

SOLLIMS SAMPLER

Targeting Peace & Stability Operations Lessons & Best Practices

Volume 4

Issue 2



**Leadership in Stability Operations
Understanding / Engaging the People**



U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the April 2013 edition of the Stability Operations Lessons Learned and Information Management System (SOLLIMS) Lessons Learned “Sampler” – **Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding / Engaging the People**.

The general structure of the “Sampler” includes (1) an [Introduction](#) that provides an operational or doctrinal perspective for the content, (2) the Sampler “[Quick Look](#)” that provides a short description of the topics included within the Sampler and a link to the full text, (3) the primary, topic-focused Stability Operations (SO)-related [Lessons Learned Report](#), and (4) links to [additional reports and other references](#) that are either related to the “focus” topic or that address current, real-world, SO-related challenges.

This lessons-learned compendium contains just a sample – thus the title of “Sampler” – of the observations, insights, and lessons related to **Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding / Engaging the People** available in the SOLLIMS data repository. These lessons are worth sharing with military commanders and their staffs, as well as with civilian practitioners having a Stability Operations-related mission / function – those currently deployed on stability operations, those planning to deploy, the institutional Army, policy-makers, and other international civilian and military leaders at the national and theater level.

Lesson Format. Each lesson is provided in the following standard format:

- Title/Topic
- Observation
- Discussion
- Recommendation
- Implications (optional)
- Event Description

The “Event Description” section provides context in that it identifies the source or event from which the lesson was developed. Occasionally you may also see a “Comments” section. This is used by the author to provide related information or additional personal perspective.

You will also note that a number is displayed in parentheses next to the title of each lesson. This number is hyper-linked to the actual lesson within the SOLLIMS database; click on the highlighted number to display the SOLLIMS data and to access any attachments (references, images, files) that are included with this lesson. Note, you must have an account and be logged into SOLLIMS in order to display the SOLLIMS data entry and access / download attachments.

If you have not registered on SOLLIMS, the links in the reports will take you to the login or the registration page. Take a brief moment to register for an account in order to take advantage of the many features of SOLLIMS and to access the stability operations related products referenced in the report.

We encourage you to take the time to provide us with your perspective on any given lesson in this report or on the overall value of the “Sampler” as a reference for you and your unit/organization. **By using the “Perspectives” text entry box that is found at the end of each lesson – seen when you open the lesson in your browser – you can enter your own personal comments on the lesson.** We welcome your input, and we encourage you to become a regular contributor.

At PKSOI we continually strive to improve the services and products we provide the global stability operations community. We invite you to use our website at [<http://pksoi.army.mil>] and the many functions of the SOLLIMS online environment [<https://sollims.pksoi.org>] to help us identify issues and resolve problems. We welcome your comments and insights!



Kabul, Afghanistan – ISAF senior enlisted leader, Command Sergeant Major Thomas R. Capel, joined with the Afghan Army’s top enlisted leader, Sergeant Major Safi Roshan, and 100 of their colleagues for weeklong discussions about the drawdown and ISAF’s ongoing commitment. Dozens of Afghan sergeants major were on hand with their coalition counterparts, exchanging best practices and strategies in order to achieve the desired future state. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Bruce Cobbeldick, ISAF Public Affairs Office, 12 March 2013)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the April 2013 edition of the PKSOI Lessons Learned “Sampler.” This edition focuses on **Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding / Engaging the People**.

Consider the following leadership actions during recent operations:

Liberia. Warring groups with access to weapons still wandered the streets of Liberia, a fact which threatened to reignite the civil war... To reinforce the peace process against these pressures [from armed groups/rebels], recovery leaders actively helped develop “networks for peace” to counter the “networks for violence.” They assisted in the building and rebuilding of multilateral, national, and non-governmental/societal networks of people and organizations that wanted a warless Liberia – as a way to check the opportunistic warlords. Indigenous Liberian networks expanded ... and succeeded.

[Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector Reform in Liberia](#), John Blaney, Jacques Paul Klein and Sean McFate, The Stanley Foundation, June 2010

Iraq. U.S. Army Colonel Sean MacFarland took full advantage of the growing rift between Sunni tribal insurgents and Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ). As AQIZ alienated the local population, the 1st Brigade was able to insert itself in between terrorists and civilians by moving out of the large Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and into smaller outposts within the city proper...Key to the strategy was the engagement of local tribal sheikhs....As the tribal sheikhs became targets of the terrorists, MacFarland offered protection for the tribes and demonstrated good faith to the people of Ramadi.

[The Sons of Iraq and the Search for Legitimacy among the Sunni Tribes](#), Bigay K. Saraswat, PKSOI, 2010

Afghanistan. Beginning in October 2009, U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Patrick Carroll and Mr. Patricio Asfura-Heim began to develop a religious leader engagement program for II Marine Expeditionary Brigade (II MEB) that addressed the tendency for religious leaders to be ignored in military and diplomatic engagements... The introduction of a U.S. Navy Muslim chaplain served as an “icebreaker” for many religious leaders in southern Afghanistan and fostered trust between ISAF and the tens of Afghans who traveled from remote villages to attend the engagements.

[Religious Leader Engagement in Southern Afghanistan](#), Alexs Thompson, Joint Forces Quarterly, issue 63, 4th quarter 2011

What can we draw from the above? The importance of understanding the people? Understanding sources of friction/violence? Engaging the right people at the right time? Using innovative approaches to influence local leaders and groups? This Sampler seeks to explore such questions/issues for leaders – both civilian and military – engaged in stability operations. Common themes and recommendations are captured in the [Conclusion](#) paragraph.

Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding / Engaging the People

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“QUICK LOOK”

Click on [\[Read More ...\]](#) to go to full lesson.

- Certain **leader attributes** prominently stand out as “keys to success” – frequently cited in strategic leader assessments and lesson reports from recent peacekeeping and stability operations. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Attending to the “**human domain**” is vital to peacekeeping and stability operations. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- An analytical review of recent publications and lesson reports on stability operations points to the importance of investing in “**social mentoring**” during both planning and execution of operations. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Since 2007, **Human Terrain Teams (HTTs)** have been providing an essential element of situational awareness to military organizations operating in Iraq and Afghanistan – namely, cultural understanding. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- The Nangarhar Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) was able to improve the quality of provincial and district level leadership in the Nangarhar Province’s agricultural sector through a comprehensive **leadership training program** that focused on training, empowering, and inspiring local officials. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Systematic **engagement of religious leaders** at the provincial, district, and village levels in southern Afghanistan created a significant line of communication for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to promote its mission of stability, as well as for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to counter anti-government propaganda and build legitimacy. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- **How to overcome the many societal divides/schisms** within a post-conflict environment is a common challenge for organizations involved in stability operations. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) **actions launched in Liberia at its “golden hour”** (mid-2003 to 2005) were absolutely critical for post-conflict recovery and for establishing a viable foundation for further stabilization work. [\[Read More ...\]](#)

2 April 2013

SUBJECT: LESSONS LEARNED REPORT – Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding / Engaging the People

1. GENERAL

“Understanding / engaging the people” is a vital component of leadership during stability operations. Cultural understanding facilitates informed decision-making. It provides a key baseline of knowledge / awareness for U.S. and international leaders (civilian and military) to successfully operate in the environment of the host nation. Identifying societal groups and networks, and then communicating with, negotiating with, influencing, advising, mentoring, etc. the various groups and their leaders are common – if not essential – engagement activities for U.S. and international leaders during the course of stability operations.

This report presents a number of lessons from the SOLLIMS database highlighting the nexus between leadership and “understanding / engaging the people.”

2. LESSONS

a. TOPIC. Leader Attributes for Peacekeeping & Stability Operations (879)

Observation.

Certain leader attributes prominently stand out as “keys to success” – frequently cited in strategic leader assessments and lesson reports from recent peacekeeping and stability operations.

Discussion.

Leadership in peacekeeping and stability operations at the strategic and operational levels is complex business, with no single set of attributes applying to all leaders or all situations. The following leader attributes, however, are often mentioned as being contributory to success:

Visioning. Visioning is the competency for envisioning a preferred – and achievable – outcome (strategic or operational outcome) and articulating it in a

word picture so that others involved in the peacekeeping/stability operation are inspired to support it. (references 1-3)

Mapping the environment. Mapping the environment entails the leader's ability to understand his position relative to national interests, authorities, objectives, available resources, socio-cultural factors, and risks. Mapping the environment contributes to visioning. (references 1, 4)

Cross-cultural savvy. Cross-cultural savvy encompasses the ability to understand and respect cultures beyond one's organizational, economic, religious, societal, geographical, and political boundaries. A leader with cross-cultural skills is comfortable interacting with and leading joint, international, interagency, and inter-organizational entities. (references 5-8)

Interpersonal maturity. Interpersonal maturity includes the willingness and ability to share power, to build relationships and consensus, to resolve contentious issues, and to employ the art of negotiation over extended timeframes. (references 5-8)

Unity of effort and purpose. Unity of effort and purpose consists of focusing diverse efforts of agencies and actors involved in the operation onto common goals & objectives and toward the purpose of building capacity in the host nation's government and society. (references 2, 6-8)

Strategic communication. Strategic communication refers to the competency and means by which the strategic or operational leader conveys intentions and keeps internal and external audiences informed of the vision and the actions being taken to achieve it. (references 2, 8, 9)

Determination toward the vision. Determination toward the vision is the quality of steadily moving forward – with commitment, hard work, patience, and endurance – despite difficulties and setbacks occurring throughout the given peacekeeping/stability operation. (references 1, 5)

There are countless examples in which the above-cited leader attributes were contributory to highly successful operations. Likewise, there are numerous examples in which failures occurred due to the absence of such leader attributes being demonstrated. What follows are just a few examples:

“General Petraeus's achievement (January 2007-September 2008) in Iraq was to push his thoughts down to the lowest level so that everyone on the ground knew what was expected of them, leaving little doubt as to the mission and tasks.” **[Visioning]** (reference 1)

“The first problem confronted by the Baghdad South Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) was lack of operational direction (i.e., lack of State

Department leadership and planning). No definitive guidance was provided to ePRT team members by way of the Embassy, the higher echelon Baghdad PRT, or the Baghdad South ePRT's leadership....Without **mapping the environment** and being able to dovetail operations into a larger, more comprehensive operational plan, the resulting effect was to support a number of "look good" projects. ...Unfortunately, these projects did more to destabilize this fragile region than to stabilize it." (reference 10)

"In Somalia, for example, shortcomings in leader **interpersonal maturity** and **cross-cultural savvy** did, in fact, lead to a loss of popular support, low troop morale and the eventual withdrawal of the UN mandate. Similarly, fragmentation of group unity can prove disastrous for peacekeeping and stability operations. Efforts in Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Somalia all fell victim to uncoordinated, unsynchronized activities by the various actors that hindered the overall mission's goals." (reference 7)

"Whereas U.S. civil-military cooperation (between the Department of Defense, State Department, and other U.S. Agencies) had not been effectively established or practiced during Operating Iraqi Freedom over the course of previous years, the senior military officer and the senior State Department officer on the ground in 2007 – General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker – possessed the keen ability and the willingness to closely and continuously partner on U.S. operations – bringing exceptional **unity of effort** and oversight for implementing the President's guidance. This leadership team ensured that military and civilian contributions were well placed, synchronized, and closely tracked – to meet the overall aim of an American (and Iraqi) political solution – a stable, capable, and legitimate Iraqi government." (reference 11)

"In the case of Kenya, the efforts of Ms. Dekha Abdi and the other four leaders of Concerned Citizens for Peace (CCP), and the parallel work of Mr. Kofi Annan and the African Union's Panel of Eminent Personalities, were absolutely critical in grabbing the attention of the Kenyan people and in mobilizing multiple sectors of society for peace building [through **strategic communication**]." (reference 12)

"Seeing a golden hour for peace building [in Liberia] upon the exile of President Taylor, the United Nations, the United States, and certain key leaders...immediately focused their engagement on Security Sector Reform (SSR). ...[Their] persistence gave a reassuring message to the Liberian government, and to all Liberians, that disarmament, demobilization, and peace building were moving forward and that momentum would be maintained. ...The UN, U.S., and certain key leaders in country also stood firm on keeping the November 2005 elections on schedule. This resulted in the first female head of state for Africa (Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson), but more importantly resulted in a new, legitimate government recognized by the vast majority of all Liberians – a new government to establish the rule of law." **Determination toward the vision** (reference 13)

Recommendation.

Leadership “success attributes” should be incorporated into pre-deployment training seminars – for senior leaders preparing to serve on peacekeeping/ stability operations.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the following **REFERENCES**:

- (1) [“Defining Command, Leadership, and Management Success Factors within Stability Operations,”](#) by Dave Fielder, PKSOI Papers, June 2011.
- (2) “Strategic Leadership for Transition,” by Colonel Bryan A. Groves, in [“Transitions: Issues, Challenges and Solutions in International Assistance,”](#) edited by Harry R. Yarger, 18 August 2011.
- (3) [“Strategic Leadership Primer,”](#) 3rd edition, edited by Colonel (Ret) Stephen J. Gerras, U.S. Army War College, 2010.
- (4) [“Social Mentoring – Understanding the People,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 789.
- (5) [“Strategic Leadership Competencies,”](#) by Leonard Wong et al., United States Army War College, September 2003.
- (6) [“Strategic Leadership Competencies for Peacekeeping Operations,”](#) by Lieutenant Colonel Wilson Mendes Lauria, 2009.
- (7) [“Essential Leadership Competencies in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 435.
- (8) [“The Challenge of Leadership in the Interagency Environment,”](#) by William J. Davis, Jr., Military Review, September-October 2010.
- (9) [“Strategic Messaging in Information Operations,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 874.
- (10) [“Lessons from an Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team in Southern Baghdad Province,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 677.
- (11) [“Political and Military Components of the Surge in Iraq,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 808.
- (12) [“Civil Society Capacity and Action for Peacebuilding – Kenya,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 702.
- (13) [“Lessons from Liberia in Security Sector Reform,”](#) SOLLIMS Lesson 703.



b. TOPIC. Attending to the “Human Domain” ([906](#))

Observation.

Attending to the “human domain” is vital to peacekeeping and stability operations. The following quotes are provided to illustrate what is meant by the “human domain” and why it is essential for planning and executing operations:

“We must also remember that conflict is a human endeavor, ultimately won or lost in the human domain. The Army operates in this human domain, which is the most important factor in a complex environment.” (reference 1)

“Simply stated, the lesson of the last decade is that failing to understand the human dimension of conflict is too costly in lives, resources, and political will for the Nation to bear.” (reference 2)

“A nuanced understanding of the environment [in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere] was often hindered by a focus on traditional adversaries and a neglect of information concerning the host-nation population. ... Because the traditional intelligence effort tended to focus on enemy groups and actions, it often neglected ‘white’ information about the population that was necessary for success in population-centric campaigns such as counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. Local commanders needed information about ethnic and tribal identities, religion, culture, politics, and economics.” (reference 3)

“Partnerships with host nation actors should be guided by impartiality, inclusiveness, and gender considerations based on a solid understanding of the local context (to include civil society; private sector actors; and, all ethnic, religious, and minority groups.)” (reference 4)

Discussion.

Although the “human domain” is broad in nature – encompassing the full range of host nation populations, their values, their motivations, and their behaviors – recent stability operations highlight the importance of focusing attention on the following specific elements / population groups:

Local leaders/elders. Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and peacekeeping and civil-military operations across Africa have shown the importance of engaging local leaders/elders and gaining their buy-in on stability and reconstruction efforts. Particularly effective approaches have been the implementation of an “itihad” (“unity”) strategy in OIF to influence community leaders and build consensus, the use of Village Stability Operations (VSO) in OEF, and Key Leader Engagements (KLEs) with local officials in both operations. (references 5-9)

Women. Recent stability operations have shown that engaging women in peace building efforts can pay significant dividends, even in societies where women have had little or no participation in governance. The deliberate inclusion of women's groups in Liberia and Kenya and the use and expansion of Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in Afghanistan provide valuable lessons on engaging women/women's groups and the derived benefits for the mission. (references 10-13)

Youth/young adults. With challenges ranging from disgruntled youths (lacking education and employment) to youths taking up arms (in militias and extremist groups), the need to address sizable youth populations has come to the fore in peacekeeping operations across Africa, as well as in OEF. Effective approaches have included: engaging established youth groups (Kenya), creating new youth groups/youth "shuras" (OEF), and implementing various post-conflict employment programs – e.g., public works programs (Liberia and Uganda). (references 11 and 14-16)

Religious leaders. From the Balkans to Iraq to Afghanistan, religion has often played a role in fueling conflict between groups within the host nation. It has also been used by insurgents as a basis for violence against coalition/international forces. Engagement with local religious leaders has shown to merit attention, particularly if the coalition/international force is resourced with subject matter experts/chaplains and places command emphasis on using them for this purpose, as per II Marine Expeditionary Brigade & the UK contingent in Helmand Province in OEF. (reference 17)

Civil society groups. Civil society groups have proven to be critical resources both for forging peace in a conflict-affected nation and for post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The work of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) in Afghanistan and the Riinvest Institute in Kosovo shows that immediate engagement with civil society groups and investments at the local level can lead to host nation capacity for long-term growth and stability. Understanding local culture, societal groups, and how they interact is paramount for this engagement. The Human Terrain System facilitated this understanding for commanders/staffs during OIF and OEF. (references 11 and 18-20.)

Insurgents. OIF, OEF, and peacekeeping & stability operations across Africa have shown the criticality of understanding the mindset of insurgents, as well as how insurgents can sometimes be persuaded to change course. Regionally-tailored Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) initiatives (bolstered by command emphasis) were able to gain notable success in both northern Iraq and northern Afghanistan – and perhaps could have been used by host nation authorities as foundations for broader programs. Information operations targeting insurgents/combatants, amnesty provisions (temporary/conditional), and nationally-resourced employment programs were shown to be critical for DDR program success. (references 10 and 21-23)

Recommendation.

1. U.S./coalition forces engaged in future peacekeeping and stability operations should develop a comprehensive strategy upfront to address the “human domain.” This strategy should target six key population groups – local leaders/elders, women, youth/young adults, religious leaders, civil society groups, and insurgents – and should consider use of the following elements:

- An “itihad” strategy (“unity” strategy)
- Village Stability Operations
- Key Leader Engagements
- Female Engagement Teams
- Youth group engagement programs
- Nationally-supported employment programs
- Chaplain/religious leader engagement programs
- Programs designed to engage, invest in, and mentor civil society groups
- The Human Terrain System
- Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration programs
- Information operations targeting insurgents/combatants

2. U.S./coalition forces should ensure that formations are sufficiently resourced and trained to operate in the “human domain.”

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the following **REFERENCES**:

(1) [“CSA Remarks at the George C. Marshall Leadership Seminar,”](#) Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno, 17 April 2012.

(2) [“Left of Bang: The Value of Sociocultural Analysis in Today’s Environment,”](#) by Michael T. Flynn, James Cisco, and David C. Ellis, PRISM, vol. 3, no. 4, September 2012.

(3) [“Decade of War, Volume I: Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations,”](#) Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (JCOA), 15 June 2012.

(4) [“Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction,”](#) United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and PKSOI, October 2009.

- (5) "[Creating an Epidemic of Unity](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 709.
- (6) "[Village Stability Operations: Leveraging Elders and Building Local Police](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 768.
- (7) "[Preventing Conflict: Interagency Village Stability Operations Model](#)," by Matthew Denny, The Simons Center, June 2012.
- (8) "[Influencing the Population: Using Interpreters, Conducting KLEs, and Executing IO in Afghanistan](#)," by CPT Michael G. Cummings, Infantry magazine, May-August 2010.
- (9) "[Rebuilding Schools and Communities in Post-conflict Kenya](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 772.
- (10) "[Lessons from Liberia in Security Sector Reform](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 703.
- (11) "[Civil Society Capacity and Action for Peacebuilding – Kenya](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 702.
- (12) "[Female Engagement Teams: The Case for More Female Civil Affairs Marines](#)," by MSG Julia L. Watson, Marine Corps Gazette, July 2012.
- (13) "[Female Engagement Teams: The Need to Standardize Training and Employment](#)," by LTC Janet R. Holliday, Military Review, March-April 2012.
- (14) "[Youth Shura Innovation in Afghanistan](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 771.
- (15) "[The Youth Bulge in Afghanistan: Challenges and Opportunities](#)," Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC), October 2011.
- (16) "[Public Works Programs in Post-Conflict Economic Stabilization](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 690.
- (17) "[Religious Leader Engagement in Afghanistan through Military Chaplains](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 770.
- (18) "[The Balancing Act of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Need to Involve Local Groups](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 685.
- (19) "[Engaging Civil Society in Peacekeeping](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 642.
- (20) "[Strategic Lesson Number 4: 'Social Mentoring' – Understanding the People, Engaging Local Groups](#)," PKSOI, 28 March 2012.
- (21) "[DDR Initiative in Northern Iraq](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 774.
- (22) "[Bottom-up Approach to Reintegration in Northern Afghanistan](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 778.
- (23) "[Strategic Lesson Number 6: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration \(DDR\)](#)," PKSOI, 30 April 2012.



c. **TOPIC. Social Mentoring – Understanding the People ([789](#))**

Observation.

An analytical review of recent publications and lesson reports on stability operations points to the importance of investing in “social mentoring” during both planning and execution of operations. This review also highlights the importance of bottom-up approaches, “shaping” the people at the local/community level, and gaining their buy-in.

Discussion.

To ensure success in stability and counterinsurgency operations such as those conducted in Afghanistan – where there is a plethora of ethnic groups, tribes, sub-tribes, clans, etc. – U.S./coalition forces must invest in understanding, engaging, and co-opting local groups. (references 1-10) U.S./coalition forces participating in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have experienced major shortfalls at times in cultural understanding. Evidence of the need to understand the people and their sensitivities is the fall-out/backlash from two recent incidents in Afghanistan – urination on dead bodies (Jan 2012) and the improper destruction of Qurans (Mar 2012). Failure to “know” the people, “shape” the people, and gain their trust/sympathy has also led to cases of operational failure, increased instability, and loss of life. A prime example is the case of the Focused District Development Program in Morghab District, Badghis Province, Afghanistan – whereby Afghan government officials and coalition planners took no account of the concerns of the people and instead pushed a national police program and a transportation project onto the local community – resulting in armed resistance, conflict, and fatalities. (reference 2)

Calls to address shortfalls in cultural understanding and situational awareness have emerged over time in Afghanistan – first with Operational Needs Statements for the Human Terrain System (HTS), and later with recommendations for making intelligence more relevant. Once the HTS was established in 2007 and Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) began to filter into Iraq and Afghanistan, situational and cultural awareness for commanders began to improve. HTTs on the ground, with support from two stateside HTS Reachback Centers, were able to gather and present data to commanders about the various social and cultural aspects of many local population groups and the drivers of their behaviors. (references 3, 4) While the HTS was gaining traction, traditional intelligence systems in Afghanistan were still seen as failing the needs of senior U.S. decision-makers – according to a January 2010 paper co-authored by the U.S. Army’s senior intelligence officer in Afghanistan. His bottom line

recommendation was a call to shift emphasis from solely threat-focused (“red”) information to gaining greater “white” information on population centers, groups, and leaders. (reference 5) Likewise, understanding, engaging, and including local groups – at the community/village level – has repeatedly been cited as paramount for effective reconstruction activities. (references 1, 2, and 6-8)

In the first years of reconstruction in Afghanistan, several governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and financial institutions laid out plans and proposals for economic reconstruction without consulting local communities about their needs and priorities – with poor results. Over time, when teams were deliberately dispatched to local communities to identify their needs – e.g., the U.S. National Guard’s Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs), teams from the World Bank-led National Solidarity Program, etc. – greater successes were achieved, because local villagers then invested resources in, and took ownership of, projects. (reference 7) The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) (an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce) operated much the same way in successful economic stabilization programs in both Afghanistan and Kosovo – conducting detailed studies of the private sector early on and partnering with local groups and entrepreneurs. Understanding and engaging local communities was key to success for CIPE, the ADTs, the National Solidarity Program, and also for certain Afghan NGOs, such as the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) and the Sanayee Development Organization (SDO). Outcomes of such local programs included expanded development activities, greater community cohesion, and lower levels of violence. (references 6, 7, and 11) Besides direct engagements with local communities (to discern their needs and involve them in reconstruction activities), the dissemination of positive themes and messages through information operations (IO) has also been cited as critical for “shaping” the people and garnering their support. (references 10, 12, and 13)

Recommendation.

1. Continue to resource the HTS.
2. Incorporate HTTs in the planning and execution of future stability operations.
3. Emphasize the collection and analysis of “white” information to better understand the people.
4. Employ programs that focus on the needs of local communities and on ensuring local ownership (e.g., ADT programs, National Solidarity Program, etc.).
5. Establish robust systems for IO.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the following **REFERENCES**:

- (1) "[Planning Considerations for Military-Political Engagement in Afghanistan](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 669.
- (2) "[Failure of the Top-Down Approach in Afghanistan](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 775.
- (3) "[Improved Situational Awareness from Human Terrain Teams](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 776.
- (4) "[Human Terrain Systems and the Moral Prosecution of Warfare](#)," by Dan G. Cox, Parameters, Vol. XLI, No. 3, Autumn 2011
- (5) "[Afghanistan: Making Intelligence Relevant](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 680.
- (6) "[Community Peacebuilding in Afghanistan](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 529.
- (7) "[SOLLIMS Sampler – Economic Stabilization](#)," PKSOI, 12 January 2011.
- (8) "[SOLLIMS Sampler – Transition to Local Governance](#)," PKSOI, 26 October 2010.
- (9) "[Brains and Brawn: Cultural Intelligence \(CQ\) as the 'Tool of Choice' in the Contemporary Operating Environment](#)," by Emily Spencer, Canadian Military Journal, Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter 2010.
- (10) "[Influencing the Population: Using Interpreters, Conducting KLEs, and Executing IO in Afghanistan](#)," by CPT Michael G. Cummings, Infantry magazine, May-August 2010.
- (11) "[Agribusiness Development Teams in Afghanistan – Key Players in Economic Development](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 689.
- (12) [CALL Reference Guide 11-39: BCT-PRT Unity of Effort](#), PKSOI, September 2011.
- (13) "[Enabling Transition in Liberia through Civil-Military Coordination](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 773.



d. TOPIC. Improved Situational Awareness from Human Terrain Teams (776)

Observation.

Since 2007, Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) have been providing an essential element of situational awareness to military organizations operating in Iraq and Afghanistan – namely, cultural understanding. Prior to the establishment/fielding of HTTs in 2007, Army organizations relied primarily on their intelligence staff sections for information about the operating environment; however, that information was primarily threat-focused. Although critical to the conduct of kinetic operations, threat-focused intelligence was not providing commanders with broader insights on the population groups within their areas of operation – leaving significant gaps in situational awareness and hindering the planning and conduct of non-kinetic operations.

Discussion.

The Human Terrain System (HTS) came into being as a result of several Operational Needs Statements (ONS) – both Army-specific and Joint ONS – developed from 2005 to 2007. Among them were: an ONS submitted by 10th Mountain Division in late 2005, a Joint Urgent Operational Needs Statement (JUONS) submitted by Multi-National Corps-Iraq in April 2007, and a JUONS submitted by Joint Task Force 82 (JTF 82) for its forces in Afghanistan in April 2007. U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) grouped the latter two JUONS into one consolidated JUONS in May 2007. In that consolidated USCENTCOM JUONS, the stated need was that an HTT was required in every Army brigade, Marine Corps regiment, and U.S. division operating in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The genesis of the emergent need was that detailed knowledge of the host populations was seen as critical – yet was largely absent among commands in Iraq and Afghanistan. Commanders were operating without real-time knowledge of the drivers of behavior among population groups in the host nations. This shortfall was limiting situational awareness for commanders and was creating greater risks for their forces.

In response to these ONS/JUONS, the Army rapidly developed the HTS program in order to quickly recruit, train, and deploy HTTs – composed of civilian and military members – and get them embedded into military formations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In contrast to collecting and analyzing "threat-focused" information, these teams conducted "social science" research to gain insights on local population groups in order to facilitate culturally astute decision-making. HTT members placed emphasis on operationally relevant aspects of local cultures; on the various ethno-religious, tribal, and other divisions/groups within society and their sentiments; and, on the multiple interests of groups and leaders. Deployed HTT personnel were equipped with the Mapping the Human Terrain Toolkit

(MAP-HT) – which enabled them to store, analyze, and retrieve this socio-cultural information. They were also given a reachback capability, provided through the establishment of two HTS Reachback Research Centers – one focused on supporting teams in Iraq and the other supporting teams in Afghanistan.

Early on, it was determined that the HTTs were best emplaced within the Effects Cell at brigade level, as opposed to within a specific staff section. Since the Effects Cell worked on the various non-lethal aspects of brigade operations, it required detailed knowledge of the local environment – i.e., the population's perceptions of governance actions and electoral procedures, the population's views on development programs, how traditional dispute resolution worked, consequences to local communities from reintegrating internally displaced persons, and so on. The HTTs were designed and able to provide such socio-cultural knowledge. It was determined that HTTs were not well placed inside the intelligence staff section, where threat-focused information and kinetic targeting support were emphasized.

Based upon the experiences of HTTs during four years of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (2007-2010), several common themes have been identified:

- HTTs were consistently able to gather and present accurate data to commanders & staffs on social and cultural aspects of local population groups.
- HTTs were able to provide efficient analysis of socio-cultural problems in local areas – to immediately assess the problems, identify the causes and trickle-down effects of the problems, and determine potential effects from non-kinetic courses of action.
- HTTs gave commanders & staffs ready expertise on both cultural issues and regional issues.
- HTTs gave commanders trained social scientists who could go out and conduct interviews among the local populace, allowing commanders to keep soldiers focused on their primary tasks, vice having to train soldiers on how to conduct interviews/surveys.
- HTTs offered commanders & staffs "non-military" perspectives on issues discussed during decision-making / planning processes. Civilian social scientists were often able to bring a level of objectivity and an out-of-the box perspective that promoted an increased understanding of the situation and helped identify more effective courses of action.
- HTTs provided socio-cultural information that could have been used by leaders earlier – i.e., during the shaping phase of campaigns (Phase Zero).

- HTTs provided continuity for organizations in Iraq and Afghanistan – owing to the individual rotation policy of HTTs. Only one member of an HTT was rotated/replaced at any given time. Continuity of socio-cultural knowledge was thereby maximized as the bulk of the HTT always remained in place. Whenever a new organization (brigade/regiment/division) rotated into an area, the supporting HTT was already there – with its wealth of cultural understanding.

Recommendation.

1. Continue to assign HTTs to brigade-, regiment-, and division-level organizations conducting stability operations.
2. Continue to utilize an individual rotation policy for HTTs/members. Rotating one individual at a time maximizes continuity of cultural understanding for both the HTT and the organization it supports.
3. Maintain the HTS Reachback Research Center on a permanent basis – for continued social science research on population groups and on socio-cultural issues, in support of deployed teams and campaign planning.
4. Consider assigning an HTT at the operational level – i.e., within the Army Corps headquarters and JTFs – to allow HTT capabilities to become an integral part of planning, rehearsing, executing, and assessing operations.

Implications.

If the Human Terrain System is not utilized during the planning and conduct of stability operations, both at the operational and tactical levels, then military leaders may experience significant shortfalls in cultural understanding / situational awareness. This could result in military leaders choosing less than optimal courses of action, as well as result in unwanted effects / adverse reactions among local population groups affected by operations.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[Reflections on the Human Terrain System During the First 4 Years](#)," by Montgomery McFate and Steve Fondacaro, PRISM, volume 2, issue 4.

Comments.

A related document which discusses the purpose and functions of the HTS Reachback Research Center is "[The Reachback Research Center](#)," TRADOC, 16 March 2011.

A related article which outlines the composition and tasks of the HTT, cites the contributions of an HTT in East Baghdad/Iraq in the 2008-2009 timeframe, recommends that commanders provide clear objectives to HTTs, and discusses a decentralized approach for HTT operations is "[Human Terrain Team Operations in East Baghdad](#)," by LTC Jonathan D. Thompson, U.S. Army, Military Review, July-August 2010.

Another related article which discusses the importance of cultural intelligence (CQ) and provides ten recommendations for leaders to strengthen CQ within their organizations is "Brains and Brawn: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the 'Tool of Choice' in the Contemporary Operating Environment," by Emily Spencer, Canadian Military Journal, volume 11, number 1, Winter 2010. This article is available at: <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo11/no1/05-spencer-eng.asp>



e. **TOPIC**. Leader Development in Afghanistan ([797](#))

Observation.

The Nangarhar Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) was able to improve the quality of provincial and district level leadership in the Nangarhar Province's agricultural sector through a comprehensive leadership training program that focused on training, empowering, and inspiring local officials.

Discussion.

Members of the ADT assigned to Nangarhar Province in eastern Afghanistan (2010-2011) recognized that, if they were to make a lasting impact on the agricultural sector of Nangarhar Province, they would need to develop and improve the quality of leadership among Nangarhar's agricultural officials and leaders – at the provincial and district levels. Nepotism was rampant, and fundamental principles of good leadership were lacking (e.g., selflessness, integrity, candor, competence, empathy, and loyalty). Therefore, the Nangarhar ADT established a "Leadership Academy" program targeting these lower level officials. The "Leadership Academy" program was specifically designed to train, empower, and inspire the province's Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAIL) and his district-level Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs).

The Nangarhar ADT implemented this program through (1) conducting basic leadership training classes for the DAIL and his AEAs, (2) providing them hands-on training opportunities to practice and refine their leadership skills, (3) giving them candid feedback on their performance during and after training sessions,

(4) regularly coaching and mentoring them, and (5) demonstrating effective leadership behaviors through leading by example.

For the hands-on leadership training opportunities, the ADT developed a structured and transparent process for managing small, agriculture-related cash-for-work projects and then began to allow the AEAs to lead and manage these projects. At the conclusion of the various projects, the ADT provided the AEAs detailed “report cards” – summarizing their performance and letting them know where they needed to improve. When the Nangarhar ADT discovered that some of the AEAs were embezzling funds intended for laborers, the ADT leadership quickly called out those AEAs on their misdeeds – in the presence of the DAIL. Over the next several months, the DAIL himself was then seen lecturing his AEAs on the detrimental impacts of corruption and on the importance of transparency. AEA leadership steadily improved over time – owing in large part to the AEAs making adjustments/improvements based upon both the DAIL’s guidance and the ADT’s feedback/recommendations provided in “report cards” and mentoring sessions.

Coaching and mentoring were central to the “Leadership Academy” program. Through continuous coaching and mentoring, the Nangarhar ADT made the DAIL aware of the power and importance of his position and taught him how to inspire and unite the AEAs and farmers of Nangarhar with a shared vision for development. In radio broadcasts, speeches, and conversations relating to this common vision, the DAIL visibly inspired AEAs and farmers to want to pull together on agricultural issues and take ownership of development projects. Additionally, the Nangarhar ADT provided continuous mentoring for AEAs – advising them on management and supervisory techniques, anti-corruption topics, transparency, and relationship-building.

Leading by example was yet another major part of the “Leadership Academy” program. The ADT leaders held themselves accountable for developing Nangarhar’s agricultural officials/leaders, worked side-by-side with the Afghans, conveyed to them an attitude of optimism and hope, and demonstrated genuine care for the leaders and people of Nangarhar. Over time, many of the Nangarhar officials with whom the team worked changed their corrupt and self-serving behaviors and assumed a more selfless and productive way of operating. At the end of the 10-month ADT tour, corruption within the Nangarhar agricultural sector was markedly reduced, and local level leadership was greatly improved.

Although the Nangarhar ADT was tremendously successful with its “Leadership Academy” program, the ADT commander postulated that they could have had an even greater impact had there been a national-level (ISAF-supported) leader development program to guide and assist the provincial/ADT efforts.

Recommendation.

The author of the article "[The Real Key to Success in Afghanistan: Overlooked, Underrated, Forgotten, or Just Too Hard?](#)" offers the following recommendations:

1. Coalition forces in Afghanistan should develop and execute a comprehensive campaign plan to improve the quality and cohesiveness of leadership in all sectors, at all levels, and across all geographic regions of Afghanistan. This campaign plan should include:

- transformational leadership classes and workshops to enhance the character of Afghan government officials and other leaders, while simultaneously improving their leadership knowledge and skills
- on-the-job training for Afghan officials to solidify and reinforce newly acquired knowledge and skills
- metrics for focusing on and measuring the changes in the quality of Afghan leadership
- utilization of newly trained Afghan transformational leaders – getting them involved in training and mentoring other Afghan leaders
- systems to reward, support, and praise Afghan leaders who exhibit selfless service, competence, and other good leadership qualities, as well as innovative ways to put pressure on Afghan leaders who do not
- command emphasis throughout the ranks of coalition forces on developing Afghan leaders – placing leader development at the forefront of civilian and military directives, plans, policies, and programs and teaching transformational leadership during pre-deployment training

2. Beyond Afghanistan, as the United States employs indirect approaches to build the capacity of partner governments and their security forces, the centerpiece of this strategy should be "developing effective transformational leaders" (i.e., selfless, courageous, visionary, and highly ethical leaders).

Implications.

If coalition forces in Afghanistan do not develop and implement a comprehensive program to improve the leadership of Afghan officials at all levels (developed and implemented in conjunction with Afghan officials themselves), then poor leadership will persist across Afghanistan – contributing to greater corruption, continued distrust among Afghans in their government officials, localized support for alternatives/insurgent groups, instability, and transition problems.

Looking, in particular, at the agricultural sector – given that agriculture is a key economic area where this leadership development process can (and did) make a difference – such “Leadership Academy” programs/models as discussed here are “must-haves” for future efforts. Beyond agriculture, such programs would benefit all areas of provincial/local governance.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[The Real Key to Success in Afghanistan: Overlooked, Underrated, Forgotten, or Just Too Hard?](#)," by Michael D. Fortune, Joint Forces Quarterly, issue 65, 2nd quarter 2012.

Comments.

A related article which briefly outlines the intent of the Nangarhar ADT's Leadership Academy is "[Missouri Guard ADT's Leadership Academy Works toward Transparent Government](#)," by Rachel Knight, Missouri National Guard, National Guard News, 10 March 2011.

A related article which lays out the components of the Nangarhar ADT's Leadership Academy is "Implementing the Agriculture Extension Agent Leadership Academy," by Captain John Paluczak, in "[The Muleskinner Report](#)," volume 4, issue 5, 31 October 2010.

A related article which discusses the mentoring component of the Nangarhar ADT's Leadership Academy is "Mentoring AEAs," by Captain John Paluczak, in "[The Muleskinner Report](#)," volume 4, issue 6, 30 November 2010.



f. TOPIC. Religious Leader Engagement in Afghanistan through Military Chaplains ([770](#))

Observation.

Systematic engagement of religious leaders at the provincial, district, and village levels in southern Afghanistan created a significant line of communication for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to promote its mission of stability, as well as for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to counter anti-government propaganda and build legitimacy. Military chaplains played a pivotal role in this religious leader engagement program.

Discussion.

In October 2009, II Marine Expeditionary Brigade (II MEB) developed an innovative "religious leader engagement program" upon determining that there was a tendency for many of the religious leaders within Helmand and Farah Provinces to be ignored on various governance, development, and security issues and activities. In its religious leader engagement program, II MEB focused on encouraging the integration of "marginalized" Afghan religious leaders into provincial religious organizations, such as the Helmand Ulema Council and the office of the Helmand Director of Hajj and Religious Affairs. These provincial organizations provided direct engagement opportunities for the "marginalized" religious leaders with provincial government officials, as well as an avenue/institution for raising and addressing specific grievances.

This II MEB religious leader engagement program was command-driven. The II MEB commander, Brigadier General Lawrence Nicholson recognized that local religious leaders were key nodes/powerbrokers in the social fabric who had significant potential for influencing society, spreading the U.S. Government/ISAF message of good will and support for GIRoA, as well as for countering Taliban rhetoric and messages of violence. BG Nicholson called for a systematic engagement of local religious leaders, to extend the ISAF and GIRoA message of stability out to the district and village levels. He tasked his command chaplain, Chaplain Philip Pelikan, to begin by engaging with Afghan provincial government leaders – to gain their support toward enhancing government relationships with local religious leaders. Moreover, BG Nicholson worked with his command chaplain to seek out a certain Muslim chaplain in the U.S. Navy and effect his deployment to Afghanistan.

Bringing a Muslim chaplain into the program paid huge dividends. In a series of engagements with local religious leaders across the two provinces, he quickly established rapport and trust by leading joint prayers sessions and holding open discussions. His presence/actions bolstered II MEB's existing relationships with local officials and helped to establish several new relationships with "marginalized" religious leaders – by penetrating barriers to communication through shared language and ritual. Throughout execution of the religious leader engagement program, both the II MEB command chaplain and the U.S. Navy Muslim chaplain provided key liaison with influential Afghan leaders.

The U.S. Navy Muslim chaplain opened new dialogue and laid a foundation of trust with local religious leaders, but the equally important work of sustaining religious leader engagement happened because of the direct involvement of Afghan officials. The II MEB religious leader engagement program deliberately placed GIRoA institutions and officials into the engagement process. In Helmand Province, for example, II MEB heavily partnered with the Director of Hajj and Religious Affairs, Sayed "Mullah" Mukhtar Ahmad Haqqani. Haqqani fully grasped the engagement program and its intent. He provided critical support for

sustaining the program by circulating throughout the province with both the II MEB command chaplain and the U.S. Navy Muslim chaplain.

As an example of the effectiveness of the II MEB-GIRoA outreach team, during one particular visit to the Bakwa District, Farah Province, the team was approached by a mullah who wore Taliban markings. He told the team that he was, in fact, a Taliban scholar who taught in a madrasa just outside Bakwa. After seeing Americans and Afghans praying together during the religious leader engagement, he told the team that he had changed his mind about Americans and would be willing to work with them from now on.

A United Kingdom (UK) contingent working with the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) similarly established a religious leader engagement program in late 2009. The UK team placed emphasis on convincing religious leaders to undermine Taliban propaganda. As part of the effort, the UK team invited a group of Afghan religious leaders to visit Great Britain. As a result of the visit, those religious leaders were able to see for themselves that Britain is a tolerant country where Muslims can build mosques and practice their religion peacefully, and they took that message back with them to their villages and mosques in Helmand province.

Recommendation.

1. DoD organizations involved in stability operations should consider developing a religious leader engagement plan – particularly in areas where religious leaders wield considerable influence and where some may be marginalized by, unconnected with, or even opposed to, the government.
2. When DoD organizations establish a religious leader engagement plan in a predominantly Muslim country, they should seek support from their respective services to resource efforts with Muslim chaplains.
3. Due to the limited number of Muslim chaplains within DoD, for large-scale stability operations, DoD should consider establishing a program in which non-military chaplains can be requested to serve with military commands on stability operations for short periods to help establish initial dialogue with local religious leaders.
4. If/when DoD organizations plan a religious leader engagement program, they should deliberately include host nation government institutions/officials within designed processes and procedures, so that religious leader engagements can be sustained upon transition to host nation control of its affairs.
5. A "religious liaison" role should be assigned to U.S. Army chaplains by doctrine. In this role, chaplains should have the task of conducting engagements with indigenous religious groups and leaders to support stability operations. If

this task were to be written into doctrine (into Army Field Manual 1-05, Religious Support), corresponding training would need to be developed.

6. The U.S. Government should invite religious leaders from countries where U.S. forces are engaged in stability operations for visits to the United States to see firsthand that the U.S. has no animosity toward their religion and that it is freely practiced by Americans of that faith. Ideally, those religious leaders would take that message back with them.

Implications.

If DoD organizations involved in stability operations do not plan and execute a religious leader engagement program, then marginalized religious leaders may not be supportive of ongoing governance and reconstruction activities. Instead, they may choose to spread anti-government and anti-coalition narratives – which could contribute to violence and instability.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[Religious Leader Engagement in Southern Afghanistan](#)," by Alexs Thompson, Joint Forces Quarterly, issue 63, 4th quarter 2011

Comments.

A related article which further discusses II MEB's religious leader engagement program in southern Afghanistan is "Mullah Engagement Program: Helmand and Farah Provinces, Afghanistan, 15 February - 15 March 2010," by Philip Pelikan, Small Wars Journal, 28 December 2010. This article is available at: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/631-pelikan1.pdf>



g. TOPIC. Creating an Epidemic of Unity ([709](#))

Observation.

How to overcome the many societal divides/schisms within a post-conflict environment is a common challenge for organizations engaged in stability operations. To address this particular challenge in eastern Baghdad, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 10th Mountain Division took an approach that it called the "itihad" ("unity") strategy. The gist of this strategy was to infuse the idea of "unity" among certain key/influential leaders and cause it to spread throughout the region as quickly as possible.

Discussion.

The 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division, was responsible for the area of eastern Baghdad and the Mada' in Qada region, having a total population of approximately 2.5 million inhabitants. Within this area, there was a general divide between the Sunni and Shi'a populations. Additionally, numerous other divides were prominent within this region – with disputes stemming from inadequate minority rights; unequal wealth distribution; grievances between various tribal, political, government, and ethnic groups; and, external extremist influences such as Al Qaeda and from Iran. These many societal divides were exacerbated by numerous entrepreneurs who attempted to take advantage of the schisms and grievances for their own benefit.

Having recognized the many divides and some of their causes, 2nd BCT developed a rather unique strategy with the purposes of supporting “unity” (including national unity), rejecting extremism, resolving conflicts/disputes peacefully, and building trust between disparate parties. As its primary reference, 2nd BCT utilized Malcolm Gladwell’s book “The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference.” Specifically, Gladwell’s concept of “contagiousness” – which advocates the pursuit of a tipping point, whereby a thought/product/virus would instantly take hold and exponentially spread – became the core component of 2nd BCT’s “itihad” strategy.

Following the lines of Gladwell’s concept of “contagiousness,” 2nd BCT focused on three types of people Gladwell identified as being critical to the initiation of an epidemic. The first of these individuals is the **maven** – someone who provides knowledge about a particular subject, product, or matter. The second type is the **connector** – someone who has an astonishingly large number of personal acquaintances. The third type is the **salesman** – someone who can easily sway people in one direction or another.

2nd BCT then developed a campaign plan that (1) deliberately involved these three types of people and (2) sought to achieve a tipping point, or points. Multiple tipping points, according to “Gladwell’s paradox of the epidemic,” are sometimes necessary to generate several tiny movements before the one large movement / epidemic can take place. In creating its campaign plan, 2nd BCT emphasized the participation/input/knowledge from organic **mavens**, such as the Human Terrain Team (HTT), Information Operations specialists, the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), the Operations Planning Group, the Intelligence Section, and subordinate units, all of whom were tasked to collect data on the environment. The most important **maven input** to the plan, however, came from outside the organization – from **Iraqi local leaders**. Despite tremendous expertise among staff representatives/soldiers/enablers who had worked on multiple tours in Iraq, it was the knowledge gleaned from local leaders – who best understood and explained the intricacies of challenges, disputes, and concerns

among the people of the region – that provided the key environmental/societal factors needed for detailed planning.

2nd BCT developed a three-phased campaign plan. The first phase of the plan consisted of preparation of the campaign plan itself, with particular attention to **maven input**. The second phase involved “Gladwell’s paradox of the epidemic” – creating small movements to inject the theme of “unity” into various segments of the population. The third phase was to ignite a “unity” epidemic – through encouraging Iraqis to hold their own “unity” meetings, monitor/assist at those meetings, and potentially provide funding for “unity”-related projects.

2nd BCT decided to invite the most influential leaders from the region to the “unity” meetings, with a maximum size of 20 per meeting, so that all attendees could actively participate. The BCT’s Human Terrain Team mapped out who the most influential leaders were: tribal leaders, religious leaders, Iraqi Security Force leaders, and governmental/political leaders. Recognizing the importance of spreading the “unity” theme to as many people as possible and to selling them on its merits, 2nd BCT ensured that the majority of invitees to the “unity” meetings were **dynamic connector-salesmen** – those influential leaders who fit both categories, who could extensively network and persuade.

At the very first meeting, Iraqi attendees heard the "unity" theme directly from the BCT Commander, who delivered it in a very collegial manner:

"We...have asked you all to come together because you are all noble, influential leaders who are critical to building prosperity in the region. In order to create prosperity, you must communicate with each other, create mutual respect, work together, and stand united against external forces that want to create unrest."

The 2nd BCT leaders then presented various environmental/societal factors that had contributed to “unity” among Iraqis – citing historical examples of Iraqi achievements, the 2010 Iraqi national elections, soccer, oral traditions, common values such as patriotism and honor, recent actions to rid areas of Al-Qaeda and other extremists, efforts to reduce vehicle borne improvised explosive devices, and the effective implementation of a tip line for informants. The 2nd BCT leaders also highlighted various environmental/societal factors that had hindered “unity” among Iraqis in the region: graffiti, hate messages delivered at mosques, lack of communication between communities, garbage problems, lack of trust in government, and failures by government to visit certain communities and to follow through on actions. A strong case was then made by the BCT Commander to the Iraqi participants that: (1) they could solve many problems themselves by working together, and (2) they could present a united front to the Iraqi Government as needed/desired on major issues.

Through dialogue at the “itihad” meeting, the Iraqi attendees developed a degree of trust and common purpose, and they agreed to attempt to resolve several problems. For instance, government representatives committed to making more rural visits and to giving greater attention to the needs of rural communities. Government representatives and security officials also agreed to cooperate more with tribal leaders on security problems. Additionally, participants expressed overall agreement that political hate and sectarian antagonism should be removed from prayer services at certain Shi’a and Sunni mosques.

At the very first “itihad” meeting, a “tipping point” was actually attained. The “unity” idea was embraced by all participants. They worked together to develop ideas for future agendas. Several of the **dynamic connector-salesmen** offered to host future meetings. Although this forum was just one group of 20 key leaders, the “unity” epidemic now had its starting point. “Itihad” meetings continued from that point on – broadening participation, progress, and acceptance of the “unity” message.

Recommendation.

1. Those engaged in stability operations should consider promoting “unity” in a strategy to overcome the divides/differences among population segments. In developing this strategy, planners and practitioners should identify, and then work to leverage, any environmental/societal factors that can contribute to “unity” among the population. Likewise, planners/practitioners should identify, and then work to negate, the various environmental/societal factors that have hindered “unity” among the population. The overall idea is to create local and regional “unity” movements, and then expand those movements.
2. Those engaged in stability operations should endeavor to identify **dynamic connector-salesmen** in their areas and bring them together in “unity” forums – to infuse the theme of “unity” and tap their potential for spreading this theme. The inclusion of governmental leaders in the “unity” forums would serve to establish a sense of governmental awareness and accountability for addressing local/regional issues, as well as to promote local/regional trust in governance.

Implications.

If stability operations practitioners do not deliberately pursue the theme of “unity” through **dynamic connector-salesmen**, then an opportunity to convince disparate segments of society to break down barriers and work together – for common prosperity and a unified state – could be lost, basically leaving those segments to continue “business as usual,” to the detriment of stability and development.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[Beyond Reconciliation: Developing Faith, Hope, Trust, and Unity in Iraq](#)," by Major Nathan Minami (U.S. Army), Colonel David Miller (U.S. Army), Lieutenant Colonel Michael Davey (U.S. Army), and Mr. Anthony Swalhah, Military Review, March-April 2011.



h. TOPIC. Lessons from Liberia in Security Sector Reform ([703](#))

Observation.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) actions launched in Liberia at its "golden hour" (mid-2003 to 2005) were absolutely critical for post-conflict recovery and for establishing a viable foundation for further stabilization work. Although every peacebuilding context presents its own set of unique and complex challenges, certain key areas of action within the Liberian security sector may also be applicable to wider peacebuilding efforts, particularly for nations recovering from an abrupt end to a civil war. Key areas of action successfully implemented in Liberia revolved around consolidating the state's monopoly of force, maintaining the momentum of peacebuilding, integrating SSR with DDR, operationalizing human security, and mobilizing networks for peace.

Discussion.

Upon the conclusion of its 14-year civil war, in August 2003, Liberia faced an incredibly difficult situation with regard to post-conflict peacebuilding. From a pre-war population of three million, more than 250,000 people had been killed, and another one million people were displaced or missing. Pillaging, looting, abductions, torture, rape, and other human rights abuses had occurred on a massive scale throughout the conflict period. Most Liberians had lived in constant fear of the military and police forces, not to mention the numerous warring factions. Liberia's infrastructure had been totally destroyed, with no functioning electrical grids, no public running water, no sewage, and no other public utilities. Throughout the capital of Monrovia, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) lived in slums consisting of tin shacks and garbage. After 14 years of violence, chaos, and fear, a pause for peace came about when President Taylor accepted an offer of asylum from Nigeria.

Seeing a "golden hour" for peacebuilding upon the exile of President Taylor, the United Nations, the United States, and certain key leaders/practitioners (including the authors of the article "[Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector](#)

[Reform in Liberia](#)”) immediately focused their engagement on Security Sector Reform (SSR).

An initial priority was to consolidate the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law. Probably the most critical action taken in this regard was the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR) program, which was implemented by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in a quick, if not hasty, manner on 7 December 2003. Launching the DDRR program quickly, and involving many of the ex-combatants in transitional labor, kept these ex-combatants focused on material gains and employment – rather than on renewing violence. Simple monetary compensation for the arms/ammunition surrendered was a key factor for gaining their cooperation. Another motive for these combatants to show up at a DDRR site was temporary amnesty. Blanket or general amnesty was never issued in Liberia; however, temporary amnesty proved to be vital to the success of the DDRR program. A conscious decision was made – in the interest of disarming and demobilizing armed groups – to postpone the implementation of transitional justice in favor of temporary amnesty, and this approach paid large dividends.

The DDRR program succeeded in disarming and demobilizing 101,449 combatants, and it collected 61,918 weapons and 6,486,136 units of ammunition. Throughout execution of the DDRR program, UNMIL disposed of the collected ordinance, and it worked to seal off Liberia's borders from outside interference. An early threat to the DDRR program surfaced during a 10-day period in December 2003. Significant riots broke out at one of the DDRR sites (Camp Schefflin), posing a major threat to the UNMIL contingent there. Consequently, UNMIL put a halt to the DDRR program. However, within four months, once additional UN peacekeepers were on the ground, UNMIL re-energized the program and resumed execution in full force. That persistence gave a reassuring message to the Liberian government, and to all Liberians, that disarmament, demobilization, and peacebuilding were moving forward and that momentum would be maintained. The pace of disarmament and demobilization picked up quickly.

Similarly, persistence in "maintaining momentum" kept the crucial 2005 Liberian presidential elections on schedule. In opposition, many senior statesmen, interim government officials, and potential candidates had pushed hard for holding party conventions and for rewriting the constitution in advance of any elections. However, their motives may have been self-serving – to prolong their time in office/exposure, or even to have an opportunity to divert resources (funds from the February 2004 donor conference) for their personal gains rather than for the good of Liberia. Fortunately, the UN, U.S., and certain key leaders in Liberia stood firm on keeping the November 2005 elections on schedule. This resulted in the first female head of state for Africa (Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson), but more importantly resulted in a new, legitimate government recognized by the vast majority of all Liberians – to establish and uphold the rule of law.

To consolidate a "monopoly of force" for this new government to uphold the rule of law, the UN, U.S., and the authors of this article took the approach of integrating DDR and SSR in the transformation of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The UN worked the "Disarmament" piece – as it systematically disarmed the legacy national military force. The United States simultaneously worked the "Demobilization and Reintegration" pieces, while at the same time restructuring and reforming the force. The entire DDR/SSR program included recruiting, vetting, training, equipping, fielding, sustaining and mentoring the new force. The program also involved constructing new military bases across the country, establishing a professional defense ministry, drafting a national defense strategy, and redesigning the force structure. The point of intersection between DDR and SSR was "reintegration" – the process of reincorporating as many appropriate ex-combatants into the new military as possible. For the select few who were able to pass the vetting process, "reintegration" not only gave them quick employment in the new military, but also served to build trust (between former enemies) and let them become an integral part of the greater Liberian peace-building effort. Due to the downsizing of the new military, however, other avenues for reintegration for most ex-combatants (economic avenues, such as public works programs) had to be pursued.

Likewise, the UN and U.S. integrated DDR and SSR in the transformation of the Liberian National Police (LNP). The highly corrupt, brutal police force that had operated during the Taylor years was, unfortunately, still largely intact after the civil war. Its officers posed a significant threat to the state and to peace. In response to this threat, the United States initially put much a much higher priority and much greater attention on reforming the LNP than on reforming the AFL. The U.S. and UNMIL demobilized (purged) all unqualified policemen, vetted/ reintegrated a small number of personnel, conducted extensive recruiting/vetting/ training of new police forces, established a new police academy, and developed an emergency infrastructure. UNMIL took on the major role of training the LNP, worked with various international partners to build new police stations and barracks, and equipped the force with vehicles and logistics. Also, efforts were made to increase female representation in the force.

A unique approach taken by recovery leaders and new governmental leaders was the effort to operationalize "human security." The primary focus here was to ensure that the population could gain "freedom from fear" of the military. A number of steps were taken to ensure the new AFL would not appear threatening to the people. As stated earlier, a vetting process was used to screen all of the candidates for the AFL. Secondly, the AFL's force structure was addressed: its size was made deliberately small, it contained no special units (to preclude any loyalties to a specific person, vice the state), and it was ethnically balanced – with all tribes equally represented. Third, non-traditional training was highly emphasized, covering the following subjects: discipline, moral judgment, respect for the laws of war, Liberian history, the Liberian constitution, civics, and literacy.

Also, Liberians were taught to be the trainers of the AFL, so that they could take stock in professionalizing their own military.

Finally, besides the many SSR and DDR actions to consolidate the state's monopoly of force, another key short-term action was to "mobilize networks for peace" – for the purpose of counterbalancing networks for war. Conflict-recovery leaders were extremely proactive in promoting the activities of peace-minded groups and in establishing multilateral, national, and nongovernmental webs of people and organizations who wanted a warless Liberia. As nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) trickled back into the country, and as evacuated embassy staff personnel returned, these groups/people were significantly helped by the UN, by the embassies, and by recovery leaders to enhance reintegration and reestablishment of social/support networks. Finally, Liberian women's peace groups were considerably assisted in networking aspects, as they grew to be active informal groups for promoting local, community-based security systems.

Recommendation.

In the immediate aftermath of civil war, when a "golden hour" or "window of opportunity" is presented to lay a foundation for peacebuilding and to impact and include the (former) warring factions, leaders/practitioners should immediately address the following areas of the security sector:

1. Consolidate the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law.
2. Maintain momentum of reform and peace.
3. Integrate DDR and SSR in the transformation of military and police forces.
4. Operationalize "human security."
5. Mobilize "networks for peace" to counterbalance the "networks for war."

Implications.

If a post-conflict state does not gain a monopoly of force through prompt reform of its security sector, then it will lack the means to uphold the rule of law and may face renewed competition from insurgents, militias, organized crime, and revolutionary movements – who can challenge the state's legitimacy, threaten citizens/communities, and potentially push the state back into wide-scale conflict.

Event Description.

This observation is based on the article "[Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector Reform in Liberia](#)," by John Blaney, Jacques Paul Klein, and Sean McFate, a policy analysis brief from The Stanley Foundation, June 2010.

Comments.

A related document, which discusses security sector reform in Liberia and the importance of incorporating non-state security actors and community-based approaches, is "[Security Sector Reform: A Case Study Approach to Transition and Capacity Building](#)," by Sarah Meharg and Aleisha Arnusch, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2010.



3. CONCLUSION

Recent stability operations have demonstrated the critical nexus between leadership and “understanding / engaging the people” during stability operations. Key lessons in this regard include the following:

- Address leadership “success attributes” during pre-deployment training seminars for senior leaders preparing to serve on stability operations:
 - Visioning
 - Mapping the environment
 - Cross-cultural savvy
 - Interpersonal maturity
 - Unit of effort and purpose
 - Strategic communication
 - Determination toward the vision
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to address the “human domain.” Strategy should address plans and goals with regard to key population groups, to include: local leaders/elders, women, youth/young adults, religious leaders, civil society groups, and insurgents.
- Ensure that deploying military organizations are sufficiently resourced and trained to address the “human domain,” as appropriate.
- Leverage the Human Terrain System (HTS) throughout planning and execution of stability operations.
- Emphasize the collection of “white” information – to better understand the people – as opposed to only concentrating on “red” information to analyze threats.
- Ensure that development programs focus on the needs of local communities and emphasize “local ownership” – to ensure that local

citizens are committed to supporting and sustaining each and every activity.

- Establish robust systems/programs for communicating intent of operations to the host nation population.
- Build leadership capacity in the host nation as needed. For some host nations, this may require investing significant resources aimed at improving the quality of leadership throughout multiple sectors, levels, and geographic regions – as well as establishing systems that reward local leaders who demonstrate selfless service, competence, and other good leadership qualities, and withhold support from those who do not.
- Develop a plan for religious leader engagements during stability operations, particularly in areas/communities where religious leaders wield considerable power/influence. Consider utilizing chaplains (military or civilian) – ideally matching the faith of the local religious leaders – to facilitate the religious leader engagements. Also, invite / include host nation government officials in these engagements.
- When societal schisms or disputes are prevalent and are adversely affecting stability progress, attempt to infuse the idea of “unity” and trust in governance among influential local community leaders. Then work to expand local success into wider, regional “unity” networks/movements.
- When a “golden hour” or “window of opportunity” is presented to lay a foundation for peacebuilding and to impact and include the (former) warring/insurgent factions – intervening leaders should focus on the following actions:
 - Consolidate the state’s monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law
 - Maintain momentum of reform and peace
 - Integrate DDR and SSR in the transformation of military and police forces
 - Operationalize “human security”
 - Mobilize “networks for peace” to counterbalance the “networks for violence”

Through further dissemination of these lessons and themes on “leadership” and “understanding / engaging the people” – as well as through additional thoughts / perspectives shared in SOLLIMS and in leadership seminars – civilian and military leaders and their organizations may be better postured for success in future stability operations.

4. COMMAND POC

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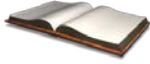
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Shast, Afghanistan – U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Blevins, Commander, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, meets Gul Haidar, the Shast village elder and a former Mujahedeen commander in Rokha District. Members from the PRT visited the Shast village to discuss village concerns. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Romain Beaulinette, French Army, 27 December 2010)



RELATED DOCUMENTS, REFERENCES, AND LINKS

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SOLLIMS SAMPLER

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