Religion and Other Cultural Variables in Modern Operational Environments

A Monograph

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Accounting for religion and other cultural aspects of the operational environment continues to be a challenge for the United States military. The basis for this is scientific rationalism embedded in military problem solving processes. It is also a reflection of the US cultural preference to separate matters of government (conflict) from matters of faith and culture. The belief in this separation is largely a Western phenomenon and is not universal. This monograph proposes that this American mindset inhibits the development of doctrine that addresses these factors; therefore, it may prevent the understanding of future operational environments. This is significant because according to The Joint Operational Environment, The World Through 2030 and Beyond, by United States Joint Forces Command; future conflicts are likely to be dominated by religious and cultural factors. Accordingly, this monograph asked a series of questions directly related to the subject. The first was, "are religious and cultural variables relevant in modern operational environments?" Individual case studies of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Soviet-Afghan War, and US involvement in Iraq demonstrate the importance of these variables in modern contexts. The second question asked, "How well does US doctrine account for these variables?" An examination of pre-OIF operations and intelligence doctrine demonstrated that it did not adequately address these areas. An examination of new doctrine like FM 3-24 revealed an encouraging recognition of religious and cultural factors however it also demonstrated that more work needs to be done to account for these factors in future operational environments. The final question asked, "How can military forces account for and understand these variables?" The author surveyed several theorists from both inside and outside the military establishment for ideas about how to incorporate these factors in future operational environments. The final portion of this monograph discusses recommendations that may increase future understanding of religious and cultural factors. Recommendations include, and institutional acknowledgement of religion and other cultural factors as key in modern operational environments, modifications to joint and service doctrine to account for these factors, and the establishment of a cultural contact center, staffed by theologians and social science specialists that can provide timely and practical input to military forces or other governmental agencies as they begin to shape and refine their understanding of the operational environments in which they will operate.

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Abstract

RELIGION AND OTHER CULTURAL VARIABLES IN MODERN OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS by MAJ Brant D. Hoskins, US Army, 61 pages.

Accounting for religion and other cultural aspects of the operational environment continues to be a challenge for the United States military. The basis for this is scientific rationalism embedded in military problem solving processes. It is also a reflection of the US cultural preference to separate matters of government (conflict) from matter of faith and culture. The belief in this separation is largely a Western phenomenon and not universal. This monograph proposes that this American mindset inhibits the development of doctrine that addresses this phenomenon; therefore, it may prevent understanding of future operational environments. This is significant because according to *The Joint Operational Environment (JOE), the World through 2030 and Beyond*, by United States Joint Forces Command(USJFCOM), future conflicts are likely to be dominated by religious and cultural factors.

Accordingly, this monograph asked a series of questions directly related to the subject. First, are religions and cultural variables relevant in modern operational environments? An examination of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Soviet-Afghan War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) demonstrated that these variables were central to those conflicts. The examination reveals that one could gain a working understanding of the conflicts by examining secular aspects of the conflicts alone. However, when religious and cultural variables were added, a more complete understanding of the conflicts emerged.

Second, having established that religion and culture were integral in modern conflict, the monograph then asks, "How well did doctrine provide for an understanding of these variables?" An examination of key Joint and Army doctrine that was in place prior to OIF revealed that while it acknowledged the importance of culture and religion it offered little in the way of practical guidance for how to obtain more than a superficial understanding of each. While pre-OIF doctrine did not adequately cover these topics, the recent addition of FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* as well as anticipated changes in forthcoming doctrine represent an encouraging trend reversal. However, much more is needed in order to prevent erroneous assessments of future operational environments.

The third question asks, "What steps are necessary to account for religious and cultural factors in future operational environments?" The answer to this question is three-fold. The first is cognitive acceptance of these factors. We need to accept the idea that religion and culture are integral -- especially in modern operational environments. Second are doctrinal changes that provide practical guidance for how planners should account for religious and cultural factors. Finally, organizational changes are needed that can provide war fighters with relevant and practical expertise, such as that offered by anthropologists, theologians, sociologists, economists and the like.

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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of major combat operations of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), a large question loomed in the air, “What next?” As combat forces on the ground tried to determine their roles in the post-conflict environment, a myriad of unexpected problems confronted them. Looting and sectarian strife along with a host of other problems that had not been anticipated in initial estimates became commonplace. These estimates had focused on how to defeat the Iraqi Army and capture the decisive point of Baghdad in order to topple the regime. Over the next year, the power void that United States (US) forces created began to fill with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) at the national level while traditional tribal structures and religious factions began to assume control at regional and local levels. Over the period of some months, the religious factions surfing on the wave of global Salafism began to use their influence through coercion, intimidation, and Islamic appeal to foment numerous insurgencies against the CPA and the fledgling government supported by US forces. The US government was slow to recognize and award this movement with the title insurgency or insurgencies likely to deny their credibility. In many cases, leaders and policy makers only reluctantly acknowledged the religious aspects of insurgent actions, rhetoric, and justification, often calling insurgents “former regime elements or anti-Iraqi forces.” This failure to acknowledge the role that religion came to play in this conflict was not surprising. However, an examination of Islam’s modern experience and religious narratives may have helped leaders to better appreciate the operational environment (OE) in which they were intimately involved.

Arguably, the failure to appreciate the importance of religion as a vital component of the operational environment is a natural extension of the Western belief in the separation of church and state and the secular nature of Western political thought. As an institution of the government, the military shares this value in principle and practice. This belief combined with a strong propensity to “mirror-image,” or ascribe ones own values on someone else or some other

organization, led planners to assign the value of separation of church and state into a context where it simply did not belong. In the case of Iraq, as with many other Muslim countries, Islam has not only been a religion but a way of life that influences everything from government, law, agriculture, to warfare, and others. Understanding these factors and how they related to US policy and military action might have been very beneficial for US forces on the eve of OIF however, they received only minimal attention.[1]

The Joint Operational Environment (JOE), the World through 2030 and Beyond, by United States Joint Forces (USJFCOM), painted a picture of future conflict that revolved around twelve "critical variables." Key among these was culture which it defined as a "system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and one another." It further portrayed a world in which those who felt victimized or threatened by change would gravitate toward radical and fundamental religious beliefs as a defense against US culture.[2] *In Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington endorsed this notion by asserting that conflict between Islam and the West was likely to continue in the future as it has for the past fourteen centuries.[3] If the expectation is that religion will be such an integral part of future conflict, then it is incumbent upon leaders, planners, and soldiers to understand religion and other key aspects of culture and how they shape the operational environments in which they will operate.

This monograph proposes that institutional and doctrinal deficiencies within the US military that prevent adequate understanding of religion and culture as key components of the OE. These deficiencies include a doctrinal failure to address these variables in other than superficial terms, Cold-War era conceptual tools that focus on conventional threat models versus

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[1]Colonel Steven Rotkoff, Deputy Chief of Intelligence, Combined Forces Land Component Command, 2001-2003, Interview by author, 7 March 2007, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

[2]US Joint Forces Command, *The Joint Operational Environment: The World Through 2030 and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 19.

[3]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 212.

more relevant influences in the operational environment like religion and organizational limitations that prevent religious and cultural understanding. Accordingly, this monograph examines these issues by asking three questions. The first question is: Does religion play a prominent role in modern warfare? Secondly, it asks: Does current doctrine sufficiently account for religion as a factor in the modern OE? The final question is: What can be done to improve processes and organizations to better account for the presence of religion and culture in the OE?

Methodology

To answer the first research question; Does religion play a prominent role in modern warfare?, this study presents three case studies of modern conflict in the Middle East; the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the Soviet-Afghan conflict of the 1980s; and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The case studies examine both secular and religious aspects of the conflicts as a technique to demonstrate how understanding religious aspects of the OE may enhance understanding. The studies are then followed by a cross case analysis to extract and examine points common among all of the cases and to examine their suitability for application against the future conflict in the region that is predicted by the *JOE*. In addition, the case studies may also suggest the limited utility of secular constructs to illustrate what may be the most significant aspect of the modern OE in the Middle East.

The paper next examines Joint Force and US Army doctrine in place at the beginning of OIF to determine how well it described religious aspects of conflict. The monograph then examines new doctrine and concepts that have emerged since OIF began in an attempt to evaluate the US doctrine's suitability for understanding religious aspects of future conflict as predicted by the *JOE*. The study then transitions to examine theories that provide ideas about how to fill in the doctrinal gaps identified in the previous analysis. Contributing theorists range from cultural anthropologists, ethnographers to active and retired military officers, as well as businessmen and clergy. The study concludes by answering the research questions and proposing a set of possible

modifications to doctrine, organization, and training models that may enhance the military's ability to understand and operate in environments where religion is a prominent variable.

Scope

This study focuses on religion to make a point about its importance in the OE. This is not to suggest that one can achieve an understanding of the OE in religious terms alone but that it is positively a critical variable in some contexts. Religion, as an aspect of culture, is only one variable that may or may not be a significant part of any particular environment and should receive due and objective consideration. In the Middle East, religion appears to be a central theme worthy of this consideration. The intent of this monograph is not to advocate one religious position over another or to conduct an in depth analysis of each but merely to demonstrate that considering religious beliefs may provide for better understanding in particular OEs.

PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT: JUDAISM AND ISLAM

Even though the US government is not directly involved in this conflict, it provides a useful example for the relevance of religion in modern conflict and how a religious understanding of the operational environment might be beneficial to leaders and planners. This conflict is a particularly useful model because it not only examines two religions that have competed with each other for several millennia but because of Western involvement in the modern dialogue. This involvement has far-reaching effects and implications that one cannot fully appreciate by examining it through secular aspects of the conflict alone. To illustrate this point, the author briefly examines this conflict through a secular narrative followed by Jewish and Muslim religious narratives that may add clarity to a complex situation.

Secular Narrative: A Common View of the Conflict

Near the end of World War I, France and Britain considered how to divide the Turkish Empire. British and French diplomats drafted a secret document commonly referred to as the "Sykes-Picot Agreement." Sykes-Picot assured both Britain and France large portions of the Ottoman Empire upon the War's end. These territories included the modern Muslim countries of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, and parts of Saudi Arabia. This agreement called for Britain to actively administer areas in Palestine and Jordan while France would actively administer Lebanon and Syria.[4]

Even as Britain and France were negotiating Sykes-Picot, Britain sought Arab assistance to defeat Ottoman forces in the Middle East. T. E. Lawrence relayed British offers of sovereignty to Arab leaders in return for assistance against the Ottomans.[5] At almost the same time, United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour declared in a letter to Lord Rothschild, a leader in the British Zionism movement, that Britain supported the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine and would "use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object." While the Balfour Declaration acknowledged the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population of Palestine, it set the stage for a seemingly irreconcilable conflict that exists to this day.[6]

At the end of World War I, Britain and France with the blessing of the League of Nations took control of their respective mandates.[7] Shortly after their intervention, the British began to take action upon the Balfour Declaration by allowing an annual quota of Jews to immigrate to

[4]Francois-Georges Picot and Mark Sykes, 15-16 May 1916: The Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1996, Available from http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/1916/sykespicot.html; Internet; accessed on 24 February 2007.

[5]T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (London: M. Pike and H. J. Hodgson, 1926), 26.

[6]Clifford A. Wright, *Facts and Fables: The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London and New York, NY: Kegan Paul International, 1989), 186.

[7]Ibid., 189.

Palestine.[8] They kept the annual immigration to a relatively low number so as not alarm the Palestinian Arabs and even curtailed immigration in the mid-1920s to address Arab concerns.[9] However, in the years between 1919 and 1948, the Jewish population of Palestine increased by nearly 470,000 and stood roughly at 650,000 by 1948.[10] By contrast, the Arab population of Palestine at the time stood at approximately 1,300,000.[11] Neither the Palestinian Jews nor Arabs favored these immigration policies, the Arabs felt that immigration policy was too liberal while the Jews believed that it was too restrictive. From 1936 to 1939, the Palestinian Arabs rose in open revolt attacking both British forces and Jewish settlements.[12]

After World War II and largely as a result of the Holocaust, Jewish immigration to Palestine increased much to the dismay of British authorities who attempted to control influx through strict quotas. At one point, the British tried to halt the flow altogether but were largely unsuccessful due to illegal immigration. Ultimately, Jewish nationalists revolted against these restrictive policies. The most visible of all the terrorist attacks occurred against the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946. Menachem Begin, who was later to become the Prime Minister of Israel, led the attack.[13]

As the violence between Arabs, Jews, and the British escalated, the United Nations developed a partition plan that called for splitting Palestine into Arab and Jewish controlled areas while Jerusalem would fall under an international mandate.[14] Many Palestinian Jews agreed in principle to the plan although acceptance was not universal. Menachem Begin, for example,

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[8]Mitchell Bard, British Restrictions on Jewish Immigration, Available from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/mandate.html; Internet; accessed on 25 February 2007.

[9]Joseph J. Zasloff, *Great Britain and Palestine; A Study of the Problem Before the United Nations* (München: Verlagshaus der Amerikanischen Hochkommission, 1952), 9.

[10]MidEast Web, Israel--Territory Occupied in the Six Day War, Available from http://www.mideastweb.org/israelafter1967.htm; Internet; accessed on 23 February 2007.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Michael J. Cohen, *The Origins and Evolution of the Arab-Zionist Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 90.

[13]George Rosie, *The Directory of International Terrorism* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1986), 68.

[14]United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution Adopted on the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question*, Special sess., 181, 29 November 1947.

rejected the idea because he held that Jerusalem was Israel's eternal capital and would not give control over to anyone other than Jews.[15] Palestinian Arabs also rejected the plan because it gave the Jewish minority a disproportionately large amount of good quality land. Surprisingly, the British also rejected the plan citing Arab and Jewish failure to agree on its terms and conditions. Additionally, they refused to share responsibility of their mandate with the UN. In exasperation, with Palestinian and Jewish resistance, as well as international pressure, the British announced their intention to terminate their mandate on 15 May 1948.[16]

Just hours before the British mandate expired, David Ben-Gurion, a member of the Jewish Peoples Council, announced the establishment of the modern State of Israel from the steps of the Museum of Art in Tel Aviv.[17] Minutes after this announcement, the US and several other countries recognized the State of Israel while several other countries were to follow suit in the days afterward.[18] Even while many countries clamored to recognize the new state, five of Israel's Arab neighbors were preparing for an invasion.

This invasion launched what was known as the "War of Independence" to the Israelis and "The Disaster" to the Palestinian Arabs and ushered in an era of conflict that has waxed and waned to the present day. In addition to this conflict, there have been no less than five wars between Israel and her neighbors to include, The Suez War (1956), The Six Day War (1967), The War of Attrition (1970), The Yom Kippur War (1973), and The Lebanon War (1982). Several smaller conflicts have also erupted between Israel and either internal dissidents or non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah. These include both First and Second "Intifadas" as well as the 2006 Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon.

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[15]Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 25.

[16]Zasloff, 80.

[17]The Jewish Peoples Council, The Declaration of the Establishment of Israel, 1948, Available from http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Declaration%20of%20Establishment%20of%20State%20of%20Israel; Internet; accessed on 22 February 2007.

[18]Harry S. Truman, Presidential Memorandum, 1948, Available from http://www.jewishvirtual library.org/jsource/History/recog.html; Internet; accessed on 25 February 2007.

A brief examination of grievances may add clarity to the ongoing conflict. As for the neighboring countries that originally attacked Israel in May 1948, their grievances were simple in that they felt that Palestine was an Arab territory which should be administered by the Arab majority and that a Jewish state had no right to exist on the land.[19] Two subsequent Arab grievances grew out of Israeli victories in the earlier conflicts. The first was Israeli occupation of territory that had previously belonged to the Arab countries; these areas included the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip (Egypt), the Golan Heights (Syria), and the West Bank (Jordan).[20] Israel also continued to displace Palestinian Arab residents from their traditional homes within Israel and the occupied territories, largely to make room for Jewish immigrants as well as for security reasons. While the Israeli government relinquished control of the Sinai on 25 April 1982 and the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority on 13 September 2005, they still retain possession of the Golan Heights and the West Bank, in which they have pursued aggressive settlement policies.[21]

The original Israeli grievance is primarily a matter of security. Immediately after David Ben-Gurion declared Israeli independence, five neighboring countries attacked the new state and it has been under hostile threat ever since. While Israel successfully defeated these attacks, it felt vulnerable to future aggression for want of strategic depth. Territorial gains in the Six Day War (Sinai, Golan, West Bank) largely alleviated this concern. While Israel has returned some of the territory gained in the Six Day War, it stills retains the West Bank and Golan Height ostensibly to ensure this strategic depth against future aggression. Additionally, Israel continues its aggressive settlement policy in these territories to accommodate an ever-increasing population of Jewish immigrants.

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[19]Zasloff, 129-130.

[20]MidEast Web.

[21]Government of Israel, Ministry of Interior, Israeli Settlement and International Law, 2001, Available from http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/guide%20to%20the%20peace%20process/israeli%20settlements%20and%20international%20law; Internet; accessed on 25 February 2007.

This brief narrative provided a general description of events that have taken place in Palestine since 1948 and explained in secular terms many reasons for why the conflict continues to this day. It did not, however, address other relevant considerations in the OE that compelled the antagonists to fight as viciously and determined as each has throughout the history of the conflict. In order to gain a better understanding of this veracity, one must examine all of the variables in the OE that motivate the belligerents; two such variables in this case are Judaism and Islam.

Religious and Ideological Considerations

In the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Judaism and Islam represent the primary religious beliefs of most of the antagonists. Each possesses an extensive body of doctrine and generally held beliefs that motivate adherents to fight over Palestine. This is not to suggest that all believers are ultra-orthodox nor that it must be the sole reason for the conflict, however, each religion significantly contributes to the core cultural values in each society which in turn may partially explain why fighting has been so prolonged and vicious. Understanding these values and the religious beliefs that motivate them will provide a more complete understanding of the OE. The following examination provides a sampling of both historical and religious narratives that shape these beliefs in this case.

Abram, son of Terah, was living with his wife and family in Haran (modern Syria) when HaShem (God) called upon him to leave that place and travel to a country that HaShem would show him.[22] Abram took his family and possessions and moved south into Canaan (modern Israel). While Abram rested in a place called Shechem, HaShem appeared to him and said, "Unto thy seed (descendants), I will give this land;" whereupon, Abram built an altar on that spot to

[22]The Holy Scripture: The Tanakh, Jewish Publication Society, 1917, Bereshit 12:1, Available from http://www. jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Bible/jpstoc.html; Internet; accessed on 8 March 2007.

commemorate the occasion.[23] After living in Egypt for a time due to a famine in Canaan, Abram returned to Canaan where once again HaShem promised the land to Abram and his descendants.[24] On two more occasions, HaShem met with Abram to confirm the covenant that the land of Canaan would be an everlasting possession for his offspring.[25]

Abram had been concerned about who would receive this inheritance because his wife Sarai had been unable to have children. As a result, Sarai took matters into her own hands and presented her Egyptian handmaiden, Hagar, to Abram so that she might produce him an heir.[26] Hagar conceived and later gave birth to a son that Abram named Ishmael. Abram loved Ishmael very much and assumed that he would be the heir but HaShem had a different plan. First of all, he changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah because they would become the "father" and "mother" of "many nations." Second, he told Abraham that Sarah would give birth to a son that he was to name Isaac and that the covenant between HaShem and Abraham would pass to Isaac and not Ishmael as Abraham had expected.[27] Abraham seemed frustrated by this because he loved his son Ishmael and pled Ishmael's case before HaShem. HaShem granted that Ishmael would be fruitful and produce a "great nation" but also reasserts that his covenant with Abraham would pass to Isaac.[28] As a seal of this covenant, Abraham circumcised all of the males in his household, a tradition that Jews practice to this very day.

In the time since Abraham's death, Israel's fortunes waxed and waned, its high point came during the reign of King Solomon while its low points included the destruction of King Solomon's Temple in 586 BCE[29] and the destruction of Herod's Temple by the Romans in 70

[23]Ibid., Bereshit 12:7.
[24]Ibid., Bereshit 13:14-15.
[25]Ibid., Bereshit 15:18, 17:8.
[26]Ibid., Bereshit 16:3.
[27]Ibid., Bereshit 16:18-20.
[28]Ibid., Bereshit 19-21.
[29]Kenneth L. Barker and Donald W. Burdick, *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 660.

CE.[30] Shortly after the Romans destroyed Herod's temple, they exiled most of the Jews from Israel and forbid those that remained from entering Jerusalem. Even in light of these events, many Jews maintained their ethnic and religious identities as well as their desire to return and establish a Jewish nation in Palestine. In 1948, this became a reality as David Ben-Gurion declared the modern state of Israel. As modern Jews trace their historical roots directly to Isaac, it is not surprising to note that many of them feel that Israel, as defined in the Tanakh, belongs to the Jewish nation by divine decree regardless of the time they spent in exile.[31] This belief provides a powerful motivation for the continued occupation and assimilation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

Islam tells a different story of Ibrahim (Abraham), Ishmael, and Isaqq (Isaac). Many Islamic scholars assert that it was Ishmael who, as the eldest son, was the rightful inheritor of the birthright of Ibrahim (Abraham).[32] It is also worthy to note here that some Arabs believe that Ishmael was the father of the Arabs (some commentators say Northern Arabic Tribes) although consensus does not exist on this point.[33] If as many Arabs believe that Ishmael was the rightful heir of Ibrahim, then it would stand to reason that the land of Canaan (modern Palestine) would belong, at least in part, to his offspring as part of their divine birthright.

Another reason that Palestine figures prominently in Islam is that it contains what many Muslims consider to be the third holiest site in Islam, the *Al Haram al-Qudsi al-Sharif* or Noble Sanctuary that contains both the *Al Aqsa* (farthest) mosque and the Dome of the Rock. This compound sits atop Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, and it is from this location where Muslims believe that Mohammed ascended into heaven where Allah gave him the requirements for their

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[30]Flavius Josephus, William Whiston, and William R. Farmer, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: A.D. 66-70 (De bello Judaico)* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1970), 237-239.

[31]The Holy Scripture, Yehoshua 3:4.

[32]ibn Kathir, Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Ibrahim's Emigration, The Test of the Sacrifice of Isma'il, and How Allah Blessed Him, 26 October 2002, Available from http://www.tafsir.com/default.asp?sid=37&tid=44236; Internet; accessed on 26 February 2007.

[33]Ibid.

daily prayers.[34] It is also worth noting that these holy sites sit on top of what the Jews call the Temple Mount, the historical location for the Jewish Temple, the holiest site in Judaism, and the only possible place, according to orthodox Judaism that a third temple can be built.[35]

The Koran also offers several religious justifications for the Palestinians to refuse to accept the status quo *vis a vis* the state of Israel. The following three verses represent a small sampling of Islamic doctrine that is directly applicable to this conflict.

> Oh yea who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them is of them. Verily God guideth not A people unjust.[36]
>
> Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.[37]
>
> Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong.[38]

Reactions: Ancient Rivalries on the Modern Battlefield

In response to the Western supported Israeli invasion of Palestine coupled with their religious beliefs, many Palestinians have formed or joined existing insurgent groups to fight against Israel. The majority of these groups organized along sectarian religious lines such as Hamas and Hezbollah; however, a few other groups like the Democratic Union for Palestine hold more secular views. While these insurgents are often noticed by the outside world through their attacks against either Israeli troops or civilians, they also use a number of other means to support their causes that include aggressive information operations campaigns, social action, and educational programs. This multi-dimensional approach to insurgency is, however, expensive and these groups must often turn to outside sources to support their causes.

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[34]Abdullah Y. Ali, *An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur-an with Full Arabic Text* (Lahore: Sh. Mu-hammad Ashraf, 1975), 693.

[35]The Holy Scripture, II Chronicles 3:1.

[36]Ali, 5:54, 259.

[37]Ibid., 60:8, 1534.

[38]Ibid., 60:9, 1534.

In order to support their causes most insurgent groups often look to the outside Islamic world for help and in many cases receive generous support from both Muslim governments and private citizens. These governments send most of the aid under the guise of aid that is for displaced families or to support the Palestinian Authority, however, much of the support ends up in the hands of insurgent organizations. Saudi Arabia for example, openly acknowledged providing over 15 billion Saudi Riyals ($4 billion) to support the Popular Committee for Assisting the Mujahedeen as well as the Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa intifada funds between 1998 and 2003.[39] These organizations supported the relatives of insurgents jailed, wounded, or killed in action against Israel. Syria and Iran have also provided financial and logistical support to insurgent organizations like Hezbollah.[40] Private Muslim aid organizations have also provided significant funds to directly aid insurgent groups.[41] One such group, the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development based in the US, funneled over $13 million to Hamas in 2000 alone.[42]

Summary

In the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, adding the religious considerations to the secular narratives helps the reader to gain a more holistic understanding of the conflict. This understanding is important because it serves as the basis for action in the region and has strategic implications for both policymakers and military personnel alike.

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[39]Steven Stalinsky, Saudi Royal Family's Financial Support to the Palestinians 1998-2003: More Than 15 Billion Riyals ($4 Billion US) Given to 'Mujahideen Fighters' and 'Families of Martyrs,' 2003, Available from http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sr&ID=SR1703; Internet; accessed on 6 March 2007.

[40]Matthew A. Levitt, "The Political Economy of Middle East Terrorism," *Mid East Review of International Affairs Journal* 6, no. 4 (2002): 1. Available from http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue4/jv6n4a3.html; Internet; accessed on 20 March 2007.

[41]Ibid. 1.

[42]Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment: Suicide Bombing Attacks Against Israeli Civilians*, 2002, 102. Available from http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/ISRAELPA1002.pdf; Internet; accessed on 19 March 2007.

Diplomatic efforts to establish peace between the antagonists provide a practical example for the value of considering religious beliefs. Consider the many Western-sponsored peace initiatives in the region that have asked Israel to return occupied land in exchange for security and peace with both the Palestinians and their neighbors. These are logical manifestations of the strictly secular belief that the cause of the conflict is Israeli occupation of Arab lands. These beliefs lead to the assumption that if Israel were to return the land, the belligerents would no longer have a reason to fight resulting in peace for the region. The addition of religious considerations, however, shows that this assumption is largely invalid because the solution does not address the fact that both groups claim a God-given right not only the currently disputed territory but the entire land of Palestine.

Religious considerations also demonstrate in part why the US became a target on 11 September 2001. It is not difficult to find a recurring theme in many Middle Eastern press outfits that the US is an ally and great contributor to the State of Israel. If, in fact, this is true, it provides a religious justification for the attack. Recall sura 60:9, cited on page 16, which allows Muslims to fight those who support an oppressor that attempts to push Muslims out of their homes. The narratives listed above represent the tip of the iceberg of religious explanations and justifications for the present Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Further exploration of these beliefs would add even more clarity to the ongoing situation, but they are not necessary to demonstrate the utility of understanding religion as an important variable in the OE.

SOVIET-AFGHAN CONFLICT: ATHEISM AND ISLAM

The Soviet-Afghan War that lasted from 27 December 1979 to 15 February 1989 provides a second case study that examines the significance of religion as an aspect of the operational environment. It provides a suitable case study because of the nature of its participants, the “atheists” of the Soviet Union and the Islamic idealists or Mujahedeen. While this conflict is not often depicted as a religious war the competing ideologies of the combatants provide as much

if not more motivation for a religious war than that of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As in the previous case study the monograph considers both secular and religious narratives of the conflict in order to determine if and how the addition of religious narratives adds clarity to the operational environment.

Secular Narrative: A History of Colonialism

Great Britain and Russia set the stage for the Soviet-Afghan War as early as the Treaty of Paris in 1763. This treaty opened the way for British exploration and later colonial control of the Indian subcontinent which at times included Afghanistan. The British were interested in Afghanistan not only for commercial purposes but because it was an historical invasion route into India which they wished to protect. The Russians interest in Afghanistan stemmed from their desire to expand their influence further into Central Asia and to stymie any further British encroachment in the region. The two powers continuously jockeyed for influence and control in the region for over 100 years in what became known as the "The Great Game."[43] They relieved this tension, at least temporarily, by way of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907[44] in which both sides agreed to keep forces out of Afghanistan and keep it as a buffer state between Russia and British India. These conditions changed; however, after the 1918 Russian revolution and the British abandonment of Afghanistan via the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi.[45]

When the British turned over responsibility for foreign affairs to Afghan authorities, Afghanistan truly became an independent country. Afghan independence, along with a renewed sense of Russian interest in Central Asia brought on by the Bolshevik Revolution, led the Russians and Afghans to establish a relationship that lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Soviets were looking not only to expand their influence but to shore up their Southern border with a friendly state as a buffer. The two countries formalized their relationship

[43]Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 343-443.
[44]Ibid., 433.
[45]Ibid., 443.

with the "Treaty of Friendship" ratified on 13 August 1921. This paved the way for almost seventy years of varying degrees of cooperation, military support, and trade.[46]

The Treaty of Friendship did not always guarantee positive relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Islamic bandits conducted cross-border raids into Soviet Central Asia while the Soviets continually pressured the Northern border of Afghanistan with troops and territorial demands. Soviet pressure included invading Afghanistan on three different occasions from 1925 to 1930. The first invasion in 1925 was over a border dispute about the ownership of the Urta Tagai Island in the Amu Darya River. Both countries laid claim to the island but the Soviets invaded to secure the territory, although they later ceded control of the island to the Afghans.[47] In the second invasion, the Soviets used a surrogate force of expatriate Afghans and Central Asians to overthrow King Amanullah who had made overtures to the West and attempted to institute Western reforms. Soviet efforts forced King Amanullah to abdicate and flee the country. In an effort to placate British concerns, the Soviets disbanded the surrogate force. The third invasion was a punitive expedition into Afghanistan to capture or kill the Afghan warlord Ghulam Nabi who had been conducting raids across the border into the Soviet Union.

In the wake of World War II and Great Britain's retreat from the Indian subcontinent, left-leaning Afghan leader, Mohammed Daoud, sought support from outside powers for military aid as well as economic development. The US was reluctant to grant significant aid, however, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) readily agreed in an effort to develop closer ties and to buffer its southern border against the West. This was beneficial for Afghanistan because it not only secured aid from the USSR but it pushed the US to grant aid as well in an attempt to check Soviet influence in the region. This arrangement worked well for nearly two decades; however, as time wore on Daoud increasingly turned to the West for support irritating his Soviet benefactors.

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[46]Ibid., 445.

[47]Thomas T. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 12.

The Soviets who saw their influence waning sponsored a coup led by Afghan communists, Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin on 27 April 1979, in which these Afghan Communists killed Daoud and took over Afghanistan.

Taraki and Amin established many Soviet-like policies in the country after the coup. They aggressively pursued social, land, education, and religious reforms which often met with resistance from Afghan traditionalists who often rejected the changes based on religious grounds. The Soviets even believed that their Afghan comrades pushed these policies too aggressively and encouraged Taraki to ease them somewhat; however, Amin aggressively pushed these reforms forward. This caused a rift between the two leaders that erupted into violence when Amin used Army forces to kill Taraki on 8 October 1979.[48] After assuming power, Amin immediately made friendly overtures to the US.[49] This combined with the death of Taraki greatly troubled the Soviet leadership and after considerable debate, they authorized the 27 December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.[50]

Once they had seized power, the Soviets put an ardent Afghan communist, Babrak Karmal, in charge of the government in Kabul. With Soviet support, he also attempted to apply Soviet style governmental and societal models in Afghanistan. Contrary to Western media portrayals at the time, Babrak designed many of these programs to improve the quality of life for Afghanistan's citizens. Samplings of these programs include infrastructure projects, agricultural and educational improvement, as well as increased rights for Afghani women.[51] The Afghan population also largely rejected these seemingly positive reforms and rose in open revolt against both the Afghan Communist government and the Soviet occupation forces.

Throughout the remainder of the 1980s, different Afghan rebel groups or Mujahedeen fought against Soviet and Afghan government policy and forces in a bloody conflict. Using the

[48]Ibid., 85.
[49]Ibid., 87.
[50]Ibid., 99.
[51]Ibid., 152.

mountainous terrain and classic guerilla tactics, rebel forces placed an enormous amount of strain on the Soviets and slowly bled them of manpower and money. On 15 February 1989, the USSR finally withdrew from Afghanistan without having achieved any of its long term objectives and at a cost of approximately 15,000 soldiers killed in action.[52]

Religious and Ideological Considerations

Unlike the previous case study which examined the religious narratives of two antagonists only one of the two in this case, the Mujahedeen, believed in a religion. The official Soviet position on religion at the time was atheism or an active belief that God did not exist. For purposes of this examination, however, atheism is considered a religious belief in order to examine the how these competing ideologies were relevant in the operational environment.

The basis for the Soviet belief in atheism was Communist theorists who asserted that religion was an invention of the bourgeoisie to repress the masses.[53] They further believed that as long as economic slavery existed that religion would also exist as a way to keep the poor complacent and orderly. In their belief, as society slowly evolved toward economic justice, religion would no longer be necessary and would slowly whither away because there would not be a need to repress or control anyone.[54]

Early Communist instigators found a fertile ground for these beliefs in Russia where the Tzars had lived luxurious lifestyles while peasants could barely survive. It was also clear to the peasantry that the Russian Orthodox Church not only supported Tzarist rule but benefited from this arrangement by having some of the richest land holdings in Russia, as well as bank accounts worth billions of rubles.[55] Just prior to overthrowing the Tzar, the Bolsheviks made clear their

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[52]Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century, Death Tolls, 25 March 2003, Available from http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat2.htm; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2007.

[53]Sidney Dark and R. S. Essex, *The War Against God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 86-87.

[54]Ibid., 88.

[55]Ibid., 99.

intentions *vis a vis* the Church in the "Anti-God Decrees" of 23 January 1918. These decrees formally separated the church and state, removed religion from schools, prevented the church from owning property and from teaching religion to children.[56] What these decrees did not do was totally eliminate religion immediately but laid the groundwork for a slow strangulation of religion that existed until the USSR collapsed in 1991. Even in the midst of this repression, the church retained its identity and quite a number of followers however, the official position of the state remained clear on religion remained atheism.

In a manner similar to that of other universalizing religions like Christianity and Islam, the Bolsheviks preached atheism in the countries that they conquered or that fell under their sway. This was not the centerpiece of their message which focused more on economic and military development however, the Soviets advocated atheism shortly after they resolved the most pressing issues. This was evident in Eastern Europe where several countries adopted policies similar to that of the Soviet Union but only after more important issues such as political instability had been resolved. Although many of these countries allowed for religion and churches to identify with their cultural heritage, they often marginalized them to that role alone.[57]

In Afghanistan, Soviet educated leaders like Mohammed Daoud, Nur Mohammed Taraki, and Hafizullah Amin gradually tried to introduce Soviet style atheism into the traditional Afghan Islamic environment but met with little success. While paying lip service to Afghanistan's Muslim populations, they subverted Islamic beliefs by incorporating secular curriculums in education as well as changing the legal system away from traditional law to more secular standards inspired by the Soviet model. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and empowered Babrak Karmal, he intensified this movement toward atheism by placing Soviet citizens in key

[56]Ibid., 106-108.

[57]George P. Majeska, review of *Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe,* by Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and John W. Strong, *The Slavic and East European Journal* 20, no. 2 (1976): 204.

ministry posts as well as aggressively integrating atheist beliefs into government actions and institutions.[58]

By the time that the Soviets invaded, Afghans were acquainted with atheism because of the policies of the Soviet trained leaders previously mentioned. Those policies had given the Afghans a taste of the ideology that Soviets were to bring with them beforehand and it took relatively little time for the Afghans to reject the overtures of the Soviets once they had invaded. Afghan Muslims could no more tolerate an invasion of their country by the Soviets anymore than the Palestinians could tolerate an invasion by the Israelis. This was not just a matter of territory as most Americans think but an invasion of a Muslim country by a clearly non-believing and "Godless" state. The mere fact that the Soviet Union was atheist was an unacceptable affront to Islam; however, attempts to propagate those beliefs in Afghanistan led to an especially visceral reaction from the native population, as well as outrage, from around the Muslim world which eventually came to their aid.

It is worth noting here that the Koran makes a distinction between Christians and Jews which it calls "People of the Book" and those that hold no faith or worship other gods.[59] Islam acknowledges "People of the Book" to be those that were once part of a revealed religion and as such may be eligible for special treatment or protection from Muslims under certain restrictive conditions although significant debate on this point continues in the Islamic world.[60] Islam calls those without a "revealed" faith or those that openly reject faith *kuffar* or "unbelievers." This is the category into which the Soviet atheists fit. The following verses constitute a small sampling of how the Koran would have Muslims confront such aggressive unbelievers:

> Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold forbidden that which has been forbidden by Allah and his messenger, nor acknowledge the

[58]Hammond, 148.
[59]Ali, sura 9:5, 438.
[60]Ibid., sura 9:29, 447.

> religion of Truth, even if they are People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.[61]
>
> O you who believe! Fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let them find you in hardness; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).[62]
>
> They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be alike; therefore take not from among them friends until they fly in Allah's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper.[63]

Reactions: Afghans Respond to Atheism

In a manner similar to that of the previous case, the Soviet-Afghan case witnessed the formation of several independent insurgencies to fight against the Soviet occupation. The resistance consisted of seven major groups and several smaller one that formed largely along ideological or ethnic lines but generally fell into one of three categories, Sunni, Shia, or secular leftist groupings. A sampling of the groups includes the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (*Mohaz Milli Islami*), Islamic Alliance (*Ittehad-e-Islami*), and Islamic Revolutionary Movement (*Harakat-i-Inquilabi-Islami*).[64] The Sunni resistance groups were by far the largest of the three groups and received a large amount of support from Sunni countries while the Shia received support from Iran although the demands of the ongoing Iran-Iraq War limited Iranian efforts. The secular resistance groups by contrast were largely ineffectual because of a lack of both internal and external supporters and either collapsed or joined the Afghan government early in the conflict.[65] In most cases insurgents used classic guerilla tactics to harass and disrupt Soviet operations but also came together in some circumstances to fight in combined operations.[66] In the end, however, it was clear that groups who invoked Islam as justification and inspiration for fighting enjoyed the most support and success. That an insurgency formed in Afghanistan to fight

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[61]Ibid.
[62]Ibid., sura 9:123, 478.
[63]Ibid., sura 4:89, 207.
[64]David C. Isby, *War in a Distant Country, Afghanistan: Invasion and Resistance* (New York, NY: Sterling Publishing Co., 1989), 99.
[65]Ibid., 103.
[66]Ibid., 106.

against the central government and Soviet forces should not have been a surprise for a number of reasons. First and foremost, most of them fought to preserve their religious beliefs discussed above against outside attack. Secondly, insurgency is a logical method to fight against the Soviets who possessed superior military strength. Additionally, the Afghans had a long history of using guerilla tactics to fight against central authority and outside invasion. What was different in this conflict was the amount of outside support that flowed into the region from the world in support of the *Mujahedeen*. This was largely as a result of several "*fatwas*," or religious decrees, which Muslim leaders issued throughout the world that called upon Muslims to support the effort against the Soviet *kuffar*.

Support for the Muslim fighters in this conflict came from a variety of sources to include both the US and Europe. The most significant aid seen in this conflict, however, was rendered by other Muslim countries and individuals heeding the call to *jihad* and supporting the *Mujahedeen* with manpower, materiel, and finances.[67] In addition, over 35,000 private Islamic citizens from 43 different countries responded directly to the call for *jihad* and went to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets.[68] This was extremely significant because it generated the perception throughout the Muslim world that a superpower was defeated by those under the banner of Islam. This perception alone may have significantly contributed to the number of foreign fighters that are seen in conflicts like Chechnya, Sudan, and modern Afghanistan.

Summary

The Soviet-Afghan War yields another case in which religion plays an important role. Even though the Soviets were not religious per se, they did possess an ideology which was strenuously rejected not only by the Afghans themselves but by the Islamic world at large. Had

[67]Lester Grau, The Soviet-Afghan War: A Superpower Mired in the Mountains, 1 March 2004, Available from http://leav-www.army.mil/fmso/documents/miredinmount.htm; Internet; accessed on 19 March 2007.

[68]Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 6 (1999), 31.

the Soviets appreciated Afghan religious beliefs and how their own ideology might collide beforehand, they may have prosecuted their campaign differently or even opted to exercise different options aside from invasion. This is not to suggest that the Soviets flippantly decided to invade Afghanistan, they actually deliberated in some detail prior to the invasion, however, the literature does not suggest that they studied religious beliefs in sufficient detail nor had an appreciation for how they might react to their ideological principles. As it was in the Palestinian-Israeli case study, this example also demonstrates the benefit of considering religious beliefs in the OE.

UNITED STATES-IRAQ: AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM

Operation Iraqi Freedom began on 19 March 2003 with the goal of removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. President Bush believed this was necessary as Saddam had continued to oppress his own people, threaten his neighbors, and refused to comply with UN sanctions that called for him to dismantle his weapons of mass destruction programs. Removing Saddam and toppling the regime proved to be relatively easy; however, it did not prove to be the decisive point nor the end of the conflict. The conflict continues to the present day as coalition forces remain locked in combat with various religious based insurgencies over the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

This conflict warrants consideration for study not only because the US is a participant but because of the ideological beliefs it asserts in policy and because of its perceived character as a nation. Ideologically, the US offers its version of democracy which by itself provides an anathema for many Muslim believers. Additionally, many in the Muslim world believe that the US is either a Christian or Zionist nation. Whether or not this is true is irrelevant, however, this perception automatically places it in a confrontation with Islam. As was done in the previous case studies, this study examines the conflict through both secular and religious lenses in order to

demonstrate not only which provides better understanding but to illuminate practical implications of religious belief in the environment.

Secular Narrative: From Iran to OIF

The Iran-Iraq War that lasted from 1980 to 1988 truly set the stage for events that are taking place in Iraq today. In 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini successfully deposed the Shah of Iran and took control of the country. He immediately set to purging the Imperial Army of officers that had been loyal to the Shah which had the effect of significantly weakening Iran. Saddam Hussein sensing the weakness took advantage of the situation to assert Iraqi territorial claims over the complete Shatt-al-Arab waterway between the two countries as well as staking a claim on the oil-rich Khuzestan province. Saddam acted on this estimate by invading Iran on 22 September 1980. After some initial Iraqi gains, the Iranians successfully ejected Iraqi forces from their territory and the war slowly ground into war of attrition that saw very little strategic success by either side for the remainder of the war. In human terms, the costs of the war were very high with 300,000 killed in action for Iraq while Iran may have lost up to one million killed, wounded, or captured.[69] The war was also expensive in financial terms as well with each side accruing debts of some $350 billion.[70] The crushing burden of this debt, contributed to the next phase of the saga.

At the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Kuwait owned an estimated $14 billion of the overall Iraqi debt and refused to grant any debt relief.[71] Saddam used this fact along with allegations that Kuwait was slant drilling into the Rumalia oil field as well as justifications to invade the emirate

[69]Globalsecurity.org, Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), Available from http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/iran-iraq.htm; Internet; accessed on 11 March 2007.

[70]Farhang Rajaee, *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), 1.

[71]Tanya Glaser, Conflict Research Consortium Article Summary, "The Gulf Crisis: Failure of Preventative Diplomacy" by Claude Rakisits, 2005, Available from http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/gulf7307.htm; Internet; accessed on 11 March 2007.

on 2 August 1990.[72] The Kuwaiti government in exile made an appeal to the international community for aid and in response; the US led a series of diplomatic and military efforts to oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Diplomatic efforts began on the day of the invasion when the UN passed the first in a series of resolutions to condemn the invasion and call for a peaceful solution.[73]

The US also pursued some unsuccessful unilateral diplomatic initiatives to resolve the conflict. The most notable was a high profile meeting between Secretary of State Baker and Iraq Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz on 9 January 1991, and a letter from President Bush to President Hussein on that same day that called for Iraq to remove its forces from Kuwait.[74] All initiatives to bring a peaceful solution proved fruitless and as a result coalition forces initiated Operation Desert Storm (ODS) on 17 January 1991. Less than six weeks later, the coalition had achieved its military objectives through a complete rout of Iraqi forces both in Iraq and Kuwait. On 27 February 1991, President Bush declared a unilateral cessation of hostilities later followed by a temporary cease fire agreement between coalition forces and military representatives of the Iraqi government.[75] All parties later agreed to a permanent cease fire by accepting UN Resolution 687 which called for several punitive actions against Iraq to include reparations, weapons procurement limitations, and economic sanctions.[76]

In the aftermath of the ceasefire, many Iraqis faced severe hardships. Food and medicine shortages were commonplace as were other materials necessary to build an economy in the wake of several years of war. While many civilians suffered, sanctions had little effect on Saddam as he had plenty of wealth saved and also earned a substantial amount of income from smuggling or

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[72]Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf, *The Gulf War Reader: History, Documents, Opinions* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1991), 63-64.

[73]Ibid., 137-156.

[74]Ibid., 178.

[75]H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero: General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the Autobiography* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1992), 564-569.

[76]United Nations Security Council, Resolution 687, 1991, 11-15, Available from http://daccessdds.un.org/ doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/23/IMG/NR059623.pdf?OpenElement; Internet; accessed on 11 March 2007.

elicit trade. The US also alleged that the Iraqis used funds from the UN "oil for food" program to finance the personal projects of Saddam Hussein which included more presidential palaces.

In addition, Iraq openly stymied UN arms inspectors from conducting weapons or sensitive site inspections. Almost immediately after the permanent cease fire agreement, Iraq established a pattern of alternating between compliance and non-compliance with UN inspection teams. In some cases they would comply with inspections while in others they would openly delay or deny access to certain sites and even kicked inspectors out of the country on a number of occasions. In response to Iraqi intransigence, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1441, the tenth resolution related to Iraqi disarmament, on 8 November 2002.[77] This resolution essentially gave Iraq one last opportunity to comply with all previous disarmament agreements or face "serious consequences."

As a result of non-compliance with Resolution 1441 and its predecessors, President Bush issued an ultimatum on 19 March 2001, for Saddam and his sons to leave Iraq. They failed to comply and as a result, coalition forces led by the US and Great Britain initiated OIF with strikes against strategic targets. The ground invasion followed two days later on 21 March led by the 3d Infantry Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, and the 1st Armored Division (UK). In a series of running battles coalition forces quickly defeated both the regular Iraqi Army and Republican Guard units and reached the outskirts of Baghdad in approximately two weeks. One week later, after having conducted the infamous "Thunder Runs," US forces controlled the Baghdad International Airport and large sections of the city. Over the next three weeks, US forces conducted offensive operations to defeat remaining pockets of organized resistance which were largely subdued when President Bush declared "mission accomplished" from the deck of the USS

[77]United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1441, 8 November 2002, 1-8, Available from http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/682/26/PDF/N0268226.pdf?OpenElement; Internet; accessed on 11 March 2007.

Abraham Lincoln on 1 May 2003.[78] In a matter of a few months, however, a new enemy began to emerge in Iraq to confront the coalition and Iraqi government forces.

Religious and Ideological Considerations

In a manner similar to that of the Soviet-Afghan and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, the US invasion of Iraq introduced an American-informed democracy as the competing ideology. As was also the case in the other examinations, this is not the only cause or consideration of the conflict; however, it provided a powerful motivation for Iraqis to fight against coalition forces and the government of Iraq. Many pundits have made the case that democracy does not contradict Islam, however, on closer inspection there are tenants of democracy, as applied in Iraq, that do conflict with certain Islamic beliefs.

The first and foremost point of contention is that democracy is a man made system that is not rooted in the teachings of Islamic doctrine nor based in *sharia* law, it unjustly places authority in the hands of men, to the idealist this authority belongs only to God. By extension, it also offers secular laws that often compete against or even contradict *sharia*. The mere suggestion that democracy would be helpful in Iraq in itself suggests that Islam is not sufficient for the needs of the people and is highly offensive to many Muslims. Seyyid Qutb, a noted Egyptian Islamist, makes this point in his book *Milestones* where he clearly asserts the supremacy of the Islamic way of life at the expense of man-made systems like democracy which Muslims should reject as a form of *jahiliyyah* or "state of ignorance of the guidance from God."[79] Abu Musab al-Zarqawi echoes this sentiment in a seven part opinion he issued on 23 January 2005 entitled, "*Zarqawi and other Islamists to the Iraqi People: Election and Democracy are Heresy*." He argues that

[78]Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2006), 551.

[79]Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Cedar Rapids, IA: Unity, 1981), 19.

Muslims must reject democracy on seven grounds the most important being, that democracy is based upon the notion that "people are the source of all authority" as opposed to God.[80]

Secondly, the inclusive nature of democracy, as advocated by the US in Iraq, denies the ideologies and differences between religious groups that often characterize each other as apostate. This speaks primarily to differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims but also includes other groups that do not subscribe to either belief. The label apostate is especially significant because it automatically places the apostate in a lower status than a rightly believing Muslim. Many Islamic scholars even believe the Koran calls for believers to kill apostates and so this makes equality at the polling site an ideological oxymoron. This is not to say that all Sunnis or Shia believe that the other group is apostate, a significant amount of literature disputes this assertion, however, the growing appeal of Salafism among Sunnis in Iraq makes reconciling at the polls a very difficult proposition. Zarqawi also makes this point in his opinion of 23 January 2005:

> Democracy is based on the principle of freedom of association and of forming political parties and the like, no matter what the creed, idea, and ethics of these parties may be. This principle is null and void according to [Islamic] law for a number of reasons . . . one of them is that voluntary recognition of the legality of heretical parties acquiesces in heresy . . . acquiescence in heresy is heresy.[81]

Another reason that many Iraqis reject the American version of democracy is because they believe it to be a morally corrupt system devoid of any redeeming values. The freedom that democracy provides allows people and nations to pursue their individual objectives without respect to morality or the good of the community. If left unchecked, many Islamic writers believe that the Muslim world would open itself up to social ills present in many Western societies such as the erosion of the family, pornography, drug abuse, and greed. To this end, Abu al-ala al-Mawdudi, a noted Islamic theorist, writes:

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[80]Middle East Media Research Institute, "Zarqawi and Other Islamists to the Iraqi People: Elections and Democracy are Heresy," *Special Dispatch Series* no. 856 (1 February 2005), Available from http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP85605; Internet; accessed on 12 March 2007.

[81]Ibid.

> We believe that the three principles [on which modern Western life is based] are wrong and corrupt [*fasidah*]. In fact, we believe very strongly . . . that these are the source of the evils, disasters and tragedies that have befallen humanity, and we have taken it upon ourselves to fight and destroy them, until we uproot them, with all the means and methods we possess.[82]

The three principles to which Mawdudi was referring were secularism, the nation-state, and democracy. While many people in Iraq actually embrace these ideals, there are also large groups of people who do not based upon religious grounds. In order to fight against the invaders and their ideologies, Islamic groups turned to their like-minded neighbors as a ready source of support.

Reactions: Iraqi Response to US Democracy

Several groups emerged that used religious themes to fight against coalition forces and to solicit support from Iraqi civilians and other supporters throughout the Islamic world. A sampling of these groups include, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Ansar al-Islam, Ansar al-Sunna, Islamic Resistance Movement in Iraq, Badr Brigades, Mahdi Army, and the Islamic Army in Iraq. Most of the groups fought to push US forces out of Iraq, discredit the Iraqi government, and to enhance their ability to control Iraq upon US withdrawal. They organized largely along sectarian lines and most often operated within sectarian boundaries, however, as the names above suggest, most of them invoked Islam as a rally point for their movements. Their techniques ranged from small scale conventional attacks and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to terror attacks against the population concentrations of other sects. While they most often fought independently, the groups have come together on occasion to mount larger scale attacks as was also seen in the Soviet-Afghan model.

While the exact number of foreign fighters in Iraq continues to be elusive (estimates range from 3,000 to 20,000), researchers know more about their composition. A study conducted

[82]David Garnham and Mark A. Tessler, *Democracy, War, and Peace in the Middle East* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 121.

of insurgents killed in action from October 2004 to March 2005 revealed 141 foreign Arab fighters from thirteen different Islamic countries. By far the greatest number of casualties on this list came from Saudi Arabia (94) followed by Syria (16), Kuwait (11), and Jordan (4).[83] A separate study of 331 foreign insurgents captured during that same year revealed a similar distribution.[84]

Materiel support also continues to flow into Iraq from a number of various sources, however, evidence points toward Islamic sources as the greatest suppliers. Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, III US Corps Commander, said in a recent interview, "We have weapons that we know through serial numbers . . . trace back to Iran."[85] These weapons included, mortar ammunition, advanced rocket propelled grenades, Katyusha rockets, and the particularly deadly explosive formed projectiles (EFP) designed to penetrate armored vehicles. The US has also accused Syria of directly providing materiel aid to insurgents however, the literature offered little substantial evidence to support this claim.[86]

Iraqi insurgents have enjoyed a great deal of support from external Islamic sources. While recent reports indicate that many groups may now be largely financially self-sufficient due to illicit activities such as oil smuggling, hostage-taking, and other black market activities, the evidence clearly suggests that external funding was the source for many earlier operations. Despite the recent trend toward self-sufficiency, supporters in sympathetic Islamic countries continue to support insurgent efforts. The Iraq Study Group recently concluded, "Funding for the Sunni insurgency comes from private individuals within Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States."[87]

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[83]Reuven Paz, *Arab Volunteers Killed in Iraq: An Analysis* (Herzliya, Israel: Global Research in International Affairs Center (GLORIA), 2005), 2.

[84]Alan B. Krueger, *The National Origins of Foreign Fighters in Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University and NBER, 2006), 4.

[85]Jim Michaels, "General Says US Has Proof Iran Arming Iraqi Militias," *USA Today* (2007), 1.

[86]Alfredn B. Prados, *Syria: U.S. Relations and Bilateral Issues* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2006).

[87]Iraq Study Group (U.S.): James A. Baker, Lee Hamilton, and Lawrence S. Eagleburger, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2006), 25.

According to the US State Department, Shia insurgent groups also receive significant financial support from Iran.[88]

Summary

Religion is clearly a motivating factor for most of the insurgent groups in Iraq and insurgents demonstrate this fact in both word and deed. If however leaders only consider the conflict through secular lens, they will never truly appreciate how or why many Iraqis reject and fight against the presence of US forces in Iraq. This is admittedly a difficult transition to make as traditional US military professional education and problem solving processes merely acknowledge demographic aspects of religion as opposed to understanding religions, their believers, and how they are likely to interact with US policy, formations, and soldiers. This knowledge coupled with more secular and scientific understandings of the OE will provide an understanding that is greater than that of either aspect alone.

SIMILARITIES AMONG MODERN MIDDLE EASTERN CONFLICTS

Clearly, there are tremendous differences between each of the conflicts listed above. They represent a collision of different religions, ideologies, and cultures in differing contexts and all clearly represent complex environments. While the differences between the cases were profound, there were also many similarities that not only explained some of the motivations for the conflicts themselves but may also have practical applicability for the future conflicts predicted in the *JOE*. This chapter identifies and discusses three trends that emerged common among the case studies, which are: Islam rejects competing ideologies, multiple insurgencies form to fight against invasion, and Muslims outside of the conflicted area provide support to insurgents inside of the contested area. The practical importance of not adequately considering these factors is also

[88]US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism, 28 April 2006, Available from http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64337.htm; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2007.

explored by examining how the US considered these factors as they prepared for and fought in early states of OIF.

Reoccurring Themes

The first theme that repeated itself in all three case studies was that "Islam has little tolerance for foreign ideologies that conflict with Islam." In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this meant a rejection of Occidentalism, Judaism, and Jewish sovereignty while in the cases of the Soviet-Afghan and US-Iraq conflict; it meant the rejection of atheism and democracy respectively. Of course, there were other grounds upon which to reject invasion such as economic considerations, national pride, and self-determination but in these cases, it appears that religion was the dominant factor.

The fact that religion was important in all three cases is not surprising, what is surprising however, is a failure to understand Islam as force in the OE. Recent interviews with two key planners from the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) staff during the initial stages of OIF clearly point out that the planners failed to appreciate the significance of religion and how it might affect their mission. Colonel Kevin Benson, the lead planner at the time stated:

> We shaped our understanding of the operational environment around the fact that we had to defeat a formidable enemy force, and travel hundreds of kilometers to reach the decisive point in Baghdad. We paid little attention to understanding Iraqi religious beliefs as these were not related to the task at hand nor intimately connected to achieving the decisive point. Its not that we did not consider religion at all, we did but this focus was more demographic factors like identifying sectarian populations and influential religious leaders as opposed to understanding how religious beliefs would effect our operations.[89]

Colonel Steve Rotkoff, the Deputy Chief for Intelligence at the time echoed this thought by stating that the intelligence planners and systems initially focused on "enemy, terrain, and weather" and gave very little attention to religion with the exception of a two week period prior to the invasion when they dedicated a small team of planners to consider these factors for post

[89]Colonel Kevin Benson, Chief of Plans, Combined Forces Land Component Command, 2001-2003, Interview by author, 2 March 2007, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

conflict operations.[90] Both planners mentioned that they dedicated a significant amount of personal time to reading about Iraq, its culture and religion as did others on their staffs. However, they did not include this variable into official estimates on the OE. As a result, Soldiers throughout the chain of command were not fully aware of the implications that religion was to have on upcoming operations. The belief throughout the formation seemed to have been that combat would be a short and violent clash followed by the definitive peace brought by victory not marked by prolonged, vicious combat.

The second observation common among all three cases was that "religiously based insurgencies formed to target each invasion and jockey for position in a post-conflict society." The use of the word insurgencies as opposed to insurgency is deliberate because in all three cases groups with different beliefs and goals formed separately to fight against invasion and occupation. At times, the groups demonstrated the desire to cooperate however, more often than not, they would fight among themselves to establish territory or advance their position to assert post conflict order.

The fact that many leaders and planners failed to foresee multiple insurgencies on the horizon in OIF was a most unfortunate oversight. Aside from the case studies that were examined here, a brief survey of other modern conflicts in the region to include Chechnya, Algeria, and Kashmir, to name a few, reveal similar trends toward insurgencies. It seemed however, that many chose to focus on major combat operations and conventional operational designs instead of truly appreciating the OE or the signs that were emerging in the environment. Even as insurgencies were growing in Iraq, leaders throughout the Department of Defense (DOD) were reluctant to acknowledge even one insurgency, let alone define or understand the nature of the various movements or their motivations. Instead, they chose to classify insurgents as criminals, looters, or

[90]Colonel Steven Rotkoff, Deputy Chief of Intelligence, Combined Forces Land Component Command, 2001-2003, Interview by author, 7 March 2007, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

former Ba'athist not worthy of the title insurgent which would have given them undue credibility.[91]

"External support in terms of manpower, materiel, and finances" was the third trend common among the case studies. This assistance came largely as a result of calls for help or religious rulings called *fatwas* that called the faithful to support other Muslims in distress or support the effort for *jihad* or holy war. Religious leaders, often in the affected areas, drafted *fatwas* and then sent them throughout the Muslim world for review and support. Religious leaders outside the affected area would then endorse the *fatwa*, and often compel their followers to lend varying degrees of support that ranged from moral support to extensive logistics or manpower and financing.

Dr. Abdullah Azzam, a respected Palestinian Islamic scholar, who was active in the Soviet-Afghan conflict, issued one such *fatwa* entitled, *Defense of the Muslim Land, the First Obligation after Iman*.[92] In the first part of the *fatwa,* Azzam demonstrated that all four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shaffie, and Hanbali) supported *jihad* against foreign invasion of Muslim lands. He also stated that it was compulsory (*fard ayn*) for all Muslims to fight against such an invasion. In the second part of the *fatwa*, he establishes that it was a sin upon all Muslims if "any hand span of Muslim land that was Islamic is in the hands of the *kuffar"* and called Muslims to fight in both Afghanistan and Palestine.[93] In the third part of the *fatwa*, he suggests that all Muslims on earth are obliged to fight *jihad*, especially against invasion, that permission was not required from any authority figures to fight *jihad*, that it was forbidden to accrue wealth while a *jihad* is waged, and finally that *jihad* ranks higher in precedence than the obligation to conduct the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). He concludes the *fatwa* by providing

[91]Joel Klein, Saddam's Revenge, 18 September 2005, Available from http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1106254-3,00.html; Internet; Accessed on 19 March 2007.

[92]Abdullah D. Azzam, Defense of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation after Iman, 2004, Available from http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_defence_1_table.htm; Internet; accessed on 8 March 2007.

[93]Ibid.

guidance about how to both fight and support the war as well as establishing the terms for peace with the invaders. The important part of this pronouncement was not necessarily the *fatwa* itself but what happened after he issued it. Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Ibn Baz, Saudi Arabia's Chief Cleric, as well as other notable Islamic leaders, later endorsed this *fatwa*,[94] which led to increased amount of men, materiel, and money for the Afghan campaign.

Summary

These case studies provide the answer to the first research question by demonstrating that religion is an important variable in the modern Middle East, despite those who wish to dismiss it. They also demonstrate that understandings of the Middle East are improved when religious considerations are combined with secular narratives. This is not to say that every Muslim or Islamic society in the region will react exactly as those in the sample cases did, however, it does suggest a likely range of possible reactions based upon religious beliefs. If, as this study implies that reactions based upon religious beliefs may be predictable, then it becomes logical that to examine these beliefs as well as doctrine to determine how it provides for this understanding.

CULTURE AND THE EVOLUTION OF DOCTRINE

Although not specifically stated, US military doctrine considers religion and cultural values under the generic category of "culture." It considers each variable separately in a few instances but in most cases, it considers religion to be a sub-category of culture. It is for this reason that this review focuses on doctrinal interpretations of culture as opposed to religion alone which is not often mentioned in either capstone or keystone doctrine. This chapter briefly surveys the Joint and Army doctrine that was in place prior to OIF as a technique to explore how its fundamental principles and techniques guided planners' cultural understanding at the beginning

[94]John C. M. Calvert, "The Striving Shaykh: Abdullah Azzam and the Revival of Jihad," *Journal of Religion and Society, The Context of Religion and Violence* (2007): 83-103.

of the conflict. This is followed by an brief survey of new doctrine and concepts that emerged as a result of OIF to demonstrate the evolution of military thought with regard to culture and to examine its suitability to provide cultural awareness in future conflict.

Culture Defined

JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, defined culture as, "a feature of the terrain that has been constructed by man. Included are such items as roads, buildings, and canals; boundary lines; and, in a broad sense, all names and legends on a map."[95] A quick survey of other pre-OIF doctrinal references provided little more useful information to expand on this anemic definition. While all of the doctrinal manuals surveyed acknowledged the importance of "understanding" and "considering" culture, values, religions, etc., none expanded on the definition offered in JP 1-02. In addition, this definition failed to provide any explanation for expanded concepts of "culture" such as "cultural awareness," "cultural understanding" or "demographic or social considerations" that were commonly referred to throughout the body of doctrine. The next chapter examines these omissions, however; it is important to make a note of this definition prior to embarking on a doctrinal review in order to provide context for the ongoing discussion of culture.

Pre-OIF Doctrine

With respect to culture, JP 3-0, *Joint Operations,* emphasized the theme that cultural awareness and understanding were an indispensable part of understanding the OE but offered little practical advice for how to achieve this understanding. The following quotation summarizes this theme quite well:

[95]US Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001 (As Amended Through 5 January 2007), 137.

> Military support and operations that are intended to support a friendly HN require a firm understanding of the HN's cultural and political realities. History has shown that cultural awareness cannot be sufficiently developed after a crisis emerges, and must be a continuous, proactive element of theater intelligence and engagement strategies.[96]

It also provided a "systems" framework as a mental construct to understand OE. This approach calls upon planners to think of the OE in terms of a series of interrelated systems that are connected to each other through a series of links. This provides the frame which JP 3-0 calls upon the intelligence function to build upon which in theory provides a relatively accurate depiction of the OE. To illustrate the doctrine, writers divide a hypothetical OE in its components systems of political, military, economic, social, informational, infrastructure, legal, and other systems (PMESII).[97] In this model, one may assume that planners should consider culture under the social system however; JP 3-0 does not specifically state this is the case or offers an alternative for how planners should consider culture.

FM 3-0, *Operations*, echoed the joint doctrine theme that culture is an important variable in the OE, but it failed to sufficiently build on this theme. It offered two conceptual tools to aid the reader's understanding of the OE. The first was the OE model itself which consisted of six dimensions; threat, political, unified action, land combat operations, information, and technology. It stated, "Each (dimension) affects how Army forces combine, sequence, and conduct military operations. Commanders tailor forces, employ diverse capabilities, and support different missions to succeed in this complex environment."[98] A significant limitation of this model is that it forces leaders to be threat focused in almost all situations regardless of whether they are major combat operations or stability and support operations.

The second tool offered in FM 3-0 was the mission, enemy, troops, terrain-time available, civil consideration (METT-TC) framework designed to assist commanders to visualize the OE.

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[96]US Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, Revision, Final Coordination (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), VII-10.

[97]Ibid., II-21.

[98]Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 1-8.

The Army changed this model from the old mission, enemy, troops, terrain-time available (METT-T) version in FM 100-5, *Operations*, to the current METT-TC in recognition of the increasing importance of civil considerations on the battlefield. On the surface, it seems that the inclusion of civil considerations would account for concepts of culture, however, FM 3-0 only calls for commanders to consider culture and how operations will effect civilian populations. It does not provide useful guidance about how to achieve this nor appreciate the complexity of human interactions between military forces and diverse populations with different goals and grievances.

JP 2-0, *Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*, acknowledged the importance of understanding culture in conceptual terms, however, it did not expand the definition of culture nor did it provide any specific information about how to achieve or use cultural understanding. It did establish the principle that considering culture was important, especially in military operations other than war (MOOTW) however; it failed to assert that it was important in other operations as well. This omission by default created a perception that the most important factors in all other environments were "enemy, terrain, and weather." Arguably this notion led CFLCC planners to choose an enemy-focused operational design which worked wonderfully during major combat operations but did not allow planner to foresee civil disturbance, sectarian violence, or growing insurgencies.

JP 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JIPB)*, provided the four-step JIPB process as a tool to achieve an overall situational awareness of the OE. Ideally, this would also have included methods to obtain cultural awareness as well, however; the JIPB inadequately addressed culture because it focused primarily on how battlefield conditions and the environment affected friendly and enemy forces and their courses of action with little appreciation for cultural variables in the OE. It did provide some useful tools to gain understanding of demographic realities but provided little appreciation for the dynamics created by interactions between friendly forces and cultural elements in the OE. This enemy focused

process was perhaps more suited for major combat operations against well defined enemy forces however in OIF its utility largely expired upon the conclusion of major combat operations.

> I knew where every enemy tank was dug in on the outskirts of Tallil, only problem was my soldiers had to fight fanatics charging on foot or in pickups and firing AK-47s and rocket propelled grenades. I had perfect situational awareness. What I lacked was cultural awareness. Great intelligence . . . wrong enemy.[99]

Army Intelligence doctrine offered two distinct conceptual tools to assist the reader in understanding the OE. The first was the contemporary operating environment (COE) model introduced in FM 2-0, *Intelligence*.[100] This model consisted of eleven variables, the nature and stability of the state, regional and global relationships, economics, demographics, information, physical environment, technology, external organizations, national will, time, and military capabilities. These variables along with the six dimensions of the OE constituted the COE. According to FM 2-0, "only by studying and understanding these (COE) variables-and incorporating them into training-will the US Army both keep adversaries from gaining an operational advantage against the US and find ways to use them to our own advantage."[101] Noticeably, absent from this list of variables, however, was any consideration for foreign culture and how it might effect not only the environment but enemy and friendly forces as well. This omission would also, by default, exclude culture from becoming a focus of the training effort proscribed in the statement above.

OIF highlighted the fact that the existing body of doctrine did not provide for the acceptable levels of cultural understanding. As a result, leaders from government, industry, and

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[99]Robert H. Scales, MG, U.S. Army (Retired), *Culture-Centric Warfare* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 2004), 1. Available from http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=119&sid=53042ac6-e547-4634-bcfb-94d89a128b6b%; Internet; accessed on 8 March 2007.

[100]Department of the Army, FM 2-0, *Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 1-23.

[101]Ibid., 1-23.

academia have engaged to address these shortfalls in theory and in practice. The following represents a small sampling of these ongoing efforts.

Emerging Trends and New Doctrine

In addition to identifying culture as an important variable in future operational environment, *The Joint Operational Environment, the World Through 2030 and Beyond* offered several practical ideas designed to improve how US forces can understand and use this concept. The first offering was a more-encompassing definition of culture than that which was found in existing doctrine. According to the JOE, culture is "a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another."[102] Along with this new definition, they also sub-divided culture into fourteen categories that include religion, law, core values, and norms of behavior among others. The implication being that as one explores and understands the component variable, then cultural understanding increases.

The second significant offering was the idea that cultures, by themselves, do not cause conflict but that the friction that comes from interaction between two different cultures creates the potential for conflict.[103] Although the authors elaborate very little on this statement, it seems to suggest that not only knowing about a target culture is important but that knowing one's own culture and how it is likely to interact with another is equally important. This represents a significant shift from "enemy-focused" methodologies seen in current doctrine to more holistic approaches to understanding the operational environment.

Finally, the authors stated that the military must "re-learn the skill of winning the cultural component of a campaign" by not only defeating an adversary's capability but also his will to

[102]US Joint Forces Command. The Joint Operational Environment: The World Through 2030 and Beyond, 14.

[103]Ibid., 9.

fight.[104] They stated that the more important of these two factors was will which had more effect on post-conflict stability. They offered two principles designed to counter an adversary's will to fight, "do no harm" and "influence the culture." The first principle simply meant that US forces should avoid any unnecessary actions that would fuel an adversary's will to fight. This would require all soldiers to possess a keen sense of cultural awareness that could be achieved through training and education. The second principle was that US forces must "influence the culture" in a way that creates a favorable perception of US efforts. They argue that this could be achieved by manipulating elements of culture to "appeal or neutralize" an adversary's emotions while "informing his cognition." They acknowledged that this approach would be difficult but achievable by developing cultural subject matter expertise, access to centers for excellence, and incorporating cultural consideration into all future Joint operational concepts.[105]

FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, published in December 2006, was developed to address shortfalls in counterinsurgency doctrine. It represented the combined efforts of military leaders and experts in field ranging from anthropology to criminal justice. While it focused primarily on how to understand and fight a counterinsurgency, it acknowledged that this could not be done without understanding cultural aspects of the OE. The manual states, "while all characteristics of civil considerations are important, understanding the people is particularly important in COIN."[106]

In order to achieve this end, FM 3-24 offered a slightly modified version of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process focused on human aspects of the OE. It emphasized that planners should focus on society, social structure, culture, language, power and authority, and interests as they shaped their understanding of the OE. Not only did it provide these simple categories but dedicated significant energy to explaining each one and how it

[104]Ibid., 38.
[105]Ibid.
[106]Department of the Army, FM 3-07, *Stability and Support Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 3-4.

affected the OE. As a matter of fact, it dedicated well over two pages to defining and explaining culture and its sub-categories like identity, belief, values, attitudes and perceptions, belief systems, and cultural forms.[107] It also offered a few practical tools to assist planners in their efforts to understand these aspect of the OE these included, a population support overlay, religion, race, and ethnicity overlay and perception assessment matrix.[108]

Summary

Operations and intelligence doctrine that existed prior to OIF demonstrated a lack of consideration for concepts of culture in the OE. This could be seen in three patterns that emerged from this survey. First, culture and its relationship to the OE were ill-defined leaving the reader to guess at what constituted culture and its associated concepts like cultural awareness, cultural understanding, and others. Second, it did not provide coherent and practical approaches for gaining cultural understanding. Finally, the doctrine focused too heavily on enemy forces in the environment with too little regard for other and perhaps more relevant variables in the OE.

Since OIF, however, some new concepts and doctrine have surfaced that address many of these weaknesses. FM 3-24 and the JOE demonstrated a renewed appreciation for culture in the OE. Both improved upon the definition of culture offered in JP 1-02 by expanding the concept into several categories giving the reader a greater appreciation for what constituted culture and its complexity. Additionally, they offered several practical tools to assist readers in gaining and using these improved understandings. These changes represent an encouraging trend in military thinking about culture that may serve as the basis for future refinements.

Even in light of these encouraging changes, this analysis suggested two remaining shortfalls that should be addressed. The first was the simple but important matter of definitions and terminology. FM 3-24 largely addressed much of this problem however; much of the

[107]Department of the Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 3-6.

[108]Ibid., B-1.

remaining doctrine was decidedly confusing and vague on concepts of culture especially religion. Secondly, doctrine still focused primarily on threat forces and to some extent civilian populations as objects of analysis but failed to account for likely interactions between these elements and friendly forces.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES FOR RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The JOE asserts that future warfare will not be characterized by the type of seemingly sterile, precise, and bloodless operations of past encounters like Operation Desert Storm but that warfare "will possess greater intensity, increased tempo, greater domain scope, interrelationships, and interdependencies, and greater uncertainty that place increased value on the human rather than the technological dimension."[109] Recent history, as seen in the case studies, seems in line with these predictions and the doctrinal review suggested that despite many improvements in how doctrine considers these factors the need for more improvement remains. Fortunately, this subject has received significant attention from a wide variety of thinkers many whom offer conceptual and practical ideas about how to account for culture and religion in doctrine, organizational structure, and training. This chapter explores and analyzes some of these ideas that may offer insight into how US military forces can understand how religion and culture shape and affect the OE.

Comparative Approaches - Religions, Ideologies, and Cultures

Lieutenant Colonel Steven Lambert offered an insightful approach for how to consider religious aspects of the OE in his book, *Y: The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct*. Lambert argued that the West failed to understand Islam because of an intellectual pedigree informed by the Enlightenment, "anti-Socratism" and Wilsonian idealism. He asserted that these

[109]US Joint Forces Command, *The Joint Operational Environment: The World Through 2030 and Beyond*, 64.

factors prevented many in the West and US from understanding the motivations and actions of religion-inspired adversaries. He offered a unique solution to this problem, however, before examining his recommendation; a brief discussion of his intellectual pedigree is warranted.

Lambert asserted that the Enlightenment created an over reliance on scientific rationalism in Western society. This epistemological model preferred scientific, quantifiable, empirical ways of gaining knowledge and problem-solving at the expense of more abstract ideas like religion or anthropology. This belief he argued, was often manifest in policy or problem-solving which often discounted significant variables in complex problems or environments that were not readily quantifiable.[110] This belief also extended into modern military problem-solving processes which inherently rely on scientific rationalism. This rationale, coupled with a healthy dose of ethnocentrism or cultural "mirror-imaging," may partially explain why it seems US military forces have been unable to understand how and why religion and culture are important variables in the modern OE.

One of the traits that ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was noted for was his constant questioning of political matters. This stemmed from the belief that a society could discern ultimate truths from open and iterative dialogues on the subject. Lambert contrasted this belief with secular humanism and postmodern nihilism which held that ultimate truths did not exist in public realms but were personal affairs of individuals. He further asserted that these beliefs stymied open dialogues about ultimate truths because they held that such discussions were fruitless as ultimate truths rested with the individual alone and were not relevant for the collective group or society.[111] American government shares these beliefs and, as a result, often avoids discussions about matters like religion and culture which it believes are more appropriate for private not public discourse. The military, as an institution of government, shares these beliefs but

[110]Stephen P. Lambert, *Y: The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic Intelligence, 2005), 17.

[111]Ibid., 18.

largely, as a result of recent operations, has grudgingly acknowledged religion and culture as important variables in the OE. Care must be taken however, to ensure that future dialogues on these topics are substantive and not purely superficial.

Lambert's third assertion was that the US still largely clings to the notions of Wilsonian ideal. This ideal contains six basic assumptions:

1. Democracies do not go to war with each other.
2. Democracy is the best way to ensure human rights.
3. Free market economies and democracy are mutually supporting and beneficial.
4. Globalization is good because it spreads free markets and democracy.
5. International law has a universal credence.
6. Multilateral organizations based on international law have credibility.[112]

He argued that a rigid belief in these values has led Americans to believe not only in the superiority of these values for themselves but also the belief that these values are universal. The findings of the US-Iraq case study above seem to dispute this notion that these ideals are in fact universal. This is not to suggest that US policy and action in Iraq invalidated every assumption however, it has become clear that many people not only in Iraq, but the Middle East region at large may reject the Wilsonian ideal based on religious grounds.

In order to gain an understanding of religion that Lambert asserted was missing from US policy, he conducted a comparative analysis of the theological doctrines of both Christianity and Islam. He also examined scripture, canon, and historical aspects of each religion's founder to form his conclusions although only his theological comparison will be discussed in this monograph. His analysis looked at four specific areas of each religion, anthropology, theology, soteriology, and eschatology.

[112]Ibid., 22.

1. Anthropology: The study of man's essential nature within the physical universe and natural order.

2. Theology: The study of God and his divine relationship with mankind as well as the physical universe.

3. Soteriology: The study of how mankind can be absolved or rescued from evil.

4. Eschatology: The study of the "here-after" or after life.

What Lambert found through this analysis was that the different theological beliefs led to very different and practical imperatives within each society. To illustrate, he argued that Christianity held that the nature of a man was essentially fallen and evil from birth because of the original sin committed in the Garden of Eden by Adam and Eve. As a result, traditionally Christian societies developed social structures designed to limit the effects of man's sinful nature. One might think of structures like term limits for US Presidents or separations of powers in the US Constitution as practical examples of this principle. By contrast, he found that Islamic anthropology held that man was neutral at birth but that external influences tended to corrupt his nature and draw him away from communion with God. As a result, Lambert argued that Islamic societies often sought to purge themselves of "wayward influences and apply correctives so as to arrange society as a constructive religious milieu for mankind."[113]

Lambert's model did not simply point out the differences between Christianity and Islam but it provided insight into the core beliefs that underlie culture, social institutions, and the behaviors of two cultures. The value of this approach was that he used the core beliefs of two antagonists to shape his understanding of the operational environment. A practical application of this theory might have been an in depth pre-mortem analysis of US intended policies for Iraq before OIF coupled with an examination of Iraqi religious beliefs to shape a more realistic understanding of possible outcomes in Iraq. This type of analysis might have foreseen Iraqi

[113]Ibid., 42.

rejection of American democracy, rejection of US appointed Iraqi government or even greater Muslim rejection of US efforts in Iraq.

In his article, *Military Cultural Education,* Colonel Maxie McFarland, US Army (Ret) endorsed the notion that cultural understanding required not only knowledge of other cultures but a also a keen sense of self-awareness. He argued that in order to achieve success the military must create "culturally literate and competent" soldiers. Culturally literate soldiers were those who understood and appreciated "their own beliefs, behaviors, values, and norms but were also aware of how their perspectives might affect other cultures views. Culturally competent soldiers on the other hand would have a "more in-depth and application oriented understanding of culture than cultural literacy required." that this was necessary for "managing group, organizational, or community cross or mixed cultural activities."[114] He also included religion under this umbrella by stating, "An exploration of religious cultural norms could take the form of comparisons of foundational cultural values as they apply to the world's prominent religions."

McFarland believed that "early" and "continuous" cultural education was necessary for soldiers and leaders to achieve literacy and competence. In his model, officers would begin to establish their cultural literacy in pre-commissioning courses and would continue on a path to competence through continuous training in the officer educational system even up to the Army War College level. He also offered distributed learning programs as a method to reinforce this education that he believed could be continuously reinforced and tested at training centers and the Battle Command Training Program.[115]

[114]Colonel Maxie McFarland, US Army, Retired, "Military Cultural Education," *Military Review* (March-April 2005): 62; Available from http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/download/English/MarApr05/macfarland.pdf; Internet; Accessed on 7 March 2007.

[115] Ibid, 67.

Practical Approaches for Religious and Cultural Understanding

"Joint doctrine fails to properly integrate cultural assessments into campaign planning" was the thesis of Major James Gordon's monograph, *Cultural Assessments and Campaign Planning*. To develop this argument Gordon led the reader through a series of historical campaigns that highlighted US failure to consider culture in different operations, these included: Vietnam, Somalia, Operations Uphold Democracy (Haiti), and Iraqi Freedom.[116] He linked many of these failures directly to Joint doctrine which he asserted failed to provide for adequate levels of cultural understanding in principle and practice. Gordon offered three recommendations that he believed would address culture and integrate it into campaign planning; two of those recommendations are discussed below.

His first recommendation was to develop a new model for JIPB that did not focus solely on traditional threat models but included a more holistic approach to the operational environment. The benefit of this model he argued was that it took familiar doctrine and modified it to facilitate cultural understanding. Lieutenant Commander John P. Coles echoed this call for an adjustment to the JIPB in his essay, *Cultural Intelligence & Joint Intelligence Doctrine* where he stated, "Cultural intelligence must be factored into the JIPB process" and offered several changes to doctrine as well as some practical ideas to achieve this end.[117]

Secondly, Gordon offered a cultural assessment model which would force planners to examine "various demographic elements" to determine dominant cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes of a target population. Planners could then compare these findings against friendly and enemy courses of action to determine likely "population group" courses of action in any given environment.[118] The key inference from this idea was the notion that cultural variables, to include

[116]Major James A. Gordon, "Cultural Assessments and Campaign Planning" (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), 50.

[117]Lieutenant Commander John P. Coles, USN, "Cultural Intelligence and Joint Intelligence Doctrine," *Small Wars Journal* (2007): 8.

[118]Ibid., 42.

religion, were knowable, and as a result planners might be able to predict how US policies and forces might be received by different cultural groups. USJFCOM's *Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept* supports the predictive nature of this model with the statement, "augmenting classic military intelligence with a cultural understanding of key players and their demands helps the joint force anticipate problems and preempt or respond appropriately."[119]

In his award winning essay, *Avoiding a Napoleonic Ulcer: Bridging the Gap of Cultural Intelligence (Or, Have We Focused on the Wrong Transformation?),* Lieutenant Colonel George W. Smith, Jr. likens the current challenges faced by US forces in Iraq to those faced by Napoleon's Army in Spanish province of Navarre in 1808. While acknowledging that no two situations are alike, he asserted that in both instances, pre-conflict intelligence focused too heavily on winning the traditional military contest at "the expense of a focus on the people" which would "make winning the peace more difficult than winning the war."[120]

Smith recommended three immediate changes to "bridge future cultural intelligence gaps," two of which are discussed here. The first recommendation was to develop new intelligence doctrine that acknowledged the importance of history and culture as factors in modern conflict. He carefully acknowledged the contributions of current cultural specialists like Special Forces and Foreign Area Officers (FAO) but suggested that these units were "undermanned and over tasked" and unable to adequately fulfill cultural intelligence requirements. As a result, he recommended that the Joint force should look to hire "anthropologists, historians, economists, criminologists, and other experts" who could "provide

[119]US Joint Forces Command, *Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept*, Draft, version 1.06 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004) 13, Available from www.dtic.mil/jointvision/ draftstab_joc.doc; Internet; accessed on 7 March 2007.

[120]George W. Smith, Jr., "Avoiding a Napoleonic Gap of Cultural Intelligence (Or, Have We Focused on the Wrong Transformation?)" *Military Review* (March-April 2005), 22. Available from http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcwar/irp/Documents/CJCS%20Essay%20-%20Smith.pdf.

the depth of understanding that would lay the foundation for success in post-hostilities operations."[121]

His second recommendation was "a culturally oriented addition to the intelligence series within joint doctrine."[122] He asserted that this addition is necessary because joint doctrine provided little guidance for understanding indigenous populations and what intelligence it did provide is scattered throughout the existing body of doctrine making it difficult to use.[123] The doctrinal review of this monograph largely supported this allegation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter is to conclude the monograph by answering the research questions based on an evaluation of the case studies, doctrinal and theoretical reviews. To review, those questions were: Does religion play a prominent role in modern warfare? Second, does current doctrine sufficiently account for religion as a factor in the modern OE? Finally, what can be done to improve processes and organizations to better account for the presence of religion in the OE?

The case studies of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Soviet-Afghan War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom demonstrate that religion continues to be an important aspect of conflict in the modern Middle East. They also demonstrate the limited ability of secular analysis to understand the complexity of these OEs. Secular analysis did yield a working knowledge of some of the causes and consequences of these conflicts however; it offered little to explain the visceral and extra-determined nature of many of these antagonists. When secular explanations and religious considerations were combined however, a more complete understanding of the OEs began to emerge. If, as the JOE predicts that future conflict will revolve largely around cultural and

[121]Ibid., 33.
[122]Ibid.
[123]Ibid., 34.

religions considerations, leaders and planners can no longer afford to ignore these factors as they formulate their understandings of these OEs.

The operations and intelligence doctrine that served as a basis for the OIF planning effort did not provide planners the principles or conceptual tools needed to account for religious or cultural aspects of the operational environment. Much of this doctrine guided planners to focus on more tangible and scientific aspects of the OE like enemy formations, or key infrastructure but provided marginal guidance about more ambiguous but perhaps more relevant factors like culture and religion. This point became clear from the interviews with Colonels Bensen and Rotkoff who agreed that their focus on enemy, terrain, and weather contributed to an inadequate appreciation for cultural aspects of the OE. This was not surprising when one considers the inherently scientific nature of the doctrine and systems that guide planners to focus on empirical aspects of problems like Operation Iraqi Freedom. A by-product of this scientific approach was the belief that planners could understand the OE of Iraq by analyzing component parts or systems of enemy forces. This approach worked well for the major combat operations where US forces could focus on defined enemy forces however; it was not adequate in subsequent operations where the number and complexity of variables that actually constituted the OE increased exponentially.

The survey of pre-OIF doctrine demonstrated that doctrine did not adequately provide for holistic understanding of the OE in OIF however, encouraging changes in doctrine have emerged since that time. FM 3-24 for example, goes to extensive lengths to demonstrate the importance of culture in the environment and even provides several practical tools to assist planners in gaining adequate situational awareness. This focus was not shared however by the remainder of the doctrine which continues to address culture and religion in superficial terms only.

Sun Tzu theorized in a famous axiom, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.” This simple idea was embedded in each of the theories examined in this monograph. As a group they clearly acknowledged the importance of knowing adversary beliefs, values, and customs -- which most argued could be obtained from

clear, objective analysis of target populations. Further, this analysis amounted to only one-half of the information required for understanding the operational environment. The remaining information could only be obtained through the objective analysis of American beliefs, values, customs, and policies which could then be merged with the adversary analysis to form overall understanding. For example, Lambert demonstrated that an overall understanding of religion as a variable in the OE came from the interaction between Christianity and Islam, not just an analysis of Islam itself. With respect to culture, McFarland argued, that "self-awareness of our own cultural assumptions enables us to use this understanding in relation to others.

With the research questions answered, this chapter now turns toward some recommendations that may facilitate better understanding of cultural and religious variables in future OEs. These recommendations represent a continuation of the dialogue on religion and culture that has expanded in the wake of OIF and OEF.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is to acknowledge and accept religion and culture as key variables in the operational environment. This idea while simplistic represents a significant departure from more scientific approaches that primarily embrace empirical variables. Whether current systems allow for it or not, the fact remains that a large number of people on earth belong to one religion or another and all belong to specific cultures. These beliefs often cause people to act in ways that baffle outsiders to include US military forces who are often unfamiliar with different religions or cultures. This confusion is often unnecessary however because of the wealth of information available about religion and culture yet it often goes unheeded because of a lack of will or ability to understand and integrate it into operations. The US military can no longer afford to ignore or under appreciate these aspects of the OE and must adopt the will and techniques that provide religious and cultural understanding. These techniques should be objective, unapologetic

and seek to mitigate the effects of ethno-centrism, mirror-imaging, and political correctness which only serve to weaken effectiveness of analysis and synthesis.

It is not sufficient to simply say that the US military should establish the will to integrate religious and cultural analyses into planning and operations for where there is a will; there must also be a way. One such way would be to modify the current body of doctrine to provide practical techniques for incorporating religion and culture as key variables in the OE. Movement on this front began with the publication of FM 3-24 which represented a significant departure from old threat models embedded in other operational doctrine. A large segment of remaining Joint and Army doctrine however retains threat focus with only superficial acknowledgment of these variables. Doctrine should be changed to present a united front on all aspects of culture.

Additionally doctrine writers should consider techniques that account for the interactions between US forces and populations that retain specific religious or cultural beliefs. This type of comparison is already used in coarse of action analysis to make predictions about interaction between conventional forces however, the idea as seen in the writings of the theorist examined in this monograph suggests that this would also be a valid technique for gauging the interactions between US forces and civilian populations. This approach would also require planners to possess not only a keen understanding of target population beliefs, attitudes and values but also be aware of their own in order to predict how these systems would likely interact. In the already taxing environment presented by combat operations, the obvious question arises, “how could a tactical or even operational level staff acquire such an understanding.”

Many of the thinkers encountered during this research offered organizational approaches as a possible solution for providing relevant religious and cultural information. To use Lieutenant Colonel George Smith’s words, the Joint force should hire “anthropologists, historians, economists, criminologists, and other experts” who could “provide the depth of understanding that would lay the foundation for success in post-hostilities operations.” This type of approach albeit expensive, offers some exciting possibilities. Consider an accessible think tank of experts

whose sole purpose was to analyze cultural aspects of future OEs. They could develop a web-based database of digestible and relevant cultural intelligence products that would assist commanders at all level shape common and coherent understanding of their environments prior to deployment. This capability coupled with bottom up refinements from units in the field might also serve to provide focus the training efforts of units preparing for deployment.

The Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas is currently working on a promising project that partially fulfills Smith's vision. They have created the Human Terrain System (HTS) which offers deployed brigades a team of five military and civilian cultural experts whose expertise ranges from anthropology, to sociology and language. These teams are responsible to provide commanders with "user-friendly ethnographic and sociocultural databases" of their areas of operation, the ability to provide rapid and focused analysis of pertinent socio-cultural issues, and a reach back capability to a range of cultural experts in the US. This capability offers tactical commanders the hope of understanding the cultural aspects of their operational environment which in theory will provide for more effective decision-making. The database may also provide deploying units a tool that will better enable them to prepare themselves for the cultural conditions specific to their anticipated areas of operation. This in turn would allow a more focused and effective training effort that would likely yield long term benefits. While HTS is currently designed to support the Brigade Combat Team, the idea that underpins the program may have wider applicability and is worthy of more consideration.

Summary

Just as they have done throughout the history of mankind, religion and cultural differences will continue to be an important part of the battlefield in the years to come. An examination of modern conflicts in the Middle East demonstrated that these factors, although not central in all cases, may serve to either cause or shape the nature of these conflicts. Modern military forces must acknowledge these as critical variables in the OE and seek to understand

how their existence may shape these future operations. This is an intimidating prospect for people and systems that are more comfortable with scientific aspects of problem solving but it is necessary in environments that are not dominated by classical force on force confrontations. This process can be made less intimidating by taking concrete steps in doctrine, training, and organization that will provide leaders the ability not only to account for these variables on future battlefields but thrive in culturally and religiously diverse environments.

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