills in the area of communication is an emerging priority.”<sup>64</sup>

Networking among actors in an operational environment is one way that groups have sought to communicate more effectively, with hopes that such increased communication will eventually lead to cooperation and even collaboration.<sup>65</sup> Organizational experts suggest that in order for the higher-level activities in project work to occur, especially the level of collaboration that can lead to innovation, a different type of conversation must occur. They posit that organizations must understand the highly social nature of this type of work and create “enabling contexts” for supporting and sustaining conversations that unleash tacit knowledge (that which is tied to the senses, intuition, experience, etc.) in groups.<sup>66</sup> Theory that conceptualizes exactly how it is that people operating in such environments make sense of their context and are able to negotiate collective action, is not well developed, though many authors write to aligning-like practices suggesting its importance in effective collaborative work.

This work of engaging in sustained conversations, whether called Aligning,<sup>67</sup> coherence,<sup>68</sup> sense-making,<sup>69</sup> or engagement,<sup>70</sup> among others, fundamentally refers to the context-specific, socially

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<sup>62</sup> Conklin, J. (2005). “*Wicked Problems and Social Complexity*,” In Conklin, J. (ed.), Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems, Wiley: Sussex

<sup>63</sup> Rawlings, D. (2000). “*Collaborative Leadership Teams: Oxymoron or New Paradigm?*”, Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 54(1), 36-48

<sup>64</sup> Conklin, J. and Weil, W. (1998). “*Wicked Problems: Naming the Pain in Organizations*”

<sup>65</sup> Nan, S. A. (1999). “*Effective networking for conflict transformation*,” Working paper (draft), International Alert

<sup>66</sup> Krogh, G. V., Ichijo, K., et al. (2000). “*Enabling knowledge creation: How to unlock the mystery of tacit knowledge and release the power of innovation*,” New York: Oxford University Press

<sup>67</sup> Addleson, M., Brumburgh, S., et al. (2004). “*Fragmentation and aligning: Why the way we work fails us*.” Draft manuscript

<sup>68</sup> Conklin, J. (2005). “*Wicked Problems and Social Complexity*.” In Conklin, J. (ed.), Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems, Wiley: Sussex

<sup>69</sup> Weick, K. E. (1995). “*Sensemaking in Organizations*,” Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

<sup>70</sup> Houghton, L. and Ledington, P. (2004). “*The engagement approach to real-world problem solving-Toward a coherent soft-system-base theoretical platform for real-world problem solving*,” Systemic Practice and Action Research, 17(5), 497-510

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constructed and negotiated act of structuring the unknown. Jonathan Rosenhead says that these are the problems of the “swamp” – they are messy and require a means for:

- How to agree what subset of all the inter-acting factors constitutes, at least for the time being, the problem;
- How to negotiate a way forward in situations beset with uncertainties; and
- How to find a policy that takes account of both technical feasibility and the existence of diverse interest groups.<sup>71</sup>

OPTs preparing for operations where such interactions are a requirement will need new tools and new skills to navigate these social spaces effectively.

Another aspect of Aligning that we considered is that of aligning with the operational environment itself. The Study Team found that discussions of Operational Culture in the exercises observed seemed focused on “culture as problem.” It is as if culture is an obstacle in the environment, like a mountain or a lake. Reframing culture in asset-based terms aligns planners’ thinking to view cultural aspects as resources inherent in the environment that can be leveraged for mission success. The approach opens up additional options that may naturally reinforce desirable outcomes and mitigate or eliminate unwanted second- and third-order effects.

The focus of traditional assessment and planning approaches on problems in the form of “needs” or “gaps” can lead to profoundly debilitating results. John Kretzman and John McKnight, the founders of the term “Asset-Based Community Development,” suggest that this unintended consequence of the vast majority of development and stabilization efforts actually goes much further than most will imagine. The consequences of a Deficit-Based approach to planning are multi-fold. First, a focus on deficits virtually guarantees unsustainable solutions because a needs- or gap-emphasizing approach naturally steers planners to external provision to fill an identified gap, and external inputs cannot and will not last forever. Secondly, “targeting resources based on the needs map directs funding not to residents but to service providers.”<sup>72</sup> External service providers actually take away existing opportunities from locals, and their long-term provision of services can permanently undermine local economies and community structures. In contrast an Asset-Based approach is necessarily *internally focused* because it emphasizes what individuals, communities and nations have in hand to build on and to create solutions with.

An Asset-Based approach emphasizes what resources are already present in a society and communities. Assets obviously include physical things like roads, buildings, rivers and land, but they also include skills and knowledge, social and cultural mores and proclivities, relationships, organizations and institutions, and even hopes and dreams – an important indicator of how individuals and communities envisage a better future for themselves. Individual, community and institutional relationships are at the heart of an Asset-Based approach to crafting solutions to

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<sup>71</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1992). “*Into the Swamp: The analysis of social issues,*” Journal of the Operational Research Society, 43(4), 293-305

<sup>72</sup> Kretzmann, J. P. and McKnight, J. L. (1993). “*Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community’s Assets,*” Chicago, IL: ACTA Publications

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complex development and security challenges. While particular assets are important, the relationships that given assets have to others is what ultimately gives them value. That individuals, communities and institutions are assets outside of their respective apparent domains as well as within them reinforces this fact. For example, many non-economic institutions such as schools, hospitals, and community organizations can play substantial enabling roles in economic growth and development. Economic development is not exclusively the role of explicitly economic or fiscal institutions like chambers of commerce, federal banks, and fiscal and commerce-oriented government ministries.

Furthermore, because an Asset-Based approach is inward-focused, it necessitates high levels of local participation both to discover and catalog assets and to formulate COAs because only the locals themselves can really know what assets they possess, even if they should need an outsider's help to discover and articulate what they are. As a result, an Asset-Based approach has the added benefit of reinforcing the democratic principles that undergird US foreign policy by empowering individuals and communities to control their own daily lives and envisage the shape of their own future.

### **4.3 Integrating Framework for Operational Culture**

In conducting the field research it became clear that for any socio-cultural support tool to be effective, it would need to fit easily within existing planning logic; that is, it must support planners by considering their requirement for cultural information from the perspective of on-going planning activities and mission-essential tasks. Further, because culture is less an object to be apprehended than a conversation to be engaged, the planning process – beginning with “*Problem Framing*” – sets the context for this conversation that must extend through all steps of the MCPP and across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. To this end, the Study Team directs its effort at the “*Problem Framing*” step of the MCPP, where the initial result is the “*Commander's Intent and Guidance*,” which will lead, ultimately, to his COA Guidance. It is in the initial statement of operational concept that the Commander sets the tone for the remainder of the planning effort with regard to what is important to him and how he envisions the operations going forth.

The application of social science and management literature helps to highlight some well-studied phenomena of social organizational work and provides some principles worth applying within an Integrating Framework support application. In the development activities, the Study Team attempts to incorporate elements that specifically address the “*Design Dialogue*,” the organic and iterative nature of team learning through discursive practices, and sense-making practices that support building shared understanding and narratives about planning problems.

The Study Team envisioned the utility of articulating and capturing the above Designing Practices, Learning Practices and Aligning Practices in a MSTP-like pamphlet intended to support planning staffs, specifically the Green Cell, in their efforts to develop plans that thoroughly consider all non-combatant actors in the operational context (e.g. local population, other US Government (USG) agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Organizations, etc.). As an Integrating Framework, the approaches and techniques put forth are

intended to foster situational understanding, creative synthesis, and sustained learning across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. Specifically, this guide provides suggestions for:

- Facilitating and sustaining creativity and learning within the OPT (*Design*);
- Systematic and holistic consideration of the operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural context of the operation (“*Understanding the Environment*”); and
- Narrative sense-making for planning problems where the operational context is characterized as highly dynamic and uncertain (“*Understanding the Problem*”).

To achieve this goal, the Study Team borrows from, adapts, and applies practitioner approaches to the conduct of Reflective Practice and dialogue conversations. These practices set the stage for effective learning through “*Understanding the Environment*” and “*Understanding the Problem*,” both in the “*Problem Framing*” Step of MCPP and beyond. Likewise, the Study Team builds upon the simple Inquiry Approach for Developmental Evaluation (What?, So What?, Now What?) and add practitioner level thinking from the development, conflict and ecology fields to support planners’ thinking with regard to the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture, especially for “*Understanding the Environment*.” Then, linking situation awareness and recognition with narrative sense-making, the Study Team accessed David Snowden and Mary Boone’s description of the Cynefin framework, which offers some very practical guidance for navigating the multiple levels and dynamics of complex operational environments.<sup>73</sup> Originally described by Cynthia Kurtz and David Snowden, Cynefin offers distinguishing characteristics of, and practical approaches to, simple, complicated, complex and chaotic environments. Using the framework helps practitioners to consider the context within which their problem resides and have aligning conversations toward their practical resolution.<sup>74</sup> This practitioner’s tool is adapted for the Integrating Framework as a means of “*Understanding the Problem*.” The prototype planning pamphlet can be found in its entirety in Appendix A of this report.

#### 4.4 Part II: Develop a Planning Support Tool

Following on from the fieldwork and analysis, the Study Team develops the Integrating Framework concept as described above. In order to take that concept and move it toward a deployable support tool for operational planners, we create a planning vignette against which the Study Team exercises and refines the concept. To this end, the Study Team deploys a systematic approach to developing a scenario vignette and likewise identifying key planning concerns within that vignette. The Study Sponsor selected the Trans-Sahel region for the setting, and a complex Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) operation as the focus of the planning task.

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<sup>73</sup> Snowden, D. J. and Boone, M. E. (2007). “*A Leader’s Framework for Decision Making*,” Harvard Business Review, November 2007, 69-76

<sup>74</sup> Kurtz, C. F. and Snowden, D. J. (2003). “*The new dynamics of strategy: Sense-making in a complex and complicated world*,” IBM Systems Journal, Volume 42, Number 3, 462

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As an area of focus, the Trans-Sahel presents a rich context for Operational Culture study. The Trans-Sahel is an arid stretch of land across Africa, which separates the Northern Sahara region from the savannas of the South. It is composed of many diverse and vibrant ethnicities and cultures. Its ethnic diversity is not confined to one State border; similarly, the complex issues affecting the Sahel region mirror its population and also span several countries. The Sahel is of strategic importance for both its rich mineral resources and its geographic position at the intersection of North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and its colonial-derived connectivity to Europe. The Trans-Sahel countries face significant internal challenges, including ethnic conflict, terrorism, environmental issues, and health-related issues.

Setting a HA/DR in the Trans-Sahel further affords the opportunity to exercise the Integrating Framework concept in a distinctly Joint and interagency planning context. Because HA/DR operations call for Department of Defense (DOD) involvement in the supporting role, it brings with it the challenge of organizational cultures as a particularly important consideration. Further, with the US Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in the lead of all such operations, it is incumbent upon the Joint Task Force (JTF) to align its methods and approaches such that they support OFDA objectives.

Indeed, an operational scenario such as an HA/DR in the Trans-Sahel presents a significant degree of socio-cultural complexity that likely dwarfs any apparent logistical complexity. Such socially complex planning problems can be deemed “wicked.” Wicked problems, as discussed above, are those that defy definitive formulation and are different from their “tame” counterparts in the following ways shown in Figure 4-4 below.

TAME PROBLEMS	WICKED PROBLEMS
The problem statement is well defined and stable	Problems are ill-structured; emerge as an evolving set of interlocking issues and constraints
There is a definite stopping point—when the solution is reached	With no definitive solutions, problem solving ends when resources run out (money, time)
The solution can be objectively evaluated as right or wrong	Solutions are not right or wrong; assessed in social context; stakeholders judge
The problem can be identified as belonging to a class of similar problems which are all solved the same way	Every wicked problem is essentially unique and novel; embedded in dynamic social context
Solutions can be easily tried and abandoned as necessary	Learning about the problem occurs in the solution; solutions tested often spawn new problems
There exists a limited set of alternative solutions	Potential solutions are a matter of creativity; what is valid, pursued or implemented is a matter of judgment

Abstracted from Rittel and Webber (1973) and Conklin (2005)

Table 4-1. Tame Versus Wicked Problems: A Brief Comparison

Problems with multi-stakeholder contexts defy traditional analytic strategies, as the need to negotiate common terms, definitions and priorities is central to developing a strategy or operational approach. In order to explore the social complexity inherent in the Trans-Sahel operational context more fully and bring greater applicability to our example, the Study Team desired to bring together a diverse group of experts with specific knowledge of both the local/indigenous socio-cultural issues within the Trans-Sahel as well as the diverse organizational approaches and interests that would be represented within a USG response to a HA/DR operation.

To gather this information that would enrich our vignette, planning knowledge and the application of the Integrating Framework, the Study Team deploys the following steps, which are discussed below.

- Step 1: Identify and select a PSM that would facilitate a diverse set of experts in thinking through and articulating key operational cultural factors and planning considerations for the Trans-Sahel.
- Step 2: Devise a sound way to identify, vet and select the participating SMEs based on relevant domains and recruit their participation in the study.
- Step 3: Develop and refine a scenario vignette from the knowledge gained in the problem structuring effort such that we might apply the Integrating Framework and further develop it via a sample case.

#### 4.4.1 Step 1: Identify and Select a Problem Structuring Method

A distinct group of “soft Operations Research (OR)” methods has been developed with the specific intent of addressing wicked problems by supporting decision making among groups of diverse stakeholders. Coming largely from European Operational Research, this class of methods called PSM,<sup>75</sup> differ from traditional OR methods used in the US. PSMs, rather than seeking a concrete and quantified solution to an ill-defined problem, provide non-quantified methods that aid stakeholders in collaboratively generating common definitions of complex situations<sup>76</sup> and construct actionable options to address the newly formulated problem.<sup>77</sup>

PSMs as a class of “soft OR” methods are designed to offer an analytical representation of a problematic situation, allowing stakeholders to clarify their individual perceptions of it, and to converge on mutually acknowledged definitions of the problem. From there, PSMs provide stakeholders tools for generating agreeable strategies to resolve the newly defined problem.<sup>78</sup> To do this, PSMs must fulfill several criteria:

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<sup>75</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). “*Problem Structuring Methods in Action*,” European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 530-554

<sup>76</sup> Mingers, J. & Brockelsby, J. (1997). “*Multimethodology: Towards a framework for mixing methodologies*,” Omega, 25(5), 489-509

<sup>77</sup> White, L. (2006). “*Evaluating problem-structuring methods: developing an approach to show the value and effectiveness of PSMs*,” Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 842-855

<sup>78</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). “*Problem Structuring Methods in Action*,” European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 530-554



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- Enable alternative, often competing perspectives to be considered and synthesized;
- Be intellectually accessible to all stakeholders and actors, so that the interactive process is participative rather than exclusionary;
- Operate iteratively to reflect and capture perceptions, definitions, and processes as they emerge through interactive processes; and
- Permit partial solutions to specific aspects of the problem, rather than demanding a single comprehensive solution.

While the various methods that fall under the classification of PSMs meet these criteria, each unique method focuses on distinct aspects of a problem, and is therefore discrete from other methods. Further, since the methods are adaptable to a variety of problem situations, individual PSMs can be synthesized from extant methods to fit the needs of a particular intervention in a one-off design.<sup>79</sup> Several of the principal methods that comprise the PSM discipline have been discussed at length by Jonathan Rosenhead<sup>80</sup> in the seminal text for the field, and further elaborated on by Jonathan Rosenhead and John Mingers.<sup>81</sup> M. Gilljam and H. Ljogodt likewise provide detailed descriptions of the many of the standard PSMs that are widely employed.<sup>82</sup> Methods reviewed by the Study Team include: Strategic Options Development and Analysis (SODA); Soft Systems Methodology (SSM); Robustness Analysis; Strategic Choice Analysis; and General Morphological Analysis (GMA), which was selected to be deployed in this study. While GMA is discussed below and in Appendix D and the Study Team's working paper on other PSMs can be found in Appendix F.

### *General Morphological Analysis*

GMA is selected for this effort for several reasons. First, it accommodates the desire to capture knowledge about the Trans-Sahel from multiple sources. Rather than interviewing experts individually and then trying to collate the issues presented, GMA allows the Study Team to gather the experts together and document their discussions in real time. Further, as a facilitated method, GMA supports the experts developing common vocabularies and definitions of various aspects of the problem space. A second reason for the use of GMA is that a literature review revealed that one of the most effective uses for GMA is in serial workshops designed to produce scenarios and strategies. This model fits perfectly with what the Study Team is trying to accomplish in the project. Finally, several colleagues had direct engagement with Dr. Ritchey, the primary developer of the approach and its supporting software. Dr. Ritchey is a specifically skilled facilitator in this method. This previous contact generated additional interest in seeing the method applied in a USMC study that further supported our decision to pursue GMA. A full report of our GMA application is in Appendix D.

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<sup>79</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). "Problem Structuring Methods in Action," *European Journal of Operational Research*, 152, 530-554

<sup>80</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1989). "Rational Analysis for a Problematic World: Problem Structuring Methods for Complexity, Uncertainty, and Conflict," Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

<sup>81</sup> Rosenhead, J. & Mingers, M. (2001). "Rational Analysis of a Problematic World Revisited," Chichester: Wiley

<sup>82</sup> Gilljam, M. & Ljogodt, H. (2006). "Problem Structuring Methods: A Survey and a Case Study," Kjeller, Norway: FFI

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GMA is a non-quantified modeling approach specifically designed for identifying, describing, and analyzing the entire set of factors and relationships involved in wicked problems.<sup>83</sup> Originally developed in the 1940s by California Institute of Technology Professor Fritz Zwicky, researchers at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) began refining the technique and applying it to complex military, policy, and social problems beginning in the early 1990s. Through an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, GMA enables stakeholders to first explore the factors that work in concert to create a complex problem, and then collaboratively generate effective solutions that meet each of their disparate needs and interests. The full GMA process is described by Dr. Ritchey in a 2006 publication.<sup>84</sup>

The GMA process is carried out in a workshop format consisting of 6-7 SMEs and stakeholders, and occurs over a period of several days. The initial phase of a GMA involves identifying and defining the fundamental elements or parameters that comprise the problem in question. Such a product of our GMA application is shown below in Figure 4-4. This is typically done through a facilitated dialogue in which representatives of the pertinent stakeholder groups analyze the various aspects of the problem. That dialogue is then synthesized to identify and define the parameters. After being identified, each parameter is described by having the stakeholders identify its discrete values or conditions. Once the parameters are defined and described, they become variables whose meanings, ranges and instances are populated by the stakeholder-participants. This activity of GMA is commonly referred to as “generating the morphological field.”

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<sup>83</sup> Zwicky, F. (1969). *Discovery, Invention, Research- Through the Morphological Approach*, Toronto: The Macmillan Company

<sup>84</sup> Ritchey, T. (2006). “*Problem structuring using computer-aided morphological analysis*,” Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 792-801

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Security threats - armed groups	Types of violence	Operating Environment	Nature of groups in historical perspective	Actors	Grand Strategy	Present Demographic trends	Power Broker	Type of Govt.	Services: lack of...	Belief Structures	National Policy toward neighbors	Revenue Sources/economy
Al Qaeda	kidnapping/abduction	Major long term droughts	Traditional allies	USA	development	unfavorable age distribution	National Government	Functional Government	to services in urban environment	family/kinship	unrestricted transits	aid
Organized Crime	direct fire conflict	floods	traditional enemies	World Bank	security	high levels of poverty	Regional Government	Decentralized Democracy (federal)	energy	Fundamentalism	restricted transit of legal goods	remittances
Traffickers	Frequency/low level violence	floods	traditional neutrals	UN	islam	low literacy	Communal/Local government	Military Junta	water	Western Culture	closed borders	corruption
Rebels/Insurgents	Random Violence	Heat/Temperature	support govt	Al Qaeda	political alliances and diplomacy	insufficient/ sporadic income	local business	Nominal democracy led by military leader	unfulfilled expectations	religious brotherhoods		taxes
inter-ethnic militias	Targeted bombing	progressive environmental degradation	anti govt	African Union	economic trade	High unemployment	Traditional leaders	Failed State	roads	Age		goods
foreign militaries	UXO/IED	Distance/size		West African States	control	large informal economy	military leaders		communications infrastructure	Gender		revenue for lootable goods
riots	Spontaneous ethnic conflict	Terrain		OIC	destabilizatin	low degeree of family cohesion	Police		economic infrastructure	Race		formal jobs
Disaffected youth	Gender violence and trafficking	lack of physical infrastructure		Arab League	Money/profit	very strong migraton	religious leaders		Healthcare	Ethnicity		barter
	trafficking	Urban Terrain		CENSAD		Rapid/chaotic urbanization	Religious leaders			education		informal economy
	intimidation and threats	Borders		EU			Charismatic Individuals			Pastoral vs urban vs agricultural livelihood		
		Diseases		French			Political Parties			social stratification		
				Muslim States						norms and taboos		
				Internat corporations						PLACE		
										Ownership/wealth		
										sexuality		
										punishment		
										ritual		

Figure 4-4. Example of a Problem Space Deconstructed by Stakeholders into Constituent Parameters in the GMA Process

The fully populated morphological field – the representation of the entire problem space, where each dimension of the problem is a variable with a finite number of possible values – is then systematically explored for the relationships between parameter values. The total number of potential solution sets is reduced from the hundreds of thousands of possible configurations to a smaller set of plausible configurations through a process called Cross-Consistency Analysis (CCA). This process eliminates combinations of variables that are logically or empirically inconsistent by comparing each value of each variable against each value of all the other variables. This allows combinations of variable states that are incompatible to be removed from

the potential solution space. This CCA can reduce the number of potential combinations by 90 – 99%, leaving a manageable number of solutions to work with.<sup>85</sup>

GMA relies heavily on software to display and analyze data generated throughout the workshop process. Researchers at FOI have developed a special software suite to expedite generation of the morphological field and the subsequent CCAs. After the total set of internally consistent variable configurations has been identified, stakeholders analyze the multitude of relationships defined, in order to identify which configurations optimally satisfy each of their individual needs and best serve their collective interests. For example, the figure below shows the selection of a Famine in Niger, which upon selection (red) immediately demonstrates the parameters that are consistent with that selection (blue). Stakeholders can select single or multiple parameters throughout the morphological field, and review their related parameters. In this way stakeholders can quickly work through multiple configurations and compare their outcome, which aids them in designing an optimal response. Below is an actual screenshot from the Trans-Sahel GMA workshop.

Scen	Engagement	Who is implementing	SCOPE	Time frame	US Govt interaction with stakeholders	Attitude to host country legal relationships and Frameworks	How relevant is the need for cultural awareness for objectives
Famine in Niger HA/DR (Stability)	Kinetic Mil	WH (NSC)	Heavy: [MTW or CPC]	10+	National Govt of "host"	Work within existing framework	Highly relevant
Demine (SFA) (Security&Econ su)	NEO	State	Medium: [TSCTP]	5-10 years	Local Government	Alter framework	Moderately relevant
Support ECOWAS op. SFA (Stability)	HA/DR	USAID	Light	2-5 years	NGO, PVO, IGO	Work outside framework	Of little relevance
	PK/PE	DOD		1 year	World Bank/IMF		
	SFA	Country team		Months	Business		
	Civ institution building			Days/Weeks	Civil Society		
	SSR				None		
	DDR						
	Pol/Diplomatic						
	PD/PA/O						

Figure 4-5. GMA Workshop Screenshot

Once all the logically consistent variable configurations are identified, stakeholders are able to explore the solution space and the relationships and interconnections of multiple parameters simultaneously.

The GMA process enables multiple stakeholders with divergent interests and needs to collectively analyze a complex problem and synthesize mutually beneficial solutions. By analyzing the entire set of parameters and relationships that define a problem in unison, policy and decision makers are able to consider a wider range of solution options than is typically

<sup>85</sup> Ritchey, T. (2006). "Problem structuring using computer-aided morphological analysis," *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 792-801

available by isolating and addressing individual components of a problem. The CCA phase of GMA ensures that the potential solutions available to decision makers are consistent, plausible, and able to address the roots of the problem at hand. The collaborative nature of the GMA process ensures that the solutions sets also represent the needs and interests of the vested stakeholders by giving each of them an equal voice in defining the problem and ownership over the solutions that are generated.

#### **4.4.2 Step 2: Identify, Vet and Select SMEs to Participate in the GMA Problem Structuring Workshop**

The use of SMEs in military analysis pertaining to human social, cultural and behavioral issues is a standard practice within the analysis community, as experts who possess specific knowledge on their area of expertise are uniquely positioned to distill salient information more efficiently than external researchers.<sup>86</sup> While the utility of SME knowledge is widely acknowledged, and the application of SMEs in analysis is widely practiced, there is a surprising paucity of theory regarding the criteria for identifying and vetting expertise. What is available is located in a variety of literatures including nursing and applied health care, management sciences, legal studies, and political science. In these fields, theory generally centers on several core elements: types of expertise; the criteria that determine expertise; the biases that influence experts and skew data; and processes for selecting experts. Not unexpectedly, the lines that separate these elements are blurred, and each element blends into the others.

Joan Grant and Linda Davis discuss the selection of experts, and cite several studies that highlight various criteria.<sup>87</sup> According to them, a history of publication in refereed journals is an excellent criterion for selecting academic SMEs. A history of applied experience with a topical area may serve to indicate the expertise of practitioners. Likewise, conceptual and framework development experience can likewise signal expertise. Alvin Goldman contributes peer nomination and professional certification as additional criteria of expertise.<sup>88</sup>

Following the guidelines provided by Delbec et al.<sup>89</sup>, Okoli and Pawlowski<sup>90</sup>, a strategy for identifying and vetting SMEs for use in a Delphi experiment. The process they report consists of five steps that the Study Team adapts for use in our GMA workshops:

- 1) *Prepare a Knowledge Resource Nomination Worksheet (KRNW)*. The purpose of this worksheet is to identify the types of expert knowledge required for a particular problem

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<sup>86</sup> Meig, H. A. (2001). *The Social Psychology of Expertise: Case Studies in Research, Professional Domains, and Expert Roles*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

<sup>87</sup> Grant, J. & Davis, L. (1997). "Selection and Use of Content Experts for Instrument Development," *Research in Nursing and Health*, 20, 269-274

<sup>88</sup> Goldman, Alvin I. (2001). "Experts: Which Ones Should You Trust?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 63:1, 85-110

<sup>89</sup> Delbecq, A., Van de Ven, A. & Gustafson, D. H. (1975). *Group Techniques for Program Planning: A Guide to Nominal Group and Delphi Processes*, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company

<sup>90</sup> Okoli, C. & Pawlowski, S. D. (2004). "The Delphi method as a research tool: an example, design considerations and applications," *Information and Management*, 42, 15-29

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or effort. This requires first dissecting the problem space into its constituent elements, identifying knowledge gaps, and then identifying skill sets and disciplines from which knowledge can be drawn to fill those gaps.

- 2) *Populate the KRNW with candidate SMEs.* Based on the dissection of the problem space and the topical categories of the KRNW, relevant organizations, academics, and skilled individuals must be identified who might be able to fill knowledge gaps.
- 3) *Nominate additional experts.* Once the initial set of candidates has been identified, contact them and seek referrals/nominations of additional experts for a particular topic. Iterate this process until multiple candidates have been nominated for each topical area. Ideally, this iteration process will continue until nominations become redundant.
- 4) *Rank and select SMEs.* Once a comprehensive set of candidates has been identified for each topical area, each candidate must be ranked against their cohort to determine who possesses the most experience and expertise on the topic in question.
- 5) *Invite SMEs.* Candidates with the highest ranking for each area should be recruited. Invite experts in order of their ranking, beginning with the most qualified.

Preliminary research on the Trans-Sahel region guides our targeting of experts for the scenario workshop. In order to systematically dissect the operational environment to identify topical areas and knowledge gaps for the KRNW, the Study Team: searches open-source media including current and recent English language media coverage; conducts secondary source review of web-based and printed country reports from USG agencies, International Organizations, and NGOs; performs academic literature review and open-source publically available literature/document review; and conducts unstructured interviews with knowledgeable regional experts. After collating and analyzing data from these sources, the Study Team identifies multiple topical areas within the Trans-Sahel that require expert knowledge for vignette design. These topical areas include:

- Cultures, ethnicity, human and physical geography;
- Political, economic and social institutions;
- Security including organized crime, trafficking and terrorist activity, [e.g. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)];
- Poverty, health and development; and
- Agriculture, environment, and livelihoods.

After identifying topical areas of SME knowledge requirements, the Study Team prepares a KRNW in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and populated it with a preliminary set of SME candidates. The candidates are identified through web-based searches of NGOs, research organizations, universities, and private firms engaged in activities that fall under the topical categories presented above. Likewise, the biographical sketches of participants at conferences, workshops, and working groups focused on the three target countries are reviewed to identify appropriate candidates. Additionally, desk officers from USAID and Department of State (DOS) as well as knowledgeable academics are contacted and asked to nominate candidate SMEs.

After ranking the initial set of candidates, the Study Team contacted candidates via email and telephone to invite them to participate in the GMA workshop. Many of the invited candidates are

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unable to attend but offer nominations for other qualified experts. These additional nominations are considered by the Study Team, and where appropriate, invited to participate. In this way the KRNW constantly expanded throughout the invitation process. The invitation process is complete once the requisite number of qualified SMEs accepts the invitation to participate in the GMA workshop.

Okoli and Pawlowski consider steps 4 and 5 of the selection and recruitment process independent, and suggest that candidates should be invited only after a comprehensive set of candidates has been identified and ranked<sup>91</sup>. The Study Team finds, however, that these processes are not entirely discrete in practice. The networks of professionals and academics working on the topical areas identified on the KRNW are large and span multiple geographic areas. As such it is difficult to identify all relevant experts in any given field, and more difficult still to rank them against each other based only on curriculum vitae, nomination, and current work assignments. With sufficient time and resources, an organization planning to employ SMEs could develop a fairly comprehensive list of candidates prior to the invitation phase. However, when time and resources constrain the effort, organizations will often have to iterate between nominating, ranking, and inviting candidates.

#### **4.4.3 Step 3: Develop and Refine a Scenario Vignette**

Using the expert-generated outputs from the GMA workshops, the Study Team, in consultation with the Study Sponsor, develops the vignette centered in the Trans-Sahel country of Mauritania. The vignette design is then presented as a discussion starter to two highly experienced DR planners, one representing the USMC and the other from USAID's OFDA. These extended interviews provide the Study Team with invaluable insight into the planning perspectives of the two organizations and provided many illustrative stories to support our application.

While the full vignette with background material is in Appendix B, a summary is provided below.

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<sup>91</sup> Okoli, C. & Pawlowski, S. D. (2004). "The Delphi method as a research tool: an example, design considerations and applications," Information and Management, 42, 15-29

## 4.5 Vignette Summary

### *Context*

- Several cycles of below-average rainfall results in food insecurity for 2.2 million people.
- World Food Programme (WFP), France, and European Union (EU) distribute food aid.
- Flooding in Southeast Asia increases international rice prices, making import of food more costly for Mauritania.
- Decreasing demand for iron results in high unemployment in urban and industrial centers.
- An al Qaeda affiliate increases kidnappings and executions of aid workers.
- Widespread discontent among large unemployed urban population results in significant rioting in the capital city of Nouakchott.
- Flooding washes out major transportation corridors, exacerbating food insecurity and disease.
- A major Mauritanian political opponent calls for a mass demonstration in the streets of the main cities. Several people die when demonstrators calling for the President to step down clash with security forces in Nouakchott.
- The Mauritanian government requests support from the United Nations (UN) and key international partners to maintain security and stability.
- The US and France agree to sign a security cooperation agreement with Mauritania in order to improve the training of Mauritanian security forces. The Mauritanian DOD requests the US to conduct Security Force Assistance (SFA) training in the Mauritanian army barracks outside the northern port city of Nouadhibou near the border with Western Sahara. The French government agrees to conduct similar SFA training in Nouakchott.

### *Precipitating Event*

- Widespread flooding occurring on the heels of sustained drought brings already severe food shortages to a critical level. Some 68% of the population is deemed at high risk of malnourishment and cholera. Mass internal migration has placed additional stresses on urban centers and limited critical infrastructure.

### *USG Involvement*

- Transport and disburse food aid;
- Provide engineering support to restore transportation networks;
- Provide security to protect food aid convoys and distribution centers;
- Support HN military in restoring and maintaining order in urban centers;
- Conduct humanitarian military medical missions to combat diseases prevalent in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps; and
- Be prepared to engage with Mauritanian security forces to provide follow-on training and support to build partner capacity.



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In Chapter 5, Task 4, the Study Team experiments with the Integrating Framework by applying it against the Mauritanian vignette. While using the approach for integrating Operational Culture into the MCPP, particularly for “*Understanding the Environment*” within the “*Problem Framing*” Step, the Study Team is able to capture this as new experience in the learning cycle. By engaging in the actual experience of applying the Integrating Framework and in reflecting on its ease of use and the quality of the learning it produces, the Study Team is able to refine and update the work towards improved utility within OPTs.

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## 5 Task 4: Apply and Evaluate the Integrating Framework

### 5.1 Introduction

The objective of Task 4 is to apply and evaluate the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture against the Mauritanian vignette developed in Task 3. Referred to as Active Experimentation (AE) within the study narrative, the Study Team exercises the method developed for “*Understanding the Environment*” with regard to Operational Culture and actively observes and records the Study Team experiences. The Study Team captures these Concrete Experiences (CEs) with regard to the strengths and difficulties, and begins reflection towards the next steps in the Integrating Framework refinement process. In this way, a new learning cycle of action-research is initiated, laying the groundwork for follow-on development.

The Integrating Framework for Operational Culture takes the form of a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP)-like pamphlet with sections aimed at supporting the major elements of the “Problem Framing” step of MCPP.

The Integrating Framework develops three elements with a mix of methods. Grounded in social theory and fundamental principles of organizational learning, these elements include:

- **Techniques** for facilitating and sustaining **creativity** and **learning** with the “*Design Dialogue*;”
- A **method** for enabling **systematic consideration** of the operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural context of the operation while “*Understanding the Environment*,” and
- An **approach** for **systemic sensemaking** for “*Understanding the Problem*” where the operational context ranges from familiar and well-understood situations to conditions that is highly dynamic and uncertain.

To fully understand the discussion that follows, readers should refer to Appendix A in which the full Integrating Framework is articulated, with particular attention to the Focusing Inquiry within the section on “*Understanding the Environment*.” It is this element of the Integrating Framework that is applied in the examples below. Appendix B contains the Mauritanian Vignette that provides the operational context for the application, and Appendix C contains the working documents capturing the thinking and learning generated by working through each of the four steps of the Focusing Inquiry for the various Lines of Operation (LOOs) delineated within the vignette.

### 5.2 Applying the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture

Because the full Integrating Framework (“*Design*,” “*Design Dialogue*,” “*Understanding the Environment*,” “*Understanding the Problem*”) was unable to be tested in an OPT/schoolhouse setting, the Study Team exercised the Focusing Inquiry in which the Five Dimensions of

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Operational Culture are used for “*Understanding the Environment*” in the “*Problem Framing*” step of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPPE).

In applying the Focusing Inquiry for “*Understanding the Environment*” for Operational Culture, the Study Team finds the approach is useful both as an organizational process tool and at driving analysis from initial assessment towards preparation for meaningful Courses of Action (COAs). The Focusing Inquiry method is systematic in helping to develop thinking about the environment, while not being overly rigid to the point of decontextualizing cultural elements. The primary weakness of the process in its current form is in the translation from conceptual to operational. This is primarily because the development of the process remains at the conceptual level and has not yet advanced to the creation of operational level working tools. Still, the Study Team finds that the Focusing Inquiry helps to highlight many important elements of the environment that might not have been considered, and moves the Study Team to think about more nuanced, but none-the-less operationally significant, relationships between the mission tasks and the Operational Culture environment.

The experimental application of the “*Understanding the Environment*” planning process flowed from six LOOs given in the Mauritania vignette as follows:

- Transport and disburse food aid;
- Provide engineering support to restore transportation networks;
- Provide security for the protect food aid convoys and distribution centers;
- Support Host Nation (HN) military in restoring and maintaining order in urban centers;
- Conduct humanitarian military medical missions to combat diseases prevalent in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps; and
- Be prepared to engage with Mauritanian security forces to provide follow-on training and support to build partner capacity.

Though the Focusing Inquiry envisions planners addressing the inquiry across three interrelated levels of analysis (Individual, Community, and Institutional), for initial evaluation purposes the Study Team limits the exercise of the six LOOs to a single level of analysis each, as follows:

- Transport Food Aid: Institutional level;
- Restore Transportation Networks: Community level;
- Security for Food Distribution: Institutional level;
- Urban Security: Individual level;
- Combat Disease: Institutional level; and
- Security Force Training and Support: Community level.

The Study Team sees the Focusing Inquiry for “*Understanding the Environment*” is useful at identifying important factors that were not otherwise self-evident and their relationship to the LOO. The method appears to lend itself naturally to some form of operational process in general,

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but the absence of a specific operational process stymies the Study Teams ability to pursue the issues with sufficient depth. Most notably the Study Team realizes there are a lack the tools to map relationships and to explore dynamics. Part of this limitation is due to a lack of expertise on Mauritania on the part of the Study Team [an experience that will likely mirror that of an Operational Planning Team (OPT)], as well as insufficient time and resources to reach out to experts as likely would be possible if utilized in real operations. Additionally, it was at times difficult to clearly distinguish between the three levels of analysis. Elements in the environment often appeared to occupy multiple levels simultaneously. In practice, it may be that elements appearing at multiple levels are not problematic. As this initial concept is further iterated through review and interaction with Marine planners as intended, the Study Team's ability to assess how the exploration of a single LOO through all three levels of analysis might work will be increased.

The Study Team appreciates the highly participatory nature of the Focusing Inquiry and believes it is effective in suspending development of COAs until the environmental elements are sufficiently explored. Built into the method is a full look around the operational environment, including a wide range of actors. Aimed at moving OPTs towards Aligning Practices as they work across the planning continuum, the process demands a highly participatory activity both to reach an understanding that reflects reality and to "discover" important elements. Thinking through each aspect of the Inquiry generates more questions than answers, and this is by design. If applied correctly, the Focusing Inquiry method creates the foundations for a sustainable learning stance among its users, which is necessary for creative and adaptive planning across the continuum (planning, execution, and assessment). Owing to the highly conceptual nature of the current Focusing Inquiry, it does not yet assist planners with "how" they employ participatory methodologies to achieve sufficient and meaningful analytical ends. Absent the application of the full Integrating Framework for Operational Culture, including the techniques described for dialogue and skillful discussion and the approach for "*Understanding the Environment*," an OPT solely using the Focusing Inquiry may have difficulty with integrated planning efforts.

The application also reveals that there is an important relationship between tactical level constraints and operational level possibilities that the Focusing Inquiry does not seem to allow for in its current form. This challenge is most apparent when exploring LOOs at the individual level. The Study Team naturally gravitates to the tactical level and then finds it difficult to "pull back" to the operational level. The Study Team struggles with this the most when applying the Focusing Inquiry to the Security Force Assistance (SFA) training LOO. It is hard for the Study Team to see how the steps of MCPP can be exercised for these activities – the Study Team asks, "*How, at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level, is SFA planned? What do the "COA Development," "COA Wargaming," and "COA Selection" steps look like?*" The Study Team is unable to observe this at the MEF level during the study period, leaving us to rely exclusively on our research into SFA type activities and anecdotes collected from current and former Marines encountered over the course of the study. Overall, the Study Team has the most difficulty with this LOO. It differs from the others LOOs, which are more directly in response to the Humanitarian Assistance (HA)/Disaster Relief (DR). Also, the SFA LOO put forth is very general. "Training" and "support" can manifest themselves in a myriad of ways. The Study Team

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quickly realizes these characteristics of the LOO make application of the Focusing Inquiry more difficult. The Study Team wants to incorporate more detail and push the analysis down into the tactical level where the distinction between planners and executors becomes less clear. The analysis quickly morphs into attempting to build an understanding how to best align training teams/units for a successful SFA operation.

In applying the Focusing Inquiry, the Study Team first dissects the operational activities of SFA in order to discover “what it is really all about.” The Study Team finds that successful SFA is, in fact, the result of two simultaneous efforts: the first being successful tactical training/support; and the second being successful relationship building. According to the *Commander’s Handbook for SFA*, “Unlike other types of military operations, personal and professional rapport between coalition and HN counterparts defines positive or negative relationships that set the stage for success or failure of SFA operations.”<sup>92</sup> From this understanding, the Study Team sees how SFA can be considered more of an “experience” rather than an activity. An experience combines the acquisition of, or exercise of, knowledge or skill of something (marksmanship) or some event (training) gained through involvement or exposure to that thing or event. SFA is experienced from two perspectives, the United States (US) Marine Corps (USMC) trainers’ perspective and the perspective of the Foreign Security Force (FSF). Though it may sound philosophical, this becomes a very important consideration when taking a comprehensive approach to SFA.

SFA activities often take place as part of broader missions and programs, such as those presented in the Mauritanian vignette. The ultimate objective of the mission or program could, frequently, differ from the goal of SFA, which seeks to build *relationships* with an FSF through advising, partnering, and/or augmenting. “A major challenge to succeeding in SFA is the requirement to deal with partners indirectly and to succeed through exercising influence rather than direct command and control.”<sup>93</sup> A unit leader needs to help advise a FSF leader to develop leadership skills, rather than teach leadership skills through asserting dominance and command of the FSF unit.

The concept of SFA as an *experience in relationship-building* feels removed from the considerations pertinent to planners at the MEF level. The Study Team does not know for certain, but the observations, interviews, and knowledge lead the Study Team to believe exploration of this dynamic occurs at a lower planning level.

The Study Team tries applying the Focusing Inquiry method from the perspective of a training team, but the activity of working through each element feels incomplete. The Study Team knows “*Understanding the Environment*” for an SFA training event requires planners to consider the context of the FSF force at all three levels of analysis. But the Study Team senses that the SFA

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<sup>92</sup> Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (2008). “*Commander’s Handbook for Security Force Assistance*,” 4

<sup>93</sup> Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (2008). “*Commander’s Handbook for Security Force Assistance*,” 2

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perspective needs a slight twist on this exercise, as well as on Operational Culture as a concept. Another layer of analysis seems to emerge during the application of the method. A military force, as an institution, can only be sustained if it reflects the cultural realities of the population it protects. The way militaries form and function is directly related to the norms, values and beliefs operating within that society. This nuance is not lost on the authors of the Army Field Manual (FM) for SFA – “US tactics, techniques, and procedures must be modified to fit the culture, educational level, and technological capability of the FSF.”<sup>94</sup> This statement reflects an understanding that there can be a tendency for individuals, when faced with uncertainty, to “mirror-image” training needs, expectations, abilities, and experiences onto members of an FSF. Mirror-imaging is the perception and processing of information through the filter of personal experience. It imposes personal perspectives and cultural background on incomplete data.

When planning for SFA, mirror-imaging can happen subconsciously - if the training teams are unable to fully understand the FSF, they may use their assumptions (explicit and tacit) as if they are factual information. These assumptions may not reflect the reality of the FSF. It is unreasonable to expect an FSF to mirror the USMC; it is easy to forget that the USMC is a reflection of American values and norms. There are aspects of USMC culture and practice that can be readily assimilated into an FSF, but these sustainable aspects will be those that reflect cultural norms and values of the HN.

The Study Team thinks it may be necessary to have planners have a similar Focusing Inquiry method, only one that encourages a reflecting back onto the USMC and themselves. The Study Team postulates: *If USMC Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) must be modified to fit the culture of the FSF, then USMC TTPs need to be better understood in relation to the broader US culture in which it exists.*

It seems necessary to delineate between the aspects of TTPs that are best practices - the most effective way of executing an activity, acquiring a skill, or structuring an organization - and effective principles. The difference between the two can best be understood through an example: a best practice in cooking says, “Heat chicken to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.” This is a best practice because the temperature is consistent across cuisines, and is determined due to safety rather than preference. An effective principle in cooking says, “Season according to taste.” This can vary according to dietary requirements, tastes, and quality of ingredients. The amount of seasoning used is less important than the purpose of making a dish palatable. Applying this metaphor within an SFA training perspective we can say, “There are some aspects that require trainers follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). For example, there are only so many ways to teach an individual how to load a weapon. But there are other aspects that require effective principles, including determining the type of weapon training best suited for the FSF unit or individual.”

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<sup>94</sup> United States Army, Headquarters (2009). “*FM 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance*”, Washington, D.C., 2-2

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During the application of the Focusing Inquiry for the SFA LOO, the Study Team wants to add within each level of analysis (Individual, Community, and Institutional) because there are two different dynamics operating at each. Taking the individual level of analysis, the Study Team believes there is a need to understand individuals of the FSF - what about the environment, economy, society, beliefs/norms shapes their relationship to their own military? For example, whether or not FSF individuals receive regular pay could indicate an attitude or perspective held by individuals toward their unit/force. But the Study Team also needs to understand how this affects the interaction between individuals of the FSF and the USMC trainers. This understanding can emerge out of another level of analysis embedded within this “Individual” layer - the reflective analysis of individual USMC trainers and what in the environment, economy, society shapes their relationship to their own military. The Study Team postulates this reflection can help prepare training teams for building positive relationships, contributing to a positive SFA experience for both the FSF and USMC.

“*Understanding the Environment*” has now taken on an additional layer of complexity, and the Study Team finds application of the Focusing Inquiry only gets us partially through the issues. The Study Team is caught between very abstract/conceptual considerations of SFA and the desire to articulate actionable information. This seems to be an area that needs deeper exploration and research as a seemingly simple task such as “provide training and support” quickly becomes complicated when viewed through the lenses of “relationship building” and “experience,” and the current Focusing Inquiry approach does not seem to capture all of the nuances.

The Study Team finds the Focusing Inquiry focuses the thoughts in a manner that is mission- or task-oriented and presents a structured approach for identifying assets, influencers, mechanisms, and opportunities embedded within the cultural context. It helps the Study Team provide a frame for “*Understanding the Problem*,” the next step in the planning process. A coherent and holistic approach to “*Understanding the Environment*” that goes beyond traditional intelligence activities, and directs attention to the socio-cultural aspects of the operational environment, sets up a much-improved consideration of options going into the remaining steps of the MCPP.

### **5.3 Evaluating the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture**

The Trans-Sahel Study and the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture produced is a utilization-focused, action research effort of Operations Research (OR). Falling into the domain of “soft OR” action research always drives at practical action to solve perceived problems in complex, socio-technical systems. Further, a utilization-focused effort, by design, would never produce a top-down management-type solution. Rather, utilization-focused work embraces human-centered design approaches<sup>95</sup> as it seeks to deliver solutions relevant to and, more

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<sup>95</sup> IDEO Human-Centered Design Toolkit (n.d.), Retrieved from: <http://www.ideo.com/work/human-centered-design-toolkit/>

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importantly, desired by, the intended users. Delivering solutions in this way involves actively engaging constituent stakeholders very early on in the project effort and creating a platform for an on-going learning, reflection and action cycle. In this section of the report, the discussion focuses on the evaluative criteria for such an effort, and report on the current state of, and next steps for the particular solution delivered: The Integrating Framework for Operational Culture.

Figure 5-1 below, which comes from a publication of IDEO<sup>96</sup>, a firm of design experts that take a human-centered approach to helping organizations in the public and private sectors, posits that utilization-focused work has three elements to its evaluation: desirability, feasibility and viability.

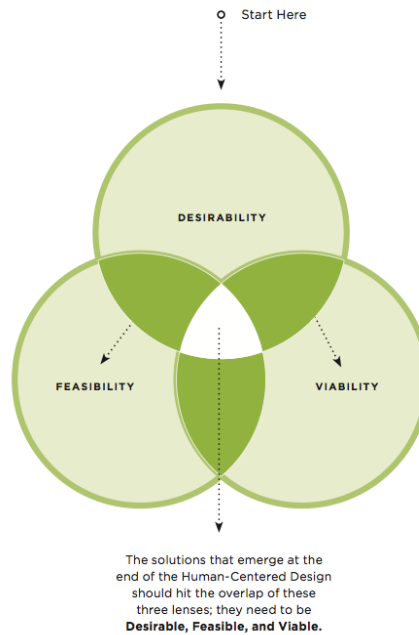


Figure 5-1. IDEO's Three Lenses of Human-Centered Design

Because action research takes a multi-stakeholder, developmental approach, much of the assessment of the effort occurs as part of the natural and on-going work of the study. Much of the learning about what is desirable, feasible and viable is captured through the learning cycle of observations, reflection and conceptualization processes and is directly reflected in the study narrative presented in earlier chapters. The elements of our utilization-focused and developmental-evaluative approach are described in turn below.

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<sup>96</sup> Human Centered Design, Second Edition (n.d.), Retrieved from:  
[http://www.ideo.com/images/uploads/hed\\_toolkit/HCD\\_INTRO\\_PDF\\_WEB\\_opt.pdf](http://www.ideo.com/images/uploads/hed_toolkit/HCD_INTRO_PDF_WEB_opt.pdf)

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*Desirability* - Through the Study Team observations and in-depth interviewing, a deep appreciation is gained for the challenges of planning for complex operational environments and the struggles that student planners have in applying Operational Culture as they make sense of their mission, analyze the tasks the mission entails, and consider options for action that will best assure their success. The Study Team observes the way they actually work, the rhythm of their process and the kind of language that is natural to their work. The Study Team follows up with interviews, and elicit personal stories of operating “in and among the people” that reflect the frustrations, difficulties and successes of the individuals the Study Team speaks with. The Study Team engages in a sense-making process about what is heard: *What seems to matter most? What are planners passionate about? What is working? Where are planners expressing a need for help?* Because the Study Team includes a former Marine planner as well as an active group of study stakeholders in the form of key figures in USMC schoolhouses and our Study Advisory Committee (SAC), the Study Team is able to extend this conversation and to test the learning as a Study Team. This occurs mostly in the form of thinking models and the Study Team presents them to the stakeholders in multiple venues such as Interim Progress Reviews (IPRs), team working sessions, and workshop environments designed by the Study Team for exactly this purpose. Developing and using thinking models in the study embodies the “build to think” approach and helps to develop deeper understanding about what an idea means. Typically the process unearths even more questions and points the Study Team to more things to learn. The study narrative is the primary output of the desirability analysis. It captures the action research approach to determining a desirable support tool approach.

*Viability* - This element is ultimately about the value proposition for the user, specifically, the OPT. Viability is an organizational issue. It answers the question, “How does the Integrating Framework deliver value?” Assessing viability in this project builds on the research done into what is desirable and needed within OPTs with regard to integrating Operational Culture and tests those concepts to explore the extent to which they actually produce the desired results. Viability assessment is the reason that early prototyping is so critical. Taking the early prototype of the Integrating Framework and testing it in a “mini” pilot helps us to learn how it works and refine it before evolving it further. The first section of this chapter in which one element of the Integrating Framework is applied, documents this initial pilot step toward assessing viability. Thinking about viability in this way also leads to a discussion of the incentive to use the framework. If the outputs of the Integrating Framework are not valued within the OPT or able to influence the remainder of the MCPP or the plan, there is really no reason to use it. Similarly, possible *dis*-incentives for use should be explored. Is there a way in which the use of the Integrating Framework puts its user at risk, or limits his contribution within the OPT? If there are aspects of the Integrating Framework that are so challenging as to claim inordinate amounts of time with little or no probability of producing actionable results, this must be considered. Viability is also linked with feasibility in that a full consideration must be given to the resources and capabilities required to use the Integrating Framework. There are inevitably times where the only resources available will be those organic to the OPT. Will this be enough to produce value? Are there usable outputs of an incomplete application of the Integrating Framework that are valuable to planners?

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*Feasibility* - This element is all about what capabilities are required for implementation of the solution. In our case, it will consider the minimum capabilities that must be internal to the OPT as well as those capabilities of partners, liaisons, special staff and other elements that can act as force multipliers to improve the implementation of the Integrating Framework. It is no good to produce an elegant way to think about all the information a planner will need with regard to Operational Culture and then for them to have no way to get that needed information. The capabilities to support the solution must be built into the “*Design*.” The challenge for the Study Team is to consider all the possible ways and different channels by which the OPT can be supported in their use of the Integrating Framework. This includes thinking about all the possible places that the Integrating Framework will be used and by whom. Though this initial effort is scoped to the MEF level, when considering missions like SFA, the Study Team finds it more applicable at the tactical level. Further, while the OPT might initially enjoy some period of deliberate planning, the plan ultimately leads to execution, where assessment and adaption will undoubtedly occur. And what of crisis action planning? How will the Integrating Framework be applied in this planning environment, and what additional or different capabilities may be required? So, feasibility will address questions of those capabilities that should be organic to the OPT and what capabilities must be developed for successful implementation of the Integrating Framework. A strong feasibility assessment will also look into potential partners, specifically those organizations that have the needed capabilities and will build in ways to reach out in order to partner for success. The discussion above helps to demonstrate why both the viability assessments and feasibility assessments are huge opportunity generators. The process of studying both will identify opportunity areas that are typically generated from reframing the insights into problems in the form of generative, forward-looking approaches. An opportunity area is never realized as a single solution: rather, an opportunity area is a “*Design Space*” where multiple solutions are possible. This also suggests why action-oriented work of this kind is never really done, and why one of the best outcomes for an effort like the Trans-Sahel Study is to establish an on-going learning platform, including relationships, connections, and research approaches, that support the exploitation of the work.

#### **5-4 Current Assessment of the Integrating Framework**

Early in the study, the Study Team recognized that there would be no single “silver bullet” solution to improving the application and integration of Operational Culture in the MCPP at the MEF level. The Study Team identified that, in fact, OPTs themselves have a strong organizational culture that is produced through the six-step process of MCPP and the often ritual use of certain products, especially the various PowerPoint briefings generated. While initially producing a sort of conundrum for the Study Team, the fact that the MCPP was under revision during the study was re-framed as a serendipitous opportunity for Operational Culture learning and integrations.

The opportunity, as the Study Team saw it, was to simultaneously leverage the powerful cultural reality of the driving force in the form of the “*Commander’s Intent and Initial Guidance*,” and the incredible ambiguity introduced by the centrality of the new “*Design*” construct in producing

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the “*Commander’s Intent*.” For this reason, the Integrating Framework is directed at the “*Problem Framing*” step of MCPP, in which the OPT conducts the research, learning and decision support to the Commander for producing the Intent and Planning Guidance.

The Integrating Framework design includes three elements that speak directly to the “*Problem Framing*” step of the MCPP. While the emphasis and greatest level of development is directed at the Focusing Inquiry method within “*Understanding the Environment*,” this piece is bookended by two additional and very important elements. There are two things required for “*Understanding the Environment*” for Operational Culture that the Study Team address in the totality of the Integrating Framework: the need to work in different ways and engage in different kinds of conversations, and, the need to suspend/manage the ambiguity of working in environments beset with operational complexity due to the interactions of socio-cultural issues. The Study Team approach to these two elements is to both support the growth of certain capabilities within the OPT members and to support a means to achieve team alignment through a sense-making process.

The first is addressed through the element of the Integrating Framework on the “*Design Dialogue*.” While the idea of a “*Design Dialogue*” is proposed in the MCPP, there are no supports for how to actually carry out such a conversation. Further, there is no distinction made between the kinds of conversations that occur in planning, specifically those aimed at divergent thinking in order to generate a broad range of ideas, and those aimed at convergent thinking aimed at generating decisions. The Integrating Framework addresses this and suggests that the two forms of conversation required in planning must be carried through all activities or planning, especially activities regarding the “green” layer of the operational environment. Overall, study stakeholders have provided very positive feedback to this element of the Integrating Framework, confirming its desirability. Says one stakeholder:

*This entire section on Design Dialogue is outstanding. Many of the dynamics that you discuss we see time and time again in OPTs. This should be required reading for 0505s [SAW students].*

The Study Team also received feedback regarding the need for the OPT to have more information about how the Integrating Framework carries forward through other steps of MCPP, specifically “*COA Development*” and “*COA Wargaming*.” These were mentioned but not highlighted in the prototype and the fact that it was mentioned points to the need to make the “incentive” for doing the Focusing Inquiry more clear in terms of how it better prepares planners for “*COA Development*” and “*COA Wargaming*”, as opposed to just “making them smart” on all the socio-cultural issues in the operational environment. Indeed, this is the entire point of the Operational Culture construct – it is all about the **operationally relevant** aspects of culture that matter. The feedback is verification that these aspects of culture are difficult for Marine planners to sort out.

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There was also concern expressed about how time constraints would play into the usability of the Integrating Framework and whether it was scalable. Simultaneously it was pointed out that, in fact, “*Understanding the Environment*” is an on-going activity and does not end with the “*Problem Framing*” step. This the Study Team could not agree with more, but perhaps future prototypes need to include more elements that demonstrate that the initial effort during the “*Problem Framing*” is merely scaffolding for continuous learning that occurs across planning, execution, and assessment. Fundamentally the Study Team has designed the Focusing Inquiry method, when combined with practices of “*Design Dialogue*” and the sense-making approach for “*Understanding the Problem*,” to support the OPT’s “*Design*” solution including creating the space for holistic and continuous learning of Operational Culture.

Feedback on the initial sense-making approach to “*Understanding the Problem*” informed the Study Team that this element needed significant further development. While generally, there was resonance with the concepts of simple, complicated, complex and chaotic contexts, stakeholders did not think it was clear how these aspects of the widely used Cynefin Framework would be used in the life of the OPT. One individual made the point, “*I get it. But in the end, all planning problems are complex. I don’t think I need Cynefin to figure it out.*” He went on to ask, “*Is there a way that Cynefin could be used to better help planners with the Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) loop? And even build their assessment plans?*” The Study Team thinks that applying the Cynefin Framework for sense-making with regard to the planning problems faced by the OPT does just that – though obviously specific operational-level tools are needed to support planners in its use.

## 5.5 Next Steps/Way Ahead

As this phase of the study comes to a close, the Study Team is pleased with the extent of active stakeholder engagement in the study process and products, and that the study effort itself has engaged an important community of practitioners, researchers and educators in addressing the perceived limited application of Operational Culture in planning within the MCPP. The purpose of this effort was to assess the current state of the integration of Operational Culture into the MCPP at the MEF level and develop an Integrating Framework that would enhance or improve it. The prototype Integrating Framework that has resulted from this effort has been exercised in a “mini” pilot, distributed to stakeholders for feedback and evolved to reflect that feedback. While the Integrating Framework will undoubtedly be further refined by students, planners, and those in the supporting establishment with use over time, the study also leaves in place a platform and approach to further development.

Should USMC stakeholders desire to refine the current prototype, the Study Team offers some thoughts on the next action research/action learning cycle. To move forward in this way, an organization might take the role of proponent and “champion” the effort, then solicit more widespread feedback on the prototype Integrating Framework. Armed with such feedback, an updated or second-generation prototype could be employed at the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) or the Command and Staff College. Either of these would be excellent sites

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to observe the actual use of the concept and will set the stage for additional improvement. Undoubtedly, an important part of the effort will be moving some of the elements still highly conceptual into more “hands-on” operational planning tools. A toolbox would be especially useful in the elements of the Focusing Inquiry method that capture the “So What?” aspects of “*Understanding the Environment.*” Specifically, it would be helpful to have ways that help planners visualize and discuss relationships and dynamics. In keeping with the evaluation model proposed above, next steps could also begin to capture the capabilities necessary for supporting the Focusing Inquiry. This would include capabilities for helping OPTs navigate the forms of conversation and enhancing learning as well as capabilities that are likely external to the OPT but are needed for sound implementation of the Focusing Inquiry. This may include the identification of partnering organizations that can provide reach-back support or creating solid mechanisms for active participation of needed experts within the OPT.

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28 March 2011

# An Operational Culture Planner's Guide

## An Integrating Framework

### FORWARD

1. **PURPOSE:** A Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP)-like pamphlet, *An Operational Culture Planner's Guide* is designed to assist planning staff officers conducting analysis in consideration of the population in order to promote an understanding of the environment and the problem. This analysis may occur as part of a Green Cell as described in *Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1: Marine Corps Planning Process*, or through other designated staff functions at part of an Operational Planning Team (OPT).

2. **SCOPE:** This pamphlet is intended to support planning staffs in their efforts to develop plans that thoroughly consider all non-combatant actors in the operational context (e.g. "green" layer elements including local population, other United States (US) Government (USG) agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Organizations) It employs a design-centric approach to foster situational understanding, creative synthesis, and sustained learning, especially with regard to Operational Culture, across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. Operational Culture as used in this document refers to the US Marine Corps (USMC) concept of Operational Culture developed by the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) and set forth in the publication *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*.

The focus of this pamphlet is on conceptual level planning at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level, in support of the commander's concept of operations, or design. The specific techniques, methods and approaches presented herein are non-prescriptive; rather they combine to form an Integrating Framework for Operational Culture, which fosters improved application of Operational Culture within the steps of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP). Effective use of this Integrating Framework for Operational Culture affords a deepening understanding of both the environment and the problem, thereby supporting the Commander's developing concept as the OPT moves through the steps of the MCP, especially problem framing, course of action development, course of action wargaming, and course of action decision.

Full understanding and successful application of the information in this pamphlet is contingent upon the user reading and understanding the contents of *MCWP 5-1*, *MCP* and *MSTP Pamphlet 5-0.2, Operational Planning Team Guide*. Further, Marine Corps University (MCU) publication *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* is a primary resource intended to compliment this guide.

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### Chapter 1 Introduction

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Current National security demands require that Marines maintain forward presence and have the necessary capacities to operate in a variety of complex settings. The MEF must, for example, be prepared to counter irregular threats and respond to humanitarian crisis, while simultaneously building strategic partnerships including supporting capacity and capability building in foreign lands. According to *Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025*:

*“We will go to greater lengths to understand our enemies and the range of cultural, societal, and political factors affecting all with whom we interact. Our training and education programs will provide skills that enable civil-military and combat operations and are particularly important in complex environments. The ability to conduct both types of operations, simultaneously, is the essence of the force as a “two-fisted fighter” — capable of offering an open hand to people in need or a precise jab to an adversary in an irregular warfare environment; while at the same time, ready to wield a closed fist in the event of major combat operations.”*

In responding to such realities, OPTs will likewise require new capabilities for creative thinking and problem solving with regard to the populations they encounter in the operating environment. The requirement is not to simply be smart on culture, or sensitive to other cultures, rather the requirement is for understanding operationally relevant aspects of culture and using it successfully across planning, execution, and assessment. Referred to in the USMC as Operational Culture, this pamphlet helps planners successfully leverage cultural knowledge for mission success.

#### **1001. Conceptual Background**

The CAOCL was established in 2005 as the central Marine Corps agency for training and education on regional, operational culture, and language. In its seminal publication the CAOCL defines Operational Culture as having Five Dimensions and being:

*“those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military operations that influence the culture of an area of operations.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Salmoni, B. A. and Holmes-Eber, P. (2008). “Operational Culture for the Warfighter”, 15

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The Five Dimensions of Operational Culture, depicted as interrelated elements in the image below, are grounded in known theories of culture and conflict and are useful both as a construct for analysis and a model for thinking and continuous learning about cultural issues in operational planning contexts.

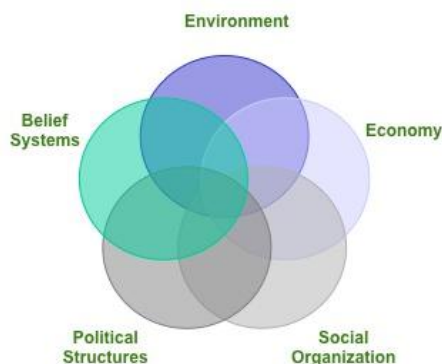


Figure A-1. Five Dimensions of Operational Culture

According to the text,<sup>2</sup> the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture are defined:

<b>THE FIVE OPERATIONAL CULTURE DIMENSIONS</b>	
Dimension 1: <b>The Physical Environment</b>	The way that a cultural group determines the use of the physical environment. Who has access to important physical resources (water, land, food, building materials) and how the culture views these resources (e.g. lands is owned or free to everyone.)
Dimension 2: <b>The Economy</b>	The way that people in a culture obtain, produce and distribute physical and symbolic goods (whether food, clothing, cars or cowry shells.)
Dimension 3: <b>The Social Structure</b>	How people organize their political, economic, and social relationships, and the way this organization influences the distribution of positions, roles, status, and power within culture groups.
Dimension 4: <b>The Political Structure</b>	The political structures of a culture group and the unique forms of leadership within such structures (bands, a cephalous society, councils, hereditary chiefdoms and tribal structures, electoral political systems) The distinction between formal, ideal political structures versus actual power structures.
Dimension 5: <b>Beliefs and Symbols</b>	The cultural beliefs that influence a person’s worldview; and the rituals, symbols and practices associated with a particular belief system. These include also the role of local belief systems and religions in controlling and affecting behavior.

Table A-1: Five Dimensions of Operational Culture

In operating environments where Marines will be in close contact with the population, the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture are used to support a comprehensive consideration of culture information requirements. Working through the Five Dimensions using the “Culture Operator’s Questions” as found in the MCU text *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* will assist planners as they begin to identify operationally significant features of the cultural context and explore their interrelationships and dynamics.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 25

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### 1002. Revised Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP)

The MCP was updated in August of 2010 to reflect the demands of planning for very fluid environments - where “*the problem will evolve even while trying to solve it.*”<sup>3</sup> Such environments require Marines to think critically and holistically, and to organize themselves for continuous learning and adaption across the entire planning, execution, and assessment continuum. Comparing the most basic representations of the old and new MCP provides a powerful image of this change in thinking:

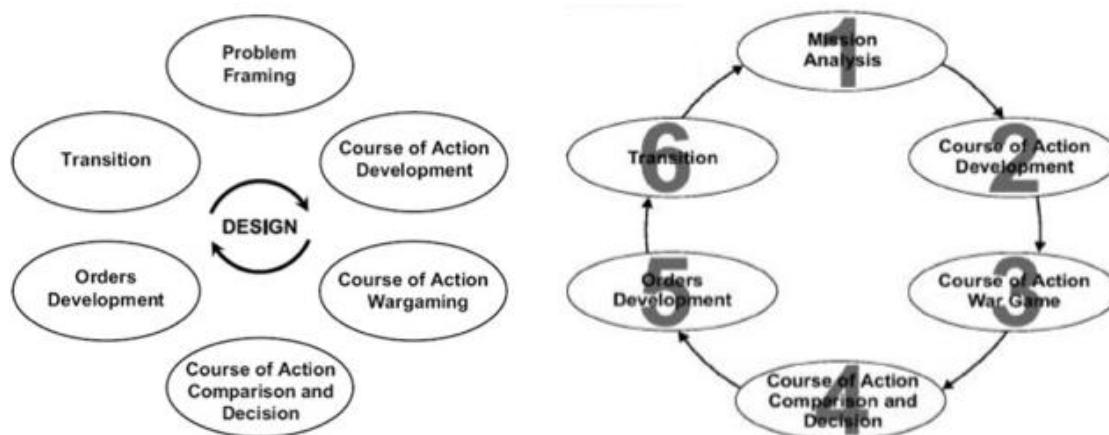


Figure A-2. The Marine Corps Planning Process Compared (2010 vs 2001)

The new MCP has replaced mission analysis with problem framing, and has added the central element of design. An immediate insight gleaned from the comparison of the two figures above is the visual demonstration that the planning steps cannot be thought of as fully sequential. The new steps are neither ordered by number, nor connected by uni-directional arrows. This is especially significant with regard to problem framing because the commander’s concept or design, which emerges in its initial form from the activities of this first step, is revised and updated with subsequent steps as greater insight into the nature of the environment and problem are gained.

### 1003. The Centrality of Design

The emphasis on design in *MCWP 5-1, Marine Corps Planning Process*, reflects the awareness that there are no simple answers for planners when it comes to the complexity of current operating environments. The construct of design as presented in MCP captures in practical guidance the doctrinal principles of planning, including the need for planning to be creative and adaptive in the face of uncertainty. Further, the USMC commitment to design practices guards against the tendency for planning methods to become inflexible and to overemphasize procedures and set products. Design is the central effort of conceptual planning in the MCP.

<sup>3</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 1-2

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The MCPP points to two distinct conceptions of design:

1. Design as a mental or conceptual model: *“Design is the conception and articulation of a framework for solving a problem,”* and;
2. Design as a means: *“Design provides the means to learn and adapt and requires intellectually versatile leaders with high-order thinking skills who actively engage in continuous dialogue and collaboration to enhance decision-making at all levels.”*

At the conceptual level of planning, design is the result of planning activities and is captured in the commander’s visualization or concept. It represents his deep appreciation for the wholeness of the problem and how to achieve operational goals - his operational design. But, design is also the activity itself - the means to the commander’s concept for solving a problem. In the latter case it is most helpful to understand design as a set of practices that support critical thinking and innovation in the face of operational complexity.

While critical thinking is known to be the result of individual skills and dispositions, there are specific things that can be done in a team/group setting to allow critical thinking and collective learning to be maximized. Discussed in MCPP as the design dialogue, the effective implementation of this practice is not specifically detailed in MCWP 5-1 even though it is noted as being critical to the OPT gaining an enhanced understanding of both the environment and the nature of the problem. To wit:

*“Group dialogue, when conducted within the proper command climate, can foster a collective level of understanding not attainable by any individual within the group.”<sup>4</sup>*

So, while the commander will initiate and lead in the design dialogue, it is incumbent upon the OPT in their activities to likewise advance design practices, including dialogue, in support of the commander’s decision making.

### **1004. Problem Framing**

*“Since no amount of subsequent planning can solve a problem insufficiently understood, problem framing is the most important step in planning.”<sup>5</sup>*

The design effort that begins during problem framing is initiated with the commander’s orientation. The elements of the problem framing step as described within the MCPP may be visualized as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, *“Marine Corps Planning Process,”* Washington, D.C., 2-1

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 1-5

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Figure A-3. The Problem Framing Step of the MCPP

The purpose of problem framing is to support the commander's developing concept through enhanced understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem. Staff actions, including systematic study of the environment and holistic approaches that reveal planning challenges, provide the commander with the information necessary to develop his operational design.

### 1005. Focus of this Pamphlet

According to the MCPP, "an essential function of planning is to promote an understanding of the problem - the difference between existing and desired conditions - and devise ways to solve it." The first step of the MCPP, problem framing, has as its primary effort describing the existing conditions (understanding the environment) and the planning challenges that these present (understanding the problem) for achieving a desired set of conditions. The result of problem framing, the commander's initial intent and guidance, is the earliest expression of the purpose of the operation, and sets the priorities and tone for the remaining planning steps. Further, conceptual planning, which results in the commander's concept or design, provides the basis for efforts at the functional and detailed levels of the planning hierarchy. For this reason, an early and rigorous study of the environment and the problem with regard to Operational Culture ensures the commander will have a sufficiently developed appreciation for the situation as it exists, as well as knowledge of important dynamics that will suggest ways to interact with cultural elements within the battlespace.

The Figure A-4 illustrates the importance of the problem framing step in forming the commander's initial intent and guidance, and how this early concept shapes the next three steps of the MCPP. According to the MCPP:

*"This understanding allows the commander to visualize and describe how the operation may unfold, which he articulates as his commander's concept - his overall picture of the operation."*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, "Marine Corps Planning Process," Washington, D.C., 1-5

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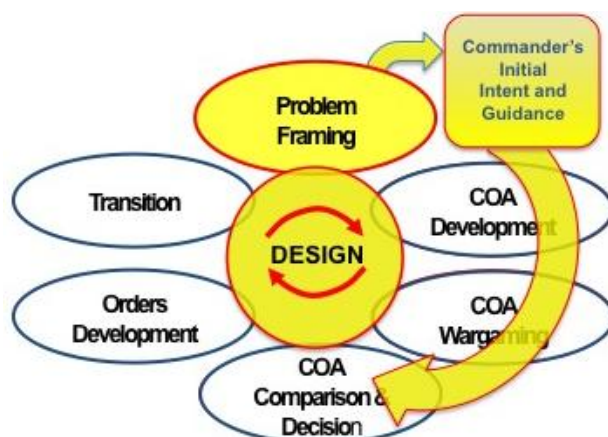


Figure A-4. Problem Framing and Commander's Initial Intent and Guidance

With a focus on the problem framing step of MCPP, this pamphlet highlights the design activities occurring within the OPT, reflected in the image below:

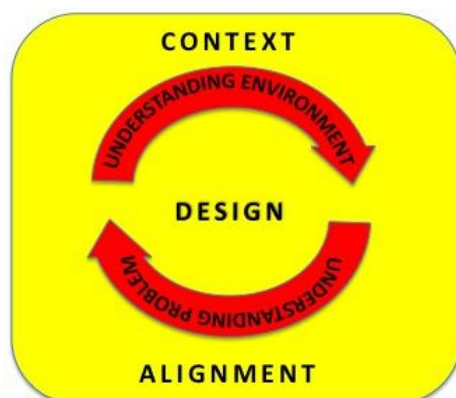


Figure A-5. An Operational Culture Planner's Guide:  
Focusing on the Problem Framing Step of the MCPP

The image is intended to reflect the idea that understanding of both the environment and the nature of the problem is a generative and highly iterative design activity. The design work occurs within the design space denoted by the yellow box. A design space is established both as a result of the command climate and as a result of concerted efforts within the OPT to engage in behaviors known to encourage creativity and continuous learning, even in resource constrained environments.

The primary products of design activities directed toward problem framing are:

- 1) **CONTEXT** - Where context is a deepening understanding of the environment in terms of the Operational Culture. It identifies actors in the environment and their relationships. Most importantly, context gives insights into current dynamics in the space so that planners can begin to generate hypotheses about how the populace will respond to

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various actions of the USMC/Joint Force/Coalition. It also establishes linkages and important relationships that must be nurtured and maintained across multiple efforts of an operation, and throughout planning, execution and assessment.

2) **ALIGNMENT** - Where alignment is shared understanding and agreements across OPT staff functions as a deeper appreciation of the nature of the problem is gained. Alignment is produced as collective sensemaking occurs with regard to mission related tasks. Sensemaking ensures the integration of Operational Culture across planning functions by providing a common language planners can use as challenges are uncovered relative to the context. In this way, sensemaking also provides a common basis for generating options in later steps of the MCPP.

The remainder of this document is intended to provide support to OPTs generally, especially to those OPT members charged with Green Cell activities as described in the MCPP. The purpose of the Green Cell activities is stated in the MCPP:

*“The purpose of a green cell is to consider the population in order to promote a better understanding of the environment and the problem. At a minimum, the green cell provides for the independent will of the population. The green cell may also provide considerations for non-DOD entities, such as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Green cell membership can range from an individual to a task-organized group of SMEs that may include liaisons from the local populace and non-DOD agencies.”<sup>7</sup>*

The contents of this pamphlet are not presented as prescriptive or procedural; rather the contents describe means to support the commander-driven design effort through a focus on the main elements of the problem framing step. This pamphlet contains:

1. **Techniques** for facilitating and sustaining creativity and learning within the OPT (problem framing element supported: design.)
2. **A method** for enabling systematic consideration of the operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural context of the operation (problem framing element supported: understanding the environment.)
3. **An approach** for systemic sensemaking across the OPT for planning problems where the operational context is characterized as highly dynamic and uncertain (problem framing element supported: understanding the problem.)

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<sup>7</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-6

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**Chapter 2**
**Design**


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*“The ability to address complex problems lies in the power of organizational learning through design.”<sup>8</sup>*

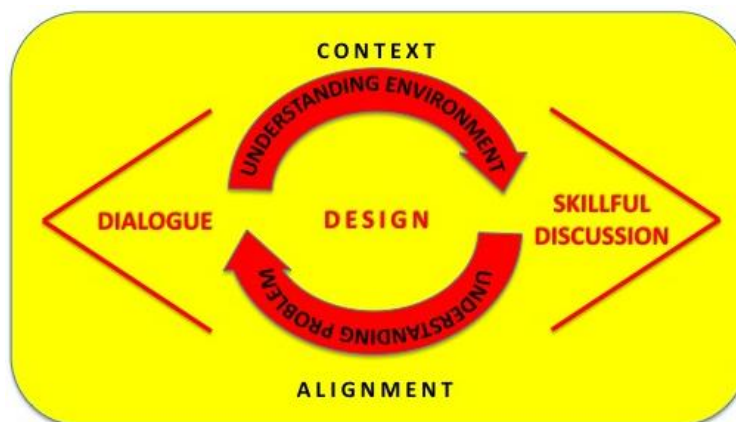


Figure A-6. An Operational Culture Planner’s Guide:  
Design in the Problem Framing Step of the MCPP

This chapter introduces techniques for supporting a design effort within the problem framing step of the MCPP. The emphasis is on design practices in support of team learning with regard to the environment and the problem. The techniques proposed are centered on conversational skills that can be used throughout the design effort to generate new ideas and deeper understandings (the divergent conversations of dialogue) as well as those that support decision making and product development within an OPT (the convergent conversations of skillful discussion.)

### **2001. Supporting a Design Climate within the OPT**

The OPT exists to support the commander’s decision-making process. The commander expects the OPT to have considered all relevant factors with regard to the operational context, minimizing biases and distortions, and to be conducting a systematic, coordinated and thorough planning effort. Planning must further be approached with an appreciation of critical uncertainties and the need for adaptive learning. As the primary conduit between the commander and the planning staff, the OPT leader plays a critical role in eliciting and synthesizing knowledge from the staff, but all OPT and especially OPT core members can exercise leadership in creating the organizational culture and environment for design-centric learning to occur.

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<sup>8</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-1



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Demonstrating a commitment to design concepts and practices will help to create a climate within the OPT that supports creativity and continuous learning, in support of the commander-driven design effort. In framing problems that are by their nature fluid, ambiguous and complex, it is especially important to use design approaches, as solutions to such problems emerge over the course of attempting to frame them. Conversation is the foundational practice of design. Conversational forms of dialogue and skillful discussion are used fluidly throughout the problem framing step, as well as in other steps of the MCPP. Conversations, especially those including nonverbal aspects like drawing and modeling concepts, invite participation in analysis and support the exploration of ideas, assumptions and meanings. It is within this dynamic conversation space that an understanding of both the environment and an appreciation of the problem will grow.

### **2002. Design Conversations**

The design dialogue is a discursive mechanism through which the Commander, OPT, and relevant staff explore a planning problem and align themselves for effective action. While the commander sets the initial tone and climate for design, the OPT leader plays a key role in fostering the practices within the staff for design to be effective. The design dialogue actually has two conversational forms that are distinguished according to their differing intentions:

- *Dialogue* - where the intention is for exploration, discovery and insight. Though there may be a meeting of the minds along the way, it is not the purpose of the practice.
- *Skillful Discussion* - where the intention is to come to some sort of closure to enable the reaching of agreements, the making of decisions or the identification of priorities. The purpose of the practice is to align the OPT for common endeavor and effective action.

Dialogue opens the space for idea generation, creative thinking and the coalescing of a collective intelligence beyond that of any one individual. Dialogue is not simply conversation; rather it should be understood as “*as sustained collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that compose everyday experience.*”<sup>9</sup> Though there are techniques that are useful for supporting such sustained inquiry, technique alone cannot make dialogue happen. Dialogue requires practice, commitment and leadership.

Skillful discussion utilizes particular protocols that will help the OPT to mindfully reach the decisions necessary to proceed with planning. Implementing the protocols for skillful discussion within the OPT will ensure that problem framing is not dangerously overtaken by advocacy of personal positions to the exclusion of collectively tackling challenging ideas and concepts in meaningful ways.

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<sup>9</sup> Isaacs, William (1993). “*Dialogue, Collective Thinking, and Organizational Learning,*” Organizational Dynamics 22(2): 24-39

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Figure A-7 below is a helpful map for understanding the relationship between dialogue and skillful discussion. A discussion follows to describe the characteristics of each stage.<sup>10</sup>

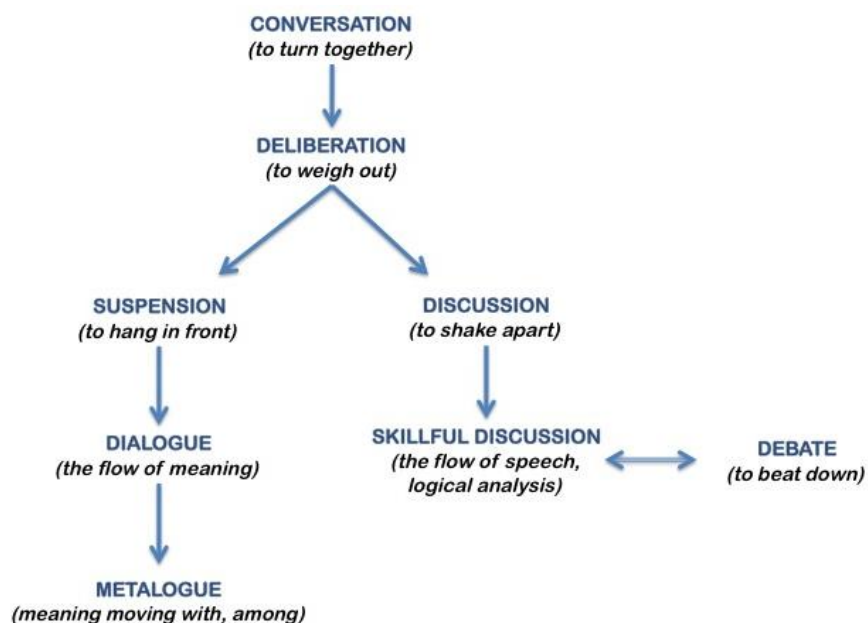


Figure A-7. Relationship of Dialogue and Skillful Discussion as Conversation Forms within the Design Dialogue

The two types of conversation, dialogue and skillful discussion, enrich each other. Both the divergent thinking generated by dialogue, as well as the convergent processes of aligning during skillful discussion, are necessary for effective problem framing. The OPT leader will have to apply judgment as to how and when to move the OPT between these two elements. The challenge is to manage the initial discomfort and ambiguity associated with dialogue, and avoid the rush to task-oriented, decision-driven activities. It is critical to sustain dialogue long enough such that effective inquiry - especially the surfacing and exploring of assumptions - can occur.

*Conversation:* The planning endeavor is first and foremost a social-organizational activity. According to doctrine [*Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 5, Planning*], the functions of planning are to 1) direct and coordinate action, 2) develop a shared situational awareness, 3) generate expectation for the evolution of action toward an outcome, 4) support the exercise of initiative, and 5) to shape the thinking of planners. To achieve the goals of planning, teams must work and learn together, and this takes place through conversation. The turning together (convening) of the OPT toward the planning effort creates a field for common inquiry, accepted term for which is the “container”. The container is defined as the “*sum of the collective*

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<sup>10</sup> The diagram and the description of its elements are adapted from “*The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*” by Peter Senge and colleagues from the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT’s Sloan School of Management. The fieldbook has an excellent discussion on conversational forms, including dialogue and skillful discussion in the section on Team Learning, pages 350-441

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*assumptions, shared intentions, and beliefs of the group*<sup>11</sup> and is the metaphorical space within which the work of organizing and aligning in order to “do” planning takes place.

*Deliberation:* Though MCPP is articulated as a series of six steps, working a planning effort in accordance with MCPP does not, in practice, proceed in such a sequential fashion. At the individual cognitive level, as planners seek to understand their planning problem, they are simultaneously juxtaposing their emerging understanding with mental simulations or images of possible approaches for solution (action). This is a natural cognitive process that is virtually impossible to avoid. We naturally categorize and make distinctions as we create meaning around the planning challenge.

As planners deliberate and deepen their work, conversations inevitably arise in which the team begins to lose effectiveness due to the realization that their perceptions, assumptions and beliefs about the issues in front of them differ significantly. This realization of just how fragmented and incoherent their collective conceptions of the environment and problem are can be both frustrating and disconcerting. This is referred to as, “instability in the container,” and is a natural occurrence during planning. This is when the move to dialogue can occur if leadership first recognizes then acts on this observation.

*Suspension:* To manage this instability in the container, everyone must acknowledge what is happening; that all on the team have habitually made and acted on assumptions to create the fragmentation being experienced. Knowing that this is a normal phase of planning for complex environments can help OPT members to step back and “cool” the inquiry by loosening their grip on stances and opinions. This allows a next level of inquiry to occur where the team not only seeks to understand the operational environment and problem, but to closely examine the thought process within the planning team itself.

*Dialogue:* Dialogue occurs when all involved collectively suspend (“hang in front”) their assumptions, and the related behaviors and actions that they drove, for all to see. The team members begin a new kind of inquiry: they explore what can be learned if things are slowed down enough to inquire within themselves. New questions take form and fully inhabit the inquiry space: “What is the meaning of this?” “Where am I listening from?” “What is the disturbance going on in me (versus others)?” Team members become at once participant and observer. This added awareness within the container allows team members to become more sensitive to each other as well as the planning problem itself. New insights often emerge and the dialogue phase is typically penetrating and even playful.

William Isaacs of MIT’s Dialogue Project says, “*During the dialogue process, people learn how to think together - not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating new pieces of shared knowledge, but in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility, in which the thoughts, emotions, and resulting actions belong not just to one individual, but to all of them together.*”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Isaacs, William (1994). “*Levels and stages of dialogue: the development of cool inquiry.*” In Senge, et. al. (1994) The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization, NY: Doubleday

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

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Given the doctrinal definition of the purpose of planning, it is clear that dialogue as described above is a requirement of planning. It cannot be taken for granted that this dialogue, and the learning and aligning it can produce, will occur within the typical planning conversation. It demands the commitment of leadership and significant practice. Over time, teams can more quickly notice fragmentation and instability within the planning inquiry and move into effective dialogue as required.

*Metalogue:* Dialogue experts describe an additional phase of the dialogue process that may or may not be achieved with every dialogue experience. The dialogue process described above is a time when the team is simultaneously inquiring into the planning organizational environment (the inquiry “in here”) in addition to the operational environment (the inquiry “out there.”) The team will likely come to recognize that the two cannot be separated - that the collective conception of the team and the implementation of planning are intimately linked. Though the dialogue inquiry is critical to exposing and inquiring into the sources of fragmentation within the planning effort, the sheer number of views and perspectives operating - the social complexity both “in here” and “out there” - can lead to further crisis as team members begin to doubt the possibility of unity within the effort. The OPT is forced to forge a new kind of meaning relative to its collective effort and purpose for being as a team. This meaning is both generated by and embodied within the group effort as collective intelligence and can lead to breakthrough creativity.

On the other arm of the conversational map is the pathway aimed at decision-making and closure. In order for planning to continue, certain decisions must be made. The OPT must decide on and synthesize the information necessary for the commander and develop products that effectively relay the collective learning of the planning staff. Skillful discussion is the practice designed for this purpose.

*Discussion - Skillful Discussion - Debate:* When it comes to making decisions, teams will often fall into a pattern where individuals or sub-groups heavily advocate for particular positions. This orientation can allow a dangerous current to begin flowing in an OPT - a “discuss to win” culture. At worst, such discussions devolve into raw debate, where positions are heaved at one another, and it becomes significantly more about winning than about learning. Advocating for decisions or approaches within the OPT is extremely important, especially when based on research done by the staff. However, advocacy within the team must be balanced with inquiry, and positions taken must be open for review and questions. There are ways to improve both advocacy and inquiry within a team to allow learning and promote greater alignment in decisions. Skillful discussion incorporates some of the same elements as dialogue, but the focus is always on tasks versus open exploration. Team members will leave a skillful discussion with discrete action items and priorities. Skillful discussion, like dialogue, takes practice and requires the commitment of all team members. Skillful discussion also requires team members to maintain awareness and be very reflective of their thoughts and behaviors, as part of their participation.

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Specifically, skillful discussion includes the individual and collective practices shown in Table A-2 below:<sup>13</sup>

<b>Pay attention to our intentions</b>	Team members should ask themselves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I want from this conversation?</li> <li>• Am I willing to let myself be influenced?</li> </ul>
<b>Balance advocacy with inquiry</b>	Team members can ask each other questions like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What led you to that view?</li> <li>• Can you tell me more about what you mean?</li> </ul>
<b>Build shared meaning</b>	Team members collectively iterate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we use the term XYZ, what are we really saying?</li> <li>• Let's go over it again, to be sure we all understand...</li> </ul>
<b>Use self-awareness as a resource</b>	Team members notice their reactions and responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What am I thinking right now?</li> <li>• What am I feeling or sensing in this moment?</li> </ul>
<b>Explore impasses</b>	Team members collectively inquire and articulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we agree on and what do we disagree on?</li> <li>• Is there an opportunity to reframe/look at this differently?</li> </ul>

Table A-2: Practices for Skillful Discussion

**2003. Design Practices**

Noted organizational learning theorist Edgar Schein says that, “*Dialogue as a form of conversation starts with the assumption that every person comes with different assumptions and that mutual understanding is in most cases an illusion.*”<sup>14</sup> Our deepest held beliefs and values often serve to establish mental models for the way the world works and generate a set of assumptions that are virtually invisible to us. Probably the greatest threats to the effective incorporation of design in planning are these unexposed, unevaluated mental models and the assumptions they generate. Managing mental models within the OPT benefits from consideration of the “Ladder of Inference,”<sup>15</sup> which helps team members by providing a common language for understanding how assumptions affect planning activities. This construct is shown in Figure A-8.

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<sup>13</sup> Ross, Rick (1994). “*Skillful Discussion*,” In Senge, et. al. (1994) The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization, NY: Doubleday

<sup>14</sup> Schein, Edgar (1993). “*On Dialogue, Culture, and Organizational Learning*,” Organizational Dynamics 22(2): 40-51

<sup>15</sup> Ross, Rick (1994). “*The Ladder of Inference*,” In Senge, et. al. (1994) The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization, NY: Doubleday

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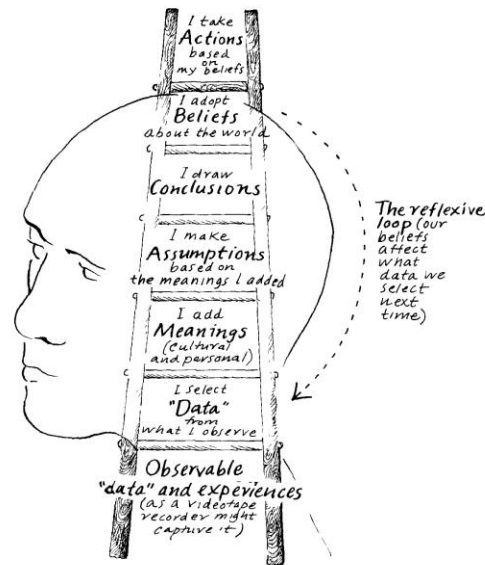


Figure A-8. Understanding Assumptions and their Effects on Thinking through the “Ladder of Inference” Construct

Because unevaluated assumptions can lead the commander to take on risk without his awareness, one of the most important roles of leadership in the OPT is helping to surface and explore assumptions operating within the team. While managing mental models and assumptions is likely the most critical component for supporting design within the OPT, there are other behaviors of leadership that maintain a climate for continuous learning and effective design. Examples of such behaviors include:

- Consciously initiating dialogue and explicitly inviting participation. This is a very important element of dialogue because participants must be intentional about entering into a state of mind for a particular type of conversation, one that is not common in everyday discourse.
- Pointing out the presence of polarizations or categories that might be limiting the thinking of the group. Create space to learn what these naming conventions or labels represent.
- Helping to catalyze insight by uncovering the process of thought. Take an interest in the details of the data, meanings and conclusions of others.
- Modeling self-awareness and offering one’s observations to the team. Self-awareness may take the form of sensations, emotions or thoughts. Describe what these entail.
- Bringing one’s own assumptions forward and describing them so that others can see them. Then, expose these to the inquiry of the team.
- Reframing disagreement or identifying a disagreement as an opportunity to look at something more closely (versus just passing it by to “get on with planning.”)
- Listening deeply, not just for what a person is saying, but also for the unique perspective they bring to the table.

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Ultimately, planning requires an enabling context for knowledge creation.<sup>16</sup> While the practices suggested above may seem new on the surface, most leaders will recognize that relationships and trust are key components of effective collaboration and learning in the OPT. Exercising both forms of conversation throughout the planning process and especially in Problem Framing will ensure a thorough and, perhaps more importantly, shared understanding of the environment as well as improved sensemaking with regard to understanding the problem. Approaches to both these elements of problem framing are described below.

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<sup>16</sup> The enabling context is talked about in-depth in Krogh, Ichijo and Nonaka (2000). “*Enabling Knowledge Creation: How to unlock the mystery of tacit knowledge and release the power of innovation,*” Oxford: University Press

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### Chapter 3

## Understanding the Environment

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*“Understanding the environment provides background information, facts, status, connections, relevant actors, habitat, local beliefs, and a broad range of other factors that serve as context for the commander and his staff to better understand the problem.”<sup>17</sup>*

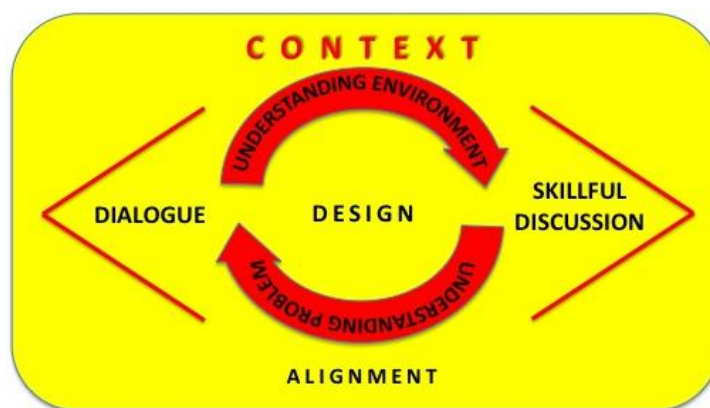


Figure A-9. An Operational Culture Planner's Guide:  
Understanding the Environment in the Problem Framing Step of the MCP

The design dialogue begins with the commander's orientation. At this point, the commander will give a snapshot of his thinking, thereby establishing the key themes and directions for the OPT inquiry. He will undoubtedly express certain concerns or specific unknowns that he would like researched or analyzed with regard to the operational environment. While the OPT leader will be the primary conduit for the design dialogue with the commander, the entire staff is responsible for engaging in design-centric thinking. Nowhere is this requirement more apparent than in the study of the “green layer” within the operational environment.

Understanding the environment from the perspective of Operational Culture involves a multi-step, iterative process that builds on the initial information that is available (e.g. Intent of Higher Headquarters (HHQ), Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (IPB), Country Handbook, and other intelligence products) and cumulatively “grows” an enhanced understanding of assets, relationships, and mechanisms inherent to the environment. By means of a structured inquiry, an OPT can create not just a better understanding of the operational context, but also an accounting of opportunities inherent to the environment itself which may be leveraged to achieve mission aims. Approaching the environment as a diverse and dynamic socio-cultural ecology, the inquiry leads planners to systematically and holistically consider its elements.

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<sup>17</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-2



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The following discussion describes a foundational and focused inquiry framework for understanding the environment that:

- Employs a foundational inquiry form that is simple but not simplistic and provides the momentum to move from understanding to action;
- Flows through four steps that elicit a mission-focused, comprehensive description of the Operational Culture of the environment and allows emergent discovery of implications for action; and
- Works at multiple levels of analysis across the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture defined by the CAOCL in order to obtain a holistic understanding.

Using this inquiry approach in an OPT will build cumulative understanding and help planners to both consider and integrate a broad range of ideas into their thinking. The approach proceeds as described below.

### 3001. Foundational Inquiry Framework

In understanding the environment, the planning team is aiming to gain a comprehensive and nuanced appreciation for the situation, as it exists in the present. The emphasis is on the characteristics of the environment in descriptive terms. Planners must refrain from approaching such characteristics - that are inevitably unfamiliar - only as problems because thinking in this way tends to dangerously limit creativity in planning. Developing a solid understanding of the environment is driven by three questions that are simple, but not simplistic. Table A-3 below illustrates the Foundational Inquiry for Operational Culture.

<b>WHAT?</b>
Clarifies the purpose of the mission and catalogs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People, places, and things in the environment; and</li><li>• Threats and assets present in the environment.</li></ul>
<b>SO WHAT?</b>
Describes the importance of the “what” identified previously and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maps the relationships between people, places, and things; and</li><li>• Describes the way those relationships work (their “dynamic”).</li></ul>
<b>NOW WHAT?</b>
Frames people, places, things, and relationships in the environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifies opportunities that can be leveraged for mission success; and</li><li>• Leaves planners prepared to explore specific courses of action upon receipt of commander’s guidance.</li></ul>

Table A-3: Foundational Inquiry Framework for Operational Culture.

This simple set of questions can drive effective learning across the planning, execution, and assessment continuum as it encourages Marines to think of themselves as continuous data collectors and learners. They will begin by asking, “What do I see? What do the data tell me?” From the answers to such initial questions, they can move to ask, “What sense can I make of it?”

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What will it mean to us?” Finally, they can link this understanding to potential actions by asking, “What are my options? What decisions must I make?” Regularly using this Foundational Inquiry can yield a change in mindset over time. The simple process of asking “What?”, “So What?”, “Now What?” helps planners become better interpreters of changes in the environment, even when solid data are not available or are highly ambiguous.

### **3002. Focusing Inquiry Framework**

In working through the Foundational Inquiry, the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture as articulated by the CAOCL play a central role. However, to have the Five Dimensions function as more than a mechanism for simply developing a great deal of cultural information, an approach is needed to help the OPT create knowledge (i.e. information with practicable meaning) and innovate with regard to the operational implications of the cultural context. Linking cultural information with the learning gained in other staff actions, especially task analysis helps to keep the focus appropriately on the operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural environment. This focusing approach sets forth a way to do just that. These are:

- Identify threats and assets to get at the Foundational Inquiry questions that establish the “What?”;
- Establish relationships between people, places and things to get at the Foundational Inquiry questions that establish the first part of the “So What?”;
- Understand the dynamics between people places and things to get at the Foundational Inquiry questions that establish the second part of the “So What?”; and
- Frame discoveries to establish options for impact to get at the Foundational Inquiry questions that establish the “Now What?”.

Each step provides the natural basis for the next. Though the steps are described as being discrete in Figure A-10 below, the entire process is iterative and cumulative. Refining and adapting the current understanding to present reality and enhancing it with newfound knowledge occurs through subsequent steps of planning and especially within execution and assessment. Both because a complete understanding of the environment is not possible until operators are fully engaged in implementing tasks during execution, and because the environment is always changing, the process continues to iterate.

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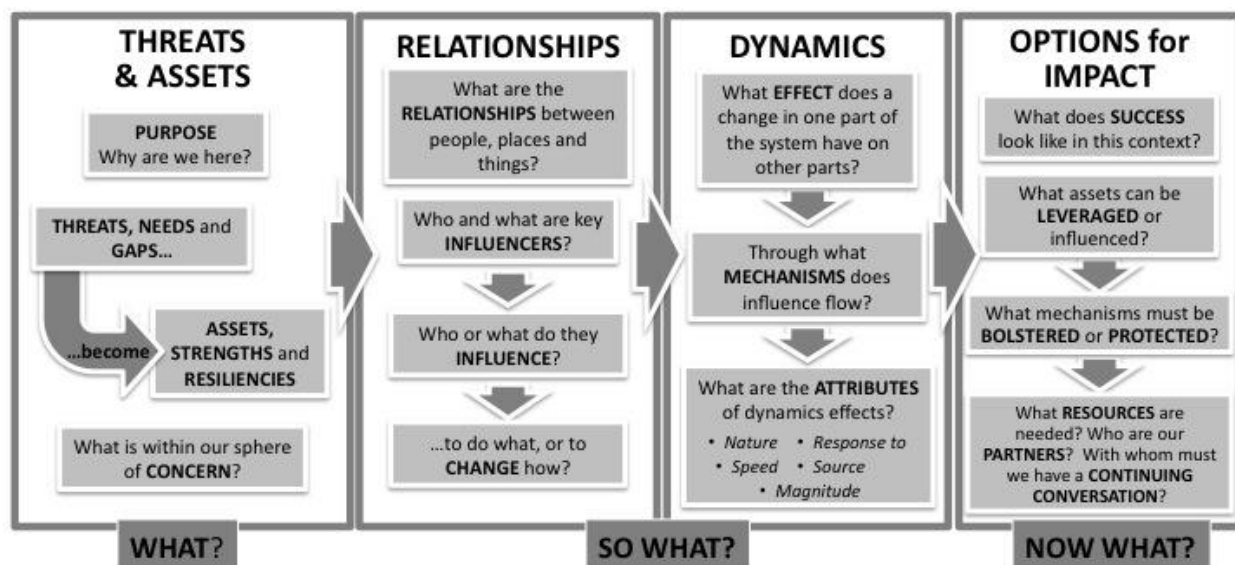


Figure A-10. Focusing Inquiry Framework for Operational Culture

### *An asset-based approach to understanding the environment*

In the first step planners are called upon to identify assets, strengths and resiliencies. Indeed, the entire understanding the environment process requires that planners take an asset-based approach to discovery and the development of understanding. An asset-based approach to understanding the environment emphasizes assets that are present in the operational environment over what is missing (“needs” or “gaps.”) Assets can include physical objects, as well as the place and geography, mores and beliefs, social and political structures, and important relationships between all elements of the environment. Another type of asset is the “resilience” of the environment - how well the environment can bounce back from a trauma and whether it learns or not from those experiences so that it can prepare for, or mitigate more effectively the next time it experiences a similar trauma.

An important byproduct of an asset-based approach is that opportunities emerge naturally from the context itself - and become central components of sustainable solutions. Solutions of this type are also characterized by lack of undesired second and third order effects. The four steps of understanding the environment are designed to lead to the identification of mission-relevant opportunities already present in the environment. How this works will become clearer through the following detailed descriptions of the Focusing Inquiry Framework.

Based on the picture of the environment created directly from IPB assessments and other pre-planning products, problems and needs are reframed and the capacities, capabilities and resiliencies that are inevitably present become the focus. The cataloging of local assets (also called “item generation”) derives from two processes:

- Seeking assets that relate directly to the specific mission; and
- Noting assets that relate directly to the broader operation.

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For example, an asset-based approach might reframe conflict or competition over a limited resource like a forest, and position it as an opportunity to bring “enemies” together to problem solve around a shared interest, in this case the sustainable management of an important but dwindling resource. Further developing this example, the specific issue of deforestation may provide a special basis upon which to build up weak governmental, social, or economic institutions, since improved institutional capacity and behavior would have a direct and immediate effect. Furthermore, effective assistance both at reducing violent conflict and managing a valuable resource (in turn saving livelihoods) could be an effective way to positively shape perceptions of the US. Asset-based thinking with regard to Operational Culture assures that the commander has the widest range of creative opportunities to consider as planning continues.

### **Step 1: Get at the “What?” by identifying threats and assets**

To effectively consider threats and assets in the environment, the OPT must:

- Clarify the mission;
- Identify problems, resource gaps, and threats to the mission from provided IPB products;
- Identify resiliencies, assets and strengths; and
- Begin to identify what operators might have control over and what they do not.

Each element of this step is described in detail below.

*Clarify the mission:* The process begins by characterizing the mission in the clearest terms possible. This is important because the mission is the reference against which the plan is built. Without a clear understanding of what the mission is, it makes no sense to identify threats to the mission, or important assets with which the mission can be accomplished. Planners should avoid language that seems to directly equate the mission with specific actions to avoid predetermining Courses of Action (COAs) before a more complete understanding of the environment is articulated.

*Identify threats, resources gaps, and needs relative to the mission:* Relying on intelligence and assessment products commonly provided to planners preceding a planning effort, this element develops a traditional view of the environment by cataloging perceived problems in the form of “needs” and “gaps,” and threats to mission success. Continuing with the previous example, deforestation may be wrecking livelihoods based on forestry products and cooking reliant on firewood, leading to conflict over the little remaining natural resources. In a military context threats are commonly viewed as “enemy combatants.” In the case of planning for a complex contingency or a Humanitarian Assistance (HA)/Disaster Relief (DR) however, enemy combatants may be present, but here “threats” refer to anything that threatens mission success, or might hinder progress towards objectives. People of course can be threats, but so can conditions such as bad weather, underdeveloped infrastructure, or high unemployment.

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*Identify resiliencies, assets and strengths:* Once sources of friction have been cataloged using traditional information sources, planners turn their focus to emphasizing elements of possible solutions through an asset-based approach, as described above. The rest of the understanding the environment process will require that planners maintain this solutions- and asset-oriented focus throughout the drive to identify actionable opportunities. The catalog of resiliencies, assets and strengths may partially mirror threats, needs and gaps, but it will likely also contain many elements that do not appear (in the inverse) elsewhere. In this step planners' assumptions about the nature of an element of the environment may be severely challenged as they are asked to find the "silver lining" in a situation they have previously viewed through the "problem" lens. In some cases, planners may be able to go so far as to identify ways in which threats or needs are also assets. The pressures of a food shortage, for example, may have made people more flexible in their willingness to try new methods or behaviors.

*Explore boundaries of what can be controlled and what cannot:* Understanding the environment is valuable to the operational planner because it eventually enables the design of COAs that match the environment - actions that make sense given local cultures and other factors - and are therefore more likely to result in successful outcomes. An understanding of the environment that is relevant to operational planners would be incomplete if it did not also include an understanding of what aspects of the environment are within planners' and operators' control and which are not.

Identifying those few aspects of the operational environment that might be in planners' and operators' direct control and the many that are not, is one way in which the scope of possible COAs is naturally refined by the process. With a clear articulation of what can be directly affected, what can be indirectly affected, and what cannot be affected at all, planners can establish expectations of reasonable outcomes and timelines based on meaningful courses of action that seek to alter conditions by affecting change where it is possible to do so, rather than where it is not. As planners advance through the following stages of the understanding process the importance of emphasizing assets will become increasingly clear.

### **Step 2: Get at the "So What?" by describing relationships**

A catalog of elements of the environment is critical both to assessing needs and gaps, and to identifying assets and opportunities. It is also important, however, to go beyond an accounting of just the elements themselves, and to establish their interactions and relationships - how any one aspect affects and is in turn affected by other aspects. This web of effects is described by "mapping" the relationships, or describing the paths of influence from one element to another. The following questions enhance the standard assessment provided through the IPB and other products by providing a basis for relationship mapping and set the stage for advancing towards an understanding of the environment from which flow COAs with the best possible chance of mission success:

- Who and what are key influencers?
- Who and what are influenced?
- What are they influenced to do or how are they influenced to change?

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Key influencers - things and people that affect changes in other people and things - within the environment are identified. Importantly, influencers and change agents are not just people or organizations, but also things and places. Rising rivers, shrinking forests, and dry crop lands have as much of an effect on behaviors and other aspects of the environment as policy changes, violence, or charismatic leaders. Furthermore, people give a special relevance to “place.” Where someone lives shapes their culture and location is often tied tightly to a sense of group identity, just as geography and topography have a profound influence on the nature of livelihoods, whether fishing, farming, mining, or manufacturing.

The Five Dimensions of Operational Culture help to orient the mapping process. There are relationships between elements within each dimension, but also between dimensions. It may be easiest to begin by mapping relationships within each dimension of Operational Culture before mapping across the Five Dimensions. Working through multiple levels of analysis as described below will help reveal important interconnection across dimensions as well.

**Step 3: Get at the “So What?” by characterizing dynamics**

In the previous step planners identify relationships by producing lists of influencers and change agents, and the map of connections between them. The list produced in the relationships step is static, whereas the operational environment is constantly in motion, or dynamic. The analysis of dynamics derives directly from the relationships cataloged in the previous step. While a map of relationships is a picture, the dynamic is that same picture animated. In this important stage the effect that key influencers have on other parts of the environment system is outlined through a query that answers the following about each observed, predicted or hypothesized effect. Table A-4 below provides a structured way to consider the challenges faced in developing dynamics.

<b>The <i>nature</i> of the effect</b>	What exactly <i>is</i> the effect? Who does it impact? What information, message, or physical change promoted this response (see below)?
<b>The <i>source(s)</i> of the effect</b>	What or who was the influencer that initiates the effect?
<b>The <i>speed</i> at which the effect occurs from source to impact</b>	From influencing event to impact, how long does it take before there is a meaningful effect? Does the whole effect seem to happen at once, or does the effect play out over time?
<b>The <i>magnitude</i> of the effect</b>	How widely and deeply felt are the impacts of the effect? How many are effected? How much? How far?
<b>The <i>response</i> to the effect</b>	How do other elements (people, places and things) respond to the effect? Are there follow-on second and third order effects that result from this initial response? Do these second and third order effects in turn affect the source of the initial effect (“feedback”)? How does the source of the initial effect change or respond?

Table A-4: Structured Consideration of the Dynamics of Operational Culture

In addition, for relationships to have meaning to the operational planner it is not enough simply to state that an influencing relationship exists or that an effect is observed. Since the planner

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seeks to achieve ends by harnessing influencers and change agents, or by affecting them directly, it is also necessary to identify the mechanisms through which influence and change occurs. An important component of influence is the way in which information or the effects of physical changes moves from the transmitter to the receiver. How information, messages, or physical changes move through the relationship map is the mechanism. Are people told that something is so, or do they experience it themselves? Do they hear a news report about how few trees remain in forested areas, or have they themselves run out of firewood for cooking and heat? Similarly physical changes to the landscape may occur for many reasons. If forests are diminishing, is this due to natural events, human behavior, or a combination of both? What are the specific reasons for these changes? Mechanisms may be as simple as a newspaper or radio, and as complex as a social or ecological structure. The effects of deforestation propagate through experiences of increasing economic hardship, through the visual perception of fewer trees and barren land, and the experience of increasing violence over competition for a valuable resource.

#### **Step 4: Get at the “Now What?” by framing discoveries to establish options for impact**

Though the entire activity described in this document supports problem framing within the MCPP, this last step ties the three preceding steps together and frames their discoveries so as to ensure they have particular meaning to the eventual development of COAs. While not intended to directly produce a COA, the four-step process could, if successful, come very close to revealing appropriate, effective COAs produced elsewhere in the MCPP process.

Working through the previous steps, planners will have identified key assets, what change occurs in the environment system, who and what causes that change, how change happens, which aspects of a changing system are most relevant to the stated mission in the form of opportunities, and how they might harness that dynamic to successfully accomplish mission objectives.

Armed with this comprehensive analysis, planners are able to provide the commander a nuanced and practicable picture upon which he can make decisions and provide planning guidance. The groundwork has now been laid to design potential COAs that maximize the use of assets existing in the operational context and seek to capitalize on enabling influencers and change agents through identified mechanisms to achieve mission objectives.

Thus, the product of this four-step process of developing an understanding of the environment is the identification of opportunities to specific mission fulfillment, and the primary means by which that might be accomplished, illustrated in Figure A-11 below.

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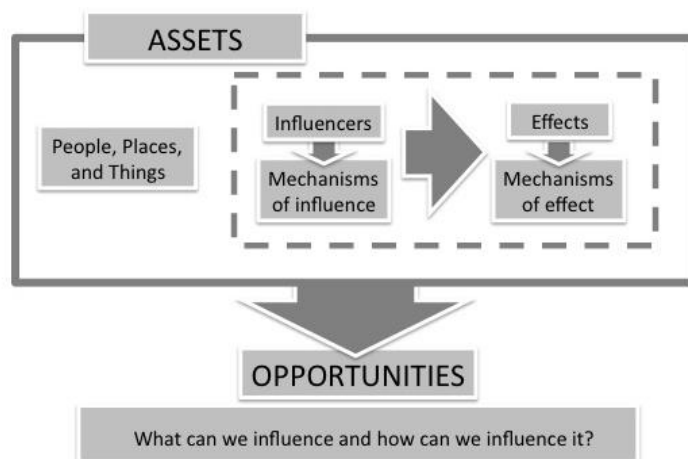


Figure A-11. Options for Impact: Linking Assets to Opportunities

Another important byproduct of the understanding the environment process that can be finally articulated in the “Now What?” step is the identification of who needs to be a part of a continuing conversation aimed at gathering information and enhancing understanding, and what some of the important lines of inquiry (and perhaps even specific questions) need to be. Since both key influencers and the influenced have been identified, as have assets (including local, national, and donor partners, USG agencies and offices, and others), the key members of a comprehensive, ongoing and meaningful conversation are also now evident.

While the basis for a conversation with partners and with members of the environment is now well formed, it is highly likely that a great many questions may appear unanswerable. This should not dissuade planners from having the conversation however, both because engaging in the conversation itself is generally productive, and because the act of having the conversation may either make the original unanswerable question irrelevant by identifying previously undiscovered replacement questions, or open up a space in which the original question can indeed be answered after all.

The conversation with operational partners and other actors in the environment can be relatively informal (particularly among USG agency partners) or where appropriate, will be as systematic as the understanding the environment process itself. A host of practical participatory methods have been developed to reach all types of people and organizations and to answer all types of questions.<sup>18</sup> What participatory method is most appropriate, and who should be included will change according to context. For example, while a group of local doctors and hospital directors will be important conversationalists at one point in the planning process, they will not be relevant to others. Similarly, while an experts’ panel may be the most effective way to reach into the community of land management experts, a more informal meeting among community members may instead be the best way to discuss policy options with surrounding educational goals. Table A-5 below provides a summary of the Focusing Inquiry Framework in matrix form.

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<sup>18</sup> Slocum, Nikki (2003). “*Participatory Methods Toolkit: A Practitioners Manual*,” Flemish Institute

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<b>WHAT?</b>	<b>SO WHAT?</b>		<b>NOW WHAT?</b>
<b>Threats &amp; Assets</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Options for Impact</b>
<p><i>Explores the question: Why are we here?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepens exploration of the commander’s orientation &amp; orders from HHQ. Looks at the question “Why are we here?” from multiple sites within the environment.</li> <li>• Helps understanding of problem parameters including what is within control, influence or concern.</li> <li>• <b>Threats/Problems:</b> Describes “needs,” “gaps,” “and “threats” including sources and current behaviors/efforts that reinforce the problems and needs.</li> <li>• <b>Assets:</b> Identifies assets, resiliencies, and strengths inherent to the environment that might be leveraged.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Explores the question: What are the relationships between people, places, and things in the environment?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps and describes <b>relationships</b> between key elements of the operating/problem environment (including between people and places/things).</li> <li>• Identifies <b>key influencers</b>, and who or what they influence.</li> <li>• Relies heavily on the <b>Five Dimensions of Operational Culture</b> to help define boundaries of elements of the environment and describe their relationships to each other.</li> <li>• Results in understanding of locals’ priorities. Takes the “emic” perspective.</li> <li>• Highlights and refines important questions about the environment and relationships within it (information/intelligence requirements).</li> </ul>	<p><i>Explores the question: What effect does a change in one part of the system have on other parts?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes <b>dynamics</b> of relationships between elements within environment system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Looks at direction of change and its characteristics.</li> <li>○ Looks at feedback effects on key elements and reverberations in other parts of the system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identifies <b>mechanism</b> of influence and change in systems of social, economic, physical and informational environments.</li> <li>• Analysis of dynamics includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nature of effect</li> <li>○ Source of effect</li> <li>○ Magnitude of effect</li> <li>○ Speed of effect</li> <li>○ Response to effect</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Explores the question: What does success look like in this context?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes societal norms and relates this to desired future states.</li> <li>• Refines <b>boundaries</b> of action (what is within control/ influence). Also characterizes operational constraints and restraints.</li> <li>• Considers the influence various actions might cause on the system. Focus is on influence and feedback mechanisms.</li> <li>• Specifies primary mechanisms through which opportunities can be realized.</li> <li>• Identifies <b>opportunities</b>, and links opportunities to relevant assets, resulting directly in actionable options.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Stimulates reflexivity in thinking. Guides generation of initial Requests for Information (RFIs) and initiates relations with other USG agencies, cultural advising and reach-back resources.</i></p>	<p><i>Generates second order RFIs and encourages ongoing conversations with other actors and supports knowledge sharing. Supports visualization and mapping of relationships.</i></p>	<p><i>Facilitates observation of patterns and feedback mechanisms and highlights sites of potential instability in the environment.</i></p> <p><i>Gets the OPT developing narratives and visualizations early for how the environment works. Supports Center of Gravity (COG)-like model building.</i></p> <p><i>Helps to establish the Commander’s Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs).</i></p>	<p><i>Supports identification of assumptions and limitations, and points to resource requirements. Helps to establish ongoing conversations and sources of data.</i></p>

Table A-5: Focusing Inquiry Framework for Operational Culture

**3003. Inquiry Across Levels of Analysis**

Most current operating environments are beset with complexity, contingency and humanitarian-related issues. The complexity and dynamism of these operational environments demands that planners approach analyzing them systematically. To make practical sense of such complexity

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necessarily requires that the environment be explored in parts so as to make analysis possible. The understanding the environment process described above does just that, but effective application of the process to practical decision-making requires an additional means of viewing the system at several levels of analysis to facilitate moving from characteristics of the operational context to planning considerations and options. Flowing through each of the four steps of the Focusing Inquiry Framework are the following levels of analysis, in which the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture provide a means of organizing the inquiry. Questions shown in Table A-6 below are illustrative and far from all-inclusive.

<b>Individual Level</b>	<p>Explores factors and dynamics of the environment system focusing on individuals' behaviors, interests, intents, and motivations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>[Physical] Environment:</b> How do local individuals relate to and interact with the physical environment? What is their perceived and actual relationship to the physical environment? What form does that relationship take?</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> What economic roles do individuals play outside of economic institutions? What relationship do those roles play in shaping social and political structures and individuals' place in each?</li> <li>• <b>Social Structure:</b> How do individuals envision their role in the environment system? What are their expectations for themselves and for others?</li> <li>• <b>Political Structure:</b> What relationship do individuals have to political structures? Are individuals able to articulate and act effectively to represent or protect their political interests?</li> <li>• <b>Belief Systems:</b> How do individuals' belief systems shape their behavior and how they perceive their interests? Do individuals define their identity mostly according to their belief system?</li> </ul>
<b>Community Level</b>	<p>Explores factors and dynamics of the environment system focusing on mostly non-formal emergent organizations of individuals into "communities." Communities may be geographically bounded, composed of individuals with shared interest, or both. Communities may be deliberately organized, or organically self-organizing. While certain communities may be easily recognizable as communities (e.g. the "business community," or the "North River Community") others may only be discovered through study and understanding of demographic or other data that indicates collective behaviors used in the Individual level above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>[Physical] Environment:</b> How do given communities see themselves relative to the environment system? Do they perceive specific roles and responsibilities for themselves or for others?</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> How do economic interests and behaviors contribute to the formation of community structures? How dependent are the shapes of community structures on economic interests?</li> <li>• <b>Social Structure:</b> How are individuals organized at the community level? Why are they organized that way? Do individual members of a given community consider themselves a member of that community? Do they even recognize the existence of that community? What are the characterizing behaviors, interests and motivations, and general personality of given communities? Why are they that way? Do they seek or hope to change their roles, responsibility, and perceived standing? How do they intend to do so?</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Political Structure:</b> What relationship do given communities have to political structures? Are given communities able to articulate and act effectively to represent or protect their political interests? Does doing so result in greater formalization of community structures?</li> <li>• <b>Belief Systems:</b> How do belief systems contribute to the shape and personality of given communities?</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Level</b>	<p>Though mostly focused on “official” or governmental institutions from localities up to the national or regional level, “Institutional” may also include non-governmental but highly formalized organizations such as rebel or insurgent groups, unrecognized local government-like entities, chambers of commerce and other trade organizations or industry consortiums, very large companies, topic or issue-oriented advocacy structures, or highly formalized economic transactions mechanisms. These are not necessarily state-based and often cross national boundaries or span entire regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>[Physical] Environment:</b> What role do institutions play in managing and exploiting the physical environment?</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> How formal are economic institutions? Are economic drivers mostly channeled through formal institutions? Are economic-related institutions predominately enablers of, or a hindrance to economic activity?</li> <li>• <b>Social Structure:</b> What is the “institutional personality” of a given institution? Why is it that way? What is the relationship of given institutions with communities and individuals? What standing do formal institutions have within social structures?</li> <li>• <b>Political Structure:</b> Do formal institutions provide a mechanism to channel interests and grievances of individuals, communities and other institutions? Is a given political institution recognized by others? By whom? Why or why not? What role do political institutions play in the economy, social structures, and managing the physical environment?</li> <li>• <b>Beliefs:</b> How do local beliefs and customs shape institutions, if at all? How responsive/sensitive are institutions to local belief systems?</li> </ul>

Table A-6: Considering Operational Culture at Multiple Levels of Analysis

Considering each of the three levels of analysis serves several purposes. First, they help separate the environment system into analytically manageable pieces without sacrificing important internal relationships and dynamics. Second, the level at which lines of effort are engaged may be somewhat pre-determined. For example, the Country Team and US Agency for International Development (USAID) in a given country where USMC is supporting operations may explicitly declare grass-roots, bottom-up efforts as a strategic principle governing project and program design. Third, each of the three levels of analysis brings a different, but equally important, view to the environment system. Stitched together the three levels enable a holistic concept of the system, as it exists.

Table A-7 below demonstrates the an application of the Focusing Inquiry Framework, applied at the various levels of analysis, to a fictional HA/DR in a West African country where the Joint Task Force (JTF) is tasked with distributing food and water.

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Threats & Assets (What?)	Interrelationships (So What?)	Dynamics (So What?)	Options for Impact (Now What?)
<b>DEMONSTRATION: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats/Problems: Food and water insecurity.</li> <li>• Assets: High levels of motivation to engage in problem solving, long-standing value of education and work ethic, and a strong sense of national pride make it likely that individuals will be eager to build and sustain solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Physical] <b>Environment:</b> How do local individuals relate to and interact with arable land areas and water sources? What is their perceived and actual relationship to the physical environment? What form does that relationship take?</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> What role do individuals play in food production, trade and distribution?</li> <li>• <b>Social Structure:</b> How do individuals' relationship to food and water sources relate to their social position?</li> <li>• <b>Political Structure:</b> Are individuals able to articulate and act effectively to represent or protect their interests? What role do individuals play in land and water management?</li> <li>• <b>Belief Systems:</b> How do individuals' belief systems shape their behavior towards the land and food production?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsustainable land use practices have slowly rendered once arable land unproductive. [nature, source, speed]</li> <li>• Lessening land production has undermined incomes and reduced social and political standing of once large farmer-class. [nature, magnitude]</li> <li>• Belief system that values food producers is challenged by lack of food production and diminishing number of food producers in society. [response]</li> <li>• Challenges to belief system have increased flexibility of individuals considering new practices. [response] (opportunity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-known elder food producers are highly esteemed. If they are seen changing their land-use practices others will follow suit.</li> <li>• Information on successful and unsuccessful farming practices usually travels through food distribution channels.</li> </ul>

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Threats & Assets (What?)	Interrelationships (So What?)	Dynamics (So What?)	Options for Impact (Now What?)
<b>DEMONSTRATION: COMMUNITY LEVEL OF ANALYSIS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats/Problems: Fracturing social system, moribund economy.</li> <li>• Assets: Communities historically organized around food production and land-management issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Physical] <b>Environment:</b> Are community interests aligned with land management and sustainable farming practices? Do communities seem to have vested interests in certain farming, management, or distribution methods?</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> How do farming interests and behaviors contribute to the shape of community structures? Do community structures enable or hinder economic transactions?</li> <li>• <b>Social Structure:</b> Are individuals organized at the community level in ways that are amenable to shared land management practices?</li> <li>• <b>Political Structure:</b> Are communities able to articulate their interests to policy makers? Are political structures responsive to the apparent needs of communities?</li> <li>• <b>Belief Systems:</b> Are community-wide belief systems immutable or flexible? How have these belief systems shaped economic and political activity, and vice-a-versa?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities historically organized around farming have slowly fractured as food production diminishes. [nature, source, speed]</li> <li>• Political elements have sought to exploit weakened communities for short-term gain despite apparent long-term consequences. [response]</li> <li>• Communities have sought to formalize their own organization as political entities threaten their historical way of life. [feedback (2<sup>nd</sup> response)]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities organized around food production and distribution issues.</li> <li>• Communities already re-coalescing to counter political exploitation of long-established resource and livelihood base.</li> </ul>

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Threats & Assets (What?)	Interrelationships (So What?)	Dynamics (So What?)	Options for Impact (Now What?)
<b>DEMONSTRATION: INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats/Problems: Weakened government authority, predatory individuals in political power.</li> <li>• Assets: Existing institutions formed around historical land-use and production patterns. Institutions largely mirror social structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>[Physical] Environment:</b> What role do institutions play in managing and exploiting the physical environment? Do government and non-government institutions cooperate or compete?</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> Is food sales and distribution formalized and regulated? Do food production and distribution-related institutions have community and long-term sustainable management interests in mind, or do they act predominately on short-term interests?</li> <li>• <b>Social Structure:</b> Do institutions reflect or challenge social structures? To what degree to institutional social structures reinforce or compete with community-level social structures?</li> <li>• <b>Political Structure:</b> Do formal institutions engage or compete with communities? Is the government perceived as legitimately holding authority? Over what domains? How entrenched are institutional interests? How flexible?</li> <li>• <b>Beliefs:</b> Does the government reflect local belief systems, or deny them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As communities weaken in the face of diminishing community cohesions, certain key political actors in concert with corporate/business interests have moved rapidly to grab land and land-related power [nature, speed].</li> <li>• Economic activity has continued to slowly diminish, further eroding confidence in government institutions [nature, speed].</li> <li>• Government and large business interests are increasingly confronted by galvanized communities of food producers in food producing regions [response, magnitude].</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government technical components are well configured to deal with land and land-use issues.</li> <li>• Medium-sized business interests seem to understand that their livelihoods are dependent on effective land-use, and have shown flexibility in tackling problems.</li> <li>• Weakened government legitimacy opens doors to altering past ways of doing business and making policy.</li> </ul>

Table A-7: Application of the Focusing Inquiry Framework at Three Levels of Analysis

Figure A-12 below shows how the three levels of analysis overlay the four steps of the Focusing Inquiry Framework. Because any operational environment is by definition a complex system (hence the use of the term “environment system”) all three levels of analysis must be pursued

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even if it seems predetermined that yet-developed COAs will only track into one of the three levels. Of equal importance, the three levels communicate and interact with one another. Though separating out the environment system into these three channels is of great analytical utility, they are not in actuality discrete. Action taken at one level inevitably impacts each of the others. In practice, knowledge at each level is often being developed at the same time. Still, analysts and planners must take care to articulate the relationships between the three levels as they advance their understanding.

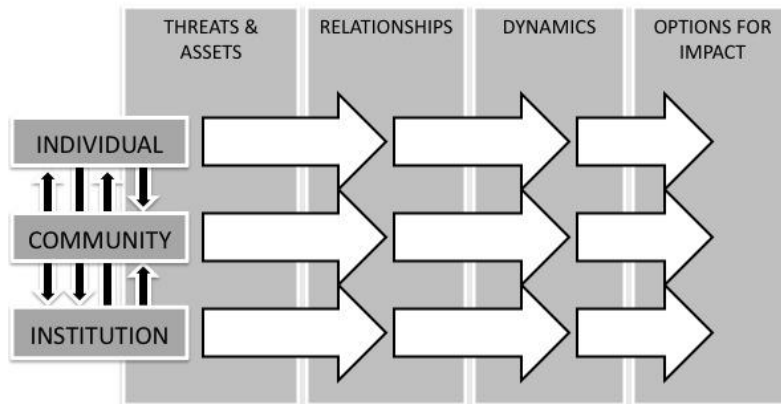


Figure A-12: Three Levels of Analyses

#### 3004. Producing Context

The output of design activities related to understanding the environment is the development of context. Context is how the OPT understand the situation in which the operation will occur. It represents the best possible understanding, at any point in the life of the OPT, the appreciation of the Operational Culture and things, relationships and dynamics, as they exist within the environment. It is CONTEXT that serves to help the commander and the staff to better understand the problem.

It is important to note that the three questions of the Foundational Inquiry and the four Focusing Inquiry steps do not delve into the development of COAs themselves because moving to development of a COA in the absence of a sufficient understanding of the environment has a strong tendency to bias planners towards predetermined solutions that may not be appropriate or adaptable to the environment they are designed to affect. While possible COAs will always be foremost in planners' minds, it is important to move through this entire process, and receive the commanders COA development guidance, before codifying formal COAs. Furthermore, though this process does not itself result directly in COAs, it does help planners capture important characteristics of the environment in a meaningful way such that the commander is fully informed prior to giving guidance. If this process is implemented effectively, relevant COAs will flow naturally from the knowledge gained, as avenues of opportunity are identified, refined, narrowed, and described in practical terms.

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This is particularly important because even though individual tasks may be narrow, overly segregating component parts of the system makes it virtually impossible to identify the myriad ways that actions in certain domains affect other domains. Similarly, actions in other domains (e.g. the efforts of other actors) may have profoundly enabling or destructive effects on the mission tasks that the OPT ultimately identifies. This process aims to identify those enabling effects that might be bolstered to the benefit of the mission as well as undesirable effects that must be guarded against or mitigated.

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## Chapter 4

### Understanding the Problem

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*“Armed with an appreciation of the environment, the design effort shifts to understanding the problem.”<sup>19</sup>*

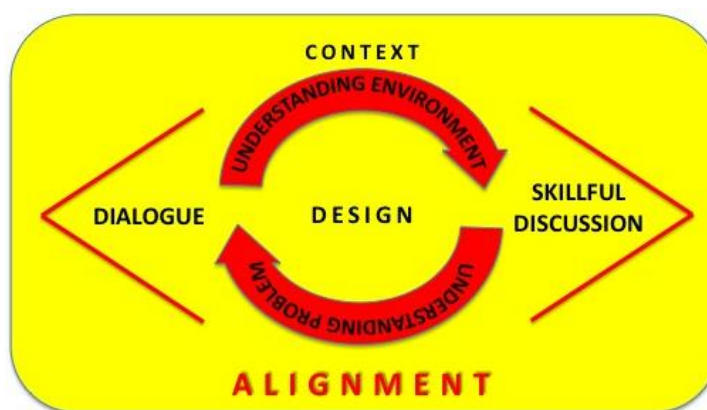


Figure A-13. An Operational Culture Planner's Guide:  
Understanding the Problem in the Problem Framing Step of the MCPP

Developing an understanding of the problem is an extension of understanding the environment. They are iterative and more often than not, simultaneous activities. As the commander engages the OPT in design dialogue through the problem framing step, an emerging sense of the difference between the situation as it exists and the desired, future state becomes apparent. As this gap comes into focus, the OPT is able to articulate more of which elements of the context must be engaged and what planning challenges they pose. Sometimes the desired future state has markedly defined and measurable outcomes, allowing for the problem to be readily analyzed by the OPT [e.g., “train a Foreign Security Force (FSF) in marksmanship” or “secure a transportation corridor”]. In many cases, however, the desired future state is not easily defined and different people will have different views on what it means or how it should look (e.g. “improve security in a community”). In these cases the OPT must continue to engage in design, dialogue, and critical thinking as they iterate between understanding the problem and understanding the environment to support the commander’s decision making.

Of the many purposes of planning, providing a disciplined framework for developing common understanding about a problem - thereby supporting communication and coordination - rank among the most critical. A common understanding of the problem for Operational Culture is achieved by a sensemaking approach that allows the OPT to fit the various elements of the context (produced through understanding the environment) into a coherent narrative scheme around which to organize the subsequent tasks of planning. Sensemaking in understanding the

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<sup>19</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, “*Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C., 2-3

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problem is a means to produce alignment of perspectives, understandings and intentions between the commander, the OPT and the rest of the planning staff.

**4001. Foundational Sensemaking Framework**

In form similar to understanding the environment, understanding the problem involves addressing the three questions - What? So What? What Now? - as its foundational element. Table A-5 below summarizes the objectives of the three questions in the Foundational Sensemaking Framework for understanding the problem:

<b>WHAT?</b>
Establishes which elements to apply to the sensemaking framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determines boundaries, limits, elements and resources under our control that may be usable in accomplishing our mission; and</li><li>• Establishes the context relationships and dynamics to be utilized in framing and understanding the problem.</li></ul>
<b>SO WHAT?</b>
Maps elements identified above (in What?) to the sensemaking framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maps mission related elements and context elements to the sensemaking framework; and</li><li>• Assesses the relationship between mapped elements to establish appropriate further action.</li></ul>
<b>NOW WHAT?</b>
Frames elements from the sensemaking framework to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine appropriate needs and actions necessary to enhance understanding; and</li><li>• Assist planners in exploring specific courses of action upon receipt of commander’s guidance.</li></ul>

Table A-8: Foundational Sensemaking Framework

*What?*: Answering this question involves exercising two perspectives: an inward-looking perspective and an outward-looking perspective. First, in understanding the problem we seek to add new information to the context as developed in understanding the environment. Knowledge is extended beyond our understanding of the situation “out there” through the deepening engagement (supported by staff actions) with the nature of the mission, or situation “in here” within the OPT. This inward look includes discussion of the boundaries, limits, elements and resources under control of the OPT that may be usable in accomplishing the mission and its related tasks.

The second part of answering the “What?” for sensemaking involves engaging with the context that is being created in the design effort as understanding the environment increases. In identifying “What?” the OPT is engaged in ascertaining which parts of the context are to be components of framing and understanding the problem. These are the elements, relationships and dynamics positioned within the environment deemed initially important to the purpose of the operation and its related tasks. The elements include:

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- Relationships
  - Who do we need to engage, relative to the mission?
  - What are their relationships?
  - Who are the stakeholders and how may they be impacted / engaged by the evolving mission?
- Dynamics
  - What dynamics are critical?
  - What entry points do they reveal?
  - How will the dynamics shape the understanding of critical second and third order effects?

*So What?*: Operational Culture introduces significant new complexities into the planning task. Answering the question “So What?” is at the heart of understanding the problem and involves utilizing an innovative sensemaking approach. The sensemaking approach employ provides a mechanism for enabling OPT members to create a more detailed mapping of the information identified while answering “What?” previously described. Details of the sensemaking approach and how it assists planners in overcoming the complexities inherent in operational culture, are delineated in the following section.

*Now what?*: As in understanding the environment, this step ties the “What?” and “So What?” steps together and frames their discoveries so as to ensure they have particular meaning to the eventual development of COAs. The sensemaking used in “So What?” provides guidance to the planner in terms of what actions need to be taken, what additional information needs to be generated, and what further understanding of the environment needs to be sought. As an integral part of the design activities, it also provides outputs that can serve as components of the COAs that will evolve in subsequent steps of the MCPP.

### **4002. Cynefin Sensemaking Framework**

Central to the design effort that integrates the understanding the environment with understanding the problem is a sensemaking approach that is brought to bear on problem framing. The Cynefin framework is an open source, practitioner’s tool for organizational sensemaking. The Cynefin (pronounced ku-*nev*-in) model was first published by Kurtz and Snowden in 2003<sup>20</sup> while they were working for IBM doing research and development in knowledge management and strategy. Now, in wide used across business, defense, and healthcare, among other sectors, the Cynefin framework is adapted and applied by a growing group of practitioners around the world. For this application - the problem framing step of MCPP - the concepts have been applied and enhanced to specifically address the various sensemaking concerns faced by OPT members.

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<sup>20</sup> Kurtz, C. F. and Snowden, D. J. (2003). “*The new dynamics of strategy: Sense-making in a complex and complicated world*”, IBM Systems Journal, 42 (3)

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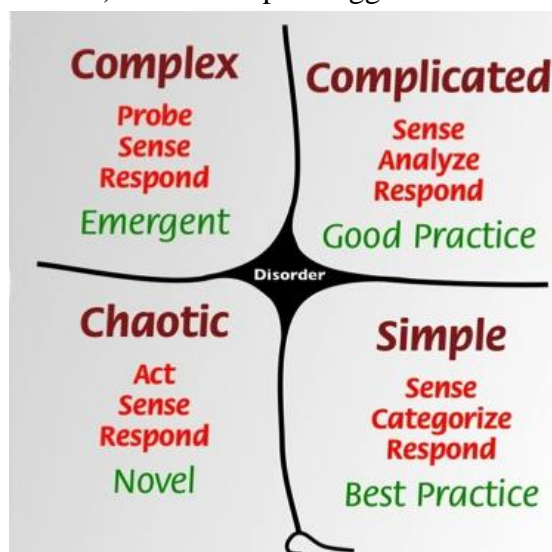
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Sensemaking is the process of understanding in a way that leads to an effective plan of action. The framework discussed is adapted from a growing body of research in organizational learning and management. The Cynefin construct presented in Figure A-14 below, is a heuristic device for assisting planners in positioning elements of the context and linking their relevant planning actions/solutions. The Cynefin framework suggests two categories of problem contexts: those problems that can be categorized, and those problems requiring sensemaking. Cynefin contexts “simple and complicated” are categorized using readily available information about an environment to identify and apply appropriate approaches. In these cases, the OPT is concerned with managing facts and data, using both as inputs as the context is classified and the approach enacted. Cynefin contexts “complex and chaotic” require that knowledge of the environment and problem *be developed* prior to and during an application of an approach. In these cases, the OPT must align itself to enable data-driven and pattern-based learning, such that a deepening understanding of the environment and nature of the problem continues through the subsequent steps of the MCPP.

Although the framework is depicted in well-defined quadrants it is absolutely essential for users to recognize that it is truly a two dimensional diagram. This means the spatial relationship within a quadrant is as important as which quadrant a given context is placed in. The boundaries, though diagramed as reasonably precise, are not. Contexts may be simple verging on complicated. Conceptual placing a context farther from the center indicates a certain satisfaction with, or confidence in the placement, perhaps as a result of significant information about the given context. At the center is disorder, which holds those elements of the context that are contested with regard to how they should be categorized.

Each category within the Cynefin Sensemaking Framework offers a suggested approach (in Red) as well as the way the category is best responded to (in Green). The three-part suggested approach is formulated to enhance effective operation within the given problem domain. They are composed of several basic action types delineated in a sequence specific to the context. Sense refers to the process of gathering information. In the case of the simple and complicated domains, sensing occurs first which provides the data to be categorized or analyzed toward developing a response. In the sensemaking domains, complex and complicated, sensing is part of the action process, performed dynamically as an activity is occurring. The basic action types, act and probe are unique to the chaotic and complex domains respectively and are described in greater detail below.



As with most of the tools and processes described in this Appendix, it is essential to remember that this construct is not a rigid

Figure A-14. The Cynefin Sensemaking Framework (Snowden, David. Creative Commons: CC BY)

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categorization scheme fixed in time but is dynamic. As more is learned complicated problems may become simple. This should be one of the goals of the process - to allow contexts that at one time seemed complex, nearly beyond comprehension, to be at least partially understood. Similarly complicated problems may, after further assessment, become complex as previously held understandings are invalidated by new information. Therefore the OPT needs to continuously monitor the understanding derived from the sensemaking process, continuously updating understanding as time progresses.

Identifying whether a given context is simple, complicated, complex, or chaotic is only the first step - each domain has unique considerations and should inform how the OPT proceeds with the MCPP to produce an order.

### **Simple Contexts:**

*What is a Simple context?:* Simple contexts are ones in which either knowledge or experience directs the planning staff to a knowable answer. They are heavily process-oriented situations, where directives are straight-forward, decisions can be easily delegated, and functions are automated. There should be widespread agreement about how to incorporate the known information into a plan. These considerations often have an easily observable cause and effect, allowing for standard operating procedures to be followed.

*How to approach Simple Contexts:* Simple contexts have a high degree of predictability and agreement. Here, it is only necessary to *sense, categorize, and respond* to the considerations that are faced. That is, take information gathered during the sense phase, categorize it within operational constraints, and respond accordingly. Adhering to best practices and standard operating procedures is appropriate with these types of cultural considerations. Examples of simple contexts may be certain culturally specific behaviors such as how to greet someone, whether an offer of food and drink should be accepted and how to time is understood.

*Challenges in the Simple Context:* Planning in the simple context can still be problematic, because there can be a tendency to feel secure in the in the “known knowns” and oversimplify problems or succumb to entrained thinking. While the design dialogue can help an OPT avoid these two pitfalls, it is good to be aware of them.

Oversimplification occurs when information is condensed or assumed. Simple problems are not simplistic - they need to be fully understood, like all the other problem contexts. Entrained thinking occurs when OPT members hold on to perspectives acquired through past success, are not open to new ways of thinking. Best practice is, by definition, past practice. Difficulties can arise if the OPT leader is not open to dissent or alternative solutions.

Additionally, operations in this domain can quickly collapse into chaos if planners do not adapt best practices to their understanding of the environment. Here, the idea of the “Strategic Corporal” - a Marine whose judgment, decision-making, and actions can have strategic implications affecting the outcome of a mission - is particularly relevant. Failing to follow the “best practices” for engaging with a particular environment - including adhering to cultural do’s and don’ts - can contribute to missions tactically succeeding but strategically failing.

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### Complicated Contexts

*What is a Complicated context?:* Complicated contexts arise as the environment becomes less predictable and desired outcomes become less certain. Complicated contexts, unlike simple ones, may contain multiple correct approaches. There is a high degree of uncertainty - the considerations may be challenging and difficult, but they are still knowable - and this where expert analysis can contribute to building an understanding of the problem within the environment. An example of a complicated context may be culturally derived patterns of conversation used in a group setting. Simple contexts interact with the multitude of actors in the conversation, often leading to questions of which of several procedures to follow. By observing the actors and their actions, then analyzing the dynamics and known rules and patterns applicable to the situation, the participant can determine appropriate action.

*How to approach a Complicated context?:* A complicated context requires the OPT to sense, analyze, and respond to the cultural considerations in this realm. This approach is not easy and the OPT should elicit cultural information and support via SMEs, liaisons, Cultural Advisors (CULADs), reach-back capabilities, and others. Additionally the OPT leader needs to encourage novel thoughts and solutions from the OPT, commander, and staff.

*Challenges in the Complicated Context:* Cultural advising can help an OPT select a right answer, based on his/her understanding of the “known unknowns”. However, the OPT cannot rely on the expertise at the expense of additional consideration from other sources. Entrained thinking is also a danger in complicated contexts, but the danger lies within the expert rather than the OPT. Because experts dominate this domain, innovative suggestions may be overlooked or dismissed. Experts have invested in building their unique knowledge base, which is both a strength and weakness. They may not be aware of contextual shifts in the environment, or their understanding of the environment may be deeply embedded in their own perspective.

To avoid this issue, the OPT leader must facilitate a design dialogue that takes expertise into account while simultaneously welcoming critical reflection and thought from the team. The expertise offered by a CULAD needs to be analyzed within operational constraints, with a response formulated according to that analysis.

There is a tradeoff between all factors in the operational environment, and a CULAD can help an OPT identify how to achieve an acceptable balance. But in the complicated domain, the OPT leader should elicit as many perspectives as possible to promote unfettered analysis. Formulating a plan in a socially complicated context can take a lot of time and effort - there is always a tradeoff between finding the right answer and simply making a decision.

When the decision is based on incomplete information - where there is still a high level of ambiguity - the operational context is complex, rather than complicated, and needs to be addressed in a different manner.

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### Complex Contexts

*“I engage, and after that I see what to do.” Napoleon Bonaparte*

*What is a Complex Context?:* Complex contexts are characterized by high uncertainty. Planning within this sensemaking context is always contingent on contextual and dynamic conditions and therefore unknowable during deliberate planning. This, however, does not mean planning for complexity cannot occur. In fact, it is within the complex context where design activities as described in this pamphlet make the greatest impact. In this context, no perfectly correct plan or COA can be devised, even with extensive analysis. In fact, there is likely to be significant disagreement among those on the planning team and other stakeholders about the nature of the problem and what, if anything should be done. The results are highly dependent on a full understanding of initial conditions - which can only truly occur during execution. During planning, the OPT will rely on what they are learning about the actors, relationship and dynamic within the environment (through working the Focusing Inquiry Framework described above) and use abductive reasoning to generate explanatory hypotheses about how the system works. Of the five possible domains, the complex domain will be that which is inhabited by many of the contexts the OPT will plan for, especially at the conceptual and function levels of the hierarchy.

*How to approach Complex Contexts:* Complex contexts require an approach that is not as clear and precise as simple or complicated contexts. Operating in complex contexts requires that the OPT use probe, sense, and respond as the approach to generate greater understanding of relationships, tendencies, and potentials within the environment. Probing helps identify how key actors and activities are interrelated, and helps build meaning with regards to the problem. This is the first step to making sense of the relationships and their dynamics - the OPT should recognize patterns that reinforce or disrupt the environment and identify potential opportunities for seeding reinforcing patterns. While the ultimate learning created through probe, sense, respond occurs during execution, planners will explore dynamics within the context by generating what if analyses and fully fleshing out assumptions. These assumptions are tested during wargaming, which provides a pre-execution opportunity to probe, sense and respond.

Complex problems do not have one right approach that can be ferreted out in advance using expertise and advising. There are numerous factors and dynamics in the environment, many of which are “unknown unknowns.” Experts are essential in the process of sensing, as well as informing “responses.” However, there can be a dangerous tendency to rely on expertise, forcing a complex problem into the complicated domain. Doing so ignores those “unknown unknowns” and can enforce a structured approach that does not adequately address the problem at hand.

When planning in this domain, the OPT leader needs to extend the design process, and be comfortable with ambiguity present in these contexts during the planning process. Rather than leaning solely on the expertise of advisors and subject matter experts, the OPT leader needs to facilitate a dialogue with all members of the OPT. Managing planning in complex contexts is not an easy task, but it can be achieved through the creation of a more open environment. Leaders are most effective when they:

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- **Open up the discussion:** Complex operating contexts require more interactive communication within the planning staff than any of other context. The OPT leader and staff need to generate innovative ideas, which can be achieved through more candid discussion in order to help leaders with development and execution of complex decisions.
- **Encourage dissent and diversity:** Dissent and debate should be used in problem framing because they encourage the OPT leader and staff to evaluate implicit assumptions embedded within well-known COAs.

Response in complex contexts is not about identifying a correct approach towards desired outcomes; rather, it is about identifying options as they emerge, monitoring relationships and tendencies as they change, and being prepared to react to surprises or unexpected opportunities. In this sense the purpose of the probe is threefold - to gather further information, to assess the potential of a given action, and to perhaps stimulate the environment in a manner that allow important information to be observed. This last purpose is consistent with what many have described Napoleon's approach to warfare, as referenced in the introductory quote - get things moving, observe for opportunities created by the complexity of the situation, then be first to exploit those opportunities.

The exercise of understanding the problem begins while engaging in understanding the environment. Complex problems, by nature, cannot be separated from the cultural context they are embedded in. The conditions of the environment cause interactions and actions to become nonlinear - minor changes can produce disproportionately major consequences. In these contexts the environment is incredibly dynamic, where the whole of the engagement is greater than the sum of each operation. Solutions cannot be imposed; rather they arise from the circumstances within the operational and cultural context.

Complex contexts may, in retrospect, appear ordered and predictable. This retrospective coherence comes from building a holistic understanding of initial conditions during execution. Because execution is required for understanding cause and effect, hindsight cannot be translated into foresight - although capturing the hindsight may help planners organize and make sense of ambiguity they will face in future operations.

Design is a critical element to planning in complexity. It helps the OPT articulate assumptions embedded in the understanding of the problem within the environment. The OPT needs to reflect on underlying assumptions: recognize which assumptions are valid, which indicate a need for additional information, and which are the result of past experiences, trainings, or world views.

*Challenges of Complex Contexts:* The primary concern for an OPT planning in complex contexts is the temptation to fall back into traditional command-and-control leadership styles. Leaders who fail to recognize that complex domains require a different type of leadership may become impatient when COAs are not easily identified. Imposing order in complex contexts contributes to failure of execution. Responses in complex contexts need to be structured so the OPT, in subsequent planning steps, can continue to collect data about the environment and critically reflect its relationship to the problem. The OPT leader needs to allow ample time for problem

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framing and, as the planning cycle continues onward, continue to use design to reframe the problem context.

### **Chaotic Contexts**

*What is a Chaotic context?:* Chaotic contexts have an extreme level of uncertainty. Often times, stakeholders will not be in agreement about what to do. These contexts have many factors that cannot be considered prior to engagement with the environment, because the environmental dynamics are not only unknown, they are unknowable. Searching for an appropriate course of action would be fruitless - the dynamics in the environment are shifting too quickly and dramatically. There is no manageable pattern in the context, only turbulence.

*How to approach Chaotic Contexts:* When planning in chaos, the OPT cannot force understanding of the context or apply an ordering construct. Rather, the OPT needs to act, sense, and then respond. Action is required to establish some order in the environment - this is the context where crisis management is the only appropriate first response. After which, the OPT can begin to make sense of the environment. The OPT needs to sense where stability is present and from where it is absent, as well as critically reflect on what actions helped contribute to the stability. The OPT should also sense emerging opportunities. The appropriate response to this context works to transform the situation from chaotic into complex. Again in this context, crisis management is the appropriate first action.

These situations often occur in the aftermath of a natural or manmade disaster. The USMC is rarely the only actor in these contexts, and never the lead for a disaster response. As such, the first action of the OPT leader is to assess the order within the interagency response. In chaos, stability should be the primary goal for intervention.

It may seem counterintuitive, but there may be situations requiring the first action to be no action at all. This strategic pause fits in with the act-sense-respond sequence, only what the planning team, with the help of interagency partners, CULADs, and SME(s), should be sensing is resiliencies emerging from the cultural context. The strategic pause can help an OPT leader identify stability and instability in the operating environment enabling the OPT to respond accordingly.

There is opportunity for innovative responses in chaotic contexts. During engagement, Marines should be looking for what is working - and what isn't - rather than frame their actions as the right answer or correct response. In these contexts, there is no clear cause-and-effect.

*Challenges of Chaotic Contexts:* Chaotic contexts provide very unique challenges. Although it may often seem that everything is chaotic, it should in some ways be used as a category of last resort. Additionally, the chaotic context provides what appears to be a simple approach: act first. So it may be tempting to classify challenging problems as chaotic so as to not require additional effort that complex or complicated contexts may require.

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### **Disordered Contexts**

Disordered contexts normally result from a disagreement of categorization. They are more a result of the process of understanding than a state of the universe. While analyzing different contexts the OPT will normally have reasonable success at defining the extremities of each of the four primary domains. As more difficult issues arise it will be tempting, as in the chaotic domain, to have the individual preferences of each participant come to the foreground. Persons preferring well-defined problems, and the corresponding simple execution plans, will attempt to force contexts into the simple or complicated domains. Those of a research bent will be tempted to assign many contexts to the complex category. Those with a more forceful nature will find the chaotic domain appealing as it will allow swift and concise action without delay. This contestation is essential to the dynamics of understanding and should be expected as part of divergent thinking.

### **4003. Responses to the Cynefin Sensemaking Domains**

Understanding the problem helps commanders formulate their intent and guidance. The commander's initial intent helps the OPT understand the larger context of actions - it bounds the environment and problem within operational constraints, tempo, and purpose. Cynefin is designed to offer guidance in answering the "Now What?" question. As contexts are placed within the framework recommended approaches to assist in developing methods to address the contexts can be formulated. For each domain in the Cynefin framework planners can assess whether the available knowledge and resources can be utilized to address the problems associated with the contexts. As detailed dynamic contexts specified during understanding the environment are further analyzed, it may be found that although the entire context is complex, parts of the dynamics may be found to fall within other domains. Certain contexts will require engaging in several domains. Consider an example of meeting with a group of tribal elders, with the desired outcome being to establish an understanding regarding an upcoming military operation. This example will be expanded on as the actions associated with different domains are described.

For simple contexts the process is straight forward. By definition simple contexts have clear cut understanding of appropriate action. Contexts within this domain can also identify specific needs. As the actions prescribed are well defined planners can assess whether appropriate capacity is available. For Operational Culture it can identify specific training needs or areas where additional knowledge is needed. In our example, simple actions would include proper ways to greet a person or how to properly sit when speaking with a member of the population. For OPT planners, and particularly for Green Cell members, Simple contexts frequently suggest specific training needs to acquaint Marines with the rules involved.

For complicated contexts the process is again reasonably straightforward. However, in complicated contexts it may be necessary to engage domain area experts, or SMEs, that are familiar with the interplay of actions with cultures. Extending on our example, conversational patterns and behaviors may fall within the complicated domain. The dynamics of the situation would require the participants to carefully observe those in attendance to determine when certain cues are given, then determine which of several choices need to be made with respect to a

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response. Where expert judgment is involved, and these experts agree as to appropriate action, one can assume that the domain is complicated. On the other hand, for the OPT planner it might be the case that the specific cultural mechanisms envisioned for the proposed meeting with village elders are not known. If this is the case, experts in the culture should be engaged to help formulate appropriate best practices for such engagements. In our example, if the Marine were to find that there are a number of participants attending the meeting, it may be necessary to have a cultural expert establish a set of guiding principles in terms of who is greeted first, who is addressed when speaking. Again it should be mentioned that the Cynefin domains are not static. As experience is gained and greater understanding of a given cultural environment expands, things once thought complex or complicated may become ingrained and hence become simple. At least for that Marine! Complicated contexts often suggest a need for specific SME support, specifically addressing the several components within a complicated context.

Complex contexts require a completely different set of cognitive approaches. The context may not be well understood. This may be either as a result of lack of appropriate information, or lack of an understanding of the underlying mechanism, if any. In our example there is a desired outcome of the meeting. As the conversation evolves it may not be clear how to achieve that agreement. Is there something that might be offered? Is the problem intractable? Are we even asking the right question? In complex situations the best course of action is to formulate several possible probes. Probes are, by definition, similar to scouting. In conversation it might be referred to as a gambit. As the situation evolves, the Marine can choose to execute a given probe, observing closely to determine if the conversation appears to be going in the right direction. If not, then perhaps a different approach is necessary. For the OPT planner, and the Green Cell member, complex contexts suggest several approaches. A context may be complex simply because not enough is known about a given situation, suggesting further information gathering. As in the example, a complex context may also lead to development of several possible probes, meant to gather further information regarding the context, and allowing planners to develop better approaches to meeting the need specified by the context. The objective when dealing in complex contexts is to develop a series of actionable goals that can expose new information. If enough appropriate information is exposed, the context may be determined to move within the complicated or even simple domains, where best practices or simple rules may be applied to meet the goals of the mission.

Chaotic contexts are simply that, chaotic. In this case the proscribed plan is to act. This allows the situation to be perturbed and may result in further understanding that allows a less extreme approach. As previously described, this may be the case in a HA/DR scenario.

The matrix on the following pages is modeled on a similar matrix developed by Cynefin practitioners. It helps the OPT determine which context they are working within, and offers insight as to how to proceed with analyzing the problem context. The four contexts have one significant requirement in common: they all need the OPT leader to keep the design dialogue open and unbounded to build an understanding of the problem. Using this matrix, one can classify issues according to the network; establish imperatives which enable the OPT to take action in regards to the category; and learn how to respond to problems situated in the various categories. It also summarizes mechanisms that will allow the development of inputs to the larger OPT process.

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<b>Cynefin Problem Context</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Context (What?)</b>	<b>OPT Imperatives (So What?)</b>	<b>Implications for Planning (Now What?)</b>
<b>Simple</b>	<p>Known Knowns</p> <p>Cause-and-effect is repeatable, perceivable, and predictable</p> <p>A “right” answer is evident</p> <p>Heavily process-oriented</p>	<p>Fact-based management</p> <p>Communicate in clear, direct ways</p> <p>Delegate</p> <p><i>RISKS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrained thinking within OPT</li> <li>• Desire to make complex problems simple</li> <li>• Complacency can collapse into chaos</li> </ul>	<p><i>Sense-Categorize-Respond</i></p> <p>Sense what is known about the context</p> <p>Categorize information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taught in pre-deployment training programs</li> <li>• Cultural do’s and don’ts</li> </ul> <p>Respond with standard operating procedures and best practices</p>
<b>Complicated</b>	<p>Known Unknowns</p> <p>Cause-and-effect are separated over time and space, but can be knowable</p> <p>More than one right answer possible</p> <p>Expertise required</p>	<p>Fact-based management</p> <p>Create a panel of experts</p> <p>Leverage liaisons/cultural advisors</p> <p>Listen to conflicting advice</p> <p><i>RISKS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrained thinking of experts</li> <li>• Alternative viewpoints excluded</li> <li>• Complex problems parsed to appear complicated</li> <li>• Overconfidence in efficacy of past solutions</li> <li>• Analysis paralysis</li> </ul>	<p><i>Sense-Analyze-Respond</i></p> <p>Sense what needs to be addressed in the context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use dialogue to force thinking out of the box</li> <li>• Elicit knowledge from experts</li> </ul> <p>Analyze information collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate several options</li> <li>• Analyze each options</li> <li>• Categorize the options</li> </ul> <p>Respond to the analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify good and effective practices</li> <li>• Make a decision within time and resource constraints</li> </ul> <p>If decision is based on incomplete data, situation is probably complex</p>

Application for OPTs based on Snowden and Boone (2007)<sup>21</sup> and Patton (2010)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Snowden, D. J. and Boone, M. E. (2007). “A Leader’s Framework for Decision Making,” Harvard Business Review

<sup>22</sup> Patton, M. Q. (2010). “Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use”

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<b>Cynefin Problem Context</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Context (What?)</b>	<b>OPT Imperatives (So What?)</b>	<b>Implications for Planning (Now What?)</b>
<b>Complex</b>	<p>Unknown Unknowns</p> <p>Cause-and-effect are only coherent in retrospect</p> <p>No right answers</p> <p>Involves many stakeholders and interacting elements</p> <p>Minor changes can produce disproportionately major results</p> <p>Solutions can't be imposed</p> <p>Need for innovative and creative approaches</p>	<p>Create an OPT environment conducive to trial and error</p> <p>Increase level of interaction and communication within the design dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open up discussion</li> <li>• Encourage dissent and diversity</li> <li>• Manage starting conditions</li> </ul> <p>Make assumptions explicit</p> <p>Engage in sensemaking and knowledge-building</p> <p><i>RISKS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temptation to fall back into command-and-control leadership</li> <li>• Looking for facts, not patterns</li> <li>• Accelerate resolution at the expense of recognizing opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Probe-Sense-Respond</i></p> <p>Probe the environment to understand its relationship to the problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use dialogue to identify key relationships</li> <li>• Capture tendencies of actors</li> <li>• Use tendencies and interrelationships to build coherence and meaning</li> </ul> <p>Make sense of the problem within the environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize patterns that reinforce or disrupt stability</li> <li>• Identify potential opportunities for seeding reinforcing patterns within the context</li> </ul> <p>Build a monitoring response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to be surprised</li> <li>• Look for emerging relationships or changes in existing tendencies and relationships</li> <li>• Investigate potential opportunities</li> <li>• Build a framework for adaptability</li> </ul> <p>Continue to monitor the response</p>
<b>Chaotic</b>	<p>Unknowable</p> <p>No clear cause-and-effect</p> <p>Never a “right answer”</p> <p>High tension and turbulence</p> <p>Rapid tempo</p> <p>Requires direct leadership</p>	<p>Command-and-control</p> <p>Provide clear, direct communication</p> <p>Look for what works instead of seek right answers</p> <p>Remain open to innovation in the response</p> <p><i>RISKS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misidentifying a potential action as “the right answer,” instead of an appropriate action</li> <li>• Missed opportunity for innovation</li> </ul>	<p><i>Act-Sense-Respond</i></p> <p>Act to address segments of the problem</p> <p>Sense where stability is present, and from where it is absent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify relationships, tendencies, and potential</li> <li>• Identify potential opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Respond to stability and reinforcing relationships and tendencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advantages of opportunities</li> <li>• Work to shift into the complex context through continued sensemaking</li> <li>• Continuously develop knowledge</li> </ul>

Application for OPTs based on Snowden and Boone (2007) and Patton (2010)

Table A-9: Identifying, Understanding and Responding to Cynefin Sensemaking Domains

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### **4004. Producing Alignment**

Alignment is a shared understanding and agreement across OPT staff functions. Alignment occurs as a part of understanding the problem through several means. Conversation, execution of the Cynefin process, and the ordering and understanding of the outputs of the Cynefin Sensemaking Framework all lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the mission goals as well as the capabilities, challenges, and dynamics involved in achieving the goals. By using a shared process a common language is developed. Understanding the concepts of complex versus complicated will especially help planners recognize the need to be more precise in their uses of the terms, creating a shared understanding of the implications of these categorizations on further communications as well as achieving the goals of the planning process.

There are two important challenges, and related opportunities when planning in the complex domain. The first challenge is to resist the desire to assume away too many unknowns, thereby treating the situation as complicated. This happens when the team becomes overly stressed by the ambiguity present in the context and the lack of alignment within the OPT. This is exactly the time when dialogue and other design practices will support the team. The other challenge occurs when the OPT sees the problem as so highly complex as that it defies a reasonable solution. In this case, it is important to use design practices, especially dialogue and sensemaking, to work through the complexity. The opportunity is found in the creative and concerted consideration of the complexity in the context. Such efforts are typically powerful generators of hypotheses about how the system might respond to actions of the USMC/Joint Force/Coalition, the assumptions underpinning these, and the commander's critical information requirements to monitor the effects. It fundamentally sets the OPT up for effectiveness through execution and assessment.

At its core, this process recognizes the challenges faced in integrating Operational Culture into the MCPP and provides a means to make sense of them toward an improved understanding of the problem. Planners using this process, especially those involved in Green Cell operations, will have more precise and understood methods to apply meaningful, accurate and useful information in the larger planning process.

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## Chapter 5

### Relationship to Remaining Steps of MCPP

The problem framing step of MCPP is considered the most important step of the MCPP. A well framed problem is the result of holistic analysis, including a thorough understanding of the environment with regard to Operational Culture. The product of such an analysis is context which forms the basis upon which the OPT can make sense of the problems they will need to solve. Problem framing leads to the commander's initial intent. The figure to the right suggests how the commander's initial intent grows through next three steps of the MCPP to produce the Concept of Operations (CONOPS). According to the MCPP:

*As planning continues, the commander's concept becomes more detailed, providing additional clarity and operational context. Design does not end with problem framing, because the situation constantly evolves and requires the commander to continually review and possibly modify his design.<sup>23</sup>*

The primary products of the design effort for Operational Culture during problem framing is the production of context and alignment through understanding the environment and understanding the problem, respectively. While gaining this understanding is the emphasis of the first step of MCPP, in fact both understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem will continue to develop as remaining steps of MCPP unfold.

In the face of operational complexity and limited information with regard to the environment, planning continues. In these cases, planners must purposefully engage in design activities, thereby deepening their understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem. Planners form logical hypotheses based upon knowledge created during problem framing. These hypotheses become important elements for planning given that they suggest the need to be tested in execution, and continually assessed such that they might be confirmed or refuted, with the plan adapting as necessary. The "what if" design work of hypothesis generation also allows the OPT to plan for branches and sequels.

The graphic below depicts the design effort of the problem framing step with regard to Operational Culture. In addition to producing context and alignment as its main products, the process generates other elements useful throughout the planning steps.

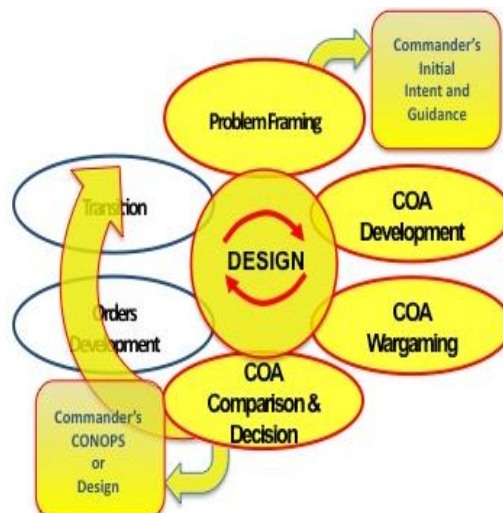


Figure A-15. Problem Framing and Commander's CONOPS

<sup>23</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, "Marine Corps Planning Process," Washington, D.C., 1-5

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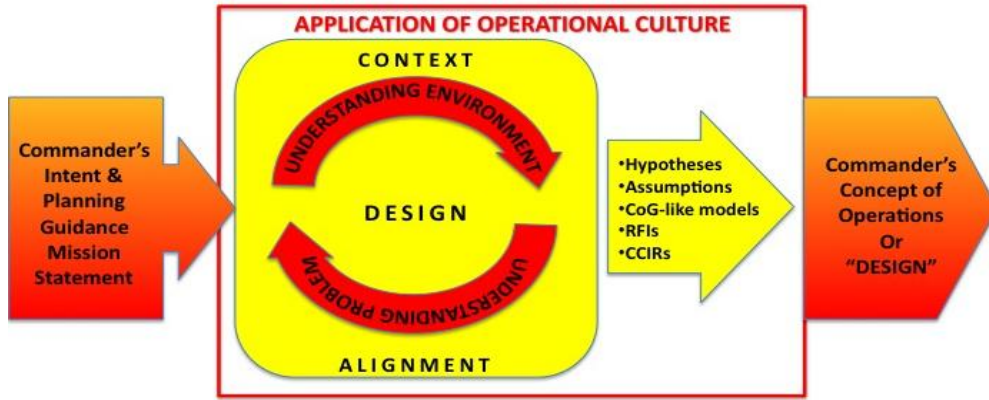


Figure A-16. Outputs of the Problem Framing Design Effort for Operational Culture



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## Appendix B. Mauritania Vignette and Operational Context

### Introduction

With support and direction from the Study Sponsor the Mauritania Vignette was developed as part of the approach to Task 3. The vignette gave us the material “sandbox” in which to experiment with our concepts for how to integrate Operational Culture into the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP). The vignette is modeled after a Joint Forces Command and Staff College (JFSC) exercise, and is set in the country of Mauritania in the year 2015. It describes a complex humanitarian and political crisis in which the United States (US) Marine Corps (USMC) is tasked to support interagency Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) operations, and to conduct Security Force Assistance (SFA) missions with the Mauritanian military. The vignette was designed to create a hypothetical operational context against which the framework could be applied and refined. Through application with the vignette, the Integrating Framework was improved and refined.

### Executive Summary

#### *Context*

- Several cycles of below-average rainfall results in food insecurity for 2.2 million people.
- World Food Programme (WFP), France, and European Union (EU) distribute food aid.
- Flooding in Southeast Asia increases international rice prices, making import of food more costly for Mauritania.
- Decreasing demand for iron results in high unemployment in urban and industrial centers.
- An al Qaeda affiliate increases kidnappings and executions of aid workers.
- Widespread discontent among large unemployed urban population results in significant rioting in the capital city of Nouakchott.
- Flooding washes out major transportation corridors, exacerbating food insecurity and disease.
- A major Mauritanian political opponent calls for a mass demonstration in the streets of the main cities. Several people die when demonstrators calling for the President to step down clash with security forces in Nouakchott.
- The Mauritanian government requests support from the United Nations (UN) and key international partners to maintain security and stability.
- The US and France agree to sign a Security Cooperation (SC) agreement with Mauritania in order to improve the training of Mauritanian security forces. The Mauritanian Department of Defense (DOD) requests the US to conduct SFA training in the Mauritanian army barracks outside the northern port city of Nouadhibou near the border with Western Sahara. The French government agrees to conduct similar SC training in Nouakchott.

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### *Precipitating Event*

- Widespread flooding occurring on the heels of sustained drought brings already severe food shortages to a critical level. Some 68% of the population is deemed at high risk of malnourishment and cholera. Mass internal migration has placed additional stresses on urban centers and limited critical infrastructure.

### *US Government Involvement*

- Transport and disburse food aid;
- Provide engineering support to restore transportation networks;
- Provide security to protect food aid convoys and distribution centers;
- Support Host Nation (HN) military in restoring and maintaining order in urban centers;
- Conduct humanitarian military medical missions to combat diseases prevalent in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps; and
- Be prepared to engage with Mauritanian security forces to provide follow-on training and support to build partner capacity.

### **Country Context**

**The Place.** Mauritania is a predominantly desert country located in the Sahel region of West Africa. More than half of the 3.3 million Mauritians depend on agriculture and livestock for livelihoods.<sup>1</sup> Despite the highly agrarian economy, Mauritania is unable to produce enough food to meet domestic consumption and imports roughly 70 percent of its cereal needs.<sup>2</sup> This makes food security in Mauritania sensitive to shocks to internal food production like drought, flooding, and locust pestilence, as well to external shocks such as volatility in the price of cereals on international markets. The effects of low domestic food production have been traditionally offset by stable international rice prices, allowing for cheap food imports. While much of the Mauritanian population remains rural and agrarian, drought in the 1970s and 1980s caused an urban migration, forcing many to leave their villages to find employment in urban and industrial centers.

**The People.** The cultural composition of Mauritania is complex, with concepts of race and ethnicity being multi-tiered and interwoven among language, color, social status, lineage, tribe, etc. At a macro level, however, the country is largely divided between its Arab-Berber population to the North, and its Sub-Saharan African population to the South.<sup>3</sup> Tension and low-intensity conflict occur sporadically among various ethnic groups. In 1989 the country

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<sup>1</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2010). "Mauritania," *The World Factbook*

<sup>2</sup> US Agency for International Development (2005). "Mauritania: Understanding the Current Food Situation Based on the Evidence," Washington D.C.

<sup>3</sup> BBC News (2010). "Country Profile: Mauritania"

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experienced significant ethnic violence along the Mauritanian-Senegalese border.<sup>4</sup> The border conflict, spurred by disputes over grazing rights, resulted in the expulsion of tens of thousands of what are known as “black” Mauritians of the ethnic groups Soinike, Peul, and Wolof, among others.<sup>5</sup> These are also the ethnic groups that constitute the majority of the Southern Mauritanian region most affected by the drought.

**The Government and Military.** In addition to ethnic conflict, a pattern of political upheaval has developed since the end of French colonization, with 11 coups or coup attempts since independence in 1960.<sup>6</sup> In 2014, senior military leaders under the leadership of a top General staged a successful bloodless coup, citing the then-standing President’s inability to combat increasing terrorism in the North of the country, and ineffective economic policies. While internally applauded, the coup received intense international criticism. The coup organizers agreed to hold elections, and the General resigned his military post. He was subsequently elected President in 2015 and the elections were deemed free and fair by international observers. Since the elections, there have been widespread allegations of corruption and nepotism in the Executive Branch, specifically regarding food and aid distribution. Ethnic tensions and corruption continue to stoke possible conflict in the country.

**The Economy.** Estimates for the vignette time period of 2015 are unavailable. As such, the vignette assumes that recent trends reported below continue to the projected year. Iron ore is the country’s primary export with China being its main destination trading partner as of 2009 (accounting for 42 percent of export purchases).<sup>7</sup> Estimates as of 2008 show that the workforce is concentrated in agriculture and fishery jobs (~50 percent) while industry jobs account for only ~10 percent<sup>8</sup> and service jobs and government jobs each account for 20 percent of the workforce structure. Unemployment rates remain near 30 percent and the population below the poverty line as of 2004 near 40 percent,<sup>9</sup> leaving a large section of the population unable to meet many basic needs. This situation is exacerbated by high inflation rates, which hovered near 7 percent in 2007.<sup>10</sup>

**Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).** An al Qaeda affiliate, AQIM has been responsible for multiple kidnappings and attacks throughout the Sahel, including Mauritania. In September 2010, in the wake of kidnappings and AQIM activity throughout the Sahel, the Mauritanian government and the French government launched a raid near the Malian border; the raid killed more than 12 AQIM members.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Department of State (2010). “*Background Note: Mauritania*,” Updated April 4, 2010

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch (1989). “*Human Rights Watch World Report 1989- Mauritania*,” UNHCR

<sup>6</sup> BBC News (2010). “*Country Profile: Mauritania*”

<sup>7</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2010). “*Mauritania*,” The World Factbook

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Reuters, Africa (2010). “*Mauritania says 12 Qaeda fighters killed in clash*,” Sept 18, 2010

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### Precipitating Event for the Scenario

Several years leading up to 2015 provided below-average rainfall which exacerbated extreme poverty in Mauritania by marginalizing pasturelands and decimating herds, disrupting domestic cereal production, and increasing the scarcity of seeds for planting. The recent harvest in 2015 was 56 percent lower than average. While domestic food production was low, tropical storms and widespread flooding destroyed Southeast Asian rice crops, dramatically increasing rice prices worldwide. As a result, Mauritania was unable to import sufficient rice to offset low domestic cereal production. The combined impact of those two factors produced insecure food conditions for 2.2 million people or 68 percent of the population. As occurred during the 2004-2005 droughts, the areas hardest hit were largely located in the southern third of Mauritania in the rain-fed agricultural zone and along the Senegal River valley flood plain. The afflicted administrative regions included Trarza, Brakna, Assaba, Gorgol, Guidimaka, southwest Tagant, southern Hod el Gharbi, and Hod ech Chargui.<sup>12</sup>

Concurrently, the international demand for iron ore slowed, leading to increased unemployment in the country's urban and industrial centers. The increases in food costs, coupled with high unemployment and the country's high inflation rate, hit the urban poor particularly hard, resulting in widespread rioting in Nouakchott.

The WFP, France and the EU responded by establishing emergency food distribution centers in the areas hardest hit. Aid convoys to these centers were intermittent, however, due to increased targeting of aid workers by AQIM. Additionally, widespread flooding resulting from an early rainy season disrupted aid distribution and displaced large sectors of the populations in and around the areas of Maghama, Mbout, Markeol, and Kankossa in southern Mauritania.<sup>13</sup> The flooding destroyed multiple transportation corridors in the Tagant region, resulting in fuel shortages that effectively paralyzed food distribution<sup>14</sup> there. In addition to malnourishment, the flooding precipitated a cholera epidemic in flood-affected areas and IDP camps.

Fears that the situation in Mauritania could lead to regional instability, as well as high-profile media coverage of the urban rioting and the rural public health crisis, prompted the US Government (USG) to mobilize its emergency response resources. The Senegalese government agreed to allow US forces to establish a temporary base of operations near the border with Mauritania in order to expedite the delivery of food and medical aid. The Malian government likewise proposed joint intelligence gathering with the USG to combat the increased threat to aid workers posed by AQIM.

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<sup>12</sup> US Agency for International Development (2005). "*Sahelian West Africa Humanitarian Emergency – September 16*," Washington, D.C.

<sup>13</sup> US Agency for International Development (2005). "*Sahelian West Africa Humanitarian Emergency – August 23*," Washington, D.C.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

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A major Mauritanian political opponent called on protesters to demonstrate in the streets of the main cities. Several people died when demonstrators calling for the President to step down clashed with security forces in the capital.

### **US Government Involvement**

At the request of the Mauritanian government and international stakeholders, the US Ambassador to Mauritania asked for USG response to the multiple crises in the country. As a result, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) at the US Agency for International Development (USAID), in coordination with US Department of State (DOS), began HA and DR operations. The Joint Staff issued a mission statement to the Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) to support HA/DR operations in Mauritania. The GCC directed that the Commanding General (CG), II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) lead a Joint Task Force (JTF) to plan and execute the following activities:

- Transport and disburse food aid;
- Provide engineering support to restore transportation networks;
- Provide security for the protect food aid convoys and distribution centers;
- Support HN military in restoring and maintaining order in urban centers;
- Conduct humanitarian military medical missions to combat diseases prevalent in IDP camps; and
- Be prepared to engage with Mauritanian security forces to provide follow-on training and support to build partner capacity.

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### ADDITIONAL DETAILS RELATED TO THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT & OPERATIONAL CULTURE

#### Mauritania at a Glance<sup>15</sup>



Figure B-1. Major Cities<sup>16</sup> and the 12 Administrative Boundaries of Mauritania<sup>17</sup>

#### *Environment*

- Area: 1,030,070 sq. km. (419,212 sq. mi.); slightly larger than Texas and New Mexico combined.
- Cities (2004): *Capital*--Nouakchott (pop. 708,000). *Other cities*--Nouadhibou (72,000), Rosso (50,000), Kaedi (34,000), Zouerate (34,000), Kiffa (33,000), Atar (24,000).
- Terrain: Northern four-fifths barren desert; southern 20% mainly Sahelian with small-scale irrigated and rain-fed agriculture in the Senegal River basin.
- Climate: Predominantly hot and dry.

<sup>15</sup> Summary statistics provided under each heading are reproduced from Department of State, “*Background Note: Mauritania*,” updated April 4, 2010

<sup>16</sup> Country map Retrieved at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mr.html>

<sup>17</sup> Regional boundary map produced independently for this report using ESRI. (1998). First Administrative Boundaries Shapefile, Redlands, CA

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### *Government*

- Type: Republic.
- Independence: November 28, 1960.
- Constitution: Approved 1991. Original constitution promulgated 1961.
- Branches: *Executive*--President (head of state). *Legislative*--bicameral National Assembly directly elected Lower House (81 members), and Upper House (56 members) chosen indirectly by Municipal Councilors. *Judicial*--a Supreme Court and lower courts are nominally independent but subject to control of Executive Branch; Judicial decisions are rendered mainly on the basis of Shari'ah (Islamic law) for social/family matters and a western style legal code, applied in commercial and some criminal cases.

### *Economy*

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (at official exchange rate, 2009 est.): US \$3.029 billion.
- Annual growth rates (2009): -0.9%.
- Per capita GDP (2009): \$939.
- Natural resources: petroleum, fish, iron ore, gypsum, copper, gum arabic, phosphates, salt and gold.
- Agriculture (13% of GDP 2007): *Products*--livestock, traditional fisheries, millet, maize, wheat, dates, rice.
- Industry (47% of GDP 2007): *Types*--mining, commercial fishing. Services (41% of GDP 2007).
- Trade: *Exports* (2009) 1.37 billion: iron ore, fish and fish products, gold, copper, and petroleum. *Export partners* (2007)--China 30.5%, France 9.5%, Italy 8.6%, Spain 8.5%, Japan 5.5%, Netherlands 5.3%, Belgium 5%, Cote d'Ivoire 4.7%. *Imports* (2009)--\$1.43 billion: machinery and equipment, petroleum products, capital goods, foodstuffs, consumer goods. *Import partners* (2007)--France 16.7%, China 8.2%, Spain 6.8%, US 6.2%, Belgium 5.8%, Brazil 5.5%.
- Currency: Ouguiya (UM).
- USAID: Total FY 2009 USAID humanitarian and development assistance to Mauritania--\$11,100,000.

### *Social Structure*

- Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Mauritanian(s).
- Population: 3,162,338.
- Annual population growth rate: 2.5%.
- Ethnic groups: Arab-Berber (White Moor), Arab-Berber-Negroid (Black Moor), Haalpulaar, Soninke, Wolof (Afro-Mauritanian).
- Religion: Islam.
- Languages: Arabic (official), Hassaniya (Arabic dialect), French, Pulaar, Wolof, and Soninke.

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- Education: *Years compulsory*--six. *Attendance* (student population enrolled in primary school)--82%. *Adult literacy* (% of population age 15+)--59%.
- Health: *Infant mortality rate*--67/1,000. *Life expectancy*--64 yrs.
- Work force: *Agriculture and fisheries*--50%. *Services and commerce*--20%. *Government*--20%. *Industry and transportation*--10%.

### The Regional Context

The Sahel is the name given to the region in Africa that creates a buffer between the Sahara desert to the North, and the wooded savannahs of West and Sub-Saharan Africa to the South. Semi-arid grasslands, savannahs, and shrub lands ecologically define the region. It extends laterally from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, and the width of the Sahel fluctuates annually based on rainfall. Lasting only 3 months, the rainy season experiences high inter-annual variability, and much of the soil is barren and vulnerable.<sup>18</sup> Agricultural productivity and animal husbandry are equally volatile, and correspond directly to rainfall, as this supplies rain-fed irrigation and determines the availability of pasture and browse. In this way, the Sahel is highly vulnerable to drought. The variability in rainfall can also cause severe flooding across the Sahel, which can also limit agricultural productivity by flooding crops as well as removing topsoil through runoff. In addition to the issues of rainfall, the Sahel experiences frequent locust pestilence that destroys crops and pasture lands. Overgrazing and desertification further exacerbate the climatic vulnerability of the Sahel.

This sensitivity to climatic variability and locust was demonstrated recently in Sahelian West Africa. In 2004 and 2005, early ends to the rainy season adversely affected pasture availability and cereal production, resulting in widespread food insecurity in the agro-pastoral and pastoral zones of Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania (USAID 2005). The situation was exacerbated by desert locust infestations across the region. During that period the WFP estimated that drought and pestilence affected 1,000,000 people in Mali, 600,000 people in Mauritania, and 2,650,000 people in Niger. Low cereal production and high livestock mortality disrupted food production in the short term and also depleted seed reserves and stock numbers making planting and husbandry difficult when the rains returned in subsequent years.

Population density is unevenly distributed across the Sahel, with highest density lying along river corridors and urban centers, and much of the remainder of the Sahel being sparsely occupied. Traditionally, the Sahel has been utilized by traders and herdsman to transport goods and products between North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East on one side, and West and Sub-Saharan Africa on the other. The vast unpopulated expanses in the Sahel make international border demarcation difficult and present serious challenges to enforcement. As such, the region is characterized by highly porous borders, across which goods (licit and illicit) and people flow easily. The geographic proximity to North Africa and Europe has historically made the West

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<sup>18</sup> ECOWAS (2006). "*The Ecologically Vulnerable Zone of Sahelian Countries*," [Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa](#). Abuja, Nigeria, ECOWAS, and OECD

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African Sahel a primary trade route for narcotics and a corridor for Africans attempting to migrate to Europe. Today, trade continues along well-established routes.

Traditional pastoral ranges, homelands and migration routes of the myriad ethnic groups in the West African Sahel are intertwined, as they often spill over formally recognized borders. The rights and timing of access to water sources, pasture lands, and agricultural areas are well established among various clans, tribes, and ethnicities, yet these rules are rarely if ever legally codified. In years of low crop- and pasture-productivity, migration routes, grazing patterns and resource use shift across the region. These shifts can give rise to low-level ethnic and inter-communal conflict.

In addition to agricultural resources, many countries in the West African Sahel have moderate mineral resources. For example, Niger has important uranium deposits, whereas Mali has phosphate and gold reserves, and Mauritania has iron, gold and oil resources. The method of extraction can in some cases marginalize pasture and farm lands, leading to conflict. Niger, for example, has repeatedly experienced conflict between Tuareg groups and corporations exploiting its uranium deposits, as mining restricts access to former grazing lands, and as local groups often do not benefit from resource extraction through either remuneration or employment.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Mauritanian Historical Context<sup>20</sup>**

The area that is controlled by present day Mauritania was originally the home of the Bafour people (ancestors of the present day Soninke ethnic group in Mauritania and Senegal). Arab-Berber migration from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onward drove the Bafours southward toward the Senegal River. By 1076 the Arab-Berber population overcame the Ghana Empire and gained control of what is now southern Mauritania. They controlled the territory until Arab invaders of the Beni Hassan tribe overpowered them. The descendants of the Beni Hassan constitute the upper stratum of modern Mauritanian society, composed of White Moors (*bidan*), and servant and slave classes composed of Black Moors (*haratine*).

French colonization began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the colonial period the Arab-Berber population remained nomadic. Slavery of the lowest classes of Black Moors and Afro-Mauritanians, which is rooted in the caste system of Mauritanian society, was legally prohibited during colonial rule. However, in practice slavery remains prevalent today. Throughout the colonial period sedentary Afro-Mauritanian farmers began to migrate back into southern Mauritania. During this time the French employed many of these Sub-Saharan in low-level administrative positions. Independence in 1960 saw a large migration of Soninke, Haalpulaar, and Wolof ethnic groups into Mauritania's Senegal River valley.

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<sup>19</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2010). "Mauritania", *The World Factbook*

<sup>20</sup> This abridged history is adapted from the Department of State, "Background Notes on Mauritania," updated April 4, 2010

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At independence, Moktar Ould Daddah became the first Mauritanian President. He served in this role until he was deposed in a bloodless coup on July 10, 1978. For the next fourteen years the country remained under military rule. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya became head of state during a coup in 1984, which made him chairman of the military government. In 1991 a referendum committee officially approved a constitution, and in 1992 the first multi-party elections were held. Taya became President in these elections and was re-elected in 1997 and again in 2003 amid allegations of election fraud.

On August 3, 2005, senior military leaders Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall and Colonel Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz staged a coup, successfully deposing Taya. They established a military government called the Military Council for Justice and Democracy. After dissolving the Mauritanian Parliament, the Council adopted a timetable for holding elections and re-establishing democratic governance. In 2006 parliamentary elections were held, and in 2007 Presidential elections were held. Both elections were deemed free and fair by international observers, and were widely recognized by the international community. President Abdallahi was inaugurated on April 19, 2007.

In 2008, General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz staged a coup deposing President Abdallahi. Domestic opposition to the 2008 coup was strong, and opponents organized under the National Front for the Defense of Democracy, and other political coalitions. During the next eight months international donors and aid organizations suspended programs inside the country, and the international community called on Aziz to hold elections. On April 15, 2009 General Aziz resigned his military post and announced his candidacy in Presidential elections scheduled for June 6, 2009. Due to boycotts by opposition groups, the elections were rescheduled for July 18, 2009.

Following the resignation of General Aziz in April 2009, Senate President Ba Mamadou M'Bare was appointed interim President. During this time, political stalemate between the military junta and opposition groups frustrated Mauritanian politics. However, through the brokering of Senegalese President Wade, the African Union, and the international community, the Dakar accords were signed in June 2009. These accords created the Transitional Government of National Unity and called on the deposed President Abdallahi to formally resign his presidency. This opened the door for constitutionally accepted elections, and the reorganization of the Mauritanian government.

The restructuring of the government resulted in the pro-coup camp appointing the Prime Minister and 50% of the government with opposition parties controlling the remaining half. The opposition also held a two-thirds majority in the National Independent Electoral Commission. On July 18, 2009 General Aziz was elected President with over 53% of the popular vote. Three opposition candidates contested the results; however the international community and international observers declared the elections free and fair. Aziz was officially inaugurated on August 5, 2009.

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### The Mauritanian Physical Environment

The physical environment in Mauritania consists of four ecological zones: the Sahara, the Sahel, the Senegal River Valley, and the Coastal zones. The zones are ecologically distinct from one another; however no natural features delineate their boundaries. The country itself is generally flat, consisting of arid plains with occasional plateaus and cliffs. Roughly 75% of the country is desert or semi-desert, and suffers frequent drought and locust infestation. As such the borders between the ecological zones shift annually. The climate in Mauritania is generally hot and arid. Sandstorms are also frequent and can last from hours to several days. The months from July through September constitute the rainy season, and annual rainfall ranges from 0-600 millimeters across the various ecological zones.<sup>21</sup> Rainfall in the country is sporadic, with some years receiving either no rain or consistent rain and other years experiencing erratic rains that result in flooding.

Due to their size and relative isolation, the North and Eastern regions in Mauritania are generally lawless, and serve as havens for smugglers, terrorists, and extra-state groups.<sup>22</sup> In these regions, the borders with Algeria, Mali, and Western Sahara are extremely porous, creating major security challenges for the Mauritanian government. Insurgent groups are able to travel nearly unfettered across the region. Likewise, traffickers have well-established routes across the desert there. Further security challenges exist in the Northern regions of Tiris Zemmour, Dakhlet Nouadhibou, and potentially Adrar in the form of unexploded ordnance and landmines deployed during Mauritanian involvement in the conflict over the disputed region of Western Sahara between 1975 and 1978.<sup>23</sup>

The Saharan Zone comprises the northern two-thirds of Mauritania. The administrative regions of Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, and Northern Hodh ech Chargui that comprise this zone are sparsely populated, and often go through periods of several years without receiving rain. In some regions, springs and wells support limited pasture. Some of the soils in the region are likewise capable of supporting vegetation after rains.<sup>24</sup>

The Sahelian Zone forms an East-West buffer between the Sahara and the Senegal River. This zone consists of steppes and savanna grasslands that support herds of cattle, sheep and goats. The rainy season extends from June – October,<sup>25</sup> however inter-annual variability in the onset, duration, and intensity of rains is frequent, and serves as a major disruption for the pastoralists and farmers who depend on the rains for irrigation and water for their herds. Likewise, flooding following intense rains can disrupt transportation networks, resulting in disruption of food and fuel supplies in this zone. Annual precipitation increases from North to South in the Sahel,

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<sup>21</sup> Library of Congress, “*Country Study on Mauritania*,” Ch. 2

<sup>22</sup> Department of State (2008). “*Country Reports on Terrorism*,” Chapter 2: “*Country Reports: Africa Overview*”

<sup>23</sup> Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, “*Mauritania Country Report*”

<sup>24</sup> Library of Congress, “*Country Study on Mauritania*,” Ch. 2

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

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supporting forests of acacia trees in the Trarza and Brakna regions, and sedentary agriculture in Assaba and northern Guidimaka regions.

The Senegal River Valley serves as the agricultural belt of the country. The Senegal is the only perennial river in the country and both sedentary agriculture and fishing occur along the river and its tributaries. Rainfall in this zone ranges from 400-600 mm, and occurs between May and September.<sup>26</sup> Rainfall and annual flooding of the river basin sustain nearly all of the country's agricultural production. As in the Sahel zone, inter-annual variability in precipitation patterns can be disruptive to agriculture and transportation in the region.

The Coastal Zone runs the length of the country's Atlantic coast and has a temperate but humid climate. Rainfall along the coast is sparse, with less than 30 mm falling annually.<sup>27</sup> The Mauritanian port of Nouadhibou is located on the northern Ras Nouadhibou peninsula and is the railhead for the country's only railroad. It is also one of the largest natural harbors on the Western coast of Africa. Vegetation in this zone is rare.

Droughts in the 1970s and 1980s caused major demographic shifts in Mauritanian society, forcing pastoralists to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and settle further South where rains were more dependable.<sup>28</sup> These droughts also initiated a large rural-urban migration. As a result, the bulk of the Mauritanian population is located in the urban areas and along the Senegal River. Likewise, rainfall patterns have shifted south, reducing the productivity of many former pasture and farmlands and causing further internal migration. These environmentally driven demographic shifts have altered ethnic distributions and resource-use patterns, leading to conflicts between agriculturalists and pastoralists.<sup>29</sup> This situation was exacerbated during the droughts of 2004 and 2005, during which more than 600,000 Mauritanians were affected by the food insecurity resulting from drought and locust pestilence.

Land-use patterns vary across Mauritania and consist of a mixture of sedentary agriculture, transhumance pastoral migration, iron mining, fishing, and limited coastal oil production. Governance and management regimes incorporate aspects of the French Colonial rules established during the colonial period, legal and constitutional frameworks adopted after independence, and Shari'ah law. Formal access to land by traditional rights and patterns was abolished by the State after independence and land access was effectively stripped of cultural and religious content.<sup>30</sup> However, in response to conflict between pastoralists and sedentary farmers, as well as pressure from international donors, the Mauritanian government established the Code

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Department of State, "Background Note: Mauritania"

<sup>29</sup> Kirsch-Jung, Karl P. and Lars T. Soeftestad (2006). "Regulating the commons in Mauritania. Local agreements as a tool for sustainable natural resource management," *CBNRM Net Papers*, no. 9 (June 2006). ISSN 0809-7119. ISBN-10 82-92746-08-0

<sup>30</sup> Wabnitz, H. W. (2007). "The Code Pastoral of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Return to the Sources, Revival of Traditional Nomads' Rights to Common Property Resources"

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Pastoral to govern pastoral land use. Enacted in 2000 and effective in 2004, the Code Pastoral represents a synthesis of traditional rights, Shari'ah law, and constitutional power.<sup>31</sup>

The country has two operational ports, the one on the Ras Nouadhibou peninsula, and one in the capital, Nouakchott. A single railway connects the Nouadhibou port to the iron mines in the North and East of the country. Three national highways connect important urban centers in the country. N1 runs north into Western Sahara. N2 runs the length of the coast and connects Mauritania and Senegal. N3 runs east and terminates at Nema. Road density is highest in urban centers and in the south of the country. Sporadic flooding during intense rains can disrupt or destroy transportation corridors. Regional airports are spread throughout the country.



Figure B-2. Mauritanian Infrastructure as of 1995<sup>32</sup>

## The Mauritanian Economy

The economy in Mauritania revolves heavily around agriculture and pastoralism, with at least half of the population engaged in these activities for subsistence and limited commercial livelihoods. Because of the heavy reliance on crop-growing and herding, food security in the country is sensitive to annual changes in precipitation and to long-term climatic changes. Limited arable land and sparse pastures inhibit agricultural productivity and require Mauritania

<sup>31</sup> Wabnitz, H. W. (2010). "Return to the Sources: Revival of Traditional Nomads' Rights to Common Property Resources in the Code Pastoral of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania," *Natural Resources Journal*, 49, 191-218

<sup>32</sup> Produced by the Central Intelligence Agency [MAP] Mauritania Map

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to import most of its food requirements. Thus, in addition to being sensitive to local productivity, food security in Mauritania is equally sensitive to external shocks, such as rising oil prices and subsequent rises in food costs.

Mining of iron ore is the predominant industrial activity, accounting for approximately 40% of total exports.<sup>33</sup> In addition to iron, Mauritania has limited reserves of gypsum, copper, phosphate, diamonds and gold. Offshore crude oil reserves exist, but are largely untapped. As such, Mauritania continues to depend on purchased oil and refining to meet its energy needs.

Fishing constitutes a significant source of employment for many Mauritians, as the nation's coast has some of the world's richest fisheries.<sup>34</sup> As occurs throughout much of Africa, fishing in Mauritania falls into three categories: artisanal, local industrial and large-scale commercial.<sup>35</sup> However, over-exploitation threatens the country's fisheries and the livelihoods that they support.

During the 1970s and 1980s, drought and rapid population growth forced many nomads and subsistence farmers to migrate to urban centers in search of work and food. As a result, most of the country's 3.2 million people are concentrated in the capital, Nouakchott, the port city of Nouadhibou, and along the Senegal River in the south. This urban concentration has given rise to a large informal economy in densely populated areas.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the vast open expanses throughout much of the country are sparsely populated and law and order are difficult to enforce. This, along with Mauritania's proximity to North Africa and Western Europe, has given rise to a large market for illicit goods, narcotics, arms, and human-trafficking.

Mauritania continues to be one of the poorest and least-developed countries in the world. In the years between independence and 2000 the country amassed a large foreign debt. In 2000, however, the country qualified for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative and much of its debt was forgiven.<sup>37</sup> Since that time, the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other donors have invested heavily in developing the Mauritanian economy.

### **The Mauritanian Social Structure**

Mauritanian society is highly stratified along ethnic lines, linguistic families, and kinship/lineage. The social structure among the various Arab-Berber groups in Mauritania can be characterized as one of the most complex caste systems in Africa. The Moors were traditionally nomadic peoples engaged in pastoral and semi-pastoral livelihoods in northern and central

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<sup>33</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2010). "Mauritania," The World Factbook

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Library of Congress. "Country Study for Mauritania," Ch 3

<sup>36</sup> Department of State. "Background Note: Mauritania"

<sup>37</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2010). "Mauritania," The World Factbook

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Mauritania. The droughts of the 1970s and 1980s forced a demographic shift, across the country, and forced many Moors into sedentary agrarian or urban life. The Arab-Berber population, often regarded as White Moors or *bidan*, occupies the elite stratum in Mauritanian society.<sup>38</sup> This has long-standing traditional roots and was institutionalized during and following French Colonialism.<sup>39</sup> Sub-elements of the *bidan*, the *hassani* or warriors and *zawaya* or religious leaders, constitute the nobility. These groups are more Arab than Berber, and are traditionally White Moors who provide either governance or spiritual guidance in society. During the French colonial period, the warrior tribes were largely pacified and became nomadic herders and traders.<sup>40</sup> *Zenaga* are tributary vassals of these noble groups, being more Berber than Arab. However, they are still considered part of the elite. Artisans and fisherman, and entertainers called *griots*, are below the *bidan* and *zenaga*. The Arab-Berber-Negroid population, known also as Black Moors and Afro-Mauritians, are referred to as *haratine* and occupy the lower positions in the caste system and were heretofore the servile layer of Mauritanian society, either as freed slaves, slaves or *abd*, or as indentured servants. Slavery has been outlawed in Mauritania, however it is still practiced widely, and human trafficking remains active in the country.

Along with the Moor population, there are several Afro-Mauritanian ethnic groups in Mauritania who migrated to the Senegal River valley during and following French Colonization. These groups include the Soninke, Haalpulaar and Wolof. While these groups exist outside of the Moor caste system, they too have a highly stratified social system, which consists of three classes: nobles/elites who traditionally hold power; an endogamous and politically privileged class, and a servile/slave class.<sup>41</sup> The Afro-Mauritanian social structure is further stratified within each caste according to livelihoods, prestige, and traditional power structures.

Conflict between the Moor and Sub-Saharan ethnic groups has been frequent in Mauritania's modern history and is spurred by many issues including land tenure, language, political power, and economic opportunity. In 1989 tension between these groups spiraled into widespread violent conflict among the groups in the Senegal River valley. This period, known as *The Events*, resulted in the forced deportation of roughly 70,000 of the Sub-Saharan population to Senegal.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s many of those refugees returned to Mauritania. In 2007 the Mauritanian government began a program of formal repatriation of refugees. However, that program has seen limited success, as returning refugees are unable to re-assimilate, and new land tenure conflicts have arisen.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Library of Congress. "Country Study for Mauritania," Ch. 2

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Di Bartolomeo, A., Fakhoury, T., and Perrin, D. (2010). "CARIM Migration Profile: Mauritania," European Union

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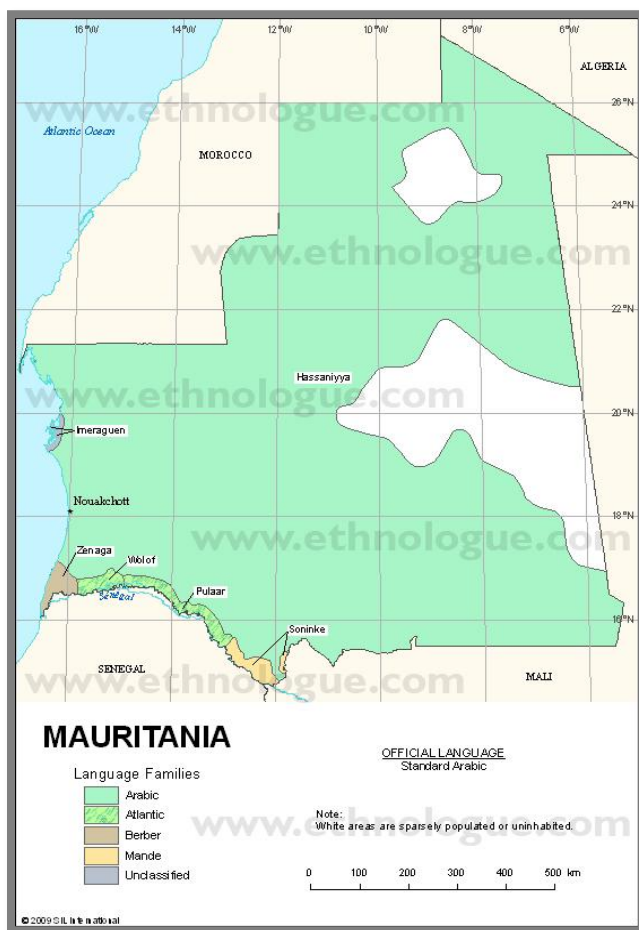


Figure B-3. Distribution of Ethnic Groups by Language Family<sup>43</sup>

Trafficking in persons is pernicious in Mauritania, as the country serves as a source, transit corridor, and destination for children trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation. Slavery in Mauritania is rooted in traditional patterns of social structuring, and continues to persist across the country. Child trafficking is particularly common, with children being sold to criminal syndicates, street gangs, and religious teachers for forced begging, to sell drugs, for domestic servitude, and sexual purposes.

### The Mauritanian Political Structure

The Mauritanian bureaucracy consists of ministries, special agencies, and para- and extra-state organizations. Much of the internal organization is modeled after the French system of local

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis, M. Paul (ed.) (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Sixteenth Edition*, Dallas, Tex.: SIL International

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administration, consisting of regional governors and prefects under the Ministry of Interior. The territory is divided into 13 regions, one of which is the capital city of Nouakchott. Control of the State is concentrated in the executive branch. Governance is based on a blend of legal frameworks, traditional leadership structures, and Shari' ah law.<sup>44</sup>

Power and politics are heavily influenced by the military, and politics are dominated by strong, heavy-handed personalities. The ability to exercise power depends on a person's control over resources, wealth and status, perceived strength, and tribal and kinship structures. Tension and conflict continue to exist among White Moor, Black Moor, and Afro-Mauritanian groups. These tensions center on unequal access to power and authority, education, land tenure, and language. The repatriation of refugees continues to challenge national unity. The Mauritanian government has taken recent steps to redress grievances stemming from slavery and forced migration. On March 25, 2009, the government signed a framework to compensate the widows of Afro-Mauritanian military personnel killed during the 1989 events.<sup>45</sup> That agreement was the first public acknowledgement of the Mauritanian government's role in the ethnic violence of the late 1980s and early 1990s. President Aziz has further taken steps to return Afro-Mauritanian teachers to their former positions in the Ministry of Education.

The US strongly opposed the 2008 military coup, staged by General Aziz. The US maintained a staunch position against the deposing of the democratically elected President Abdallahi and subsequently suspended all development and cooperation programs. Further, the US called for international sanctions against the junta and imposed travel restrictions on the junta leadership and its supporters. Following the diplomatic rapprochement of the Dakar accords and the subsequent elections, the US accepted the legitimacy of the newly elected President Aziz, and resumed aid and cooperation programs. Since then, the US and Mauritanian governments have cooperated on a wide array of programs including counterterrorism, food security, trade promotion, and human rights and rule of law development.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is increasingly active in Mauritania. The group, based largely in Algeria, employs a range of tactics including kidnapping, suicide bombing, and employment of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to target Western interests in Mauritania as well as Government and military targets. To date, these attacks have been sporadic and limited to targeting foreign tourists and aid workers. Mauritanian law enforcement and military forces have reacted swiftly to these attacks and continue to combat terrorism across the country.

The National Police, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for law enforcement and maintaining order.<sup>46</sup> The National Guard, also under authority of the Ministry of Interior, can likewise be called on to provide security support, to restore civil order in times of

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<sup>44</sup> Wabnitz, H. W. (2010). "Return to the Sources: Revival of Traditional Nomads' Rights to Common Property Resources in the Code Pastoral of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania," *Natural Resources Journal*, 49: 191-218

<sup>45</sup> Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (2009). "Human Rights Report: Mauritania"

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

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large-scale disturbance, and to provide security at national facilities. The gendarmerie, which falls under the authority of the Ministry of Defense, is responsible for maintaining civil order inside and surrounding metropolitan areas and provides law enforcement services in the countryside. According to the US Department of State (DOS), corruption and impunity undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of these security forces. Likewise, human rights abuses have been alleged at many levels throughout the security forces.<sup>47</sup>

The latest constitution, ratified in 1991, expressly guarantees freedom of speech and press, which are generally respected by the government, with only occasional arrest and harassment of reporters and critics. Approximately thirty private newspapers are published regularly in French and Arabic, and two daily newspapers are owned and operated by the government.<sup>48</sup> The state operates local broadcast media. Additionally, several international syndicates broadcast in Mauritania. Internet access is available throughout urban areas, however only 1.4 percent of the population uses that resource.<sup>49</sup>

### **Beliefs and Symbols in Mauritania**

Islam is the official state religion in Mauritania and is practiced by nearly all Mauritians, whether White Moor, Black Moor, or Afro-Mauritanian. Mauritians belong to the Malekite rite of Sunni Islam. Sufi brotherhoods, known as *tariqas*, have been an important part of the Mauritanian belief structure since the 13th century. These brotherhoods transcend ethnic, clan, and kin relationships and are one of the only unifying features of an otherwise segmented society. Two main brotherhoods are predominant in the country: Qadiriya, which stresses humility, generosity, and neighbor relations based on Islamic teachings; and Tijaniyya, which is a missionary order that emphasizes reflection on God. In addition to these two major brotherhoods, there are two smaller brotherhoods that are more geographically concentrated. These are the Chadeliya, found predominantly in the Tagant Region, and the Goudfiya, spread across the Tagant, Adrar, Hodh ech Chargui, and Hodh el Gharbi regions.

The brotherhoods are hierarchical, led by chiefs who initiate members and assign authority to subordinates. Members reside with their own clans and tribes, rather than concentrating in central or separate locations. In this way, the religious community is more a spiritual commitment than a physical reality for the membership. There is a common belief across Mauritania in the divine and supernatural powers of religious leaders within the Sufi brotherhoods. These leaders, called marabouts or *murabitun*, are believed to possess divine or mystical powers and are believed to be able to perform miracles.

Mauritanian Islam lacks a central clergy. Thus marabouts, also called *shaykhs*, serve as intermediaries between people and theology. These leaders exercise influence within

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid

<sup>48</sup>Ibid

<sup>49</sup>Ibid

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Mauritanian culture by propagating faith through teaching and proselytizing, as well as exerting significant political power. Marabouts are also relied on for mediation and dispute resolution, granting asylum or protection to individuals, and advising tribal leadership.

Family and lineage is central to Mauritanian belief and symbolic life. Kinship, along with Islam, is a strong cohesive force for Mauritanian groups. Patrilineal lines are traced back at least five or six generations. Lineage provides Mauritanians a sense of history, social responsibility, and a specific role in traditional society.<sup>50</sup> However, the importance of lineage has declined slightly over the past several decades, particularly in urban areas where economic development has shifted livelihood strategies.<sup>51</sup> This coincides with increasing flexibility in the economic roles filled by Afro-Mauritanian and Arab-Berber castes. Increasingly Mauritanians are involved in or employed in work outside of traditional caste occupations. Furthermore, the importance of endogamy is eroding slightly, indicating increasing flexibility across Mauritanian culture.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Library of Congress. "Country Study for Mauritania," Ch.2

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

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### **Appendix C: Example Application of the Integrating Framework**

#### ***“Understanding the Environment”* Using Operational Culture - Mauritania Vignette Application**

These materials show what products might look like when using the Integrating Framework for Operational Culture to “*Understand the Environment.*” Sample products are provided for multiple Lines of Operation (LOOs) from the Mauritanian vignette (described in Appendix B). Below is a brief synopsis of the crisis, and activities to be executed by the Joint Task Force (JTF):

At the request of the Mauritanian government and international stakeholders, the United States (US) Ambassador to Mauritania has asked for US Government (USG) response to the multiple crises in the country. As a result, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) at the US Agency for International Development (USAID), in coordination with US Department of State (DOS), has begun Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) operations. The Joint Staff issued a mission statement to the Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) to support HA/DR operations in Mauritania. The GCC has directed that Commanding General (CG), II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) lead a Joint Task Force (JTF) to plan and execute the following activities:

- Transport and disburse food aid;
- Provide engineering support to restore transportation networks;
- Provide security for the protect food aid convoys and distribution centers;
- Support host nation military in restoring and maintaining order in urban centers;
- Conduct humanitarian military medical missions to combat diseases prevalent in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps; and
- Be prepared to engage with Mauritanian security forces to provide follow-on training and support to build partner capacity.

The application has planners apply a Foundational Inquiry (described in Appendix A) focused by four steps (the Focusing Inquiry), with the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning’s (CAOCL’s) Five Dimensions of Operational Culture playing a central role. The purpose is to link cultural information with learning gained in other staff actions to keep focus on operationally relevant aspects of the socio-cultural environment. Figure C-1 below shows the flow of the Focusing Inquiry.

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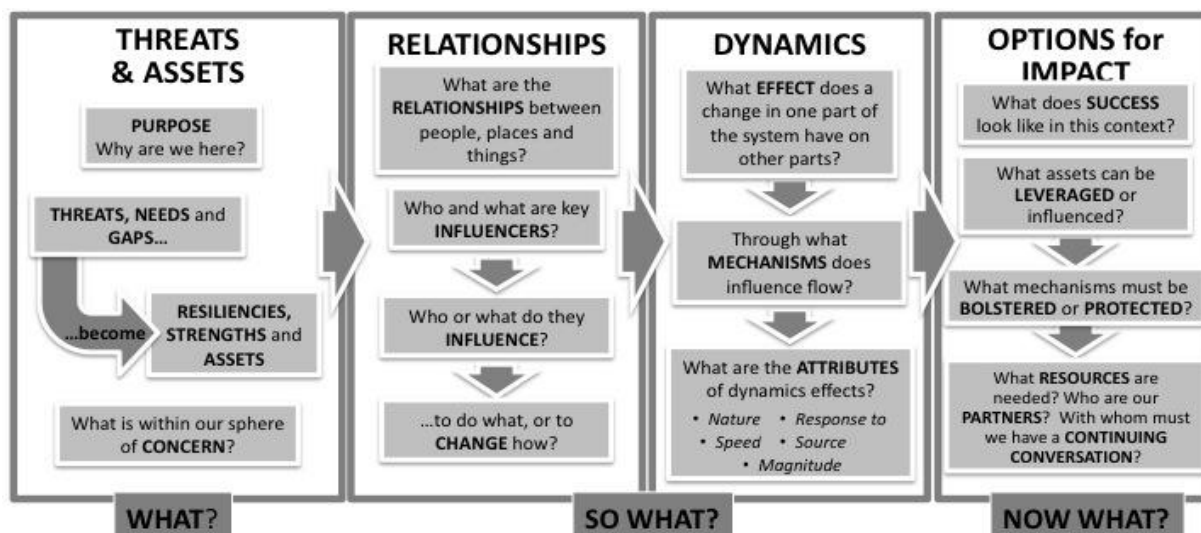


Figure C-1. Focusing Inquiry for “*Understanding the Environment*”

The Focusing Inquiry should be applied at three levels of analysis: Individual, Community, and Institutional. For illustrative purposes, the Focusing Inquiry was applied to only one of the three levels for each LOO as follows:

- Transport Food Aid: Institutional level;
- Restore Transportation Networks: Community level;
- Security for Food Distribution: Institutional level;
- Urban Security: Individual level;
- Combat Disease: Institutional level; and
- Security Force Training and Support: Community level.

Table C-2 below demonstrates the application of the Focusing Inquiry for “*Understanding the Environment*,” at the levels of analysis described.

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**Example: Transport and Disburse Food Aid (Institutional Level of Analysis)**

<b>Threats &amp; Assets (What?)</b>	<b>Relationships (So What?)</b>	<b>Dynamics (So What?)</b>	<b>Options for Impact (Now What?)</b>
<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food sometimes used for political purposes.</li> <li>- Transportation networks extremely limited - some are recently destroyed.</li> <li>- Aid and development workers sometimes targeted by AQIM.</li> <li>- Government management structures limited in capacity/ corrupt.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A large number of existing local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been operating in-country for a long time.</li> <li>- Two ports relatively newly refurbished.</li> <li>- Populations in need are generally concentrated in urban areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Environment:</b> Government reach predominately limited to urban areas, particularly capitol Nouakchott.</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> Limited institutional capacity is already partially oriented towards food production and distribution issues. Years of experience dealing with NGOs and international development agencies.</p> <p><b>Social Structure:</b> Government institutions are overlaid on social systems – do not accurately reflect natural social structures.</p> <p><b>Political Structure:</b> Highly favors families and ethnic groups of those in power. Generally resented by population.</p> <p><b>Belief System:</b> Government appears to represent the belief system of those in the South, where the capitol is located, and so alienates Northerners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent of the crisis, coupled with government corruption and incompetence, has left many Mauritians rightfully distrustful of official institutions.</li> <li>• Heavy reliance on NGOs and international development agencies has further weakened government’s ability to manage food distribution.</li> <li>• Lack of effective economic institutional environment makes it virtually impossible for farmers to grow crops beyond subsistence levels.</li> <li>• Poor quality/non-existent transport network means limited government services are limited to capital city, further alienating rural and Northern populations and diminishing government legitimacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large number of workers, including those with food production and distribution skills, are available and desire to work.</li> <li>• Existing institutions are poor at servicing those without food, but are somewhat oriented towards food issues.</li> <li>• Northerners are capable of traversing difficult terrain, even in the absence of transportation network.</li> </ul>

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**Example: Restore Transportation Networks (Community Level of Analysis)**

<b>Threats &amp; Assets (What?)</b>	<b>Relationships (So What?)</b>	<b>Dynamics (So What?)</b>	<b>Options for Impact (Now What?)</b>
<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Security situation is poorly controlled by local security forces.</li> <li>- Local civil engineering capacity is limited.</li> <li>- Local infrastructure rebuilding capacity is limited.</li> <li>- Communities aligned with political leaders get favorable delivery of services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large available workforce.</li> <li>- Raw materials for road building easily available locally.</li> <li>- Communities value transportation networks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Environment:</b> Communities concentrated towards the South and eastern two-thirds of the country.</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> Communities are highly reliant on limited roads for economic transactions and for transport of goods and services to and from Senegal and Mali.</p> <p><b>Social Structure:</b> Berber pastoralists to North are experienced traveling in underserved areas. Owing to large geographic area, southern social structures particularly require transportation networks to remain cohesive.</p> <p><b>Political Structure:</b> Political power is concentrated in urban centers, especially Nouakchott.</p> <p><b>Belief System:</b> Flat, unremarkable landscape minimizes social connection to the land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended droughts caused many nomads and farmers to migrate into cities. Heavy flooding is causing similar patterns.</li> <li>• Destruction of limited roads has diminished economic activity and social communication.</li> <li>• Reduced commerce and delivery of already limited goods and services outside of urban areas increases sense of political isolation and economic vulnerability in rural populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large numbers of unemployed facilitates assembling of available labor force.</li> <li>• Local production of natural resources minimizes costs of road-building and enables use of local business.</li> <li>• High reliance on roads makes people particularly thankful for improvements – though expectations are low due to historically poor transportation networks.</li> </ul>

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**Example: Provide Security to Food Distribution (Institutional Level of Analysis)**

<b>Threats &amp; Assets (What?)</b>	<b>Relationships (So What?)</b>	<b>Dynamics (So What?)</b>	<b>Options for Impact (Now What?)</b>
<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Security situation is poorly controlled by local security forces.</li> <li>- AQIM targets aid workers.</li> <li>- NGOs will not allow themselves to be directly associated with military or other combat-oriented forces.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited number of roads and distribution centers to secure.</li> <li>- Owing to attacks, NGOs and other development professionals eager for secure transit-ways.</li> <li>- Flat landscape tactically simple to monitor and secure.</li> <li>- Existing US Military-to-Military relationship through Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI)/Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Environment:</b> NGOs know the terrain and means of traverse well.</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> Likely means of traverse are limited and therefore shared for all uses, including movement of goods and service providers, and for government and military transport.</p> <p><b>Social Structure:</b> Means of traverse are of generally higher quality in the South than in the North, due to government favoritism of like ethnic group.</p> <p><b>Political Structure:</b> Government controls means of traverse in southern regions where IDP camps are located, but does not have capacity to repair or maintain the infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Belief System:</b> Government means of communication is sensitive to southerners' modes of communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDP camp populations are highly concentrated at just a few locations because of limited road net.</li> <li>• The few roads in existence are in terrible condition and are heavily congested with people fleeing flooded areas to IDP camps and other areas.</li> <li>• Damage to, and congestion on, roads exerting a drag on economic recovery.</li> <li>• Few food and other goods are making it to populations in need.</li> <li>• Without supplies, IDP camp conditions worsen.</li> <li>• As camp conditions worsen, locals' perception of government and international actors grows increasingly negative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High concentrations of needy minimize logistical complexity of security requirements.</li> <li>• Though NGOs are normally highly sensitive to perceived relationships with military and other security forces, recent attack by AQIM on NGOs and development workers has eased resistance to cooperating with security forces.</li> <li>• Simple topography promotes ease of access by land and by air means.</li> <li>• Government security forces often use the same few routes that lead from national ports of entry to IDP camps.</li> <li>• Existing USG-Government of Mauritania (GOM) Military-to-Military relationship eases communication and combined operations, and leaves the door open for direct US assistance to the GOM.</li> </ul>



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**Example: Urban Security (Individual Level of Analysis)**

<b>Threats &amp; Assets (What?)</b>	<b>Relationships (So What?)</b>	<b>Dynamics (So What?)</b>	<b>Options for Impact (Now What?)</b>
<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Security situation is poorly controlled by local government forces.</li> <li>- Food supplies are scarce (basic needs are not ensured).</li> <li>- Employment options are very limited.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Owing to food and unemployment pressures individuals are willing to adapt lifestyle patterns.</li> <li>- Many Mauritians, including many of those who have migrated to urban areas, are skilled food producers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Environment:</b> Urbanites are a large percentage of the population, but many individuals are new to this way of life.</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> Few economic opportunities or informational or assistance resources for individuals. Most individuals disconnected from past rural employment.</p> <p><b>Social Structure:</b> Owing to high levels of diversity and urban density, individuals can easily find many others that share their interests, ethnicity, or beliefs, though urbanites are increasingly disjointed from rural populations.</p> <p><b>Political Structure:</b> To the degree that the polity has a relationship with individual constituents, it is only so in urban areas – individuals feel more of a connection to the government in the city. Government services, though few, are experienced only by urban populations. Competing political leaders are attracted to urban centers because urban density makes it easy reach and influence concentrations of followers.</p> <p><b>Belief System:</b> An urban existence is difficult to square with most Mauritians’ rural-based beliefs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Though many individuals desire a rural lifestyle, they are migrating to the city to seek a better life. Migration fueled by rumors about opportunities in the city coupled with devastation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Many individuals treat their relationship to the urban environment like they would the rural one.</li> <li>• Unfulfilled expectations and a disassociation from the familiarities of rural living lead many individuals, particularly youth, to act out violently.</li> <li>• Because information travels very quickly (usually by word of mouth) in a city of highly concentrated social structures, small events easily become large-scale riots.</li> <li>• Because of the scale and density of the city, demonstrations of government ability or inability have far-reaching effects. Whether providing security or other services, individuals make a direct and rapid connection between effective management of events (riots) and conditions (trash, food distribution, unemployment, etc.), and their perception of government. So far, the perception that the government is ineffective is widespread.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban density makes it possible to transmit information to many people quickly and with little effort.</li> <li>• A convergence of unemployed farmers and a food shortage may make urban food production opportunities attractive to many.</li> <li>• Social and community leaders have a substantial and rapid effect on followers’ behavior.</li> <li>• Demonstrations of effectiveness will likely have a magnified effect in urban areas.</li> <li>• Individuals’ connection to their physical environment makes them likely to respond to opportunities to be a part of transforming it.</li> </ul>

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**Example: Combat Disease in IDP Camps (Institutional Level of Analysis)**

<b>Threats &amp; Assets (What?)</b>	<b>Relationships (So What?)</b>	<b>Dynamics (So What?)</b>	<b>Options for Impact (Now What?)</b>
<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disease spreads rapidly due to highly concentrated populations in IDP camps.</li> <li>- Local medical capacity is limited.</li> <li>- IDP camps are difficult to reach.</li> <li>- Existing transportation capacity and infrastructure extremely limited, even pre-flood.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affected population is several concentrated areas (rather than diffuse).</li> <li>- NGOs and international development agencies are well-established.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Environment:</b> Affected IDP camps relatively are in close proximity to each other and relatively near to limited existing medical infrastructure in main cities.</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> Troubled southern economy significantly influenced by effects of disease</p> <p><b>Social Structure:</b> Social hierarchies are retained in IDP camps, though those in high castes are not in IDP camps.</p> <p><b>Political Structure:</b> Ethnic makeup of IDP camps is well represented in government, though government institutions lack the capacity to deal with outbreaks of disease in IDP camps.</p> <p><b>Belief System:</b> Belief system in the IDP camps largely values “traditional” medical treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrated population in IDP camps with poor sanitation and little medical services capacity has allowed rapid outbreak of disease.</li> <li>• Though the government has failed to respond effectively, the shared ethnic makeup of political leaders and residents of the IDP camps has shielded the government from blame.</li> <li>• Coupled with local devastation from flooding, the outbreak of disease in whole communities has severely hobbled economic recovery, even to limited pre-flood levels.</li> <li>• Population is familiar with, and generally views positively, local and foreign NGOs due to their long-standing presence in-country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnically homogeneous populations in IDP camps make treatment models relatively free of political risk.</li> <li>• Existing NGO service delivery and information infrastructure well established.</li> <li>• Transportation networks are limited and severely damaged, but lead directly to IDP camps.</li> </ul>

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**Example: Security Force Training and Support (Community Level of Analysis)**

Threats & Assets (What?)	Relationships (So What?)	Dynamics (So What?)	Options for Impact (Now What?)
<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethnic and tribal competition plagues the military.</li> <li>- Civilian population often fears people in uniform.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military worked with 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group during efforts associated with Trans-Sahel Initiative.</li> <li>- Military is generally considered to be well trained.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Environment:</b> Military installations are located close to the North and South boundaries as well as the coastline.</p> <p><b>Economy:</b> Military is a prestigious institution, with a salary much higher than average. Military families live above poverty.</p> <p><b>Social Structure:</b> Civilians, especially older Mauritians, tend to fear men in uniform. In the past the national guard and gendarmerie were accused of harassment, rape and confiscation of cattle. Additionally, after the 1978 coup, ethnic and tribal competition plagued the armed forces. People who go against their tribe are often considered traitors.</p> <p><b>Political Structure:</b> The French, who considered Arab-Berbers superior to black Africans, exempted them from military service. After the Saharan war, the number of enlisted grew, mostly by black Africans and <i>haratine</i>.</p> <p><b>Belief Systems:</b> The population – including the military – is Sunni Muslim.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Border protection is probably a chief concern for the military.</li> <li>• Informal social control mechanisms, built around family and kinship ties, often provide protection the National Guard and Gendarmerie should provide.</li> <li>• The national army has become an ethnic army of racist repression.</li> <li>• Uniforms mask ethnic/tribal differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The security force may not be the best option for dealing with crowd control and direct civilian engagement.</li> <li>• Be prepared to engage with a force that has multiple command structures – the explicit, organizational command structure and then the implicit, tribe/group/familial/ethnic command structure.</li> </ul>

Table C-1: Examples of the Focusing Inquiry Applied to the Three Levels of Analysis

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# Appendix D. General Morphological Analysis Workshop Report

## Overview

This is the full report of the two General Morphological Analysis (GMA) workshops held in September 2010 and provides the additional detail that is not presented in the main body of the report. The GMA workshops allowed the Study Team to compile a wide range of views on the Operational Culture considerations for operations in the Trans-Sahel.

In executing Task 3 of the Trans-Sahel Study the Study Team reviewed the relevant problem-structuring literature and selected GMA to be used in support of efforts to gain a deep understanding of the planning context in the Trans-Sahel. The Study Team conducted two workshops as part of the GMA effort, occurring on September 22-23 and September 27-28, 2010. The effort was designed to define the most important planning parameters in the operational environment of the Sahel region of Africa, as well as those planning parameters internal to the United States (US) Government (USG) Interagency process. Through a series of facilitated and computer-aided dialogues, panels of cultural experts and Interagency planners fully explored the problem space to identify and consider the most important operational dynamics, cultural factors and institutional constraints that USG personnel should consider when operating in the Trans-Sahel countries of Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Over the course of four working days, the expert participants worked collaboratively to generate boundaries of a conceptual model of the Trans-Sahel cultural space, and of potential interagency and military actions in the area. The GMA workshop process is described below, with discussion focused on the outputs of the workshop and lessons learned.

## Process

The full methodology of GMA, including the theoretical underpinning and history of its development, is outlined in Ritchey (2006). The GMA workshop process and facilitation technique employed herein were developed by researchers at the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) under the direction of Dr. Tom Ritchey. Dr. Ritchey was sub-contracted by the Study Team to facilitate the GMA workshop to ensure that its application adhered to the theoretical and methodological directives of the GMA process. Under his guidance seven experts were recruited for each phase of the workshop. The first phase employed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) who were either: 1) knowledgeable about the operational environment to provide deep contextual information about the Sahel; or 2) had specific functional area expertise in a domain important to the Sahel. The second phase employed the US Marine Corps (USMC), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of State (DOS) planners to provide information on the planning context for USMC and Interagency operations.

Dr. Ritchey and two members of the Study Team facilitated each session, with Dr. Ritchey leading the group discussions and the Study Team recording the details and dialogue of group work. The first working day of each two-day phase was facilitated with the aid of a whiteboard, where important ideas and concepts were mapped. Those data were then entered into CARMA software (developed at FOI specifically for GMA) by the facilitation team between working

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sessions. The second working day of each phase was facilitated with the aid of a personal computer, video projector, and the CARMA software. During this phase, concepts were refined and plotted within a morphological field in using the CARMA software. Next, the concepts were linked to each other through the Cross-Consistency Analysis (CCA) described in Ritchey (2006).

At the end of the second phase of the workshop, a formal debrief was presented at the Group W Inc. facility in Triangle, VA. Each of the SMEs who participated in the workshop was invited to attend this debrief, as were representatives of the Study Sponsor. This debrief summarized the GMA workshop process and reported on the raw products that it produced during the workshops. In this way, participants of each phase were able to see how their input was used to develop products to elucidate the interactions and dynamics of the socio-political context and operational dynamics found in the Trans-Sahel.

### **SME Selection**

Preliminary research on the Trans-Sahel was guided by the context of the notional scenario provided by the study sponsor. In order to systematically dissect the operational environment to identify functional areas and knowledge gaps needed for the GMA workshops, the Study Team employed a mixed-method research approach that consisted of: media review of current and recent English language coverage of each of the three target countries; secondary source review of web-based and printed country reports from USG agencies and International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); academic literature review and document review; and unstructured interviews with knowledgeable regional experts. After collating and analyzing data from these sources, the Study Team identified multiple topical areas within the Trans-Sahel that require expert knowledge for vignette design. These topical areas include:

- **Cultures and ethnic terrain:** The Trans-Sahel region serves as a frontier between Arab-Berber and Sub-Saharan peoples. Ethnic and racial distinctions in the region are highly complex, and the relationships between ethnic groups, tribes and clans fluctuate with changes in political, environmental, economic, and regional dynamics. In addition, many ethnic groups are nomadic and semi-nomadic. Migratory routes are well established, and do not necessarily correspond with international boundaries. Further, migration patterns fluctuate according to racial/ethnic relations, resource availability, and pasture and browse availability.
- **Political, economic and social institutions:** The political and economic climates inside each of the three target countries are unique. Overall, the region is one of the poorest in the world, and that poverty affects political and civil society institutions differently inside each country. Likewise, political strategies and cohesiveness inside each country drive different economic patterns including rates and modes of production as well as livelihood strategies.
- **Security:** Criminality and trade in humans, arms, narcotics, and illicit products are rampant in the Sahel. The region serves as a source, transit route, and destination for trade in each sector. Organized crime syndicates present serious security challenges to each government in the area. Likewise, informal trade funds multiple insurgent and terrorist organizations throughout the region. Mali and Niger have each had historical

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tensions between the governments and Tuareg insurgencies. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is a terrorist group that originated in Algeria and is increasingly active across the Sahel. Another security challenge in the area is cross-border violence and contagion of instability across international borders.

- **Human and economic development:** In addition to poverty, malnourishment and disease are constant challenges that peoples in the region face. Development organizations and international donors play a major role in combating these marginalizing factors throughout the region. International Organizations like the World Bank (WB), the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) engage in multiple development projects in the three countries. Likewise, foreign assistance from partner countries has a major impact on the economies and livelihoods in the three target countries.
- **Agriculture, environment, and livelihoods:** Livelihoods in the regions rural areas are predominantly composed of subsistence agriculture and pastoral herding. Fishing augments livelihoods in certain areas in the region. Because of such heavy reliance on the natural world, populations are highly vulnerable to environmental fluctuations. There are limited reserves of sub-surface mineral and metal resources like uranium, gold, and oil in the region. Exploration of these resources by foreign companies and domestic governments provides some livelihoods in the region. However, that exploration also disrupts traditional livelihoods and destroys traditional migration routes and grazing lands. This has been a source of grievance for many ethnic groups across the region.

The Study Team identified and recruited SMEs to participate in the GMA workshop according to the methodology outlined by Okoli and Pawlowski (2004), who describe an approach for identifying and vetting SMEs to participate in a Delphi experiment. The methodology they report consists of five steps (p. 20):

- *Step 1: Prepare a Knowledge Resource Nomination Worksheet (KRNW).* The purpose of this worksheet is to identify the types of expert knowledge required for a particular problem or effort. This requires first dissecting the problem space into its constituent elements, identifying knowledge gaps, and then identifying skill sets and disciplines from which knowledge can be drawn to fill those gaps.
- *Step 2: Populate the KRNW with candidate SMEs.* Based on the dissection of the problem space and the topical categories of the KRNW, relevant organizations, academics, and skilled individuals must be identified who might be able to fill knowledge gaps.
- *Step 3: Nominate additional experts.* Once the initial set of candidates has been identified, contact them and seek referrals/nominations of additional experts for a particular topic. Iterate this process until multiple candidates have been nominated for each topical area. Ideally, this iteration process will continue until nominations become redundant.
- *Step 4: Rank and select SMEs.* Once a comprehensive set of candidates has been identified for each topical area, each must be ranked against their cohort to determine who possesses the most experience and expertise on the topic in question.
- *Step 5: Invite SMEs.* Candidates with the highest ranking for each area should be recruited. Invite experts in order of their ranking, beginning with the most qualified.

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After identifying topical areas of SME knowledge requirements, the Study Team prepared a KRNW in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Figure D-1) and populated it with a set of SME candidates, identified via web-based searches of NGOs, research organizations, universities, and private firms engaged in activities that fall under the topical categories presented above, and through nominations from desk officers from the USAID and the DOS, as well as knowledgeable academics.

Trans Sahel GMA KRNW 7 slots covering 5 topical areas 36 candidates; 23 invitations 7 confirmed; 12 refused; 4 no response						
Candidate	Priority	Primary Expertise	Secondary Expertise	Organization	Status	Explanation
Sandy Ruckstuhl	high	Development/Aid	Environment/Agriculture	Group W	confirmed	confirmed
Max Goldensohn	high	Environment/Agriculture	Development/Aid	DAI	confirmed	confirmed
John Turner	high	Socio-cultural	Institutions	MCIA	confirmed	confirmed
William Zartman	high	Institutions	Socio-Cultural	Johns Hopkins University	no response	no response
Angela Martin	high	Development/Aid	Institutions	State Dept. HIU	refused	scheduling
Arielle Giegerich	high	Development/Aid	Security	OFDA MLU	refused	scheduling
George Siasoco	high	Development/Aid	Institutions	USAID OFDA	refused	scheduling
Mike Dittrick	high	Development/Aid	Security	State - AA	refused	scheduling
Scott Fisher	high	Development/Aid	Security	ACOTA	refused	scheduling
Steve Catlin	high	Development/Aid	Security	OFDA MLU	refused	no response
Andrew Dillon	high	Environment/Agriculture	Development/Aid	IFPRI	refused	scheduling
Penelope Hucker	high	Environment/Agriculture	Development/Aid	ACDI/VOCA	refused	scheduling
Bernadette Graves	high	Institutions	Socio-Cultural	STATE HIA	refused	scheduling
Yonah Alexander	high	Security	Socio-Cultural	Potomac Institute	refused	scheduling
Joseph Inikeri	high	Socio-cultural	Security	Woodrow Wilson Center	refused	scheduling
Donna Kerner	intermediate	Development/Aid	Institutions	USAID CRC- Africa Bureau	confirmed	confirmed
Margaret Harritt	intermediate	Institutions	Development/Aid	USAID- FS	confirmed	confirmed
James Bisky	intermediate	Security	Socio-cultural	MCIA	confirmed	confirmed
Shannon Pacheco	intermediate	Socio-cultural	Security	CAOCL	confirmed	confirmed
John Randall	intermediate	Environment/Agriculture	Development/Aid	WWF - Humanitarian Partnerships	no response	out of area
Jane Dennison	intermediate	Institutions	Development/Aid	USAID	no response	no response
Jeremy Glauber	intermediate	Security		US Army	no response	no response
Kathleen Martin	intermediate	Development/Aid	Institutions	USAID	refused	reassigned
Deborah Orsini	low	Development/Aid	Institutions	MSI	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Judy Oglethorpe	low	Development/Aid	Environment/Agriculture	WWF	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Amita Van Breda	low	Environment/Agriculture	Development/Aid	WWF - Humanitarian Partnerships	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Kate Hampshire	low	Environment/Agriculture	Socio-cultural	Durham University	HOLD	out of area
Cedric Jourde	low	Institutions	Security	Toronto	HOLD	out of area
Dorina Dekeo	low	Institutions	Socio-cultural	USIP	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Leonardo Villalon	low	Institutions	Security	Kansas	HOLD	out of area
Ricardo Rene Larcemont	low	Institutions	Security	SUNY	HOLD	out of area
Richard Joseph	low	Institutions		Brookings Institution	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Richard Vengroff	low	Institutions		UCONN	HOLD	out of area
Jeff McManus	low	Security		OEF-TS	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Karin Von Hippel	low	Security		State Dept.	HOLD	redundant expertise
Bill Young	low	Socio-cultural	Institutions	SAIC-N81	HOLD	tangential knowledge
Bekele Debele	networking			World Bank	networking	networking
Bronwen Morrison	networking			DAI	networking	networking
Emily Narkis	networking			State	networking	networking
Geff Dabelko	networking			Woodrow Wilson Center	networking	networking
James Klotz	networking			USMC II MEF	networking	networking
Jeson Ingraham	networking			DAI	networking	networking
Louise Shelley	networking			GMU	networking	networking
Nicole Goodrich	networking			OCRS-State	networking	networking
Ozong Agborsangaya-Fitou	networking			World Bank	networking	networking
Steve McDonald	networking			Woodrow Wilson Center	networking	networking
Summer Allen	networking			IFPRI	networking	networking
Terrence Lyons	networking			GMU	networking	networking

Figure D-1. KRNW for SME Selection for Trans-Sahel GMA Workshop Phase 1

After ranking the initial set of candidates, the Study Team contacted several candidates via e-mail and telephone to invite them to participate in the GMA workshop. Many of the invited candidates were unable to attend, but offered nominations for other qualified experts. These additional nominations were considered by the Study Team, and when appropriate to the specific effort, the personnel were invited to participate. In this way the KRNW constantly expanded

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throughout the invitation process, which ceased once the requisite number of qualified SMEs accepted the invitation to participate in the GMA workshop. The names and biographical information of SMEs that participated are provided in *Attachment 1*, found at the end of this report. The second phase of the GMA required specialized knowledge of planning. For this workshop experts were recruited from current and former USMC planners and DOS personnel knowledgeable in the specific mission sets of concern and who were available to participate (i.e. not currently tasked or forward-deployed). These experts were identified and recruited throughout the research phase of the Trans-Sahel Study.

### **GMA Workshop #1**

The first two-day GMA workshop was used to identify a range of the most important cultural considerations that might affect USG missions in the Sahel. For this stage, the Study Team convened SMEs covering five topical areas considered to be salient issues in the Sahel context: Security; Socio-cultural and Behavioral; Agriculture and Environment; Political and Economic Institution; and Development. The group of experts included personnel from Development Alternatives Inc., the USMC Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), the USMC Intelligence Activity (MCIA), the USAID, and government contractors. Prior to the workshop the SMEs were sent preparatory materials comprising Dr. Ritchey's 2006 article on GMA, a focus question, and logistics information for the workshop.

The first day of the workshop was divided into two sections. In the first section, participants were welcomed and briefed on the GMA methodology, the purpose of the workshop, and the outline of the two working days. The facilitated dialogue commenced following the orientation brief.

As directed by the GMA methodology, during facilitated dialogue the expert panel considered the focus question: "What are the most important factors that operational personnel and planners must consider when operating in the countries of Mali, Mauritania, and Niger?" Contributing their individual expertise, the expert panel deconstructed the problem space and identified the cultural, environmental, operational, and political factors deemed important in the region. The biggest challenge in constituting the morphological field is the building of a common vocabulary among the SMEs. Each expert, and the organizations they represent, use disparate parlance for similar concepts. Likewise, specific terms carry varying definitions across organizations. As such, great care was taken by the facilitation team to bring the SMEs to a common definition of concepts and terms. Over the course of the facilitated dialogue, 13 broadly defined macro categories of factors relevant to the operational environment of the Trans-Sahel emerged. Subsets of relevant factors under each macro category were then identified. Following the end of the first working day, the facilitation team collated the data in the CARMA software to produce a baseline of the cultural considerations relevant to the Trans-Sahel countries of Mali, Mauritania and Niger (Figure D-2). The macro categories from this baseline are:

- Security threats/armed groups: The factors that fell under this category are the general threats to USG personnel in the area.

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- Modes of violence: These are the types of violent conflict that could/do occur in the region.
- Operational environment: Environmental, geographic, and topographic features affect USG missions and operations. These factors identify the environmental constraints that USG missions must prepare to encounter.
- Nature of groups in historical perspective: From an anthropological perspective, it is important to identify how groups have tended to interact in the past, as well as their stances toward central governing authorities.
- Actors: These are foreign governments, NGOs and Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs) that are expected to be present in the operational environment.
- Grand Strategy: These are the long-term goals and large-scale objectives that drive the missions and actions of actors in the operational environment.
- Present demographic trends: In order to assess stresses on the local population, and thereby identify mission needs, threats, and stresses on partners and allies, it is necessary to identify the demographic and economic trajectories of local populations.
- Power brokers: These are groups or individuals who command institutional, military, economic, and social power. These brokers affect local responses to USG missions.
- Type of government: The type of government and functional ability of the government at the local, regional, and national level is considered to be a relevant factor in the operational environment.
- Services: The factors in this category relate to the level, quality, and type of resources and social services available to both local populations as well as to USG personnel.
- Belief structures: This category of factors relates to the traditional beliefs, cultural mores, and social practices of local populations.
- National policy, government, and neighbors: The factors in this category center on regional political dynamics, tensions, and partnerships.
- Revenue sources/economy: These factors identify the macro and micro economic context of the operational environment.

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Security threats - armed groups	Types of violence	Operating Environment	Nature of groups in historical perspective	Actors	Grand Strategy	Present Demographic trends	Power Broker	Type of Govt.	Services: lack of...	Belief Structures	National Policy toward neighbors	Revenue Sources/economy
Al Qaeda	kidnapping/abduction	Major long term droughts	Traditional allies	USA	development	unfavorable age distribution	National Government	Functional Government	to services in urban environment	family/kinship	unrestricted transits	aid
Organized Crime	direct fire conflict	floods	traditional enemies	World Bank	security	high levels of poverty	Regional Government	Decentralized Democracy (federal)	energy	Fundamentalism	restricted transit of legal goods	remittances
Traffickers	Frequency/low level violence	floods	traditional neutrals	UN	islam	low literacy	Communal/Local government	Military Junta	water	Western Culture	closed borders	corruption
Rebels/Insurgents	Random Violence	Heat/Temperature	support govt	Al Qaeda	political alliances and diplomacy	insufficient/ sporadic income	local business	Nominal democracy led by military leader	unfulfilled expectations	religious brotherhoods		taxes
Inter-ethnic militias	Targeted bombing	progressive environmental degradation	anti govt	African Union	economic trade	High unemployment	Traditional leaders	Failed State	roads	Age		goods
foreign militias	UXO/IED	Distance/size		West African States	control	large informal economy	military leaders		communications infrastructure	Gender		revenue for potable goods
riots	Spontaneous ethnic conflict	Terrain		OIC	destabilizin	low degree of family cohesion	Police		economic infrastructure	Race		formal jobs
Disaffected youth	Gender violence and trafficking	lack of physical infrastructure		Arab League	Money/profit	very strong migration	religious leaders		Healthcare	Ethnicity		barter
	trafficking	Urban Terrain		CENSAD		Rapid/chaotic urbanization	Religious leaders			education		informal economy
	intimidation and threats	Borders		EU			Charismatic individuals			Pastoral vs urban vs agricultural livelihood		
		Diseases		French			Political Parties			social stratification		
				Muslim States						norms and taboos		
				Internet corporations						PLACE		
										Ownership/wealth		
										sexuality		
										punishment		
										ritual		

Figure D-2. Morphological Field Generated as Part of the First GMA Workshop

The second day of the workshop was again divided into two distinct sections. During the first section the expert panel reconstructed the problem space by re-defining the concepts generated in the previous day’s sessions, iteratively creating concrete parameters, and constructing variables from the conditions and elements that comprise the baseline “considerations” per the focus question. These parameters and their associated variables were used to construct a morphological field (Figure D-3) consisting of the following parameters:

- **Actors:** The groups, governments, NGOs, and foreign militaries that USG personnel are likely to encounter in the operational environment.
- **Security threats/concerns in the environment:** The security threats that USG personnel are likely to encounter in the operational environment.
- **Modes of violence:** The tactics, ordinance, and types of violence that USG personnel are likely to encounter in the operational environment based on the security threats identified.
- **Nature of groups in historical perspective:** These include the historical inter-relations among groups in the operational environment, as well as the groups' various positioning concerning the central government.

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- Power brokers (internal): The groups and individuals in the operational environment who control formal/legal/institutional power and the groups and individuals who hold informal/tribal/traditional power.
- Beliefs structures: The societal, cultural and traditional behaviors, values and beliefs to which groups in the operational environment adhere. These influence how groups will respond to the presence of USG personnel.

In the final activity of the first workshop the expert panel identified several operational scenarios, and identified the values of each of the cultural parameters that must be considered by USG personnel engaged in such operations. These scenarios are presented in the first column of Figure D-3, and are summarized below:

- Famine in Niger: This scenario involves the deployment of USG personnel to conduct a Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) mission. In the scenario, long-term drought in Niger culminates in famine. The scenario does not include a precipitating event resulting in the immediate deployment of USG personnel.
- Demining Operation: In this scenario, USG personnel conduct Security Force Assistance (SFA) missions to provide training to the Mauritanian Army by engaging in demining activities in the border region with Western Sahara where large fields of unexploded ordinance remain a serious security threat.
- Support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Operations: This scenario presents a situation where a coup attempt in Mauritania results in the collapse of the central government, prompting disorder and conflict in the capital. The ECOWAS devises a mission to deploy Malian troops inside Mauritania to restore order. USG personnel are ordered to provide SFA in the form of air and ground transportation for the Malian forces.

Scen	Actors (external)	Security threats/ concerns in environment	Modes of violence	Nature of groups in historical perspective	Power Brokers (internal)	Belief structures & attitudes which influence...
Famine in Niger HA/DR (Stability)	USA	Al Qaeda	Kidnapping/ abduction	Traditional allies	National Government	Family/kinship
Demine (SFA) (Security&Econ)	World Bank	Organized Crime	Direct fire conflict	traditional enemies	Regional Government	Fundamentalism
Support ECOWAS op/ SFA (Stability)	UN	Traffickers	Frequency/low level violence	support govt	Communal/Local government	Religious brotherhoods
	"Al Qaeda"	Rebels/Insurgents	Random violence	anti govt	local business	Age
	African Union	inter-ethnic militias	Targeted bombing	Not important	Traditional leaders	Gender
	West African States	foreign militaries	IED		military leaders	Race
	Magreb	Mobs	Spontaneous ethnic conflict		Police	Ethnicity
	EU	Disaffected youth	Gender violence and trafficking		Religious leaders	education
	French	LUXO	Human trafficking		Charismatic Individuals	Pastoral vs urban vs agricultural livelihood
	Muslim States	Unfulfilled expectations	Intimidation and threats		Political Parties	social stratification
	International corporations	Large informal economy			Civil society orgs.	Norms and taboos
	Other international orgs.	Corruption				Relation to "Place"
		Own inappropriate response				Ownership/ wealth
						Sexuality
						Attitudes to punishment
						Place of ritual

Figure D-3. Cultural and Environmental Variables Identified in an Example Scenario

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In order to connect each scenario to the operationally relevant variables, Dr. Ritchey facilitated expert discussion, asking participants to decide whether each variable under each parameter would be a possible operational consideration in a given scenario. Based on the facilitated analysis, the variables that are actually possible/present in the context of a given scenario in the Trans-Sahel were linked to that scenario in the CARMA software and inclusion models were generated. While these models are coarse-grain, low-resolution examples, they demonstrate the range of cultural factors that need to be considered by USG personnel engaged in planning various types of missions in the Trans-Sahel.

## **GMA Workshop #2**

The second two-day workshop of the GMA effort was designed to analyze the operational planning constraints and process that affect Marine Corps planning in the Sahel, particularly when operating in an Interagency setting. Toward this end, planners were from the DOS, the USMC, the CAOCL, the USAID, and government contractors participated.

During this phase the planning experts identified the range of operational considerations involved in conducting Interagency operations. Particular focus was given to identifying the institutional and structural constraints that USG agencies operate under, given likely scenarios in the Trans-Sahel context. As in the first phase, during the first working day of this second phase the planning experts engaged in a facilitated dialogue to deconstruct the Interagency planning space into its constituent components. The Study Team again collated these elements into a baseline (Figure D-4), which was later used to construct parameters for consideration in USG planning. The parameters generated during the first working day were:

- Engagement: USG operations, programs, and missions abroad.
- Implementing agency: A “help”<sup>172</sup> parameter to define the type of engagement according to who is responsible for execution and authority.
- Scope: A measure of effort “output.” Can be either a measure of the “footprint” on the ground or the political/diplomatic/military weight behind the effort.
- Time frame: Time frame is defined as the duration of the operation in execution. Does not include the length of time required to plan or prepare for the operation/mission.
- Stakeholders: Who will the US primarily interact with during planning and execution? Stakeholder interests cover a spectrum of relevance. In some cases a given stakeholder’s interests may be of paramount importance and in other instances it may have little relevance.
- Attitude toward host country legal framework: There are three dimensions to a legal framework: US law, international law, and Host Nation (HN) law. In this parameter, the legal framework is narrowly defined as HN law. In certain instances, such as a UN “Chapter 7” peace-enforcement mission or a kinetic military action, host-nation law might not limit certain actions.

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<sup>172</sup> A “help” parameter is a descriptive variable that is included for clarity but does not figure into the final GMA output.

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- Relevance of cultural awareness for accomplishing objectives: This captures the extent to which cultural factors need to be considered in planning in order to achieve specified US objectives and goals.

Engagement	How important is the need for Cultural	Spectrum of Coordination	Time frame	Structure of Coordination with Host Nation	Institutional Structure	Relationships and Legal Framework	Primary Resource Types	Coordination outside US Govt	Who Leads	SCOPE/Footprint	Goals
SFA	Very Relevant	Just mil	10+	National Government	create an agency	Work within existing framework	Money	National Government	WH (NSC)	Heavy: [MTW or CPC]	National interests
Kinetic Mil	Respectful of host nation experience	Just civ	5-10 years	Local Government	modify existency agency	Alter framework	People	Local Government	State	Medium: [TSCTP]	Partnership building
HA/DR		Coordination	2-5 years	NGO, PVO, IGO	plus up	Work outside framework	Material	NGO, PVO, IGO	USAID	Light	Rebuild/Develop/Stabilize
SSR	Little Use	Multinational	1 year	Businesses	Ad hoc/temporary org/DART		Information	World Bank	DOD		Relief
Institution building		Bilateral	Months	None	None		Political capital	Business	Country team		Good Governance
NEO		Go alone	Weeks					Civil Society			
DDR											
PoV/Diplomatic											
PD/PA/IO											
PK/PE											

Figure D-4: Morphological Field Containing the Parameters and Values

During the second day participants vetted the parameters through the Cross Consistency Analysis (CCA) process. During the CCA the experts analyzed each variable pair-wise against all other variables (Figure D-5). By excluding the logically inconsistent variable combinations from consideration, the expert panel was able to generate formal inference matrices (Figure D-6) that identify primary planning considerations in an Interagency context. This process generated an inference model that allows users to select on parameters of interest exploring all possible, internally consistent, relationships within the morphological field.

Once inference matrices were generated, the planning experts revisited the scenarios that were produced by the cultural expert panel during the first phase of the workshop. Expert panel participants attempted to link planning factors from the second workshop to the scenario factors identified during the first workshop. However, it proved difficult to draw linkages between the two sessions because planning panel participants focused predominately on internal factors that govern Interagency planning and decision making, rather than operational factors. In hindsight this stage of the analytical effort could have benefited from a third GMA session held between

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the two sessions that focused on operational parameters derived directly from the scenario workshop. The discussion on internal factors could then have been derived from the operational factors discussions, ensuring direct linkages between all three.

		Scenario	Engagement												Who is Implementing						SCOPE	Time frame							US Govt interaction with stakeholders							Attitude to host country legal relationships and Frameworks																	
		Family II Niger (Stability) Dem (SFA) (Security&Econ support) Support ECOWAS op. SFA (Stability)	Kinetic MI	NEO	HADR	PKPE	SFA	Civ institution building	SSR	DDR	POD/diplomatic	PD/PA/O	WH (NSC)	State	USAID	DOD	Country team	Heavy: (MTW or CPC)	Medium: (TSCIP)	Light	10+	5-10 years	2-5 years	1 year	Months	Days/Weeks	National Govt of "host"	Local Government	NGO, PVO, IGO	World Bank/IMF	Business	Civil Society	None	Work within existing framework	Alter framework	Work outside framework	Highly relevant	Moderately relevant	Of little relevance														
Engagement	Kinetic MI																																																				
	NEO																																																				
	HADR	S																																																			
	PKPE																																																				
	SFA						S																																														
	Civ Institution building																																																				
	SSR																																																				
	DDR																																																				
	POD/diplomatic																																																				
	PD/PA/O																																																				
Who is implementing	WH (NSC)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	State			X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	USAID			X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-
	DOD	S	S	-	-	S	-	S	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Country team			X	-	-	-	-	K	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
SCOPE	Heavy: (MTW or CPC)	S	S	-	X	S	K	X	-	X	X	K	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Medium: (TSCIP)			-	K	-	-	-	-	K	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Light		S	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Time frame	10+			X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	5-10 years			-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	2-5 years			-	X	-	-	-	-	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	1 year	S		-	X	S	-	-	K	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Months		S	-	K	-	K	S	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Days/Weeks			-	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
US Govt interaction with stakeholders	National Govt of "host"	S	S	-	-	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Local Government	S	S	-	-	S	-	K	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	NGO, PVO, IGO	S		K	-	S	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	World Bank/IMF			X	K	-	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Business			-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Civil Society	S	S	-	-	S	-	S	-	K	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
	None			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Attitude to host country legal relationships and Frameworks	Work within existing framework	S	S	-	-	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Alter framework	S	S	-	-	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Work outside framework	S		-	-	S	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
How relevant is the need for cultural awareness for objectives	Highly relevant	S	S	-	K	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Moderately relevant		S	-	-	K	K	S	K	K	K	-	K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Of little relevance			-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

Figure D-5. Cross-Consistency Analysis Matrix

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Scen	Engagement	Who is implementing	SCOPE	Time frame	US Govt interaction with stakeholders	Attitude to host country legal relationships and Frameworks	How relevant is the need for cultural awareness for objectives
Famine in Niger HA/DR (Stability)	Kinetic Mil	WH (NSC)	Heavy: [MTW or CPC]	10+	National Govt of "host"	Work within existing framework	Highly relevant
Demine (SFA) (Security&Econ su Support ECOWAS op. SFA (Stability)	NEO	State	Medium: [TSCTP]	5-10 years	Local Government	Alter framework	Moderately relevant
	HA/DR	USAID	Light	2-5 years	NGO, PVO, IGO	Work outside framework	Of little relevance
	PK/PE	DOD		1 year	World Bank/IMF		
	SFA	Country team		Months	Business		
	Civ institution building			Days/Weeks	Civil Society		
	SSR				None		
	DDR						
	Pol/Diplomatic						
	PD/PA/IO						

Figure D-6. Example of an Inferential Model

**Lessons Learned**

The data and models produced during the Trans-Sahel GMA workshop generated a wealth of rich cultural data and deep knowledge concerning the situational factors and constraints that affect US missions and operations in the Sahel region. In addition the workshop provided the opportunity for experts from a variety of agencies and organizations to discuss the challenges and advantages of executing Interagency operations.

Several themes emerged during discussion throughout the workshop sessions, focused particularly on the challenges of interagency communication and coordination during the planning and execution of Interagency operations. Those themes were reinforced throughout the dialogue among expert participants. For instance, one theme that continually emerged in both workshop sessions was that different institutional participants in an Interagency operation have different mission sets and consequently bring very different views of the “problem space” and mission parameters. Predictably the DOS and the USAID focus on the political and long-term strategic aspects of Interagency operations, whereas the military are focused on short-term execution of specific tasks. In the case of the three scenarios outlined in these sessions, it was regularly the case that the uniformed participants highlighted “end state” conditions that would signal a redeployment of forces. Civilian counterparts, on the other hand, while recognizing “end state” conditions, seemed comfortable with a more abstract definition of success.

The discussion throughout the workshop sessions highlighted the ways that breakdowns in communication across agency lines limits the scope of factors that are incorporated into planning and execution. For example, the participants, many of whom have worked extensively in Interagency field operations, had never seen a comprehensive list of relevant operational

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considerations like the one generated through the workshop process be employed in field operations or planning.

The GMA workshop thus served dual purposes. For the Trans-Sahel Study Team, the GMA generated a wealth of data on the cultural and planning contexts for Interagency operations. That data was later employed to generate the operational vignette to be used later in the Trans-Sahel Study effort. The workshop also served as a forum for field personnel from multiple USG agencies and Departments to engage in thoughtful dialogue and analysis of Interagency operations. The experts involved all support USG missions in various roles (e.g. as analysts, contractors, intelligence officers, and field personnel). The dialogue they participated in gave them each a deeper understanding of their own role in the Interagency, as well as the roles and focus areas of their counterparts in other agencies.

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### **Attachment 1. GMA Participants**

#### *SMEs*

#### **Ms. Shannon M. Pacheco**

Shannon M. Pacheco is the senior Research Analyst for the Africa Desk at the CAOCL. Her responsibilities include developing regional and country-specific products and briefs for Marines, participating in Africa-focused conferences throughout the greater Washington, D.C. area, and researching relevant military issues and current affairs relating to the African continent.

Having earned dual bachelor's degrees in International Affairs (Human Rights concentration) and French, as well as a minor in Political Science from the University of Dayton in 2005, Shannon continues to increase her understanding of global and regional issues within the international community through graduate studies in Global Affairs (Culture and Society concentration) at George Mason University. Her areas of expertise are North Africa, human rights, and linguistics. Shannon's research interests are regional conflict; colonialism and post-colonialism in Africa; terrorism; human trafficking; and North African culture.

Shannon is a fluent French speaker and has elementary Arabic language skills, which she developed during her residency in Morocco, and maintains through her work with North African and Middle Eastern contacts. Prior to working at the CAOCL, Shannon was the aide-de-camp for Ambassador Aziz Mekouar at the Embassy of Morocco in Washington, D.C.. She is a member of the Alliance Française of Washington, and is a voracious reader and health enthusiast. She is married and enjoys traveling extensively, both locally and abroad. She can be reached at [spacheco@cots.com](mailto:spacheco@cots.com).

#### **Dr. Margaret Harritt**

Margaret has technical training in forestry, with a PhD in forest genetics. She has been a Foreign Service Officer with USAID since 1992, serving 14 years in USAID field missions: after a decade in Latin America (natural resources, agriculture and rural development), her next posts were Pakistan (democracy and governance and economic growth) and Central Asia (regional energy markets).

For the past five years stationed in USAID/Washington, Margaret has worked on development of methodologies and tools for operationalizing best practices and lessons learned for conflict, post-conflict, and stabilization. Materials have been developed for stabilization frameworks and programming approaches, with emphasis on ability to track impact of USG interventions. In addition, she has managed a global youth employability program for several years for Economic Growth and Trade's (EGAT's) Urban Programs team.

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### **Ms. Donna Kerner**

Ms. Kerner has more than 15 years experience working with the USAID, the DOS, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UN agencies, international and NGO organizations in the areas of HA, DR, development, and Civil-to-Military operations in conflict and post-conflict countries. Ms. Kerner has extensive expertise in Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration (DDR), economic recovery, government capacity-building, and civil society strengthening. She has worked in politically complex positions in Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Macedonia and Croatia.

Ms. Kerner works at the USAID as principal DDR specialist for reconstruction and stabilization operations in the Civilian Response Corps. She is detailed to the Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development/Conflict, Peacebuilding and Governance Division. Ms. Kerner was Senior Civil-to-Military Planner at the DOS's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) and Africa Deputy Team Leader at the USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI).

### **Dr. Max D. Goldensohn**

Dr. Goldensohn has worked in developing countries since 1965. He has served as Chief of Party of four major USAID-funded projects – in Mauritania, Zaire, Sri Lanka and Egypt – and as country Director in Colombia for the Pan American Development Foundation. These projects covered agribusiness and agricultural development, infrastructure construction and maintenance, institutional analysis and transformation, alternative development, internally displaced and vulnerable populations, and policy design and implementation. He has designed and evaluated projects in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe and has established the monitoring and evaluation systems for the four projects of which he was Chief of Party. In addition, Dr. Goldensohn has served as Senior Vice President for Field Operations and for the Agriculture and Economics Practice at a leading international development contracting firm. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Harvard and has learned more than 10 languages in his career.

### **Dr. Sandra Ruckstuhl**

Sandra Ruckstuhl is a Senior Social Scientist at the Center for Complexity Analysis at Group W Inc. where she conducts research and provides advisory services on development policy and operations in conflict-affected and fragile states for the WB, the UN and the USG. Prior to joining Group W she worked for more than seven years as a consultant to the WB and the UN where she provided technical assistance and conducted research on conflict-sensitive approaches to development. She has worked on water, natural resource management and environmental issues in 14 countries across four regions, including fieldwork in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, India and the West Bank and Gaza. Sandra is an Instructor at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) where she has designed and teaches a 15-week graduate seminar entitled "Water and Conflict."

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With her dissertation entitled "Enabling Environmental Peacebuilding: An Analysis of Projects and Factors in Four Project Cases" she earned her PhD from the Institute. Sandra holds a Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in International Relations with a regional studies focus on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. She lives in Falls Church, Virginia with her husband.

#### **Mr. James Biskey**

James Biskey currently serves as the MCIA's Sahel Analyst, covering security issues including counter-terrorism and political/military dynamics. For the past two years, he has covered Saharan counter-terrorism and insurgency issues. Prior to joining the MCIA, he worked as a Middle East and Africa analyst for US Army Europe (pre-African Command).

Mr. Biskey's travel in the Sahel includes trips to Niger and Senegal. He is currently a graduate student in Applied Economics at Johns Hopkins University and graduated from George Mason University with a B.A. in Geography and International Politics.

#### **Dr. John Turner**

Dr. John Turner received graduate degrees from the University of Michigan and Yale University and has worked for the Department of Defense (DOD) on African affairs since 1982. Prior to his work with the MCIA, where he is the North Africa regional Analyst (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt), he worked at the US European Command (USEUCOM) for 14 years as their North Africa and Sahel specialist. Dr. Turner is the author of a number of published works on African security issues, including one book, *The Continent Ablaze* (Cassel, 1987). At USEUCOM he also taught a series of seminars on the peoples of North Africa, the Sahara, and the Sahel.

#### ***Planning Experts***

##### **Mark Triplett**

USMC Colonel (retired), Group W Inc. analyst, expertise in Security Cooperation (SC) planning

##### **Pat Martin**

USMC Lieutenant Colonel (retired), Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP) staff, expertise in I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) planning and HA/DR

##### **Henri Bore**

French Marine Corps Colonel (retired), CAOCL Africa Desk, expertise in Trans-Sahel and Military planning

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**Elon Weinstein**

Independent consultant, Former DOS, expertise in Contingency planning, West Africa

**Donna Kerner**

USAID/Office of Transition Initiatives, Africa Deputy Team Lead, Senior Civilian-to-Military planner

**Dr. Scott Fisher**

DOS, Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA), expertise in contingency planning

**Major Paul Bischoff**

USMC, MSTP staff, expertise in Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) and MEF planning

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### Appendix E. Expert Papers

#### Introduction

The expert planning papers were developed to support the Study Team's understanding of the major mission sets of interest to the Sponsor. Though Counterinsurgency and Stability Operations have doctrinal publications, the Study Team needed to know more about the United States (US) Marine Corp's (USMC's) Security Cooperation (SC) construct, which includes Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and building partner capacity activities. The Study Team also wanted to understand more about the Department of State (DOS) and US Agency for International Development (USAID) plan, especially in a Disaster Relief (DR) context, as they would take the lead in such an operation. These papers explain the approaches from the perspective of those with expert knowledge and direct experience.

*"Security Cooperation Planning"* was written by Colonel Mark Triplett, USMC (retired), former director of the Security Cooperation Education Training Center (SCETC).

*"Planning for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Events: An Interagency Perspective"* was written by Mr. Elon Weinstein, Consultant, International Sustainable Systems. Former DOS Contingency Planner specializing in West Africa, and Dr. Stacey Ballou, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), USAID.

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## Security Cooperation Planning

### Background

Security Cooperation (SC) is an overarching Department of Defense (DOD) concept that encompasses “all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific United States (US) security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a Host Nation (HN).”<sup>173</sup> Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Security Assistance (SA), and Security Force Assistance (SFA) are all subsets of SC (figure E-1).

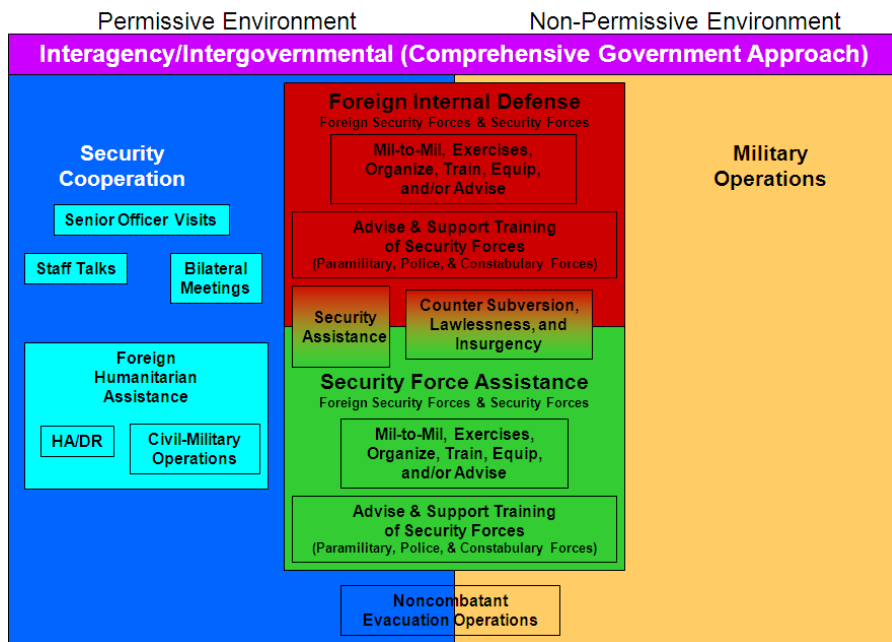


Figure E-1. SC/SA/SFA Relationships

The focus of US FID efforts is to support the HN’s Internal Defense and Development (IDAD). IDAD is “the full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.”<sup>174</sup> It focuses on building viable institutions that respond to the needs of society. Military engagement during FID supports the other instruments of national power through a variety of activities across the range of military operations. In some cases, direct military support may be necessary in order to provide the secure environment for IDAD efforts to become effective.

<sup>173</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (2001). “JP 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms” (as amended through 31 October 2009), Washington, D.C.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid

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SA (Title 22 United States Code) is “a group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services, by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Security assistance is an element of security cooperation funded and authorized by Department of State to be administered by Department of Defense/Defense Security Cooperation Agency.”<sup>175</sup> SA is the military component of Foreign Assistance that has as its principal components Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Peace Operations (PO), and Excess Defense Articles (EDA). The SA activities that are carried out in support of these plans span the gamut from large-scale interoperability exercises to Humanitarian Assistance (HA).

SFA is “the DOD activities that contribute to unified action by the US Government (USG) to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions.”<sup>176</sup> The US military engages in activities to enhance the capabilities and capacities of a Partner Nation (PN) by providing training, equipment, advice, and assistance to those FSF organized in national ministry of defense, while other USG agencies focus on those forces assigned to other ministries such as interior, justice, or intelligence services. SFA spans the range of operations from military engagement, SC, SA, and deterrence activities to crisis response and contingency operations, and if necessary, major operations and campaigns. It can include combat advisory and support activities not falling under SA. SFA may be conducted in both permissive and non-permissive security environments.

### **The Theatre Cooperation Plan (TCP)**

The Geographic Combatant Command’s (GCC’s) TCP is the primary document that focuses on the command’s steady-state activities, which include operations, SC, and other activities designed to achieve theater strategic end states. The GCC’s TCPs are the primary vehicle for designing, organizing, integrating and executing military SC activities. The GCC’s TCPs:

- Focus efforts on steady state activities which include ongoing operations, SC and other shaping or preventative activities
- Ways to build transparent, accountable and ethical defense and security planning and execution
- Planning will ensure SC activities are in compliance with legal and policy limitations governing military engagement with foreign countries
- Address:
  - Partner readiness
  - Sustainment and training
  - Methods to identify and reduce corruption

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<sup>175</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (2001). “*JP 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*” (as amended through 31 October 2009), Washington, D.C.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid

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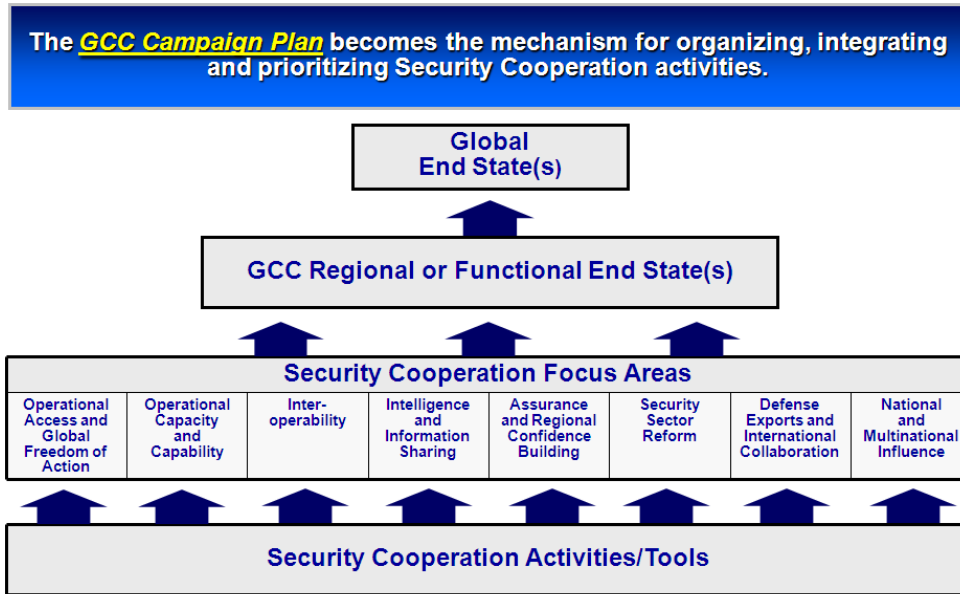


Figure E-2. Multi-year Campaign Plan Activities

Each military service will influence and be influenced by the GCC TCPs through their respective service components. Therefore, the Marine Force (MARFOR) component SC planner must be fully aware of and have a clear understanding of the guidance at the Strategic and Service level, the GCC TSC plans and guidance, and how they influence their plans.

### Planning Guidance for SC

The *Guidance for Employment of the Force* (GEF) contains DOD guidance for SC. This guidance provides goals and activities for specific regions and provides the overarching framework for many SC related activities. The GEF also includes the SC tools/resources. The theater strategy translates national and alliance strategic tasks and direction into long-term, regionally focused operational tasks and direction to accomplish specific missions and objectives. The *National Military Strategy* (NMS), GEF, and the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan* (JSCP) guide the development of this strategy that incorporates peacetime and war objectives and reflects national and DOD policy and guidance. The determination of the desired end state for the theater is an important element in the strategy process. This determination establishes the theater's strategic direction on which commanders and their staffs base campaign plans as well as other plans. In general, the theater strategy will normally include an analysis of US national policy and interests, a strategic assessment of the Area of Responsibility (AOR), a threat analysis, the Commander's vision, and a statement of theater missions and objectives. Such guidance creates a base from which the SC planner can go forward to accomplish the mission. The context of SC planning is not high tempo combat contingency operations but systematic and methodical application of training and education constructed in a logical sequence to build PN capabilities and capacity (figure E-3).



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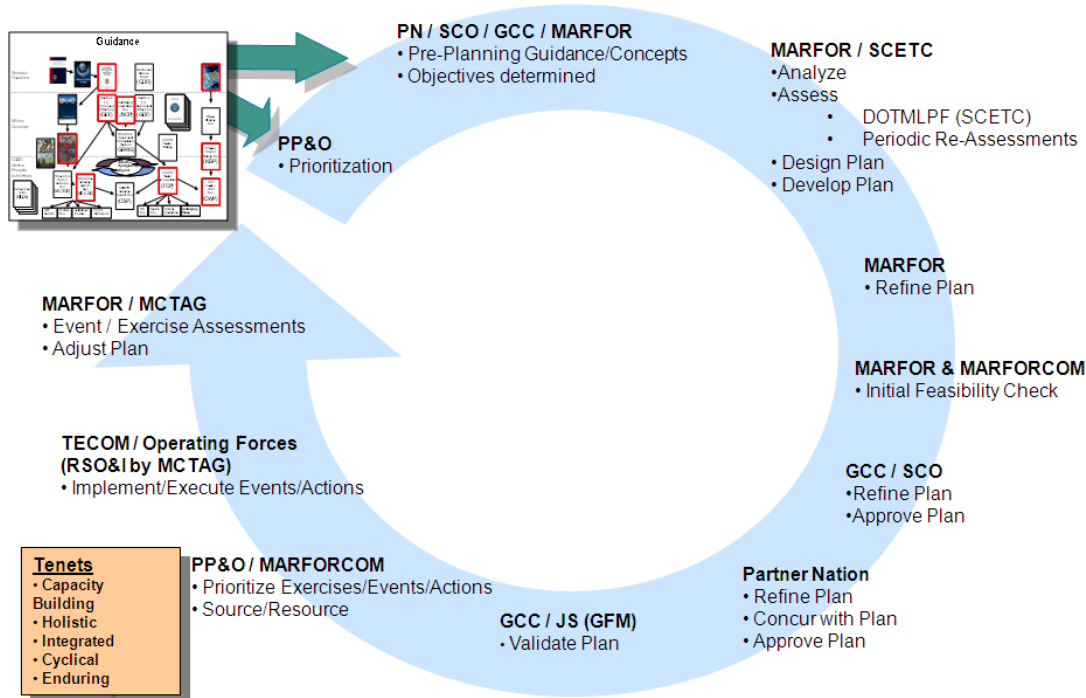


Figure E-3. SC Planning Cycle

An essential function of planning in general is to promote understanding of the problem – the difference between existing and desired conditions – and to devise ways of resolving it. A SC planner is faced with capability or capacity gaps that exist within the PN FSF and is charged with assisting the PN in addressing and correcting those gaps. Planning should not be viewed as an isolated activity or process, but rather as a part of a continuum in which planning, execution, and assessment are continuous. As described in Marine Corps Doctrine Publication (MCDP) 5, “*Planning*,” planning at the highest level is conceptual planning. It establishes aims, objectives, intentions, and involves developing broad concepts for action. The next level of planning is functional planning, which involves the design of supporting plans for discrete functional activities. The lowest level of planning is detailed planning, which translates the broad concept into a complete and practicable plan. The Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC) has developed a planning process to assist the SC planner with a detailed process to develop a multi-year SC Engagement Plan (SCEP), based on the Systems Approach to Training Process (SATP) described below.

### Planning for Engagement with SATP

The SATP was established to manage the process of analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional programs. SATP assists commanders in identifying critical warfighting tasks, both for the individual and the unit, and it guides the Marine Corps’ application of limited resources. The SATP is a dynamic, flexible system with 5 phases, Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate (ADDIE), that overlap and are interrelated.

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When applied, this process provides an effective and efficient construct for development and management instructional programs.

Using the ADDIE process to develop a SCEP better ensures FSF capacity is built through holistic, integrated, cyclical, and enduring engagements. The SCEP is a long-term (3-5 years) planning tool across the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) categories to plan and synchronize SC engagements in order to build prioritized PN FSF capabilities and capacity and to apply US Marine Corps (USMC) resources. It is intended to assist the regional MARFORs, PN FSF or organization in building capabilities and/or capacities in order to accomplish the designated mission. The ADDIE steps are defined as follows:

- ANALYZE - to examine critically, so as to bring out the essential elements or give the essence of; to examine carefully and in detail so as to identify causes, key factors, possible results, etc.
- DESIGN - adaptation of means to a preconceived end; to intend for a definite purpose.
- DEVELOP - to bring out the capabilities or possibilities of; bring to a more advanced or effective state; to grow into a more mature or advanced state; advance; expand.
- IMPLEMENT - to put into effect according to or by means of a definite plan or procedure.
- EVALUATE - to judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of; assess.

Figure E-4 and the text following details the steps of ADDIE and discusses additional activities and considerations for the SATP for persistent Military-to-Military engagement planning.

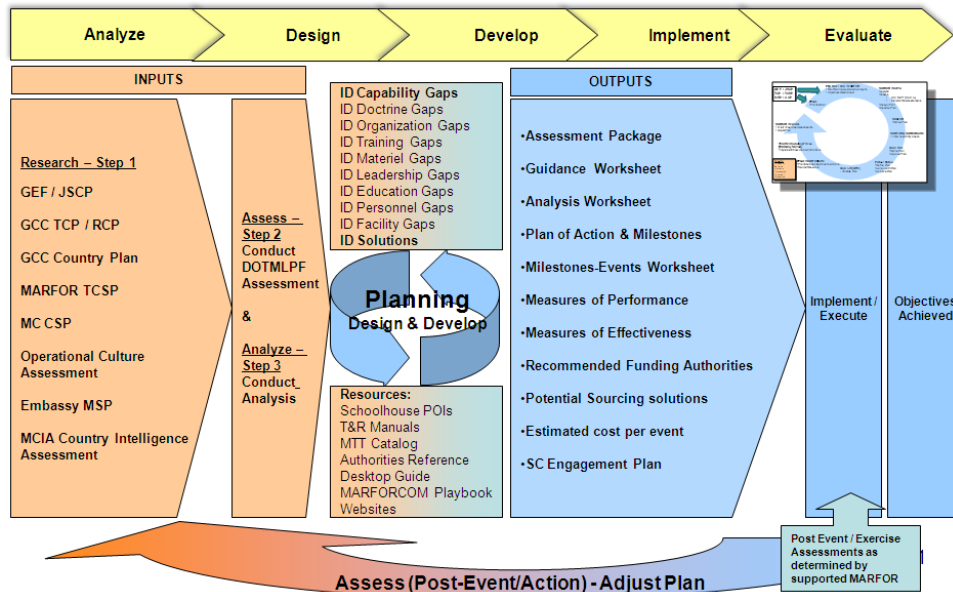


Figure E-4. Engagement Planning Process

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### Step One: Analyze

*Conduct Necessary Research:* The SC planner must take a holistic look at known facts that apply to the DOD, the DOS, and the PN FSF utilizing a wide range of resources. In order to gain an even stronger understanding of the situation, the SC planner should also conduct a thorough study of the PN culture and obtain official applicable intelligence reports. There are three basic parts to Pre-Planning Research. The first part is to research the documents that give input or guidance to the development of the proposed SCEP. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- GEF
  - Consolidates and integrates DOD planning guidance
  - Establishes campaign planning construct to achieve strategic end states and objectives
  - Recognizes the global nature of emerging military threats
  - Addresses resource limitations
- GCC TCP
  - Drafted under direction found in GEF
  - Operationalizes strategy
  - Delineates end states
  - Prioritizes regions, sub-regions, and efforts
  - Directs Service Components role
- USMC Service Campaign Support Plan
  - Provide guidance that ensures a unified approach to achieve the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) priorities
  - Address how the Marine Corps will meet the GCC requirements
  - Synchronizes and directs Deputy Commandant, Director, and Commander activities to develop, organize, train, equip, and deploy Marine Forces
  - Assign Service objectives and a methodology for providing feedback to CMC
- Component Campaign Support Plan
  - Developed by the Component Regional Action Officer to meet the GCC TCP goals and objectives
  - Synchronize Service-level activities in support of the national strategic end states and GCC TCP
  - Serves as the primary reference for articulating and understanding Marine Corps SC priorities and activities
- Mission Strategic Plan (MSP)
  - A US embassy plan that is tied to transformational diplomacy
  - Provides the overarching foreign policy basis for all mission activities
- The Ambassador's (Chief of Mission) plan
  - Reflects all country team concerns
  - Provides for each staff section and staff
  - An annual plan with 3-5 year horizon
  - Assigned objectives to be accomplished in year
  - Measured outcomes
  - Yields future plans

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- Country Action Plan
  - A DOD document which is aligned with the MSP in the US embassy
  - Developed by the SC Organization (SCO) in the US embassy to meet the GCC TCP goals and objectives
  - Identifies military activities tied to the MSP
  - Links the US embassy and PN goals and objectives with the GCC TCP

The SC planner must also examine the Operational Culture for the country and region assigned. The SC planner must review those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of military operations. The Five Dimensions of Operational Culture are:

- Physical environment
- Economic
- Social structure
- Political structure
- Beliefs and symbols

Those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of military operations and the military actions that influence the culture of an Area of Operations (AO) together define Operational Culture. Successful SC planning demands Operational Culture considerations to be incorporated into all phases of the planning process. Operational Culture is easily injected into the Operational Design developed for SC planning, finding its logical place in all phases of the ADDIE process. The integration of Operational Culture here provides the Commander and staff the necessary factors to consider when planning both SC events as well as long-term planning while drafting a *MARFOR Campaign Support Plan*. Operational Culture should be included throughout the process, including Implementation and Evaluation, so that it can influence the next set of SC events. The SC planner must then conduct research regarding the country and region. The Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) typically provides country briefings and a threat assessment.

*Conduct an Assessment:* The SC planner must then conduct an actual assessment of the PN Service, organization, or unit built around the DOTMLPF construct. The DOTMLPF construct facilitates the gathering and organizing of information for the assessment. This will identify capabilities and refine and/or confirm the information already gathered. The assessors will ascertain information on the PN FSF defined mission and tasks, requirements, assets, deficiencies, solutions, and analysis for each of the DOTMLPF sections.

*Conduct the Analysis:* The final step of the Analyze phase is to identify the PN FSF capability gaps. A capability gap is a deficiency in a PN FSF capability or capacity that prevents the PN FSF from achieving success in its stated mission or tasks. The SC planner lists the significant findings from the assessment and the specific capability gaps uncovered during the assessment for each of the DOTMLPF categories. Finally, the planner identifies potential solutions that will correct the identified gaps. The potential solutions become the “Objectives” for the Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) in the “Design” phase. The SC planner must ensure that all of the problem areas identified during the assessment process are captured.

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### Step Two: Design

Design is defined as “the conception and articulation of a framework for solving a problem.”<sup>177</sup> There are three steps in the “Design” phase of SC planning:

- Development of a POA&M Worksheet for each of the DOTMLPF category
- Identification of enabling tasks and events that when combined become a capability set
- Produce a Capability Set Worksheet that shows all of the capability sets, enabling tasks and events as they are sequenced through time

*Develop a POA&M Worksheet:* Using the DOTMLPF construct, objectives are developed and milestones sequenced to achieve those objectives. The objectives come from the recommended solutions of the Analyze phase. The milestones are significant intermediate goals that lead to the accomplishment of the objective. The objectives are a logical Line of Operation (LOO) for each of the DOTMLPF categories. For the SC planner, this means creating a workable sequence of events to accomplish the task(s) and intent as outlined in the GCC’s TCP. The SC planner must address all of the identified PN capability gaps. The end state is a group of capability sets that address all of the known gaps and that provide a series of sequenced events that are a solution for gaps.

*Identify the Capability Set:* The SC planner must identify the enabling tasks that will accomplish the objectives and milestones. This is followed with identifying specific sequential events that will accomplish the enabling tasks. It is completely acceptable to have one event that may be used to accomplish multiple enabling tasks that can even cross capability set boundaries. A subordinate or component commander’s perspective and focus will be different from that of the GCC, and the LOO methods will vary. Operational level and tactical organizations typically will focus more on the specific application of military capabilities, even when in support of civil authorities. However, the military commander’s understanding of the purpose, objectives, and activities of the civilian and multinational counterparts is essential to promoting unified action.

*Develop the Capability Set Worksheet:* The Capability Set Worksheet is the first time in the SC plan that breaks away from the DOTMLPF construct and forges the objectives and milestones from the POA&M Worksheet into a single capability set with enabling tasks and specific events. Once the specific events are identified, the planner fills in some specific information for each event that will be useful in the “Develop” phase. Most SC event sequencing will follow logical steps in progression regardless of cultural environment; however, Operational Culture considerations may identify the need to add intermediate steps that may otherwise not be considered. One of the main contributions of Operational Culture during the “Design” stage will be to identify any needs to elongate the sequencing process hence a continuous (non-timeline based) construct during the “Design” phase vice a single year and five year construct during the “Develop” phase. The Capability Set Worksheet will be used to develop the SCEP.

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<sup>177</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). “*Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, Marine Corps Planning Process*,” Washington, D.C.

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### Step Three: Develop

The first step in the “Develop” phase is the development of the SCEP. This SCEP combines the GCC Tasks from the “Analysis” phase plus previously scheduled known events (current or next fiscal year) with the sequenced events from the Capability Set Worksheet in the “Design” phase. The Capability Set Worksheet has sequenced events; the SCEP now takes those sequenced events and combines them into a fully synchronized and integrated multi-phased series of events. The final products of the SCEP are event summaries and event Concept Cards.

*Create Event Concept Cards:* Event Concept Cards form the basis of developing sequential events and close identified gaps in order to build PN capacity. Event Concept Cards are used as the source document for entering events into the Theater Security Cooperation Information System (TSCMIS). Entering events into TSCMIS ensures that all SC enablers and executors are able to share the same information concerning proposed events. This provides an ideal means of sharing information so that a single message is provided to the PN by various organizations interacting with the PN.

*Categorize Types of SC Events/Activities:* SC events and activities can be organized in eight overarching categories:

- Education and training. This category includes activities that offer Professional Military Education (PME) or training for US and PN FSF officers or civilians through classroom and/or field instruction. One or more of the following characteristics distinguishes most of these activities - a standardized curriculum, an academic focus, or an academic setting. One objective of the program is to increase regional stability through effective, mutually beneficial, Military-to-Military relationships that lead to increased defense cooperation between the US and the PN.
- Exercises. This category includes bilateral and multilateral military exercises. The key characteristic of these exercises is the participation of US military units in combat training activities.
- Exchanges. This category may include reciprocal, one-for-one, bilateral exchanges of military personnel. The US and PN FSF are integrated into each others’ units to perform duties of a valid position within that unit. It may also include bilateral exchanges of civilian and military personnel based on equitable, not one-for-one exchanges. US and PN FSF work in each other’s defense organizations to perform a valid position within that organization.
- Exchange Program in the areas of Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) as well as the Administrative and Professional Exchange Program. This category includes the exchange of military career administrators and professionals in fields such as administration, logistics, finance, law, planning, and quality assurance.
- Military-to-Military contacts. This broad category includes activities that provide interaction between US military and PN FSF in a wide variety of settings. It includes contacts between senior military officers that facilitate the attainment of bilateral agreements which encourage or nurture networks of US and foreign officers.

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- International support and treaty compliance. This category captures programs that provide support to of countries, either through official treaties or through humanitarian-type activities.
- FMS and technical training. This category includes programs that involve the transfer of military materiel to other countries and any attendant training. Mainly it includes SA programs which fall under Title 22 United States Code and/or contacts, services, and maintenance related to transfers. FMF may also be used to enhance peacekeeping capabilities, and nonproliferation, antiterrorism, or de-mining programs.
- International cooperative research, development, and acquisition. This category includes the exchange of personnel and information under the Defense RDT&E Information Exchange Program agreements, Information Exchange Program annexes; other umbrella RDT&E agreements supplementary project agreements/annexes/arrangements; and other research, development, and acquisition program (systems design, development, and acquisition/production) agreements. As a result, such international cooperative research, development, and acquisition agreement usually extends to the cooperative RDT&E during systems development and design of emerging technologies for military applications, and often to cooperative RDT&E during systems development and design, and even sometimes culminates in cooperative acquisition and/or production of those bilaterally or multilaterally developed weapons systems.
- Standardization. This category includes programs that support bilateral and multinational planning, coordinating, and designing of military standards. Some defining characteristics include a focus on the exchange of ideas and the management of an established relationship.

*Vet Concepts:* Once the information from the Concept Cards has been entered into TSCMIS, vetting of proposed events must be conducted with the various decision makers involved in approving, sourcing or conducting events. Organizations that SC events may need to be vetted include: Secretary of the Defense (SECDEF), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), various DOD-level organizations, the GCC, the US embassy staff and/or the Ambassador; the SCO interacting with the supporting Service Component Commander; the Service Component Commander; various Supporting Establishment (SE) organizations, and the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). Vetting may also include formal authorization, verification of legal authority, and funding source.

### **Step Four: Implementation**

In addition to executing the event(s)/activities(s) in the SCEP, the Implementation phase provides guidance to the executing organization(s) that includes Operational Culture information, required training for the trainers, and the Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MOE). Pre-deployment training should include the Intelligence Assessment and a review of all Operational Culture information used to design and develop the SCEP.

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### *Articulate Implementation Considerations:*

- Legal Authorities
- Funding
- Foreign disclosure
- Sourcing
- Operational Culture
  - Scheduling
    - Holidays (PN and US)
    - Seasonal considerations
  - Pre-SC event training
    - Cultural orientation
    - Language
- SC Planning Objectives:
  - Suitable: Does the plan accomplish the purpose and tasks? Does it comply with the guidance?
  - Feasible: Does the plan accomplish the mission within the available time, space, and resources?
  - Acceptable: Does the plan achieve an advantage that justifies the cost in resources?
  - Distinguishable: Does the plan differ significantly from other options?
  - Complete: Does the plan include all tasks to be accomplished?

***Create Event Schedule:*** Scheduling specific SC events may be limited by many, if not all, of the five Operational Culture Dimensions. The key is to provide black-out dates when SC events would severely impact, or be severely impacted by, the culture. The next step is to fit the SC events into the open dates while maintaining the designed sequencing.

### **Step Five: Evaluate**

There are two aspects to the evaluate phase: post-event assessments and periodic re-assessments.

*Conduct Post-Event Assessment:* A post-event assessment is an event level assessment that:

- Identifies if the observed SC event(s)/activity(s) achieved the stated objectives and tasks using predetermined MOPs and MOEs
  - MOP: “A criterion used to assess friendly actions that are tied to measuring task accomplishment. An evaluation of what was planned against what was actually performed. A portion of this analysis must include whether or not the tasks performed were relevant.”<sup>178</sup>
  - MOE: “A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state,

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<sup>178</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (2001). “*JP 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*” (as amended through 31 October 2009), Washington, D.C.

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achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. An evaluation of what the planned results/expectations were against what was actually affected. A portion of this analysis must include whether or not the planned MOE were relevant.”<sup>179</sup>

- Yields subsequent corrective actions
- Facilitates development of follow-on SC events through adjustments to existing plan(s)
- Provides for resource reallocation based on adjustments to the existing plan(s)

*Conduct Periodic Re-Assessment:* A review of the SC Event Concept Card and the original DOTMLPF final analysis should be reviewed prior to conducting the re-assessment. The re-assessment will end with a final analysis. The final analysis will include:

- MOP
- MOE
- Does the SC event/activity need to be repeated?
- Does a new SC event need to be scheduled before continuing the next event/activity of the SCEP?

The MARFOR SCEP will likely have an impact upon, and be impacted by the GCC’s TCPs. It is critical that the SCEP be closely coordinated with the GCC SC planners. The MARFOR planner must also be fully aware of the USMC Service strategy level documents and have a clear understanding how the strategic level, military guidance level, and the GCC/Service products and activities are linked to each other. Once the SCEP is approved, the events/activities will be programmed for execution. The operating forces and/or SE that are tasked to execute the SC event/activity will normally use the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPPE). The MARFOR SC planner should be prepared to provide information that details where this event/activity fits within the overall SCEP, country information, points of contact, and other information as requested by the executing organization.

SC planning as described above is a systematic and methodical application of training and education in a logical sequence to build PN capabilities and capacity. The SCEP is a long-term (3-5 years) planning tool across the DOTMLPF categories to plan and synchronize SC engagements in order to build prioritized PN FSF capabilities and capacity and to allow the application of limited USMC resources in a well thought out manner. A well thought out SCEP with resources planned against SC events/activities will foster a better understanding of the cultural environment of the HN, and build personal and professional relationships between Marines and FSF personnel.

Although the Marine Corps has had a long history of engaging with FSFs, these engagements have typically occurred when FSF requested specific training, or the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) was in the vicinity and planned a port call. SC engagement activities/events were almost an afterthought. The issue for the near term is that not all countries have a SCEP or a SCEP-like

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<sup>179</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (2001). “JP 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms” (as amended through 31 October 2009), Washington, D.C.

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long-term plan. Not all SC engagements have been with a priority country FSFs, engagements were sporadic, and the events/activities were not tied to any objective. The majority of countries listed in the GEF have an objective of assisting the HN to build the capacity and capability of FSFs in order to have an effective force that can operate along side of US military forces in a conflict or crisis. The events/activities that comprise the SCEP allow for sustained development and training of FSFs that may be critical during an internal or external conflict or a Humanitarian Assistance (HA)/Disaster Relief (DR)/Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) crisis. The information that the MARFOR SC planner can provide to USMC forces responding to a conflict or crisis on the current readiness status of the FSF will allow the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) planners to quickly assess the SCEP, either accelerate the events/activities planned in the SCEP, or develop a new plan to quickly develop the capabilities of the FSF. The MEF responding to a GCC crisis or contingency should coordinate with the MARFOR SC planners who have intimate knowledge of SC events/activities in the HN. Recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq highlight the issues when conducting combat operations while simultaneously attempting to train FSFs. Armed with the FSF readiness information and knowledge of the HN, the MEF planners would have been better equipped during their initial planning process, specifically during the “*Problem Framing*” step in the MCPP.

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## 2. Planning for Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief Events: An Interagency Perspective

### Inside the Interagency

Despite the existence of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), the interagency rarely produces operational plans in any form that a military person would recognize. Though policy planning and planning for an emergency [such as Humanitarian Assistance (HA)/Disaster Relief (DR) events] are different, the interagency does not have an established process or template for either. The following describes how interagency response to an HA/DR might unfold both within the Interagency itself and within the theatre of the HA/DR event.

#### *When and Why Does the Interagency Plan?*

Planning at the United States (US) Agency for International Development (USAID) or the Department of State (DOS) is driven either by cyclical demand, such as the fiscal year, or by events at home or abroad. Policy planning in the DOS is often initiated and led by an Office Director from a geographic bureau (Africa, Western Hemisphere Affairs, etc.) with the political and bureaucratic “cover” of an Assistant or Deputy Assistant Secretary(s), though higher levels can initiate and manage planning in higher profile cases. Some of the reasons why interagency planning is initiated include:

- An event such as an HA/DR or complex emergency, an upcoming election in the country of interest, a peace agreement signing, etc.
- A new general policy directive from the Secretary (DOS) or Administrator (USAID)
- A new fiscal year budget justification
- A query from Congress or a scheduled congressional hearing
- The policy prerogative of a pro-active Assistant Secretary or Office Director

There is not a codified planning process, methodology, or template for interagency planning. Instead, planning in the interagency is generally organic and *ad hoc*, though some offices and bureaus in USAID such as the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), and some offices oriented around health issues do have long-somewhat more formalized approaches to planning. State Department-led planning may include only DOS personnel, or may cast its net widely and include input from many agencies. Some common participants include USAID, Justice, Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff [Department of Defense (DOD)], Central Intelligence Agency, Commerce, and Treasury. The “plan” is usually written by

Consultation with the “Country Team” – the officials at the US embassy abroad led by the US Ambassador to that country – is the norm, but the depth of input is ultimately dependent on the quality of personal relationships between Washington and the Country Team members. *One cannot therefore assume that the Country Team is behind a plan written in Washington.*

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a desk officer at the direction of an office director, with input on specific aspects (e.g. debt relief, military training, etc.) from many other bureaus and agencies.

### *Interagency “Strategic Plans”*

Interagency *policy* planning at DOS and USAID is driven first and foremost by budget justifications to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Congress, not operations. While the annual State Department and USAID Strategic Plans are written to provide policy guidance, they are created with the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ) in mind. When the DOS refers to “Strategic Planning,” they usually mean the annual Strategic Plan and/or the CBJ. Much of the content for the Strategic Plan document is created during the CBJ authoring process.

### *Emergency and HA/DR Planning*

Event driven planning usually starts at the State Department. The level of leadership that will convene the first emergency interagency plenary depends on the profile (i.e. strategic or political importance) and perceived magnitude of the emergency. Higher profile meetings will usually be initiated and led by single or even multiple Assistant Secretaries, and will be widely attended by representatives from the Office Director level down to working level officers from many agencies, bureaus and offices. Lower profile and less urgent issues can be initiated and led by working level officers, and may be scantily attended. For example, response to transfer of power issues in Haiti, and the recent earthquake emergency there prompted very-high level meetings led by multiple State Department Assistant Secretaries and USAID Assistant Administrators, and were attended by Office Directors and desk officers from throughout the US Government (USG). On the other hand, early meetings to address the rising threat of piracy in the Horn of Africa were initiated by desk officers and reluctantly attended by only a few people. In rare instances, Under Secretaries themselves, such as the Under Secretary for Political Affairs (P), may initiate or attend meetings so as to indicate that an event or set issue is of unusual importance to the leadership or the President.

State Department *Assistant Secretaries* lead geographic or functional bureaus such as African Affairs (AF), Western-Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), or Political-Military Affairs (PM). The USAID equivalent to an *Assistant Secretary* is an *Assistant Administrator*, though technically USAID is subservient to the State Department. *Office Directors* lead Offices within Bureaus, such as the Office of West Africa, or the Office of Caribbean Affairs.

## **Who is Responsible for a HA/DR Response?**

Due to the complexity and of the diversity of needs present in a HA/DR event theatre, a startling number of offices, bureaus, and agencies involve themselves in the operation. There is never an individual who genuinely asserts authority over all the USG players during an operation. Even though everyone in-country is technically under the purview of the US Ambassador, during a large-scale emergency the Ambassador exercises authority by granting or denying permission to

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US entities to be present in the country, and sharing some decision making, coordination and “command” authority with a special envoy or coordinator, should there be one. Coordination in the world of civilian operations is a passive verb. “Coordination” usually means sharing information about your programs, projects, or tasks with others, and listening to what others are doing. While some divisions of labor stem naturally from a bureaucracy bifurcated into generally well established specialties, such as supplying food, or training judges, there is often substantial overlap of responsibilities, and sometimes redundancy as certain elements forge forward unaware of what others in the government are doing. S/CRS has made efforts, with some success, to mitigate this phenomenon both by trying to track what USG elements are doing or planning to do in theatre, and by trying to adopt a more activist role as coordinator of operations in theatre. S/CRS’ coordinator role is limited by the fact that civilian chains of command, to the degree that they exist at all, do not point towards a single commander (with the obvious exception of the President and Commander in Chief himself), nor are civilian agencies in Washington amenable to being coordinated. All of this leads to a response that may feel as chaotic and difficult to navigate and understand as the theatre itself. Despite this apparent disorganization, however, there is still *some* sense and predictability to a USG HA/DR response that, as mentioned earlier, stems naturally from pre-established functional divisions of labor. Some of the most important of these are described below.

#### *USG HA/DR Organizations: Immediate Aftermath and Short-term*

In the midst of the organized chaos of a HA/DR a few high-profile players are virtually always present, and bring years of highly developed expertise and capacity to theatre, while some newer and less experienced entities are now an integral part of every HA/DR as well. The following organizations play a role immediately preceding, during, and in the immediate and short-term aftermath of a HA/DR event:

- Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The OFDA is the lead US agency responsible for the management and coordination of USG emergency humanitarian response. OFDA is relatively masterful at managing logistics for HA/DR events under trying conditions. As described above, however, their role as coordinator is limited both by their narrow mandate and overlap with other coordinators (*see below*). OFDA was created in 1964 following a disastrously embarrassing response by USAID to an earthquake in Skopje. Housed at USAID in the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, OFDA is something of an independent entity, even within USAID. OFDA is a uniquely operationally-oriented (versus policy-oriented) unit, and has been consequently described as the most military-like of civilian organizations because of its total operational focus. OFDA’s mandate is narrower in respect to both time and mission. OFDA’s official mandate is to:
  - Save lives
  - Alleviate human suffering
  - Reduce the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies worldwide<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> US Agency for International Development, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (2009). “*OFDA Annual Report 2009*,” 13

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OFDA's mandate is restricted almost exclusively to emergency response, which limits the time it maintains a large presence in-theatre, and leaves transition and development tasks to others. OFDA's material resources draw from its own substantial annual budget of over \$1 billion. The bulk of OFDA operations are conducted by a combination of contract logistics firms whose services are purchased with "pre-competed" medium- and long-term open contract mechanisms that enable tasking and deploying services immediately following, or even before a major contingency, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Organizations, and the United Nations (UN) who receive a substantial portion of OFDA resources in the form of grants.

- Office of Food for Peace (Public Law (PL) 480 II). The "Agricultural Trade Development Assistance Act," or "Public Law 480," was renamed the "Food for Peace Act" in 2008. Food for Peace enables the direct provision of US food and other agricultural assets and commodities for purposes of international assistance for both emergencies and non-emergencies. Four PL480 "Titles" govern the purpose, management and use of this agriculture and food assistance. The USAID Office of Food for Peace manages the PL480 II account. PL480 Title II commodities can be transferred to Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), NGOs, and International Organizations for distribution, but are never transferred directly to Host Nation (HN) governments.
- Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). The DOS Bureau of PRM is responsible for formulating refugee and humanitarian policy, and helps manage USG HA/DR resources and operations with International Organizations such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). PRM's organizational personality lends itself to a relatively horizontal hierarchy that belies its organizational chart, and in which junior PRM officers often serve in the capacity of Bureau representatives at meetings and in the field alongside much more senior representative from other organizations.
- Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Intended to formulate processes and methodologies for, and serve as the interagency coordinator of HA/DR and complex contingencies and emergencies, the DOS Office of the S/CRS ostensibly reports directly to the Secretary of State, and is not therefore organizationally subordinate to another bureau or office in the DOS save the Secretary's. In practice, however, S/CRS has struggled mightily to define clear roles for itself, and to establish its position in the bureaucracy. Its existence and operations continue to generate controversy within the interagency. S/CRS' role is highly dependent on the leadership of given

Though known for its independence, USAID is technically wholly subservient to the State Department. Continuous debate over the advantages and disadvantages of USAID's bureaucratic separation from the State Department, and doubts that it always shares a vision of the national interest with the State Department (or the President), led the Bush administration to abolish the USAID Office of Policy Plans and Policy (PPC) and integrate it into the State Department Office of Foreign Assistance (F), where it remains today. While the Obama administration has returned substantial independent authority to USAID, it continues to emphasize a singular operational relationship between the two agencies by "dual-hatting" the USAID Administrator with the additional responsibility of leading the F Bureau.

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geographic bureaus to cede control to it in instances of HA/DR events. For example, S/CRS has historically shared a good relationship with the Bureau for WHA, and as a consequence played a formidable role in the recent high-profile response to the earthquake in Haiti.

- Washington-Based State Department and USAID Regional Bureaus. Regional bureaus, particularly in the DOS, dominate policy-making and operations, and are rarely willing to cede control or authority to others, though they regularly draw heavily on a broad constituency of offices, bureaus and agencies. Though USAID geographic bureaus are also somewhat “more equal” than their technical and functional counterparts, USAID is dissimilar from the DOS in that, technically-oriented bureaus and offices often share the spotlight with USAID geographic bureaus, in part because all are ultimately subservient to DOS geographic bureaus, in part because USAID is more technically and operationally oriented than the DOS, and in part because most of the most critical and independent functional offices, such as OFDA, are located under a single bureau – the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. Ambassadors are in constant contact with their respective DOS geographic bureaus, and report directly the Assistant Secretary of that bureau. In some special cases, offices for very particular geographically-bounded issues can have offices created just for them, such as the Sudan Programs Group (S/PG). Though highly independent, these offices usually report through their respective geographic bureaus. Planners should be aware that the Areas of Responsibility (AORs) of Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) do not coincide perfectly with State Department or USAID’s geographic bureau AORs. Issues relating to North and West Africa, for example, will fall in the purview of both the Bureaus of African Affairs (AF) and Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), whereas DODs African Command (AFRICOM) is responsible for both North and West Africa (though not Egypt). Some of the offices and bureaus most relevant to HA/DR are listed below:
  - DOS Geographic Bureaus
    - ◆ African Affairs (AF)
    - ◆ European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
    - ◆ East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
    - ◆ Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
    - ◆ South and Central Asian Affairs
    - ◆ Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
  - Important State Department Functional Bureaus during a HA/DR
    - ◆ Political Military Affairs (PM)
    - ◆ Public Affairs (PA)
    - ◆ International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL)
    - ◆ International Organizations
    - ◆ Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM)
- Important State Department Office that Report Directly to the Secretary of State
  - Office of the Secretary
  - Office of the Deputy Secretary of State
  - Undersecretary for Political Affairs
  - Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Proliferation
  - Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

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- Undersecretary for Democracy and Global Affairs
- Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
- Intelligence and Research
- Office for Counter Terrorism
- Office of US Foreign Assistance
- Office of Policy Planning
- Special Envoys
- USAID Geographic Bureaus
  - Bureau for Africa (AFR)
  - Bureau for Europe and Asia (E&E)
  - Bureau for Middle East (ME)
  - Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC)
- Important USAID Bureaus and Offices During a HA/DR
  - Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)
  - Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (DCHA/OFDA)
  - Office of Food for Peace (DCHA/FFP)
  - Office of Military Affairs (DCHA/OMA)
  - Bureau for Global Health (GH)
- Office of Military Affairs (OMA). The USAID Office of Military Affairs is a small office in the DCHA Bureau responsible for liaison between the military and USAID. Its role includes both managing operational communication, as well as policy, doctrine and training.
- Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/DCHA/OTI), true to its name, designs programs to transition from HA/DR to long-term development programs, though the bulk of their focus is on democracy and governance issues. OTI programs rarely last longer than a year. Like OFDA, OTI is one of the few interagency players that have a well-established way of planning, and equally well established criteria for assessing the appropriateness of programs and designing them for maximum effectiveness.

### *Embassy Country Teams*

The “Country Team” is composed of people employed by the USG to work embassy issues in the HN. The Country Team usually works out of an embassy, which may sometimes include chanceries and USAID offices and offices or representation from agencies other than the State Department such as the Departments of Agriculture, DOD, Labor, and Treasury. The Country Team is led by the US Ambassador, with assistance from the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) who serves as the Ambassador’s deputy when the Ambassador is present, and as the acting Ambassador when he/she is not in the country. While much of the Country Team are US citizens, the embassy also employs many Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) from the host country population to work a range of tasks from high-level policy work and analysis and advisory and intelligence functions, to drivers and janitors and everything in between.

The US Ambassador has final say over every USG action in country, and who from the USG can or cannot enter the country (including military personnel).

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The Country Team covers every functional area, and in many ways mirrors the structure of Washington. At an US embassy political and economic officers work policy issues, public diplomacy/public affairs officers engage the media and the population, while consular officers to process visas. The Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) handles Security Cooperation (SC) and Security Force Assistance (SFA), while Military-to-Military relations are handled by the Defense Attaché (DATT). The ODC and DATT are always uniformed US military officers. In smaller embassies roles overlap. The ODC and DATT may be the same person, just as civilian officers may be responsible for multiple issue portfolios. A USAID “mission” is usually housed in the embassy, but in areas where there is a great deal of development or continuous HA/DR activity that requires a lot of staff, USAID may be housed at a separate physical facility from the embassy. An important member of any country team is the Mission Disaster Response Officer (MDRO). The MDRO is a key person within the embassy who often directs initial response to an HA/DR event for the country team. The MDRO can be an employee of the embassy itself, or a member of the local USAID mission depending on the makeup of the embassy. OFDA trains and works with MDROs all over the world.

Because of its relatively small size and isolation, the effective functioning of a Country Team is highly dependent on the personalities and skill level of the management there. Just as in Washington, internal coordination at an embassy is also highly variable. At some embassies communication among functional areas is common place - the ODC/DATT may be in contact with their USAID counterparts regularly. Most embassies, however, are as “stove-piped” as Washington. Consequently, though the DATT is responsible for representing the military to the Country Team and the HN, military units engaging in HA/DR missions cannot assume that USAID or other elements of the Country Team are necessarily aware of what they are doing in theatre.

Very large embassies, such as Baghdad or London, are very much mirrors of Washington. They are highly bureaucratic, and equally stove-piped. Internal politics plays a significant role in how well the embassy functions.

## **The Interagency Process: A Walk Through of a HA/DR**

### *The Disaster Declaration*

Before people mobilize and money is spent, the US Ambassador in the country where the HA/DR event occurred makes a formal disaster declaration through a formal DOS cable. The disaster declaration serves both to signal the magnitude of the problem, trigger emergency action from organizations such as OFDA, and to legally enable drawing on special emergency-oriented accounts such as PL480 II.

### *The “Kick-Off” Meeting & Plenary Meetings*

In the case of a large-scale requirement for an event-driven HA/DR in which the interagency may have been taken by surprise (such as the earthquake in Haiti or the Tsunamis in Asia) a senior leader will convene an interagency meeting to discuss the emergency and formulating a

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response. These meetings can be very large, sometimes cramming over sixty people into a single meeting room. Senior representatives of traditionally core HA/DR functions (see “Traditional Roles and Responsibilities of HA/DR Responders,” above) will sit around the table, while junior officers and representatives of secondary functions will ring the meeting table. Particularly in high profile cases representatives from throughout the interagency will attend. The US Ambassador may fly to Washington to attend one or two of these meetings. Early meetings set the tone for how the operation will unfold. The agenda for the first few meetings is almost always the same. First, members of the intelligence community brief on the group on the situation and the scenario is further detailed by other knowledgeable specialists. Following this initial briefing, USAID, State Department, and sometimes military representatives will brief on their respective areas of expertise. OFDA will discuss the food and water situation, PRM the refugee situation, etc. Discussion will ensue with the intent to get a sense of the magnitude of assessed need versus the financial and commodity resources available for response. Budget issues will play a paramount role as various account-holders will describe what resources they might have available. No commitment of resources, however, is made at this meeting.

Discussion is usually fairly free flowing, and most participants, including the most junior can add to issues. A list of “do-outs” mostly consisting of fulfilling information gaps identified during the current meeting is compiled and announced for completion before the next meeting. These interagency meetings will likely be held every day for a week or two following a major response such as Haiti, then once a week for a month or two, before their regularity drops off. Perhaps the greatest value of these meetings is that representatives from various offices and organizations have the opportunity to meet one another and exchange views and contact information. Because staff in the USG – whether in the military or civilian agencies – rarely remain in their positions for longer than two years, this may be the first time that many people meet their counterparts from other agencies or offices.

#### *A Central Information Clearinghouse: The “Task Force”*

In the case of an HA/DR of sufficient magnitude to warrant it, the DOS will set up a “Task Force.” The Task Force operates twenty-four hours-a-day, seven days a week and is staffed by personnel seconded from offices throughout the DOS, usually that have some connection geographically or functionally to the event. The Task Force is purely an information clearinghouse and “op center.” The Task Force writes a situation report (SITREP) every morning before the opening of business, and it will maintain an active roster of all offices, bureaus, and agencies believed to be even remotely relevant. No policy or operational decisions are considered or made by the Task Force, but it does serve as a place anyone can call if they do not know who to reach for a given issue.

#### *Making the Big Decisions: The National Security Council (NSC), the Deputies Committee (DC), and the Principals Committee (PC)*

Meanwhile, the NSC meets to assess the situation and to pass that assessment onto the President and his advisors. The NSC is the White House foreign policy team, and the only foreign policy body in the government with the true authority to actively coordinate other agencies. The

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personality of the NSC and the degree to which it adopts a leadership role in policy and operations (versus delegating responsibility) is highly dependent on the administration. The Clinton administration, for example, had a very strong NSC that was very much at the center of policy and operations, while Condoleezza Rice's NSC under the Bush administration delegated virtually all authority to the agencies. Though the agencies can negotiate most issues and divisions of labor among themselves, some issues cannot be settled. Decisions that the agencies cannot arbitrate among themselves are sent to the DC or PC for decision. The "Principals" are the Cabinet heads, such as the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the "Deputies" are their respective deputies. Though some of the decisions that reach the DC and PC will be political, most of the unresolved altercations they must settle are funding and resource related. The military may not want to send otherwise occupied troops to yet another theatre (particularly for a "non-traditional" operation), and the DOS probably does not want to pay for that deployment. Someone has to tell them what to do. In the midst of this wrangling the DOS Congressional Relations office prepares a request for a Congressional budget supplemental to pay for all of the unplanned expenses associated with the HA/DR so the agencies do not have to take them "out of hide."

#### *Getting the Work Done: Interagency Working Groups*

Because of their size and the diversity of issues to cover at the Interagency plenary meetings, the plenary discussions rarely delve very deeply into specific issues, and leave important decisions unresolved. Specialists and lower lever officers gather once a week or so in Interagency Working Groups (IWGs). These groups can be fairly comprehensive (refugee or political issues) or very narrowly specialized (water rights). It is at these working level meetings that the "real" work gets done. Policy and operational options are formulated and articulated for decision, and detailed information is exchanged among colleagues. While interagency plenary meetings may fall off, IWGs will usually continue throughout the government for as long as operations demand they continue.

#### *The First Ones In: The Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)*

Initial assessments collected by Country Team members will begin to flow back to Washington immediately, but several teams will shortly be formed to operate directly in theatre. During the first one to three weeks following the disaster event, USAID will form and deploy a DART. DARTs may be anywhere from only three people (Ethiopia), to multiple teams of up to a dozen people on each team (Iraq). In some cases the DART may also have substantial near- or in-theatre "reach back." The Iraq DART, for example, was comprised of three teams of twelve people, but another approximately 35 staff members supported their work from Kuwait City. DARTs may spend as little as two weeks or as much as six months in theatre. Extended stays are rare, though the DART in Indonesia following the Tsunami was in country for four to six months following the disaster itself. Except in instances of large scale and particularly high profile HA/DR events, DARTs average about four people, and usually stay in theatre three to six weeks. The role and composition of DARTs has changed over time. Early DARTs were comprised solely of USAID personnel, usually exclusively from OFDA and OTI. Over the last five years DARTs have come to include members of other Agencies such as the DOS, and even uniformed

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military representatives or civilian DOD officials. DARTs first weeks in country are spent performing assessments and gathering information, identifying partners for programmatic interventions and awarding grants, in addition to moving commodities into the theatre of operation. Heavily operationally oriented, the assessment that the DART performs seeks to identify both needs on the ground and existing USG and other donors' resources, and begins suggesting matches of available resources to the needs it has identified. Some members of the DART, particularly those from OTI, may even have spending authority and can begin to execute projects on the spot. The effectiveness and timeliness of the DART is highly dependent on the access it has to key areas on the ground.

#### *Emergency Aid Finally Arrives: Initial Deployments*

Even as the DART deploys OFDA is shifting resources from other theatres to the new one—repositioning the “pipeline.” OFDA is now faced with the enormous challenge of re-allocating existing resources while minimizing the impact on those in need elsewhere that were originally slated to receive existing relief commodities. In those instances in which the disaster was predictable, say a coming famine or an imminent flood or volcanic eruption, OFDA would have begun shifting the food “pipeline” weeks or months in advance, and even pre-positioning food and relief stocks for rapid distribution immediately following the disaster. The moment the DART is able to identify key areas of concentrated need and negotiate ingress logistically and politically (with the help of the Country Team) OFDA mobilizes logistics contractors held on pre-competed contracts for just this contingency.

In cases of large-scale emergencies, and particularly those that struck without warning, the NSC will likely call on the DOD to assist with logistics, and sometimes the provision of direct services such as medical care. OFDA will work with the military through its Office of the Response Coordinator (ORC) in conjunction with the USAID Office of Military Affairs' Joint Task Force Liaison, while the DATT at the US embassy in theatre is furiously working to coordinate with the HN military. Existing Military-to-Military relationships with the HN military through SFA and other forms of direct persistent engagement prepare both countries' militaries to work side-by-side and may substantially ease coordination at times of stress.

OFDA will also have coordinated with other international donors such as the World Food Program (WFP), the UN, and the ICRC either to “de-conflict” the delivery of goods and care, arrange for the US to deliver and/or distribute others' donations where necessary, and to understand what other resources beyond its own are available and where to expect gaps in supply. In the coming weeks and months countless tonnage of random donations from uncoordinated private do-gooders will pour in, clogging important ingress and egress routes like ports and roads. Airports are usually more tightly controlled, and will be less congested with “unofficial” aid, except in instances of very high profile events such as Haiti, in which case every ingress is clogged with “unofficial” aid commodities flowing in from church groups and other do-gooders. The UN will rapidly set up a coordinating clearinghouse just like the DOS Task Force, but with mission of coordinating international donors' efforts. OFDA will report all of its action to this UN body, and refer to it for information.

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### *Planning from the Field: The Advance Coordination Team (ACT) and Field Advance Coordination Teams (FACT)*

In the coming months following the rapid deployment of the DART and initial deployments of OFDA and perhaps the military and other emergency USG resources, the S/CRS stand up an ACT and complementary FACTs. The role of the ACTs and FACTs are similar to the Washington-based IWGs described above, but are field oriented. ACTs and FACTs were formed because it was felt that policy and operational design was too Washington-centric. The ACT and respective FACTs are essentially one and the same team, but like the DART and its in-theatre reach-back team, the ACT is usually at the US embassy in the capital city of the HN while the FACTs are deployed throughout the countryside. In conjunction with Washington-based agency counterparts and the Country Team, ACTs and FACTs draft operational plans for the HA/DR and for the transition to development. Like the DART and Task Force, ACTs and FACTs are staffed with personnel seconded from USG civilian agencies and the military.

### *Settling in to Continued Operations and Preparation for Transition from Emergency Response to Disaster Recovery and Development*

At some point, usually a month or so into an HA/DR operation, the implementing agencies and operators begin to develop an operational rhythm in which there are few surprises, and the operational tempo and daily requirements are increasingly predictable. The initial chaos and “fog of war” uncertainty has lifted, and situational awareness is high as information flows readily from and through both official and unofficial channels. If all is going well local capacity begins to reconsolidate and the need for external help diminishes. As it does so emergency responders can begin to plan to go home (or on to the next emergency) and to hand off duties to transitional development professionals (such as those from USAID/OTI) whose primary interest is preparing the environment for long-term development challenges. By now the DOS Task Force has likely been stood down and the country desks and the Country Team are serving as the primary clearinghouse for information and coordination (perhaps with support from S/CRS). Large well-attended interagency meetings, once held daily or weekly, now occur only once or twice a month. More focused technical meetings may continue to occur more often. Though certain specialized military capabilities such as emergency medical skills may still be called on, the shift to contractors’ and NGOs’ capacity is mostly complete, and the US military redeploys. One of the greatest challenges from this point forward for the interagency will likely be finding sufficient resources over the long-term to meet ongoing needs as the sense of emergency subsides and priorities shift elsewhere.

### **In the HA/DR Event Theatre**

Not surprisingly, the two most predictable characteristics of an HA/DR environment are 1) that it will initially be massively chaotic, and 2) because of the chaotic environment quality information will be hard to come by and situational awareness will be low. HA/DR events affect everyone who experiences them, rich and poor, civilian, government and military. Large-scale HA/DR events like natural disasters stress institutions, such as national and local governments, to the breaking point, and under such stress many of them do break. Government leaders may be

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missing, dead, or so obviously powerless to mitigate the disaster that their authority is weakened to the point of irrelevance or nonexistence. The devastation of a natural disaster will also likely have damaged or destroyed important infrastructure like roads, bridges and ports. In a HA/DR environment Maslow's hierarchy of needs looms large - food, water, shelter and medical care subsume all other requirements or desires.

One of the greatest challenges for responders is effectively matching their response to immediate needs without undermining local capacity to recover. An important lesson of past HA/DR responses is that effectiveness can easily be undermined by acting too quickly. As contradictory as this may appear, the desire to respond instantaneously, even in the absence of sufficient information, is based first and foremost on the myth that nothing is happening among the local peoples. Though everyone will need help, it is not the case that nothing is happening until you get there. Certain capacities cannot wait, such as search and rescue teams after an earthquake, but many others will benefit by even a day or two of assessment to better understand the real nature of current requirements. Furthermore, in most underdeveloped environments there is already a regular OFDA, FFP, or USAID presence. Coordination with USAID and OFDA in particular is absolutely critical at all times, but particularly in the early phases of a response. A failure to effectively identify appropriate provisions can undermine even the best-intentioned response. The US military, for example, often ships Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's) even when the local population may not know what they are, or if their contents may violate local religious or other customs. Similarly, the US military delivered and distributed massive quantities of bottled water to the Burmese, despite a total lack of local capacity to manage large quantities of waste, such as millions of empty plastic water bottles.

One byproduct of the chaos following a major disaster is a general lack of information about the true status of the affected place and its people. Civilian and military institutions respond very differently to this absence of information. While an OFDA HA/DR is "pull" or demand-driven, historically the US military approach is "push" or supply-driven. Civilian organizations such as OFDA will usually precede response with assessment, whereas military organizations have a tendency to simply respond with what they have. Though this inclination is noble, it can also be counterproductive or even destructive. The military, however, is not the only "pusher" of provisions. Following large high profile events, groups such as churches and NGOs from all over the World will clog airports, ports and roads with tons of provisions of all varieties, few of which may actually be appropriately matched to actual needs, and even fewer of which were coordinated with major commodity distributors such as OFDA or the UN.

#### *Planning Factors*

There are three broad categories of local factors that military responders must be aware of when designing a response to best maximize positive effects:

- Physical/logistics
- Local community and government
- Economics and markets

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### Physical/logistics

The primary role the military will be asked to fulfill is logistical. It is widely recognized that no one can match the lift and distribution capability of the US military. Immediately following a disaster it is often the case that points of entry such as ports and airports, and means of traverse such as roads or railways, may have been damaged or destroyed, or was never sufficient to bear a substantial international presence to begin with. The military will likely be called on to repair or upgrade facilities. In the aftermath of the recent earthquake in Haiti, for example, the US military moved quickly not only to repair damage to the Port au Prince airport, but to bring a nighttime capability to the airfield it had never previously had.

The military will very likely be asked to transport goods to the country in question, and perhaps even distribute goods within the country itself. Managing distribution of food, water and medicine is a tricky business. During an HA/DR it is usually the case that many people are on the move, fleeing or returning. Generally it is not beneficial to promote high concentrations of people at a few distribution points. Though the logistics of such a distribution model are obviously relatively straightforward, promoting movement to a few concentrated areas such as refugee camps can clog roads, and upend the social fabric of communities for years to come. Indeed, communities structures are part of what makes localities resilient to the shocks and trauma that require a HA/DR to begin with, and these communities can be one of the first casualties of a major event. The military is faced with a classic conundrum. The magnitude of the military's logistics capability positions it as best suited to engage in comprehensive decentralized distribution, but to do so almost certainly risks both setting expectations that the military will continue to provide services forever, and undermining local economies, in turn creating long-term dependencies on Foreign Assistance that did not necessarily exist before. Again, careful coordination with USAID and OFDA is critical to ensuring that effective action is coupled with smart long-term mitigation.

Communications infrastructure is also absolutely critical in a HA/DR environment. Underdeveloped nations often have high levels of penetration of the most modern wireless telecommunications technologies. Functioning cell towers are a critical enabler for locals to recover their own communities. In Burma the US military repaired a number of cellular towers and provided an important service by doing so.

Perception management is a particularly difficult challenge in HA/DR environments. Rumors and truths alike travel to the most remote regions shockingly quickly, and people will act based on what they hear. Staying ahead of the communications curve is therefore critical. Similarly, transmitting a consistent message, whether about distribution points or larger policy issues, is also important so as not to confuse the population and inject more chaos than is already present.

### Local Community/Government

Institutions, particularly at the national level, often collapse in the face of an HA/DR event. Even in the absence of total collapse of national governing structures, the evident impotence of the local government to provide for its people can introduce long term political challenges.

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While the US military will not be overly concerned with this aspect of an HA/DR, a power vacuum can leave the population believing that the “boots on the ground” that are providing for their needs represent a new de facto authority. Once again, careful coordination with the DOS and USAID is imperative to avoid this sense from taking hold.

Community can also be affected by a disaster. Communities are the first line of response post-disaster, and key community points of reference such as markets, religious centers and medical facilities may have been damaged or destroyed, contributing to a diminishment of local coping capacity.

### Economics/Markets

Naturally, during an HA/DR the local economy will have taken a substantial hit. The risk, at this time of great fragility, is that important and perhaps even foundational elements of the local economy will be replaced with assistance, allowing the local economy to wither and even perish. The provision of too much food, for example, can undermine the local agricultural economy. In Burma aid agencies and NGOs shipped in large quantities of much needed wood, but eliminated demand for local bamboo producers in the process. Therefore a focus on utilizing local labor and reliance on existing local business structures even in the response to immediate needs such as emergency construction and food and water distribution will go a long ways towards mitigating the possible negative effects that the introduction of large quantities of aid can have on the local economy and job force.

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### Appendix F. Team Working Papers

#### Introduction

The team working papers represent significant work done to support or prepare for the four tasks of the study. Though parts of the content of each are represented in various sections of the main report, the detail is provided in the Appendix in order to maintain the flow and readability of the main document. The breadth of the study did not allow for all Study Team members to closely study all topics relevant to the project. For this reason, select Study Team members would do the focused study and share their findings with the rest of the Study Team through the working papers.

- Study Team Working Paper 1: The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) Background and History
- Study Team Working Paper 2: Department of Defense (DOD) and United States Marine Corps (USMC) Context for Operational Culture
- Study Team Working Paper 3: Research Methods Discussion for the Study Team
- Study Team Working Paper 4: Exploring Mission, Enemy, Terrain and weather, Troops, Time available, and Civil considerations (METT-TC) and Operational Culture Planning
- Study Team Working Paper 5: United States Marine Corps (USMC) Security Cooperation (SC) Concept
- Study Team Working Paper 6: The Security Force Assistance (SFA) Concept
- Study Team Working Paper 7: Literature Review of Problem Structuring Methods
- Study Team Working Paper 8: Brief Review of Selected Conflict Assessment Approaches

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### Study Team Working Paper 1: The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) Background and History

Upon becoming Commandant in January 2003, General Hagee issued his plan for the Marine Corps to develop a “*comprehensive plan to increase our capabilities in irregular warfare by improving foreign language, cultural, and counter-insurgency skills.*”<sup>181</sup> As a result of this directive, all Marine units deploying to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) underwent training that emphasized cultural sensitivity – focusing on decorum, taboos, and “do’s and don’ts.” Commanders at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) level were responsible for designing their own programs. For example, General Mattis, with 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division at Camp Pendleton introduced the “Survival Level Arabic Class (SLAC).”

At the same time, it was established that Training and Education Command (TECOM) assume greater responsibility for culture and language training and education, including setting Course Descriptive Data.<sup>182</sup> Training and education are considered to be different tools for developing an effective fighting force. Each complement the other and they are tightly interwoven – the early stages of a Marine’s career are weighted heavily towards training, with education dominating the later stages. Training is considered to be the “conduct of instruction, discipline or drill; the building in of information and procedures; and the progressive repetition of tasks- the product of which is skill development and proficiency.”<sup>183</sup> Education is “the process of moral and mental development; the drawing out of students to initiate the learning process and bring their own interpretations and energies to bear- the product of which is a creative mind.”<sup>184</sup>

By December, Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) 573-03 directed that all Marines undergo one-time screening for foreign language ability, to “develop an accurate inventory of current foreign language capability throughout the force”<sup>185</sup> Defense Language Proficiency Tests were administered by Base Education Centers and results were entered into the Marine Corps Total Force Structure (MCTFS) and the Marine’s Foreign Language Data was updated accordingly.

In January 2004, the difference between training and education is further articulated in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Officer Professional Military Education (PME) Policy.<sup>186</sup> PME needs to complement training, experience, and self-improvement to produce the

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<sup>181</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2005). “ALMAR 008/03: 33<sup>rd</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps Guidance,” Washington, D.C.

<sup>182</sup> United States Marine Corps, Training and Education Command (2003). “TECOM Bulletin 1553 – Training and Education Course Resourcing Process,” Quantico, VA

<sup>183</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (1991). “Marine Corps Order 1553.1B, The Marine Corps Training and Education System,” Washington, D.C.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid

<sup>185</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2003). “MARADMIN 573-03: One-time screening of all Marines for foreign language capabilities and identification of language requirements,” Quantico, VA

<sup>186</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (2009). “CJCSI 1800.01D Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP),” Washington, D.C.

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most professionally competent individual possible. *“Education fosters a breadth of view, diverse perspectives and critical analysis, abstract reasoning, innovative thinking, particularly with respect to non-linear complex problems. This contrasts with training, which focuses on the instruction of personnel to enhance their capacity to perform specific functions and tasks.”* Training and education are not considered to be mutually exclusive. Success relies on close coordination of training and education.

Early in 2004, TECOM officially took over responsibility for all aspects of the Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP) in the Marine Corps. Training shifted away from cultural sensitivity towards culture awareness classes, emphasizing contemporary history, based on first hand observations from OEF and OIF veterans. This shift reflected an intentional effort to develop *“a method of curriculum development that integrated Soldier’ and Marines’ recent experiences and articulated needs.”*<sup>187</sup> The curriculum addressed social dynamics and was not predicated on a priori assumptions of what might be important for a Marine to know. Despite TECOM taking responsibility of PTP curricula, anecdotally the perception was that cohesion and integration was still lacking. Each Commander continued to structure his own program, despite TECOM’s efforts.

In October of 2004, Colonel Bearor at TECOM meets with Dr. Montgomery McFate and others to discuss the concept of establishing a culture center. The first step was to assess and evaluate individual programs, with the goal of creating one standardized culture training program across the Marine Corps. Dr. Barak Salmoni’s *“Tactical Culture for Marine Expeditionary Forces (TCMEF)”* – developed at the Naval Postgraduate School – was one of the evaluated programs. Dr. Salmoni’s 12-step program begins with capturing exit interviews from operators, link it to academic materials, reinforced through training cycles, and reiterating back again. The concept was to teach culture as an approach, not a static element that could be learned once and not revisited. General Mattis’ SLAC was also evaluated during the latter parts of 2004.

In January 2005, the Department of Defense (DOD) released the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR). This was a momentous development for language and culture learning. The DLTR was a major initiative to develop foreign language and cultural expertise among its military and civilian members. It acknowledged a need for DOD to significantly improve *“organic capability in emerging languages and dialects, a greater competence and regional area skills in those languages and dialects and a surge capability to rapidly expand its language capabilities on short notice.”* DLTR assigned following tasks to the Marine Corps:

- Task 1.D. Ensure doctrine, policies, and planning guidance reflect the need for language requirements in operational, contingency, and stabilization planning.
- Task 1.J. Conduct a one-time self-report screening of all military and civilian personnel for language skills
- Task 1.P. Ensure incorporation of regional area content in language training, Professional Military Education (PME) and development, and pre-deployment training.

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<sup>187</sup> Salmoni, B. A. (2005). *“Tactical Culture for Marine Expeditionary Forces,”* Department of the Navy, Science & Technology, 79

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Additionally, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was published, and unlike previous QDRs, Rumsfeld advocated that it be an *“open and collaborative review from the beginning, soliciting input across the Department and the interagency.”*<sup>188</sup> This transparency reflected the unique circumstances of the time: it was the first wartime QDR, first QDR led by a Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) who had led one prior, released with an expectation of continued budget expansion, and the first post-9/11 QDR.

The QDR was based on a new threat matrix, with each threat representing a different changing security environment. The matrix was designed to drive capabilities-based planning for irregular, catastrophic, traditional, and disruptive threats. It identified four “core problems” to be addressed: Partnerships with failing states to defeat international terrorist threats; Defense of the homeland, including offensive strikes against terrorist groups; Influencing the strategic choices of major countries; Preventing proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Even though the QDR was not going to be released until the following year, there was great awareness about its content and direction. The Services were aware culture was going to be a major factor of the QDR, and as a result, the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) began to put pressure on TECOM to establish a culture center prior to the QDR’s official release. This pressure is in part why General Mattis is considered the “godfather” of the CAOCL. As it turns out, culture was an integral part of the 2006 QDR:<sup>189</sup>

*“Finally, by emphasizing greater cultural awareness and language skills, the QDR acknowledges that victory in this long war depends on information, perception, and how and what we communicate as much as application of kinetic effects. These cultural and language capabilities also enhance effectiveness in a coalition setting during conventional operations.”*

Sometime in February 2005, the concept for the CAOCL was first pitched to the MCCDC. The concept was heavily modeled after the TCMEF, as well as the SLAC. Emphasis was on culture, rather than language training. The center’s name was a combination of the idea that the training would take place at advanced Marine Corps schools – The Basic School (TBS), the Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), the Command and Staff College (CSC), the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) – and that the training would be “operationally relevant.”

On 18 April 2005 General Hagee released MARADMIN 08/15 outlining a vision that included the need to *“exploit the advantages of cultural understanding”* through improved training and education in foreign languages, cultural awareness, tactical intelligence and urban operations.

The following day, 19 April 2005, Lieutenant General Robert Magnus and Lieutenant General James Mattis addressed the Seapower Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, using the upcoming QDR as the frame for their statement. They acknowledged how challenging it can be determining the right balance of capabilities the Marine Corps must provide to meet

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<sup>188</sup> Department of Defense (2006). *“Quadrennial Defense Review Report”*

<sup>189</sup> Ibid

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challenges across the operational foundation. They pledged to “*increase the speed, flexibility, and agility of our Marine Air Ground Task Force’s (MAGTF’s) by first renewing emphasis on our greatest asset, the individual Marine, through improved education and training in foreign languages, cultural awareness, tactical intelligence, and urban operations*” (pg 19). They promise to stand up the CAOCL. They outlined a mission of equipping Marines with requisite regional, cultural, and language knowledge.<sup>190</sup>

01 May 2005 the CAOCL officially stood up under the guidance of TECOM’s Commanding General, Major General T.S. Jones. The primary goal of the CAOCL was to coordinate, source, and plan Operational Culture pre-deployment training. Initially, the CAOCL was staffed for 15 individuals: the core five individuals involved with the building the concept of the center, four more people acting as desk operators, a director, a deputy director, and four trainers for the operating forces. It immediately starts addressing the operational needs of Marines in OIF/OEF.

“Tactical Culture Training” or “Operational Culture Learning” replaced cultural awareness classes. This training focused on positive incentives such as understanding local human and culture dynamics to help accomplish a mission, rather than focusing on not offending the local population. As a result, “*culture knowledge - knowledge applied toward achieving mission goals - became an element of combat power and a force multiplier.*”<sup>191</sup>

By August 2005, the CAOCL had visited the MEF Area of Responsibility (AOR) in al-Anbar province to evaluate previous culture training. The outcome of the visit was an affirmation of two central principles: effective culture trainers need first-hand experience of culture in a military context, and effective change emerges out of a feedback loop from the PTP to the schoolhouses. While in Iraq, the CAOCL partnered with instructors from Marine Corps PME schools to develop new material for the upcoming training cycle.

By the end of 2005, the Marine Corps University Press had published *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*. Written by Dr. Salmoni and Dr. Paula Holmes-Eber, the book becomes the comprehensive textbook, reference, and planning tool for Operational Culture. It drew from research and field experiences, and presented an anthropological framework for understanding culture.

On 14 January 2006 the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration/Commanding General, the MCCDC issued a charter establishing the CAOCL as a Center of Excellence (COE). The CAOCL COE is now “*the central Marine Corps agency for Operational Culture training and operational language familiarization training programs.*”<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Seapower Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Seabasing and Resetting the Force (2005)

<sup>191</sup> Salmoni, B. A. (2005). “*Tactical Culture for Marine Expeditionary Forces,*” Department of the Navy, Science & Technology, 79

<sup>192</sup> United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (2006). “*Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning Center of Excellence Charter (CAOCL COE),*” Quantico, VA

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The CAOCL COE is directed to perform two core functions: create, develop, and maintain an operationally focused culture training program; and create, develop, maintain, and publish culture and operational language resources.

The first task covers the education and training continuum by:

- Coordinating provision of militarily significant culture studies to Marines and Marine units;
- Developing and providing operational language familiarization training;
- Coordinating and integrating curriculum;
- Assigning micro-regions for study by career Marines;
- Assisting in the drafting of doctrine; and
- Serving as the TECOM representative on working groups.

The second task is more administrative in scope, establishing that resources be developed in conjunction with the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) and the Director, Intelligence for distribution.

On 23 January 2006, Lieutenant General Mattis lists the CAOCL as one of the Command Advocate Requirements List “Top-10” Initiatives. This Program Objective Memorandum (POM) was developed to highlight priority investments for 2008. It was issued to serve as a planning tool for program evaluators. Initiatives were categorized as “Essential,” “Critical,” or “Valid.” The CAOCL was declared Priority 9. It is also declared to be the 15th most essential program. The directive served as a planning tool to *“highlight priority Command Element investment initiatives for POM 08.”*<sup>193</sup>

Additionally, in January 2006, the CAOCL expanded its reach, by servicing training requests in support of I, II, and III MEFs. Prior to January, the CAOCL had provided pre-deployment classes to units deploying to OEF and AORs in the Caucasus and Africa.<sup>194</sup>

The rest of 2006 and most of 2007 was a growing period for the CAOCL and its programs. The CAOCL grew from 15 people to 32 during this time. The CAOCL developed training programs, and modeled its Career Marine Regional Studies (CMRS) program after Lieutenant General Mattis’ SLAC.

The organization also engaged in dialogue with other MCCDC Centers and Marine Corps Agencies to in an effort to establish how each complements, works in support of and with the others. There was an internal Marine Corps debate if the CAOCL should shift to the Center for Irregular Warfare and Operational Culture (CIWOC). The CAOCL grew very quickly and had started to bring in concepts that targeted more “irregular warfare”. The departure from Operational Culture was controversial.

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<sup>193</sup> Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations (2006). *“Navy Strategic Plan in support of Program Objective Memorandum 08,”* Washington, D.C.

<sup>194</sup> Salmoni, B. A. (2005). *“Tactical Culture for Marine Expeditionary Forces,”* Department of the Navy, Science & Technology, 80

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It was decided that the center would lose momentum in its growth if it became the CIWOC. The Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW) was established as a separate entity in May 2007.

MARADMIN 661/08, released November 08, made Rosetta Stone Language Learning Software available to Marines via MarineNet or at Language Learning Resources Centers (LLRCs). The mission of the MARADMIN was to promote “*PME language education throughout the total force and in support of the Career Marine Regional Studies (CMRS) program.*”<sup>195</sup> Language training is established with a 0+ or survival level language skills in a targeted group of Marines in a unit.

On 10 September 2008, Director of Intelligence (DIRINT), Brigadier General Lake testified in front of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on the Marine Corps foreign language and cultural awareness efforts. He argued that in response to General Hagee’s JAN 03 planning guidance, the Marine Requirements Oversight Council designated the DIRINT as the Marine Corps senior language authority in Nov 04. This gave the DIRINT the ability to adopt a broad perspective on Marine Corps language policies beyond intelligence-related language issues. His statement said that the Jan 05 DLTR outline 3 specific tasks addressed by the DIRINT and other organizations. Significantly, in response to Task 1.P (Ensure incorporation of regional area content in language training, professional military education, and pre-deployment training), Brigadier General Lake called the CAOCL the “one-stop” clearing house for the Marine Corps. The DIRINT coordinated with the MCIA, the MCCDC, the TECOM, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), and Plans, Policy, and Operations (PP&O) on required actions.

*“The Marine Corps defines Operational Culture as aspects of culture knowledge information and skills relevant to successful planning and execution of military operations across the spectrum of conflict.” (pg 6)*

This testimony was significant because it defended the Marine Corps’ wide approach to culture. Congress was undergoing budgetary review and the committee had called into question the need for many organizations addressing similar issues. As a result of this briefing, the CAOCL received a greater portion of the budget, ensuring the organizations continued growth, and other “overlapping” organizations, including the Marine Corps Training and Advisor Group (MCTAG) and the Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC), were pared down.

In November 2008, *Vision 2025* was released, in response to the 2006 Commandant’s Planning Guidance. *Vision 2025* detailed General Conway’s vision of the future Corps and outlined a plan for creating the Marine Corps of 2025. Culture is outlined as a core competency – the Marine Corps historical ability to conduct expeditionary operations, including irregular warfare, counterinsurgency, and counter-terrorism has shown that “*Marines are specifically trained and broadly educated to understand cultures and populations, to thrive in chaotic environments, and to recognize and respond creatively to demanding situations.*” Core competency #6 mandates

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<sup>195</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2003). “MARADMIN 573-03: One-time screening of all Marines for foreign language capabilities and identification of language requirements,” Quantico, VA

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the establishment of enduring relationships (integration of military and interagency efforts) and the orchestration of diverse capabilities, organizations, and cultural awareness across all aspects of an operation. The ability to comprehend and effectively “maneuver” in the cognitive and cultural dimension of the modern battlespace is paramount.

To supplement *Vision 2025*, the *Implementation Planning Guidance* was also released. It clustered the 10 Strategy Objectives into 3 groups, and then tasks were outlined accordingly.

Task 26 read, “*DC CD&I in coordination with DC PP&O and DIRINT [will] develop a plan prioritized by region and country to increase cultural expertise and language proficiency, in order to enhance cultural intelligence throughout the Marine Corps.*”

In response to Task 26, the CAOCL morphed their CMRS Program into the Regional Culture and Language Familiarization Program (RCLF). The concept of implantation is: “*RCLF [will] develop cross-culturally competent general purpose forces with diverse regional understanding and language capacity to ensure that the Corps has assets within each unit to assist in operational planning and execution in all operationally significant regions of the world*”

The RCLF mission statement reads: “*Ensure all Marines are globally prepared and regionally focused so that they are effective at navigating and influencing the culturally complex 21st Century operating environments in support of Marine Corps’ missions and requirements.*”

In April 2009, NAVMC 3500.65, “*Operational Culture and Language Training and Readiness Manual, (Short Title: Culture T&R Manual)*” is published. It is different from other T&R Manuals because it is not specific to type of unit or community; all “collective events” apply to units of any size performing missions. It is significant in that it standardizes the CAOCL’s education/training programs to fit within the Systems Approach to Training (SAT) manual. The T&R Manual formally establishes the CAOCL as the culture-training center and sets the operational cultural Mission Essential Task (MET) matrix as:

- 1.MET 1 – Conduct Mission Analysis  
OCOL-PLAN-3001            Conduct a culture analysis
- 2.MET 2 – Conduct Deliberate Planning (MCP)  
OCOL-PLAN-3002            Incorporate OC into mission planning
- 3.MET 3 – Influence the Population  
OCOL-INTA-3003            Manage Perceptions  
OCOL-INTA-3004            Influence an indigenous population
- 4.MET 4 – Provide Marine and Family Services Programs  
OCOL-STRS-3005            Mitigate cultural stress

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**The CAOCL Command Brief**

In an effort to familiarize the Study Team with the study sponsor – the CAOCL – the Study Team met with the CAOCL director and staff to receive the organization’s mission brief. Below is the Study Team lead’s email to Mr. George Dallas, requesting the meeting:

Dear CAOCL Partners,

We are looking forward to meeting with you all tomorrow. For the last six weeks, we have been studying doctrine, documents and directives relevant to the understanding of culture and 'operational' culture, the Marine Corps, and CAOCL specifically. Tomorrow, we want to hear the story of CAOCL, RCLF and Operational Culture--in your own words.

Having looked through the RCLF brief, we have done our own sense-making linking components of the presentation to the documents that we have been studying, but it is clear that there is so much more to it. What we hope to leave with tomorrow is a filled-in narrative of (1) how and why CAOCL came into being, (2) what it was like (and what you were doing) in those early days/months and how that led to what you are doing now. We also need a much better understanding of (3) how you interact with other organizations within the MC; both your customers and collaborators. Finally, we would like a (4) glimpse of your vision and expectations for CAOCLs future... where are you headed and what will things look like with a fully implemented CAOCL?

Thank you again for making this time for us. Certainly this session will not answer all the questions we have, and of course more will emerge as we go forward, so we anticipate having many follow-on conversations. We are very energized by what we have learned to date and look forward to working with you on this important study.

See you all shortly,

Karen

The Study Team met with the CAOCL 13 November 2009, approximately 2 weeks after the official study kick-off. The meeting began with brief introductions and a discussion about the next version of *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*. *Operational Culture for the Warfighter 2.0* is expected to have a chapter on culture and planning that will be included in the book and exist as a stand-alone document.

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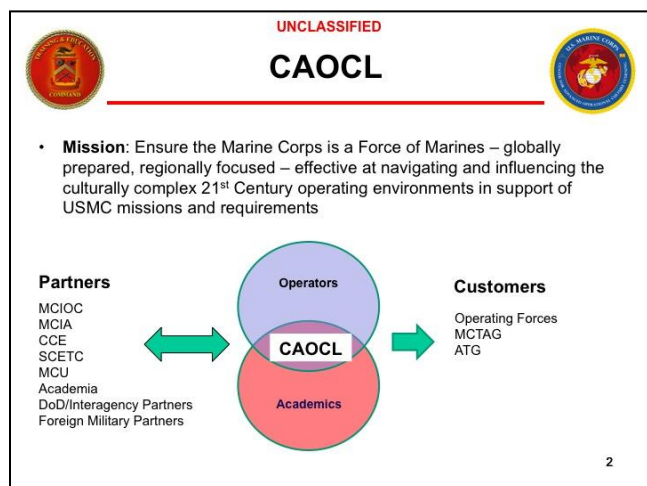
The study lead asks about the first slide of the brief, saying, “It would be useful to hear CAOCL ‘fill in’ the brief.” There is no date on the slide; however it is known that this briefing was built 16 September 2009.

The statement, “Regionally Focused, Globally Prepared” was taken from *Vision & Strategy 2025*, and encapsulates the paradigm of the Marine Corps. The rhetorical question is posed, “How do we prepare Marines globally.”

*Balance* is a word used by the CAOCL staff to describe the tension between Regional vs. Global. Operational, resource, and time constraints are such that the Marine Corps cannot “train for everything”. An anecdote is shared – a group of Marines were preparing to head to Iraq but then were diverted to Afghanistan – to illustrate the need for Marines to be flexible and adaptive. The statement also reflects what the CAOCL believes to be a necessary skill set – the Operational Culture framework as a tool to help Marines approach people and communication, globally. Concurrently, the CAOCL tries to build individual capabilities within in units so “someone can say, ‘I know a little bit about this’.” The ultimate goal is to make Marines more prepared for the battle space.

*“We are creating a capable Marine Corps. There is no I in Team.”*

Mr. Dallas, the CAOCL director, enters into the room. There are brief introductions, and then the briefing moves on to slide 2:



This slide was built to reflect the CAOCL charter, which instructs the organization to operate across the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel and Facilities (DOTMLPF) spectrum. While the CAOCL is situated within the TECOM, their programs are much broader. *“We’re impacting beyond our immediate boss’ purview. Not TECOM, not MCCDC, the entire Marine Corps organization.”*

As reflected on the slide, the CAOCL is not the exclusive agent of culture and language.

While it is acknowledged that the CAOCL does not own all aspects of culture, the organization believes it is the “single belly button” of the DOTMLPF construct.

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Mr. Dallas admits that the CAOCL is not yet dealing 100% effectively with all organizations who own part of culture, but says he believes that *“we come pretty close to that. We’re unlike other services in this way.”*

The CAOCL also works closely with the operating forces. He describes the origins of CAOCL’s organizational history: *“3-4 years ago General Mattis, coming back from Iraq, said, ‘Wow, we missed the boat’.”* From Mr. Dallas’ perspective, he believes General Mattis was articulating an understanding that Marine Corps needed to *“develop a better understanding of the human terrain. Marines are dying and we aren’t successful in the battlespace.”*

Mr. Dallas describes how he sees culture: *“Bug on a windshield.”*

Extending the metaphor, Mr. Dallas describes the first attempts by the Marine Corps to incorporate culture. He says that the MEFs were contacting local universities – *“splatters all over”* and now *“CAOCL is trying to our hands around these splatters. We don’t care who’s doing it,”* but he wants it to be *“our material.”* *“We do own the bulk of materials and programs for culture.”*

He reiterates his approach to sharing culture: *“Here’s the package to teach.”*

According to Mr. Dallas, in the first year of the CAOCL, the organization had trouble discerning what end is up. Now the organization can focus on its priorities. Most efforts have been geared towards OIF/OEF, but at the same time the CAOCL is growing and developing programs of instruction (POIs). Mr. Dallas believes that their POI for Africa is *“decent”* and *“emerging”* for South America.

The CAOCL began with an OIF/OEF focus, but it is now broadening its reach – Mr. Dallas mentions African Command (AFRICOM), Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM). In the first years, the CAOCL had a reactive approach – it was primarily focused on keeping up with demand. But now the CAOCL has begun to institutionalize, by formalizing POIs, strategizing, and formalizing instruction. *“Codify is what we’re doing.”*

Mr. Dallas returns to his mental timeline, and says that 8-10 months ago the CAOCL settled on one model – the Five Dimensions: *“I think it was a good decision. It provided stability and a solid path.”* Mr. Dallas believes having one model puts the CAOCL in a solid position for growth.

Mr. Dallas then describes how he saw/sees the CAOCL using an extended metaphor. In the battlefield, wounds are treated by placing bandages on top of bandages. *“We’ve been layering bandages. Now we’re in the hospital and we are the doctors who need to pull off those bandages. We’ve been reacting to meet needs. Now CAOCL can take a breath.”* The intent is to weave Operational Culture into the Marine Corps – make it part and parcel. He uses his hands to mime out the metaphor.

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He mentions that they are looking to embed Operational Culture into the MCPP. The CAOCL is working with organizations that own the MCPP. There are two “*open doors – coincidentally MSTP is rewriting 5-1.*” The “*other door is that 1-0, warfighting doctrinal docs are being written.*”

Mr. Dallas points to the CAOCL having written the T&R manual, saying, “*We really are training and education based. We aren’t big doctrine people but it [doctrine] is something you can touch if you need to.*”

He believes training and education “*tends to be the agent of change in organizations.*” Doctrine exists in this fuzzy space as strategic thinking, but “*in the mud*” (an effective organization) needs to be “*touching things in a real way.*”

Shifting topics, he says that the CAOCL is trying to be more responsive to the Marine’s needs, and he is trying to provide direct support to Commanders. As a part of this effort, they are redoing the entire PTP. The PTP needs to get better acceptance, it needs to be understood better to be more effective. “*We can be better. We need to be more efficient.*”

Recognizing that OEF is tougher than Iraq - “*Understanding that it doesn’t happen out there (Afghanistan) - CAOCL is now providing “SME support to commanders. Akin to HTT.”* Mr. Dallas says that the idea [Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)/mentors] is similar [to human terrain teams (HTTs)] but the approach is different. He says “*we chose a focused approach – a laser beam.*” Mr. Dallas describes the effort as being support to more senior Marines and Commanders. The mentors are people who are fluent in the region at a province level. Mr. Dallas cites Helmut/South Afghanistan as an example of “*regionally fluent.*” He understands that a SME from Kabul will have an urban perspective, versus a SME from the South. He acknowledges that these differences are important.

The mentor will be fluent and have connections. His job is to assist the Commander to interpret signals and non-verbal’s, capture the message, and see the meeting in a different (from the Commander’s) perspective. The mentor is effective because he “*lives it*” (the regional culture.) Mr. Dallas mentions that the CAOCL did this for Iraq and currently has the capabilities for others to provide this support. In his words the program is not “*grand and glorious*” but functional.

Mr. Dallas senses a growing awareness in the Marine Corps about the CAOCL – he feels like Marines know they “*can ask us questions.*” The CAOCL provides answers, as a reach back in the field. Current technology (cell phones and email) have enabled those in the field to contact the CAOCL. The “*message*” is beginning to get out – “*commanders are getting it.*”

He cites a recent example of this reach-back: A Commander in Afghanistan posed this question to the CAOCL, “*Whether or not Marines could kill local dogs?*” The dogs were apparently hurting Marine canines. Mr. Dallas feels that 6 months ago the Marines would have just shot the dogs, but now there is a growing awareness that there are other ways of approaching the

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situation. The CAOCL provides insight into the problems associated with killing local dogs, and offers a solution.

The CAOCL is here to help the Commander with informed decision making. Mr. Dallas then says *“We’re (the Marine Corp) about winning. It’s just that you can do it in different ways. Blunt force doesn’t always work.”* The CAOCL helps by taking reactive work and applying delivered thought and formal thinking and action.

Mr. Dallas goes on a brief tangent by saying *“Marines solve problems.”*

He sees the CAOCL as providing immediate support to operational decision making. The CAOCL is currently forming recurring training.

Mr. Dallas likens his vision of the CAOCL’s long-term education program to the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program. His narrative is that before DARE there was an opinion that counter-narcotics efforts needed to target the supply side. But *“somebody figured out that’s not the answer. Now let’s address demand [for drugs] through education.”*

Returning to his mental timeline, Mr. Dallas mentions that the CAOCL’s predecessor had CMRS, but it is now rebranded as RCLF because it is a different program. It is a 20-year program, through training and principally education, to give the Marines as an organization a deeper understanding of culture with specific understanding of regions. Mr. Dallas then adds, *“Oh, by the way, language floats through that.”*

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### So What is Operational Culture?



- Operational Culture is:
  - A framework to analyze the interconnected cultural dimensions that influence military operations
  - A model that enables military planners and operators to evaluate and plan for culture
- Operational Culture is not:
  - Cultural sensitivity (cultural do’s and don’ts)
  - Cultural intelligence (targeted/classified info)
  - A long checklist of cultural traits



3

Moving on to slide 3, it is explained that the tip of the iceberg is considered to be the *“do’s and don’ts of culture.”* The rest – the power and capability of culture – sits below the waterline. It is where culture impacts the thought processes and beliefs of *“your adversary or your friend.”* He cites the rhetoric about, *“if you know how they think, you’ve got the advantage.”*

*“It is classic maneuver warfare: thinking, reacting faster than the enemy. He now reacts to us.”*

Mr. Dallas points to the iceberg image and says *“that’s a lotta iceberg. It is going to take time to reach all aspects of culture, and acknowledges that there are pieces of culture CAOCL will never get to – and that’s OK.”*

He emphasizes that understanding and operationalizing culture is not about being nice, sympathetic, or empathetic. *“It is about winning.”* The key point for the slide is that the Marine

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Corps' view of culture may be somewhat different than others. *"Some seem to be wrapped around the notion of cross-culture competence and sensitivity, but this really is focused on empathy and sympathy towards your enemy or the populous, and how to not offend them."*

While this is important in certain situations, it does not make you effective in operations. We have developed a framework and model for thinking about cultural factors, which can be used in operational planning, education and training. We want our Marines to be *Culturally Effective*, not *Culturally Sensitive*.

A CAOCL staff member points to the waterline and asks, *"The Marine Corps has traditionally been above?"* Mr. Dallas answers in the affirmative; in the past the Marine Corp has been about *"dos and don'ts,"* which does help but is not as effective as what is *"below the line."*

Mr. Dallas thinks *"Dos and Don'ts"* will make friends, but *"is probably not a decisive factor."* He then backtracks a bit, saying that *"dos and don'ts"* are also extremely important. He uses women in Afghanistan as an example of how cultural *"dos and don'ts"* differ – in Iraq women were not such a sensitive area, but in Afghanistan it is extremely important that Marines respect the Afghan attitude towards women.

Another staff member interjects that Operational Culture knowledge is especially important in an information-heavy environment. *"We aren't great at crafting messages that are received well."* Mr. Dallas agrees, and mentions that General Mattis had recently given a speech at Mary Washington about the implication of information-heavy environments.

Mr. Dallas refers back to the charter, saying that it is an older charter, written in the TECOM paradigm. He acknowledges that it has a heavy individual focus. But that in the last year, the CAOCL has looked at other DOTMLPF functions to see where else the CAOCL fits. *"The guys who kicked this thing off were just trying to meet demand."* Housekeeping functions fell by the wayside in the early years of the organization, *"it just didn't get done."* But he thinks that the CAOCL is mature enough as an organization to go back and address the other aspects/areas the CAOCL could impact.

Mr. Dallas gets very introspective, and acknowledges that a critical area that needs to be addressed is assessment. He is not satisfied with their progress in this area.

He then mentions the RCLF program, saying that the intent is not to put more rocks in the pack. The program will leverage existing "stuff" to minimize the impact on the individual Marine. The Commandant has a list of books for every Marine, and Mr. Dallas says *"we'll either add to that, or make worksheets for books currently on the list."* He mentions *Gates of Fire*, as a book that Marines love, and would probably read on their own. He sees the CAOCL as being able to leverage that book, by asking questions on a worksheet like: *"How does the Operational Culture of Sparta influence decisions? How does the Operational Culture of Athens influence decisions?"*

A CAOCL staff member agrees, saying *"We want 'aha' moments when reading."*

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The Study Team asks about a carrot and stick, in terms of RCLF.



Mr. Dallas sees the language aspect of RCLF as having a different approach than the culture aspect. Each region has 3-4 languages, and when a Marine receives his regional assignment, he'll be able to pick his language. He then speaks in a comfortable tone to the career Marine he sees in his head: *"In hopes maybe you'd have an interest in that language."*

Mr. Dallas sees language as being an uneven playing field – citing Spanish and Arabic as a good example of how the learning curve is not consistent across languages. As a result, Mr. Dallas believes that the CAOCL cannot make language learning "punitive." He says, *"We've kinda neutered it."* Language learning will be on the honor system. There is a way for the CAOCL to track progression through the program, but retention and learning will not be tested. *"There is no stick associated."*

He likens culture training to marksmanship instruction – believing that Operational Culture could be an important weapons system. *"This could produce the same kind of results."* He admits that he will never be able to *"sell it to the Marine Corps, but he can at least talk about it."* There is a bit of uncomfot in the room – this seems to reflect his own personal opinion rather than the CAOCL consensus. Mr. Dallas says, *"I tell people 'It is what it is!'"*

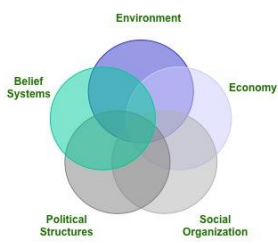
The CAOCL is also adjusting the T&R Manual to show the collective ability the CAOCL is building. Mr. Dallas then says to the Study Team: *"If you have any ideas, seriously, let us know."*

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### Framework & the Five Dimensions

- Our framework is an anthropologically based model
- This model, Operational Culture, is based on five dimensions of culture:
  - Environment
  - Economy
  - Social/Power
  - Political/Leadership
  - Belief Systems
- These dimensions are interrelated.
- An action in one dimension has repercussions in the others.



4

Slide 4 explains the Operational Culture Framework. *"In creating the framework, we looked at several cultural analysis models. Not one did everything we needed, yet each contributed something. So, two of our PhD's, one a cultural anthropologist, blended key elements of these existing models into one which worked for the Marine Corps."*

This model is the framework which can be applied to any culture. When applied, Marine planners now have a tool that does not have to be created each time a mission is

assigned. But with this tool, you are able to think about those aspects of that particular culture which most affect the planning and execution. Without such a framework, cultural information can be left out or labeled inappropriately.

*"Furthermore, these five dimensions are intrinsically connected...each affecting the other. By getting our Marines to think in this manner, they can begin to think through actions and the resulting second and third order effects. If I do this...then this happens...which will cause this to*

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*happen...and that is not the end state the Commander desires or could cause sustentative losses in political and social capital.”*

Mr. Dallas says, *“This model isn’t 100% correct, but it isn’t 100% wrong. But it is significant because it plants a flag.”*



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**CAOCL & Institutionalizing Culture/Language**

- Initiatives
  - Doctrinal Publication
  - Overarching Marine Corps Culture & Language Strategy
  - Training & Readiness (T&R) Standards => Readiness Reporting
  - Lessons learned integration
  - Broadening of Regional Study programs
  - Regional Culture and Language Familiarization (RCLF) Program
  - Integration in Training Exercises (MSTP)
  - MEF LNOs & Cultural Advisors to aid in planning
  - Inculcated in PME Programs (Pvt – Sr. Officer)
  - Center of Excellence / Research Center

5

Mr. Dallas addresses many of the bullets on Slide 5. He reads out loud the first bullet, and then acknowledges that while there is no specific culture doctrine, the CAOCL is currently “doing it” but it is a low priority. The CAOCL’s priority is Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0 and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1.

In reference to the second bullet, Mr. Dallas says, *“Oh, yes, ‘Little L’ and ‘Big L.’”* The CAOCL has developed a unit level strategy to language.

He says the CAOCL is not as far along as it would like to be in terms of lessons learned integration.

The CAOCL’s goals for providing a truly global capability, with regionalization within that, are briefly discussed – in reference to the fifth and sixth bullets. There is still some debate around how many different regions there will be. The seventh bullet relates back to the first bullet – MSTP is described as the *“keeper of the books”* in terms of doctrine.

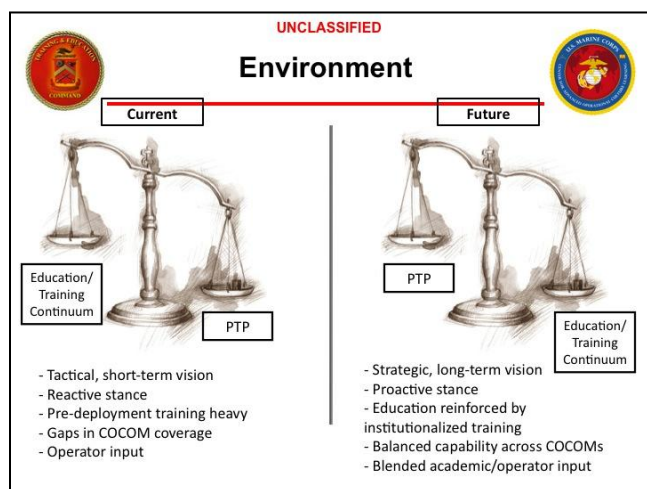
Mr. Dallas addresses the final bullet by saying that the CAOCL is creating an academically-focused center in the organization, with the conceptual idea being a place where high-level thinking and conceptual understanding mix with Marines and operational reality. At the moment, the CAOCL staff is *“principally operators”* but his vision is to combine academic excellence with operational practicality.

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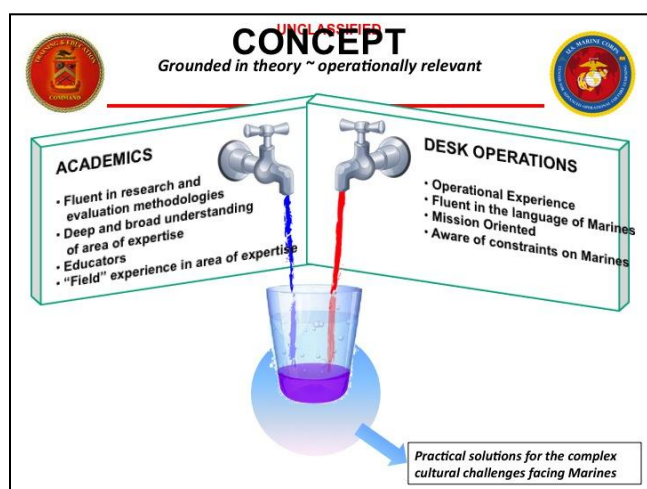


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Slide 6 explains the current organizational environment for the CAOCL. Currently, the CAOCL is in a reactive stance, because the operational paradigm shifted from OIF to OEF “overnight. Literally.” Long term success of the CAOCL requires the organization to be deliberate in their process and principally focused on education over training.



Slide 7 is a visual representation of the research center/ center of excellence presented in Slide 5. The desk operators are an important aspect to the CAOCL staff because they understand the “reality – given operational constraints, culture, etc.” He says, “It is about being effective in the battlespace. Operational Culture is about the so what.” The difference between culture and Operational Culture is described as: “We take encyclopedic knowledge into reality. It is about translating and applying.”



Slide 8 prompts a brief description of the Marine Corps. Because the Marine Corps is mostly General Purpose Force (GPF), and there is not a large Special Forces (SF) component, the CAOCL focuses on the GPF. There is mention of the CAOCL efforts with the MCTAG and the SCETC to help with advising on cultural affairs. There is verbal affirmation of the CAOCL efforts at Mojave Viper.

The Culture bullet is described as “just the iceberg.” The Language training program focuses on “Little l” language: language familiarization. Language is taught in three

ways: in person, Rosetta stone or some other Defense Knowledge Online (DKO) programs, and

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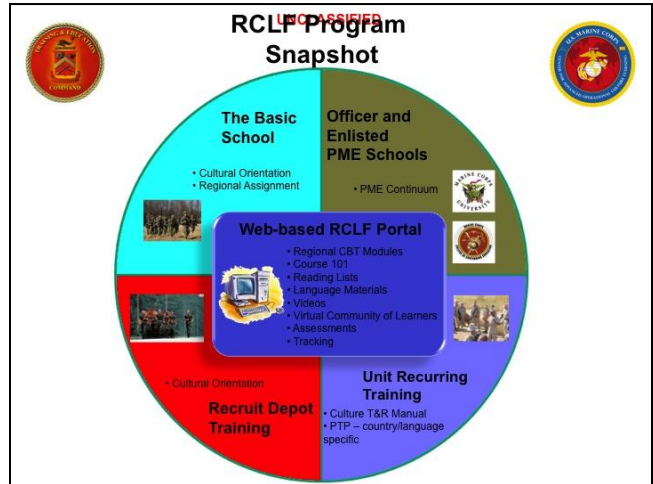
at language learning centers. Language familiarization focuses on communicating: social graces, functional terms, how to best use an interpreter, and non-verbal gestures. Language familiarization intends to put language in context with culture.

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### Regional Culture and Language Familiarization Program

- Response to Task #26
- Career-long training and education program for all officers and career enlisted Marines
- Triad of capacity: regional understanding, cross-culture competence and language familiarization
- Quality spread within each unit to assist in operational planning and execution in all operating environments
- Assessment platform to track individual achievement and Marine Corps preparedness

9



Mr. Dallas quickly reads through Slide 9 before moving on to Slide 10. He “defers” to the current coordinator of the RCLF program. She says it is important to her that the Study Team understand this program is not a CAOCL program, it is a Marine Corps program. The CAOCL is not alone in tackling the issue of teaching culture to Marines. The program is an outline of how the Marine Corps, as an organization, is going to tackle this area of learning. “This is the Marine Corps approach.”

Slides 11-16 continue to describe the RCLF program:

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### Mission Statement

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*Ensure Marines are globally prepared and regionally focused so that they are effective at navigating and influencing the culturally complex 21<sup>st</sup> Century operating environments in support of Marine Corps missions and requirements*

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### Assumptions

- A unified, single Marine Corps Program that integrates the efforts of commands, detachments, and sections across the DOTMLPF
- Focus on general purpose forces—not FAOs, RAOs, MARSOC, or language professionals
- TBS will continue to assign officers regions
- MMEA will assign enlisted Marines regions upon first reenlistment
- DKO will continue to have needed bandwidth and security parameters
- Must include a bridging strategy to accommodate Marines not previously assigned region or language
- Requirements apply to the Selected Marine Corps Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve Marines—their inclusion must be articulated in management strategy

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**The Plan**  
**Officer Program**

<b>Block 1</b> Introduction to Operational Culture (Part 1)  TBS Regional Assignment	<b>Block 2</b> Introduction to Operational Culture (Part 2)  2ndLt – 1stLt WO-CWO2	<b>Block 3</b> Intermediate Operational Culture  Capt CWO3	<b>Block 4</b> Operational Culture Planners  Maj – LtCol CWO4	<b>Block 5</b> Senior Operational Planner  LtCol and Up CWO5
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Block completion is defined by completion of set educational objectives. Objectives throughout program will increase from basic knowledge and comprehension to higher-level cognitive skills (synthesis and evaluation). Each Block will build on learning gained from previous levels and will be assessed through MarineNet.

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**The Plan**  
**Enlisted Program**

<b>Block 1</b> Culture Basics  E1 – E3	<b>Block 2</b> Introduction to Operational Culture  E4	<b>Block 3</b> Culture and Tactical Effectiveness  Regional Assignment E5	<b>Block 4</b> Applied Operational Culture  E6	<b>Block 5</b> Cultural Integration  E7	<b>Block 6</b> Senior Operational Planner  E8 – E9
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Block completion is defined by completion of set educational objectives. Objectives throughout program will increase from basic knowledge and comprehension to higher-level cognitive skills (synthesis and evaluation). Each Block will build on learning gained from previous levels and will be assessed through MarineNet.

	Pvt, Pfc	LCpl	Cpl	Sgt	SSgt	GySgt	1stSgt, MSgt	SgtMaj, M0ySgt	
<b>BLOCKS</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6			
<b>PME Level</b>	Introductory	Primary	Intermediate	Senior	Senior Executive				
<b>Cross Cultural Competence (PME and other resources)</b>	Deployment Training Culture Orientation	Leading Marines' MCI Culture 101 CBT and Video	Corporals' Course Sergeants' Course	Career Course	SNCO Advanced Course "Scenario based"	First Sergeants' Course Regional Seminar Master Sergeants' Regional Seminar	SgtMaj Symposium Regional Symposium Senior Enlisted Course		
<b>Regional Culture</b>	None MOS Focus	Readings Survey topics and broad history Regional CBTs Historical narrative Video	Readings Narrower regional topics Video seminar topic	Readings Broad regional and country topical issues Video seminar topic	Readings Narrower regional and country topical issues Video seminar topic	Readings Broad regional and country topical issues Video seminar topic	Readings Broad regional and country topical issues Video seminar topic		
<b>Language Familiarization</b>	none	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM		
<b>PTP</b>	DEPLOYMENT SPECIFIC REGIONAL CULTURE / LANGUAGE								
<b>T &amp; R</b>	UNIT LEVEL RECURRING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS								

	WO, CWO2, 2ndLt, 1stLt	CWO3, Capt	CWO4, Maj	CWO5, LtCol, Col	General
<b>BLOCKS</b>	1 & 2	3	4 & 5	4 & 5	
<b>PME Level</b>	Primary	Career - CLS	Intermediate - ILS	Senior - TLS	GO/Flag
<b>Cross Cultural Competence (PME and other resources)</b>	MOS focus Culture 101 CBT Video Readings	Distance and Resident or Sister Service Course  Readings Videos Other materials TBD	Distance and Resident or Sister Service or approved foreign course  Readings Videos Other materials TBD	Senior Level College, National Defense Univ., Approved Foreign Senior Level  Readings Videos Other materials TBD	Seminars and symposiums
<b>Regional Culture</b>	Readings Survey topics and broad history Historical narrative Regional CBTs	Readings Narrower regional topics Video seminar topic Elective Courses Other materials TBD	Readings Narrower regional and country topical issues Video seminar topic Elective Courses Other materials TBD	Readings Broad regional and country topical issues Video seminar topic Elective Courses Other materials TBD	
<b>Language Familiarization</b>	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	Rosetta Stone CL 150 SOCOM	
<b>PTP</b>	DEPLOYMENT SPECIFIC REGIONAL CULTURE / LANGUAGE				
<b>T &amp; R</b>	UNIT LEVEL RECURRING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS				

The RCLF program is then briefed to the Study Team. The plan is for both the officer and enlisted program to have specific learning objectives and outcomes in culture. There are four blocks: assessment on culture analysis, culture planning, culture communication, and culture influencing people. RCLF is currently in a key development phase – the concept is fully developed and now the focus is on developing curriculum, beginning with the “Officer Program.”

The program develops skills for every Marine, from point of enlistment until their last day of active duty. At Basic Training, Marines are developing (or will be) Operational Culture skills. The regional focus is for career Marines; Marines receive (or will receive) their regional assignment at first re-enlistment.

The CAOCL hopes to have modules up on MarineNet by January. Every lieutenant will be assigned one of 17 regions “at this point.” The number of regions is not set, and will not be formally set, because “this is a dynamic process. The world changes, so regions will be based on priorities set by Combatant Command, the Marine Corps, and Department of Defense.”

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The CAOCL methodology for assigning regions will use the *Global Employment of the Force (GEF)*, *Marine Corps Campaign Support Plan (CSP)*, and *Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCPs)* to make sure priorities will fit how forces are employed. The GEF is reviewed once a year, as will be their regional language and assessment process. As the program develops, the CAOCL intends to be “*mindful to add value to Marines’ education and training without adding additional rocks to the pack.*”

The languages will be key languages targeted in key regions. They will focus on the Strategic Language List:

#### Immediate Investment Languages

1. Arabic
2. Chinese
3. Persian Iranian/Persian Afghan
4. French
5. Hindi
6. Indonesian – and dialects like Javanese
7. Japanese
8. Korean
9. Pashtu
10. Portuguese
11. Russian
12. Turkish – includes Turkoman
13. Urdu/Punjabi

#### Strategic Stronghold Languages

1. Azerbaijani
2. Bengali
3. Cambodian
4. Hausa – includes Yourba
5. Kazakh
6. Kurdish
7. Malay
8. Serbo-Croatian
9. Swahili
10. Tagalog
11. Thai
12. Uighur
13. Uzbek
14. Vietnamese

The overall concept of implementation for RCLF is outlined as: “*RCLF [will] develop cross-culturally competent general purpose forces with diverse regional understanding and language capacity to ensure that the Corps has assets within each unit to assist in operational planning and execution in all operationally significant regions of the world.*”

Cross-culturally competent is defined as, “*the ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively operate in a cultural complex environment.*” Marines must be able to conduct a cultural analysis for any operation – and apply that analysis to operational and strategic planning, cross-cultural communication and negotiations, and information campaigns.

Diverse regional understanding is defined as, “*a wide range of knowledge particular to the Marine’s assigned region, including:*

- *Historical and regional trends*
- *Threat perceptions*
- *Strategic Relationships*
- *Five operational dimensions*
- *Negotiating patterns*
- *Sources of conflict*

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- *Historical narratives and their impact on operational effectiveness”*

Language capacity defined as, “*At a minimum – familiarization with the language. Marines will not be tested on their language learning, but they will be expected to complete the online language materials provided through the RCLF program. The goal is not the creation of linguists, but rather familiarization or what we call memorized proficiency.*”

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# Study Team Working Paper 2: Department of Defense (DOD) and United States Marine Corps (USMC) Context for Operational Culture

## The Historical Relevance of Culture in Military Operations

The USMC has a lengthy tradition of emphasizing culture in its ‘small wars’ doctrine<sup>196</sup> in formal and informal educational and training structures, as well as in practice. Drawing from its experiences in the Philippines, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua from 1900 to the period just prior to World War II, the Marine Corps began to formulate its theories and doctrine on small wars, or counterinsurgency (COIN), through the encouragement of shared best practices.<sup>197</sup> During the Vietnam conflict, COIN theory was revived with the implementation of the Combined Action Program (CAP). The CAP called for small teams of Marines to be imbedded within the local populace to provide local security and deny enemy influence in a particular area. Although CAP is now judged as largely having been a success, it was discontinued in favor of more conventional tactics by the Military Assistance Commander – Vietnam, General Westmoreland. Through the remainder of the Cold War, Irregular Warfare / COIN training and doctrine – and by extension culture – were not given the same level of attention as Conventional Warfare with its focus primarily on orders of battle and Mission Enemy Troops Terrain - Time (METT-T) factors.

Recent lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan has inspired a renewed emphasis on cultural considerations as critical aspects of the operational environment. Individual interviews and unit surveys from US service members returning from overseas deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) reveal a belief that cultural awareness is critical to their ability to operate in close proximity with foreign populations.<sup>198</sup> The report on the Marine Corps Non-Commissioned Officers’ Lessons Learned Conference in 2005 stated that “*language and cultural awareness were viewed as crucial to success,*” and the after action report for the US Army’s 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division deployment to Afghanistan noted the importance of cultural awareness training as “*critical for deploying personnel to fully understand the operational environment and effects in theater.*”<sup>199</sup> In addition, a recent study by the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab found that a sound understanding of the culture and perspective of the Host Nation (HN) is critical for military forces engaged in international Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) operations.<sup>200</sup> As a response to these lessons learned, there has been a greater emphasis on cultural considerations in planning and operations. METT-T has now become METT-TC to

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<sup>196</sup> The Small Wars Manual was last published in 1940 and emphasizes many of the concepts of contemporary Counterinsurgency and Irregular Warfare doctrine to include Operational Culture.

<sup>197</sup> Connable, B. (2009). “*All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is undermining sustainable military cultural competence,*” *Military Review*, March-April, 2009

<sup>198</sup> Healey, E. J., Jr. (2008). “*Cultural Competency Training in the United Marine Corps: A Prescription for Success in the Long War,*” Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Command and General Staff College, 8-9

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 9

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 9

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include Civilian considerations in planning and operations. In some cases, a special emphasis on Culture is added to form C-METT-TC. Culture represents the first “C” and is the lens through which all other factors are considered.

### **Language and Cultural Competency in the Department of Defense (DOD)**

The Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG) for FY 2006-2011 directed the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) to develop a comprehensive plan for achieving the full-range of language capabilities necessary to support the 2004 Defense Strategy. The SPG outlined four goals for language transformation:<sup>201</sup>

- Create foundational language and cultural expertise in the officer, civilian, and enlisted ranks for both Active and Reserve Components.
- Create the capacity to surge language and cultural resources beyond these foundational and in-house capabilities.
- Establish a cadre of language specialists possessing level 3/3/3 ability (reading/listening/speaking ability).
- Establish a process to track the accession, separation and promotion rates of language professionals and Foreign Area Officers (FAOs).

In January 2005, the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR) was published to address these four goals for increasing language and regional expertise within the DOD. A total of forty-three supporting actions were outlined in the DLTR along with the corresponding Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) and a Full Operational Capability (FOC) date. A June 2009 Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report,<sup>202</sup> however, noted shortfalls in the implementation of the DLTR and recommended several measures to improve DOD’s efforts. These recommendations included:

- The development of a comprehensive strategic plan for its language and regional proficiency transformation
- The establishment of a mechanism to assess the regional proficiency skills of its military and civilian personnel
- The development of a methodology to identify its language and regional proficiency requirements.

While the DLTR supporting actions have not all been implemented on schedule, the roadmap provided the impetus for the creation of language and culture centers among the services as well as the basis for multi-faceted language assessment and development programs.

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<sup>201</sup> Department of Defense (2005). “*Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*,” 1

<sup>202</sup> General Accounting Office (2009). “*DOD Needs a Strategic Plan and Better Inventory and Requirements Data to Guide Development of Language Skills and Regional Proficiency*”

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The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) Report outlined a vision where joint ground forces “...will understand foreign cultures and societies and possess the ability to train, mentor and advise foreign security forces and conduct counterinsurgency campaigns.”<sup>203</sup> The development of language and cultural skills was acknowledged as a key component to building this capability. The QDR outlined several initiatives DOD would undertake in the coming years to further its language and culture goals to include:<sup>204</sup>

- Increase funding for the Army’s pilot linguist program to recruit and train native and heritage speakers to serve as translators in the Active and Reserve Components.
- Require language training for Service Academy and Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship students and expand immersion programs, semester abroad study opportunities and inter-academy foreign exchanges.
- Increase military special pay for foreign language proficiency.
- Increase National Security Education Program (NSEP) grants to American elementary, secondary and post-secondary education programs to expand non-European language instruction.
- Establish a Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps, composed of approximately 1,000 people, as an on-call cadre of high-proficiency, civilian language professionals to support the DOD’s evolving operational needs.
- Modify tactical and operational plans to improve language and regional training prior to deployments and develop country and language familiarization packages and operationally-focused language instruction modules for deploying forces.

Beginning with the release of Field Manual (FM) 3-24 & Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5 “*Counterinsurgency*”<sup>205</sup> in December 2006, a formal doctrinal emphasis on cultural “awareness” across the spectrum of operations was introduced as a core competency of the US military. At the tactical level, the COIN Manual makes the following observation:

*“Cultural awareness has become an increasingly important competency for small-unit leaders. Perceptive junior leaders learn how cultures affect military operations. They study major world cultures and put a priority on learning the details of the new operational environment when deployed. Different solutions are required in different cultural contexts. Effective small-unit leaders adapt to new situations, realizing their words and actions may be interpreted differently in different cultures. Like all other competencies, cultural awareness requires self-awareness, self-directed learning, and adaptability.”*<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Department of Defense. (2006). “*Quadrennial Defense Review Report*,” Washington, D.C., 42

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. 78-79

<sup>205</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2006). “*Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency*” is hereafter referred to as the ‘COIN Manual’

<sup>206</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2006). “*Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency*”, Washington, D.C., 7-16

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The emphasis on culture has also been applied at the operational and strategic levels. As the *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (IWJOC)* notes, “*An IW campaign must begin with a clear understanding of the political purpose and strategic objectives. The campaign design must consider the protracted nature, cultural aspects, and environmental and political causes of the conflict.*”<sup>207</sup>

In October 2008, the Army released FM 3-07, “*Stability Operations*” which heavily emphasizes cultural considerations for planners and operational forces conducting stability operations. FM 3-07 mentions the words ‘culture’ or ‘cultural’ no less than seventy-six times with numerous references to culture’s impact on the outcome and success of operations and ‘conflict transformation’ as noted below:

*“Ultimately, conflict transformation aims to shift the responsibility for providing security and stability from the international community to the host nation, with a sustainable level of continuing support from external actors. Conflict transformation recognizes that conflict is a normal and continuous social dynamic within human relationships and seeks to provide effective peaceful means of resolution. Conflict transformation is based in cultural astuteness and a broad understanding of the dynamics of conflict. Success depends on building creative solutions that improve relationships; it necessitates an innate understanding of underlying relational, social, and cultural patterns.”*<sup>208</sup>

The inter-agencies have embraced the concept of incorporating culture into their operational planning as well. The US Government (USG) “*Counterinsurgency Guide*” was published to establish common operating concepts incorporating a ‘whole of government’ approach to COIN and other irregular operations. The USG COIN Guide notes the importance of establishing a “*...deep and shared understanding of the cultural, ideological, religious, demographic and geographical factors that affect the insurgency.*”<sup>209</sup>

## Culture and the Marine Corps

The future of Marine Corps operations is continually evolving and now includes much more than just major combat operations. Today, the Marine Corps is preparing its force to operate in irregular conflicts and in Security Force Assistance (SFA) roles requiring a competency in ‘culture’ as a core warfighting skill. To meet the requirements of these diverse operations, the Marine Corps has begun to invest in language and cultural instruction that will prepare Marines for the dynamic conditions they will likely face. As the Marine Corps “*Vision & Strategy 2025*” states, “*The ability to comprehend and effectively 'maneuver' in the cognitive and cultural dimension of the modern battlespace is paramount... Our language and cultural communication*

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<sup>207</sup> Department of Defense (2007). “*Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats, Joint Operating Concept*”, (Version 2.0), Washington, D.C., 28

<sup>208</sup> Department of Army, Headquarters (2003). “*Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations*”, Washington, D.C., 1-6

<sup>209</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2006). “*Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency*”, Washington, D.C., 3

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*skills require considerable enhancement and must become integral to our training and education programs.*<sup>210</sup> “*Vision & Strategy 2025*” outlines the Commandant’s intent to broaden the perspective of Marines ensuring they are “*specifically trained and broadly educated to understand cultures and populations, to thrive in chaotic environments, and to recognize and respond creatively to demanding situations.*”<sup>211</sup> This intent was made explicit in Task 26 of the “*Vision & Strategy 2025 Implementation Planning Guidance*” in which the Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration (DC CD&I), in coordination with the Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policy, and Operations (DC PP&O) and Director of Intelligence (DIRINT) were tasked to “*develop a plan prioritized by region and country to increase cultural expertise and language proficiency, in order to enhance cultural intelligence throughout the Marine Corps.*”<sup>212</sup> The Career Marine Regional Studies (CMRS) program – later renamed the Regional, Culture, and Language Familiarization (RCLF) program – was developed to address the Commandant’s requirement to improve language skills and cultural knowledge through individual and unit level instruction. This initiative takes a “cradle to grave” approach integrating language training and cultural education throughout the evolution of a Marine’s career. The RCLF program and other endeavors seek to develop the non-combat competencies often required to succeed in these complex and changing environments. As the Marine Corps “*Vision & Strategy 2025*” makes clear:

*“We will go to greater lengths to understand our enemies and the range of cultural, societal, and political factors affecting all with whom we interact. Our training and education programs will provide skills that enable civil-military and combat operations and are particularly important in complex environments.”*<sup>213</sup>

## From ‘Culture’ to ‘Operational Culture’

### Ambiguity in ‘Culture’ Terminology

The term ‘culture’ has been used increasingly in doctrine and official publications in recent years. Many organizations and leaders have accepted that ‘culture’ needs to be part of their mission, training, doctrine, and guidance. Unfortunately, there is no DOD-level direction as to what kind of ‘culture’ is needed. This has led to ambiguity in the terminology used by leaders and in publications attempting to redress the culture shortfall. At the DOD level, the “*Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations Joint Operating Concept*” (SSTR JOC) refers to the importance of “cultural understanding” while the Army’s Stability Operations Manual (FM 3-07) emphasizes “cultural astuteness.” The COIN Manual refers to “cultural knowledge” and “cultural awareness” in its guidance for the successful conduct of counterinsurgency operations. Within the Marine Corps, the terminology is no less ambiguous. The Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) refers to “*cultural orientation... cultural considerations... and cultural characteristics*” of the environment in which planning is

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<sup>210</sup> Department of the Navy, Office of Naval Research (2008). “*Vision & Strategy 2025*,” Washington, D.C., 13-24

<sup>211</sup> Department of the Navy, Office of Naval Research (2008). “*Vision & Strategy 2025*,” Washington, D.C., 10

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 15

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 6

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conducted. Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP) Pamphlet 5-0.2 uses the term “cultural Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (IPB)” encompassing “*cultural factors, particularly useful during operations which will involve significant host nation and non-combat population interaction.*”<sup>214</sup> Finally, the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) has attempted to refine these broad concepts of culture into a neologism directly applicable to the success of Marine Corps missions – Operational Culture.

### **Operational Culture Defined**

Operational Culture is a term coined as part of the Marine Corps’ language and regional proficiency transformation plan. It refers to the integral shaping factors across the spectrum of Marine Corps operations that define the battlefield environment for commanders at all levels. It is both a framework as well as a learning process. Operational Culture is described as “*those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military actions that influence the culture of an area of operations... It is a continual process of individual and collective learning about contemporary and future operations... influenced by the behavior, relationships, and perceptions of all participants within the operational environment.*”<sup>215</sup> These participants include Marines, other US forces, inter-agencies, allied coalition partners, indigenous security forces, and the local civilian population.

The CAOCL developed an Operational Culture framework to capture the relevant considerations of the operational environment. These considerations broadly consist of five dimensions to include: the physical environment, the economy of a culture, social structures, political structures, and the beliefs and symbols of a culture group. Each of these dimensions is a shaping factor influencing the conduct of military operations.

### **The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL)**

In early 2003, Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) General Hagee delivered his guidance for a “*Comprehensive plan to increase our capabilities in irregular warfare by improving foreign language, cultural, and counter-insurgency skills.*”<sup>216</sup> As a direct result, all Marine units deploying to OIF and OEF were required to undergo “cultural sensitivity” training. Commanders at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) level were responsible for designing their own programs with a focus on cultural “do’s and don’t’s.” Around the same time, the Training and Education Command (TECOM) assumed greater responsibility for culture and language training and education in the Marine Corps. The TECOM became responsible for setting Course Descriptive Data (CDD) outlining the concepts and requirements

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<sup>214</sup> United States Marine Corps, Training and Education Command, MSTP (2009), “*MSTP Pamphlet 5-0.2 Operational Planning Team Leader’s Guide*,” Quantico, VA, 37-38

<sup>215</sup> Salmoni, B. A., and Holmes-Eber, P. (2008). “*Operational Culture for the Warfighter, Principles and Applications*,” Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press

<sup>216</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2003). “*ALMAR 008/03 – Commandant’s Guidance*”, Washington, D.C.

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necessary to meet Training and Readiness (T&R) manual standards.<sup>217</sup> Additionally, the TECOM standardized the Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP) incorporating cultural sensitivity training into cultural awareness classes for deploying units. These classes featured lessons learned from returning OIF and OEF units combined with instruction on the history and social dynamics of the specific region to which Marines were deploying.

In May 2005, the CAOCL Center of Excellence (COE) was established under the TECOM assuming responsibility for the PTP as well as other functions related to Operational Culture. The CAOCL COE Charter specifies its mission as follows:

*“[S]erve as the Marine Corps Agency for Operational Culture training and operational language familiarization training programs and issues within the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities (DOTMLPF) process in order to synchronize and provide for training and education requirements.”<sup>218</sup>*

With the establishment of the CAOCL, the Marine Corps had institutionalized its concept of Operational Culture and began formally applying its principles to training and operations. The CAOCL has since embarked on an aggressive campaign to ensure deploying units and individual Marines are equipped with the cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities to operate in the myriad of environments within which Marines are called to serve. Since its inception, the CAOCL has serviced training requests to support the MEFs including visits to deployed forces in order to assess the value of training provided. The CAOCL has primary responsibility for managing the RCLF program providing oversight and management for many of its core features. The importance of these missions is reflected in the personnel strength of the CAOCL, which has grown from an initial staff of only two individuals to more than thirty-five military, civilians, and contractors performing duties across the full spectrum of the CAOCL’s core functions.

### **Core Functions of the CAOCL**

The CAOCL performs several core functions in support of its mission as the Marine Corps agency for Operational Culture training and operational language familiarization. These core functions include the following:

- Preparing and coordinating the provision of militarily significant culture studies to Marines and Marine units.
- Developing and providing Operational Culture and language familiarization training. This training is targeted in the following areas: PTP, Professional Military Education (PME), and other venues such as field exercises, distance learning programs, and ad-hoc

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<sup>217</sup> United States Marine Corps, Training and Education Command (2003). “TECOM Bulletin 1553 – Training and Education Course Resourcing Process,” Quantico, VA

<sup>218</sup> United States Marine Corps, Training and Education Command, Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (2006). “Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning Center of Excellence Charter (CAOCL COE),” Quantico, VA

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seminars. As an example, the CAOCL provides new battalion commanders with forty hours of culture and language training.

- Coordinating and integrating curriculum into the Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), the Command and Staff College (CSC), and the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW).
- Assigning micro-regions for study by career Marines. Each career Marine<sup>219</sup> is assigned a region of the world at the beginning of his or her career [first reenlistment for Enlisted/Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs)] in which he/she will be expected to gain a certain measure of expertise through individualized study of a specific language and culture.
- Assisting in the drafting of doctrine. This is to ensure the tenets of Operational Culture are included in all relevant doctrine to include those pertaining to operations, planning, and other warfighting competencies.
- Serving as the TECOM representative on working groups.
- In addition to these training functions, the CAOCL also develops and maintains Operational Culture and language resources for the benefit of Marines and Marine Corps organizations.

### **The CAOCL Initiatives**

The CAOCL is leading several initiatives in its drive to further institutionalize culture and language in the Marine Corps. The CAOCL has authored a doctrinal publication on culture in operations and, in conjunction with other agencies, continues to refine its strategy for incorporating Operational Culture into all facets of Marine Corps activities. The CAOCL has developed a T&R manual in which it has specified its future goals and initiatives. The T&R manual includes Mission Essential Tasks (METs) and readiness reporting standards for units. The RCLF program is a growing endeavor and now reaches into all levels of Marine Officer and Enlisted PME. Additionally, the CAOCL is working to integrate Operational Culture in the MCPP – a topic further explored by this study – through training, education, and doctrinal publications. Each of these initiatives comes with its own challenges, but the CAOCL believes it has finally begun to “crack the code” infusing Operational Culture into the mainstream of Marine Corps missions and activities.

### **Roles of Other Marine Corps Organizations in Operational Culture**

While the CAOCL is the central agency for Operational Culture in the Marine Corps, other organizations are also involved with implementing the principles of Operational Culture into their missions.

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<sup>85</sup> United States Marine Corps, Training and Education Command, Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (2006). “*Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning Center of Excellence Charter (CAOCL COE)*,” Quantico, VA

<sup>219</sup> The term ‘Career Marines’ refers to all Officers as well as NCOs/Enlisted personnel beyond their first term of enlistment.

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- **The Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA).** The MCIA has perhaps had the traditional role of considering culture in its activities. As the central Marine Corps agency for intelligence production and a key contributor to the greater intelligence community, the MCIA must take cultural considerations into account in nearly every facet of its activities.
- **The Marine Corps Information Operations Command (MCIOC).** The MCIOC *“enables Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Information Operations (IO) capability through tactically focused training, operational planning support to MAGTF commanders, tactics development, and formulation of IO requirements including research and development priorities.”* Each of the Five Dimensions of Operational Culture plays a key role in the formulation of an information operations campaign and the activities supported by the MCIOC. The organization is chartered to fully integrate IO into all aspects of MAGTF Operations with a focus on abilities to influence key target audiences across the spectrum of conflict.
- **The Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW).** Established in June 2007, the CIW serves as the central Marine Corps agency for identifying, coordinating, and implementing irregular warfare (IW) across DOTMLPF in order to increase, improve, and enhance operations across the spectrum of war against irregular threats. The principles of Operational Culture play a key role in these activities and CIW must consider the implications of culture and their impact on IW missions. The CIW is currently working on a variety of initiatives to include providing lead Marine Corps representation to the DOD IW Steering Committee, the DOD Consortium for Complex Operations, and the DOD Train, Advise, Assist Working Groups. The CIW also provides representation on the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) - 44 Working Groups. The CIW assists in the IW QDR Roadmap studies, and has established relationships across the services, DOD, and key interagency organizations working IW and Stability Operations issues.
- **The Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group (MCTAG).** The Marine Corps has identified the need for an organization to provide conventional advisor forces. Conventional advisor forces figure prominently in current and projected operations as a means to build partner nation capacity to prosecute the Global War on Terror and function within in the construct of Phase zero in the long war. In FY08, a 42-personnel Coordination Element Headquarters was created to coordinate forming, training and equipping Marine Corps advisor and training teams. Its collateral mission is to conduct detailed planning in order to support the CMC decision making processes and DOTMLPF analyses as they relate to Service advisor capabilities. The MCTAG coordinates and provides oversight of SFA efforts including the training of advisors and foreign military training teams that will conduct Host Nation (HN) and partner-nation capacity building. The implementation of the principles of Operational Culture is a key component of the MCTAG’s mission success.
- **The Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC).** The SCETC is responsible for implementing and evaluating Marine Corps Security Cooperation (SC) education and training programs in order to support Partner Nation (PN) capacity building. The SCETC participates in Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations integrated training workshops sponsored by the US Agency for

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International Development (USAID). The SCETC is also leading the development of formalized Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations (CMO) training and education for Civil Affairs Groups and Artillery Regiments in their secondary mission of Civil Affairs. The SCETC conducts advisor Pre-deployment Training for all Marine Corps Transition Teams (TTs) in support of OIF and OEF at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) and the Mountain Warfare Training Center. During their Pre-deployment Training, TTs receive advisor-specific skills that include numerous IW-related issues associated with the current OIF/OEF operational environment. The SCETC training stresses cultural immersion with scenario-based events, using role players and a range of training events culminating in a final exercise with an advisor/trainer/mentor focus. The SCETC has taken the lead on organizing a Civil Affairs training program with a mix of mobile training teams, school quotas at the Navy Maritime Civil Affairs Qualification Course conducted at Little Creek School, and occasional openings at Army schools.

- **The Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP).** The MSTP provides training to MEF Commanders and staff on Joint and Combined operations and planning. The MSTP constructs a five-part exercise package across two of the four quadrants of war while tailoring its program to current requirements, notably, IW. The package includes a theater-specific Warfighting academic seminar which includes COIN planning considerations, Interagency Operations, CMO, Law of War, Detainee Operations, Cultural Intelligence, Insurgency Operations, Escalation of Force, Negotiations, and Assessment.

### **Operational Culture vs. Cross-Cultural Competency: Discovering the “So-What” of Culture**

Despite the recognized importance of culture in the full spectrum of military operations, there is a lack of top-level guidance from DOD on its implementation. As a result, each Service has developed its own interpretation of ‘cultural considerations’ and how they can be effectively applied to meet each Service’s respective needs. The Army has focused on the notion of enhancing “cross-cultural competency” as the means of addressing shortfalls in cultural capacity. This ‘competency’ is derived primarily from individual personality traits that enhance one’s ability to operate in cross-cultural situations. Language skills and region-specific knowledge may supplement cross-cultural competency, but are not included within its core definition. The Marine Corps has taken a different approach with its concept of Operational Culture. This approach encompasses not only broad competencies that are enhanced through individual training and education, but also more narrowly focused skills at both the individual and organizational levels that enable the success of Marine Corps missions in a particular time and place. Unlike cross-cultural competence, Operational Culture emphasizes knowledge of external variables of the environment (i.e., the ‘five dimensions’) supplemented by language skills to create “culture warriors” able to successfully operate within a defined cultural space. The Navy and the Air Force have also implemented programs to increase cultural capacity in their respective Services. The Navy’s Language Resources Evaluation Conference (LREC) strategy envisions a force able to “appreciate and respect cultural differences” including a cadre of career language professionals. The Air Force Culture, Region, & Language Program seeks to enhance

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cross-cultural competence through a “Big ‘C,’ little ‘l’” approach<sup>220</sup> emphasizing culture general skills, regional specific knowledge, and language training.

### **Cross-Cultural Competence in the Army**

The Army Research Institute (ARI) recently conducted a study<sup>221</sup> of cultural capability and the factors that help develop its underlying capacities. The concept of cultural capability was categorized into three components: language proficiency, regional/culture-specific knowledge, and cross-cultural competence. Through a workshop organized by the researchers and a review of academic literature, the study drew several conclusions and made recommendations for addressing the Army’s shortfalls based on three primary research questions:

- What do Army leaders need to know and understand about culture and identity?
- What traits and characteristics correlate with learning about and operating in different cultures?
- What is the relationship between language proficiency and cultural understanding, and to what extent does learning a second language affect learning other languages?

**What do Army leaders need to know and understand about culture and identity?** The first research question was addressed noting the differences between cultural knowledge and cultural understanding. Cultural knowledge can be categorized into two types: culture/region-specific or culture-general (also referred to as cross-cultural schema) consisting of skills applicable across many different cultures. Knowledge of one’s own cultural biases – cultural self-awareness – is a critical first step in the process of gaining knowledge. Beyond cultural self-awareness, there is little consensus as to what type and how much cultural knowledge is necessary to yield benefits in cross-cultural environments. Although there is a lack of research on the types of culture-general knowledge that affect one’s adjustment to different cultures, the workshop participants recommended a culture-general approach to knowledge acquisition. This would lead to transferable skills among General Purpose Forces (GPFs) that may deploy to different regions throughout their careers. The researchers distinguished cultural understanding from cultural knowledge asserting that understanding requires the ability and willingness to update one’s knowledge about a culture. *“Understanding culture demands increasing complexity in one’s knowledge structures to accommodate new information.”*<sup>222</sup> This takes time to develop and should be addressed at different levels of the Army’s PME system.

**What traits and characteristics correlate with learning about and operating in different cultures?** The second research question was partly addressed drawing upon the findings of a

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<sup>220</sup> United States Air Force (2008). *“Air Force Culture, Region, & Language Program: Organization, Concepts, and Plans”*

<sup>221</sup> Abbe, A. (2008). *“Building Cultural Capability for Full-Spectrum Operations”*, US Army Research Institute Study Report 2008-04

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 9

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prior ARI study<sup>223</sup> on cross-cultural competence. This study surveyed the empirical literature on the broad array of factors that influence behavior in cross-cultural settings. The researchers then proposed an integrated framework describing the relationships between individual characteristics that influence cross-cultural competence and their effects on outcomes such as job performance, personal adjustment, and interpersonal relationships.<sup>224</sup> In this model, cross-cultural competence is comprised of three elements – knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation. While language capability and culture/region-specific knowledge may contribute to intercultural effectiveness, they are not themselves within the core definition of cross-cultural competence. Antecedent variables such as conscientiousness, extraversion, emotional stability, and self-monitoring (dispositional characteristics); biographical traits such as life-history and international experience; and, variables related to self and identity such as ego strength and self-efficacy all influence the development of cross-cultural competence but do not themselves provide the knowledge, affect, or skills needed for intercultural effectiveness.

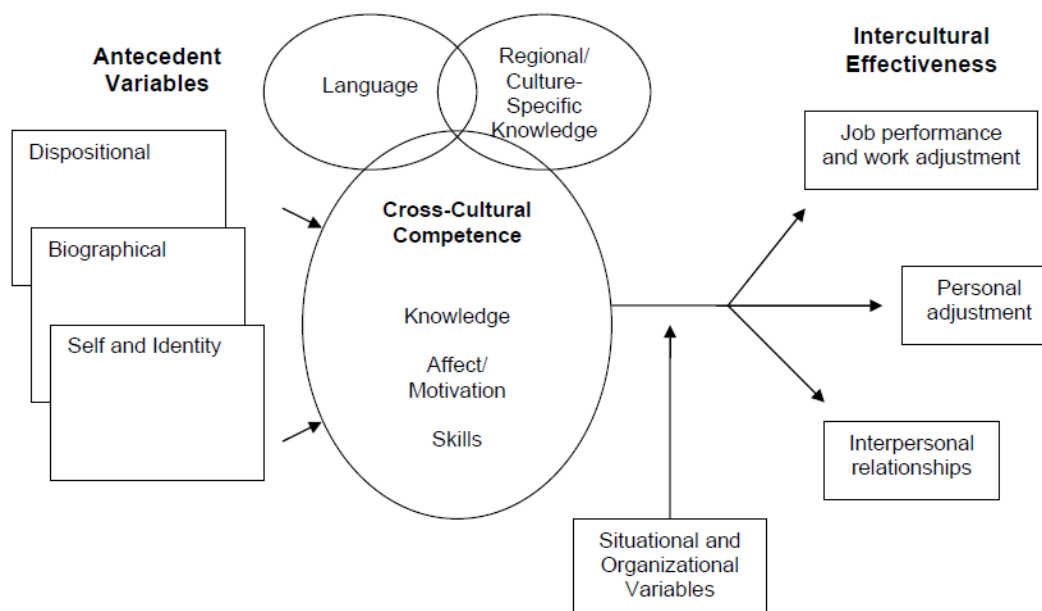


Figure F-1. A General Framework for Cross-Cultural Competence (Abbe, 2008, p. 11)

What is the relationship between language proficiency and cultural understanding, and to what extent does learning a second language affect learning other languages? The researchers assert that language proficiency, cultural understanding, and language understanding are all interrelated; however, language proficiency does not necessarily equate to cultural understanding. Language skills can be useful in conveying respect in cross-cultural situations but are neither necessary nor sufficient for learning about or operating within a culture. Interpersonal skills and cultural sensitivity can overcome language barriers and research shows that they contribute more to successful intercultural outcomes than language proficiency. The

<sup>223</sup> Abbe, A., et al. (2008). "Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders: A Conceptual and Empirical Foundation," US Army Research Institute Study Report 2008-01

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 11

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literature is equivocal when it comes to the effect of learning a second language on learning other languages. As the authors of the study cite, an earlier study has shown that bilinguals tend to have greater cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness which can be applied toward learning future languages. In another study cited, however, there was no difference in metalinguistic awareness between students highly competent in two languages and students highly competent in one. More research is needed in this area, particularly as to how language benefits adult learners.

### **The Navy Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Awareness (LREC) Strategy**

The Navy's LREC Strategy was designed to increase the Navy's capabilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century international security environment. Drawing upon the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, among other references, the LREC Strategy outlines a vision and end state emphasizing the ability to meet the Navy's current mission needs and surge for emerging requirements. Its goals include:<sup>225</sup>

A total force that appreciates and respects cultural differences, and recognizes the risks and consequences of inappropriate, even if unintended, behavior in foreign interactions:

- A cadre of career language professionals (i.e., Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) and cryptology language analysts) whose primary functions require foreign language skill and regional expertise;
- Other language-skilled Sailors and civilians with sufficient proficiency to interact with foreign nationals at the working level;
- A reserve capacity of organic foreign language skills and cultural expertise that can be called upon for contingencies; and
- Expand cultural awareness in the force by integrating regional content and, as appropriate, language familiarization in Navy Professional Military Education (NPME), pre-/mid-deployment training, and port visit orientation.<sup>226</sup>

The Navy's LREC strategy is perhaps more closely aligned with Operational Culture than with the Army's cross-cultural competence. As these goals indicate, the Navy places a premium on language skills and the integration of regional content to expand cultural awareness.

### **The Air Force Culture, Region, & Language Program**

The Air Force Culture & Language Center (CLC) was established in April 2006 to *“implement the Air Force Chief of Staff's guidance to improve Airmen's cross-cultural competence by developing their cultural, regional, foreign language and negotiations abilities through the*

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<sup>225</sup> Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations (2008). *“Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Awareness Strategy,”* Washington, D.C., 7

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 9

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*professional military education system.*” The CLC outlines its goals consisting of both “core goals” and “enabling goals” to include the following Core goals:<sup>227</sup>

- Cross-culturally competent Airmen of all ranks and occupational specialties, developed across their careers through the Continuum of Education’s residential and distributed programs;
- Expeditionary Airmen empowered for mission success in culturally-complex environments through the Continuum of Training;
- A substantial cadre of Airmen from the GPF with working-level foreign language proficiency;
- Airmen proficient in the conduct of cross-cultural negotiations; and
- Enabling Goals:
  - Sufficiently resourced Air Force CLC capable of accomplishing all core goals.
  - Mutually beneficial partnerships with external agencies, stakeholders and subject matter experts.
  - Effective Command, Control, and Communications (C3) policy, programs and plans support to Headquarters Air Force/DOD.

The Air Force emphasizes the importance of attaining cross-cultural competence for Airmen but differs from the Army in its interpretation of cross-cultural competence. The Air Force is unique among the services in its inclusion of negotiation skills as part of cross-cultural competency. In fact, the Air Force has even established a negotiation center at Maxwell Air Force Base to meet this requirement. Additionally, its inclusion of foreign language proficiency differs from the Army’s core definition of the term.

## The Future of Operational Culture

### Operational Culture in Planning

Within Marine Corps doctrine, cultural considerations are being infused into the warfighting publications and training manuals. MCWP 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process*, states that: *“Before the Commander and the staff can begin mission analysis, they must develop an understanding of their potential employment. Their understanding must include the possible area of operations; probable mission; available forces; and political, military, and cultural characteristics of the area.”*<sup>228</sup> This doctrinal emphasis on “cultural characteristics” was an early reference to the importance of Operational Culture in the planning process.

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<sup>227</sup> AFCLC website: <http://www.culture.af.edu/center.html>

<sup>228</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2006). *“Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1 Marine Corps Planning Process,”* Washington, D.C., 2-2

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## Study Team Working Paper 3: Research Methods Discussion for the Study Team

### Methods<sup>229</sup>

#### *Generating Empirical Materials*

In grounded theory research, data collection, data analysis and theorizing occur in iterative cycles. According to Glasser and Strauss, “*Data collection proceeds in a hermeneutic spiral involving cycles of data collection, coding, analysis, writing, design, and data collection.*”<sup>230</sup> There is simultaneous engagement with data collection and analysis. The goal is thickly/richly captured, contextualized materials.

**Jottings during field observations:** First, understand that scenes can feel very chaotic when we are new to them. During the field observations I will be jotting notes to myself. While the jottings are important to capture the scenes and the conversations, I do not want jotting to get in my way. It is important to pay close attention, while the same time interacting in the space. I want to take note of my initial impression and attempt to capture the unique qualities of the setting. As the scene unfolds, I want to focus on key events or incidents. Prepare to be surprised, but suspend judgments. This does not mean that I should focus too heavily on managing my reaction to events; rather, I should register the reaction while at the same time staying with the action.

Specific things to listen for and pay attention to:

- Members’ terms of address and greetings
- The socialization process of a newcomer
- How members themselves describe events
- Storytelling—recognize multiple versions and do not take stories as factual accounts
- Members’ terms, types and typologies (buzz words)
- How members classify people and events
- How members themselves explain things
- Pay attention to contradictions within stories
- Note indigenous/local forms of contrast
- Watch for the local reading of race, class, gender, ethnicity, organization, roles, membership and the like.

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<sup>229</sup> This section is generated from personal notes that I have collected over the last 15 years; from my own research experiences, readings, class notes, and lecture preparation for students in my methods classes. I can only cite them as coming from a variety of notebooks and loose sheets of paper. I am especially indebted to Amy Best, PhD of Mason’s sociology department for giving me a great deal of feedback on my work, which is what is necessary to become truly proficient in qualitative research.

<sup>230</sup> This quote was pulled from a partially photocopied page. Though the quote is attributed to Glasser and Strauss (1967) the exact source of the photocopied page is unknown.

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Other important considerations for my fieldwork: Consider the sort of membership roles that I play. Be especially mindful of the alignments I form in the field and the relationship with/to power. This will impact the research so be aware of the dynamics. I also notice what I am drawn to in my field experience - crisis events, 'big' things, etc. Understand that rapport, which is the ability to develop relationships, is not the same thing as trust. People will undoubtedly be mindful of what they are revealing to me in the research context. Participatory roles take shape in different ways and sometimes the setting would not lend itself to immersion.

**Writing fieldnotes:** Fieldnotes are all about creating "scenes on a page." They are written in active voice, and described in detail as if you've never been there. They bring visual, sensory, perceptual experience to word on a page. The focus is on rich description - which means avoiding labels and the tendency to sum things up. The goal is to capture the local meanings (those of the actual people you are observing) that underwrite the activities of the group. Look for their strategies of moving through the world. Attempt to capture the rhythm and embodied dimensions of the speech and place these in the context of action. Bracket off insider knowledge when it is being drawn on for clarity's sake, and be sure to document any active assumptions you are employing. Suspend and be self-conscious of attempts at analysis - be mindful of what is descriptive and what is evaluative.

**Interviewing:** After spending time in observation, there will typically be some specific talk or practices observed that will generate the starting place for further inquiry. In the in-depth interview we try to uncover how members make sense of their world using the words and meanings they ascribe. The questions you want to explore are never the questions you ask... and the conceptual questions are never asked. Always begin with broad, non-threatening questions. In the interview, you get the person to start talking concretely about what they did, and embedded within these responses are conceptual models. Pay attention to how interviewees present their narratives, as they may come in surprising ways - for example, they might present as episodic rather than chronologic. Look for what the narrator moves toward and how they develop their own agendas within the interview. They will often define what the interview is about, so be flexible.

In this type of interviewing, the interviewer is the main research tool. In critical approaches to social inquiry, special attention is placed on the performance of power in the encounter. Employing reflexivity to remain mindful of the power and authority imbued in the researchers role, and of my personal positionality (e.g. race, gender, class, etc) relative to the respondent. Hesse-Biber suggests "*Reflexivity goes to the heart of the in-depth interview; it is a process whereby the researcher is sensitive to the important 'situational' dynamics that exist between the researcher and the researched that can affect the creation of knowledge.*"<sup>231</sup>

Think innovatively in developing your interviews - remember that the interview encounter is not just a research space, but also a *social* space that is co-constructed. The interview space is performative and can be thought about from the dramaturgical perspective.<sup>232</sup> It cannot be

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<sup>231</sup> Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). "*Feminist research practice: A primer*," SN & PL Leavy, eds., 130

<sup>232</sup> Goffman, Erving (1959). "*The presentation of self in everyday life*," New York: Doubleday

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considered a true window into the person's world, we are not in the privileged position and it is the speaker that mediates our access. Be mindful of the role that impression management plays in the interview, people are producing/performing accounts of events, which are not the same as events themselves.

Edwards and Potter make some helpful comments in this regard: *“Participants’ concerns for what happened and how to describe it are subjugated not to the disinterested pursuit of truth, but to the contingencies of practical action. Put another way, the epistemologies of our everyday discourse are organized around adequacy and usefulness rather than validity and correctness. ... Participants’ conversational versions of events (memories, descriptions, formulations) are constructed to do communicative, interactional work.”* *“People blend notions of thought and reality, fact and reason, cause and account, when they talk. This is not because they are confused but because they live in a world oriented to action.”*<sup>233</sup> As Reissman suggests *“it is precisely because of their subjectivity—their rootedness in time, place, and personal experience, in their perspective-ridden character—that we value [such accounts].”*<sup>234</sup>

Strategies that can help to produce a good interview include:

- Move beyond the question/answer format into a conversation
- Let people talk, and listen intently
- Pay attention and be prepared to drop your own agenda to follow the pace of the interview
- Avoid leading questions - use open-ended question (How...? What...?)
- Avoid double-barreled questions
- Use probing silence and encouragement (“Uh huh...”)
- Encourage them to talk about mundane features of their lives, work and organizations
- Ask for clarification, repeating or reiterating
- Assure them that what they have to say is important
- Use reassuring language, and suspend judgment (i.e. do not use judging or evaluative language)

**Focus Groups:** Not only do focus groups provide the opportunity to gain data from a range of respondents in one setting, it also affords the possibility of observing a group dynamic where the negotiation of important information about key issues is readily observable and informal styles of language particular to the group is encouraged. Focus groups can be a particularly useful way to gain access to “difficult” populations - like those that are particularly disenfranchised or oppressed.<sup>235</sup> They can also give us insight into organizational dynamics, rhythms, relationships and norms.

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<sup>233</sup> Edwards, D. & Potter, J. (1992). *“Discursive Psychology,”* London: Sage, 16-24

<sup>234</sup> Reissman, C. K. (1993). *“Narrative Analysis,”* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 5

<sup>235</sup> Leavy, P. L. (2007). *“Chapter 6: The practice of feminist oral history and focus group interviews,”* Hesse-Biber, S. N. & P. L. Leavy, eds. Feminist research practice: A primer

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*“The kind of group interaction and multivocal narrative that occurs within focus group interviews appeals to [critical/feminist] researchers interested in unearthing subjugated knowledge. Focus group interviews produce what is referred to as a “happening.” A happening is a conversation that, while prearranged and “focused” by the researcher remains a dynamic narrative process. Within the context, group members communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences on their own terms.”<sup>236</sup>*

**Transcription:** Transcription is not a minor detail. Transcription like fieldnotes themselves inscribes what was once a complex social encounter into linear, sequential lines of words on a page. As Emerson et. al. points out, *“As inscriptions, fieldnotes are products of and reflect conventions for transforming witnessed events, persons, and places, into word on paper.”<sup>237</sup>* The act of transcription reifies a communicative event in troubling ways—eliminating fluidity and reducing the dimensionality<sup>238</sup> (such as eye gaze, gesture, posture, cadence, etc.). There are ways to capture more detail of the performance of the interview using systematic schemes for coding pauses, laughs, gaffs and the like, but these take a great deal of time to learn and are outside the scope of this project.

### *Analyzing Empirical Materials<sup>239</sup>*

Grounded theory is an inductive method of data analysis where theoretical concepts are developed out of the empirical materials of observation in a particular setting. Coding is a practice that moves beyond the descriptive level and identifies the more analytic dimensions of a setting. It enables a researcher to take a specific event, incident or happening and relate then to other events. The goal of coding is to discover and generate sociologically relevant themes. We’ll start by doing all of these steps together as a team, but I will walk you through how I approach things.

Coding my fieldnotes begins with an “open” reading, where I approach the notes as if they were written by someone else. It helps to consider the following questions when approaching the fieldnotes in this way:

- What are the people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?
- How do they do this? What strategies do they use?
- How do members talk about and characterize what is going on?
- What assumptions might they be making?
- What do I see going on?

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<sup>236</sup> Leavy, P. L. (2007). *“Chapter 6: The practice of feminist oral history and focus group interviews,”* Hesse-Biber, S. N. & P. L. Leavy, eds. *Feminist research practice: A primer*, 173

<sup>237</sup> Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I. & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *“Writing ethnographic fieldnotes,”* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 9

<sup>238</sup> Ibid

<sup>239</sup> These discussions are based on personal notes and my experiences from actual research I have conducted using these methods.

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- Why did I include this in my fieldnotes?

Notice that the questions do not ask me to theorize causality. The focus is on process, not cause. The only “why” question is directed toward my own reflection on the production of the notes. In asking these questions, I want to pay attention to the conditions, the interactions among participants, the strategies and tactics of action, the outcomes/consequences of action, and the like.

After the open reading, I perform initial, open (meaning unrestricted) coding of small segments of the notes. I move line-by-line entertaining all analytic possibilities, jotting notes, key words and questions to myself in the margins. The goal here is to keep the inquiry open. It is important that I do not attempt to assert any predefined categories or concepts. I seek to maintain my awareness of practical concerns of the people I observed; the conditions and constraints of the actors as they engage in seemingly mundane activities and practices.

I follow the open reading by writing an initial memo where I name and specify analytic issues that seem to span parts of the notes. This leads directly to the selecting and privileging of core themes by which the fieldnotes are reorganized (by physically grouping according to theme; I use color coding). I then return to my fieldnotes, line-by-line, with a concerted eye for the core categories. I do not force the categories, rather I allow sub-themes or sub-codes to develop and I remain open to new or more specific meanings.

I then write a final, integrative memo where the themes are detailed and examples for the themes are provided. I also suggest how issues are linked with other discrete observations and themes within the notes. At this point I am thinking about (including clarifying and adjusting) the more encompassing question that I am responding to in my observations. This type of thinking naturally occurs as narrative. I am creating the story that is offered by the fieldnotes and their analysis.

Handling the interview data (transcripts) proceeds in a very similar fashion. Some of the questions I ask myself as I approach the open reading/open coding are:

- How does this person narrate a particular event?
- How do members talk about and characterize what is going on?
- What assumptions might they be making?
- How do they respond to my questions?
- How do they talk about themselves and others?
- What seems invisible to them? What do they not talk about?
- What is revealed about the definitions that they offer for various social situations?
- How might this particular narration reveal a larger social narrative?

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### **Study Team Working Paper 4: Exploring Mission, Enemy, Terrain and weather, Troops, Timing available, and Civil considerations (METT-TC) and Operational Culture Planning**

While thinking about Marine Corps Operational Culture and its place in operational planning it occurred to me that it might be instructive to look at military command and control in its simplest form. The acronym “METT-TC” is one of the first principles taught to all Marine Corps and United States (US) Army small unit leaders and it stands for: Mission, Enemy, Terrain, Troops, Timing, and Civil considerations. It provides a framework for commanders to use to think about how to accomplish their missions. METT-TC is fundamental and, therefore, decision making is standardized if not somewhat predictable. Proceeding from METT-TC is the “Five paragraph Order” (FPO): situation, mission, execution, administration/logistics, and command/signal. Again, a constant between the Army and Marine Corps, the FPO is a detailed way of communicating mission objectives and plans. It’s basically a template and in the process of filling it out a commander is forced to think about all the details several centuries of operational experience have shown to be important to success. Like METT-TC it provides a level of familiarity and predictability that provides some semblance of communications certainty and subsequent command and control. These two paradigms – METT-TC and FPO - have been around for a long time and soldiers and Marines are used to thinking in terms defined by them. Operational Culture on the other hand, is a relatively new term, though the concept is at least as old as Sun Tzu and Alexander. It also has a set of definitive terms that provide a “framework” for thinking about interactions with another culture: environment, economy, social structure, political structure, belief system. If you accept the proposition that knowledge and application of this social framework is important then you have to ask yourself whether or not the two fundamental paradigms – METT-TC and FPO – consider it, and if so, to what degree. Do the details of METT-TC and the Five Paragraph Order contain satisfactory consideration of Operational Culture and, if not, how could they be modified to include it.

METT-TC is a framework/paradigm for assessing, visualizing and communicating and is defined as follows [Field Manual (FM) 3-0, chapter 5]:

- Commanders determine the ***mission*** through analysis of the tasks assigned. The results of that analysis yield the essential tasks that, together with the purpose of the operation, clearly indicate the action required. The mission includes what tasks must be accomplished; who is to do them; and when, where, and why the tasks are to be done. (paragraph 5-13)
- The analysis of the ***enemy*** includes current information about his strength, location, activity, and capabilities. Commanders and staffs also assess the most likely enemy courses of action. In stability operations and support operations, the analysis includes adversaries, potentially hostile parties, and other threats to success. Threats may include the spread of infectious disease, regional instabilities, or misinformation. Commanders consider asymmetric as well as conventional threats. (paragraph 5-14)
- Analysis of ***terrain*** and weather helps commanders determine Observation and Fields of fire, Avenues of approach, Key terrain, Obstacles and movement, and Cover and

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concealment (OAKOC) (FM 6-0). Terrain includes manmade features such as cities, airfields, bridges, railroads, and ports. Weather and terrain also have pronounced effects on ground maneuver, precision munitions, air support, and Combat Service Support (CSS) operations. The nature of operations extends the analysis of the natural environment (weather and terrain) into the context of the physical environment of a contaminated battlefield. To find tactical advantages, commanders and staffs analyze and compare the limitations of the environment on friendly, enemy, and neutral forces. (paragraph 5-15)

- Commanders assess the quantity, training level, and psychological state of friendly forces (*Troops*). The analysis includes the availability of critical systems and joint support. Commanders examine combat, Combat Support, and CSS assets. These assets include contractors (see FM 3-100.21). (paragraph 5-16)
- Commanders assess the *time* available for planning, preparing, and executing the mission. They consider how friendly and enemy or adversary forces will use the time and the possible results. Proper use of the time available can fundamentally alter the situation. Time available is normally explicitly defined in terms of the tasks assigned to the unit and implicitly bounded by enemy or adversary capabilities. (paragraph 5-17)
- *Civil* considerations relate to civilian populations, culture, organizations, and leaders within the Area of Operation (AO). Commanders consider the natural environment, to include cultural sites, in all operations directly or indirectly affecting civilian populations. Commanders include civilian political, economic, and information matters as well as more immediate civilian activities and attitudes. (paragraph 5-18)

As a fundamental template for military decision making it's arguable whether METT-TC (at least as it stands today in FM 3-0) leads commanders to the necessary depth of consideration for missions across the full spectrum of conflict. While the last "C" specifically addresses civil considerations, it's easy to get the impression that the authors were more concerned with stability operations (Phase IV) as a consequence of accomplishing the mission, rather than something central to the mission itself.

Paragraph 5-15 describes the first "T" (terrain) while paragraph 5-18 addresses the "C" (civil considerations). Look at the difference in tone. *"To find tactical advantages, commanders and staffs analyze and compare the limitations of the environment on friendly, enemy, and neutral forces."* from paragraph 5-15 implies activity in a military operation; it's something a commander should be doing. In comparison, "Commanders include civilian political, economic, and information matters as well as more immediate civilian activities and attitudes." (paragraph 5-18) is softer, somehow less martial; it's more in line with something a pollster would be doing. While METT-TC is fundamental to military leadership training, it is not, in and of itself, a complete treatment of command and control. All the aspects of METT-TC are further expanded and developed in another classical military tool: The FPO.

The FPO is used extensively in the Army and the Marine Corps. Its purpose is to provide a framework for a commander to communicate the salient information necessary for his/her subordinates to accomplish the mission. The fact that it's standardized and widely used speeds understanding and utility. Subordinates know what they are supposed to do and where to look for

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further information if they have a question. Like METT-TC it's also a tool for the Commander to ensure all necessary aspects of the mission have been considered and properly communicated. Here's an example taken from FM 71-2, appendix B:

- **Situation**. This paragraph provides an overview of the general situation and always contains three subparagraphs in an operation order (OPORD): enemy forces, friendly forces, and attachments and detachments. An operation plan (OPLAN) adds a fourth: assumptions.
  - **Enemy Forces**. This subparagraph contains enemy information only, which is provided by the unit intelligence officer.
  - **Friendly Forces**. This subparagraph contains the verbatim mission statements of higher, adjacent, and supporting or reinforcing units, and the brigade commander's intent for the operation. It includes (in order):
    - The mission and intent of the next higher headquarters (in a task force OPORD, the brigade mission and a short statement of the brigade commander's intent taken from the brigade's concept of operation subparagraph).
    - The mission of adjacent units listed in sequence - left, right, front, and rear.
    - The mission of units that are supporting or reinforcing the next higher headquarters.
  - **Attachments and Detachments**. When not shown in the task organization, units attached to or detached from the issuing headquarters are listed here. Additionally, if a unit is to be attached or detached after the effective time of the OPORD, it is listed here with the effective time and conditions under which the change in status will occur.
  - **Assumptions**. This is included in the preparation of an OPLAN. This subparagraph includes situations and conditions that a commander believes will exist at the time the OPLAN becomes an OPORD.
- **Mission**. The mission is a clear, concise statement of the task(s) to be accomplished by the issuing unit and its purpose. The mission statement is derived from the Commander's mission analysis during the decision making process, and it addresses the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY of the operation. At battalion level and below, all of the essential tasks (critical to the success of the operation as determined by the Commander) to be accomplished are addressed in the mission statement. The mission is always stated in full, and must stand alone without reference to any other documents except a map. For example:
  - "TF 2-77 conducts a passage of lines and attacks 130530A Sep 84 to seize HILL 295 (NB251369) and HILL 301 (NB296384); continues the attack to the east on order."
  - "TF 2-77 establishes defense from NA524165 to NA536109 NLT 210630A Nov 84; assists passage of the division covering force; and defends in sector to prevent penetration of the MUHLEN River."
- **Execution**. The execution paragraph contains the Commander's concept and "how to" information needed for mission accomplishment. This paragraph consists of three elements: concept of operation, subordinate unit subparagraphs, and coordinating instructions.

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- **Concept of Operation.** Normally, the operation overlay is referenced in this part of the concept. The initial paragraph expands on the why of the mission statement to explain the "big picture" or master plan. It is the Commander's concise personal summary of intent, which can be easily grasped and provides the basis for initiative. The Commander's visualization of the enemy defeat and the outcome of the battle are expressed here without attempting to express every contingency.
  - **Maneuver.** The scheme of maneuver describes the movement or placement of all major subordinate maneuver elements within the task force. The scheme of maneuver discusses the battle from start to finish, and describes HOW the operation will progress. It is stated in sufficient detail to ensure a thorough understanding of appropriate actions by subordinates.
  - **Fires.** The scheme of fire support outlines the Commander's concept for fires and integrates tasks for fires with the scheme of maneuver.
  - **Obstacle, mines, and fortifications.** These items may be included in the concept of operation. Additionally, priorities of engineer effort and types of operations (mobility, countermobility, and survivability) may also be addressed. Detailed information relating to an obstacle plan is included in a separate annex and referred to here.
  - **Intelligence and electronic warfare.** The concept may include a brief discussion of the Commander's intelligence collection priorities and electronic warfare priorities and how they directly affect the scheme of maneuver.
  - **Other support activities.** Other aspects included in the concept are Suppression of Enemy Air Defense (SEAD), air defense fires, and rear area combat operations.
- **Subordinate Unit Subparagraphs.** The specific tasks to be accomplished by each subordinate element of the task force are listed in a lettered subparagraph. The units are normally listed alphabetically or numerically in order of decreasing size by type of unit. Subordinate teams (combined arms elements) normally precede branch pure elements in sequence. Additionally, maneuver units precede combat support and combat service support units. At battalion level and below, all major subordinate units or units under task force control are listed in separate subparagraphs, with two exceptions: trains elements are addressed in paragraph 4, and a unit in reserve is addressed in the reserve subparagraph. Instructions in the concept of operation may be repeated in the subordinate unit subparagraphs if the Commander feels it is necessary for clarity; however, it is not mandatory to repeat. Instructions in the subordinate unit subparagraphs are limited to tasks that apply to a particular unit and only that unit. In addition to the listing of units, the following items may appear in the subordinate unit subparagraph portion of the OPORD.
  - **Fire Support.** (Not mandatory.) This subparagraph may contain a discussion of air support, chemical operations, field artillery (organization and special instructions), naval gunfire, and nuclear fires. This subparagraph is not the same as the plan of fire support discussed under the concept of operation, and it does not substitute for a discussion of fire support in the concept.
  - **Air Defense, Aviation, Engineer, and Military Intelligence.** These subparagraphs are sometimes used. (Not mandatory.)

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- **Reserve.** A reserve subparagraph is included in the format of the order for company level and higher. It is listed in sequence as the last subordinate unit subparagraph immediately preceding coordinating instructions. If no reserve is planned, the word “NONE” is shown. A unit totally in reserve during the operation appears only in this subparagraph (in addition to the concept of operation).
- **Coordinating Instructions.** This last subparagraph contains details of coordination and control applicable to two or more elements of the task force, with the exception of signal items, which are covered in paragraph 5b. Typical items included in coordinating instructions are:
  - Reports other than Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that are to be made.
  - Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) troop safety instructions and Operational Exposure Guidance (OEG).
  - Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) levels, if different from SOP.
  - Air defense criteria.
  - Consolidation and reorganization instructions, if other than SOP.
  - Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR), if not stated in an intelligence annex.
  - Passage of lines coordination.
  - Effective Date Time Group (DTG), or conditions under which the order or plan becomes effective when not effective upon receipt.
  - Reference to annexes included in the order (plan) not previously mentioned in the body of the order.
- **Service Support.** This paragraph contains combat service support instructions and information relating to the operation. General information such as the Main Supply Route (MSR), time and composition of Logistics Packages (LOGPACs) and methods of resupply and evacuation for supporting units is contained here. There is no doctrinal format for paragraph 4; however, the administrative/logistics order format is recommended as follows (reference may be made to unit SOP if appropriate; items not required are omitted).
  - **Matériel and services.** Status of classes of supply, transportation, services, and maintenance.
  - **Medical evacuation, aid station locations, and hospitalization.**
  - **Personnel.** Unit strengths, replacements, maintenance of morale, discipline, law and order, headquarters management.
  - **Civilian-to-Military cooperation.** Limitations or restrictions concerning local area; psychological operations.
  - **Prisoner of war procedures.**
  - **CSS facilities.** The locations and proposed locations of CSS facilities (combat or field trains) may be indicated; however, this is not necessary if shown on an overlay.
- **Command and Signal.** This paragraph contains instructions and information relating to command and communications-electronics functions. It has two subparagraphs--command and signal.
  - **Command.** As a minimum, this subparagraph includes the initial location of the Commander (to facilitate messenger operations if they become necessary); it may also include the command post locations (required if not shown graphically) and

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Command Post (CP) axis of displacement. Succession of command may be shown, if different from SOP.

- **Signal.** As a minimum, this subparagraph lists the Signal Operating Instruction (SOI) index by specific number in effect for the operation as well as any changes scheduled during the operation, it may also list alternate or emergency signals (for example, pyrotechnics) and any signal restrictions, such as radio-listening silence.
- **Ending**
  - **Acknowledge.** Directs the recipient of the order to acknowledge receipt. Acknowledgment may be made in the clear using the message reference number in the OPORD heading. Any instructions pertaining to acknowledging the receipt of the order (plan) may be listed here.
  - **Signature.** The Commander or his authorized representative signs the original copy of the OPORD.
  - **Authentication.** If the Commander's signature cannot be reproduced, the operations officer authenticates subsequent copies of the order. Annexes issued with the order do not require signature or authentication. Annexes issued separately require or authentication in the same manner as the order. Authentication is performed by the primary staff officer responsible for the annex.
  - **Annexes.** Lettered alphabetically and listed in the order in which they appear in the OPORD. The operations officer designates the letter to be associated with a given annex. Annexes are prepared by the appropriate officer having staff responsibility for the activity, arm, or service covered by the annex. When an annex is to be issued later and, therefore, does not accompany the order, the parenthetical phrase "(to be issued)" is shown following the listing of the annex.
  - **Distribution.** Establish distribution in coordination with appropriate staff officers. Distribution must also be made to adjacent, supporting, and attached units not included in the SOP distribution.

While there is undoubtedly a lot of latitude in how FPOs can be constructed, the example above is telling. Look at the type of actions enumerated under paragraph 3a "Concept of Operations:" Maneuver, fires, obstacles, intelligence, and other support activities. Nowhere is there even a hint that intimate knowledge of customs, language, or local culture could in any way be useful. Even the examples under "other support activities" - SEAD, air defense fires, rear area operations – all refer to kinetic operations. The first hint of culture in the FPO is in a paragraph 4 (Combat Support) where it talks about Civil-to-Military relations. Similar to the biases apparent in the definitions of METT-TC, interactions with the local population (or culture) seem to be relegated to Phase IV activities, not something to be considered as a means to affect a successful mission. If Operational Culture is to become a doctrinally sound, fundamental part of operations and planning it must somehow be reflected in how basic military tenets like METT-TC and the FPO are taught and applied both at the various schoolhouses and also in operational units. It needs to become part of the basic lexicon of a warfighter.

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### Outline and ideas

So, how does this happen? Some might argue that the processes reflected in METT-TC and the FPO are flexible and therefore amenable to any situation. In my opinion, this is a formula for re-enforcing the status quo. Military planning is, inevitably, an exercise in creating something that's vitally important - "The Plan" – without sufficient time to do most of it in reassuring detail.

Since there is not enough time to do everything, by nature, a planner is only going to do those things that are required by dictum [e.g., Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1] or of specific interest to the Commander. If it is not going to wind up on a PowerPoint slide in front of the general, it is not going to get done. Therefore, relying on flexibility is not a good way of getting Operational Culture into the planning process. There needs to be fundamental change in the way the basic doctrine is formulated and subsequently taught.

As noted before, METT-TC has issues with tone: the "C" processes, in addition to being the last one mentioned, sound decidedly less military than all the others. To remedy this several things should happen: The name translation of "C" should be changed and its relative placement moved forward. "Civil considerations" sounds like an afterthought; it's something Marines do, but is not really central to the mission. What if, instead, it stood for "Cultural Center of Gravity (COG)" and it resided right after the "M" – MCETT-T. "The Mission" (the "M" in MCETT-T) is, or should be, the ultimate goal of the military operation. This is why the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) is being formed and Marines are going to move out to some Area of Responsibility (AOR). All the rest of the letters in the acronym "modify" the mission (i.e. environment, troops, terrain, and timing). They are factors that affect how the mission gets done. One of the first considerations in this regard should be the cultural COG. If you can win the war by winning the population without firing a shot, that's far more desirable an outcome than fulfilling the mission with significant casualties.

*"Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field."*

"The Art of War," Sun Tzu

In fact, you could probably make an argument that the "ETT-T" also "modify" or tailor the "C." Cultural COGs will change depending on things like terrain, weather, and even the time of year. But if it's relegated the title "Civil considerations" and considered as the last component of the acronym, it loses its importance, and hence, any likelihood it will receive the necessary attention during the planning process. Changing to MCETT-T is fundamental – it precipitates a sequence of other changes in thinking and in fact.

With a modified CMETT-T the FPO now takes on a different tone - suggest possible changes in the template.

These small fundamental changes in doctrine and doctrinal application also have repercussions "up the chain." The Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) embodied in MCWP 5-1 would

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need to reflect the addition of Operational Culture to the way Marines fight. One could argue that the process already accounts for that in the flexibility it allows a commander to tailor the Operational Planning Team (OPT). But without the explicit “force of regulation” it would be possible to forego satisfactory consideration of Operational Culture to save time or to take pressure off some other expedient. Where should it go? Probably in an appendix; an overlay of some sort (referencing it to geography would tie it together with the classical concept of terrain and the newer one of “human terrain.”). While it would likely go against the grain of the social scientists there would need to be a “top 3” or “top 5” cultural issues to consider; captured and socialized to the members of the OPT. Commanders are not going to be expert social scientists; they’ll be trained to be familiar with the kinds of Operational Culture issues important to their mission, but they would not know everything. The “C” in MCETT-T could evolve with the campaign and the “top whatever” cultural issues for commanders would need to evolve too.

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## Study Team Working Paper 5: United States Marine Corps (USMC) Security Cooperation (SC) Concept

### Background

As part of the study, two military mission sets are to be examined to determine how to better incorporate Operational Culture into the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP). The mission sets provided by the Action Officer for the study were Humanitarian Assistance (HA)/Disaster Relief (DR) and SC.

This paper addresses the general concept of SC and the taxonomy of guidance that assists planners when developing SC engagement plans.

### SC Concepts

The US maintains a leadership role in the global community, recognizing the importance of partnerships in defense, diplomacy, and in developing strong economic ties. Challenges are shared in this partnership so that common threats are diminished and risks become more acceptable. These partnerships occur across the highest levels of government, and are addressed as part of the US Foreign Policy in a “comprehensive approach” (also known as the “whole of government” approach) addressed in the “*National Security Strategy*” (NSS) (figure F-2).

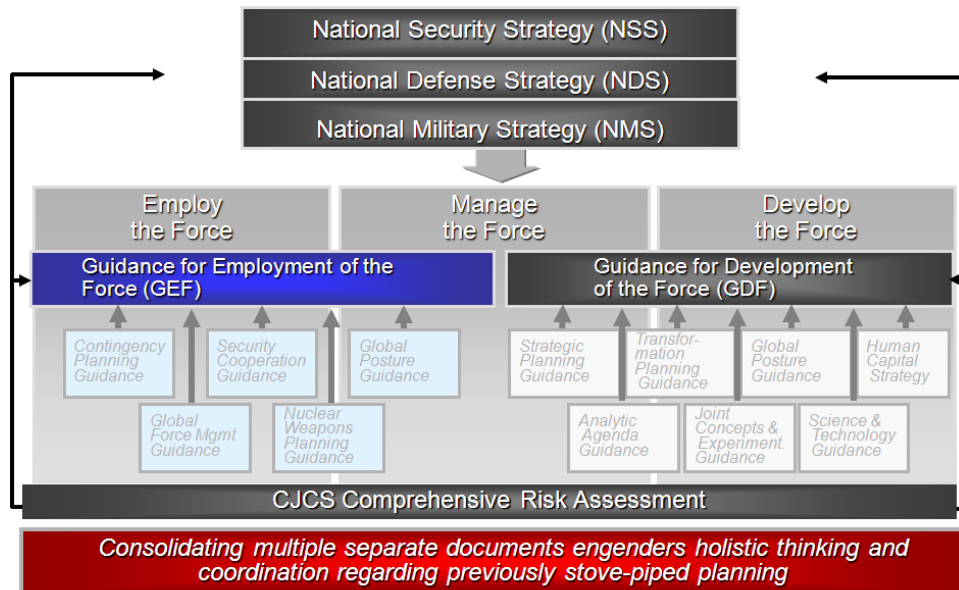


Figure F-2. Strategic Guidance Hierarchy

The Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) consist of “people” and “things” which provide a connection to the Partner Nation (PN), and also are tied to the NSS, “*National Defense Strategy*” (NDS), and the “*National Military Strategy*” (NMS)

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Objectives and Goals. GCCs work in concert with the senior Department of State (DOS) personnel assigned to the various countries within the GCC Area of Responsibility (AOR) in striving to achieve the objectives outlined by the NSS, NDS, and NMS.

The GCC's campaign plans will likely have impact upon, and be impacted by, the Regional Marine Forces (MARFORs) and USMC Service level strategy and guidance. The joint publication of the DOS/United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Strategic Plan, "*Transformational Diplomacy*" not only provides direction to the various embassies, but also has an impact on the "*Global Employment of the Force*" (GEF), in that Department of Defense (DOD) and DOS share goals and objectives (and in some cases tasks) that can be found within the NSS. Consequently, planners must maintain an understanding of the interagency process which is part of the "whole of government" and/or "comprehensive government" approach. At the operational level, the US embassy's Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) should be aligned/complementary to the GCC TCP, in order to more efficiently participate in and contribute to the interagency process.

The current view of the strategic environment as it relates to US and PN interaction is in the context of the "3D Model" environment: Diplomacy, Defense, and Development (figure F-3). SC touches all three "D's," DOS, DOD, and USAID, are all key contributors. They often conduct business in a supported/supporting type arrangement to ensure Interagency coordination is carried out from planning through execution and assessment.

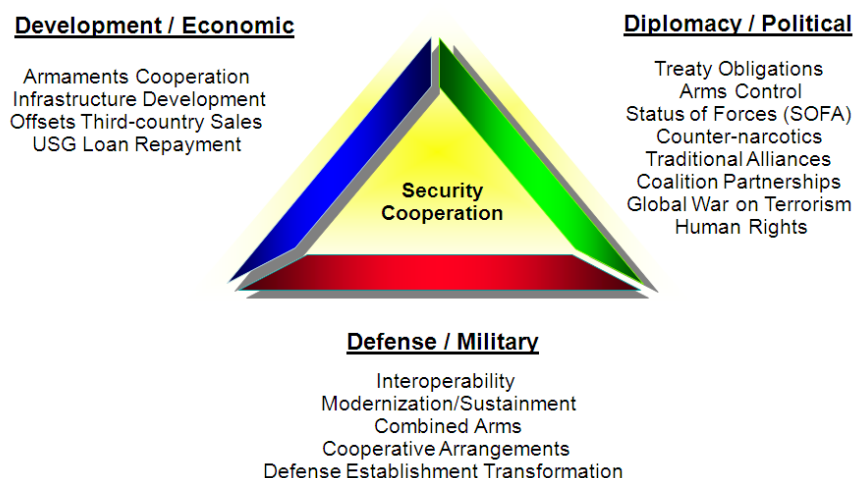


Figure F-3. US/PN Strategic Environment

In 2003 the DOD formalize how they would interacted with foreign defense establishments, with the intent of focusing our SC activities on the best way to advance our national interests and ensure we had the "right" partnerships for the future. The US has always conducted engagements with PN, but it was "soft power" and the results were hard to quantify and measure. Secretary Rumsfeld wanted a more rigorous process for planning and this was done via the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) SC guidance that directed the GCCs to implement this strategic guidance through their Theater SC Strategies.

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Following the 2006 “*Quadrennial Defense Review*” (QDR), the US Government (USG), made a number of major changes to how we do business, including developing the Global Force Management (GFM) program as a better way to manage and resource current and future requirements in prosecuting the “Long War.”

In 2008 a more consolidated planning construct was implemented with the publication of the GEF and the “*Guidance for the Development of the Force*” (GDF). The GEF integrated the DOD’s planning guidance regarding operations and other military activities (i.e. SC) into one document. It accomplished two key things. First, it consolidated and integrated the SC guidance along with four other guidance documents: the GFM, “*Global Defense Posture*,” “*Contingency Planning Guidance*” (CPG), and “*Nuclear Weapons Employment*” (NUWEP). Second, it directed the development of GCC Campaign Plans that link, for the first time, SC and shaping activities to the Phase-0 elements of their Contingency Plans. This concept operationalizes SC by providing a model for commanders to decide where to apply limited SC resources in the most effective way. The GDF consolidated and integrated DOD’s force development planning priorities into one document. It accomplished three key things. First, it replaced guidance formerly promulgated through four previous documents: the “*Strategic Planning Guidance*” (SPG), “*Transformation Planning Guidance*” (TPG), *Global Defense Posture*, and “*Science and Technology Guidance*.” Second, it established the Building Partnerships Joint Capability Area (JCA). Third, it institutionalized capabilities-based planning that enables the assessment, prioritization and alignment of resources across the JCA, and lines the money up with the mission.

SC guidance has been broken down into three levels (figure F-4):

- Strategic Guidance
- Military Guidance
- GCC/Service Products and Activities

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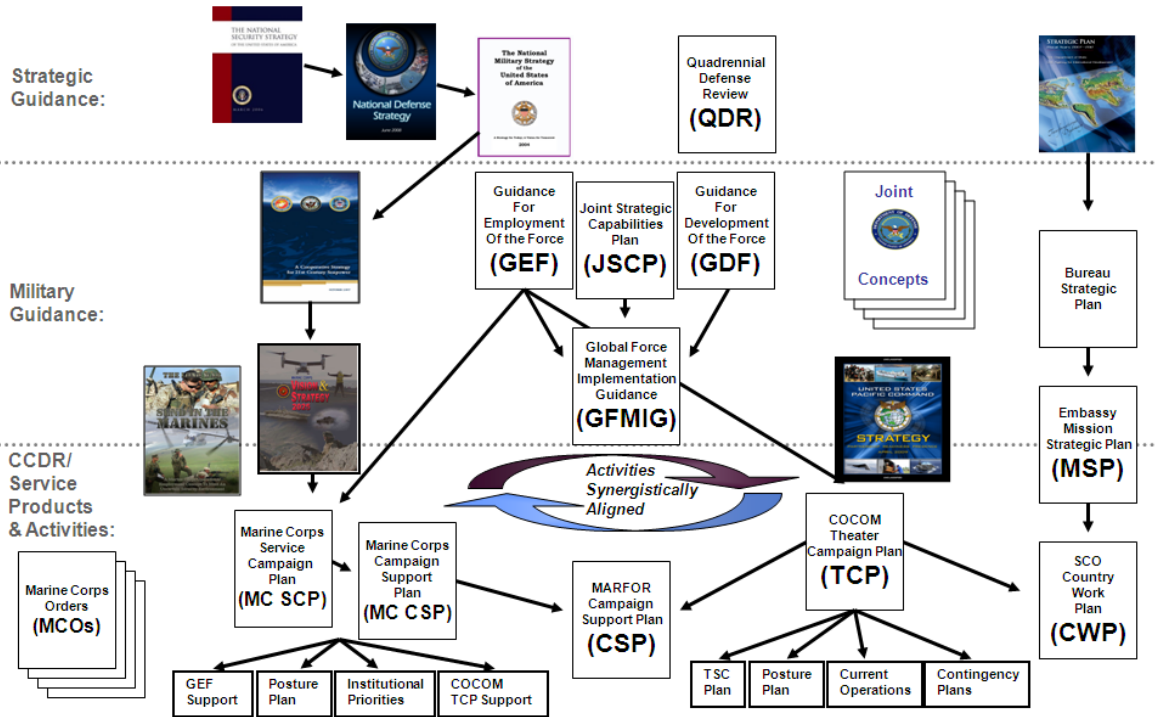


Figure F-4. SC Guidance

**Strategic Guidance**

“National Security Strategy” (NSS). The NSS is a document prepared periodically by the executive branch of the government, which outlines the major national security concerns of the US and how the administration plans to deal with them. The legal foundation for the document is spelled out in the “Goldwater-Nichols Act.” The document is purposely general in content and its implementation relies on elaborating guidance provided in supporting documents such as the NMS. The President recently published the NSS 2010.

When it comes to global development, the NSS clearly anticipates a long-term approach/commitment of vast US resources and assets. The NSS also discusses the concept of “Invest in the Capacity of Strong and Capable Partners” to foster security, pursue sustainable and responsible security systems, and preventing the emergence of conflict. Additionally, the final section of the NSS, “International Order” expands on this concept by discussing:

- Ensure Strong Alliances
  - Strengthening security relationships
  - European Allies
  - Asian Allies
  - North America
- Build Cooperation with Other 21<sup>st</sup> Century Centers of Influence
  - Asia
  - Russia

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- Emerging Centers of Influence
- Strengthen Institutions and Mechanisms for Cooperation
  - Enhance cooperation with and strengthen the United Nations (UN)
  - Pursue decisions through a wide range of frameworks and coalitions
  - Invest in regional capabilities
- Sustain broad cooperation on key global challenges
  - Climate change
  - Peacekeeping and armed conflict
  - Pandemics and infectious disease
  - Transnational criminal threats and threats to governance
  - Safeguarding the global commons
  - Arctic interests

It is clear that the NSS points to continued international engagement, which DOD will obviously play a pivotal role.

Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2007-2012 *“Transformational Diplomacy.”* The Strategic Plan is the capstone document for DOS and USAID. It addresses their roles in US Foreign Policy, as well as gives guidance on how Foreign Assistance (FA) will be administered. The DOS is the lead executive branch office responsible for implementing US Foreign Policy, including implementing FA plans in concert with the USAID. The Strategic Plan responds to the NSS and guides/informs the US embassies’ MSP. The Strategic Plan defines the following DOS and USAID joint strategic goals:

- Strategic Goal 1: Achieving peace and security
  - Counterterrorism
  - Weapons of mass destruction and destabilizing conventional weapons
  - SC and security sector reform
  - Conflict prevention, mitigation, and response
  - Transnational crime
  - Homeland security
- Strategic Goal 2: Governing justly and democratically
  - Rule of law and human rights
  - Good governance
  - Political competition and consensus building
  - Civil society
- Strategic Goal 3: Investing in people
  - Health
  - Education
  - Social services and protection for especially vulnerable populations
- Strategic Goal 4: Promoting economic growth and prosperity
  - Private markets
  - Trade and investment
  - Energy security
  - Agriculture

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- Environment
- Strategic Goal 5: Providing HA
  - Protection, assistance and solutions
  - Disaster prevention and mitigation
  - Orderly and humane means for migration management
- Strategic Goal 6: Promoting international understanding
  - Offer a positive vision
  - Nurture common interests and values
  - Marginalize extremism
- Strategic Goal 7: Strengthening consular and management capabilities
  - Consular services (Visa, Passports, American Citizen Services)
  - Major management functions

Each mission, led by the US Ambassador or senior Foreign Service Officer, is responsible for creating and maintaining the MSP. The MSP includes the DOS and other USG agencies located in the country (to include DOD). This annual strategic plan outlines the intended goals, priority initiatives, and performance indicators with targets for the Country Team. To complement the MSP, DOD has developed operational plans, known as Country Action Plans (CAPs), for certain activities between countries in a region or theater. CAPs detail the use of FA funds for the implementation year. The CAP identifies the objectives of proposed military activities for each country but also point to objectives outlined in the DOS's MSPs. CAPs remain specific to the DOD's military operations in each country.

*“National Defense Strategy”* (NDS). The NDS serves as the DOD's capstone document in this long-term effort. Although written in 2008, the NDS remains a primary reference for the Service Chiefs and GCCs as they plan their roles in defending the Nation. The NDS is a strategy paper that is done every four years and which "provides the policy basis on which the armed services plan their research, development and acquisitions of weapons systems." The objectives of the NDS are to defend the homeland, win the long war, promote security of the US, deter conflict, and win our nation's wars. SC is a tool through which the US implements the NDS and increases the capabilities of US partners abroad. The NDS:

- Flows from the NSS and informs the NMS
- Provides a framework for other DOD strategic guidance, specifically on campaign and contingency planning, force development, and intelligence
- Reflects the results of the 2006 QDR and lessons learned from on-going operations in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Addresses how the US Armed Forces will fight and win America's wars and how we seek to work with and through PNs to shape opportunities in the international environment to enhance security and avert conflict

The NDS describes our overarching goals and strategy. It outlines how the DOD will support the objectives outlined in the NSS, including:

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- The need to strengthen alliances and build new partnerships to defeat global terrorism and prevent attacks against us, our allies, and our friends
- Prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends with weapons of mass destruction (WMD)
- Work with others to defuse regional conflicts, including conflict intervention
- Transform national security institutions to face the challenges of the 21st century

The NDS acts on these objectives, evaluates the strategic environment, challenges, and risks we must consider in achieving them, and maps the way forward. The key NDS passages that are germane to SC planning and execution:

*“The security of the United States is tightly bound up with the security of the broader international system. As a result, our strategy seeks to build the capacity of fragile or vulnerable partners to withstand internal threats and external aggression while improving the capacity of the international system itself to withstand the challenge poses by rogue states and would-be hegemons.”<sup>240</sup>*

In cooperation with allies and PNs, the US can help shape the international environment, the behavior of actors, and the choices that strategic states face in ways that foster accountability, cooperation, and mutual trust.

*“We will support, train, advise and equip partner security forces to counter insurgencies, terrorism, proliferation, and other threats. We will assist other countries in improving their capabilities through security cooperation, just as we will learn valuable skills and information from others better situated to understand some of the complex challenges we face together.”<sup>241</sup>*

Building these partnerships takes resources. The DOD has worked with its interagency partners and Congress to expand the portfolio of SC and partnership capacity building tools over several years. These tools are essential to successful implementation of the strategy. SC complements other national level efforts to prevent conflict and promote mutual security interests. These activities encourage nations to develop, modernize and transform their own capabilities, thereby increasing the capabilities of partners and helping them to help themselves. SC helps resolve doctrinal employment differences among military counterparts, enhances important intelligence and communication linkages and facilitates rapid crisis response. Active SC contributes to stability in key areas of the world while dissuading potential adversaries from adopting Courses of Action (COAs) that threaten stability and security. In this way, the US will facilitate the integration of military operations with allies, contribute to regional stability, reduce underlying conditions that foment extremism and set the conditions for future success. The NDS establishes four defense objectives to guide the DOD activities:

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<sup>240</sup> Department of Defense (2008). “*National Defense Strategy*,” Washington, D.C., 6

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 15-16

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- Secure the US from direct attack
- Secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action
- Establish security conditions conducive to a favorable international order
- Strengthen alliances and partnerships to contend with common challenges

SC increases the capabilities of US partners by:

- Identifying areas of common interest
- Encouraging enhanced capabilities and coalition participation
- Seeking authorities to facilitate cooperation
- Spurring the military transformation of key allies
- Help partners increase capacity to:
  - Defend themselves
  - Collectively meet challenges to our common interests

*“The National Military Strategy”* (NMS). The NMS is the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS) guidance to the Armed Forces, guided by the goals and objectives contained in the NSS and serves to implement the NDS. The NMS's chief source of guidance is the NSS document. The NMS establishes three military objectives:

- Protect the US against external attacks and aggression
- Prevent conflict and surprise attack
- Prevail against adversaries

The NMS is the focus for military activities to define a set of interrelated military objectives and joint operating concepts from which to identify desired capabilities and assess risk. The NMS:

- Consolidates and integrates the DOD planning guidance
- Replaces the CPG and SC guidance
- Transitions the DOD planning to a “strategy-centric” vice “contingency-centric” approach
- Establishes campaign planning construct to achieve strategic end states and objectives
- Complements the DOS’s Strategic Plan

*“Quadrennial Defense Review”* (QDR) – 2010. The QDR is a legislatively mandated review of the DOD strategy and priorities. It sets a long term course for the DOD as it assesses the threats and challenges that the Nation faces and re-balances the DOD’s strategies, capabilities, and forces. The QDR describes four overarching defense objectives:

- Prevail in today’s war
- Prevent and deter conflict
- Prepare to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies
- Preserve and enhance the All-Volunteer Force

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*“Preventing the rise of threats to US interests requires the integrated use of diplomacy, development, and defense, along with intelligence, law enforcement, and economic tools of statecraft, to help build the capacity of partners to maintain and promote stability. Such an approach also requires working closely with our allies and partners to leverage existing alliances and create conditions to advance common interests.”<sup>242</sup>*

The QDR focuses its assessment on improving capabilities for the following key missions:

- Defend US and support civil authorities at home
- Succeed in Counterinsurgency, stability, and Counterterrorism Operations
- Build the security capacity of partner states
- Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments
- Operate effectively in cyberspace

Throughout the QDR, a prevalent theme is to undertake a broader and deeper range of prevent-and-deter missions, as part of a whole of government approach and in concert with allies and partners.

### **Military Guidance**

*“Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5132.03, DOD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation.”* SC, which includes the DOD administered Security Assistance (SA) programs, is an important tool of national security, foreign policy, and is an integral element of the DOD mission. SC activities are planned, programmed, budgeted, and executed with the same high degree of attention and efficiency as other DOD activities. SC requirements are typically combined with other DOD requirements and implemented through standard DOD systems, facilities, and procedures.

- Establishes DOD policy and assigns responsibilities under the GEF, GDF and Titles 10 and 22 of the US Code (USC)
- Directs that SC Planners will:
  - Consider Host Nation (HN) economy
  - Consider and coordinate with USG activities
  - Work within authorities and receive training
  - Work within disclosure rules

*“Guidance for Employment of the Force”* (GEF) 2008. The GEF is the DOD capstone document for SC planners and is supported by and complimentary to the other documents. The current version was signed in October 2008 and represents a new understanding by the DOD regarding shaping the global strategic environment. The GEF:

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<sup>242</sup> Department of Defense (2010). *“Quadrennial Defense Review Report,”* Washington, D.C., v

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- Consolidates and integrates the DOD planning guidance; replaces CPG and SC Guidance
- Transitions the DOD planning to a “strategy-centric” vice “contingency-centric” approach
- Establishes campaign planning construct to achieve strategic end states and objectives
- Complements the DOS’s Strategic Plan
- Accounts for forces involved in current operations. The force allocation guidance provides a decision framework for the Global Management Board (GMB), and includes rotation policies.
- The GEF identifies and prioritizes global strategic end states and contingency planning efforts, provides broad, overarching assumptions, identifies core foreign partners critical to achieving US objectives globally.

The GEF is intended to:

- Deter major conflicts
- Preclude major instability from occurring
- Enhance governance and military capability of partners
- Prepare for catastrophic events
- Starts with the NDS which drives Theater/Functional end state and priorities for each GCC
- Allows GCC to “balance efforts” and address specific threats or problems within the larger context of the Campaign Plan in dozens of countries in order to build their capacities
- Aligns the GCCs activities with the NSS objectives and complements embassy specific MSP
- It recognizes and identifies global threats, addresses seams and defense in depth
- Addresses interrelationship between planning, force management and global posture

The GEF aims to defuse strategic problems and resolve crises before they become critical. If prevention fails and fighting becomes necessary, the GEF aims for rapid domination of the adversary in order to prevent escalation and transition rapidly to stability operations. It raises the importance of planning and conducting “Theater Shaping Activities.” The GEF balances the demands of fighting the “Long War” with shaping the strategic environment to prevent or prepare for possible contingencies. The Shaping Framework integrates efforts to shape strategic environment; deter major conflicts; preclude major instability from arising; enhance governance or military of PNs; prepare for catastrophic event. It directs the DOD components to deter-defuse problems early; set conditions for military operations as necessary.

- Contingency-US dominance early
- Includes Coalition Stability Operations-integrate with PNs early
- Ensures long-term approach
- Theater Shaping-Build PN capacity

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The GEF stipulates that GCCs should focus SC efforts on:

- Advanced operations capability and capacity building
- Interoperability (technological or operational)
- Information and intelligence sharing
- Defense exports and international collaboration
- The priorities for resources other than forces (time, funding, effort) are intended to guide SC and near-term force employment only
- DOD components that manage global SC accounts will highlight major deviations to the SECDEF
- SC activities and investments between Global Core Partnerships [(that support multiple Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs))] and critical region partnerships that support the achievement of GCC end states are directed to be balanced
- Three interdependent posture elements:
  - Nature of HN relationship
  - Footprint of facilities and type
  - Steady state and surge activities of US forces

Additionally, the GEF addresses interrelationship between planning, force management and global posture (figure F-5).

- Describes organizing construct for high priority *Global Defense Posture* issues
- Global Defense Posture strategy directs DOD components to develop flexibility to contend with uncertainty; expand allied roles and build partnerships; focus on capabilities, not numbers; focus across regions; and develop rapidly deployable capabilities
- Establishes four Lines of Effort (LOE) for *Global Defense Posture Strategy*

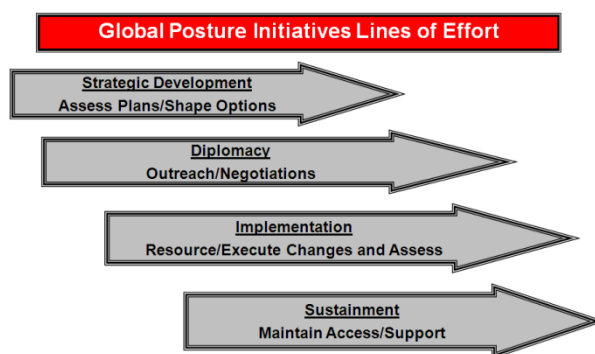


Figure F-5. Global Defense Posture

The GEF outlines eight SC areas:

- Operational access and global freedom of action
- Operational capacity and capability

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- Interoperability
- Intelligence and information sharing
- Assurance and regional confidence building
- Security sector reform
- Defense exports and international collaboration
- National and multinational influence

These focus areas are intended to help the GCCs, Services, and defense agencies focus their SC efforts with partner countries. The GEF and Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) are principal sources for guidance to GCC for steady state, contingency, and posture planning efforts. A two-year update to GFF began in August 2009 in parallel with the 2010 JSCP and GDF, and will be informed by the 2010 NSS and QDR.

*“Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan”* (JSCP) 2008. The JSCP is a Joint Staff document that provides guidance to the GCCs, Service Chiefs, Combat Support Agency directors, applicable Defense agencies, the DOD Field Activity directors, and the Chief, National Guard Bureau to accomplish tasks and missions based on near-term military capabilities.

- A companion document to be applied in conjunction with GEF
- Planning guidance for steady state activities and global posture in addition to contingency planning requirements
- Has 12 sections
  - Strategic context and global priorities
  - Resources and forces
  - Global Defense Posture
  - Campaign Plan requirements
  - General planning guidance
  - Functional planning guidance (Special Operations Command (SOCOM), Strategic Command (STRATCOM), etc)
  - Regional Planning Guidance (Central Command (CENTCOM), Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), etc)
  - Implementation guidance
  - Assessments
  - Supplemental instructions (info of a specialized, functional nature)
  - References
  - Glossary

The JSCP implements campaign, campaign support, contingency, and posture planning guidance reflected in the GEF. The current JSCP was developed in conjunction with the current GEF in order assure complete coordination and prevent gaps.

National Maritime Strategy, *“A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower.”* Maritime forces provide joint or combined force commanders a range of options for responding to crises. The National Maritime Strategy provides the following tasks:

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- Regionally concentrated, credible combat power
  - Limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power
  - Deter major power war
  - Win our Nation's wars
- Globally distributed, mission-tailored maritime forces
  - Contribute to homeland defense in depth
  - Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners
  - Prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system

The strategy also establishes six capabilities that comprise the core of US maritime power and reflect an increase in emphasis on those activities that prevent war and build partnerships:

- Forward presence
- Deterrence
- Sea control
- Power projection
- Maritime security
- HA/DR

Naval Operations Concept – 2010 (NOC 10), *“Implementing the Maritime Strategy.”* Armed with the Strategic Guidance as described above, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and the Commandant of the Coast Guard co-authored the NOC 10 which provides functional guidance to maritime forces. NOC 10 articulates how naval capabilities can be applied in support of the GCCs operations, contingency plans, and Theater SC (TSC) plans.

*“The basic premise of our newly published Maritime Strategy is that the United States is a force for good in the world – that while we are capable of launching a clenched fist when we must – offering the hand of friendship is also an essential and prominent tool in our kit. That premise flows from the belief that preventing wars means we don't have to win wars.”<sup>243</sup>*

Operating forward enables familiarity with the environment, as well as the personalities and behavior patterns of regional actors. Effective SC activities are a form of extended deterrence, creating security and removing conditions for conflict.

*“Joint Operating Concepts”* (JOC). JOCs are typically developed by the US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) and approved by the CJCS. They expand on operational concepts through the use of Joint and Service operational lessons learned and experimentation including joint wargames, seminars, workshops and other concept development venues. There are currently three JOCs that expand on concepts that have ties to SC/SFA:

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<sup>243</sup> United States Marine Corps, Headquarters (2010). *“Naval Operations Concept: Implementing the Maritime Strategy,”* Washington, D.C., inside cover

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- “*Irregular Warfare (IW): Countering Irregular Threats*” dtd 17 May 2010
- “*Military Contribution to Cooperative Security (CS)*” dtd 18 September 2008
- “*Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*” dtd December 2006

Numerous elements of all three of these concepts have been folded into other documents that address SC/SFA either at the Military Guidance level or GCC/Service level.

Marine Corps “*Vision & Strategy 2025.*” The CMC signed this document on 18 June, 2008. CMC’s intent was to define the role of the Corps in the future security environment, inform future requirements, and position the Corps for continued success. In the foreword, he described a Marine Corps that is capable across the full range of military operations. The metaphor he used is a “two-fisted fighter” with the ability to engage in IW as one fist, and the ability to fight in a Major Combat Operation (MCO) as the other. The Marine Corps’ Vision and Strategy reinforces the priorities established in the overarching guidance of the NSS, NDS, NMS, and the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower and charts the Corps’ unique contributions to future security environments. It is informed by estimates and assessments of emerging environments and addresses the character of conflict and operational environment that Marine forces are likely to face and establishes the intellectual groundwork upon which the Marine Corps Operational Capstone Concept and all supporting concepts are built.

“*The Long War Concept.*” The Long War Concept is a concept for the employment of MARFORs to deal with the challenges of an uncertain security environment. This concept will be implemented progressively as forces become available from the current MCOs, and will seek to provide the GCCs with task organized forces that will forward deploy to foster long term relationships and build PN Foreign Security Forces (FSF) capacity to deal with the causes and challenges of instability. The Marine Corps has recognized that it is better to engage and proactively address security challenges, rather than allow these challenges to explode into crisis or conflicts. Over the course of the two years that this concept was under development, decision makers came to recognize that the steady state would include significant force requirements to address terrorists and other irregular opponents. The best way to address these threats is to win the struggle for influence. By assisting PN governments to maintain popular support while providing those governments with the means to address their own internal and regional challenges, resources are better utilized. “*The Long War Concept*” provides a force employment concept that describes how MARFORs will be employed in the “steady state.”

When contingencies and crises do arise, these will constitute periods of “surge” where additional forces are required to fight and win our nation’s battles. During these surge periods, force deployment tempo will increase to enable support to continue to the GCCs. However, some of the steady state commitments may have to be downsized or stopped until the contingency or crisis can be alleviated. The Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) will remain the tactical-operational level force, but Special Purpose (SP) MAGTFs will be used to support the GCC Theater Campaign Plans.

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Although Marines have a long history of training and operating with FSF, the advent of the SC MAGTF provides a new approach that differs significantly from previous bi-lateral training venues. Instead of training with FSF to build interoperability, the SC MAGTF will focus on building the capacity of FSF to be more effective in a manner that allows those FSF to handle their country and region’s security challenges. These are missions that have previously been the exclusive purview of Special Operations Forces (SOF). Due to the current environment and high demands being placed on SOF require that the military services take on some of these missions to help to establish a more persistent presence in areas where US building partner capacity activities will have the greatest effects. The SC MAGTF will be specifically organized based on mission requirements and is expected to be smaller than a MEU. The SC MAGTF is a SP MAGTF that is drawn from a conventional capability that has expertise in certain areas as required (figure F-6). Having capabilities, mobility, and sustainability commensurate with its requirement to train FSF and alleviate some of the underlying conditions that lead to instability; the SC MAGTFs will be comprised of the same multi-capable forces that constitute Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs), and Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs).

While not deployed, the forces that will comprise the SC MAGTF will focus the majority of training time on high end combat skills. Through training and engagements with PNs, SC MAGTFs will contribute to the GCC efforts to build PN security capacity and support PN security efforts. The SC MAGTFs is expected to be formed around an infantry battalion from regionally focused regiments, though mission requirements may dictate that another element constitute the bulk of the MAGTF. The SC MAGTF will also have a tailored combat logistics element to provide combat service support functions as well support for training to PN security forces, Civil-Military Operations (CMO), and HA/DR. The Aviation Combat Element (ACE) will task organize for specific requirements but are expected to principally focus on mobility, training support, and when required, reconnaissance and multi-dimensional force protection to assure freedom of action in remote, austere, and less than stable environments.

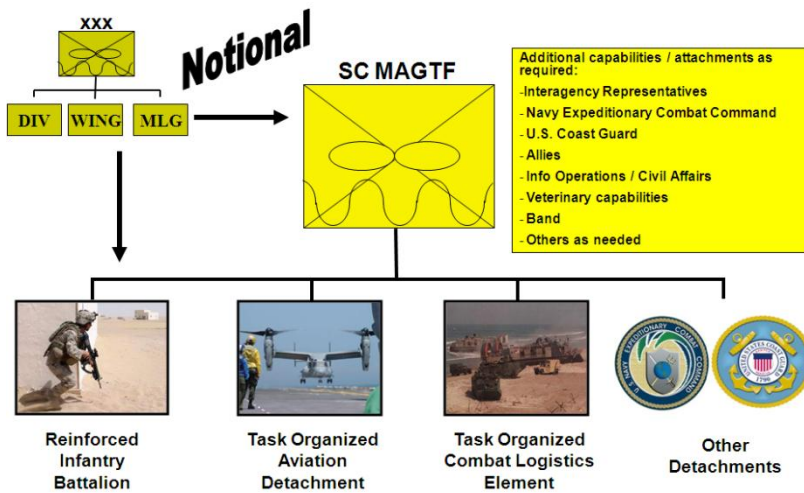


Figure F-6. SC MAGTF Concept

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The SC MAGTF will be organized and trained for deployment with a 1:2 deployment to dwell time. Upon return from a deployment, the units that comprise the SC MAGTF would return to their parent commands to refit and reorganize. Like all returning units, these units would go through a predictable pattern of post-deployment leave and reduction in force strength as personnel execute orders and leave the service. Within 2-3 months, the process of rebuilding the units would occur. Throughout this period, the units would focus almost exclusively on high spectrum training. As the time for deployment nears, some pre-deployment training would be provided to build an understanding of the “human environment” the units will be engaging as part of the SC MAGTF (figure F-7). The intent will not be to create regional experts, but to provide enough of an understanding that the Marines can more effectively work with HN personnel. By doing so, the Marine Corps will position itself to provide a more robust forward presence in support of GCC efforts to build and maintain partner capacity through SC and theater engagement.

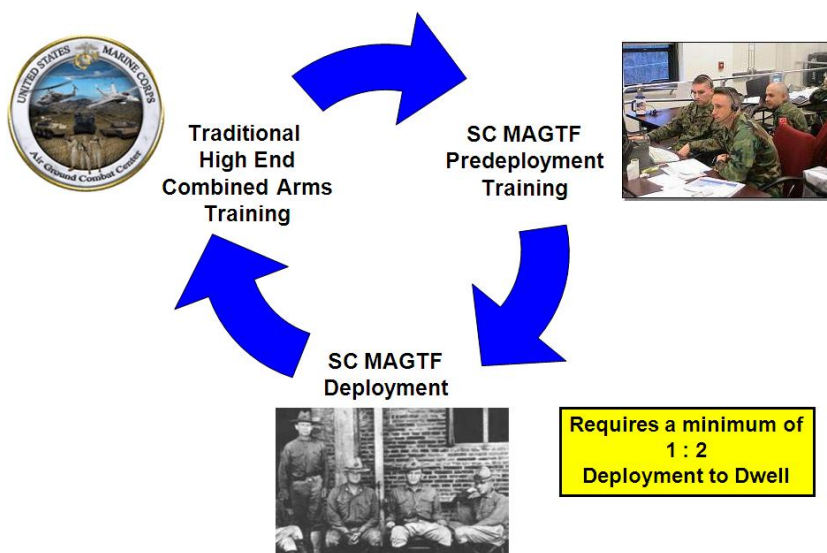


Figure F-7. SC MAGTF Life Cycle

## Service/GCC Products and Activities

“*Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan*” (MCSCP). The MCSCP was approved on 9 December 2009. It flows from external guidance and *Vision and Strategy 2025* (figure F-8). The MCSCP moves the Marine Corps forward towards the objectives laid out in *Vision and Strategy 2025*. The MCSCP:

- Provides guidance that ensures a unified approach to achieve the CMC priorities
- Addresses how the Marine Corps will maintain its core competencies
- Addresses how the Marine Corps will meet GCC requirements
- Integrates and directs Deputy Commandant, Director, and Commander activities to develop, organize, train, equip, and deploy Marine forces
- Provides force deployment prioritization guidance

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- Assigns Service objectives and a methodology for providing feedback to the CMC
- Provides a framework for USMC guidance and directs execution
- Publishes the Marine Corps Core Competencies.
  - Conduct persistent forward naval engagement and is always prepared to respond as the Nation's force in readiness.
  - Employ integrated combined arms across the range of military operations, and operate as part of a joint or multinational force.
  - Provide forces and specialized detachments for service aboard naval ships, on stations, and for operations ashore.
  - Conduct joint forcible entry operations from the sea and develops amphibious landing force capabilities and doctrine.
  - Conduct complex expeditionary operations in the urban littorals and other challenging environments.
  - Lead joint and multinational operations and enable interagency activities.
- Phase I Key Outcomes
  - Retrograde of MAGTF from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) completed
  - Rotation to meet Marine Corps Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) - Afghanistan requirements established
  - MEB level proficiency across core competencies increased
  - Marine Corps approach to supporting Security Force Assistance (SFA) institutionalized
  - Initial regionalization efforts completed
  - MARFOR resourcing analysis completed
  - Risk accepted in meeting forward presence, crisis response, and contingency response requirements outside the CENTCOM Area Of Responsibility (AOR)
  - Cost-benefit analysis for standing MEB headquarters completed
  - Analysis for how MEF will man, train, and equip a Joint Task Force (JTF) Headquarters (HQ) completed



Figure F-8. Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan

These outcomes reflect the fact that some of these events are based on GCC requirements or political decisions. Several policy level initiatives and decisions will be formulated and acted upon during Phase 1. These include analysis for how we are going to approach the roles of training enablers for SFA, the regionalization of the operating forces, how to most effectively resource the MARFOR headquarters given recurring shortfalls in their ability to meet GCC

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operational and planning requirements, detailed analysis for how to bring back standing MEB HQs, and how to prepare MEFs as JTFs to GCC requirements. The USMC will assume risk in supporting GCC engagement requirements in order to meet CENTCOM requirements. The USMC plans on continuing to provide MEUs and detachments for SC activities, but not at the full capacity as requested by GCCs.

- Phase I Intermediate Objectives
  - Marine Corps able to sustain an aggregate 2.0 MEU presence (in addition to 31st MEU) with 1.0 MEU available to CENTCOM
  - Unit/personnel deployment to dwell tempo of 1:2 is achieved for active component. Mobilization to dwell tempo of 1:4 is achieved for reserve component
  - Each MEF develops a training and exercise program to increase MEB level proficiency in amphibious, Maritime Prepositioned Force (MPF), and joint/multinational operations
  - Within operational capabilities, each MEF conducts a MEB level exercise/operation annually to increase proficiency in amphibious, MPF, and joint/multinational operations
  - Each MEF is assigned regions to focus training and cultural awareness

Regionalization will be implemented with MARFOR Command (MARFORCOM) and MARFOR Pacific (MARFORPAC) assigning regional focus areas for each MEF (figure F-9). Regionalization consists of policies that will enable the MEFs to provide Marines who possess greater social-historical, political, cultural, and linguistic understanding of the environments where they will conduct engagement activities in support of GCCs. Regionalization will largely consist of two elements; changes in deployment patterns to recurrently send the same units back to the same locations to facilitate building relationships and unit proficiency in those regions; and changes in manpower policies that permit the tracking and assignment of personnel with regional experience/understanding to units that recurrently deploy to the same locations.

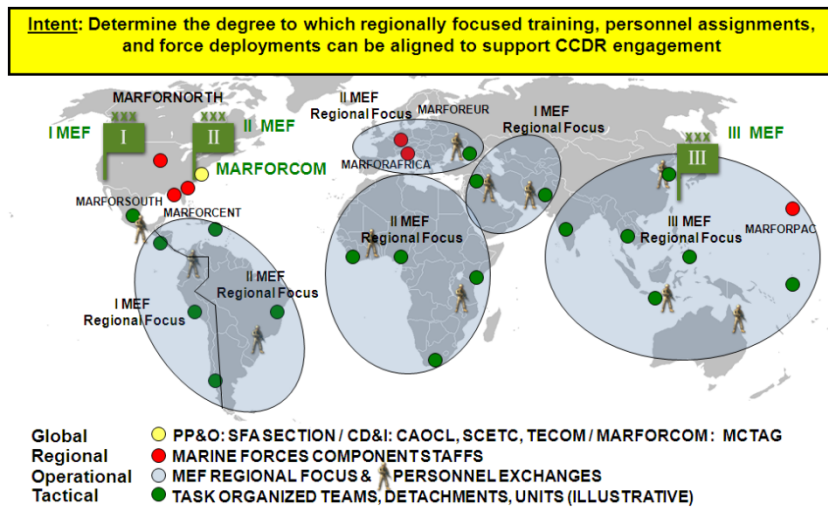


Figure F-9. Regionalization Concept

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The concept of regionalization is based upon DOD guidance requiring the Services to focus forces on specific regions. The CMC has stated that we will not regional forces below the MEF level.

- Phase II Key Outcomes
  - MEF level proficiency across core competencies increased
  - Full SFA enabling capability within Supporting Establishment (SE) and each MEF established
  - Manpower and force generation policies to support regionalization of operating forces institutionalized
  - MARFOR resourcing objectives achieved
  - Unit Deployment Program (UDP) in support of III MEF re-established
  - Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) initiatives for III MEF realignment on planned timeline
  - Forward presence, crisis response, and contingency response requirements outside the CENTCOM AOR expanded
  - CMC decision on establishing standing MEB headquarters

Based upon resourcing decisions for how the Marine Corps will support SFA activities, those capabilities should be mature in the MEFs and the SE. Key decisions will include the roles of the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group (MCTAG), the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), and the Security Cooperation Education Training Center (SCETC) as well as how to institutionally create Information Operations (IO), Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), and Civil-Military Operations (CMO) capabilities in the MEFs. The way ahead for SC MAGTFs should also be known by the end of Phase II. Related to SFA will be the realization of the manpower and force generation policy changes to support regionalization. Based on decisions for how MARFORs will be resourced, appropriate structure changes will be implemented - initial indications are that all of the MARFORs will require a manpower increase.

*“Marine Corps Campaign Support Plan”* (MCCSP). The MCCSP is a classified appendix to the MCSCP and provides details on how the USMC will support the GEF implementation (figure 10). The purpose of the MCCSP is to:

- Synchronize Service-level activities in support of the GEF-defined national strategic end states and GCC Campaign Plans.
- Ensure that USMC institutional requirements are being met to deliver the most capable Marine Corps.
- Serve as the primary reference for articulating and understanding Marine Corps SC priorities and activities.

The MCCSP provides PN prioritization guidance based on which countries the Marine Corps is best postured to support. The majority of these countries are in the littorals and have a naval infantry force and/or a Marine Corps, or are countries that the Marine Corps has a long history with. This list was developed with the support of the MARFORs and is meant to provide a

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decision making tool, complimentary to the GEF, for the allocation of Marine forces to support GCC engagement requirements.

Given the GEF’s paradigm shift to focus on Steady State Phase-0 planning and the evolving GCC TCPs, the MCCSP is focused on identifying current USMC SC capabilities and support to TCPs. Future versions are intended to provide additional USMC guidance and prioritization for SC planning and coordination and eventually assessment guidance and methodology. The intent is to support the attainment of the global and strategic end states articulated in the GEF (figure F-10). USMC planners, using information provided in the MCCSP, advise respective GCCs on USMC concepts and capabilities for SC. MCCSP Concept of Operations (CONOPS):

- Maintain and expand efforts in persistent forward naval presence as forces become available; Sea-based focus
- Tailor General Purpose Forces (GPF) to meet GCC SC needs. Force options: Teams, Detachments, Task Forces, MAGTF
- Enabling organizations to support GPF
- Tailor GPF to meet the evolving needs of the GCCs
- Force options will include training teams, detachments, task forces, and MAGTF. The MAGTF may include SP MAGTF task organized and trained for SC or MEUs with a secondary mission to conduct SC events.

- **OSD Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF) 2008**
  - Creates Campaign Plan construct for CCDRs
  - Created Campaign Support Plan construct for Military Departments, Combat Support Agencies, and Defense Agencies
- **JCS Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) 2008**
  - Directs CCDRs to write a Theater Campaign Plan (TCP)
  - Directs Military Services to write a Campaign Support Plan (CSP)
- **PL directed to write USMC CSP by DC, PP&O (OPR – PLU-7)**

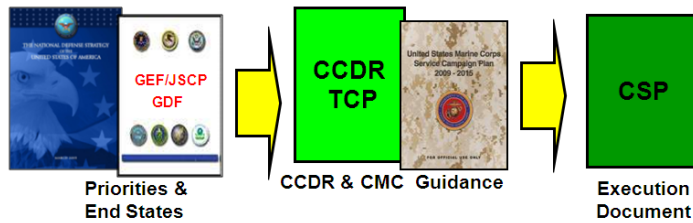


Figure F-10. Marine Corps Campaign Support Plan

The majority of Marine Corps forces are committed to participation in rotational operations within the CENTCOM AOR, resulting in TSC being conducted elsewhere as an economy of force effort. As CENTCOM commitments subside, additional Marine Corps forces will become available for TSC. The Marine Corps has established a number of SC enabling organizations within the operating forces and SE that enhance the ability of GPF to conduct TSC (figure F-11).

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- Input from Service Campaign Support Plans
- Includes coordination with interagency to achieve NDS Objectives
- Undertakes NDS Objectives as tasks
- Speaks to forces

The command mission statement describes an enduring strategic environment, rather than an end state, and more accurately recognizes the need for continuing and expanded US engagement throughout the command's area of focus. The widespread assurance that the US is committed to the US allies and partners and will decisively respond to threat and crises strengthens the significance to US presence in the theater. Credible US military commitment, presence, influence, and action are fundamental elements of this strategic environment.

*Theater Campaign Plans (TCPs)*. The strategy for the TCP is informed by national guidance; especially the GEF. The strategy contains the Theater objectives; the Vision and Regional approach that integrate all command activities to support national security and defense objectives. It is also Strategic Communications Tool for both internal and external audiences (figure F-12). The TCP also operationalizes the strategy; includes the management processes and administrative details.

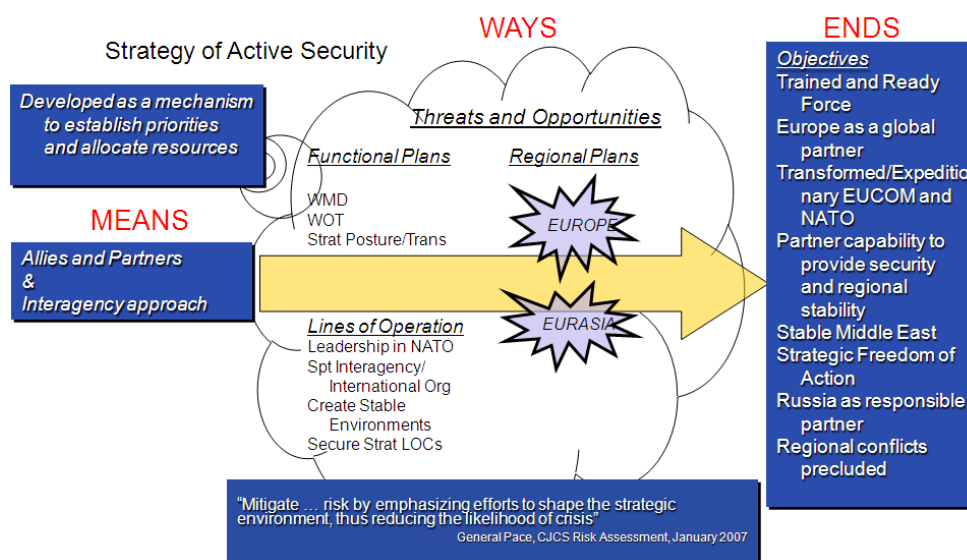


Figure F-12. Concept of the Theater Campaign Plan

The strategy directs the development of functional plans that look across the whole theater, identifies Lines of Effort (LOEs) or operations that address key theater-wide issues as our means, and these in turn support our way by defending forward with regional approaches and plans that address specific regional issues in order to achieve our strategic objectives and goals. The Ways and Means of the Strategy of Active Security will yield, when synchronized and coordinated, the Ends. The Ends support achieving the directed global and regional end states articulated within the GEF. Within the framework of the Ambassador's MSP and the command's Theater Security Strategy, these offices strengthen bilateral security relationships, enhance partner capacity and

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promote effective Civilian-to-Military relations. The Functional and Contingency plans deal with challenges that span the AOR/globe and to prepare for warfighting responsibilities. The Regional Campaign Plans (RCP) synchronizes what we want to get done, where and why. The Country Campaign Plans (CCP) provides the how. The Components' Campaign Support Plans are developed in close cooperation with the CCP and RCP. This provides unity of effort/unity of purpose. A comprehensive government approach is achieved by working the CCP through the various SCOs, which provide input to the embassy's MSP. Finally, an effective assessment mechanism determines validity of the plans, resourcing short-falls, and risks and requirements.

- Provide guidance for Contingency Plans responding to crisis scenarios
- Operationalizes the theater strategy
- Utilize the GEF directed construct
- Delineates theater end states
- Establishes priorities within and between regions or sub-regions
- Prioritizes GCC efforts within the theater
- Informs and directs component roles and responsibilities within the overall campaign plan.

### General Planning Guidance

- Interagency synchronization
- International synchronization
- Building partner capacity
- Operational capacity/capability building
- Human capacity/human capital development
- Institutional capacity/defense sector reform
- Combined operations capacity
- Access and relationships
- Operational access and global freedom of action
- Intelligence and information sharing
- Assurance and regional confidence building
- International defense technology collaboration
- International suasion and collaboration
- General SC planning guidance
  - CMOs
  - Stability Operations
  - Peacekeeping
  - HA
  - Counternarcotics Operations
  - Public/Private partnerships
  - Non-Governmental Organizations
  - Communication and information
  - WMD
  - Intelligence

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### Regional Planning Guidance

In some GCCs, the diversity of the security environments, regional political relations, culture, geography and the PN needs make it useful to divide the area of focus into regions.

*TSC Plans.* TSC plans are the primary vehicle for designing, organizing, integrating and executing SC activities.

- Focus efforts on steady state activities which include ongoing operations, SC and other shaping or preventative activities
- Ways to build transparent, accountable and ethical defense and security planning and execution
- Planning will ensure SC activities are in compliance with legal and policy limitations governing military engagement with foreign countries
- Address:
  - Partner readiness
  - Sustainment and training
  - Methods to identify and reduce corruption

SC activities and tools include programs under Title 22 and Title 10 USC funding sources such as Foreign Military Sales (FMS), and International Military Education and Training (IMET). The activities that are carried out in support of these plans span the gamut from large-scale interoperability exercises to HA/DR. Examples of SC activities:

- Multinational training
  - Maritime law enforcement, safety, and security training
  - Counter drug and narcotics training
  - SA
  - Foreign Military Financing (FMF) grants
  - SA education and training
  - Counter Terrorism Fellowship Program
- Multinational exercises
  - Combined exercises
  - Joint combined exchange training
  - Joint Force Headquarters (HQ) training
- Defense and military contacts
  - Chaplain programs
  - Intelligence SC
  - Joint Contact Team Program
  - Military HIV/AIDS prevention
  - Military-to-Military contacts
  - National Guard State Partnership Program
  - Port visits and VIP Ship Rider Program
  - Senior Officer/SDO visits

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- HA
  - Property, de-mining, and civic assistance
- IO
  - Combat Camera
  - IO training and development
  - Military Information Support Team
  - Rewards Program
  - Web-based information programs
- Multinational education
  - Regional center programs for:
    - ♦ Advanced Security Studies
    - ♦ Terrorism and Security Studies
    - ♦ Senior Executive Seminar
    - ♦ Outreach
    - ♦ Partnership for Peace Consortium
    - ♦ Graduate support
- Other SC activities
  - Exercise related construction
  - Regional maritime awareness capability

The majority of these activities do not include funding to provide actual training and equipment – an authority Congress previously provided almost exclusively through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to the DOS, but carried out through the DOD through FMF grants. The requirement to build greater partner capacity for the Global War on Terror is slowly eroding this restriction, but within strict legislative authorities. For example, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency provides training and equipment for counter-proliferation purposes – everything from radars to radiation detectors. DOD’s Counter-narcotics office provides counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics training and equipment. And most recently, there has been a growth in funding available to support forces for coalition operations, with the Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative, Coalition Support Funding, and Enhanced International Peacekeeping Capabilities funding being notable examples, as well as drawdown and Section 1206 USC authority which re-allocates existing funding.

Each military Service will influence and be influenced by, GCC Campaign Plans through their respective Service components. Therefore, the MARFOR SC planner must be fully aware of the Service’s Strategy level documents. With this guidance, the MARFOR SC planner has a clear understanding how the documents at the Strategic level, the military guidance level, and the GCC/Service products and activities are linked to each other, and how they influence plans at the lower echelons.

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### Study Team Working Paper 6: The Security Force Assistance (SFA) Concept

Army Field Manual (FM) 3-07 defines SFA as the “*unified action to generate, employ, and sustain local, host nation, or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority.*”<sup>244</sup> Unified action comprises joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational activity in cooperative effect with non-governmental agency. Security forces, as defined, include military, police, border, and other paramilitary forces. SFA can be conducted across the spectrum of conflict, in any operational theme, and across the spectrum of operations. However, SFA is often a larger security sector reform effort or tied to building partner capacity (rather than reform).

SFA seeks to build one of three relationships: an internally focused bilateral relationship, externally focused bilateral relationship, or a multilateral relationship. A major challenge to succeeding in SFA is the requirement to deal with partners indirectly – success comes from exercising influence rather than direct command and control. SFA is inherently multinational.

When the Department of Defense (DOD) coined the term SFA in 2006, it equated it to those activities – organize, train, equip, rebuild/build, and advise – that support the development of a Foreign Security Force (FSF) capabilities and capacities. The efforts are conducted “With, Through, and By (WTB).” WTB is a term of art used to describe the process of interaction with FSF, initially involving training and assisting (With), advising (Through) and finally operating independently (By).

It aims to establish conditions that support the partner’s end state, which includes legitimate, credible, competent, capable, committed, and confident security forces. SFA differs from traditional “train and equip” missions, because it is often necessary to develop new organizations in order to support and sustain maneuver units and provide legitimate control. According to DOD Directive 3000.05, “the long-term goal is to develop host nation capacity for securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a robust civil society.”

#### SFA in Context

There are several operations or programs that directly relate to SFA. They provide the context for engaging in SFA activities, and includes Security Cooperation (SC), Security Assistance (SA), and Foreign Internal Defense (FID).

**Security Cooperation (SC)** is “all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships promoting specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with

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<sup>244</sup> Department of Army, Headquarters (2009). “*FM 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance*”, Washington, D.C.

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peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.”<sup>245</sup> Commanders distinguish SC from SFA based on its emphasis in building relationships and capacities: SC emphasizes building relationships, and SFA builds capacities.

### **SC has four DOD Objectives:**

1. Build defense relationships that promote specific United States (US) security interests
2. Develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations, including allied transformation
3. Improve information exchange and intelligence sharing to harmonize views on security challenges
4. Provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access and en route infrastructure

Other SC activities, such as bilateral meetings or civil affairs activities dedicated to the non-security sector fall outside of the scope of SFA.

**Security Assistance (SA)** is a specific subset of SC that focuses on both external and internal threats. JP 1-02 defines SA as: “Groups of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, and other related statutes by which the US provides defense articles, military training, and other defense related services, by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.”<sup>246</sup> SA supports SC by building Military-to-Military relationships with potential coalition partners and by assisting nation-building efforts of current or potential allies. SA directly supports the “*National Security Strategy*” and the “*National Military Strategy*,” and is a major component of regional component Commander’s Theater Security Cooperation Plans. It promotes regional stability, maintains US defense alliances, and promotes civilian control of the military.

It is a Department of State (DOS) initiative executed by the DOD. It has five principle components:

1. International Military Education & Training (IMET)
2. Foreign Military Sales (FMS)
3. Foreign Military Financing (FMF)
4. Antiterrorism (AT)
5. Peace Operations (PO)

SFA activities include all SA programs, except for FMFP. Policy oversight for Marine Corps SA resides with the Deputy Commandant (D/C), Plans, Policy, and Operations (PP&O). IMET management and coordination is the responsibility of the Training and Education Command (TECOM).

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<sup>245</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (2001). “*Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*,” 12 April 2001 (as amended through 19 August 2009), Washington, D.C.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid

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Objectives of IMET:

- Further the goal of regional stability through effective, mutually beneficial Military-to-Military relations that culminate in increased understanding and defense cooperation between the US and foreign countries;
- Provide training that augments the capabilities of participant nations' military forces to support combined operations and interoperability with US forces; and
- Increase the ability of foreign military and civilian personnel to instill and maintain democratic values and protect internationally recognized human rights in their own government and military

IMET students often attend Marine Corps University (MCU) schools such as the Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) and the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW).

Expanded-IMET (E-IMET) opens the IMET program to participants not typically part of a defense-related IMET training program. By including representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civilian leaders, E-IMET reinforces Civilian-to-Military values and promotes democratization.

**Foreign Internal Defense** is currently defined by JP 1-02 as *“Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.”*<sup>247</sup> The 1986 *“Goldwater-Nichols Act”* directed FID become a core Special Operations Force (SOF) mission. As a result SOF is the only force in DOD that retains FID as a core mission. FID efforts involve all instruments of national power to support Host Nation (HN) Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) programs. The military instrument of FID includes indirect support, direct support, and combat operations.

- Indirect support: FID operations that emphasize the principal of HN self-sufficiency.
- Direct support: FID operations focused on Civil-Military Operations (CMO), Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), intelligence and communications sharing, and logistic support.
- Combat operations are a temporary solution and in all cases support the HN IDAD program and remain strategically defensive in nature.

The military Instrument of FID focuses on combating internal threats to help the HN maintain legitimacy and influence over the population. FID may include capacity building across the HN, but SFA only deals with the military instrument aspect.

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<sup>247</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (2001). *“Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,”* 12 April 2001 (as amended through 19 August 2009), Washington, D.C.

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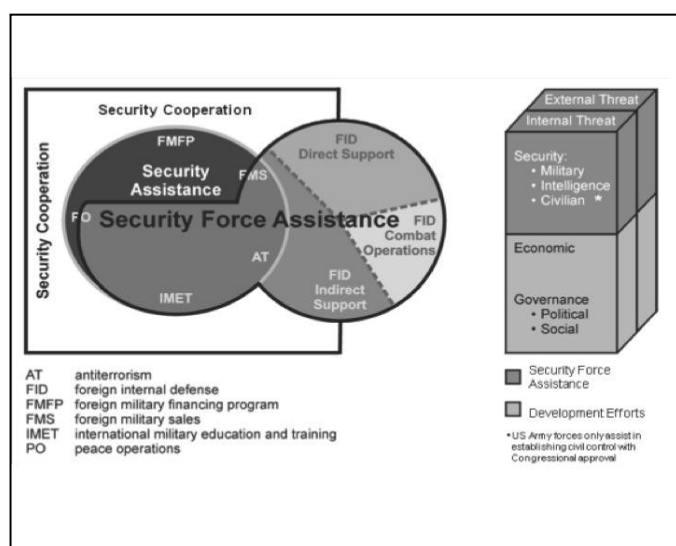
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### The Relationship Between SFA, SC, and FID

#### The Key Takeaway:

- SC as a *means* to improve a HN FSF
  - Comprised of two funding programs: US Code Title 22 (SA) and US Code Title 10
  - SC and SA are *programs*
- SFA as a *ways* to improving a HN FSF
  - Using organize-train-equip-rebuild-advise
  - SFA is an *activity*
- FID as an *ends* from improving a HN FSF
  - Deter/defeat an internal threat
  - FID is an *operation*



IDAD is the full range of measures taken by a nation to promote growth and protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. IDAD focuses on building viable institutions (political, economic, social, and military) that respond to the needs of a society. The figure on the left is an effort by FM 3-07.1 to illustrate these relationships.

SA is a specific subset of SC. The military instrument of FID overlaps with both SA and SC. SFA is the activities in support of the military instrument of FID, much of the SA efforts, and some SC efforts.

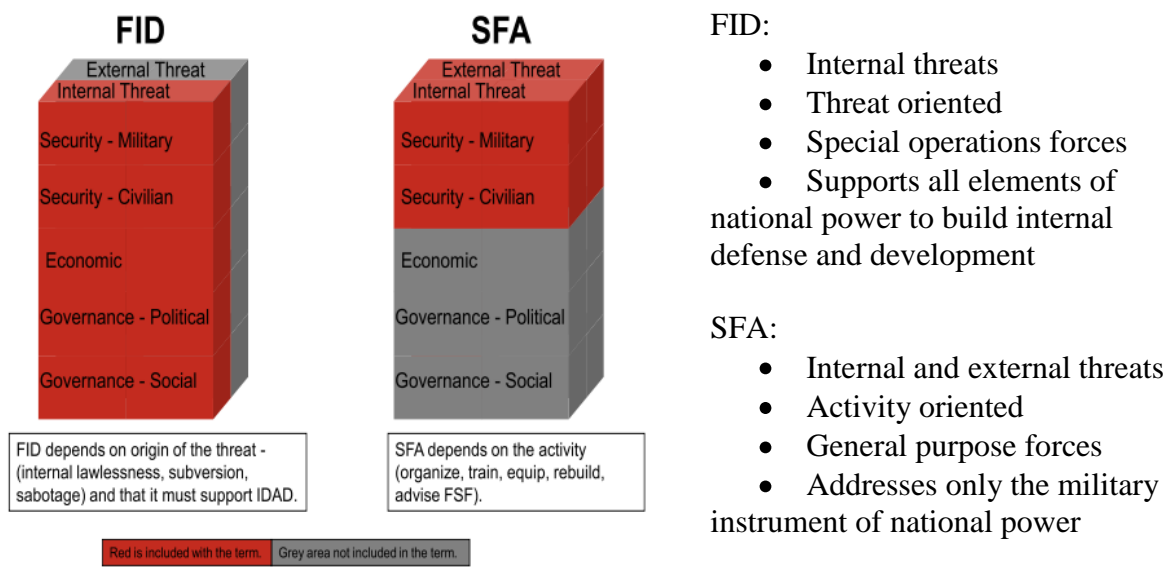
SFA was coined to address the overlap of SC, SA, and FID. It does this by focusing on developmental activities rather than being tied to a single purpose like FID, a single funding source like SA, or agencies like SC. There are operations explicitly SC but implicitly SFA, including Stability Operations and Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and mine action. Similarly, there are operations and missions not explicitly SFA, but as an activity within FID, are implicitly SFA. These operations include counter-insurgency, unconventional warfare, HA.

The difference between FID and SFA is quite nebulous: FID only deals with internal threats and SFA deals with the military instrument of FID *and* external threats. The figure below depicts the difference:

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## A Closer Look at SFA - The SFA Framework

FM 3-07.1 states that, “*The SFA framework is composed of the **mindset** required of the units and Soldiers, **imperatives** for success, inherent **tasks** and **activities**, and the three **types** of security force assistance.*”<sup>248</sup>

### *SFA Mindset*

The SFA mindset focuses on working “By,” “With,” and “Through” the FSF to support the HN’s IDAD or regional organization’s charter. The relevant population *must* perceive the FSF as legitimate for long-term success.

### *SFA Imperatives*

The six imperatives of provide the foundation for the proper SFA mindset. These imperatives apply to all SFA efforts, regardless of level of war, echelon, or stage of conflict. Adapted from FM 3-07.1, the imperatives are:

- **Understand the Operational Environment:** It is vital to clearly understand the theater, population, and FSF. It is also vital to understand and monitor the conditions of the operational environment.
- **Provide Effective Leadership:** Leaders must focus on transitions; their decisions need to move the FSF toward independent operations. Leading FSF or combined group of US and FSF is more challenging due to differences in culture, language and training.
- **Build Legitimacy:** Legitimacy is the most crucial factor; local civilians and the international community determine the government’s legitimacy based on collective

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<sup>248</sup> Department of the Army, Headquarters (2009). “*FM 3-07.1 Security Force Assistance*,” Washington, D.C.

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perception of credibility. It goes beyond strict legal definition; it includes the moral and political legitimacy of a HN government. Local civilians and the international community determine the government's legitimacy based on *collective perception* of the credibility of its cause and methods. Commanders should identify transformational figures that “create” legitimacy and come to the fore as future leaders at the local, regional, or national level.

- **Manage Information:** Sufficient SFA disseminates relevant information, integrates it during planning and leverages it appropriately during execution. Efficient information management supports decision making throughout capacity building
- **Ensure Unity of Effort**
- **Sustain the Effort:** Ability to sustain SFA effort throughout the operation as well as the ability of the FSF to sustain their operations independently

### *SFA Tasks*

SFA **tasks** aid in the execution of the activities. FM 3-07.1 suggests the mission to develop HN security forces organize around these processes because they facilitate the ability for planners to assess and allocate resources based on conditions:

- **Organize** encompasses all measures taken to assist FSF in improving its organizational structure, processes, institutions, and infrastructure. This task is dependent on HN social and economic conditions, cultural and historical factors, and security threats. It requires resolving issues related to recruiting, promotion screening and selection, pay and benefits, leader recruiting and selection, personnel accountability, demobilization of security force personnel.
- **Train** assists FSF by developing programs and institutions for training and education
- **Equip** encompasses all efforts to assess and assist FSF with the procurement, fielding, and sustainment of equipment.
- **Build** is a task to assess, rebuild and build existing capabilities. Task requires an in-depth analysis of the capability, capacity, and structures required to meet the desired end state
- **Advise and assist:** Advising establishes a personal and professional relationship where trust and confidence define how well one can influence the SFS. Assisting is providing required supporting or sustaining capabilities so FSF can meet objectives and the end state. Advising is a task both separate and connected to the other tasks.

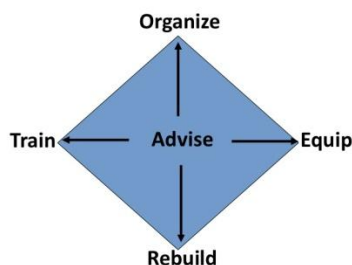


Figure F-13: SFA Tasks

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### *SFA Activities*

For planning purposes, there are five **tasks** to help execute the five necessary **activities** for reaching the end state. These activities blend over time based on the capability and capacity of FSF.

As an inherently developmental effort, success in SFA is measured by the increase in the FSF's capability and capacity in the areas in which US forces are assisting them. Activities blend over time based on the capability and capacity of FSF.

- **Plan and Resource** begins as commanders understand the Area of Effect (AOE) and determine the requirements necessary
- **Generate** includes forces, leaders, and warfighting function capabilities based on the desired end state
- **Employ** involves transitioning from force generation to mission employment
- **Transition** could be a transition of authority between US to new FSF or from HN military to HN police force
- **Sustain** occurs when institutional capacity of FSF has been developed to a point where it is self sustaining

The SFA framework can be visualized as follows:

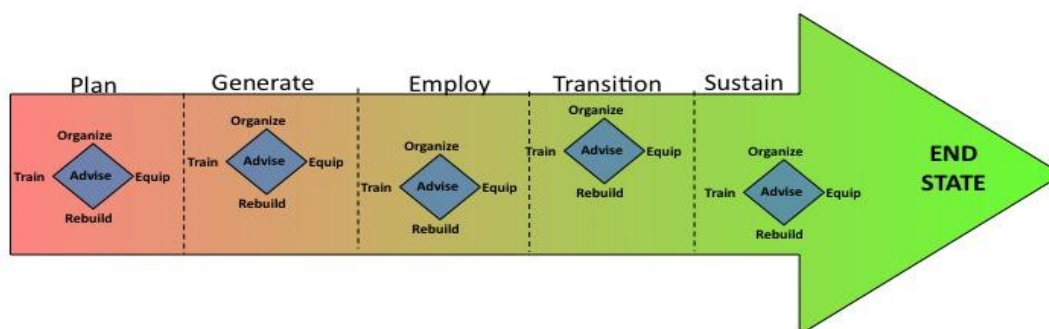


Figure F-14: SFA Framework

### **Types of SFA: Advising, Partnering, Augmenting**

An SFA mission begins with planning and goes through each activity until it reaches the desired end state. Within each activity, operators are engaging in the appropriate tasks – Organize, Train, Equip, Rebuild, and Advise (OTERA). There are three types of SFA. These define the relationship between outside actors and FSF. All types may be employed simultaneously, sequentially, or in combination. Progression and types are determined by the operational environment, the assessment of the FSF, and by resources available.

**Advising** is the primary type of SFA, and is the use of influence to teach, coach, and advise while working “By,” “With,” and “Through” FSF. Advisors have three responsibilities: as a member of a US military organization, they receive and execute the orders of superiors; as a part of their

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advisory role, they live, eat, and work with the men of their host units; as interpreters/communicators between US superiors and foreign counterparts, they must help resolve the myriad of problems and misunderstandings. Advisors are not partners; US forces act as partners (FM3-07.1, 2-9.). But they perform *partnership shaping functions*. Advising and partnering are complementary but inherently different activities. Advising requires relationship building and candid discourse to influence the development of a professional security force. Partnering incorporates training with combined operations to achieve the same SFA goals. Advisors perform partnership shaping functions, shape discussions with their counterparts, and create opportunities for the partner units. Advising helps FSF with independent decision making and operations. Advisors must accept they are bound by unique situations.

**Partnering** attaches units at various levels to leverage the strengths of both US and FSF. As FSF's capabilities mature, echelon and degree of partnering decreases.

**Augmenting** is an arrangement where FSF provide individuals/elements to combine with US units or US individuals/elements combine with FSF. It improves the *interdependence* and *interoperability* of US and FSF. Augmenting can occur at many levels and in many different forms.

All SFA types tend to be more effective if they are long-term efforts. Advising fosters a more personal relationship and infers a stronger commitment to see the partner succeed. Partnering and augmenting include US and FSF conducting operations together. There are levels of partnering. Different advisory relationships use advisor teams embedded within various partner echelons and units, use one advisor team to advise multiple entities, or have a senior leader visit a partner unit to give advice.

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## Study Team Working Paper 7: Literature Review of Problem Structuring Methods

### Introduction

Many of the problems that military commanders, policy makers, corporate strategists, and planners of various sorts face are well-structured, orderly, and empirically solvable. The solution may be difficult to devise or costly to implement, but it follows logically from empirical analysis of the problem. Referred to as ‘tame’,<sup>249</sup> these problems are readily solved using traditional hard Operations Research (OR) methods such as mathematical modeling and statistical analysis. Examples of such tame problems include solving algorithms mathematically, coordinating logistics in transportation problems, etc. According to Conklin<sup>250</sup> a tame problem:

- is well-defined and clearly stated
- has a clearly identifiable solution
- has a solution which can be empirically validated
- belongs to a class of similar problems with similar solution strategies
- has solutions which can be applied, evaluated, and abandoned if necessary
- has a finite set of potential alternative solutions

Citing Pidd<sup>251</sup>, Ackoff<sup>252</sup>, and Mackenzie<sup>253</sup> they refer to these tame problems as *puzzles*, where the end state is visible, and the solution strategy is readily identified. Mackenzie contrasts puzzles with *problems*, where the problematic situation is well-defined, but the solution strategy and optimal end state are obscure. In other words, it is clear what needs to change between the beginning and end states, but the exact character of the end state and the path to it is unclear. Such problems can still be considered ‘tame’, as it is clear what needs to change, and that change can be empirically measured, thus validating various solution strategies.

In contrast to these tame problems, decision makers often confront unstructured and ill-defined problems. These situations, referred to as *messes* by Mackenzie<sup>254</sup> and Horn<sup>255</sup> among others, often involve multiple stakeholders whose understandings of the situation are often incompatible; being shaped by divergent and often competing interests in the condition of the

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<sup>249</sup> Rittel, H. W. & Webber, M. M. (1973). “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning,” Policy Sciences, 4: 155-169

<sup>250</sup> Conklin, J. (2006). “Dialogue Mapping: Building shared understanding of wicked problems,” Wiley: Sussex

<sup>251</sup> Pidd, M. (1996). “Tools for Thinking: Modeling in Management Science,” Chichester: John Wiley & Sons

<sup>252</sup> Ackoff, R. (1979). “The future of operational research is the past,” Journal of the Operational Research Society, 30, 93-104

<sup>253</sup> Mackenzie, A., Pidd, M., Rooksby, J., Sommerville, I., Warren, I. & Westcombe, M. (2006). “Wisdom, decision support and paradigms of decision making,” European Journal of Operational Research, 170, 156-171

<sup>254</sup> Ibid

<sup>255</sup> Horn, R. (2001). “Knowledge Mapping for Complex Social Messes,” Presentation to the “Foundations in the Knowledge Economy” at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, July 16, 2001

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end state. These messes are what Rittel and Weber term *wicked problems*.<sup>256</sup> Wicked in this sense, refers to problems as malignant an intractable, rather than carrying an ethical or normative connotation. Wicked problems are poorly defined, ambiguous, dynamic and constantly evolving, and associated with moral, political, and social issues.<sup>257</sup> Conklin<sup>258</sup> further asserts that wickedness is owed, in part, to the complexity of social systems. In this sense, complexity is a function of the number and range of competing interests represented by diverse sets of actors involved in a problem.

In order to define wicked problems, Rittel and Webber<sup>259</sup> characterize them according to 10 generally accepted criteria. These are not standards for empirically assessing the degree of wickedness for a given problem, but rather serve as guidelines for understanding and approaching a problem that demonstrates wicked properties.

1. “*There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem:*” whereas tame problems can be stated with sufficient information for a problem-solver to identify, analyze, and solve the problem, wicked problems cannot be fully conceptualized without first identifying conceivable solutions *a priori*. For wicked problems, the definition of the problem and the solution to the problem are interdependent. Because the problem is defined by competing interests and the needs of multiple stakeholders, the problem cannot be conceptualized without first understanding the context of each stakeholder’s needs. The satisfaction of those needs is a fundamental part of the context, and thus the problem cannot be fully ordered without identifying conditions to satisfy the needs of stakeholders.
2. “*Wicked problems have no stopping rule:*” Wicked problems exist within dynamic social systems. A change in a single element of the system ripples across other interconnected elements of the system in a series of first, second, and third order effects. These changes alter the perceptions and needs of the various stakeholders, and as such the definition of the problem is constantly shifting. In this sense, a problem is never completely solved. Rather, it is resolved, mitigated, or managed. As certain interests are met, other needs arise. Thus there is no objective point of terminal solution.
3. “*Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad:*” Solutions to tame problems can be objectively measured according to established criteria as to whether they satisfy the various elements of the problem. Wicked problems, however, do not have a standard set of empirical criteria which, when met, satisfy the whole set of needs that comprise the problem. Rather, wicked problems are judged by individual stakeholders according to the degree to which they satisfy the needs of their own interest. A good solution satisfies many of the competing needs, and a bad solution satisfies few.

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<sup>256</sup> Rittel, H. W. & Webber, M. M. (1973). “*Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*,” Policy Sciences, 4: 155-169

<sup>257</sup> Ritchey, T. (2005). “*Wicked Problems: Structuring Social Messes with Morphological Analysis*,” White Paper. Swedish Morphological Society.

<sup>258</sup> Conklin, J. (2006). “*Dialogue Mapping: Building shared understanding of wicked problems*,” Wiley: Sussex

<sup>259</sup> Rittel, H. W. & Webber, M. M. (1973). “*Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*,” Policy Sciences, 4, 161-167

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4. *“There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem:”* because a change in the system results produces unintended second and third order effects, a solution which immediately satisfies some set of needs can undermine others as changes ripple through the system. As the rippled affects advance further from the original change they become increasingly difficult to trace. Thus it is impossible to fully appraise the effects of a solution that changes any element of the system.
5. *“Every solution to a wicked problem is a “one-shot operation;”* because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly:” Every solution changes certain aspects of the system, and thus changes the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the system, and their needs within it. These changes are irreversible in the sense that once implemented they cannot be undone. The context changes absolutely with perturbation to the system, thus making every intervention fundamental to the structure of the problem.
6. *“Wicked problems don’t have an enumerable (or exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan:”* as it is impossible to identify the total set of interactions that a given intervention will set into motion, and because the stakeholders have ill-defined conceptualizations of solution strategies, there is no empirical method for proving that all potential solutions to a problem have been identified and considered. Further, it is possible that certain definitions of a problem may yield no possible (logically consistent) solution strategies. In these situations, actionable solution strategies depend more on realistic judgments and trust and credibility among stakeholders than they do on empirical appraisal.
7. *“Every wicked problem is essentially unique:”* Whereas tame problems exist in groupings of essentially similar classes, the combination of social factors and viewpoints, and the dynamic nature of the system mean that each wicked problem – the exact combination of factors from which a wicked problem emerges – is fundamentally unique. Therefore there is no standard prescription which can be applied to a given problem. Instead, unique solutions must be generated for individual problems.
8. *“Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem:”* The distinct elements and interests that combine to form a wicked problem do not exist in a social vacuum. Rather, each interest is simultaneously an expression of multiple underlying factors and also a contributor to other interconnected interests. In this way, single factors that contribute to a problem cannot be isolated and addressed, and changes in one factor necessarily result in changes in other, interconnected factors.
9. *“The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem’s resolution:”* every stakeholder in a given problem understands the nature of the problem according to their own needs which must be, or are not being met. In this way, the solution of the problem directly influences the definition of the problem, and vice versa.
10. *“The planner has no right to be wrong:”* wicked problems occur in the social sphere, and as such attempts to resolve them alter the world in which people live. Planners, decision makers, and problem solvers are thus directly accountable for the changes (intended or otherwise) that they implement.

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Rosenhead<sup>260</sup> examines the nature of wicked problems and suggests that they can be summarized according to the following criteria. Wicked problems generally include a diverse group of actors, each of whom has unique vested interests in the outcome of the problem. These actors are not in super/subordinate relationships, and thus are able to individually pursue their own interests and objectives irrespective of the actions of other actors. Since each actor has an individual perception of the problem, and since each pursues divergent goals and strategies, there is no single optimal solution. In cases of such uncertainty, no single OR formulation is capable of solving the problematic situation. Before a solution strategy can be formulated for a wicked problem or a social mess, the competing interests and needs of all relevant stakeholders must be coherently structured into a formal problem statement through interaction and negotiation. After stakeholders adequately define the problem, they must formulate mutually acceptable end states. Only when the problem and the ideal solution are formulated can participants collaboratively generate mutually acceptable solution strategies. Unlike tame problems where the problem is well-formulated and the solution is finite and clear, wicked problems are dynamic, complex situations where the needs and influence of multiple competing stakeholders are non-quantifiable, mutable, and defined by each stakeholder's perception of the problem space.

### Problem Structuring Methods

One of the most challenging factors for stakeholders who are facing wicked problems is framing a common definition of the fundamental issues that define the problem situation.<sup>261</sup> A distinct set of soft OR methods have been developed with the specific intent of addressing wicked problems, by supporting decision making among groups of diverse stakeholders.<sup>262</sup><sup>263</sup> Named *Problem Structuring Methods* (PSMs), they differ from traditional OR methods in that rather than seeking a concrete and optimal solution to a well-defined problem, these methods aid stakeholders in collaboratively generating common definitions of a complex situations,<sup>264</sup> and construct actionable options to address the newly formulated problem.<sup>265</sup>

Traditional OR methods were heavily developed following the Second World War, during which time there was a push to include more scientific rigor in management issues. As Checkland<sup>266</sup> notes, this upsurge in scientific management and applied problem solving stemmed from the successes of scientific OR in military decision making and design during the war. In the

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<sup>260</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1996). "What's the Problem? An Introduction to Problem Structuring Methods," *Interfaces*, 26(6), 117-131

<sup>261</sup> Shaw, D., Franco, A. & Westcombe, M. (2006). "Problem structuring methods: new directions in a problematic world," *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 757-758

<sup>262</sup> White, L. (2006). "Evaluating problem-structuring methods: developing an approach to show the value and effectiveness of PSMs," *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 842-855

<sup>263</sup> Rosenhead, J. & Mingers, M. (2001). "Rational Analysis of a Problematic World Revisited," Chichester: Wiley

<sup>264</sup> Mingers, J. & Brockelsby, J. (1997). "Multimethodology: Towards a framework for mixing methodologies," *Omega*, 25(5), 489-509

<sup>265</sup> White, L. (2006). "Evaluating problem-structuring methods: developing an approach to show the value and effectiveness of PSMs," *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 842-855

<sup>266</sup> Checkland, P. (2006). "Reply to Eden and Ackermann: Any future for problem structuring methods?" *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 769-771

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positivist tradition, OR as a discipline analyzed problems from a systems perspective, isolating individual problematic or inefficient nodes in a system, carefully defining goals and objectives for improving those nodes, designing systems and interventions to achieve those goals, then testing and replicating the process in scientific fashion.<sup>267</sup>

PSMs emerged as a response to the inability of the hard OR methods to adequately cope with the complexity of human systems. The reductionist approach of isolating individual elements and then optimizing their performance works well when systems are static, and when changes to specific nodes have little effect on the essential character of the system as a whole. Human systems, however, do not behave in that way. Rather, human systems are dynamic, being built on individual perceptions of the system. As the perceptions of actors in the system change, the essential character of the system itself changes. In this way, isolating and modifying a single element of a human system in the hard OR fashion alters the essential nature of the system, and that change ripples through the system in second and third order effects such that an unintended and unpredictable order emerges from even slight modifications to the system. For this reason, PSMs development began in the 1960s, and by the 1980s several functioning methods were being practically applied to a diverse range of complex decision problems.<sup>268 269</sup>

PSMs as a class of soft OR methods have a distinct framework and purpose. According to Mingers and Rosenhead<sup>270</sup> they are designed to offer an analytical representation of a problematic situation, allowing stakeholders to clarify their own individual perceptions of it, and to converge on mutually acknowledged definitions of the problem. From there, PSMs provide stakeholders tools for generating agreeable strategies to resolve the newly defined problem. To do this, PSMs must fulfill several criteria:

- enable alternative, often competing perspectives to be considered and synthesized
- be intellectually accessible to all stakeholders and actors, so that the interactive process is participative rather than exclusionary
- operate iteratively to reflect and capture perceptions, definitions, and processes as they emerge through interactive processes
- permit partial solutions to specific aspects of the problem, rather than demanding a single comprehensive solutions

Those criteria are satisfied by several common characteristics of PSMs. First, PSMs commonly employ models to represent alternative and emerging scenarios of the problematic situation, and

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<sup>267</sup> Checkland, P. (2006). "Reply to Eden and Ackermann: Any future for problem structuring methods?" Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 769

<sup>268</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1989). "Rational Analysis for a Problematic World: Problem Structuring Methods for Complexity, Uncertainty, and Conflict," Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

<sup>269</sup> Shaw, D., Franco, A. & Westcombe, M. (2006). "Problem structuring methods: new directions in a problematic world," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 757-758

<sup>270</sup> Minges, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). "Problem Structuring Methods in Action," European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 530-554

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visually represent and convey perceptions and processes. Moreover, as Rosenhead<sup>271</sup> aptly notes, these methods all model various aspects of cause-effect relationships. To do so, these models are populated with data gathered from relevant stakeholders through facilitated dialogues which enable stakeholders to generate a common understanding and definition of the situation.<sup>272 273</sup> In this way, the models that PSMs build are transitional objects<sup>274</sup> intended to facilitate negotiation. The models change throughout the interactive process to reflect the current perceptions of each stakeholder at a given point. The model evolves until it sufficiently represents a shared understanding of the problem space. PSM models, then, are not intended to generate optimal solutions to the problem, but rather to build common understanding and serve as a tool through which stakeholders can use to later generate commonly accepted and mutually agreeable solution strategies. Thus PSM models serve the dual analytic purposes of providing short-term support for problem formulation, and longer-term guidance as a frame of reference for stakeholders during the implementation of action strategies.

Secondly, PSMs are concerned with improving the effectiveness and productivity of group processes.<sup>275</sup> They operate under the assumption that group interaction dynamics and sub/super-ordinate power relationships must be managed in such a way that the perspectives of all stakeholders are equally represented in an interactive setting. The underlying belief here is that more and more equal participation from group members will produce a more comprehensive and thus less conflictive definitions of the problem, leading to more acceptable and appropriate solution strategies. Because of these assumptions, PSMs generally embrace and manage the complexity involved in working with multiple competing perspectives, rather than reducing it.<sup>276</sup>

Both of the above characteristics of PSMs require an effective facilitator to aid in effective model building and manage group dynamics toward reaching agreement.<sup>277 278 279</sup> This facilitator is the third characteristic of PSMs. The complexity of competing interests, and the goals of building shared definitions of the problem and constructing actionable alternatives require that facilitators of PSMs master multiple skills<sup>280 281 282 283</sup> including the ability to simultaneously

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<sup>271</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1996). "What's the Problem? An Introduction to Problem Structuring Methods," Interfaces, 26(6), 117-131

<sup>272</sup> Eden, C. & Ackerman, F. (2006). "Where next for problem structuring methods," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 766-768

<sup>273</sup> White, L. (2006). "Evaluating problem-structuring methods: developing an approach to show the value and effectiveness of PSMs," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 842-855

<sup>274</sup> Eden, C. & Simms, D. (1979). "On the nature of problems in consulting practice," Omega 7, 119-127

<sup>275</sup> Eden, C. & Ackerman, F. (2006). "Where next for problem structuring methods," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 766-768

<sup>276</sup> Ibid

<sup>277</sup> Eden, C. & Ackerman, F. (1998). "Strategy Making: The Journey of Strategic Planning," London: Sage

<sup>278</sup> Eden, C. & Ackerman, F. (2006). "Where next for problem structuring methods," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 766-768

<sup>279</sup> Franco, L. (2006). "Forms of conversation and problem structuring methods: a conceptual development," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 813-821

<sup>280</sup> Richardson, G. & Andersen, D. (1995). "Teamwork in group model building," System Dynamics Review, 11, 113-137

<sup>281</sup> Ackermann, F. (1996). "Participants' perceptions on the role of facilitators using group decision support systems," Group Decision and Negotiation, 5(1), 93-112

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manage group processes while capturing important content for inclusion in the model, and the ability to navigate the PSM methodology flexibly to best meet the needs of the stakeholders.

While the various methods that fall under the classification of PSMs share these defining characteristics, each unique method focuses on distinct aspects of a problem, and is therefore discrete from other methods. Further, since the methods are adaptable to a variety of problem situations, individual PSMs can be synthesized from extant methods to fit the needs of a particular intervention in a once-off design.<sup>284</sup> Several of the principal methods that comprise the PSM discipline have been discussed at length by Rosenhead<sup>285</sup> in the seminal text for the field, and further elaborated on in Rosenhead and Mingers.<sup>286</sup> Gilljam and Ljogodt<sup>287</sup> likewise provide detailed descriptions of the many of the standard PSMs that are widely employed. Several of these methods are summarized below.

### Strategic Options Development and Analysis (SODA)

SODA uses cognitive mapping to elicit individual perceptions of a problem space, and then later synthesizes the maps of each stakeholder into a comprehensive model of the problem space.<sup>288</sup> The synthesized model serves as a tool to generate dialogue among stakeholders, and enables them to build a common understanding of the problem space. The facilitator then guides participants toward the generation of actionable strategies.<sup>289</sup> This method depends heavily on a skilled facilitator to collect and accurately model the perceptions of individual stakeholders. The facilitator must likewise be skilled enough to collate divergent and often competing perceptions, and then synthesize them into a coherent combined model of the system.

As Gilljam and Ljogodt<sup>290</sup> note, SODA was developed by Colin Eden and colleagues according to four interacting perspectives:

- The individual perspective: the methodology is built on a foundation of cognitive theory from the discipline of psychology. By visually modeling the cognitive map of ideas, it is

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<sup>282</sup> Andersen, D. & Richardson, G. (1997). "Scripts for group model building," *System Dynamics Review*, 13, 107-130

<sup>283</sup> Eden, C. & Ackerman, F. (2006). "Where next for problem structuring methods," *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 766-768

<sup>284</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). "Problem Structuring Methods in Action," *European Journal of Operational Research*, 152, 530-554

<sup>285</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1989). "Rational Analysis for a Problematic World: Problem Structuring Methods for Complexity, Uncertainty, and Conflict," Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

<sup>286</sup> Rosenhead, J. & Mingers, M. (2001). "Rational Analysis of a Problematic World Revisited," Chichester: Wiley

<sup>287</sup> Gilljam, M. & Ljogodt, H. (2006). "Problem Structuring Methods: A Survey and a Case Study," Kjeller, Norway: FFI

<sup>288</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). "Problem Structuring Methods in Action," *European Journal of Operational Research*, 152, 530-554

<sup>289</sup> Rosenhead, J. (1996). "What's the Problem? An Introduction to Problem Structuring Methods," *Interfaces*, 26(6), 117-131

<sup>290</sup> Gilljam, M. & Ljogodt, H. (2006). "Problem Structuring Methods: A Survey and a Case Study," Kjeller, Norway: FFI

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possible to capture the perceptions, concepts, and ideas that individuals normally express through language.

- The nature of organizations: An organization is actually defined by the actions of its members, compared to the documents that describe it (by-laws, charters, rules, etc.). Negotiation and management of conflict among members shapes the nature of the organization.
- The nature of consulting practice: Consultants play a direct role in managing conflict by facilitating negotiation and trying to reach consensus.
- Technology and technique: Cognitive mapping is a tool that consultants can employ, and there are software technologies available to help visualize and generate cognitive maps.

Based on these principles, SODA facilitators first engage stakeholders individually to gather and generate their cognitive maps. Once each map is constructed, the facilitator discusses it with the owner of the map, and resolves any ambiguities and contradictions. With the corrected maps in hand, the facilitator then generates a combined model that incorporates the elements of all participants. During this stage software can help the facilitator to identify outliers and clusters within the data. Finally, the individual stakeholders are brought together in a workshop format where the facilitator presents the combined model in the form of a strategic map. The purpose of this is to allow stakeholders to see where and how their individual perceptions fit into the emergent structure of the organization, and to foster dialogue around conflicting and competing views of the system. This gives stakeholders propriety in the organization, by seeing how they contribute to it. It also provides a forum for facilitated conflict management and negotiation.

### Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

Development of SSM began in the 1960s, and has principally been refined by Peter Checkland<sup>291</sup> and colleagues at the University of Lancaster as a method for system redesign. In a SSM intervention, individuals representing the relevant stakeholders in a problem situation build conceptual models for their relevant world views, and then compare those models to their perceptions of the current system in an effort to stimulate dialogue and debate. The goal is to identify and describe plausible changes to elements of the system, select desirable changes, and conceptualize actions to improve the problem situation.<sup>292</sup> While the SSM process is fully elucidated in Checkland<sup>293</sup> Gilljam and Ljogodt<sup>294</sup> describe the process according to seven stages;

- During the first two stages, *Summary of the problem situation* and *Expressing the problem*, stakeholders assemble a summary of the problem including the main elements that comprise the problem, and a depiction of the structure of the system that they create.

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<sup>291</sup> Checkland, Peter (1999). “*Soft Systems Methodology in Action*,” Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

<sup>292</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). “*Problem Structuring Methods in Action*,” European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 530-554

<sup>293</sup> Checkland, Peter (1999). “*Soft Systems Methodology in Action*,” Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

<sup>294</sup> Gilljam, M. & Ljogodt, H. (2006). “*Problem Structuring Methods: A Survey and a Case Study*,” Kjeller, Norway: FFI

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These two stages are designed to produce a rich picture of the problem space, and allow stakeholders to deeply explore the problem dynamics.

- The third stage, *Formulating root definitions with CATWOE*, is used to generate systemic thinking about the problem space. Using the mnemonic CATWOE, stakeholders identify the (O)wner of the problem, and the (C)lient or customer. (T) signifies the transformation that will take place, and the states of the problem before and after the transformation must be conceptualized. The transformation is implemented by (A)ctors working under various (E)nvironmental constraints. As such, these must also be identified. Finally, the (W)orld view of the problem owner is used to give meaning to the transformation in the system. By analyzing these elements of the system, stakeholders generate a Root Definition of the problem.
- The fourth stage is used to *Build a conceptual model* of the system based on the root definition generated in stage three. This model maps out human activity in the system, using verbs to describe activity and arrows to show the logical order of the relationships and connections within the system.
- Stage five *Compares the model against the real world*, asking what is missing from the model, or how is the model problematic.
- During stage six stakeholders examine the questions generated in stage five and define potential changes that can be implemented in the real world to shift system dynamics to a more desirable state.
- Finally, in stage seven stakeholders take action to implement real world changes identified in the previous stage.

SSM is used to build ideal type models based on the world views of relevant stakeholders. By comparing the ideal type world against the real world, participants in this methodology are able to identify elements of a problem situation to change or restructure, bringing the real and ideal worlds closer to each other. In SSM the facilitator takes a very limited role, guiding the process and giving advice, but largely leaving the execution of the methodology to the group.

### Robustness Analysis (RA)

RA is a methodology explicitly designed for use in planning in situations characterized by high levels of uncertainty.<sup>295</sup> In RA, participants dissect a single decision into a series of smaller decisions, according to a causal flow from initial commitment through end state. The goal is to identify decision points that allow for maximum flexibility across time. By envisioning the desired end state and the logical flow of potential actions to move toward it, participants can examine how certain decisions may lead to path dependence, and reduce the number of future decisions available based on initial commitments, whereas others will increase the number of future actions available. Participants begin by conceptualizing the problem, and envisioning possible future states. Various initial commitments are identified, and the range of options for secondary, tertiary, quaternary, etc. that arise from each decision are then identified. Participants evaluate the various decision strategies and explore the end states logically follow from a given

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<sup>295</sup> Rosenhead, J. & Mingers, M. (2001). *"Rational Analysis of a Problematic World Revisited,"* Chichester: Wiley

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set of decisions at the initial, secondary, and tertiary decision making stages. The robustness of a decision is described as the number of potentially acceptable end states that logically follow from it.<sup>296</sup>

In any planning situation it is difficult to capture all of the complexity and identify the total range of options available. Likewise, it is difficult to forecast the total scope of events that will flow from each decision. Despite these challenges, a careful team of planners and participants using RA will be able to identify many of the critical decisions and the flow of activities that lead to various end states. This process gives participants and decision makers not only actionable strategies, but also a deep understanding of the problem and a rich view of the second and third order effects that a given decision will generate in the system. The actionable strategies are valuable to decision makers; as they enable them weigh decision and outcomes against desired end states. The richer contextual understanding is equally important, as unforeseen events will likely arise during the course of implementation. The rich understanding of the problem space will enable decision makers to more easily navigate these new situations as they arise.

### Strategic Choice Analysis

Strategic choice analysis is an alternative method for planning. Unlike RA, which is used to explore planning strategies in advance, strategic choice analysis is often used to aid decision making in real time, or in situations where a decision is imminent.<sup>297 298</sup> Like SODA, strategic choice analysis depends heavily on a skilled facilitator who will guide loosely connected stakeholders through option creation and decision selection. The strategic choice analysis process begins by shaping the decision area – an area wherein decision makers need to select one Course of Action (COA) out of several alternatives. During this phase, stakeholders select and refine a manageable number of interrelated decision areas that together create the problem space. The facilitator helps stakeholders model the interconnectedness of these multiple tangential decision areas.

Within each decision area, participants are asked to develop a representative set of plausible options. Next, pairs of options from different decision areas are examined to determine whether they are logically feasible. Various consistent options from all decision areas are pooled into solution strategies called *feasible decision schemes*.<sup>299</sup>

After these schemes are developed, they are compared against each other. This process is often difficult to manage, as the number of decision areas and resultant decision schemes will often create a large number of necessary comparisons. However, by judiciously selecting and

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<sup>296</sup> Gilljam, M. & Ljogodt, H. (2006). “*Problem Structuring Methods: A Survey and a Case Study*,” Kjeller, Norway: FFI

<sup>297</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). “*Problem Structuring Methods in Action*,” European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 530-554

<sup>298</sup> Gilljam, M. & Ljogodt, H. (2006). “*Problem Structuring Methods: A Survey and a Case Study*,” Kjeller, Norway: FFI

<sup>299</sup> Ibid

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comparing decision alternatives pair wise between different decision schemes, and then ranking them in order of acceptability, the process of comparison can be streamlined.

Once the various options have been identified, decision makers select alternatives from each decision area and implement a decision strategy. The process of defining, designing, and comparing alternatives within decision areas may give rise to multiple uncertainties that must be clarified before a decision is implemented. Thus the process enables stakeholders to identify the areas of the problem that are known, and the areas about they know little about. Through Strategic Choice Analysis, they are then able to simultaneously generate actionable alternatives and garner a rich understanding of the problem space in which they operate.

### General Morphological Analysis (GMA)

GMA is a modeling tool specifically designed for identifying, describing, and analyzing the entire set of factors and relationships involved in wicked problems.<sup>300</sup> Originally developed in the 1940s by California Institute of Technology Professor Fritz Zwicky, researchers at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) began refining the technique and applying it to complex military, policy, and social problems beginning in the early 1990s. Through an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, GMA enables stakeholders to first explore the factors that work in concert to create a complex problem, and then collaboratively generate effective solutions that meet each of their disparate needs and interests. The full process is described in Ritchey.<sup>301</sup>

The GMA process is carried out in a workshop format consisting of 6-7 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) or stakeholders, and occurs over a period of several days. The initial phase of a morphological analysis involves *identifying* and *defining* the fundamental elements or parameters that comprise the problem in question. This is typically done through a facilitated dialogue in which representatives of the pertinent stakeholders analyze the various aspects of the problem. That dialogue is then synthesized to identify and define the parameters. After being identified, each parameter is *described* by having the stakeholders identify its discrete values or conditions. Once the parameters are defined and described, they become variables that can be used to generate solution sets.

The next phase of analysis involves collating these parameters into a Zwickian morphological field.<sup>302</sup> This field represents the entire problem space, where each dimension of the problem is a variable with a finite number of possible values. Formal solutions to the problem space are then represented by various configurations of the values of those variables. This can be compared to the creation of feasible decision schemes in Strategic Choice Analysis. However as with the potential decision strategies in each decision area in Strategic Choice Analysis, because each

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<sup>300</sup> Zwicky, F. (1969). "*Discovery, Invention, Research – Through the Morphological Approach*," Toronto: The Macmillan Company

<sup>301</sup> Ritchey, T. (2006). "*Problem structuring using computer-aided morphological analysis*," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 792-801

<sup>302</sup> Ibid

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variable has multiple values, there are thousands, and potentially hundreds of thousands of possible configurations of all the variables, with each configuration representing a unique solution set. Because of this combinatorial complexity, the facilitator guides the group in selecting between 6 – 10 fundamental parameters. This still generates a large number of combinations, totaling between 50,000 and > 5,000,000 formal configurations based on the number of values for each parameter.<sup>303</sup>

The total number of potential solution sets is reduced from the hundreds of thousands of *possible* configurations to a smaller set of *plausible* configurations through a process called Cross-Consistency Analysis (CCA). This process eliminates combinations of variables that are logically or empirically inconsistent by comparing each value of each variable against each value of all the other variables. This allows combinations of variable states that are incompatible to be removed from the potential solution space. This CCA can reduce the number of potential combinations by 90 – 99%, leaving a manageable number of solutions to work with.<sup>304</sup>

Like SODA, GMA relies heavily on software to display and analyze data generated through the workshop process. Researchers at FOI have developed a special software suite to expedite collation of the morphological field and the subsequent CCA.

After the total set of internally consistent variable configurations has been identified, stakeholders analyze the potential solution sets to identify which solutions optimally satisfy each of their individual needs and best serve their collective interests. This final analysis phase allows the stakeholders to compare multiple possible solutions to the problem, and to synthesize an optimal solution strategy.

The GMA process enables multiple stakeholders with divergent interests and needs to jointly analyze a complex problem and synthesize mutually beneficial solutions. By analyzing the entire set of parameters and relationships that define a problem in unison, policy and decision makers are able to consider a wider range of solution options than is typically available by isolating and addressing individual components of a problem. The CCA phase of GMA ensures that the potential solutions available to decision makers are consistent, plausible, and able to address the roots of the problem at hand. The collaborative nature of the GMA process ensures that the solutions sets also represent the needs and interest of the vested stakeholders by giving each of them an equal voice in defining the problem and ownership over the solutions that are generated.

### Summary

PSMs offer stakeholders and decision makers a suite of tools and methods to apply when facing wicked problems, several of which have been described here. These methods have been developed over the last 50 years to operate specifically in situations:

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid

<sup>304</sup> Ritchey, T. (2006). “*Problem structuring using computer-aided morphological analysis*,” Journal of the Operational Research Society, 57, 792-801

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- Involving multiple actors operating in a common environment
- Where there are divergent, often competing perceptions of the problem space
- With incompatible goals and strategies, which are often non-quantifiable
- Involving key uncertainties

Because of this combination of factors, the problems that individual stakeholders face are poorly defined, and combine to produce what Ackoff<sup>305</sup> refers to as social messes. Before solutions can be implemented, the problems must be concretely described and commonly understood. PSMs enable this by facilitating the negotiation of problem definitions under the lens of specific desired end states.

With many standard and well-developed methods, and multiple off-shoots and once-off variations of these, an important question for actors facing a wicked problem is how to select an appropriate PSM to employ. Unfortunately there is no simple means of prescribing an appropriate method. Because these situations involve multiple unknowns and intangibles, and because they are themselves undefined, stakeholders in these situations do not possess enough knowledge *a priori* to select an appropriate method. It is often only after the process of structuring the problem has begun that an appropriate method can be identified.<sup>306</sup> Likewise, as these situations are extremely complex, a single method may not be sufficient to address all of the elements and dynamics involved in the problem space. In many such situations, facilitators and stakeholders may be required to engage multiple methods, or combine elements from many methods to synthesize a new method in order to address the problem situation.<sup>307 308 309</sup>

A second issue that arises with regards to PSMs is how to assess the effectiveness and validity of a method, or its application to specific problems, and whether evaluation is appropriate or even feasible. The positivist tradition of mainstream OR suggests that any method should be able to be abstracted from its application, and tested using experimental approaches.<sup>310</sup> In this perspective a method must demonstrate that its process and the results that spring from that process must be falsifiable and repeatable. Only after that validation can a method be trusted to produce the results it promises. In contrast, the interpretivism paradigm suggests that the method cannot be abstracted from the process, precisely because every instance of a PSM application will be unique, and shaped as much by the external factors as it is the internal process of applying the

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<sup>305</sup> Ackoff, R. (1979). "The future of operational research is the past," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 30, 93-104

<sup>306</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). "Problem Structuring Methods in Action," European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 530-554

<sup>307</sup> Ibid

<sup>308</sup> Ibid

<sup>309</sup> Jackson, M. (1999). "Towards coherent pluralism in management science," Journal of the Operational Research Society, 50(1), 12-22

<sup>310</sup> Finlay, P. (1998). "On evaluating the performance of GDSS: furthering the debate," European Journal of Operational Research, 107, 193-201

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method.<sup>311</sup> Because of this, the only appropriate evaluation is to ensure transparency of process and adherence to the method. This debate is summarized well by White.<sup>312</sup>

Regardless of the paradigm that stakeholders operate under, when selecting a PSM they need some means of determining whether the method will actually be able to deliver the results that it promises, and afterward to determine how effective the process was at guiding them to resolution. One of the major dilemmas associated with measuring the effectiveness of a PSM is the fact that they usually do not offer specific solutions. Rather, they guide stakeholders toward a concrete definition of the problem space, and generate options and commitments for action. Whether or not action follows from the process is left entirely to the actors involved. Thus measuring the method based on the final objective outcome of the problem space is inappropriate, as the implementation of solution strategies is not part of the PSM process. Because of this, much of the monitoring and evaluating of PSMs that has been done to date relies on post-process surveys of stakeholders.<sup>313</sup> Under this evaluative framework it is possible to explore how successful clients of PSMs felt the process was, and how satisfied they were with the products of the PSM intervention.

A final issue worth considering is the reliance of these methods on a facilitator. Unlike the hard OR methods which stand apart from the implementer/analyst, facilitation techniques and styles are fundamental to the PSM process. The success (or failure) of a PSM intervention depends directly on the ability of the facilitator to simultaneously manage group dynamics, capture important information elicited through dialogue, synthesize disparate perspectives, and generate coherent models. This requires both natural ability in these areas, and endless refinement of skill through practice. Keys<sup>314</sup> discusses at length the issues involved in becoming an expert in the use of PSMs, and the drawbacks of ineffective facilitation in these methods.

There are several advantages to working with GMA over several other PSMs. As discussed in previous sections, evaluation of any PSM is difficult, as the method cannot be fully abstracted from the process. This makes measuring the effectiveness of a PSM challenging. At best, PSMs should be internally consistent, transparent, and methodologically consistent. The iterative nature of GMA and the coupling of facilitation and dialogue with computer-aided visualization and analysis technology combine to produce an audit trail of the entire process. The audit trail begins with parameter formulation, and continues through to solution generation. In this way, clients and stakeholders are able to directly trace a concept from its inception. Likewise, by applying the internal CCA, solution strategies that are impossible are omitted from consideration, leaving only those strategies that could potentially occur in the real world. Further, as referenced in earlier sections, each application of a PSM and each wicked problem are unique, and may require multiple methods to adequately address the issues involved. GMA is an excellent starting point

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<sup>311</sup> Checkland, P. (1981). *“Systems Thinking, Systems Practice,”* Chichester: Wiley

<sup>312</sup> White, L., (2006). *“Evaluating problem-structuring methods: developing an approach to show the value and effectiveness of PSMs,”* *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 842-855

<sup>313</sup> Mingers, J. & Rosenhead, J. (2004). *“Problem Structuring Methods in Action,”* *European Journal of Operational Research*, 152, 530-554

<sup>314</sup> Keys, P. (2006). *“On becoming expert in the use of problem structuring methods,”* *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57, 822-829

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for multi-method development, as it begins by structuring the entire problem space. Once this is done, other methods, including more traditional OR methods, can be employed to augment analysis and solution generation.

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### **Study Team Working Paper 8: Brief Review of Selected Conflict Assessment Approaches**

International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and diplomatic missions undertake conflict analysis - either formally or informally - to inform programs, policies, and projects in active conflict zones, post-conflict contexts, and countries with tense political situations. Interventions in such situations by external actors alter local dynamics and can either mitigate or exacerbate the factors that contribute to conflict. As such, it is important to inform interventions in such a way as to minimize the projected detrimental impacts of a program/policy, while maximizing the expected benefits that it is designed to achieve.

A variety of conflict analysis methodologies have been developed by various United States (US) Government (USG), NGOs, and International Organizations. Each methodology is designed to inform the implementing agency with information requisite to their specific program goals. As such, the various methodologies collect information at various scales, and focus on various aspects of a conflict situation. Despite their individual nuance, conflict analyses generally examine the following factors:

- What is the risk of conflict or violence in a specific country, region, or locale?
- Who are the stakeholders, and what are their positions, aims, and objectives?
- What are the triggers of conflict, and what factors mitigate conflict?
- What negative impacts might a program, intervention, or policy have on that risk?
- What are the entry points for conflict management and peacebuilding?

Conflict analyses provide an initial picture of a conflict situation which can serve as a baseline for monitoring/evaluating both the trajectory of conflict dynamics, as well as the progress or impact of specific interventions. In effect, conflict analysis enables external actors to understand the context they work in, and identify opportunities for contributing to conflict management and resolution, while advancing peacebuilding and stability initiatives in a productive way.

The following pages summarize several conflict analysis methodologies that are employed in the field by various NGOs, Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs), and USG agencies. Each methodology is summarized according to the following format:

- Introduction – purpose, scope, and agency that developed the method
- Methodology – the elements, and processes that comprise the method
- Strengths – the factors that the method best incorporates
- Limitations – areas that require additional data/research/investigation
- Reference – source material for the method

The analyses summarized here do not represent a comprehensive list of analysis frameworks. Rather, they are intended to demonstrate the diversity of approaches and the scope that is covered by various methods. Likewise, they demonstrate the utility in analyzing conflict from a variety of lenses and approaches.

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### **Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) – The US Agency for International Development (USAID)**

#### **Purpose**

The Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) at the USAID have developed a CAF as a diagnostic tool. Specifically, the CAF is designed to help USG Missions identify and prioritize the causes and consequences of conflict for specific countries, understand how development programs mitigate or exacerbate sources of violent conflict, and determine where development assistance can most effectively contribute to peace-building. The purpose of the framework is to help USG Missions develop a coherent understanding of the drivers and mitigating factors of conflict in a specific country context, and to develop strategic and focused interventions.

While the CMM recommends that all USG Missions consider employing the CAF as part of their development assistance programs, they acknowledge that some countries face a lower risk of violent conflict than others. They suggest that the *Peace and Conflict Ledger*, an annual forecast of potential violent conflict published by the University of Maryland, serves as a good reference to indicate whether or not a Mission should perform conflict analysis. Countries ranking high or medium on the annual Ledger should engage in conflict analysis.

#### **Methodology**

The CAF methodology consists of three steps. Conflict assessment begins with diagnosing the conflict or potential conflict in a particular country. In this initial phase, the assessment team considers five broad factors:

- Incentives for violence: Greed and grievance motives for social change exist in all societies at different levels. These can be pernicious when they motivate groups to fight. As such, it is important to understand the fault lines and pressures in a society.
- Access to conflict resources: Many groups may have incentives to fight. However, whether or not these groups have the means to fight and the capacity to sustain violent activity both affect the likelihood of outbreaks of violence.
- Institutional and social capacity to manage violence: This factor concerns the degree to which political, social, and economic institutions mitigate and/or exacerbate the incentives and means for violent conflict.
- Regional dynamics: Conflict can exist inside State boundaries, and also across international borders. Even when conflict is contained inside a single State, regional dynamics such as Diaspora and kinship, international markets, and regional politics can inflame social tensions within a country, leading to conflict.
- Windows of Vulnerability: The previously mentioned factors all contribute to conflict dynamics, but require opportunities or triggers to spark full-scale violence.

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The CAF provides a checklist of questions to guide the assessment team in considering these factors. It also provides detailed discussion of the factors, and variables associated with them, based on extensive discussion of the academic literature on conflict analysis and early warning.

The second step in the CAF is to map the connections between existing development programs and the causes of conflict. In this step, the analysis team should understand that the societal dynamics that contribute to conflict occur independently, as well as being interconnected. They must therefore consider the second and third order effects of various societal dynamics when mapping the interrelations of development and conflict.

Finally, the assessment team suggests new intervention strategies or reconfigured development assistance programs to address the sources of conflict and tension in the host country. Because of the complexity of social, political, and economic systems, intervention strategies should account for the interconnectedness of multiple variables. Development interventions will change certain dynamics in the system, and those changes will ripple across other parts of the system. Therefore, interventions must consider how problems are manifest at multiple levels, and act to engage them wherever they occur.

### **Strengths**

The CAF encourages conflict sensitive development for USG Missions, by suggesting systemic and systematic thinking about the multiple factors that contribute to conflict. It explicitly demonstrates the linkages between incentives, means, opportunities, and triggers inside a country, while also highlighting the exogenous dynamics that affect them. Further, it includes a detailed guide for exploring the five factors, and multiple variables associated with them.

### **Limitations**

While the CAF is designed to provide a broad overview of the trends and patterns that can destabilize or fragment a society, it does not address any single variable in great detail. Instead, it points assessment teams to various program toolkits also created by the CMM, which can be used to assist in the design of interventions aimed at specific factors (e.g. poverty alleviation, food security, land conflict, etc.). In this way, the CAF does not stand alone, but rather requires additional resources to design the interventions included in the third step, where the analysis team is asked to suggest new or reconfigured strategies.

## **Strategic Conflict Assessment**

### **Purpose**

The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) developed the strategic conflict assessment methodology for assessing conflicts at the country and regional level, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of development policy and programs in preventing and reducing conflict. More specifically, Strategic Conflict Assessment is designed to assess the negative impact of conflict on various programs, identify the potential for specific programs and

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policies to contribute to or exacerbate conflict, and highlight the opportunities for improving conflict prevention and reduction via effective development interventions.

Strategic Conflict Assessment can be conducted at the micro level by considering specific programs. In this approach, Strategic Conflict Assessment is used to map the conflict and current responses to it. The strategic conflict assessment then identifies future policy or program alternatives. At the macro, Strategic Conflict Assessment assesses national or regional initiatives. This enables partners to develop strategic approaches for conflict prevention and reduction, and likewise encourages collaboration among various groups, agencies, and stakeholders.

### **Methodology**

The methodology for Strategic Conflict Assessment should be flexible, and responsive to the needs and context of different conflict situations. However, several principles outlined by DFID are meant to guide the process. First, agencies/organizations undertaking Strategic Conflict Assessment should adapt their assessments to meet the needs of the end user. No assessment can meet the needs of every donor/actor in a conflict situation. Since generic or oversimplified assessments may lack useful information for specific users, Strategic Conflict Assessment should be designed with the needs and objectives of specific stakeholders in mind.

A second guiding principle for Strategic Conflict Assessment is to identify and respond to the nature or phase of the conflict. Development partners attempting to influence the trajectory of conflict dynamics must be aware of the current state of the conflict, in order to design effective and appropriate interventions.

Next, Strategic Conflict Assessment should include dynamic forms of analysis. These should include structural factors, as well as identifying and analyzing the dynamic nature of the context, including the actors, their incentives, and the triggers of violent conflict.

In addition to an agency's own analysis, Strategic Conflict Assessment should include collaboration with other stakeholders in the conflict at different locations and across various levels of the development and aid system. This will ensure not only more thorough information gathering, but will likewise create a shared understanding of conflict dynamics and development needs throughout the stakeholder network. Collaboration will likewise assist in developing coherent responses to help guide conflict trajectories.

The Strategic Conflict Assessment methodology is based on the notion that no single theoretical framework is able to direct the systematic and comprehensive analysis of a conflict situation. As such, analysis needs to be informed by multiple theoretical perspectives, and employ multiple methods for data collection and analysis. Strategic Conflict Assessment attempts to coherently examine conflicts in these ways by examining the structures, actors, and dynamics of a conflict through multidisciplinary techniques.

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The Strategic Conflict Assessment consists of three key stages:

### *Stage A: Conflict Analysis*

- Analyze structures (e.g. security, political, economic, social)
- Identify actors (e.g. interests, relations, capacities, peace agendas, incentives)
- Explore dynamics (e.g. conflict trends, triggers of violence, conflict management capacity, future conflict scenarios)

### *Stage B: Analysis of Responses*

- Mapping external responses (e.g. military, diplomatic, immigration, trade, development)
- Mapping development policies and programs (e.g. magnitude and focus of programs, approaches to conflict, capacities to work effectively in and on conflict)
- Assessing impacts on conflict and peace (e.g. impact of conflict on policies, impact of interventions on conflict dynamics)

### *Stage C: Strategies/Options*

- Influencing other responses to conflict (e.g. developing common donor approaches/coherence of aid)
- Developing/refining DFID policy and program approaches (e.g. adjust current activities, develop new initiatives)

## **Strengths**

The Strategic Conflict Assessment encourages collaborative analysis across all levels of the aid nexus, including Host Nation (HN) efforts, International Organizations and IGOs, grassroots NGOs and civil society. In doing so, Strategic Conflict Assessment is able to incorporate a host of views and interests into its assessment, which in turn enables construction of timely and effective development strategies.

## **Limitations**

Focusing only (or primarily) on development, Strategic Conflict Assessment may not encourage buy-in from non-development sectors like military and intelligence services who's mandates may run counter to DFID or other development organizations goals and objectives. Likewise, there are likely to be a wide range of parallel and divergent interests across the entire development spectrum for any conflict situation. Collaboration among the various stakeholders is voluntary, and will require buy-in from each organization. This may be difficult to generate, particularly if multiple organizations are competing with each other for the same funding sources.

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### **Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)**

#### **Purpose**

The ICAF is an assessment methodology designed to enable a USG interagency team to assess conflict situations in a coherent, systematic, and collaborative manner, and to prepare the interagency for planning conflict prevention, mitigation, and stabilization interventions. By jointly assessing an active or a potential conflict situation through a formalized methodology, USG departments and agencies can develop a common understanding of the drivers of conflict within a country, and the dynamics that mitigate conflict.

The ICAF is meant to build on existing analytical exercises throughout the regular intelligence community and other USG agencies, to provide a forum in which USG agencies can share knowledge and establish a common USG perspective. In addition to identifying societal and situational dynamics, the ICAF provides a snapshot of a conflict situation, which can be used as a baseline for measuring the effectiveness of USG interventions.

#### **Methodology**

The level of detail, the time available, and the type of USG intervention are unique to specific USG interventions and conflict zones. That variance across conflict situations will shape the ICAF process. For example, some crisis situations may require a very quick ICAF process consisting of only a 1-2 day workshop in Washington, D.C. consisting of representatives of relevant stakeholder agencies and departments. Other situations might represent burgeoning or latent conflicts, and might require a three day workshop in Washington DC, followed by in-depth field research and ground-truthing in-country.

Whatever the form the process takes, there is a standard methodology for employing an ICAF analysis, which consists of two major components. The first component consists of diagnosing the conflict. This gathers and analyzes important information on the context of the conflict, as well as drivers and mitigating factors in the societal dynamics. The findings of the ICAF analysis are then channeled into recommendations on appropriate USG interventions.

The second component segues the ICAF findings into planning. Depending on the type of conflict the USG is responding to, the ICAF recommendations are channeled into the planning process in specific ways. For example, when supporting Crisis Response or Contingency Planning, the ICAF findings feed into the situation analysis and policy formulation in the USG Planning Framework. In contrast, when ICAF analysis is used to support steady-state or conflict prevention planning, the Assessment Team segues from analysis to pre-planning by mapping existing diplomatic and programmatic activities against the drivers of conflict and mitigating factors identified in the ICAF analysis.

The two components of an ICAF analysis, referred to below as tasks, consist of the following aspects.

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### *Task 1: Conflict Diagnosis*

- Evaluate the Context of the Conflict
- Understand Core Grievances and Social/Institutional Resilience
- Identify Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors
- Describe Opportunities for Increasing or Decreasing Conflict

### *Task 2: Segue into Planning*

- Specify current USG activities
- Specify current efforts of non-USG actors (bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs, private sector/local entities)
- Identify gaps in current efforts
- Specify challenges to addressing gaps
- Describe risks associated with failing to address gaps
- Describe opportunities for addressing gaps

### **Strengths**

One of the real strengths of the ICAF methodology lies in its ability to develop a common understanding of situational and societal dynamics across discrete USG agencies with divergent missions and objectives. By engaging all relevant stakeholder agencies in the process, the ICAF framework mobilizes the whole USG knowledge of the context. This simultaneously increases the volume/quality of knowledge produced on the situation, while decreasing the cost (time, resources, and personnel) of data gathering. Likewise, engaging all relevant stakeholder agencies will increase institutional buy-in from each agency.

### **Limitations**

The ICAF methodology produces a baseline/snapshot of a conflict situation at a particular point in time. Conflict situations, however, are dynamic, and the drivers of conflict as well as mitigating factors can shift over time. This is particularly true when outside agents like the USG or other groups introduce measures or programs to counter the drivers of conflict. While the baseline provided by the ICAF is necessary to inform a concerted USG intervention in a crisis situation, the USG must iteratively assess the situation and continue to monitor shifting situational and societal dynamics throughout its intervention process.

## **Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) – World Bank (WB)**

### **Purpose**

In response to the WB Operational Order 2.30, the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit of the WB developed the CAF to enable conflict sensitive programming. The CAF is intended to support programs and efforts to analyze and address conflict through poverty reduction and other sustainable development programs. The success of the CAF is development programs and

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assistance are improved by their design includes potential sources of violent conflict, and opportunities/triggers of conflict outbreak. Likewise, the CAF was designed with the understanding that development assistance can change social dynamics, potentially exacerbating tensions and triggering outbreaks of violent conflict.

### Methodology

Designed to address conflict risk at the country level, CAF begins with a scoping or screening phase. In this phase, teams the state of nine main indicators:

- History of conflict: Conflict tends to recur over time. As such, if a country experienced conflict in the past 10 years, it is highly prone to renewed conflict
- Income per capita: Low per capita Gross National Income (GNI) increases the likelihood of conflict
- Primary commodity exports: Countries whose economies are dependent on primary commodity export are highly prone to conflict
- Political Instability: Both transformation of the state structure and the breakdown of law and order can signal coming conflict
- Militarization: Countries with a large ratio of defense spending compared to GNI are highly prone to conflict or escalation of violence
- Ethnic dominance: States with political and economic systems that are dominated by a single ethnic group may experience conflict
- Active regional conflict: Just as conflict recurs over time, conflict also spreads across space. If conflicts are active in other parts of a region, countries in that region may experience conflict
- Youth unemployment: Often called the ‘youth bulge’, this relates to the potential for populations to be mobilized toward violence in an attempt to redress the grievances and frustrations associated with low income and few opportunities

While each of these factors may contribute to the likelihood of violent conflict, none by themselves are sufficient to trigger violence. Likewise, violent conflict can be caused by factors not on this list. With those two caveats in place, the above factors often signal coming violent conflict. If several of these factors are present in a given country, that country should undergo a CAF. The CAF process analyzes six variables according to seven dimensions to determine how each variable relates to conflict and poverty.

The variables are:

- Social and Ethnic Relations: social, economic, and ethnic cleavages; differences in opportunities; identity and myth-making, etc.
- Governance and Political Institutions: stability of institutions; equity of judicial system; links between government and system
- Human Rights and Security: freedom of expression and role of media, etc.
- Economic Structure and Performance: economic growth and changes in income; inflation and foreign debt; reliance on primary commodities, poverty

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- Environment and Natural Resources: availability of resources; access to resources; internal and foreign competition for resources
- External forces: regional conflicts; role of Diaspora and external kinship

The dimensions of these variables are:

- History/changes: how the issue has evolved over time
- Dynamics/trends: what the current trajectory is, and what is driving it
- Public perceptions: public attitudes and biases
- Politicization: how the issue is co-opted/employed by various groups
- Organization: how groups are mobilizing around the issue
- Links to conflict intensity: how the factor has, is, or could contribute to violence
- Links to poverty: how the factor has, is, or could contribute to levels of poverty

Each conflict situation and potential conflict situation is unique, and will require different methods to analyze these variables and dimensions. However, some standard practices can be employed. First, the CAF team can conduct a desk study of existing information pertinent to the country. Next, the team can stage workshops with country specialists and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to collate other knowledge. If needed, the CAF team can conduct follow-on studies that explore specific dynamics identified previously. In-country consultation with relevant stakeholders in civil society and within host-country agencies can generate new knowledge on the situation. Finally, concluding workshops can help collate, analyze, and integrate that knowledge into development assistance planning.

### **Strengths**

CAF is built on a strong foundation of conflict early warning, conflict forecasting, and conflict analysis. The variables and dimensions included in the methodology have been thoroughly explored by academics and practitioners through myriad methods including statistical analysis, case study, game theoretical experiments, and observation. Likewise, the correlations have been ground-truthed through interviewing and observation. Thus the CAF employs variables with a strong theoretical and empirical connection to violent conflict, and as such avoids the pitfall of exploring irrelevant factors.

### **Limitations**

The empirical solidity of the variables employed in the CAF can lead analysts to focus only on those variables, and dismiss other potential triggers of conflict as either unimportant, or not empirically validated. In such a case, it is possible for analysts to omit pertinent factors from their analysis, and thus design programs that are either ineffective, or that serve to exacerbate existing tension and create new social rifts.

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## **Appendix G. Empirical Materials - De-Identified and Organized by Key Themes**

### **Introduction**

To fulfill the requirements for Task 1: Document Status of Operational Culture and Application to Planning, the Study Team observed planners in both the schoolhouse environments and in experimental contexts. Field notes and interview transcripts were produced based on those observations. This document demonstrates key areas of planning activity that emerged from the fieldwork, using the “thick” descriptions of the social and organizational scenes we observed, as well as sections from interview transcripts. It allows the reader to engage directly with the empirical materials generated in the study based on the themes that they generated. The data are organized around the themes of “*Problem Framing*,” “*Design*,” the Role of the Commander, and Operational Culture. Though this study did not attempt a formal grounded theory analysis, we used a rapid assessment approach in the team context that none-the-less produced thematic categories of analytic utility to the project. The general results of this process are presented in this Appendix.

### **“*Problem Framing*”**

*The revision to MCWP 5-1 Marine Corps Planning Process replaced Mission Analysis with “Problem Framing” as the first step in planning. An important part of “Problem Framing” is “Design,” and we observed both in the schoolhouse settings:*

“There is nothing simple about a military problem. And he was like no, no, no, some of them are simple. I’m like, No, they’re not. They can’t be simple, by the very definition of what they are.” (5MM)

“Let’s, let’s emphasize the importance of “*Design*” specifically “*Problem Framing*,” specifically understanding up front in our doctrine, so everyone knows this is important, so if you have the time, it’s important to spend as much time as you can on it.” (3AA)

*“Problem Framing” is a key element of “Design.”*

“I think that the one thing design tells you to do very explicitly in the new publication is it tells you to understand the problem first. What’s the problem? And they’ll do, is inside of there, is when you look at the problem, the things you need to consider are: what does Higher say the problem is? Has he told you what his problem is yet? What is his intent? What are his orders? What are his directives? Is there an available intelligence preparation of the battle-space that does talk about the enemy? What are the key actors inside of the area, and the enemy? What are the relationships, potential, time, operational environment, culture, language, demographics, geography and climate? All of those things now

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are laid out for a commander to think about, and for a staff to think about, before they start.” (5MM)

“I think that the one thing “*Design*” tells you to do very explicitly in the new publication is it tells you to understand the problem first. What’s the problem? And they’ll do, is inside of there, is when you look at the problem, the things you need to consider are: what does Higher say the problem is? Has he told you what his problem is yet? What is his intent? What are his orders? What are his directives? Is there an available intelligence preparation of the battle-space that does talk about the enemy? What are the key actors inside of the area, and the enemy? What are the relationships, potential, time, operational environment, culture, language, demographics, geography and climate? All of those things now are laid out for a commander to think about, and for a staff to think about, before they start.” (5MM)

“We call it orientation. You orient your staff to the problem, and then they take a deep dive into the problem.” (6FD)

“And I think that’s where “*Design*” basically is, or “*Problem Framing*” inside of “*Design*”, is it shows it feeds back into itself. It’s not just mission analysis and then “*COA Development*.” (5MM)

“It’s mission analysis, “*COA Development*,” go back and see what changed through mission analysis. Is there a shortfall now that I do not see? And I go through multiple ones of these before I come out with the ultimate course of action. And that is what I believed “*Design*” allowed us to do. It allows us to set up that framework. I mean, you saw how many ideas we kicked around there.” (5MM)

“It’ll get better, but I think “*Design*” will sort of emerge, or evolve, in the Commander’s mind, starts at the very beginning, and as he gets to “*Problem Framing*” and working with a staff, a broad picture of how to approach the problem, because if you understand the problem better, starts to emerge, and when he gives sort of overarching major lines of work.” (6FD)

*“Problem Framing” should be used to understand the intricate dynamics of a system.*

“Because everything I just said - the objectives, things are going to change from time to time, but we want to try to prevent in the planning process is to get it as close - to understand the problem in the environment as close as we can, much closer than we have been, that way the changes downstream might just be slight rudder changes as opposed to just complete shifts.” (8UT)

“Just over the last six months, has required the Commander, the staff, and the planning teams to, to widen the lens so to speak on the way they view a problem

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or an opportunity, and to think about things that in many of our scenarios we've just glossed over, because they've been highly kinetic, highly conventional, and not necessarily focused on counterinsurgency." (6FD)

*As "Problem Framing" continues, there are additional interactions with the Commander that reflect the learning going on with regard to the operational environment and the planning problem it presents. The Commander asks many questions of the OPT leader and also offers insight into his reasoning and current thinking. He asks, "Is there anything within the AO (area of operations) that is politically limiting? Will we create a place that is hostile to us, by our actions? What is our authority or relationship with the host nation security forces? What will 'partnering' mean from a command and control perspective?" These questions are built into a discussion about the recommended mission statement and how the essential and implied tasks are developed. The Commander emphasizes that everything should support the mission and that the essential tasks will be those deemed required for achieving the mission. (SAW)*

*The rush to task-oriented activities often makes "Problem Framing" ignored or utilized ineffectively.*

"Right, because of the real world, stress to get it done, the, the uncertainty that comes with ambiguity." (3AA)

"So we saw a tendency to dive right into what in our doctrine is called task analysis. Here's what our higher told us to do, let's get right on it, let's break - specified, implied, essential." (3AA)

"So Marines in general, want to solve the problem. And we want to solve it now. That's one of the reasons we've been so successful for so long. Unfortunately, we would skip over the understanding part, and we'd go right to what we've been told to do, and then what we were told not to do, and then how we're going to tell our subordinate units to do that. That is a very fast way to do things. It can be the wrong one." (3AA)

*On Assessment:*

"But, the thing, one of the roles that you guys, assessment, provides to guys like me is that you must continually remind us that you're here to do something." (3AA)

"Assessment is tied to the plan, the plan is this is what I'm going. It is that simple." (3AA)

"I think assessment is more of an art than anything else." (6FD)

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“Assessment, one of the words assessment, it’s harder with an SSTR, SASO, COIN, I think it’s always hard, more than anything. What we need to go, it’s all about creativity.” (6FD)

*Marines may focus oftentimes on the more easily measurable parts of their plan rather (MOP) than MOEs.*

“We are really good at getting a lot of MOEs, how many gallons of fuel we’re pumping, how many tons of bombs we’re dropping, but we’re not very good at creating creative tubes, you know like a straw tube into the operation that gives you really insight into what’s going on.” (6FD)

“And we’re very comfortable and very good with the performance piece because it’s scientific, but the other piece is less so. And we’re not as good at that.” (6FD)

“The problem with assessments up front, the planning and predicting things in the future talks to culture somewhat again, measures of effectiveness, is that the right thing? How do we know what we’re doing is right? Passing out a flyer that says this, passes this message to this community in that area. Performance wise, we can do that, yes, that’s accomplished, but is that the right - are we doing the right thing? If we don’t understand the culture, how do we know we’re crafting the right Measure of Effectiveness in the planning process?” (8UT)

“Well, let’s not be the medical, let’s take two dental units there, as opposed to a little of this, a little of this, a little of this, that’s how assessments in the planning phase can help us with something we struggle with.” (8UT)

“...The problem we have with assessments is, when I got to ISAF was that, when you plan, you know you try to come up with end states, things you want to get accomplished - that’s how you write your assessments plan, that’s how you come up with the measures of effectiveness, remember we talked about that, are we doing the right thing? Performance you know is a little simpler; the trick is, when that changes though, because you don’t have a full understanding of the problem or the environment, or you get it wrong, the Commander’s gonna change those end states or those objectives; well the whole assessments process ...” (8UT)

“I think that assessment is very difficult. And then assessment, certainly broken down into the metrics of measures of performance and measures of effects...” (8D8)

### **“Design”**

*We observed the importance of utilizing “Design” and Designing Practices in planning. Effective planning is more about the “Design” of the plan than the actual steps themselves. Designing Practices are those practices that support effective “Problem Framing,” and*

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*continuous learning and re-learning throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum.*

*He calls the MCPP a “hut-n-hut” redesign, and says the MCPP is not intended to inform what is going on. (EWS)*

*The new chapter on “Design,” which the participants are using, intends to be intuitive and force creative decision making. “Design” is all about understanding the ambiguity inherent in the AO. (EWS)*

“They thought the “Design” piece made the whole planning process part intuitive. It felt like, the way you think is the way you plan.” (5MM)

“I would say, ‘Understand where we’re at, and what we have to do.’ They have to understand the mission; they have to know where I’m at.” (5MM)

“Remember, the plan is nothing. The planning is everything.” (5MM)

“The student feedback was very, very positive on the “Design” model. It... felt pretty intuitive to me... What I’m finding out after speaking to some senior commanders, is its nothing new, it’s just something that they have all figured out over time. It has just never been captured well in our doctrine. And I think that’s what our doctrine is trying to do... is to catch up with the way better commanders have made that happen.” (5MM)

“Good units and good commanders have always done “Design.” (3AA)

*At the same time, “Design” is a contentious issue.*

“And yes, it’s a process, it’s an approach to get from a, a sequenced approach to get from one place to another in a reasonable manner. So yes, of course it’s that. I think it’s both, it’s what you need it to be.” (3AA)

“The argument, which we have been arguing about this for a year, is “Design” process or product? And you have proponents on both sides. That is an academic argument. It’s both. Of course it’s product.” (3AA)

“There has been lots of pushback. There has been. And that’s not a bad thing.” (3AA)

“Right now we are just trying to figure it out as we go; the “Design” thing is relatively new too, so that becomes an issue.” (8UT)

*Despite the debate, key elements of “Design” are useful and will remain part of the new Marine Corps Planning Process.*

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“But, define the environment; define the problem, that's going to stick.” (8UT)

“Because we get out there, you're the “blank” little jobs officer in a lot of ways... just to get people to do the planning process right... It's a freaking challenge!” (8UT)

*Because of the time-constrained environment, adaptations must be made to the planning process.*

“But it doesn't mean my way of solving is correct, or is the best way of solving it, so I use the Course of Actions to validate my thoughts. And it all depends on time, too. So if we don't have a lot of time, then I'm going to drive it early and I'm not going to develop two Courses of Action. I'm going to develop one because I'm pretty sure we'll at least get an 80% solution and be able to adapt if it changes. That is part of the theory and nature of planning as well – how does time come into it? I think the military judgment and experience of a commander absolutely has, he's got to fight that.” (8UT)

“You'll get up there, MCCDC, everything's rosy, we've got this planning process down, now we're doing “*Design*,” but... people get task-oriented.” (8UT)

*“Design” is a series of feedback loops, reinforcing themes, which may feel intuitively out of sync with the MCPP. It is a dialogue, intended to draw the planning process away from the linear structure of MCPP.*

“The iterative nature of “*Design*” runs counter to the linear structure of the MCPP.” (EWS)

“Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. MCPP may not make immediate sense... but it will. You'll see.” (EWS)

“*Design* is a constant feedback loop that progresses down the diagonal. Initially things start out heavy on the “*Design*,” but the process works to “close “*Design*” gap to create tenable COAs.” (EWS)

“So you notice these feedback loops. This publication [MCDP 1-0] doesn't show that. It shows it as a pure circle, one step next step next step next step. True... but the steps feed back into themselves.” (5MM)

“From there, notice how the circle feeds back in on itself, this is where our doctrine is going... Our war fighting reference publication is going to catch up with our doctrine.” (5MM)

“And when you look at the planning process, what you'll see is it is a self-feeding process. You see how it always goes back into itself. Well this is what you watched the other day with you “*Design*.” (5MM)

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“Now what is important inside of “*Design*,” though, is making sure you’re asking yourself the right questions. That assessing the situation is what the Marine Corps is really attempting to change.” (5MM)

*In the EWS exercise, we observe the Ground Command Element, which is the OPT. As OPT Leader, our instructor/host, makes considerable efforts to facilitate “Design” in the GCE the first days of the exercise. He says, “I don’t want full agreement. I need some dudes who respectfully disagree.” He uses “Design” to force creative and intuitive decision making. He explains to the students that “Design” is about understanding the ambiguity inherent in an area of operation. He uses an extended question period with his team and calls it “Design Dialogue” and explains that its purpose is to encourage alternative views and dissent from the OPT. (EWS)*

*Dissent promotes positive change and discussion. An open discussion is a useful tool to the effective plan. Utilizing dissent intelligently can foster an environment for creative and critical thinking, as well as the development of novel approaches.*

He says that when he hears intelligent dissent, he “hands them that task. Buy into the disbelief and let them figure out the solution.” The trick, he says, is “discerning between the problem solver and someone who flips over the monopoly board.” (EWS)

“Like, it always makes me nervous when everybody’s like ‘Oh, I completely agree with you Sir!’ I don’t want them to tell me what I want to hear. I want them to tell me what they know. So I don’t want to influence them. Now what I think you want to hear, how can we best get this person to integrate into our planning process, umm, you know what I mean.” (5MM)

*The Commander is and should be the center of any “Design” process. It is the “Commander’s Intent” which truly creates the effective plan, especially a plan that incorporates cultural concepts.*

“You’re leaving out the most critical point: the creativity of every commander. You’re never going to be able to rule that out.” (5MM)

“You mentioned that “*Design*” wasn’t being accepted. First, you’ve gotta talk about where the Marine Corps has decided to go with “*Design*”... That warfare has become so complex in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that it requires a whole bunch of smart men to assist the Commander, which is patently ridiculous, to remove the Commander from the center of the planning is just - he is the number one planner in a unit, and if that isn’t, I’m telling you this in absolutes, so I’m actually making the same mistakes you are - cause there are bad commanders. But he shouldn’t be the Commander if he’s not that guy. To me, that’s one of the prerequisites for being a commander. Of course you are a good planner. The skill suite is the same.

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But they would have you believe that it's become so complex that we must have this German general staff group of smart guys, Jedis, to answer it. And if they do it the right way and they fully understand the problem, that out of that process out of "Design," comes the perfect solution..." (3AA)

"My opinion is that one of the important roles the Commander plays is when we've done enough "Design." (3AA)

"Well, the whole process is the Commander's, he owns it, like it or not, and he's responsible for it, and, that's something we try to convince the Commanders that they can't outsource, they can't subcontract, it's theirs." (6FD)

*The SAW students conduct their planning using the concepts found in the functional working draft of MCPP. "Design" is occurring through dialogue between the OPT leader, who is presenting the collective work of the OPT, and the SAW Senior Mentors who are acting in the role of MEF Commander. The Commander makes a point of the difference between initial guidance and planning guidance and expresses the importance of the information that will be exchanged between the OPT and him. There is significant time spent discussing the Center of Gravity (COG) analysis. We note that fully one half of the 90 minute brief with the Commander is spent wrestling with the proper framing of the COG construct. The Commander suggests that a friendly COG is non-traditional, but is a mental construct that will make their job easier if used correctly. Many opinions are voiced about what the COG is, and suggestions run the gamut from "the will of the people" to "partnering with the state governments." The Commander allow the OPT to continue to debate the COG because they believe the view has to be focused on the people, "Because if we go south on the people, the whole thing goes south." Later, during an interview with the SAW senior mentors, the OPT is described as having gotten "wrapped around that axel." (SAW)*

*In discussing the role of the Commander in the planning process... He (OPT leader) sees the role as being incredibly vital and cites Clausewitz who attributes success to the "genius of the Commander." He tells us that the planning process begins with the "Commander's Guidance," and the OPT's task is to take that guidance and incorporate it within the complex factors of the environment, including terrain and culture. The process ends with the commander deciding if the plan fits in with his vision. The OPT leader sees draft MCPP, with its "Problem Framing" and "Design" elements, as an attempt to articulate the "genius of the Commander." As he sees it, experienced commanders often utilize these two processes. (EWS)*

*There was significant uncertainty on the concept of the narrative and how to effectively use it.*

"Narrative is a word in vogue, across our country, especially in government." (6FD)

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“What you do, what you do is if you’re able to write down your orientation notes, I don’t know, maybe that’s a narrative, I don’t know, but if you’re able to write that down and there’s a piece there that has your initial guidance in there, when you come into the “*Problem Framing*” brief you can set that right there, as they go through it and you can go, ok, they did, they did, and it’s not at all uncommon for them to have left something out completely.” (6FD)

### **Role of the Commander**

*The Commander owns the Planning Process*

“Well, the whole process is the Commander’s, he owns it, like it or not, and he’s responsible for it, and, that’s something we try to convince the commanders that they can’t outsource, they can’t subcontract, it’s theirs, and there’s no right or wrong on this thing I mean - as long as the Commander is sharing with his people what he’s thinking about, what his concerns are, then, then fine; but he can’t walk in and say, ok, we just got this warning order, I’ll be back in two hours, tell me what you come up with.” (6FD)

“It’ll get better, but I think “*Design*” will sort of emerge, or evolve, in the Commander’s mind, starts at the very beginning, and as he gets to “*Problem Framing*” and working with a staff, a broad picture of how to approach the problem, because if you understand the problem better, starts to emerge, and when he gives sort of overarching major lines of work.” (6FD)

“We wanted to further define the environment and the problem based on what the Commander told us. Every OPT there is different.” (8UT)

“...To remove the Commander from the center of the planning is just - he is the number one planner in a unit, and if that isn’t, I’m telling you this in absolutes” (3AA)

*The Commander’s intellect and experience makes him integral to the planning process – the “genius of the Commander.”*

“So, I know all of this might run together, that’s fine, but those are sort of, because to me those things really reflected your requirements, because to me those are the things you as a commander needed to assess risk.” (6FD)

“My opinion is that one of the important roles the Commander plays is when we’ve done enough “*Design*.” I understand enough. Because it’s all about in his head, he’s the decision maker.” (3AA)

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“That is part of the theory and nature of planning as well – how does time come into it? I think the military judgment and experience of a commander absolutely has a role in that.” (8D8)

“You’re leaving out the most critical point: the creativity of every commander. You’re never going to be able to rule that out.” (5MM)

“What you have to take into account here is the genius of the Commander. Clausewitz will tell you the genius of the Commander is everything.” (5MM)

*Commanders lead “Design.”*

“It’s been generated by a need to more formally address something called “Design”. And, we’re not sure where exactly it’s going to go, although I think we’re starting this season, some final drafts and some pushes, but that in my view, just over the last six months, has required the Commander, the staff, and the planning teams to, to widen the lens so to speak...” (6FD)

“Let’s understand the problem first, and then let’s put our guidance together to start letting them analyze the problem.’ That’s where the Commander comes in, right up front. So I think these new tools get injected into a [“Design”] process that already exists.” (8D8)

*Commanders have always done “Design.”*

“What I’m finding out after speaking to some senior commanders, is its nothing new, it’s just something that they have all figured out over time. It has just never been captured well in our doctrine. And I think that’s what our doctrine is trying to do... is to catch up with the way better commanders have made that happen.” (8D8)

“Good units and good commanders have always done “Design.” (3AA)

“I think better commanders always did the right thing, but the old system used to be called ‘Mission analysis was the first the step.’” (5MM)

“It made a lot of us realize what a lot of ingenious commanders already knew.”

*If culture is not considered important by the Commander, it would not make it into plans.*

“But that is where it kind of to light to me was, between ORSA and JIFCOM and everybody, there’s a ton of data getting produced in these studies, but how does that fit into the Commander's objective?” (8UT)

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“That’s the battle is, how do you get the Commander to prioritize wanting to use the culture in all of this.” (8UT)

“And it’s not about, it’s not about, telling at this level, planners and commanders, it’s not about telling me which hand to shake with and don’t show the bottom of boots, or all this stuff, it’s about how differing cultures translate into warfighting potential.”(8D8)

“But I do need someone to help my planners understand what those nuances actually are. So let’s not take this to the extreme and have the stable of senior, you know culturally superior folks that we plug into commanders. That’s never going to be accepted.” (8D8)

“There is no simple military problem. They are all at least complex. They may not be ill-structured. But they are in and of themselves at least complex. I can pull out the definition at least, real quick, where that no matter what, they are complex. So just that a commander realizes that he puts culture on top of it, that it just became a complex problem, therein of itself he’s got a realization that ‘I can’t just look at the enemy. I’ve got to look at this as a whole.’” (5MM)

“I think the higher level commander has a responsibility to move the whole Area of Operation forward. What we need to understand is that the cultural context absolutely comes from the top.” (8D8)

## Operational Culture

*We find that the complexity of cultural knowledge is not lost on the Marine Corps. Marines understand that culture is a complex phenomenon which requires attention.*

*[After hearing about a particular country’s history] “Ok guys, we need to frame our minds around this.” (EWS)*

*“[We’re] peeling back the onion pretty far, and that’s okay.” He says they need to think deep to understand relationships. He also says that if someone opens “the good idea box” that person (or someone else) needs to fill it. (EWS)*

“So just that a commander realizes that he puts culture on top of it, that it just became a complex problem, therein of itself he’s got a realization that ‘I can’t just look at the enemy. I’ve got to look at this as a whole.’” (5MM)

“I mean, I come from a culture, I have my own culture, I understand that it’s important. I understand that for every place that we go, it’s going to be different. And I need to understand how, what that difference is. I don’t need someone whispering in my ear telling me that I’m human. But I do need someone to help my planners understand what those nuances actually are.” (3AA)

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“I actually think we’ve done it reasonably well, especially the Marines. I think we understand that implicitly, that it’s about the population in COIN.” (3AA)

“It doesn’t matter what type of mission I’m on, we need to consider it from a Green Cell perspective. We need to have those kind of experts in there. So if I was laying it on Iwo Jima tomorrow, I would want a Green Cell take, look and theme throughout...there’s only good in that. I think there’s only good in that.” (3AA)

“Culture is one of those lines which, in my position, you know, in certain problems, people oriented strategy that has to be one of the primary lines we use.” (8UT)

“Because if we violate cultural issues up front, that takes a long time to recover from, sometimes never. I’m kind of a change the world one person at a time thing. Who knows if that sixteen year old boy or gal is going to be a future leader in that country.” (8UT)

*He says that the crux of the “cultural approach isn’t what we’re doing, but how.” He feels like they should explain this, “it is something that we will find at a lower tactical level. It is more difficult to transform into a task. I think it belongs at a lower level than we are acting.”*

“With regards to the execution of an operation at the tactical level, culture will help us determine how we will do it. At the tactical level, we must interact with both the local populations and the national forces” (ie: police, Afghan Army, among others). (2ZI)

“Understanding the cultural motives and attitudes of the Afghan population helps our leaders and soldiers foster trust and relationships with the populations we are trying to influence. It is important to remember that the national forces also come from the local populations; their trust is just as important as the local civilian population.” (2ZI)

*Continuing on, he says choosing criteria with regards to culture is very important because the Commander is the decision maker, ultimately. It is “normal that he has another point of view, but if the criteria is supported by culture that helps to strengthen the COA.” (2ZI)*

“The dynamics of insurgencies are really cultural. It's freaking cultural.” (8UT)

*The team observes planners become frustrated due to a lack of familiarity with cultural information and nuance:*

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“When I went to Afghanistan I noticed that - there’s so much out there - it’s very intimidating.” (8UT)

*I asked a CULAD for his perspective and he said, “It’s a lot of ‘I see what you’re saying is important, but I don’t understand it yet, so I will go back to what I know.’ The planners seemed to get frustrated by the amount of information they did not know, yet needed to incorporate CCA, and instinctively resorted back to planning the way they were used to. (MNE)*

“So it's gotta be complex enough to get to some of the meat of the cultural aspects, but simple enough for the Marines to understand it.” (8UT)

“They seem to get overwhelmed by the magnitude of the situation.” (MNE)

*They start going through the detail and I see them trying to use culture in planning the detail. They seem to get frustrated by the information they do not know, and so they return back to discreet bits that they can confirm. (MNE)*

“These are the sort of questions PhDs need to answer.” (EWS)

*Culture, although important, was ignored in the past because it was deemed either inconsequential or too difficult to comprehend.*

“First time we got there, making a lot of medical, dental, just humanitarian things there, for two week periods, provide medical care. That's where you kind of see it. Going in, planning that, I started realizing it, if I had known more about these people there, I would have done a lot better job.” (8UT)

“We were so ignorant of these things. Until five years ago, we could’ve cared less if somebody spoke another language. We could’ve cared less.” (6FD)

Now, having said that [that sometimes people “go too far” with expecting cultural expertise], it is, it does need to be kept up above the radar because we often ignore it.” (3AA)

*The Study Team observed planners experiment with different ways of organizing a Green Cell:*

“The “culture” guy is given no other duties other than to call “BS” on the plan.” (EWS)

“Well, the white cell, and I think the Marine Corps is going to call it a green cell. I was logging onto their main page, and working with that, and it sounds like they’re going to call it a green cell. With the green cell, it sounds like what’s going to happen, is they’re trying to decide when they’re going to form them up. Somewhere prior to war-gaming. My take is they should be fired up before the

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brief, before “*Design.*” Because they should be looking at it from the culture’s perspective. Now if you notice, I had two different people running the white cell, and I’m going to call it the green cell only because that is what the Marine Corps is going to call it and I don’t want to confuse you.” (5MM)

“Well, as I build my course of action, he’s going to be [used like] my Red Cell. That’s an example of what I would use him for. Okay, well, we’re going to build a well in this town.” (8D8)

*The Green Cell must be attached to someone or have a place within the team; it cannot and should not stand alone:*

“I would be okay with the Green Cell plugging into that effort and Red Cell and Green Cell being the same thing. One of them fights the adversary, one of them fights the pop - the environment. I would be okay with that. Unfortunately, in that idea I just gave you, OPTs go away. Where does the Green Cell go? It’s gotta have a computer, have some place to sleep.” (3AA)

“More authority for themselves. All right, I got that. In the real world, you gotta be attached to somebody.” (3AA)

*Green Cell utilization needs its own language and analytic approach to distinguish it from the descriptive analysis prepared for the IPB:*

“I saw the Green Cell do was give more layers of paint on the existing conditions. This is what happens today. One of the biggest mistakes that we make as planners is we think this is simple. It’s not simple. Yeah, the Green Cell needs to be able to answer, the number one thing I want is for you to help me do what I say I’m going to do. So The IPB level stuff that the Green Cell was giving was good, but that does replicate what our G-2 already does. Where the tribes are, where the fault lines are amongst the communities, you know, the general measureable makeup of peoples. I think the Green Cell should continue to do that, that’s why I said I was little bit critical.” (3AA)

*Marines are and will always be enemy-oriented/Red Cell in regard to understanding culture.*

“I think we should be completely upfront about it. Part of what we do is kill. And Clausewitz said it, it’s about violence, so it’s about...so I’m willing to do all of the things that’s required of my mission to include kill you. But they need to understand that I don’t want to do that.” (3AA)

“What I really want to understand is so I can use all the non-lethal means, all the non kinetic means, so only a strong use of Green Cell things can get it that form of imposing your will on an adversary.” (3AA)

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“So yeah, I think the Marines are going to stay more focused on the enemy, because that’s natural.” (5MM)

*On the Cultural Advisor:*

“That guy works for me, so I drive him. I drive his goals and objectives.” (8D8)

“And this Culture Advisor is critical to our training piece. So instead of having to request through CAOCL, or requesting through the MEF, to spend money on pulling people down to set up training as it relates to culture, this guy can be my cultural coordinator, number one. And then he can teach the classes here when I build the training schedule.” (8D8)

“I don’t want my view on what I need to do; I want what the perception of the public is going to be.” (8D8)

*[Re: if the CULAD is not a Marine]* “Understand the Marine culture. Come live with us.” (8D8)

*[Discussing a native cultural advisor a Marine had in Iraq]* “So he would teach me about the culture of the people. He would come in after a meeting and ask ‘Do you understand what he meant when he said *this*’ ...And again, it was so funny, like when I was turning over this guy, ‘Man your interpreter isn’t very good.’ ‘You don’t understand... what he’s saying... the words coming out of his mouth in English are only half of what he’s teaching you.’ So he was my culture teacher.” (5MM)

“Call it Green Cell, call it whatever you want. Bottom line is: the guy who’s going to help you identify the gaps in your plan.” (8D8)

*I ask the CULAD if he feels like he’s making an impact. He says he thinks we’ve made the most impact when we [augment] the intel piece. He says that he thinks they are still confused about the level of detail required, but says, “No matter what level – practical application has to come into play.” (MNE)*

“Need a clear message on the role of the CULAD. I don’t know. If I were to decide, I would have him close to the Commander: permanent access, he is free to discuss with the CULAD.” (MNE)

*The CULAD posed his answers in a form of a question to pull the planners into a higher level of critical thinking. He was not answering direct questions about the culture or planning, rather he was helping them become comfortable in their own ability to consider culture. (MNE)*

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*On what kinds of help the Marines need:*

“That they [CAOCL] be able pull together these experts very quickly and do a deep dive into culture and the operating environment to tell us how things work there.” (6FD)

“If we don’t have a common understanding of the environment, yet, to make some decisions on how to tackle a problem, well I need to go get that information.” (6FD)

*Cultural knowledge should not take the place of key elements of the planning process, but it still needs to be integrated within.*

“It’s beyond culture.” (6FD)

“Culture to me is important. So there’s my bumper sticker. But it is no more important that weather, terrain, so all the very tangible things that we immediately rack and stack, I mean there are things we can measure and stack up in number that are as important to planning as the artsy stuff, the conceptual stuff.” (3AA)

*At the same time, culture needs to be integrated into the planning process.*

“The problem with culture is people want tangible, and the problem with “*Design*” also is there are a million ways to do “*Design*,” and again one person’s opinion, I mean, it’s conceptually, it’s how we think; we all “*Design*” differently.” (8UT)

“And again, that’s different - a different problem; kinetic might be back to war fighting functions, and as planners you got to have flexibility - but the problem is, we don’t, as a planner right now I go out there, there is no model; now, I could go out - if I was to go out to the MEF and was a planner and got a problem like that - I would do this, cause of my education, but that’s just one person’s initiative.” (8UT)

“There were no clear links. They’ve got Op-Culture, the book’s a start, but I think the tool that you guys tell me is really what we’re going with it, but also framework and planning process, how do we get that? It gets back to the people thing. If we’re deploying the strategy, we have to have a framework.” (8UT)

“I’m a big fan of the Marine Corps Planning Process. I think it is a very useful process, not a procedure. And so, um, I’m interested in seeing it.” (8UT)

“It is a skill that we need to be good at, before we start applying a different environment. We need to first understand how we plan, and not only the process, but the theory and nature behind planning.” (8UT)

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“But to a Marine, you’re teaching all different terms. You’re teaching him new terminology. This to me is just the ‘So what?’ of this. So this is a whole different process that is good, but it needs to be made into, it needs to be nested with the Marine Corps Planning Process.” (8UT)

“I think that was the biggest challenge, I think, for people who understand MCPP and get thrown this period of instruction is you’re constantly figuring out how does it fit in?” (8UT)

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### Glossary

#### Part 1. Abbreviations

AC	Abstract Conceptualization
ACE	Air Combat Element
ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance
ACT	Advance Coordination Team
ADDIE	Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate
AE	Active Experimentation
AECA	Arms Export Control Act
AF	African Affairs
AFR	Bureau for Africa
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AO	Area of Operation
AOE	Area of Effect
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARI	Army Research Institute
ASCOPE	Area, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events
AT	Antiterrorism
C3	Command, Control, and Communications
CAF	Conflict Assessment Framework
CAP	Country Action Plan
CAOCL	Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning

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CBJ	Congressional Budget Justification
CCA	Cross-Consistency Analysis
CCIR	Commander's Critical Information Requirement
CCP	Country Contingency Plan
CDD	Course Descriptive Data
CD&I	Concepts, Doctrine & Integration
CE	Concrete Experience
CENTCOM	Central Command
CG	Commanding General
CIW	Center for Irregular Warfare
CIWOC	Center for Irregular Warfare and Operational Culture
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
CLC	Culture and Language Center
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
CMM	Conflict Management and Mitigation
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
CMRS	Career Marine Regional Studies
COA	Course of Action
COE	Center of Excellence
COG	Center of Gravity
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CP	Command Post
CS	Cooperative Security

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CSC	Command and Staff College
CSP	Campaign Support Plan
CSS	Combat Service Support
CULAD	Cultural Advisor
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DATT	Defense Attaché
D/C	Deputy Commandant
DC	Deputies Committee
DC CD&I	Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration
DC PP&O	Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policy, and Operations
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DIRINT	Director of Intelligence
DKO	Defense Knowledge Online
DLTR	Defense language Transformation Roadmap
DOD	Department of Defense
DODD	Department of Defense Directive
DOS	Department of State
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities
DR	Disaster Relief
DTG	Date Time Group

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EAP	East Asian and Pacific Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDA	Excess Defense Articles
E&E	Bureau for Europe and Asia
EGAT	Economic Growth and Trade
E-IMET	Expanded International Military Education and Training
EU	European Union
EUCOM	European Command
EUR	European and Eurasian Affairs
EWS	Expeditionary Warfare School
FA	Foreign Assistance
FACT	Field Advance Coordination Team
FAO	Foreign Area Officer
FARP	Forward Arming and Refueling Points
FFP	Food for Peace
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FM	Field Manual
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FOC	Full Operational Capability
FOI	Swedish Defense Research Agency
FPO	Five Paragraph Order
FSF	Foreign Security Forces

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FSN	Foreign Service National
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GDF	Guidance for the Development of the Force
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Employment of the Force
GFM	Global Force Management
GFS	Global Fleet Station
GH	Bureau for Global Health
GMA	General Morphological Analysis
GMB	Global Management Board
GNI	Gross National Income
GPF	General Purpose Forces
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
HHQ	Higher Headquarters
HN	Host Nation
HQ	Headquarters
HTT	Human Terrain Team
ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
ICAR	Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDAD	Internal Defense and Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices

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IGO	Inter-governmental Organization
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
IO	Information Operations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPB	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace
IPR	Interim Performance Reviews
IWG	Interagency Working Group
IWJOC	Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept
JCA	Joint Capability Area
JCWS	Joint and Combined Warfighting School
JFCSC	Joint Forces Command and Staff College
JOC	Joint Operating Concept
JSCP	Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan
JTF	Joint Task Force
KRNW	Knowledge Resource Nomination Worksheet
LAC	Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean
LLRC	Language Learning Resources Centers
LNO	Liaison Officer
LOGPAC	Logistics Package
LOO	Line of Operation
LOE	Line of Effort
MAGTF	Marine Air Ground Task Force

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MAP	Marine Expeditionary Unit Augmentation Program
MARADMIN	Marine Administrative
MARFOR	Marine Forces
MARFORAF	Marine Forces Africa
MARFORCOM	Marine Forces Command
MARFORPAC	Marine Forces Pacific
MCAGCC	Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center
MCCDC	Marine Corps Combat Development Command
MCCSP	Marine Corps Campaign Support Plan
MCDP	Marine Corps Doctrine Publication
MCIA	Marine Corps Intelligence Agency
MCPP	Marine Corps Planning Process
MCPP-N	Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway
MCIOC	Marine Corps Information Operations Center
MCO	Marine Corps Order
MCU	Marine Corps University
MCSCP	Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan
MCTAG	Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group
MCTFS	Marine Corps Total Force Structure
MCWP	Marine Corps Warfighting Publication
MDRO	Mission Disaster Response Officer
ME	Bureau for Middle East
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force

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MET	Mission Essential Task
METT-T	Mission, Enemy, Troops, Terrain – Time
METT-TC	Mission, Enemy, Terrain and weather, Troops, Time available, and Civilian considerations
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MNE	Multinational Experiment
MOE	Measures of Effectiveness
MOP	Measures of Performance
MOPP	Mission Oriented Protective Posture
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MPF	Maritime Prepositioned Force
MPSRON	Marine Prepositioned Squadron
M&RA	Manpower and Reserve Affairs
MRE	Meals Ready to Eat
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
MSR	Main Supply Route
MSTP	Marine Air Ground Task Force Staff Training Program
NAVMC	Navy Marine Corps
NBC	Nuclear, Biological, Chemical
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NEA	Near Eastern Affairs
NEO	Non-combatant Evacuation Operation

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NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NMS	National Military Strategy
NOC	Naval Operations Concept
NPME	Navy Professional Military Education
NSC	National Security Council
NSEP	National Security Education Program
NSS	National Security Strategy
NUWEP	Nuclear Weapons Employment
OAKOC	Observation and fields of fire, Avenues of approach, Key terrain, Obstacles and movement, Cover and concealment
ODC	Office of Defense Cooperation
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OEG	Operational Exposure Guidance
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OMA	Office of Military Affairs
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OODA	Observe, Orient, Decide, Act
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OPORD	Operation Order
OPR	Office of Primary Responsibility
OPT	Operational Planning Team
OR	Operations Research
ORC	Office of the Response Coordinator

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### Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture: A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel

OSCE	Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe
OT&E	Organize, Train, and Equip
OTERA	Organize, Train, Equip, Rebuild, Advise
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PA	Public Affairs
PACOM	Pacific Command
PC	Principals Committee
PIR	Priority Intelligence Requirement
PL	Public Law
PM	Political Military Affairs
PME	Professional Military Education
PMSEII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information Systems
PN	Partner Nation
PO	Peace Operations
POA&M	Plan of Action and Milestones
POI	Program of Instruction
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PP&O	Plans, Policy, & Operations
PRM	Population, Refugees, and Migration
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSM	Problem Structuring Method
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
PTP	Pre-deployment Training Program
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review

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RA	Robustness Analysis
RAP	Rapid Assessment Process
RCLF	Regional Culture and Language Familiarization
RCP	Regional Contingency Plan
RDT&E	Research, Development, Test and Evaluation
RFI	Request for Information
RO	Reflective Observation
SA	Security Assistance
SATP	Systems Approach to Training Process
SAW	School of Advance Warfighting
SC	Security Cooperation
SCA	Strategic Conflict Assessment
SCEP	Security Cooperation Engagement Plan
SCETC	Security Cooperation Education and Training Center
SCO	Security Cooperation Organization
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SDO	Senior Defense Official
SE	Supporting Establishment
SEAD	Suppression of Enemy Air Defense
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SITREP	Situation Report
SLAC	Survival Level Arabic Class

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SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOCOM	Special Operations Command
SODA	Strategic Options Development and Analysis
SOF	Special Operation Forces
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SOUTHCOM	Southern Command
S/PG	Sudan Programs Group
SPG	Strategic Planning Guidance
SP MAGTF	Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force
SSM	Soft Systems Methodology
SSTR	Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction
STRATCOM	Strategic Command
T&R	Training and Readiness
TBS	The Basic School
TCAPE	Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework
TCMEF	Tactical Culture for Marine Expeditionary Forces
TCP	Theater Campaign Plan
TECOM	Training and Education Command
TRAE	Team Reflection Application and Experimentation
TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Plan
TSCMIS	Theater Security Cooperation Information System
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
UDP	Unit Deployment Program
UN	United Nations

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### Analytical Tools for the Application of Operational Culture: A Case Study in the Trans-Sahel

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USC	United States Code
USD (P&R)	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
USEUCOM	United States European Command
USG	United States Government
USJFCOM	United States Joint Forces Command
USMC	United States Marine Corps
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHA	Western Hemisphere Affairs
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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### Part 2. Definitions

area of operation	An operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and maritime forces. Areas of operation do not typically encompass the entire operational area of the joint force commander, but should be large enough for component commanders to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. Also called <b>AO</b> . See also <b>area of responsibility; joint operations area; joint special operations area</b> . (JP 3-0)
assessment	1. A continuous process that measures the overall effectiveness of employing joint force capabilities during military operations. 2. Determination of the progress toward accomplishing a task, creating an effect, or achieving an objective. 3. Analysis of the security, effectiveness, and potential of an existing or planned intelligence activity. 4. Judgment of the motives, qualifications, and characteristics of present or prospective employees or “agents.” (JP 3-0)
combatant command	A unified or specified command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Combatant commands typically have geographic or functional responsibilities. See also <b>specified command; unified command</b> . (JP 5-0)
container	The sum of the collective assumptions, shared intentions, and beliefs of the group.
design	The conception and articulation of a framework for solving a problem. (MCWP 5-1)
designing practices	Those practices that support effective problem framing and continuous learning and re-learning throughout the planning, execution, and assessment continuum. (MCWP 5-1)
evaluating practices	Those practices that allow the planner to critique ideas, make recommendations, assess value and make choices.
foreign assistance	Assistance to foreign nations ranging from the sale of military equipment to donations of food and medical supplies to aid survivors of natural and man-made disasters. US foreign assistance takes three forms: development assistance, humanitarian assistance, and security assistance. See also <b>domestic emergencies; foreign disaster; foreign humanitarian assistance; security assistance</b> . (JP 3-29)

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foreign internal defense	Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Also called <b>FID</b> . (JP 3-22)
host nation	A nation which receives the forces and/or supplies of allied nations and/or NATO organizations to be located on, to operate in, or to transit through its territory. Also called <b>HN</b> . (JP 3-57)
humanitarian assistance	Programs conducted to relieve or reduce the results of natural or manmade disasters or other endemic conditions such as human pain, disease, hunger, or privation that might present a serious threat to life or that can result in great damage to or loss of property. Humanitarian assistance provided by US forces is limited in scope and duration. The assistance provided is designed to supplement or complement the efforts of the host nation civil authorities or agencies that may have the primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance. Also called <b>HA</b> . (JP 3-57)
integrating practices	Those practices that help the planner to be effective in discrimination, appraisal, and synthesis with regard to the cultural context within which he operates.
intergovernmental organization	An organization created by a formal agreement (e.g. a treaty) between two or more governments. It may be established on a global, regional, or functional basis for wide-ranging or narrowly defined purposes. Formed to protect and promote national interests shared by member states. Examples include the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the African Union. Also called <b>IGO</b> . (JP 3-08)
internal defense and development	The full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and to protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. It focuses on building viable institutions (political, economic, social, and military) that respond to the needs of society. Also called <b>IDAD</b> . See also <b>foreign internal defense</b> . (JP 3-22)
international military education and training	Formal or informal instruction provided to foreign military students, units, and forces on a non-reimbursable (grant) basis by offices or employees of the United States, contract technicians, and contractors. Instruction may include correspondence courses; technical, educational, or informational publications; and media of all kinds. Also called <b>IMET</b> . See also <b>United States Military Service funded foreign training</b> .

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measure of effectiveness	A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. Also called <b>MOE</b> . See also <b>combat assessment; mission</b> . (JP 3-0)
measure of performance	A criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment. Also called <b>MOP</b> . (JP 3-0)
nongovernmental organization	A private, self-governing, not-for-profit organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering; and/or promoting education, health care, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and conflict resolution; and/or encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society. Also called <b>NGO</b> . (JP 3-08)
operational culture	Those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military actions that influence the culture of an area of operations. ( <i>Operational Culture for the Warfighter</i> )
operational design	The conception and construction of the framework that underpins a campaign or major operation plan and its subsequent execution. See also <b>campaign; major operation</b> . (JP 3-0)
operational environment	A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. (JP 3-0)
partner nation	Those nations that the United States works with to disrupt the production, transportation, distribution, and sale of illicit drugs, as well as the money involved with this illicit activity. Also called <b>PN</b> . (JP 3-07.4)
security assistance	Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Also called <b>SA</b> . See also <b>security assistance organization; security cooperation</b> . (JP 3-57)
security cooperation	All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation. See also <b>security assistance; security assistance organization</b> . (JP 3-07.1)

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- security force assistance      The Department of Defense activities that contribute to unified action by the US Government to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions. Also called **SFA**. (JP3-22) (Approved for inclusion in JP 1-02)
- social complexity      A function of the number and diversity of players who are involved in a project. The more parties involved in collaboration, the more socially complex it is. The more different those parties are, the more socially complex.

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