Strategy Research Project

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR TODAY'S WARRIOR-DIPLOMATS

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL CAROLYN F. KLEINER
United States Army Reserve

USAWC CLASS OF 2008

U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
15 MAR 2008	**Strategy Research Project**	**00-00-2007 to 00-00-2008**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Importance of Cultural Knowledge for Today's Warrior-Diplomats	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
Carolyn Kleiner	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
U.S. Army War College ,122 Forbes Ave.,Carlisle,PA,17013-5220	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
See attached

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			
unclassified	**unclassified**	**unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**28**	

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR TODAY'S WARRIOR-DIPLOMATS

by

Lieutenant Colonel Carolyn F. Kleiner
United States Army Reserve

Colonel R. Christion Brewer
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Carolyn F. Kleiner

TITLE: The Importance of Cultural Knowledge for Today's Warrior-Diplomats

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 20 March 2008 WORD COUNT: 5,438 PAGES: 28

KEY TERMS: Cultural Awareness, Army Training, Army Officer Professional Military Education, Distance Learning

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

In conducting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), working with coalition partners and projecting influence worldwide, the Armed Forces of the United States (U.S.) will continue to be sent to the far corners of the earth to perform wide-ranging missions such as stability operations, nation building, peace-keeping duties, and humanitarian assistance. These types of operations all require competencies far beyond traditional war-fighting skills. All leaders in the military, whether at the tactical, operational, or strategic level, need training, education, and new skill sets as they function as "warrior-diplomats." If cultural knowledge is critical for U.S. armed forces to both defeat adversaries and work successfully with allies, what is and can be done by the United States Army to address this shortcoming? This paper will first show how a lack of cultural knowledge has hindered U.S. military and diplomatic efforts, then identify gaps in the current Army structure in providing cultural knowledge, and next review historical examples of the value of cultural knowledge in military operations. Following a survey of training programs currently implemented in the Army, the paper will conclude with recommendations to develop and employ a more culturally adept force.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR TODAY'S WARRIOR-DIPLOMATS

> Operating in a foreign land can be a minefield. Few members of the Armed Forces will be familiar with cultural traditions of the countries in which they operate. Yet violation of local norms and beliefs can turn a welcoming population into a hostile mob.…The military has enough to worry about without alienating the local population.…It is clear that the Armed Forces lack sophisticated knowledge of foreign countries.…Cultural awareness is not a mission-essential task—but it should be.[1]
>
> —The Honorable Ike Skelton and Honorable Jim Cooper

In conducting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), working with coalition partners and projecting influence worldwide, the Armed Forces of the United States (U.S.) will continue to be sent to the far corners of the earth to perform wide-ranging missions such as stability operations, nation building, peace-keeping duties, and humanitarian assistance. These types of operations all require competencies far beyond traditional war-fighting skills. All leaders in the military, whether at the tactical, operational, or strategic level, need training, education, and new skill sets as they function as "warrior-diplomats." As Montgomery McFate, a cultural anthropologist and defense policy fellow at the Office of Naval Research points out, "Misunderstanding culture at a strategic level can produce policies that exacerbate an insurgency; a lack of cultural knowledge at an operational level can lead to negative public opinion; and ignorance of the culture at a tactical level endangers both civilians and troops."[2]

So if cultural knowledge is critical for U.S. armed forces to both defeat adversaries and work successfully with allies, what is and can be done by the United States Army to address this shortcoming? This paper will first show how a lack of cultural knowledge has hindered U.S. military and diplomatic efforts, then identify gaps

in the current Army structure in providing cultural knowledge, and next review historical examples of the value of cultural knowledge in military operations. Following a survey of training programs currently implemented in the Army, the paper will conclude with recommendations to develop and employ a more culturally adept force.

Over the past 10 years, military leaders of all services have recognized the need for American forces to have a better awareness and understanding of foreign cultures. In the mid-1990s, Marine General Anthony Zinni called cultural awareness a "force multiplier" as he was struggling to resolve tribal conflict in Somalia.[3] In 2004, after the Iraq war began, retired Army Major General Robert H. Scales argued that the conflict "was fought brilliantly at the technological level but inadequately at the human level."[4] While the military was capable of technically conducting net-centric warfare, it lacked the "intellectual acumen, cultural awareness, and knowledge of the art of war to conduct culture-centric warfare."[5]

Historically, cultural knowledge has not been a priority within the Department of Defense (DOD), however, "the ongoing insurgency in Iraq has served as a wake-up call to the military that adversary culture matters."[6] The lack of cultural understanding has impeded our military efforts at the tactical and operational level leading to conflict and unnecessary loss of life. Congressmen Ike Skelton and Jim Cooper, members of the House Armed Services Committee, provide examples of U. S forces in Somalia using the circled-finger "A–OK" sign which was insulting to Somalis and American Solders using the two-fingered peace sign to greet Serbs which made the Serbs angry because it was a gesture commonly used by their Croat enemies. In a more recent case, U.S. troops were forcing detained Iraqis to bow their heads to the ground. This position is

forbidden by Islam except during prayers so the Soldiers offended not only the detainees but other Iraqis observing the situation.[7] Another illustration is provided by Dave Matsuda, an anthropologist who teaches at California State University and is presently a member of the Human Terrain Team attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, operating in Baghdad and Sadr City. In this instance, U.S. Soldiers made a condolence payment and thought they had settled a disagreement in a village. However, they were attacked when they returned to the village a few days later. "The Soldiers felt betrayed but in the villagers' eyes, the agreement had never been valid because the reconciliation ritual had not been conducted."[8]

Cultural understanding must be a critical component not only of all military planning and operations but more importantly of national security strategy and diplomatic efforts. According to Sheila Miyoshi Jager, Visiting Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. military has been working to incorporate cultural knowledge into doctrine, tactics, and operations, however, our political leaders have failed to develop a strategic context for counterinsurgency that includes cultural considerations. Nor have they helped to "redefine a compelling new strategy for counterinsurgency."[9] To illustrate this, Jager points to the primary tenets of the "Bush Doctrine"—a "pursuit of regime change and radical vision of transforming the Middle East." This approach has proven costly by increasing regional instability and overextending U.S. military forces.[10] McFate agrees noting that Bush administration policymakers "misunderstood the tribal nature of Iraqi culture and society. They assumed that the civilian apparatus of the government would

remain intact after the regime was decapitated.…In fact,…power reverted to its most basic and stable form—the tribe."[11]

Gaps We Have Today

To deal with gaps in knowledge about foreign cultures, military forces have historically turned to the intelligence community and doctrine. However, today, these two resources are not fulfilling the needs for culture-centric operations and strategies.

Intelligence Systems and Structure

When General David H. Petraeus was the Commanding General of the Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I), he stated cultural terrain was as important as geographical terrain:

> Knowledge of the cultural terrain can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, the knowledge of the geographical terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographical terrain.[12]

When seeking information on foreign forces and cultures, military forces rely on the intelligence community. Unfortunately, many current U.S. military intelligence systems are techno-centric, relying on Cold War tools and methods. As Scales observed, "The military has to develop an exceptional ability to understand people, their culture and their motivations. Tactical intelligence operations need to be transformed from technology-centered to human-centered efforts."[13]

The system is structured to collect info on the mission, enemy, troops, terrain and time (METT-T) to support high-intensity conventional warfare. This is not enough to support commanders operating in a human-centric, low-intensity, counterinsurgency environment. Scales recommends that DoD "build databases that contain the religious

and cultural norms for world populations—to identify the interests of the major parties, the cultural taboos—so soldiers can download the information quickly and use it profitably in the field." [14]

Definition and Doctrine

Over the last decade, the military has used the term culture in multiple ways. The terms cultural awareness, cultural understanding, cultural knowledge, and cultural intelligence are widely used, yet the definitions are largely absent in military doctrine.[15] Research conducted by Bill Lambert, Assistant Professor, Department of Joint and Multinational Operations, Command and General Staff College, shows culture appeared recently in some publications, most often in the context of "cultural awareness." In his review of 26 joint publications and 21 Army field manuals with a total of 9,595 pages, Lambert found only 1,152 instances of "culture." Furthermore, the doctrine contained "four conflicting definitions of culture and no definition of cultural awareness."[16]

For the purpose of this paper, the definition of culture is one published by the Department of National Security and Stability at the U.S. Army War College.

> "Culture" is a difficult concept to grasp with any certainty, but a fundamental one for defining and understanding the human condition. It is also an important dimension of policy and strategy, because it affects how people think and respond and thus how policy and strategy are formulated and implemented. We can consider culture as the way humans and societies assign meaning to the world around them and define their place in the world. It is manifested in languages, ideas, beliefs, customs, traditions, rituals, objects and images that are symbolic (therefore symbolic forms that represent and/or contain certain meanings) of the values, interests, perceptions, and biases of individuals and of the collective society… [17]

Despite the recognition that this is important, the Services face significant challenges in providing all our military forces with basic cultural awareness training let

alone providing serious opportunities to gain true cultural understanding and competency in interacting with foreign populations.

Relearning History

While Commander of the Combined Arms Center, Lieutenant General David Petraeus stated, “We have spent the last fifty years remembering and forgetting the importance of cultural awareness and stability ops. Now it’s coming to us full force.”[18] American history reveals many failures in our ability to apply cultural intelligence and awareness to operational and diplomatic situations. Such failures prolonged military operations in Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq—to name a few.[19]

Historically, America’s major wars have generally been against opponents that reflect a European cultural background very similar to our own. Therefore, cultural understanding was inherent, and unrecognized, in our planning and execution of military operations. For example, America fought the English in the Revolutionary War and in the War of 1812, the Mexicans/Spanish in the Mexican War and the Spanish American War, the Germans in World War I, and Germans, Italians and Japanese in World War II.

While the Japanese in World War II represented a significantly different cultural background, we were fighting a high intensity conflict with a goal of unconditional surrender. Cultural influences, while important, were not a critical factor during the war although they figured prominently in actions after the war. To illustrate this point, Jager uses the U.S. military occupation of Japan from 1945-52 as an example of American leaders using cultural knowledge to determine U.S. strategic objectives in Asia. To “preserve the Japanese imperial system and shield Emperor Hirohito from being tried as a war criminal” the U.S. “rewrote” history:[20] Jager further writes:

> Hirohito was miraculously transformed from Japan's preeminent military leader who oversaw a brutal 15-year war against Asia and the United States to an innocent Japanese victim and political symbol duped by evil Japanese militarists. The surprising and rapid transition from Japanese militarism to Japanese democracy was made *not* through the imposition of American democratic values and norms, but by a not so-subtle manipulation of Japanese cultural symbols and meanings, including a rather blatant manipulation of history.[21]

Vietnam provides another example of American propensity to lean toward our western heritage. There we aligned ourselves with the ruling elite French educated Catholics, which reflected the culture of the French colonialists much more so than that of the general, Buddhist population. There were efforts to educate U.S. military forces on cultural aspects of the country and populace but military and political strategies did not account for non-western, cultural differences. Former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said, "I had never visited Indochina, nor did I understand or appreciate its history, language, culture or value. When it came to Vietnam, we found ourselves setting policy for a region that was terra incognita."[22] The term "terra incognita" refers to unknown terrain and in this case the terrain was the Vietnamese population and its culture.

The desire to put the unsuccessful events of Vietnam behind us resulted in American political and military leaders dropping virtually all counter insurgency training, doctrine and operations, in which cultural understanding is critical, in favor of a planning for a major conflict, high-intensity war with the Soviet Threat in the European theater which was seen as a "true" threat to the United States. Although the Cold War era ended over a decade ago and the U.S. has been involved in low intensity operations and humanitarian relief efforts requiring cultural awareness and knowledge, training and education for the military forces is still in the crawl stage. Additionally, with current and

future operations involving coalition and multinational forces, Colonel Maxie McFarland emphasizes “cultural competence is a crucial leadership requirement.”[23] Undoubtedly, the Army and DoD will continue to focus on cultural training for the next few years as it is needed for current operations, however, the question is will DoD maintain its focus and funding for foreign cultural awareness and understanding or is cultural knowledge just a “trend” that will quickly disappear once we disengage from our current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Training and Assessment

To develop, execute, and assess cultural training and education for Soldiers is a daunting but critical task. Scales believes, “Every young soldier should receive cultural and language instruction, not to make every soldier a linguist but to make every soldier a diplomat with enough sensitivity and linguist skills to understand and converse with the indigenous citizen on the street.[24]

To develop, execute, and assess cultural training and education for Soldiers is a daunting task. Research reveals a consensus that different levels of cultural awareness and understanding are needed at various levels of warfare—“one “size” of cultural awareness does not fit all.”[25] Different levels of cultural understanding are needed at different levels of command and will be specific to the needs of the mission.”[26] To illustrate this point, Army Lieutenant Colonel William D. Wunderle, author of a cultural awareness primer for U.S. armed forces, designed the model below. This pyramid shows how basic information gained at the lowest level augmented with specific and advanced training will lead to the cultural competence needed by decision makers at the highest level.[27]

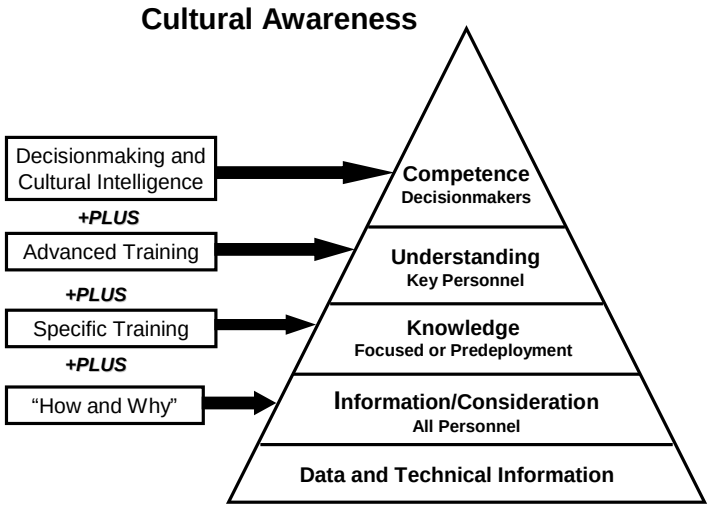

Figure 1: Cultural Awareness Pyramid

Wunderle's explanation of the levels is as follows:

- *Cultural Consideration* ("How and Why") is the incorporation of generic cultural concepts in common military training—knowing how and why to study culture and where to find cultural factors and expertise.
- *Cultural Knowledge* (Specific Training) is exposure to the recent history of a target culture. It includes basic cultural issues such as significant groups, actors, leaders, and dynamics, as well as cultural niceties and survival language skills.
- *Cultural Understanding* (Advanced Training) refers to a deeper awareness of the specific culture that allows general insight into thought processes, motivating factors, and other issues that directly support the military decisionmaking process.
- *Cultural Competence* (Decisionmaking and Cultural Intelligence) is the fusion of cultural understanding with cultural intelligence that allows focused

> insight into military planning and decisionmaking for current and future military operations. Cultural competence implies insight into the intentions of specific actors and groups.[28]

Dr. John Jandora, a retired U.S. Marine Corps colonel and a supervisory threat analyst at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, offers a similar approach. He establishes three levels of cultural knowledge requirements necessary for different arenas of military activity: basic, advanced, and special applications.[29] At the basic level, U.S. Soldiers need cultural skills to "operate roadblocks and checkpoints, conduct searches, reconnoiter areas, ask questions of natives and interact with friendly native officials, soldiers, and police." This training would include "basic verbal and nonverbal communication aids, behavioral "dos and don'ts," precautions to respect Islam" and instruction on differences between American and foreign cultures.[30]

At the advanced level, commanders and leaders would get all of the basic level instruction plus additional training on nuances of behavior and other customary or cultural subtleties necessary to "assess local social dynamics, engage local or regional native power brokers and handle feedback." [31]

Finally, apart from general cultural knowledge, military personnel may perform operations that require special applications. Jandora identifies Civil Affairs teams, Information Operation planners, and Military Intelligence analysts as groups that would require specialized training.[32]

Jandora's proposed Cultural Awareness Products include the following: Handbook for Soldiers; Handbook for commanders; Handbook for staff planners/campaign planners; Doctrine (Field Manual appendix) and instruction for

intelligence analysts; and Doctrine, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures and instructions for interrogators, counter-intelligence agents and collection managers.[33]

Personality and Aptitude

In order to grow a more culturally adept force, Army Lieutenant Colonel Timothy R. Williams, suggests administering personality inventories to all officers during their Officer Basic Course to identify culturally adept personnel. Individuals showing a tendency for cultural aptitude would be offered intensive training to build on their natural abilities. Additionally, all officers would be given the Defense Language Aptitude Test to identify those capable of learning foreign languages. Having the ability to converse in a foreign language often provides the motivation and skills necessary to understand a specific foreign culture.[34] To achieve and maintain even a small force with this expertise, will require time, funding, and the committed support of leaders at all levels.[35]

Army Training

The Army's objective is to have a conventional force "with Special Forces qualities, including being culturally competent."[36] In an effort to build cultural competency, the U.S. Army has programs such as multinational and partnership training exercises; officer exchange programs, and leader education or training events. While these programs are useful, they are primarily focused on educating the foreign student about U.S. cultural norms.[37]

To address the shortcoming in cultural knowledge needed by U.S. Soldiers, the Army recently instituted cultural awareness training at all levels of Professional Military Education (PME). Officers receive instruction from pre-commissioning through Senior Service College. Recognizing that gaining cultural knowledge must be a life long

endeavor, the Army established Distance Learning opportunities. In late 2005, the Army created the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Cultural Center at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center (USAIC), Fort Huachuca, Arizona. The TRADOC Culture Center (TCC) offers cultural awareness information and training materials along with language training materials and disseminates the products across the Army. The Center has developed common core standards and topics for all levels of PME and lesson objectives and classes enabling units across the Army to train soldiers in cultural issues that are critical for our military forces. The TCC expanded the development of Middle East, South East Asia, and Africa cultural products and provides mobile training teams (MTTs) Army wide to prepare Cultural Awareness trainers and Soldiers preparing to deploy. Additionally, the Center produced practical exercise cultural awareness video games hoping to engage the digitally-savvy Soldiers.[38]

The TCC also offers web based training through the University of Military Intelligence home page. For example, the PME Cultural Awareness Training Support Package (TSP) contains four levels of training spanning from Initial Military Training to the Captain's Career Course. The TSP offers lessons in defining culture, discussions of American and personal culture to determine areas of conflict and biases, the cultures of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the impact of culture on military operations through multiple practical exercises and situational training exercises.[39] The vision for the Center includes cross-cultural training, education, research, collaboration among military and civilian scholars, and physical and virtual organizational features. As the TCC matures, it anticipates influencing the rise of new cultural centers across the Army and DOD.[40]

Another valuable resource is the on-line Combined Arms Center (CAC) Research Library of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This is a superb web site providing links to the CAC Commander's Cultural Awareness Reading List, documents on Cultural Awareness, and links to DOD and non-DOD sites where individuals find books and articles to broaden their cultural knowledge.

The Defense Language Institute (DLI) Foreign Language Center provides a web-page with links to Field Support Modules, familiarization guides, language courses and a link to the DLI Cultural Awareness Assessment (CAA).[41] As directed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) of 23 January 2006, the CAA assesses familiarity with specific regional cultures in levels from 0+ to 2, based on a scale developed from the DoD Regional and Cultural Expertise Guidelines. General topics include geography, religions, customs and basic phrases of the dominant language of the culture. Detailed information on the government, economy, history, military, and security of the region is also assessed.[42] These excellent resources are available but the Army has not done an adequate job of advertising them which leads again to the question of whether "the Army" truly recognizes the importance of training and educating the total force in foreign cultures.

Challenges of Distance Learning Training

Delivering cultural awareness training to the Soldier, especially those in the Reserve Components (RC), is as significant a challenge as developing the training. For active duty forces, classroom training can easily be augmented or replaced with individual web based learning supported by computers or video technology located in

the post learning centers, computer center, or library. Army RC Soldiers, currently comprising 60% of the total Army force, do not live or work on Army posts. Unless they are activated to a military installation preparing to deploy, reserve component forces traditionally train one weekend a month in reserve centers across the country. These centers have few computers and lack robust internet connectivity let alone the broadband required for video, sound and graphics.[43] Even if the hardware was purchased, the Army must also ensure information technology (IT) support is available, especially on drill weekends, and fund the cost of the bandwidth connectivity. In lieu of the classroom, Scales thinks "Soldiers should be able to achieve proficiency at home and demonstrate their knowledge using assessment tools administered by DoD or the Joint Staff before any overseas deployment."[44] In addition to difficult technology issues associated with using home computers, this also puts additional burden, cost, and responsibility on the individual Soldier. Home computers "come in a variety of makes, models, operating systems, memory, and connection speeds." That presents a challenge to remote IT support technicians who would be needed to help Soldiers keep their home computer systems working. Individual Soldiers would additionally bear the responsibility to load and update virus scanning software and learn how to access the web pages and use any required tools.[45] If Soldiers are expected to train themselves at home, the Army must avoid placing the financial burden on the individual. This could be done by the Army providing laptop computers and reimbursing the cost of broadband connection – at least to company grade officers and enlisted Soldiers.

While the Services and DoD can develop and make available multiple training and educational tools, Commanders must make it happen. A common complaint is that

there is no time for cultural awareness training due to the overwhelming number of other training requirements. Another challenge Commanders face is motivating Soldiers to complete the training on-line and assessing their progress and comprehension. If Commanders recognize and educate their troops that future operations will increasingly be multinational coalitions and foreign populations constitute a critical center of gravity, then cultural awareness will be a high training priority – making it a force multiplier and a life saver during operations.[46]

Assessment

Troops focus on what is inspected and measured. Cultural training must become a core component of all institutional and unit training programs. Even Congressmen Skelton and Cooper, stated, “Cultural awareness is not a mission-essential task—but it should be.”[47] By listing cultural understanding on the Mission-Essential Task List (METL) and an evaluated component of training exercises, units and leaders will understand it is a standard condition of unit readiness.[48]

Bridging the Gap

Current research yielded several innovative ideas to help bridge the cultural knowledge gap prevalent in our military forces. Three are presented in the discussion below. The Army set up the Human Terrain System in 2005 but more funding and attention is needed to continue and expand this initiative. The concept of Global Scouts and Military Cooperation Groups are also recommendations worthy of consideration.

The Human Terrain System

Until recently, commanders arriving in their areas of operation in Iraq and Afghanistan were left to fend for themselves in figuring out ways to gather, analyze, and record cultural information on the populations in their area of operation. A commander in the 3rd Infantry Division returning from Iraq stated:

> 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 technical intelligence...wrong enemy.[49]

Since there were no established processes to collect cultural information or structured database architectures to record the data, each unit developed their own systems. These homegrown databases were not formally linked to other databases to allow the seamless sharing of information and the data was not archived for broader use within the Army. Unfortunately when one unit left, new commanders entering the same area of operation had to start again from scratch, developing their own system for researching and analyzing cultural data.[50] To mitigate these problems, the Army instituted the Human Terrain System (HTS) which represents a robust cultural information research system that augments traditional military intelligence systems. The goal of the HTS is to fill the cultural knowledge void by gathering ethnographic, economic, and cultural data for an area of operation and provide databases and tools to support analysis and decision making. Additionally, the database and institutional memory is transferred in total to successive commanders upon unit rotation, providing for needed continuity of situational awareness.[51]

The Human Terrain System has three components: a Human Terrain Team (HTT) operating at the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) level, a Human Terrain Analysis

Team (HTAT) operating at the Division level, and a Research Reachback Center (RRC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.[52]

The core building block of the HTS system is the HTT consisting of five individuals, three military and two civilian anthropologists or social scientists, embedded in brigade combat teams. These advisors are in direct support providing commanders with an organic capability to gather, process, and interpret relevant cultural data. Additionally, the HTT maintains the brigade's cultural database - the MAP-Human Terrain or (MAP-HT). This tool provides the commander with data maps showing specific ethnographic or cultural features in the area of operation such as key regional personalities, social structures, links between clans and families, economic issues, public communications, agricultural production, and any other cultural item of interest to the commander. Although the MAP-HT is operated by the deployed HTT, the system regularly transfers data to the Human Terrain Analysis Team at Division level and the Research Reachback Center to allow for more advanced analysis and wider use by the military and other government agencies. To provide continuity when the BCTs change out, the HTT rotates on a different schedule. HTT personnel and the database transfer to the incoming Brigade commander which provides immediate “institutional memory” about the people and the culture of its area of operation. [53]

The Human Terrain Analysis Team at Division level provides the Division commander with operationally relevant, social & cultural information to support the division planning and decision-making process. Additionally, this team integrates all information from the Brigade tactical teams to create a Common Operational Picture at the Division level.

The third component, the RRC has researchers who are experts in the cultural and ethnographic characteristics of the geographic area they support. The RRC's main purpose is to help Human Terrain Teams answer deployed commander's specific requests for information. Apart from its own institutional expertise, the RRC is able to access a network of researchers throughout the government and academia to get answers. The data compiled is available for the training, modeling, and simulation communities to improve mission rehearsal exercise scenarios for deploying forces.[54]

Global Scouts

According to Major General Scales:

> The Army would benefit from developing a cadre of so-called global scouts – officers and non-commissioned officers, well-educated, with a penchant for language and comfort with strange and distant places. These soldiers must be given time to immerse themselves in a single culture and to establish trust.[55]

The US Army can learn much about this concept from the British Army. In the late 19th century, they sent bright officers to various corners of the world to immerse them in the cultures of the Empire. The value of this custom was clearly demonstrated in the actions of China Gordon and T. E. Lawrence. A more recent example was Great Britain's relative success in Basra which Scales attributes, "in no small measure to the self-assurance and comfort with foreign culture derived from centuries of practicing the art of soldier diplomacy and liaison.[56]

How to build a cadre of global scouts for the U.S. military? Scales recommends the military Services set up a sponsorship program that provides funds for officers and noncommissioned officers to spend long periods in foreign countries. They would be expected to attend foreign military schools and stay within their assigned countries for

several years and the Service must ensure they do not encounter negative impacts to their career progression.

A successful global scout initiative would require a change of culture within the military intelligence community. A culture-centric approach to intelligence collection would demand a fundamental change in how intelligence specialists are selected, trained, and promoted. A shift from a technological to a cognitive approach to intelligence would give priority to those who are able to devote time to studying war and who are capable of immersing themselves in potential theaters of war. Global scouts would be supported and reinforced with a body of intellectual analysts within the intelligence community. These analysts would be formally educated and possess the skills to understand and interpret the information and insights provided by scouts in the field. Furthermore, individuals from government agencies that routinely work with the military should be required to attend military schools specifically designed to improve the interagency function in war. The students and faculty would be from agencies such as the departments of State, Treasury, Homeland Security, and Agriculture, as well as permanent staffs in the White House and Congress. Military attendees would include foreign area officers and personnel in civil affairs, public affairs, special forces, and information operations specialties. Ideally, these schools would attract attendees from domestic and international nongovernmental organizations as well as the media.

The Military Cooperation Group

Another recommendation is offered by Army Lieutenant Colonel Alfred E. Renzi, Jr. who recommends establishing United States Military Cooperation Groups (MCG) by consolidating DoD activities at embassies and expanding the charter for DoD operations

conducted from embassies. He proposes a policy that would "consolidate the functions of Defense Attachés, Security Assistance Officers, and add ethnographic information officers into a network of embassy annexes that would cover every nation in which the United States has a country team."[57] This proposal is based on a concept implemented a few years ago in U.S. Southern Command. General Wallace H. Nutting explained his efforts:

> My purpose was to establish a modest network of US intelligence, operations, and planning capabilities in each capital and at the theater-operational level, using that regional network to try to pull together and to coordinate the efforts that we were undertaking in each country.[58]

The MCG would be the building block for an overt collection of ethnographic information. Renzi sees several benefits of a continuous in country presence. First, are the benefits gained in accumulating "knowledge cultures, networks, personalities, and personal relationships" built over time. Second, is a more streamlined command and control for operations such as civil-military efforts, security cooperation, limited counter insurgency and counterterrorism, and psychological operations. The third benefit would result from sharing information laterally within the embassy and other MCGs and vertically with the combatant commander and stateside organizations. Finally, the familiarity with local and regional areas would provide a cultural foundation for developing contingency plans and if a Joint Task Force would be required, in-country MCG personnel would be an immediately available asset.[59]

Conclusion

The lack of cultural understanding has impeded not only our military efforts leading to conflict and unnecessary loss of life but has also hindered achieving political objectives and strategic goals. All leaders in the military, whether at the tactical,

operational, or strategic level, need training, education, and new skill sets as they function as “warrior-diplomats”.

This paper explored how the lack of cultural knowledge has hindered U.S. military and diplomatic efforts. It identified gaps in the intelligence structure and doctrine which are inhibiting Army’s ability to gain cultural knowledge. Additionally, it provided a review of historical examples showing the value of cultural knowledge in military operations and surveyed current training programs implemented by the Army. Finally, recommendations were presented to help the Army develop and employ a more culturally adept force.

Undoubtedly, the Army and DoD will continue to focus on cultural training for the next few years as it is needed for current operations. However, this cannot be a short term fix. With the increase in multinational coalition cooperative efforts and continuing Global War on Terrorism, DoD must increase its focus and funding placing a high priority on cultural awareness that is critical to save the lives of our “warrior-diplomats.”

Endnotes

[1]Ike Skelton and Jim Cooper, “You’re Not From Around Here, Are You?” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 36 (2004): 12. The Honorable Ike Skelton and the Honorable Jim Cooper are members of the House Armed Services Committee.

[2]Montgomery McFate,”The Military Utility of Understand Adversary Culture,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 38 (2005): 43.

[3]John W. Jandora, “Military Cultural Awareness: From Anthropology to Application,” Landpower Essay, no. 06-3 (November 2006): 1.

[4]Roxana Tiron, “Army Criticized for Not Learning from Past Wars,” *National Defense Magazine,* September 2004; available from http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/ issues/2004/Sep/Army_Criticized.htm; Internet; accessed 3 January 2008.

[5]Robert H. Scales, “Culture-Centric Warfare,” *Proceedings: U.S. Naval Institute*, October 2004; available from http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_1004_Culture-P1,00.html; Internet; accessed 3 January 2008.

[6]McFate, 43.

[7]Skelton, 12.

[8]Mike Pryor, “Human Terrain Team Helps Soldiers in Iraq Understand Cultural Landscape,” 11 December 2007; available from http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/12/11/ 6531-human-terrain-team-helps-soldiers-in-iraq-understand-cultural-landscape/; Internet; accessed 22 December 2007.

[9]Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2007), vi.

[10]Jager, 19.

[11]McFate, 44.

[12]David H. Petraeus, “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations From Soldiering in Iraq,” *Military Review* (January-February 2006): 8.

[13]Tiron.

[14]Scales.

[15]William D. Wunderle, *Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: A Primer for US Armed Forces Deploying to Arab and Middle Eastern Countries* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Press, 2006), 103.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Jiyul Kim, “The Analytical Framework,” *Course Reader for the Strategic Thinking Course*, Academic Year 2008, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2008), 2.

[18]Peter Shaver, *Language Action, TRADOC Cultural Training Summit*; available from http://www.universityofmilitaryintelligence.us/mipb/article.asp?articleID=544; Internet; accessed 1 January 2008.

[19]Center for Advanced Defense Studies, “Cultural Intelligence and the United States Military,” July 2006; available from http://www.c4ads.org/files/cads_report_cultint_Jul06.pdf; Internet; accessed 3 January 2008.

[20]Jager, 7-8.

[21]Ibid., 8.

[22]Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect* (New York: Random House, 1995), 32.

[23]Maxie McFarland, “Military Cultural Education,” *Military Review* (March-April 2005): 64.

[24]Scales.

[25]Wunderle, 11.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., 20. Wunderle adapted this model "from Connable and Speyer (2005) and modified it to be congruent with the cognitive hierarchy found in FM 6-0, appendix B."

[28]Ibid., 11.

[29]Jandora, 2-5.

[30]Ibid., 3.

[31]Ibid., 4.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., 6.

[34]Timothy R. Williams, *Culture – We Need Some Of That! Cultural Knowledge and Army Officer Professional Development*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 15 March 2006), 11.

[35]Ibid.,12.

[36]McFarland, 64.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Remi Hajjar, "The Army's New TRADOC Culture Center," *Military Review* (November-December 2006); available from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PBZ/is_6_86/ai_n17093423; Internet; accessed 18 March 2008.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]*Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center Home Page*, available from http://www.dliflc.edu/; Internet; accessed 21 December 2007.

[42]Defense Language Institute, "Cultural Awareness Assessment (CAA)," linked from *Field Support Modules* at "Featured Product: Cultural Awareness Assessment," available from http://fieldsupport.lingnet.org/, Internet; accessed 21 December 2007.

[43]Jeffrey F. Mitchell, *Increasing Language Proficiency and Cultural Awareness Through the Use of Distributed Learning*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 6 April 2004), 12.

[44] Scales.

[45]Mitchell, 12.

[46]Hajjar.

[47]Skelton, 12.

[48]Scales.

[49]Scales.

[50]Jacob Kipp et al., “The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century,” Military *Review* (September-October 2006); available from http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume4/december_2006/12_06_2.html; Internet; accessed 22 December 2007.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Tiron.

[56] Scales.

[57]Alfred E. Renzi, Jr., The Military Cooperation Group, Master’s Thesis, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2006, 1.

[58]GEN Wallace H. Nutting, “The State Department Denied a Need for U.S. Military Aid,” Interview, 29 January 1987, Orlando, in El Salvador at War: An Oral History, ed. Max G. Manwaring and Court E. Prisk (Washington, D.C.: national Defense University Press, 1988), 102.

[59]Ibid., 13.