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ONE FALSE MOVE:

TRAINING DEPLOYERS IN CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS

by

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Abstract

In 2015 Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James directed that members of the Air Force be trained in cross-cultural negotiation skills before deploying. The next step is identifying who needs to receive this training, when the training should be accomplished, and how the course should be delivered. The purpose of this paper is to determine how best to answer these important questions.

Using an evaluative framework, this paper carefully examined the best way to determine what ranks and jobs in the Air Force would need the training and at what point in the Expeditionary Readiness Training program the course should be inserted. In addition, both classroom and computer-based training options were compared and evaluated to determine the best and most cost and time-effective option.

The results showed that Career Field Managers who oversee particular AFSCs should be delegated the role of determining who in their prevue should receive the training. The Air Force Negotiation Center (AFNC) should be tasked with providing these managers with guided questions to help them make that decision. Pre-existing online courseware developed by the AFNC should be used to teach these skills; the courses are already in place and allow for the most flexibility of scheduling for the member. That training should occur during the second tier of ERT, which is completed only by Airmen who have deployment taskings. By following these recommendations, the Air Force can fulfill Secretary James' direction while being mindful of budget, time, and necessity.

Section 1: Introduction

A wink. A handshake. An innocent question. In war could these small, innocuous things matter? There is stark evidence that it can matter, sometimes with devastating effects. By September of 2012, 45 NATO military members were killed in “green on blue” attacks, assaults committed by members of the Afghani military. Of those 45, 35 were deemed incidents that were not, as many assumed, Taliban-led, but instead resulted from personal grievances and misunderstandings.¹

To help alleviate the problem, the Afghanistan Defence Ministry published a guide for their forces to help them understand their cultural differences with Americans and other Western NATO forces. "Even minor cultural differences can create misunderstandings and rows... If you or your coalition partner gets angry, stay away from each other until the situation becomes normal,"² read the booklet, written and distributed to more than 190,000 Afghan National Army soldiers. The peak for these types of green-on-blue attacks was in 2012 when 15 percent of coalition deaths were attributed to them.³ Since then the rate dropped considerably, with 9.9 percent of deaths caused in 2013 and four percent in 2014. While there were 45 green-on-blue attacks in 2012, that number dropped to two in 2015.⁴ A direct cause and effect relationship cannot really be made with the information available, but one can infer that cultural education here did make some positive difference.

By this time NATO had been in Afghanistan for more than 11 years, yet the cultural divide continued to cause major issues. The pamphlet addressed items many people may not think important. “Putting one's boots on a desk, blowing one's nose, winking, taking photos, swearing and raising the middle finger were also given as examples of Western culture which

might offend Afghans. In a deeply religious Muslim country where many pray several times a day, the pamphlet urged Afghan troops not to be upset when NATO troops pass in front of them during prayer, considered disrespectful in Islam.”⁵ The goal was to simply call attention to the differences the two cultures faced. With 77 percent of the attacks identified as not related to extremism,⁶ education seemed the best plan of attack for lowering the instances of green-on-blue violence.

These seemingly minor infractions fall under the category of cross-cultural communication. An added layer to this happens when U.S. forces are not only communicating with other countries’ military members or residents, but negotiating with them. Many times military members are in a position to need information, logistics, or other help from those whose cultures are vastly different from American culture. If missteps like those above can cause such devastating results, imagine the impact of those same errors when troops are not only communicating, but negotiating, even informally, with cultural opposites. If a security patrol needed information from a tribal leader while conducting maneuvers, they must negotiate with that leader. In such situations, the local norm would be to share tea, socialize, and establish a friendly working relationship before sharing the requested intelligence. Given NATO members’ result-orientated approach, the impulse to skip such pleasantries could severely hinder operations.

In 2015 current Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James stated that the Air Force needs to train its deployers in the elements of cross-cultural negotiation (CCN) because that training will better assure the military saves money, time, and face when negotiating with foreign military members and local politicians and businessmen in a deployed environment.⁷ Those who are in a position to negotiate, either formally or informally, may be unwittingly

offending their cultural counterparts since their views of relationships, time, and face-saving, among other biases, cause them to make serious errors which can lead to suboptimum agreements.

It is now time for those who design and implement the training Air Force deployers receive to integrate Secretary James' request and add CCN training into the scope and sequence. So who, when, and how should the Air Force teach these principles? These are important points to ponder. While CCN skills will be necessary for many ranks and AFSCs, the Air Force needs to have a cost and time-effective way of teaching CCN to those who need it, and a way of identifying those who do not.

There are those who think that culture is inconsequential to negotiation strategies, maintaining that financial attractiveness or personal gain is the only issue, however that does not take into account other factors such as cultural norms, relationship building, and simple things like eye contact, personal space, and time that are different across cultures and usually set the stage for a successful negotiation. When so much of what the U.S. military does is subject to judgements from both our enemies and allies, it is imperative that the Air Force do everything it can to not only protect its reputation as a force for good, but be good stewards of taxpayer funds by not wasting them in fruitless negotiations.

This training also relates to the U.S. military's goal in deployed environments. American armed forces, along with their coalition partners, do not seek domination or annihilation of the countries they're in. For example, once major combat operations were concluded, U.S. troops in Afghanistan began training the new Afghan National Army at a military school that had once been the target of bombing campaigns.⁸ The goal of the training was to prepare the Afghanis to provide for their own security and protect themselves from the

terrorists that exist within their own borders. These modern times lead us to a different type of war which has the U.S. and its partners working with the people of these countries like Iraq and Afghanistan to drive out the terrorist organization that is attempting to take over those countries. To do their job, troops must partner with locals, not dominate them. The oft-used phrase “winning hearts and minds” perfectly sums up this tactic. Cross-cultural negotiation training is imperative to arm U.S. troops with the skills they need to work with the people of those countries toward a common and shared goal. Winning those hearts and minds would be exponentially more difficult if American troops were completely ignorant of how their cultural differences can affect their communication and negotiation with their local counterparts.

This research paper will use the evaluative framework to determine what ranks and job specialties (AFSCs) should receive mandatory training for cross-cultural negotiations. The main objective will be to look at the statement from Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James regarding the importance of teaching these principles to our deployers and determine the least expensive (in time and cost) way to deliver that information to them as well as develop a framework for Air Force leadership to guide them in the decision of who should receive it.

The beginning of this paper will explain exactly what CCN is. It will move to an explanation of how deployers are trained now, including the subjects, types of courses, and the hierarchy currently used to determine when an Airman is tasked with the training. At that point the paper will discuss the various teaching methods and platforms available for instructing deployers and evaluate the cost, in both time and money, of each. All of this information will be used to explain a framework for deciding which AFSCs and ranks should receive the training and recommendations on when the training is given, how it is given, and generally to whom it should be given.

Section 2: Background

Cultural differences during wartime are not a new phenomenon, however the friction seen today is certainly more complex than it was in the past. “During the Cold War a bias existed on the part of nations wishing to align themselves with either the East or the West. Siding with one or the other was necessary in a bi-polar world in which the major powers’ ideology competed through aligned or nonaligned states.”⁹ Smaller nations found their identity by being more like the Big Brother of their choice. It was during this time that American movies, music, and pop culture spread world-wide amongst the nations in the West. The same phenomenon was true of Eastern Bloc countries.

Since the end of the Cold War that has changed. There is now a focus on cultural and national identity. Assimilation is frowned upon. “This basic competition of cultural norms resulted in a retreat from western values in many regions of the world, becoming a source of friction rather than a means of achieving common understanding.”¹⁰ While Americans still have a generally positive favorability rating worldwide, 69 percent in the latest Pew poll,¹¹ no longer does the U.S. set the cultural pace for the rest of the world; our culture is liked, but no longer emulated like it was before.

This developing importance of cultural identity makes it now even more important for military troops and leaders to understand the cultural norms of the populaces in which they function. National and cultural pride are not zero-sum; respecting and adhering to the cultural norms of another country does in no way imply that American culture is less worthy or important. U.S. troops need to not only respect and understand these differences, but learn to use them as tools for shaping their operations. While the military arms its troops with weapons and protective gear, so too should they be armed with other, softer tools that can help them

negotiate rather than dominate.

It is first important to understand exactly what is and is not covered in the study of cross-cultural negotiations. One cannot expect to understand its impact in today's global engagements without fully comprehending what the term means. In short it means taking cross-cultural communication skills and incorporating them with solid negotiating practices.

However having a firm understanding of culture and its effects on communication is the first step.

Culture is defined as “the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.”¹² This detailed definition is helpful for explaining how culture can affect a person's ability to communicate. This wide range of sub-categories included in this definition encompasses much of what it is to be human; they affect nearly everything about a person, which ultimately affects communication styles as well.

It is important to note that the definition does not mention race or gender. Different cultures and communication styles can be affected by a person's race or gender, but do not define it. Women and men within a culture usually communicate differently on a certain level, but deep-seated cultural communication patterns go beyond sex and gender to the culture as a whole. For example in Japanese culture it has been the norm for women to use different words than men to express the same meaning. More interesting is that younger Japanese women are choosing to use the male form more often as a signal of equality. Despite these differences and more modern changes, this is all an agreed-upon part of Japanese culture as a whole.¹³

While this definition is a good starting point, it only begins to explain why cultures

communicate differently. Anthropologists divide opposing cultures into two groups: high context and low context.¹⁴ High context cultures (including much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America) are “relational, collectivist, intuitive, and contemplative.”¹⁵ This means that interpersonal relationships are highly valued by the people in these cultures. The most important first step to communicating in a high context culture is developing trust. High context cultures are collectivist; they prefer consensus, humility, and harmony over achievement. They also tend to let intuition and feelings affect their decision making and interactions.¹⁶

On the other hand, low context cultures, most notably North America and much of Western Europe, are “logical, linear, individualistic, and action-oriented.”¹⁷ People from low context cultures value facts, logic, and directness. Communicators who best reflect their low context culture are concise, efficient, and straightforward. A business deal in a low-context culture will usually end with a written, explicit contract, whereas a high-context agreement is often made with a handshake. High-context negotiators, by comparison, can sometimes “distrust contracts and be offended by the lack of trust they suggest.”¹⁸

How these cultural differences can lead to a breakdown in communication is illustrated by a Japanese businessman who described his culture’s communication style to an American. “We are a homogeneous people and do not have to speak as much as you do here. When we say one word, we understand ten, but here you have to say ten to understand one.”¹⁹ When a high-context and low-context communicator must come together to reach an agreement, if both possess even a cursory understanding of the many differences that exist between the two styles, the possibility of a better outcome increases dramatically.

The first and most central difference is the concept of time. In low-context America

time is usually seen as logical, sequential, and moving with incremental assurance. It is as a distinct unit of measure that can be saved and spent. Americans set appointments, schedule their days (sometimes to the minute), and use its measurement to show progress. In the United States almost every worker keeps a detailed schedule of appointments, meetings, and events. For many, even rest is “penciled in” on a dayplanner or calendar app on a smartphone. Americans rely on the cultural expectation that others will also “keep time” in the same way. Cell phones automatically synchronize with satellites that operate from The Atomic Clock. Punctuality and timeliness are not just admired traits; Americans’ collective days can come to a halt when some choose not to be on time. This view of time is called monochronic – a single understanding and acceptance of time.²⁰

The high-context Middle East, by contrast, sees time as fluid. Their approach is polychronic, an approach which developed as a result of the centuries-long history in the area.²¹ These cultures see their lifetimes as very small pieces in a vast timeline. What is a mere 15 minutes when their people have lived in their area for thousands of years? Many high-context cultures operate on a polychronic understanding of time. For the majority of their history, it was only possible to schedule events or meetings in general terms such as dawn, dusk, or high sun. Many cultures have kept their more relaxed view of time while the Western, low-context cultures have become more and more tightly scheduled.

This difference in the way American and Middle-Eastern cultures view time can have very swift and unfortunate consequences when members of both attempt to communicate. It can be as simple as setting a time to meet. An American will search on his calendar for an opening, agree to a time, write it down, and set an alarm. He will check his day’s schedule that morning, remember the meeting, look at the location on GPS, and determine how many

minutes He will need in order to be on time. If that meeting is to be with a Middle-Easterner, it is very likely our American will be waiting a while. It is not at all unusual for polychronic thinkers to be late, really late, by U.S. standards. Americans would see that lateness as a major sign of disrespect and become upset about the inconsiderate person with whom they are to meet. An Iraqi or Afghani, on the other hand, sees that extra 30 or 45 minutes as merely a blip of time in the grand scheme of things. As long as he shows up and works to improve his relationship with the American, that is all that matters.

Relationships are another way time can infiltrate and hinder communication. In America relationships are valued, but it is understood that not every interaction, especially those in the business community, needs to be one in which the friendship and relationship between the parties grows stronger. It is the norm for a business meeting to begin with a greeting and a handshake and then move immediately to the business at hand.

However, the Middle-Eastern mindset is one that puts great value on the building of those relationships. Their view of time shows them that they will meet the same people many times and the long-term relationship is more important than the short term need.²² These two views are diametrically opposed. When the two finally meet, the American will, in the interest of time, want to “get down to business.” The Middle-Easterner will see this as rude, and the meeting will barely begin before both parties are upset at each other.

Another variable that can affect different cultures’ ability to communicate with each other is how they view fate and personal responsibility. Americans are taught that they have the ability to be the masters of their own fate. In the U.S. it is assumed that a person can “rise above” his station to achieve his goals. However in the Middle East, fate is seen as largely pre-determined. Many hundreds of years of war, poverty, and struggle results in an acceptance of

fate and the fulfilling of destiny. This variable can surely cause conflict when attempting to communicate. If someone who believes in his ability to “adapt and overcome” crosses paths with someone who sees fate having a strong hand in determining outcomes, miscommunication is all but assured. The first person will expect decisions and actions, while the second expects a level of acceptance for the natural order of destiny. The American will see the Middle-Easterner as incapable of making a decision and lazy. The Middle-Easterner, in turn, will judge the American as having an inflated idea of his importance and being disrespectful.²³

The idea of “saving face” is not usually considered an American cultural value, but it is a prevailing idea in Middle-Eastern thinking. “Face includes ideas of status, power, courtesy, insider and outsider relations, humor, and respect. In many cultures, maintaining face is of great importance, though ideas of how to do this vary.”²⁴ To understand how this varies, it must be connected to the ideas of individualism and communitarianism. A person from a culture that values traits such as self-determination, self-reliance, and self-worth will feel empowered to take on a task and work to find a solution. However, a person from a culture which puts a greater value on an individual’s place and status within his community will be much more likely to avoid taking big steps for fear of “losing face” in that community. In fact it is not unusual for “face-saving” cultures to communicate tough messages through a third party in order to avoid confrontation and minimize any effects on the relationship.²⁵

Time, relationship, and reputation – all factor into how different cultures communicate with each other. When those communications come in the form of a negotiation, an exchange where “people voluntarily discuss their differences and attempt to reach a joint decision,”²⁶ the stakes are raised. The decisions could be about money, time, information, cooperation, or a myriad number of other topics. Regardless of the stakes, the ability for both parties to

successfully communicate with each other will have a direct impact on the success either party might achieve.

All of this knowledge of cross-cultural communication is then bridged with the study of negotiation. The Air Force teaches a negotiation approach called the Cooperative Negotiation Strategy. “Every negotiation involves some sort of task (problem) and requires the interaction of two or more people or groups of people (relationship).”²⁷ By assessing the type of relationship between the parties and the level of their motivation to solve the problem, negotiators are taught to choose one of five negotiation strategies: Cooperate, Insist, Comply, Evade, or Settle. The best outcomes collectively come from cooperative negotiations, an approach that can only be used when both motivation and trust are high. This level of trust is where the cross-cultural communication skills play a vital role. Additionally concepts like identifying the BATNA (each party’s likely course of action should negotiations fail),²⁸ the aspiration point (each party’s best case scenario), and the reservation point (the bottom line, the least each party is willing to agree to),²⁹ are all taught in conjunction with cross-cultural communication awareness. By combining all these skills, Airmen are more likely to be able to create a trusting environment in which to negotiate, which can allow for a much more positive outcome.

Many imagine all negotiations are made up of a bunch of men in power suits sitting around a boardroom table, or maybe a group of generals gathered inside the E-ring at the Pentagon. They envision a staff doing background research or preparing dossiers in order to send their leadership in prepared for high-level discussion. It is misconceptions such as these that lead many to believe that only high-ranking officers or community leaders require training to negotiate successfully. By only focusing on training the “brass,” many feel that military

members of more junior ranks are left behind to flounder. The supply driver who needs to discuss getting around a road block with a local, the security forces who rely on tribesmen for information, and the services superintendent who makes the arrangements for local food deliveries are all American military members who, while they do not fit the pre-conceived notion of a military negotiator, are in fact negotiating across culture on an almost daily basis. “There are many times when platoon leaders and platoon sergeants at roadblocks, and company and battalion commanders working in cordon and search operations, must negotiate and communicate with potential belligerents. Leaders need to know that they may be placed in a position that requires them to mediate or negotiate on the battlefield.”³⁰ It is for these reasons that the Air Force is planning on teaching their deploying members the skills necessary to successfully communicate and negotiate cross-culturally.

Section 3: Discussion

Training troops for an impending deployment is a multi-faceted project. The scope and sequence of what Airmen are tasked to do to prepare for deploying is constantly updated. The Air Force’s most recent iteration of this training was released October 15, 2015. While the accompanying Air Force Instruction that covers the new Expeditionary Readiness Program is still forthcoming, an 11-page Guidance Memorandum has been released.

The Expeditionary Readiness Program “focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required of an Airman to survive, operate and succeed in a deployed environment across the full Range of Military Operations (ROMO).”³¹ It divides the education of deployed Airmen into three strata: Basic Airman Readiness (BAR), Basic Deployment Readiness (BDR), and Advanced Deployment Readiness (ADR). The lowest tier, BAR, is the training Airmen

receive at their home base of assignment as they prepare for their postured deployment vulnerability period. Of those in that vulnerability period, only those with deployment taskings will be asked to accomplish the next level of training, BDR. Of that group any Airmen who are tasked to deploy to uncertain or hostile environments will also attend an ADR course, the highest tier of training.³²

This recent reorganization of the training program for deployers was brought about by a concern that some of the training was redundant and took too much time. "Airmen's time has always been a contentious issue," said Col. James Piel, the Air Force's chief air adviser who also oversees expeditionary readiness. "There are some people out there that are highly tasked We had to make some hard choices about what things were really the most important."³³ Basic airman readiness training used to take more than nine hours spread over two years, but this new restructuring lowers it to seven hours every three years. Over a six-year period, that means an Airman's training time would be cut from nearly 28 hours to roughly 14 hours.³⁴ The restructuring also allows Airmen to test out of coursework they have previously accomplished. In that case training time could be cut even further, as much as 77 percent, if Airmen pass all the tests allowing them to opt out.³⁵

The amount of time Airmen spend in either computer-based or classroom training in order to prepare for deployment is a real concern. The BAR level of training is computer-based and accomplished through the Advanced Distributed Learning System (ADLS).³⁶ Without official deployment taskings, Airmen are only asked to complete four ADLS courses to be considered current. Once deployment taskings are received, Airmen transition to the next level of training, BDR. This courseware set is made up of limited hands-on training as well as additional computer-based courses in ADLS and Joint Knowledge Online (JKO).³⁷

It is the second and third levels of instruction, BDR and ADR, which are adjusted in relation to certain information included on an Airman's deployment tasking. Some courses are necessary only for certain AFSCs, deployment locations, or units of assignment. Therefore it is already a routine practice to identify the need for some Airmen to take certain courses over and above the norm.^{38 39} These decisions are mandated by the Expeditionary Readiness Council, "an O-6 (or civilian equivalent) body that provides Expeditionary Readiness (ER) policy and guidance recommendations to the ER [senior authority] to meet AF ER requirements."⁴⁰ This construct is designed to establish Air Force advocacy of Expeditionary Readiness initiatives and to help guide the choices that each career field or theater makes when deciding what training should be given and to whom.⁴¹

Airmen assigned to either Iraq or Afghanistan are directed at this training level to take a culture-specific course on ADLS designed by the Air Force Culture and Language Center.⁴² These two-hour-long courses are web-enabled PowerPoint presentations with narration and cover the history, social and religious structure, and general information about the countries. They also spend a good deal of time educating Airmen on cross-cultural communication issues.⁴³ The courses have no assessment. That means it is possible for an Airman to press play on the course in ADLS and multi-task through the presentation. There is no accountability built in to the course to assure he has retained any of the information.⁴⁴ Airmen assigned to countries other than Iraq or Afghanistan are directed to take a country-specific course offered through the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLI).⁴⁵ There are more than 80 countries represented in the list of available courses. It is important to note that these courses do not cover any cross-cultural communications issues at all. Their purpose is to familiarize the deployer with the country he or she will be in, but in terms of economy, religion, and

geography. There is nothing in the DLI courseware that would prepare an Airman to be able to communicate or negotiate successfully with a member of a culture different from American culture.⁴⁶ The courses in the final level of training, ADR, are held in-residence and are reserved for Airmen whose deployment locations are considered hostile. Those courses are all hands-on and focus on field craft and combat.⁴⁷

There are a number of ways training can be accomplished. While some courses in the ERP are hands-on classroom instruction, most are delivered via various computer-based training platforms. The three sites that are used at this time are ALDS, JKO, and the country-specific courses hosted on the DLI Web site. The first site, ADLS is an Air Force specific training platform. Most of its content can only be accessed with a Common Access Card (CAC) from a .mil location, although there are a few courses which Airmen can access from home with a CAC-enabled computer.⁴⁸ JKO is a .mil Web site that, although CAC login is available, also has the ability to be entered with a verified user name and password. In addition it has an accompanying mobile app for use on smart phones and tablets. The courseware is vast and covers both military and government agency topics.⁴⁹ The DLI Web site is completely open and available to anyone. No login is necessary to access the courses.⁵⁰

DLI courses are simple in their design. Each has a series of pages to read and pictures to look at with a true or false assessment at the end. The ADLS Web site has more functionality. The courses can incorporate slides, video, audio mid-session assessments, and “clickable” elements within the lecture itself. Joint Knowledge Online has the most functionality. The courses on JKO tend to be more interactive and entertaining; game-based scenarios can be used as a form of assessment, for example. Much of what is done in any computer-based training module is lecture, direct instruction. Educational research has shown that the more interactive

lecture is, the better and deeper the retention of the subject being taught.⁵¹ Games, quizzes, and scenarios help keep the student engaged. If the goal of the class is retention of the topic, then interactive computer-based instruction has a much higher success rate.

It is apparent that the ERC and those whom they advise have opted to save classroom instruction only for times when it is completely necessary. Weapons training, field craft, and combat-related topics are next to impossible to cover adequately via computer-based training platforms. Even Self Aid and Buddy Care covers part of its coursework as a computer-based module accomplished during the BAR training level and saves the hands-on classroom section for the BDR training timeline used for those who are actually holding deployment taskings.^{52 53} Waiting to do some of the training for this time allows for targeting the expense of both time and money on the troops who actually need it. Classroom training is more expensive, more time-consuming, and less flexible. Airmen tasked with completing classroom courses need to leave their work station and open up time to attend the class. The class needs a teacher who has also had to clear his schedule. Where a computer-based course can be done at whatever time is most advantageous to the student, a classroom course is rarely done at a time that is convenient for anyone. Classroom instruction also does not allow Airmen to have the ability to test out of the course, an easy task for computer-based modules. With budget constraints at the forefront of the decision-making process in any area of military planning, opting for computer-based training, when feasible, is clearly the prudent choice.

Section 4: Methodology and Explanation of Evaluation Criteria

The research conducted to complete this paper distinguishes between the different population groups of deployed Airmen, different teaching platforms, and different tiers of training accomplished to prepare these Airmen for their deployments. It also examines the advantages and disadvantages of each option within the HOW, WHO, and WHEN categories in order to make concrete recommendations.

Section 5: Evaluation and Analysis

The current state of pre-deployment training has all members with deployment taskings, regardless of rank or AFSC, being trained via computer-based modules on country-specific information, some of which (Iraq and Afghanistan) cover elements of cross-cultural communication. The training is accomplished at the BDR level of the training hierarchy. This arrangement does not fulfill Secretary James' request that cross-cultural negotiation strategies be covered during this pre-deployment period.

Evaluating the different ways of teaching this material took into account time, cost, accessibility, and the efficacy of the training itself. The different options include an ADLS-based course, a JKO-based course, and a classroom course taught at either the BDR-level (home station) or the ADR-level (TDY location). A thorough assessment of the ER classroom-based courses shows that the designers of the updated ERP have saved classroom-based learning for times when there is no other way to accomplish the task. Examples are the hands-on portion of Self Aid and Buddy Care and firearms training. The high-cost of this type of training as well as the inflexibility of its scheduling and accessibility make it both cost and time

prohibitive. Because there is no hands-on component necessary for CCN skill training, a classroom-based course would not be the preferred delivery method. In addition, studies have shown that the efficacy of computer-based training (CBT) is either identical or sometimes even higher than classroom training, depending on the type of information being taught. A 2009 meta-analysis of a collection of studies that compared computer-based courses with classroom teaching showed that for factual knowledge, CBT can be as much as 6 percent more effective than equivalent classroom teaching of the same material. For procedural training, the type that teaches the application of knowledge, CBT was equally as effective as the classroom. The analysis also shows that trainees themselves were equally satisfied with the quality of their training, regardless of the platform.⁵⁴ In every measure CBT either equals or outperforms classroom training for material without a hands-on component. It is cheaper, easier, and as effective.

Both ADLS and JKO are online courseware platforms. The ADLS Web site is already home to the culture courses for Iraq and Afghanistan. There is currently no CCN course on the ADLS site, so to use it would mean designing and creating the course from scratch. Although there are ways of increasing retention in ADLS classes with tools like multiple choice quizzes and tests, many of the courses, including the culture classes, have no assessment built in. Therefore the retention level could be low. The ADLS site is also less accessible for members. The member must log in with his Common Access Card from a .mil computer to access most of the classes.

By comparison, the JKO site is not only more accessible with a login and password option, but it also allows a member to access a mobile site on a phone or tablet as well. More importantly there are already CCN courses created by the Air Force Center for Negotiation on

JKO. These courses were built in 2014 and cost approximately \$750,000 to create.⁵⁵ The two-hour long courses are specially tailored to members who are deploying. There are three courses; however, each is identical for the first half. That section covers the Cooperative Negotiation Strategy and general cross-cultural negotiation information. The second half of each course is different and tailored to a specific deployment type: civil affairs, force protection, and humanitarian assistance. The JKO courses are also interactive and have both quizzes and a scenario-based assessment at the conclusion. If retention of the information is a goal the Air Force wants to achieve, the JKO course has the best design to achieve it.

Using the criteria of time, cost, accessibility, and retention of material, the JKO-based courses in CCN that already exist are the best delivery method for this type of training. The two-hour class time is acceptable, the cost is negligible since the courses have already been created, it is the most accessible, and its design allows for the best retention.

Assuming that the JKO courses are used to accomplish CCN training for deployers, the timing of that training needs to be addressed. The lowest level of training, BAR is accomplished by members who are in their postured AEF cycle. The next level, BDR, is for Airmen who have actually received their deployment tasking. Both levels have computer-based training modules assigned, but it is only the BDR level that can pinpoint deployment location and mission for the Airmen. The current ERP has Airmen waiting until the BDR tier to do their culture and country specific training. It makes the most sense for the CCN training to take place at this level as well. In addition to knowing the location of deployment, troops can best select which of the three mission-specific CCN courses to use in JKO once their tasking has been received.

The third part of the question is the most difficult to evaluate. Who needs to be trained in

CCN skills? Airmen can be divided into a few different population groups. Rank and AFSC are the two major delineators. What needs to be evaluated is what ranks and AFSCs are most likely to need cross-cultural negotiation training? What tasks might they be asked to perform or what interactions with cultural counterparts might they participate in that would be enhanced by this training? There are a few obvious answers.

The officer corps is, as a whole, likely to need this training. A 2006 study out of West Point interviewed more than 40 company grade officers who had just returned from Iraq about the frequency and substance of their negotiating activities there. “17 percent of respondents reported having to develop agreements with Iraqi military or police daily; 50 percent reported having to do so once or twice a week; 14 percent reported having to do so once or twice a month, and 19 percent reported never having to develop agreements with Iraqi military or police. Respondents also reported frequent negotiation with Iraqi civilians. 17 percent reported daily, 40percent reported once or twice a week, 29 percent reported twice a month or less, and only 12 percent reported never having to develop agreements with Iraqi civilians (see Figure 1⁵⁶).”⁵⁷

Figure 1: Study Results – Army personnel negotiations while deployed

Frequency of negotiation engagements	USA personnel reporting negotiation with Iraqi military or police	USA personnel reporting negotiations with Iraqi civilians
Daily	7 (17%)	7 (17%)
Once or twice a week	21 (50%)	17 (40%)
Once or twice a month	6 (14%)	12 (29%)
Never	8 (19%)	5 (12%)

With this level of interaction with host-nation counterparts, it is imperative that the Air Force arm its officer corps with the skills necessary to effectively negotiate.

However, it cannot be assumed that only officers will interact with foreign military,

police, or civilians. There are some enlisted positions that by their very nature are in a position to have task-oriented interaction with locals. Security forces and logistics readiness troops are two of these jobs. Constantly “outside the wire,” these Airmen and sergeants often need information, help, and guidance from host-nation military and civilians. The CCN skills would greatly enhance their ability to do their jobs on a daily basis, especially when help or information is needed right away. By making them aware of the different cultural sensitivities and the negotiation strategies that can bridge that gap, these troops will be less likely to unknowingly offend those who can help them.

There are other considerations, however. Sometimes plans do not come together as intended, and these occurrences can put Airmen in negotiation situations many would not assume they would be in. This type of situation happened during the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom. In October 2001 U.S. forces were tasked with opening one of many airbases in Southwest Asia (SWA). This base had previously been used during the first Gulf War, so its infrastructure was already in place. However, much needed to be done with host-nation military and civilians to get the base up and running. Air transport availability, the original locations of the deploying units, and differing abilities of the units to prepare quickly for the deployment resulted in the advanced party (ADVON) being delayed. The first troops to arrive were “a security forces squad, two enlisted transportation troops, and a small civil engineering contingent.”⁵⁸ They remained the only forces for several days. The senior officer was a security forces major with no negotiation training or experience. “The pressing issue was the actual process of how and in what manner the needs of the U.S. were met. Negotiating with the host nation on the base’s development was the dominant activity. Everything from water delivery times to what types of vehicles were allowed on the flight line were subject to

negotiation with the host nation. Even after the ADVON team arrived, this trend continued.”⁵⁹ The only person with any negotiation training or experience was a contracting officer assigned to the ADVON team.

“Senior NCOs found themselves negotiating with senior host nation officials on issues such as U.S. security forces patrol boundaries and whether wine was allowed for Catholic services. The host nation’s culture valued negotiating and saw it as integral to their daily routine. Price for water? Negotiable. Dress for females? Negotiable. Flying times, aircraft parking spaces? Negotiable. It was not that the host nation disputed the U.S. needs or was uncooperative; they were firm allies. However, the method of fulfilling requirements was subject to constant negotiation. Inefficient U.S. negotiations had a direct effect on the mission.”⁶⁰ Had Air Force leadership needed to decide whom to train in CCN skills, many affected by this scenario would not necessarily have been selected to receive the training. While it is important to mandate required training only for those who need it, careful thought must be put into making that decision. While it is easy to assume certain ranks and AFSCs will not be tasked with negotiating with cultural opposites, the best laid plans sometimes do not work out. “Flexibility is the key to Air Power” is a commonly heard axiom throughout the Air Force. The same principle which makes that statement hold true is the same one that points to the idea of training all Airmen in these important skills.

Another factor that should be considered is assignment with multi-national forces. Many U.S. deployments and engagements include assignment alongside other NATO and foreign military. In the interest of unit cohesion and esprit de corps within these units, the Air Force should consider what skills Airmen of any rank or position might need when working along with other countries’ military. Currently 23 NATO member countries contribute military

forces,⁶¹ and their cultural differences run the gamut. An American Airman has a much greater chance of integrating successfully in these multi-national assignments if he has been given the tools to both communicate and negotiate successfully with people across the cultural spectrum.

Section 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Because of the Secretary of the Air Force's mandate, the question is not should we train Airmen in cross-cultural negotiations. That decision has already been made. Now is the time to decide who, specifically, needs this training, when that training needs to happen, and how to accomplish it successfully. Before adding any sort of training to the pre-deployment line up, monetary cost, time cost, and efficacy of training need to be taken into careful consideration.

The Air Force assigns Career Field Managers (CFM) who "ensure development, implementation, and maintenance of Career Field Education and Training Plans for their assigned Air Force specialties."⁶² It is these professionals whom this paper recommends be tasked with deciding who receives CCN training before deployment. While there may be many at the Air Force headquarters level who could make recommendations about which ranks require this training, it is the CFMs who know better which ranks within that particular AFSC would benefit from it. In order to assist the CFMs with this decision, the Air Force Negotiation Center should create a set of questions the CFMs can use to help make the proper determination. The following questions should be asked at a minimum. Allowances for supplementary questions decided upon by the CFMs would, of course, be welcome, dependent on their circumstances:

1. How often will this rank/AFSC/billet be in a position to interact with someone from a differing cultural perspective?

2. How often might that interaction involve even an informal negotiation (for information, help, goods or services, etc.)?
3. While deployed, could this rank/AFSC/billet improve his or her job performance by including training in cross-cultural negotiation?

The recommendation would be to err on the side of caution and require CCN training in any case that might elicit positive replies to the questions above. It is important to make clear to the CFMs that their decisions about recommending CCN training need not be across the board for any category. For instance, it may be determined that the majority of E-3s and below in that particular AFSC would have almost no need for this training, but the CFM could still elect to require it for a handful of E-3s who, because of the certain circumstances of their deployed job, would need it.

Because this paper recommends that rank, AFSC, and deployed billet determine the need for CCN training, it also recommends that the CCN training be accomplished in the BDR level of readiness training. It is this level that occurs after an Airman has been tasked with deployment. This permits the CFMs to have the most accurate data to use in deciding to require an Airman to complete the courses. This also allows the Air Force to keep to a minimum the additional training time adding CCN courses would necessitate. While no doubt the skills taught are important, by targeting the education to those with actual deployment taskings, the Air Force loses the least amount of man hours to additional training during their pre-deployment uptick in coursework.

The major factors that should determine how the courses are taught are time, cost, accessibility and efficacy. As was previously discussed, a comparison of classroom training vs. computer-based training shows that CBT is less expensive, easier to schedule, more accessible

and equally, if not more, effective. There are a number of CBT platforms the Air Force has available. However, the only platform that already has well-designed and tailored CCN courses on it is the Joint Knowledge Online Web site. These existing courses have already been paid for, designed, and implemented. Each course requires roughly two hours to complete (members only take the course designed for their deployment mission type), contain assessments that engage the student and elicit participation, and have three separate deployment focuses that allow the type of training to be as prescriptive as possible. It is also important to note that the JKO site is the most accessibly CBT platform available. With non-.mil, non-CAC, and mobile device availability, members have the most flexibility for scheduling and accomplishing the training. For these reasons this paper strongly recommends that the existing JKO-based CCN courses be used to implement the vision Secretary James has for deployers to receive cross-cultural negotiation training. While using these already-paid-for courses keeps costs for this program to a bare minimum, it also makes the Air Force good stewards of the taxpayer's money in a different way. Hundreds of thousands of dollars and many man-hours went into designing and creating these courses. If they are not used for their intended purpose, all that time and money was essentially wasted.

The question is not "if" the Air Force needs to train its deploying members in cross-cultural negotiations. Secretary James has already made that decision. By using existing computer-based courses, scheduling the courses at a time that is appropriate, and using existing administrative structures within the Air Force assignment system to select who is required to take the courses, the Air Force can move forward with the secretary's requirement. By doing so, the Air Force can provide a highly useful set of cultural tools to its members while remaining good stewards of taxpayer money and Airmen's time.

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