



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE TO THE MILITARY

Joint Doctrine Note

1/09

JOINT DOCTRINE NOTE 1/09

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE TO THE MILITARY

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Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Development, Concepts and Doctrine)

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JOINT DOCTRINE PUBLICATIONS

The successful conduct of military operations requires an intellectually rigorous, clearly articulated and empirically-based framework of understanding that gives advantage to a country's Armed Forces, and its likely partners, in the management of conflict. This common basis of understanding is provided by doctrine.

UK doctrine is, as far as practicable and sensible, consistent with that of NATO. The development of national doctrine addresses those areas not covered adequately by NATO; it also influences the evolution of NATO doctrine in accordance with national thinking and experience.

Endorsed national doctrine is promulgated formally in Joint Doctrine Publications (JDPs).¹ From time to time, Interim Joint Doctrine Publications (IJDs) are published, caveated to indicate the need for their subsequent revision in light of anticipated changes in relevant policy or legislation, or future lessons arising out of operations.

Urgent requirements for doctrine are addressed in Joint Doctrine Notes (JDNs). JDNs do not represent an agreed or fully staffed position, but are raised in short order by the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) to establish and disseminate current best practice. They also provide the basis for further development and experimentation, and a doctrinal basis for operations and exercises.

Details of the Joint Doctrine development process and the associated hierarchy of JDPs are to be found in JDP 0-00 '*Joint Doctrine Development Handbook*'.

¹ Formerly named Joint Warfare Publications (JWPs).

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PREFACE

*“I had perfect situational awareness. What I lacked was cultural awareness. Great technical intelligence...wrong enemy”.*²

1. **Purpose.** Knowledge of culture is one of the most important aspects in meeting the challenges of contemporary conflict. Not only may people from different cultures behave in different ways, they may also think about the world in different ways. To understand why they do what they do, we need to try to see their world in the way that they do. Enhancing cultural capability³ contributes to the success of operations through risk reduction and the exploitation of opportunities, including the potential to influence behaviours and perceptions. It improves the ability to calculate and plan military outcomes, and leads to better informed strategic, operational and tactical decision-making by commanders and individuals of all ranks. Cultural capability can also enhance routine relations with friendly and neutral actors, including allies and partners. The purpose of Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1/09 ‘*The Significance of Culture to the Military*’ is threefold. Firstly, to provide reference material to ensure coherence across emerging works to strengthen cultural capability including: policy, statements of operational requirement, education and training reviews, and developments in support to operations. Secondly, to provide commanders and staff with an understanding of the significance of culture to the military. Thirdly, to provide guidance for the practical application of cultural capability in the operational context. The JDN can be exploited by planning staff, particularly those involved in intelligence and influence activities, and can specifically support the formulation of requests for information in terms that will elicit the required response through external reachout to subject matter experts.

2. **Context.** Members of British Armed Forces are frequently working with partners and within populations, and facing opponents with different moral, ethical and legal boundaries and perspectives to their own. Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-01 ‘*British Defence Doctrine*’ (BDD) states that ‘in the consideration of context, the cultural and historical features of a situation or operating area are perhaps most important of all’. Understanding culture is an art and an appreciation of how much you do not know can be valuable in itself. Culture is relevant to the defence, development and diplomatic environments and it is intended to make this publication available to other government departments.

3. **Structure.** The JDN is in 5 parts. Chapter 1 introduces culture and its significance to the military. Chapter 2 identifies cultural themes and Chapter 3

² Commander of US Third Infantry Division, Iraq 2003, quoted in R Scales, ‘*Culture-Centric Warfare*’ proceedings, October 2004.

³ See definition at paragraph 102b.

examines cultural aspects of different actors. Chapter 4 looks at military implications and Chapter 5 discusses strengthening cultural capability.

4. **Linkages.** JDN 1/09 draws on academic work, direct consultations, lessons from operations and extant military doctrine. It precedes, but conforms with current drafts of updates to JDPs 2-00 '*Intelligence*' (3rd Edition), 3-00 '*Campaign Execution*' (3rd Edition) and 3-40 '*Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*'.⁴ Other linked doctrine and sources are:

- a. JDP 0-01 '*British Defence Doctrine*'.
- b. JDP 01 '*Campaigning*'.
- c. JDP 3-45.1 '*Media Operations*'.
- d. JDP 3-50 '*Peace Support Operations*'.
- e. JDP 3-80 '*Information Operations*'.
- f. JDP 3-80.1 '*OPSEC, Deception and PSYOPS*'.
- g. JDP 3-90 '*Civil-Military Co-operation*'.
- h. JDP 5-00 '*Campaign Planning*'.
- i. '*Future Land Operational Concept 2008*'.
- j. Pre-deployment Cultural Awareness Training Packs for Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵
- k. Background Briefs – Cultural Appreciation Booklets:⁶
 - (1) '*The Arab World*'.
 - (2) '*Iraq*'.
 - (3) '*Afghanistan*'.
- l. '*Countries in Perspective*' and '*Cultural Orientation*' downloads.⁷

⁴ Working title, January 2009.

⁵ Available from Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army).

⁶ Available from Defence Intelligence Human Factors.

⁷ Available via LAND Web <http://fieldsupport.lingnet.org/index.aspx>

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

*“To operate without cultural understanding is to operate blind and deaf”.*¹

SECTION I – THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE

Understanding Cultural Complexity and its Relevance

Tribal Dynamics in Afghanistan

British troops glean much from locals in Helmand, but we are still learning. The conflict is not against a monolithic threat, but entwined with older struggles rooted in tribalism, complex alliances and loyalties. Crude ethnic breakdowns (Pashtun, Tajiks, Hazaras, Turkmen, Uzbeks and others) mask baffling complexity; there are 60 Pashtun tribes and a further 400 sub-tribes alone. One veteran says that, *‘you must approach every village as its own campaign’*.

The ousting of the Taliban regime in 2001 resulted in renewed dominance for some tribes and lost status for others. The Taliban regard tribal custom as a deviation from *sharia* law, but where individual tribes feel aggrieved, the Taliban can be willing allies. Areas where tribal structures are strongest tend to be more resistant to Taliban encroachment. However, while tribal structures can help undermine support for the Taliban, the Pashtun code (with concepts of hospitality, honour and revenge), and its self-regulating system of elders and arbitration, is at odds with central government and other western-imposed ideals.

Culture is not just about tribes, nor is the significance of culture to the military confined to operations. Nevertheless, analysis of cultural factors, including tribal dynamics, is crucial to campaign success.

101. **What is Culture?** Culture is learned, not biologically inherited, acquired mostly through habituation, or unconscious conditioning, often in subtle ways. It distinguishes the members of one group of people from another and provides a lens through which the group’s members see and understand the world. Culture includes values, norms and beliefs, reflected in different structures and systems, and affected by the past and present. It contributes to an individual’s attitudes, assumptions and expectations, and shapes perceptions, motives, intents and behaviours. Culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual’s personality on the other, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

¹ Maj Gen J Shaw, Culture in Conflict Symposium, Shrivenham, 10-11 June 2008.

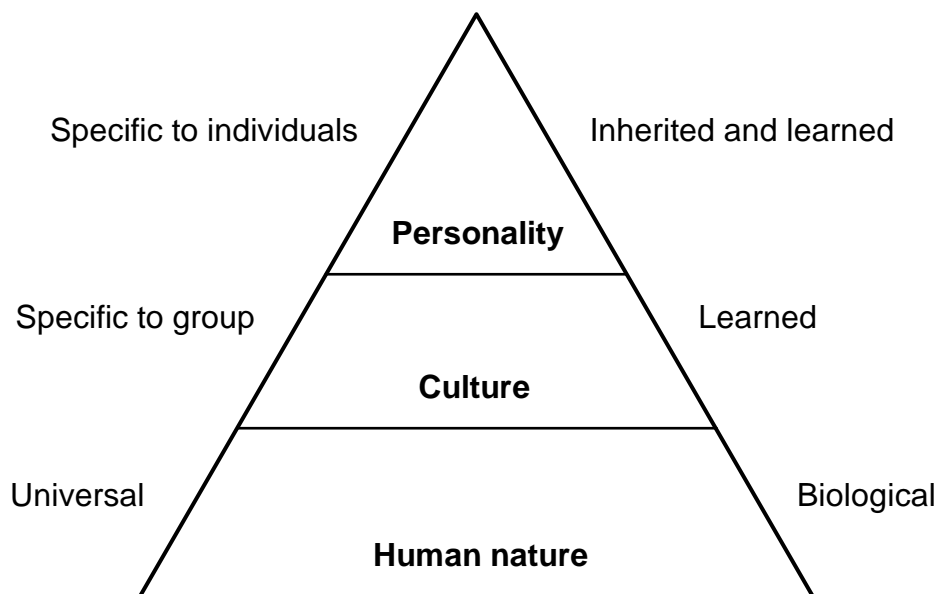


Figure 1.1 – Three levels of human programming²

102. **Definitions.** For the purposes of this publication, the following definitions are used:

- a. **Culture.** Culture is the shared concepts that guide what people believe, how they behave and how this behaviour is interpreted.
- b. **Cultural Capability.** The ability to understand culture, and to apply this knowledge to effectively engage in any environment. Cultural capability comprises 3 levels: awareness, understanding and competence (see paragraph 504).
- c. **Organisational Culture.** An organisation's way of approaching its task, its relationships with other agencies, its self-image and public image, its standard operating procedures, and the behaviours of its members in the work context.
- d. **Subculture.** A cultural group within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture.
- e. **Society.** A population of 2 or more persons, whose members are subject to the same political authority, often occupy a common territory, and/or have a common culture and a sense of shared identity. A society usually has a dominant culture, but can also have a vast number of different subcultures. Different societies may share similar cultures.

² L Hoecklin, *Managing Cultural Differences, Strategies for Competitive Advantage*, 1995.

103. **The Significance of Culture to the Military.** Culture is part of the context within which military operations and routine relationships are conducted. Ignoring the significance of culture increases risk of mission or campaign failure, and creates barriers to successful interaction. Enhanced cultural capability reduces these risks and creates: opportunities contributing to the defeat of, or success of negotiations with, opponents; an improved understanding of local populations and the underlying causes of conflict; and fruitful collaboration with allies. To enable the commander to coordinate and focus the application of both physical and psychological effects, a critical appreciation of the cultural characteristics and influences of all significant actors is essential. An appreciation of culture throughout the spectrum of military operations and processes will result in increased situational awareness, an improved preparation of the battlespace, enhanced force protection and more effective tactical engagement. Culture is of particular significance to security and stabilisation where the human dimension is critical. Here there is risk of alienating the civilian population from national authorities or supporting international actors, or possibly both, often precisely what some actors wish to exploit. An analysis of culture should identify alternative options, potentially decreasing the requirement for fires, which can help starve insurgents of propaganda and recruits.

104. **Challenges.** Avoiding a *them and us* perspective, focusing on cultural differences, real or perceived, presents a significant challenge. Cultural clashes can occur when people attribute different meanings to the same behaviour or have different ways of expressing the same meaning. Cultural differences can result in friction, potentially degenerating into a downwards spiral as misunderstanding leads to mistrust and increased tensions. For example, in joint, allied or coalition headquarters, this can result in prejudice and poor relationships. In the operational environment, it can lead to a rapid deterioration of a situation, reducing opportunities for constructive activity and potentially resulting in violent conflict. To reduce these risks, overcoming the dual challenges of ethnocentrism (the innate belief that one's own culture is superior) and stereotyping is crucial.

Getting it Wrong – A Contemporary Example

One month into a Brigade's tour in Iraq, a patrol was ambushed while on a routine patrol. Engaged from 2 directions and with one man down, it applied minimum force in returning fire, thus preventing escalation or harm to civilians. It was a bold decision that put soldiers at risk, but it was the right one. However, as the assailants made their escape, the patrol gave chase, eventually entering a mosque still bearing arms. In hindsight, this was judged the wrong decision and the wider impact was significant, sparking major demonstrations against British forces. The Brigade spent 3 weeks repairing the damage to local relations after suffering a 'nightmarish loss of cooperation'.

Consideration of cultural factors is important to tactical decision-making, as the consequences can have operational, and in some instances, strategic impact.

105. **Opportunities.** An appreciation of culture can aid the anticipation and interpretation of an individual's or group's actions, therefore an analysis of culture must be integral to campaign planning and execution. Cultural analysis has particular relevance to Joint Action, enhancing the ability to influence the will, understanding and capability of actors. This may involve both the reinforcement and fostering of cultural similarities, and the exploitation of cultural differences. The opportunities presented by enhanced cultural capability include:

- a. Improved analysis and planning, including conflict prevention and pre-conflict planning.
- b. The identification and exploitation of opportunities to break into an opponent's decision-making cycle.
- c. The identification and exploitation of opponent's cultural vulnerabilities, whilst identifying and protecting one's own cultural vulnerabilities.
- d. The reduction in risk of alienation amongst friendly and neutral actors, reinforcing perceptions of legitimacy and credibility, enhancing campaign authority.³
- e. The identification and mitigation of undesirable and unintended consequences, potentially enhancing force protection.
- f. The identification of locally acceptable and sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of conflict, enabling transition and handover to local actors.
- g. The enhancement of shared understanding and consultative working required by a Comprehensive Approach in cross-government, multinational and multi-agency collaboration, and defence diplomacy.

³ See Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-01 'British Defence Doctrine' (3rd Edition).

Getting it Right – A Lesson from History

Allenby's entry into Jerusalem

When General Sir Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem on 9 December 1917, having captured the City from Ottoman Forces, he dismounted his horse and entered the City on foot. This was perceived by the populace as a mark of respect to the holy status of a City that had considerable significance to Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Allenby vigorously played down any notion of a *crusade* and culturally his approach compared favourably to an earlier imperious entry into the City by the German Kaiser.

106. **Culture and Conflict.** Culture plays a role in why and how people engage in conflict, while conflict itself can change culture. Cultural differences, including the absolute belief in the righteousness and justice of a cause or value system, may be a fundamental cause of conflict. Where an invasion or intervention appears to threaten the very survival of a culture, this can be a powerful unifying factor and even the prospect of military defeat or societal collapse might not deter extreme courses of action. If people exist in conditions of deprivation or repression they may fall back on certain aspects of their culture as a primary source of stability and dignity. In these circumstances, populations can be very sensitive to any slight, humiliation or attack on their culture, real or imagined, deliberate or unintentional. Some cultures may be more inclined than others to threaten or employ violence, often citing a warrior ethos, and some cultures have a tradition of revenge or vendetta. Such notions can contribute to the resurgence of violence, even if issues are apparently resolved at a higher level, affecting the momentum of a conflict.

Culture of Revenge

In Afghanistan, the Pashtun code of honour (*Pashtunwali*) includes *badal*, a system of retribution to avenge a wrong. Even a mere taunt (or *Paighor*) is regarded as an insult, which can be redressed by shedding of the taunter's blood or that of his next closest male relation. This in turn can lead to a blood feud that can last generations and involve whole tribes with the loss of many lives. However, whilst the cultural rhetoric supporting the notion of retribution is strong, in reality Pashtun culture actually goes to great lengths to prevent and contain blood feuds.

107. **The Relationship between Culture and Language.** Cultural and language capability are inextricably linked. An appreciation of a culture facilitates the use of language, whilst linguistic skills facilitate the gaining and exploitation of cultural knowledge. However, knowledge of a language does not directly equate to knowledge of a culture. If language is what is said, culture influences what is meant. Whilst all personnel can benefit from enhanced cultural capability, language capability will

remain a specialisation. It is possible for a relatively high level of cultural capability to be achieved with limited language ability. However, to be an effective linguist, a reasonable level of cultural capability is required in order to maximise the opportunities presented through direct engagement. Only fluent linguists may observe some important cultural nuances, for example the way people use humour, and how formally or informally they use language in different contexts.

SECTION II – LEGAL FACTORS

108. **Protection of Cultural Values.** One characteristic of human security is the protection of cultural values and all individuals, theoretically at least, have their basic human rights protected by international agreements. The current body of international law, dating from 1948/9, consistently recognises a universal protection from cruel and inhuman treatment or from outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment. There are no internationally agreed criteria to describe inhuman or degrading treatment, but acts which intentionally set out to destroy or denigrate individual or collective cultural, including religious, values are generally considered as falling within these terms. During armed conflict, such treatment may amount to a breach of the Geneva Conventions. The obligation to consider cultural values is described in more detail in Geneva Convention rules for the treatment of individuals (the wounded, prisoners of war etc) within the control of a party to an armed conflict. The application of either international or domestic human rights law will depend on the mandate and status of British Armed Forces, for example as delineated in a memorandum of understanding or United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), and the extent to which they have effective control over individuals or territory.⁴ Such factors may not easily be determined within the context of a rapidly developing operation, and where necessary commanders should seek timely legal advice.

109. **Protection of Cultural Property.** In support of a general principle that civilian objects should not be the subject of attack, both the Geneva Conventions, and the Hague Convention on Cultural Property set out a framework for the protection of cultural property in armed conflict. The Hague Convention in particular places an equal obligation on parties to a conflict to refrain from uses of cultural property that would expose it to danger and to refrain from acts of hostility against an enemy's cultural property. The definition of cultural property within both the Geneva and Hague conventions is wide, encompassing 'movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people' which might include *inter alia* historic monuments, places of worship, objects of artistic or archaeological interest, scientific collections or important collections of books or archives. Under international law, British military personnel also have an individual obligation to

⁴ European Court of Human Rights judgement in *Bankovic v Belgium* [EctHR Application 52207/99] and House of Lords Judgement in *Al Skeini and Others* [2007], UKHL 26.

refrain from destruction of cultural property in armed conflict. This is an important element of all Law of Armed Conflict training.

SECTION III – RISKS

110. **Risks.** Although the benefits of enhancing cultural capability outweigh the risks, it is important to acknowledge a number of potential challenges:

- a. A tendency to concentrate on differences, potentially reinforcing the *them and us* way of thinking. However, similarities, common values and shared experiences can be a basis for building mutual respect and understanding.
- b. A little knowledge can be dangerous, masking important nuances and subtleties and leading to misunderstandings through overconfidence. Frequent reference to subject matter experts may be necessary.
- c. Dehumanising the enemy can be a useful technique in emboldening the warrior ethos and dealing with the stress of battle. Too much empathy, through enhanced cultural knowledge, could decrease objectivity and the ability to carry out operational requirements.
- d. Excessively strong empathy with certain groups, or being perceived to have ‘gone native’, may bring into question the loyalty and objectivity of an individual within their own organisation.

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CHAPTER 2 – CULTURAL THEMES

*‘All good people agree and all good people say, all nice people like us are
we, and everyone else is they,
But if you cross over the sea, instead of over the way, you may end up
(think of it), looking on we as only a sort of they’¹*

SECTION I – CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

201. **Characteristics.** An examination of any culture is complex, however, a number of characteristics can be identified which aid the generic understanding of culture and can assist in the interpretation of a specific culture. These characteristics include:

- a. **Learned.** Culture is not genetic but is learned in the social environment.
- b. **Shared.** There is no *culture of one*, as culture must be a shared system.
- c. **Patterned.** Culture creates patterns of activity and, although culture does not determine a precise course of action for individuals or a group, it often shapes and constrains their actions.
- d. **Habitual.** Culture is an immersion of experience that is usually taken for granted in a belief that certain things are normal. An individual will rarely notice the influence of their own culture on themselves.
- e. **Dynamic.** Although appearing slow to change, culture is dynamic and in a constant state of flux, with unwritten rules susceptible to shift and amendment.
- f. **Symbolic.** Much of the outward expression of culture is made through symbols, and symbolic meaning can be attributed to events, places, objects and people. Symbols may often have both explicit and implicit meanings.
- g. **Context Dependent.** Culture is not based on natural laws, but is created by humans according to the whims of the society (for example standards of beauty and dress), therefore different contexts can prompt different behaviours by the same people from the same culture.
- h. **Sub-divided.** As the culture or subculture that an individual identifies with at any one time depends on context, identifying subculture boundaries within a wider group can be problematic.

¹ R Kipling, *‘We are They’*, first published in *‘Debts and Credits’*, 1926.

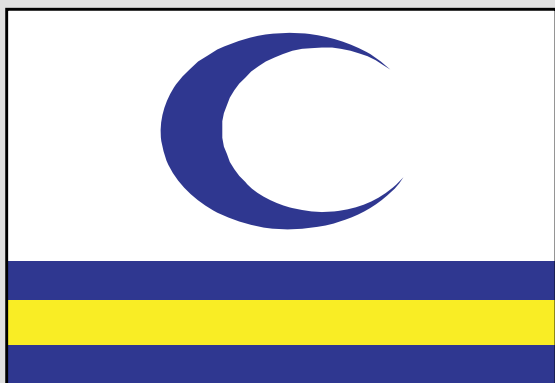
Symbols

Same Symbol, Different Meaning

In the UK an owl is a symbol of wisdom, yet in Sierra Leone it is a foreteller of doom.

The Abuse of Cultural Symbols

National flags are cultural and societal symbols, the abuse of which is a common form of protest. In Iraq protestors frequently burn Israeli, British, and American flags and in 2004 protestors burnt the proposed new flag for Iraq. However, the current Iraqi national flag is rarely burnt as it contains the *Takbir* 'Allahu Akbar' ('God is great'), making the desecration of this flag culturally taboo to Muslims.



Proposed Iraqi Flag – 2004



Interim Iraqi Flag – 2008 to present

SECTION II – WHAT SHAPES CULTURE

202. **History.** It is easy to underestimate the degree to which some cultures are anchored in their own histories. Past events, some of which are attributed with particular meaning and value, can be of great significance to a culture, shaping attitudes, beliefs and relationships. Recent history may provide motivation, but longer histories tend to be used to provide reasons and justification. Different groups often have very different interpretations of history. Deliberate reinventions of history are common to set the perceptions and expectations of a culture within its present context, these reinventions often being accepted as truths. One way in which history and heritage can be expressed is through a chosen glory or trauma, events that a group remembers as a glorious success or a significant injury, often manipulated for political reasons. These events become emotion-infused memories and are rallying symbols for people during times of crisis and conflict. Commanders and staff should consider the relevance of history to an operational environment, to aid the understanding of the contemporary context.

Chosen Trauma: *The Field of Blackbirds*

Kosovo Polje, or the *Field of Blackbirds*, is the site of the decisive Battle of Kosovo in 1389, where the Ottomans defeated the Serbian army. This defeat has entered the Serbian psyche as a chosen trauma and the *Field of Blackbirds* was where Slobodan Milosevic chose to make an inflammatory speech in 1987, which propelled him to the presidency of Serbia 2 years later. The significance of this battlefield is greatly enhanced by its location in the disputed territory of Kosovo.

203. **Religion.** Religion provides a framework for some people to understand their world. It often reflects an ideal system and articulates the expected behaviour for individuals and groups. Religion can be a factor in precipitating crisis and provide the pretext under which individuals are motivated to engage in armed conflict or resistance. Equally, religion can be a powerful force for peace. There is often a contention between fundamentalists and moderates within an observant religious society. The former often use religious symbols and vocabulary for essentially political ends.

204. **Environment.** Environmental factors help shape culture and conversely some factors can be shaped by cultural influence. Environmental factors include:

- a. **Physical.** Cultures not only have a physical dependency and relationship with geographical features, seasons and climate, but also are usually emotionally and symbolically attached to a place. ‘Where are you from?’ can be a short cut method of determining friend, foe or stranger.
- b. **Political.** Politics and power have the capacity to influence the behaviour of others. Who exercises power and makes decisions, whether those decisions reflect cultural norms and values, the process by which decisions are made, and how power is legitimised, exerted and enforced, reflects and influences culture.
- c. **Economic.** Inequalities between rich and poor, often with cultural nuances, can lead to a sense of injustice that can cause resentment and, potentially, conflict. However, some cultures accept economic inequality as the natural order.
- d. **Social.** The social conventions, which shape every day interaction, often reflect important aspects of culture. Examples include entering homes, the conduct of meetings, the acceptance of hospitality, attitudes to alcohol and the giving of gifts.

The Geo-political Landscape: *The Durand Line*

There are times when politics meets geography, creating a cultural impact. In 1893 the British defined the border between what was then British India (now Pakistan) and Afghanistan. This border, the Durand Line, mainly followed geographic features, rivers and watershed divides, but it arbitrarily separated Pashtuns who had a common history and culture. Because the Durand Line artificially divides the Pashtun people, it continues to be a source of tension between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pashtuns on both sides of the border do not recognise the Durand Line.

Existing cultural, social and administrative territorial boundaries should be considered when creating additional boundaries, for example military areas of responsibility.

SECTION III – MANIFESTATIONS OF CULTURE

205. **Visible and Invisible.** Culture is sometimes illustrated as an iceberg with only a small proportion visible and the majority hidden to the eye. Similarly, the analogy of an onion is useful, with the outer surface representing that which is outwardly visible, but under which are many more layers. The closer to the centre of the onion, the more deeply accepted the value or belief is and the harder it is to change. So the superficial layer may include dress, food, artefacts and etiquette. Deeper, requiring an element of interpretation, lie behaviours and actions, while deepest of all are core morals, beliefs and values. Social structures, invisible concepts or ideas that form the basis for cultural practices, are described at Section IV, and cultural practices, things you can see and observe, are described at Section V.

206. **Cultural Narrative.** Groups will often move to make their cultural boundaries stronger, reinforcing *them and us*, where everyone not *us* is suspect and potentially dangerous. A cultural narrative, through an account described of connected events, can influence a group's perception of their own identity and expectations, and provide an explanation of their current circumstances. When narratives are proactively developed for the purpose of influence, there is liable to be a tension between maintaining continuity of the message and ensuring the narrative adapts to a dynamic context. This is further complicated where narratives need to resonate with domestic, local and international audiences alike, whilst considering that of the opponent. Cultural narratives will normally take the form of a story or explanation of events utilising words and symbolism that resonates with the target group, taking into account the relationship between those creating the narrative and those at whom it is aimed. A narrative may include a call to action, ideally action that lies within the immediate capability of the target group, and often aims to inspire people to mortgage current self-interest for perceived future benefits. A successful narrative will require credibility built on a high degree of consistency between what is said, what is done and what is seen or perceived. The accountability of western democracies, and need for

inclusion of coalitions and alliances, can make narratives a cumbersome tool. Some opponents, with fewer constraints, have become adept at employing colourful narratives with the content, however manipulated or manufactured, being widely accepted as truth.

The Vocabulary of Narratives

The *Global War on Terror* narrative has used vocabulary like *Jihad* (Holy Struggle) and *Mujaheddin* (literally ‘struggler’, referring to Muslims involved in Jihad). These terms have entered the Western lexicon and reinforced a *them and us* polarization, deemed necessary to garner domestic support. However, the use of such vocabulary can serve to validate the irregular’s message, conferring on the militant a status they are seeking. Alternative vocabulary, like *Hirabah* (unlawful war) and *Irahabi* (terrorist) imply criminalisation within the Muslim context, but would not now resonate so easily with the domestic audience. The consideration of vocabulary is important in the creation of a cultural narrative and highlights the tension between the interpretations of the same narrative by different cultural groupings.

SECTION IV – SOCIAL STRUCTURES

207. **Beliefs, Ideologies and Values.** Culture influences people’s judgements about what is right, wrong and normal, and what is important. Beliefs are concepts and ideas accepted as true, often without the need for evidence. Ideologies are a set of beliefs that characterise a culture. Values are the importance or relative worth attributed to principles or standards of behaviour and the attribution of what is right and wrong. Each culture and subculture, cultivates an ideology that strengthens the individual’s attachment to the group. However, individuals do not unquestioningly absorb all these beliefs and values; they accept some and reject others. As individuals belong to more than one subculture, the beliefs and values of different groups may be in conflict; for example religious values may conflict with generational values, or gender values within organisational practices. Tensions between different subcultures may present opportunities for exploitation. However, attempts to change the central beliefs and values of a culture may result in significant unintended consequences.

208. **Structures and Systems.** There is huge variety in how people organise their relationships. Forms of cultural structures and systems include those based around kinship and family, tribal, ethnic, political, and economic groupings. A common characteristic of cultural structures is their tendency to endure over time, existing independently of the individuals within them, and contributing to a culture or society’s stability. They can be vertical (state/institutions) or horizontal (tribal/family) networks and allegiances. Parallel structures can exist, for example governments alongside national religions, sometimes mutually supporting and sometimes undermining. Of

particular relevance to the military planner is an analysis of what happens when cultural structures are altered, for example elders killed, or institutions broken or strengthened.

Challenging Structures: *Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone*

Family structures in Sierra Leone are based on extended families with young people having great respect for their elders. The issue of child soldiers has challenged this whole idea. Not only have children been forced to commit atrocities in their own villages, making return incredibly difficult, but many child soldiers, some of whom had been placed in command of older soldiers, no longer see their elders in the same way. The self-confidence, independence and experiences of child soldiers have shaken the authority of elders and extended families, and their feelings toward the child. It is, therefore, not sufficient to generalise about traditional African views of family if, for example, developing an information strategy focussed on the reintegration of child soldiers.

209. **Identity.** Identity is an umbrella term used to describe how people perceive themselves and others. Significant identities are frequently national, religious, and ethnic. Other identities include those that relate to occupation, opinions or interests. Race refers to physical characteristics, but is outdated as a way of understanding how people interact. In the cultural context ethnicity is more important, as ethnic groups distinguish themselves through common cultural practices, language, history, ancestry and religion. However, each individual belongs to multiple and overlapping identity groups or subcultures, through birth, assimilation and achievement. The identities people choose to bring forward are context specific and influenced by an individual's psychological make-up. This choice of identity may provide an indication of an individual's sense of loyalty within a particular context. Establishing a common identity with an individual may present alternative options and opportunities. Similarly, identifying a common external threat is a frequent cause of group cohesion and inter-group alliances. Stereotype descriptions and images tend to reinforce preconceived views of identity, focusing on differences, inferiorities and potential threat, and often reinforcing unhelpful generalisations.

SECTION V – CULTURAL PRACTICES

210. **Behaviours, Customs and Rituals.** Behaviours are the actions of individuals and groups, and are the result of complex influences including beliefs, values, perceptions and what is thought to be in self-interest. An analysis of cultural beliefs and values can allow experts to predict the likely behaviour of an individual or group, in terms of the range of probable actions, based on an understanding of the relative strengths of the competing subcultures. A custom is a traditional or widely accepted behaviour that is specific to a particular culture, place or time. A ritual is a series of

actions performed according to a prescribed order to convey a cultural meaning. Commanders and staff should identify culturally significant events and dates, and anticipate the likely activities and reactions of significant cultural groups.

Custom of Celebratory Gunfire

The custom of celebratory gunfire is common in many countries throughout the world. In December 2007 an RAF Officer, waiting to cross the road in the Contingency Operating Base at Basra, was hit by a stray bullet from celebratory fire. In January and February 2008 alone, incidents caused by celebratory gunfire included a passenger jet being hit in Montenegro during orthodox Christmas celebrations, 23 injuries in Turkey following a football victory and a wedding guest killed in the United Arab Emirates. When celebratory gunfire occurs in areas of conflict, there is risk of mistaking the fire for a malicious act, the reaction to which has the potential to lead to tragic or escalating responses.

211. **Communication.** The primary means of human communication are the spoken (oral) and written word. However, particularly when conversing in or translating from another language, there are risks of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Non-verbal communication, including gestures and body language, can also convey meaning and intent, and provide clues about an individual's emotions, reactions and receptiveness. The combination of oral, written and non-verbal communication, is a powerful tool with many cultural overtones. Elements of communication influenced by culture include:

a. **Oral and Written.**

(1) **Language.** Sometimes who is using what language in what context, for instance the choice as to whether to speak or write in a local or other language, in itself conveys meaning.

(2) **Vocabulary.** The context within which particular vocabulary is used, for example formal vocabulary or certain phrases and words, can infer more meaning than a simple translation of the words.

(3) **Intonation.** The intonation or pitch, volume and speed with which speech is delivered can provide valuable clues as to meaning, sometimes even without understanding the language used. Additionally, fluent linguists may identify subtle meanings through the way a phrase is said, for example indicating truthfulness or otherwise through a sincere or sarcastic tone.

b. **Non-verbal.**

(1) **Body Language.** Body language, including facial expressions and gestures, whether used consciously or involuntarily, can provide indication of feelings and intent, however culturally different meanings may be attributed. For example, eye contact is considered polite in some cultures and contexts but impolite in others.

(2) **Personal Space.** The notion of personal space and toleration to physical contact is often different between cultures, although there may also be significant variations in attitudes between individuals.

(3) **Appearance.** Cultural statements can be made through appearance, for example implying power or status. While clothing is the most obvious form of sending cultural signals through appearance, personal effects and grooming can also be significant. For example, wearing sunglasses can deliberately create, or inadvertently impose, a barrier to communication.

(4) **Day-to-Day Actions and Etiquette.** There is cultural meaning in almost every aspect of day-to-day actions. Offering a cup of tea is rarely just about satisfying thirst. While cultural signals may be most apparent through formal etiquette, they can also be observed in all means of interaction, for example through factors such as employment, education, sport, literacy, diet, home ownership, and access to utilities and wages.

(5) **Silence.** Silence can be either a sign of respect or a source of tension depending on cultural norms and context. Some cultures are comfortable with silence, allowing time for deliberation or contemplation, while other cultures are intolerant of it.

SECTION VI – CULTURAL CONCEPTS

212. **Cultural Concepts.** Amongst academic and observed cultural concepts or notions, a number of particular relevance to the military in understanding and exploiting cultural differences include:

a. **Power Gradient.** Power gradient, sometimes referred to as power distance, is the perceived authority gap between a superior and a subordinate, and the importance of status. This is often manifest in a contrast between consultative versus autocratic management styles.

- b. **Uncertainty Avoidance.** Uncertainty avoidance is an individual's attitude to a perceived risk and the extent to which they avoid it. At the group level it is the culture's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity.
- c. **Attitudes to Time.** Attitudes to time, sometimes referred to as time orientation, determine whether a culture is focused on the past, present or future in making decisions. In managing expectations it is important to understand whether a culture is time-conscious and very precise about punctuality, or more casual about time, favouring long negotiations and slow deliberations.
- d. **Honour and Shame.** Some cultures attach considerable importance to tradition, ceremony, social rules, formality and rank. In these cultures respect is very important and related to the concepts of honour and shame. When honour is considered lost, the notion of shame or humiliation can be powerful. This can provoke feelings of intense resentment, resulting in lost opportunity for influence and can potentially lead to a desire for revenge that must be assuaged before dignity is restored. Admitting responsibility for something that went wrong can be shaming in itself and lead to loss of honour. People will spend time and effort to negotiate a form of words that saves face, the outward appearance of honour. When humiliation is felt on a national or regional scale, for example in the context of defeat and occupation, it can be cited as the motivation and justification for extreme behaviours.
- e. **Reciprocity.** Obligations to give, to receive and to reciprocate create social ties. What might seem to be an immoral practice in the UK, for example bribery or corruption, may to another culture be a legitimate, even morally expected, way of developing social relationships. In terms of the exchange of information, understanding where and from whom people get their information may help identify whom they trust and hence with whom they might cooperate.

Cultural Concepts in Practice: *Afghanistan*

Time Orientation

Afghan saying; 'You have the watches, we have the time'.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Afghan tribes will often wait to see which side, if any, looks to be a conclusive winner and will only then declare openly for that side, to best place their interests. For example, it was not unusual during the Soviet occupation for Pashtun tribes to hedge bets, sending a son to join the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan Army, essentially serving the Communist regime, another son or sons to join one or more of the various *mujahedeen* groups, another son to a *madrasah* in Pakistan and another to the West to study or work.

Honour and Face

In Afghanistan the transition to male adulthood (and respect) is marked by acquiring a wife, house and children – all of which require money. The effects of war have meant that in many cases the normal mechanisms for transition have broken down. For many young Afghan males the only way to make the money to acquire the symbols of adulthood, and hence maintain honour, is through the insurgency.

CHAPTER 3 – CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

‘When the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail’¹

SECTION I – UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT POSITIONS

301. **Cultural Relationships.** It is not enough to examine actors in isolation, as relationships are crucial and will vary with context and over time. Cultural differences and similarities will have an impact on relationships. For example, UK Government Departments, including the Ministry of Defence (MOD), share the same British culture but exhibit some differences in organisational culture, while British Armed Forces will share some military cultural aspects with armed forces from other countries.

302. **Self-Analysis.** Ethnocentrism is the evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating from one’s own culture. Individuals tend to have a deeply engrained ethnocentric belief, sometimes supported by cultural or religious narratives, that their own culture and way of life is superior. It is hard to recognise this trait in one’s self, therefore the risk of mirroring your culture on others is high. Cultural self-analysis requires an understanding of the influence of one’s own culture, in particular sub-conscious assumptions, perceptions and prejudices that may affect how an individual relates to people of other cultures.

Viewed by Yourself/Viewed by Others

Images of peacekeeping troops wearing United Nations (UN) blue berets patrolling conflict zones around the world are often unremarkable to us and seen as symbolic of well-meaning intervention. However, consider the impact had there been similar images of UN peacekeepers, say from an Asian or African nation, patrolling the streets and fields of Northern Ireland during *the Troubles*. Placing military intervention into our own context and experience can challenge our comfort zone, assumptions and interpretations.

When Mahatma Ghandi was asked what he thought of western civilization, he replied, ‘I think it would be a good idea’.

SECTION II – BRITISH AND WESTERN CULTURES

303. **British Culture.** The United Kingdom, just as any nation state, exhibits a strong national culture, but is also frequently described as multi-cultural. This multi-

¹ A Maslow, psychologist, 1908-1970, quoted in J Kiszley, ‘Post-Modern Challenges for Modern Warriors’, The Shrivvenham Papers, No 5, December 2007.

cultural label recognises the influence of the large immigrant population and more than 10 million British citizens who live and work overseas. Within the subculture of UK Government Departments there are significant organisational cultural differences, creating tensions over timescale horizons, attitudes to risk, and between the need to plan versus the need to retain room for negotiation and manoeuvre. Cultural and subcultural diversity, although potentially a source of friction, can bring the advantage of merging different perspectives and experiences for mutual advantage.

304. **British Armed Forces.** An understanding of our own organisational culture helps us to understand our professional perspective and how it may differ from, and be interpreted by, others. This self-understanding may help mitigate the danger of reproducing certain types of activity because it is simply what we expect to do.

a. **Doctrine.** Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-01 '*British Defence Doctrine*' outlines the characteristics and principles of British military culture. In doctrinal terms, moral cohesion explicitly depends on cultural solidarity, formed by shared experiences, a common sense of worth, appropriate discipline and an expressed collective identity, which is sustained by shared common values and standards.

b. **British Military Ethos.** Ethos is the characteristic spirit of a culture and British Military ethos attributes to itself the characteristics of courage, offensive spirit, loyalty, comradeship, determination, patriotism, duty, sacrifice, initiative, humanity, ingenuity and humour.² While such attributes tend to endure, to improve, organisational cultures need to constantly self-assess and adapt. For example, the application of Mission Command, while embodying the trust and decision-making culture which the British military actively seeks to cultivate, simultaneously challenges how far we are culturally comfortable with this delegation of command and risk.

c. **Offensive Spirit.** Offensive spirit is a significant part of military ethos, however controlling the warrior impulse and achieving the right balance in the right circumstances is one of the most important responsibilities of military commanders at any level. Within military culture, where the image of heroes is built around physical valour, there is a challenge to recognise and acknowledge the qualities of restraint, when appropriate, which may entail equally great courage and moral conviction.

d. **Jointery.** While 'Jointery' has greatly increased the interoperability of the front line commands, the single-Service cultural differences continue to create a demand for mutual understanding based on a more honest and open acknowledgement of respective strengths and weaknesses.

² JDP 0-01 '*British Defence Doctrine*' (3rd Edition).

e. **Legislation.** A cultural shift has been brought about through health and safety laws, equal opportunities and human rights legislation, reflecting trends in society as a whole. Such legislative and regulatory changes, societal tendency towards transparency, and the reality that Service personnel are more willing to question and challenge the organisation they work within, have reduced the ability of the Armed Forces to regulate itself within an autonomous professional space. The challenge is to ensure that society's expectations are balanced against the imperative of operational effectiveness.

305. **The UK Population's Perception of its Armed Forces.** An appreciation of how others perceive a culture, as well as how a culture perceives itself, is an important element of self-analysis. For example, as a subculture of British national culture, the British Armed Forces need to appreciate their place within society and the attitudes of the UK population towards it. Amongst the population, adjectives often attributed to the military not only include, professional and capable but also, authoritarian, hierarchical and secretive. Since the end of national service and a considerable reduction in size of the Armed Forces, there is far less direct and indirect contact between the general public and members of the Armed Forces. This and the greater contextual ambiguity of current missions, compared to the substantial and identifiable military threat during the Cold War, decreases knowledge amongst the populace and political decision makers of what the military does.

306. **Western Culture.** There is a widespread assumption within Western culture that the perceived wisdom inherent in its way of doing things has universal applicability and should be recognised and accepted, if not acclaimed. Many Westerners who sincerely believe that they are exporting a better way of life are at a genuine loss to understand why other cultures may not embrace their own cultural values, including democratic and economic systems. However, Western models of centralised governance or rule of law, for example, may simply not resonate or may be seen as a threat in cultures where governance or the law may be based on tribal, local or religious systems. It is therefore usually more appropriate, successful and sustainable to work with or adapt local practices, however imperfect they may appear to Western eyes, rather than force change.

SECTION III – NATIONAL ACTORS

307. **Host Nation Authorities and Forces.** In the context of a supported regime, the relationship between international interveners and the host nation authorities will be steeped in cultural sensitivities. Considerable effort may be required to ensure that appropriate national actors are seen to be in charge and making the decisions, to ensure that honour and status is maintained and enhanced within their communities. The development of culturally sensitive solutions to the underlying causes of conflict is crucial to facilitate a successful transition to full host nation authority following a period of capacity building. Mentors and trainers of indigenous forces should be

carefully selected and prepared to deal with the inevitable frustrations caused by cultural differences in attitudes to discipline, authority and the application of military power. Continuity of personnel is particularly important to allow relationships and empathy to form and cultural hurdles to be overcome.

308. **Local Populations.** There is danger in imagining that the local population in one area is like the local population in another, based on certain shared characteristics such as religion or language. It may also be relevant to consider what cultural groups extend beyond national borders, in the form of trans-national ethnic groups. A local population may also have a different frame of reference from our own. For example, a local populace may have experienced a generation of chaos and war resulting in military uniform itself being symbolic of past grievances and violence, regardless of who is wearing it and their mandate. Cultural nuances are complex and may require expert advice to decode. Subcultures within a population that may warrant particular attention include:

a. **Socially-marginalised Populations.** Socially-marginalised or disaffected elements of populations can create disproportionate impact if they turn to violence in response to perceived injustices. However, care is needed to avoid enforced restructuring of cultural hierarchies that could equally lead to conflict within the local population.

b. **Diaspora.** A diaspora is often the most readily accessible form of cultural insight at the pre-intervention stage of planning. However, individuals may have very personalised views of a situation, possibly coloured by the reason why they left their native country, and their viewpoint may either be frozen at the point of departure or have evolved from what has subsequently been gleaned at a distance. A diaspora may also include exiled leaders who may be at odds, or have lost influence, with the national population. To counter the risk of personal and cultural bias, a cross-section of views should be canvassed to gain the most balanced insight.

c. **Locally Employed Civilians.** Locally employed civilians are liable to be caught between their own culture and that of their employers. It is important to respect their culture, not only through common courtesy but also as they may be a powerful influence on the attitudes of the local populace from which they come. Where possible and operational security allowing, care should be taken to draw locally employed civilians from a cross-section of subcultures to avoid the appearance of partiality, while ensuring compliance with the applicable discrimination laws and policy. Locally employed civilians are a source of cultural knowledge themselves, although this must be seen in the context of their risk, aspirations and willingness to work with UK/coalition forces and how this may affect their attitudes and interpretations.

SECTION IV – OPPONENTS

309. **Opponents and Spoilers.** The more unconventional the opponent's methods, the more important it is to understand the underlying cultural dynamics and the opponent's relationship with the population. An opponent's ambitions and cultural assumptions may be unconstrained by either adherence to international law or (Western) accepted norms of morality. Just as we may look to exploit an opponent's cultural weaknesses, so to the opponent will aim to identify and exploit our own cultural weaknesses, not least our need to retain the perceived moral high ground through adherence to international law and ethical constraint.

Female Suicide Bombers

Cultural sensitivity has been exploited by some opponents who have used female suicide bombers, who may draw less suspicion and go through less rigorous searches, particularly in the absence of female searchers. For example, in Turkey the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has used female suicide bombers with explosives strapped to their abdomens to simulate pregnancy and avert suspicion. A balance is required between security needs and the repercussions should cultural taboos be breached.

SECTION V – OTHER NON-STATE ACTORS

310. **Alliances and Coalitions.** Welding together the elements of an alliance or coalition into an effective team, in addition to political acumen, patience and tact, requires cultural sensitivity. The effect of previous wars and operations on different nations' military cultures may be manifest in differing attitudes to risk and decision-making. Language and cultural differences may result in the incorrect interpretation of intent. It is also easy for native speakers to use their superior grasp of the language to confuse or patronise non-native speakers, even inadvertently. Individuals should consider their speed of delivery, choice of vocabulary, and use of potentially hard to translate metaphors or humour, when in multi-lingual environments. NATO provides good examples of the value of relationships over time, as organisational/cultural familiarity has done much to overcome language and cultural differences. However, individuals within even long-established organisations should continue to develop the necessary communications skills. It is not simply a matter of language; the US and UK armed forces share the same language but have differences in operating cultures, often revealed through a different use of vocabulary.

311. **International Organisations.** International organisations have organisational cultures unique to their membership and mandate, and individual members may have subtly different motivations for membership. While the effectiveness of international organisations may on occasion be diminished through the complexity and process of compromise, in order to accommodate all views, and be perceived to be unwieldy due

to the lengthy processes to achieve collective decisions, their power is in the unity of voice and implicit weight of international support.

312. **Civil Society.** The cultural divide between the British Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), often deemed to be particularly wide with Humanitarian NGOs, is a frequent topic of debate. The majority of Humanitarian NGOs are guided by the 4 core humanitarian principles (*humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality*), the ‘do no harm’ ethos, and the imperative of the dignity of the beneficiary. The concept of humanitarian space, ‘the access and freedom for humanitarian organisations to assess and meet humanitarian needs’,³ and the distinction between the role and function of civilian humanitarian actors and those with an official, commercial or political agenda, has often been seen an area of friction between Humanitarian NGOs and the military. However, while there are clear ideological and institutional differences, there are shared circumstances that can help to bridge the perceived cultural divide, including: motivation of service; desire to improve a situation; sense of adventure; acceptance of risk; and separation from family and friends. Vital to establishing a good working relationship, is a mutual understanding of the respective organisational cultures.

313. **The Commercial Sector.** Commercial companies, including private military and security companies, vary greatly in their agenda, capabilities, legal framework and ethos. However, an organisational cultural bond is that the commercial imperative is the driving force and the contract is effectively the mandate. With reference to private military and security companies, while the commercial aspect makes the organisational culture quite different from the military, there are similarities between some of the roles undertaken and the shared environment, reinforced by the number of ex-military personnel in their employ.

314. **Media.** Within the media there is a growing subculture where audience entertainment comes before accuracy, balance and independence in the reporting of news. This can result in reporting that is shallow and context free, and where images are key. This can be illustrated by the ‘if it bleeds, it leads’ attitude which places emphasis on visual, physical and exciting events, whilst neglecting important, but less engaging, issues such as negotiations and reconstruction. Additionally, the rise of the unmediated citizen journalist, with ready access to mobile phones, digital cameras, blogs and social network websites, can have a significant impact on a domestic audience’s perception of the military and the conduct of operations. Within current Western culture, war can be won or lost in the hearts and minds of our own population as well as the local population.

³ European Commission’s Directorate for Humanitarian Aid definition, quoted at www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Nov/guttieriNov05.asp

315. **Cultures of Interest.** The cultural dynamics of the growing trend in virtual networks and their influence is not yet clear; however, the increase in communities of interest and shared values, compared with communities of physical identity, is potentially significant. Ubiquitous media make ideas and beliefs easy to transmit to a wide audience. The nature of virtual communities increases the potential for underlying messages to be based on insubstantial facts and un-provable notions. Cultures of interest challenge the Westphalian model of sovereign states that is based on 2 principles: territoriality and the exclusion of external actors from domestic authority structures.

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CHAPTER 4 – MILITARY IMPLICATIONS

‘Geography, tribal structure, religion, social customs, language, appetites, standards were all at my finger-ends. The enemy I knew almost like my own side.’¹

SECTION I – MILITARY APPLICATION

401. **Historical Context.** In the days of the British Empire, the colonial countries had permanent British administrative bodies and garrisons, in effect *amongst the people*. Individual soldiers and diplomats often spent whole careers in a single country, frequently learning the language and closely connected to the locals, albeit in hierarchal terms. While it is debatable how successfully the cultural knowledge thus gained was applied, this level of immersion in a culture over time is rare within contemporary UK defence and diplomatic communities. With the loss of this resource, the situation is now reversed with some of our opponents having significant familiarity and understanding of the West, often having been educated there, and having read our doctrine and studied our culture.

From Cultural Immersion to Isolation: *The Indian Mutiny (1857)*

The causes of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 were varied and complex, however cultural misunderstanding is a theme that links many of the ingredients. Initially officers of the East India Company shared the same privations and dangers as their local soldiers, developing empathy and cultural understanding. However, over time mutual respect weakened as officers spent more time with other British officers and officials, the contact further diluting as officers’ families joined them. The dislocation of experience had a detrimental effect on language skills and cultural knowledge. This coincided with an increase in the East India Company’s interest in religious affairs, whilst new technologies were perceived as threatening traditional Indian social and economic systems. Arguably the trigger for the mutiny was the introduction of new cartridges, which had to be bitten open to speed up loading, that were rumoured to contain grease made from beef and pork fat. Indian soldiers, in the British employ, were horrified as cows were revered by Hindus and pigs considered unclean by Muslims. To Hindus and Muslims alike, their worst fears of being ritually humiliated had been confirmed, and many assumed that this had been a deliberate policy by the Europeans who were looking to impose their own religion and values on the sub-continent.

Apparently isolated issues may be linked to reinforce feelings of a lack of respect for a culture or even its oppression, leading to unforeseen and unintended consequences.

¹ T E Lawrence quoted in M McFate, ‘*Understanding Adversary Culture*’, Joint Force Quarterly, Issue 38, 2005.

402. **A Comprehensive Approach.** A Comprehensive Approach can benefit from different cultural perspectives contributing to the depth of analysis. However, the collective strength of a Comprehensive Approach can be time consuming to achieve, bringing into question whether it can be agile enough for dynamic environments. Familiarity with organisational/national cultures can contribute to the pre-emption and mitigation of potential obstructions and caveats, resulting in more rapid resolution of impasses and improved agility.

403. **Campaigning.** Culture is a key factor for Joint Action, enhancing the ability to influence the will, understanding and capability of actors. Cultural considerations may shape the balance of fires, influence activities and manoeuvre, as well as the specific means or activities selected. Commanders need to assess the impact of their actions on the will and understanding of all participants, not just the repercussions for the target individual or group. Culture should be considered throughout analysis, planning, execution and assessment.

404. **Campaign Authority.** The legitimacy within the campaign authority model² is based as much upon subjective considerations, often with strong cultural nuances, as it is upon objective legality. The populace's perception of the legitimacy of the intervening actors is particularly important during security and stabilisation where perceived impartiality could be a crucial factor. For example, the celebrations of one cultural group may be inflammatory to another, so if commanders and staff are invited to participate in cultural events they must carefully balance the risk of acceptance against the impact of declining the invitation.

SECTION II – FRAMING THE PROBLEM

405. **Analysis and Planning.**³ Analysis of different actors' involvement, relationships, beliefs, motives, perceptions, interests and desired outcomes is integral to understanding the operating environment (or framing the problem), and throughout campaign planning. For example, it is vital that staff identify the cultural ties and divisions between an opponent, or key influencer, and the population. The determination, evaluation and selection of courses of action should specifically include consideration of perceptions, behaviour patterns and likely actions and reactions of significant groups and individuals. The patterns of culture suggest a potential predictive value of particular relevance to military analysis and planning. However, while knowledge of culture is useful in identifying possible individual or group behaviour, it should not be seen as deterministic. The cultural factors derived from analysis, as well as the economic and political value of a particular target, contribute to understanding how a population could react to its destruction or protection. For example, the planning for a mission designed to capture a high value target individual

² Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-01 'British Defence Doctrine' (3rd Edition).

³ See JDP 5-00 'Campaign Planning' (2nd Edition), Chapter 1 *Analysis* and Chapter 2 *Planning*.

must also take into account unintended consequences, such as: the impact on the neighbourhood surrounding the objective; the shift in the local balance of power; and the effect should the target be killed or subsequently freed. Cultural analysis can help visualise potential secondary and tertiary effects, although these can never be predicted. Analysis of cultural factors should be tested against alternative viewpoints wherever possible. There will seldom be obvious distinctions between cultural and psychological, political, economic or religious factors. All sources, including diplomatic and intelligence reporting, should be used to aid the commander's determination of what influences and what is influenced by, culture.

406. **Cultural Analysis Template.** To aid the incorporation of cultural factors into the analysis and planning process, a cultural analysis template (at Annex 4A) is under development. This template aims to assist staff in identifying objectives, relationships, resources, means of unification and weaknesses of significant cultural groups. In addition to exploring group dynamics and relationships, significant cultural influences on key individuals may also be derived. Staff can apply the cultural analysis template to opponent, neutral or friendly cultural groupings. It can also be a tool to aid self-analysis of our own cultural groupings, to aid the identification and protection of our own vulnerabilities and provide insight into how others perceive us. The template should be used to identify the information required for further analysis using an appropriate methodology, such as a Centre of Gravity or Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis.⁴ Through the latter methodology, the cultural analysis contributes to the protection of strengths, minimising of weaknesses, exploitation of opportunities and mitigation of threats. An analysis of culture should assist the commander and staff in Step 1 of the estimate process, understanding the situation (framing the problem). The completion of a cultural analysis will require a fusion of information from all sources, including patrol observations, intelligence, subject matter experts and open source. Not all the information and means of interpretation will be available to staff in theatre and the cultural analysis template should aid and focus the formulation of requests for information. Due to the dynamic nature of groups, relationships and culture, the material will require frequent review and should become an iterative part of campaigning. Analysis of groups must not be carried out as if they are detached or isolated, as external relationships are often a way to exploit or protect weaknesses within a cultural group.

⁴ See JDP 5-00.

SECTION III – INTELLIGENCE AND INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

407. **Intelligence.** Intelligence underpins cultural capability. Basic intelligence, maintained as databases of reference material, is a source of background cultural material. This is updated with current intelligence that will include information on current leaders and opinion formers, and local modifications or adaptations within a culture. J2 have access to selected subject matter experts, either deployed or via reachout⁵ and can be tasked to generate geospatial products such as tribal or ethnicity mapping; although these are inevitably simplified and must therefore be used with care. J2 can specifically task Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance assets, particularly Human Intelligence (HUMINT), to collect information on specific aspects of culture. However, there may be a tension between the collection of HUMINT and the gathering of general cultural information, due to external actor's perception and potential suspicion of intelligence techniques and purposes. Therefore, where possible, commanders should engender an explicit distinction between the collection of cultural information and HUMINT, in order to maintain the access to, and the trust of, local populations and academia.

408. **Influence Activities.** Cultural capability helps to ensure that commanders and staff target influence activities with accuracy, while enhancing the communication and interpretation of intent. Culturally insensitive influence can generate significant barriers that may hinder or even prevent the efforts to deliver essential messages and therefore have the potential to undermine the information strategy.

a. **Information Operations.** Cultural capability is a vital enabler for information operations with particular relevance to psychological operations, deception and key leadership engagement. During these activities, and specifically target audience analysis, the choice of dissemination media should take into account cultural factors such as oral traditions, literacy rates and the means by which messages are traditionally passed to and from opinion formers, decision-makers and the target audience. The principle of empathy in psychological operations acknowledges the need for careful consideration of cultural factors, and psychological operations development should identify emotive and credible cultural themes and symbols. Successful key leadership engagement is built on a clear understanding of the cultural and religious factors that most influence leaders, opinion formers and any supporters or spoilers. Effective engagement requires not just the identification of notional leaders but also an understanding of their actual sphere of influence, within the context of time, place and culture. This informs an assessment of whether the individual or group is truly key to the process or negotiations. Effective engagement may be helped by appropriate inducements and should include consideration of those opponents who are potentially reconcilable.

⁵ Access to external expertise, information or functions. (JDP 2-00)

Information Operations

Taliban Matching of Dissemination Media to Target Audience

Taliban information operations use a variety of media, including a website in 5 languages, updated several times a day. However, for a largely illiterate, rural population in Afghanistan with an oral culture, methods of dissemination have included DVD, audio cassettes, traditional songs, poems and *shabnamah*.

Shabnamah, or night letters, are traditional means of communication in the form of pamphlets and leaflets delivered to individuals or spread throughout a village or area, which in addition to the message often contain threats.

b. **Media Operations.** Successful media operations require an understanding of how different cultures may perceive the same message. While messages must resonate with the people activities are seeking to influence, the complex global media does not restrict access to the target audience alone. Certain messages crafted for the domestic audience may not resonate with others who commanders seek to influence and vice versa. Therefore, widely distributed messages must be carefully balanced.

c. **Civil-Military Co-operation.** Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) practitioners should be well versed in the general cultural differences between military and civilian organisations, for example international organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), but there should be no assumption that CIMIC personnel necessarily have expertise in a specific local culture. However, when deployed, CIMIC practitioners will inevitably gain cultural insight through their interaction with civilian populations and organisations and may over time become a useful source of cultural information.

SECTION IV – PRACTICAL ISSUES

409. **Inter-Personal Skills.** Sound inter-personal skills are fundamental to the successful application of cultural knowledge. Cultural mistakes are more likely to be forgiven or overlooked if appropriate patience, respect, humility and dignity are practised. Negotiation, deterrence, mediation and reconciliation can be high risk, high gain activities and natural communicators with sound inter-personal skills, should be identified and these skills developed and exploited. Credibility will often be reliant on transparency and being seen to stick to one's word. One way to protect credibility is through tracking promises made and promises kept.

410. **Interface.** Certain individuals as a result of specific skills, normally language qualifications, are at the interface between international and local actors. Commanders should note that these individuals are not necessarily the people with

power in the culture and may simply be the spokesperson or communicator. These individuals will have their own cultural perspective, and personal motivations. They may be respected by a community or tarnished by the nature of their engagement and subject to intimidation or exploitation. The culture of the target audience should be considered when selecting the most appropriate personnel for duties or tasks involving the interface with local cultures. Social status, gender, age and ethnicity may be relevant to the audience however, UK discrimination law and MOD policy must be complied with. Moreover, the audience's choice of representative spokesperson may be a better option than the commander's selection.

411. **Interpreters.** Selecting interpreters from the same cultural background as the audience may ensure the best chance of their acceptance by that audience, and can increase their utility through interpreting cultural meaning of not just what is said but also gestures, mannerisms, and inconsistencies in dress, speech or behaviour. However, UK discrimination laws and MOD policy must again be complied with, and the impact of an individual's biases should be considered. In addition to cultural considerations for the selection of interpreters, there are cultural nuances to their use. In establishing a rapport with an interpreter, knowledge and sensitivity of their culture is important. In some cultures, interpreters may attempt to save face by concealing a lack of understanding, potentially resulting in confusion and impacting on the credibility of the speaker. Humour is often culturally specific and therefore does not translate well.

Choosing Liaison Officers and Interpreters: *The Balkans*

In the Balkans, during the 1990s, commanding officers would pick their liaison officers to local militias or dignitaries carefully. The liaison officers had to be effusive, charismatic and often have a capacity for alcoholic intake. The best information would emerge and the best relationships established, when all concerned were seen to be suitably inebriated. At such meetings, female interpreters were very helpful because, in the Slav culture, they were not expected to drink and therefore were able to make sober observations. While knowledge of local customs was important for liaison officers, sound inter-personal skills often overcame inadvertent *faux pas*. For information to flow freely the ambience had to be right and carefully selected individuals created much of that ambience.

412. **Gender Issues.** The respective roles and status of males and females in a culture will influence how individuals interact with male and female superiors, peers and subordinates. Marriage and childbearing often significantly change the status of women and hence the appropriate ways of interacting with them. Knowledge of, and sensitivity to, gender issues can enhance credibility. An example where gender issues may be relevant is the conduct of searches, both of individuals and of female living-quarters.

SECTION V – DATA COLLATION AND ASSESSMENT

413. **Collation of Cultural Observations, Data and Lessons.** While preparatory research and the engagement of subject matter experts is important in evolving cultural capability, many cultural clues can be gleaned from direct observation. Warfare Centres should develop standardised formats for cultural observations, with guidance for completion, for inclusion in patrol reports. A simple tool to aid the identification of culturally significant factors is offered below, at paragraph 414. However, the capture, analysis and promulgation of cultural data and lessons are particularly challenging due to the high level of contextual complexity, the subjective and interpretative nature of many observations, and limited shelf life of specifics. Nonetheless methods should be developed for the collation and sharing of relevant information, and the maintenance of corporate memory during roulements. The Defence Intelligence leadership assessment tool provides a mechanism for collecting structured assessments of individual's behaviour and the specific characteristics of interest to Defence Intelligence Human Factors. Although this tool is focused on the assessment of individuals, information gleaned will help build and update cultural knowledge within Defence Intelligence Staff.

Lessons to Learn

Case Study: Somalia – Unified Task Force 1992-93

During the international intervention in Somalia in 1992-93, the importance of the clan system was not well understood and the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) overlooked the fact that Somali clans viewed an attack against one clan, culturally, as an attack on all clans (similar to NATO's institutionalised Article 5 commitment). By targeting General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, a clan leader, UNITAF unwittingly provided a common purpose giving the clans a legitimate reason, in their eyes and the eyes of Somalis in general, to wage a war against the *outsiders*. American helicopters dropping leaflets couched in pigeon Somali over Mogadishu's primarily illiterate population, for some encapsulated the style of a Western intervention with a high dependence on technology but a low level of cultural understanding. The oral tradition and ready access to radios would have made broadcast a more suitable medium to convey messages to the populace.

US Marine Brigadier General Anthony Zinni observed in 1993: "What above all made Somalia a tough place to do business was the United State's lack of comprehension of its intricate and unfamiliar social and cultural fabric."

414. **Cultural Comparison.** Three simple questions,⁶ benchmarked by knowledge of one's own culture, can aid the rapid identification of culturally significant factors in the field. Although relatively crude, this method can be used as a first attempt to identify critical factors that may cause tension or misunderstanding, present opportunities for exploitation, or identify similarities for positive reinforcement. Although what is hidden, by definition, cannot be observed, as knowledge of a specific culture increases, an element of interpretation becomes possible. This framework can be used to assist the recording of observations to provide data for the cultural analysis template, which in turn should inform the estimate process (see paragraph 406):

- a. **What is Similar?** What is the common ground, or empathy, between one's own culture and that observed? Is something that initially looks similar actually different?
- b. **What is Different?** What seems strange or may be uncomfortable?
- c. **What is Hidden?** What seems to lie underneath – what are the fundamental beliefs?

415. **Assessment.** It is hard to measure the effectiveness of the cultural aspects of a campaign and in the case of psychological effects, the Measurement of Effect or Measurement of Activity may be largely subjective. However, Defence Intelligence Human Factors has developed a range of methodologies to aid the objective measurement of perceptions, including opinion polling and focus groups. Additionally, there are independent open source studies available, for the current main theatres of operation, which use quantitative and qualitative techniques and metrics.

⁶ Adapted from the '4 questions' in ABCA Publication No 360, Edition 1, *The Impact and Importance of Culture on the Conduct of Military Operations*, 10 January 2008.

ANNEX 4A – CULTURAL ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

4A1. This cultural analysis template (see paragraph 406)¹ is under development to aid the analysis of any cultural group (opponent, neutral or friendly), through:

- a. The identification and articulation of requests for information.
- b. The collation of data for further analysis using an appropriate methodology, for example a Centre of Gravity or Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- c. Contribution to Step 1 of the estimate process – understanding the situation.

4A2. **The basic information on cultural/social group comprises:**

- a. Group name/primary identity.
- b. Size of group and support base.
- c. Basic demographical information.
- d. Military disposition and threat, if relevant.
- e. Area of operation and/or influence.
- f. Identifiable cultural beliefs, symbols and taboos.
- g. ‘Does’ and ‘don’ts’ when interacting with members of the group.

Q1. What makes the group a group?

- How does the group describe its history and where it came from? What are the key formative events in the group’s history, and what is their importance?
- How does the group perceive current and past events?
- Do the group members share religious beliefs? If so, what are they? If not, what other beliefs do they share?
- What are the important rituals that the group uses?

¹ Derived from a combination of work: Professor A King’s (Exeter University) ‘*Cultural Estimate*’ draft, J Bastrup-Birk’s ‘*ARIA Group Tool*’ draft and Defence Intelligence Human Factors ‘*Generic Anthropological Assessment Template*’.

Q2. How is the group organised?

- What are the important relationships and does kinship play a role?
- Does class play a role?
- Does ethnicity play a role?
- Does tribalism play a role?

Q3. What motivates the group? Consider: political; resistance; economic gain; social change; service provision; and/or information provider.

- What are the key attitudes and motivations of individual members (e.g. same as group objective, power status, personal economic, social change, protection)?
- What are the principal means of achieving their objectives (e.g. political, non-violent social, violent)?
- How are their objectives expressed internally and externally?

Q4. What relationships are seen within the group and with people outside of the group?

- How does the group relate to those around it (how isolated or otherwise is it)?
- What is the group's support base?
- How often do people move into and out of the group? How long do people stay members of the group?
- What are the critical internal relationships within the group? What causes these relationship to become critical, and when?
- What are the critical external relationships to the group? (who is interacting with who?) What causes these relationships to become critical, and when?
- Who are the central players in the network and why?
- What is the nature of the group's relationship to the wider population and the state?
- How similar is the group to others around it and what values are shared/different to other groups?
- How do people become members of the group?
- Do people leave the group? If so, how and why?

Q5. What are the group's primary economic resources?

- How do they gain these resources?
- Who if anyone does the group rely on to gain resources?
- What capabilities do these resources give to the group?

Q6. What forms does power and political organisation take in the group?

- What political influence does the group have?
- How is power achieved and maintained in a group?
- Does the group have leaders and if so how are they determined?
- What are the roles and characteristics of the leaders?
- What is the leadership style (e.g. directive, consensus-driven, laissez-faire)?
- Who are the key opinion formers and gatekeepers for information?
- How is information disseminated within the group?
- How is status determined?

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CHAPTER 5 – STRENGTHENING CULTURAL CAPABILITY

‘Rectification of the UK’s lack of cultural understanding will require a shift away from technological solutions back to cultural investment’¹

SECTION I – EDUCATION AND TRAINING

501. **The Requirement for Cultural Education and Training.**² The investment of significant effort in understanding another culture is a pre-requisite for gaining the best outcome in any situation, enhancing the ability to relate, communicate, collaborate, influence and negotiate across culture. Education and training are essential elements for creating the requisite knowledge of others *with whom, amongst whom and against whom* we operate. Education and training help reduce an individual’s shock on exposure to a new culture, and can partially mitigate the loss of corporate knowledge resulting from comparatively short tour lengths, ensuring that an acceptable level of cultural capability is reached more quickly on deployment and then maintained. Education and training should also provide commanders and staff with the means to identify and analyse cultural factors, the skills required to influence perceptions and behaviours, and the knowledge of what subject matter expert support is available. A basic cultural awareness³ can enhance the capacity of every soldier to be an effective sensor within what some have called the *human and social terrain*. This should also improve the probability that individuals will take appropriate action in a given context.

502. **Culture-Generic Education.** Culture-generic education should introduce the general themes of culture and the significance of cultural capability for British Armed Forces and can be viewed as an extension to equality and diversity education. Inculcated from the earliest opportunity⁴ and developed throughout in-Service education, the aim should be to equip individuals with the underlying principles, characteristics, components and universal dynamics that in varying combinations govern all cultures. The generic approach enables individuals to learn how to learn from subsequent specific cultural experiences.

503. **Culture-Specific Training.** Culture-specific training should take the generic aspects of culture and apply them to a specific theatre of operations, normally through pre-deployment training. Training should cover an in depth analysis of the culture and its importance to the success of the operation. Although previous experience of a

¹ Operational Experience Group report, 30 September 2008: Maj Gen J D Page OBE, page A-1.

² Subject to Defence Centre for Training Support (DCTS) Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

³ See Annex 5A, ‘Levels of Cultural Capability’.

⁴ The Army Adaptive Foundation or single-Service equivalent.

specific culture is liable to be extremely valuable, it does not always transfer directly to a different place in the same theatre, or even the same place but at a different time.

504. **Levels of Cultural Capability.** The *Defence Language and Cultural Awareness Training Policy*,⁵ currently defines 4 levels of training based on rank and command responsibility. However, in current operations, greater interaction between members of British Armed Forces and local officials, opinion formers, forces and populations is occurring at rank levels well below those previously envisaged. Therefore, a task-specific, as opposed to a rank/command-specific, structure for the targeting of appropriate levels of culture-generic education and culture-specific training is required. The levels of cultural capability⁶ (awareness, understanding and competence) and target audiences are summarised at Annex 5A.

505. **Academic Input.** Academia is a valuable source of expertise, including social scientists, religious and regional experts. There are however, potential tensions between the military and some academics. The origins are found in collaborations in the 1960s, where many social scientists, particularly anthropologists, perceived the subversion of academic research for political and military ends, in ways that could potentially harm those that they study. The relationship between the military and academia should therefore not be taken for granted. Transparency should be the basis of a sound working relationship, particularly where information from academics may be directly used for potentially sensitive purposes, such as targeting or interrogation. The Defence Academy is developing a Cultural Institute, under the lead of the Advanced Research and Assessment Group. The Cultural Institute's principal activities will be open-source analysis and curriculum development, and it will bring together professionals from a wide range of backgrounds.

SECTION II – SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

506. **Reachout.** The Human Factors branch within the Defence Intelligence Staff, applies social science to all-source intelligence analysis and is the natural point of contact for request for information of a cultural nature. It can provide support to operations either directly or via the Operational Intelligence Support Group, and can draw on a range of sources, including the Defence Academy's Cultural Institute. Support includes Cultural Appreciation booklets,⁷ pre-deployment briefings and a range of political, military, socio-cultural and psychological assessments. The Human Geographical Intelligence (GEOINT) Analysis Branch produces mapping products including those depicting distributions of tribal, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. GEOINT products can be useful for analysis and planning, but inevitably represent a

⁵ See Defence Instructions and Notices (DIN) 2008DIN07-075. Current rank/command based levels: Top, High, Middle and Low.

⁶ Levels as described in 'Army Culture and Language Capability' paper, endorsed by the Committee of the Army Board, December 2008.

⁷ Currently available: 'The Arab World', 'Iraq' and 'Afghanistan'.

generalised and simplified illustration of reality, and should be used with care. Furthermore, one of the key challenges in producing cultural mapping is validating patterns often based on historical sources with current data, which is frequently hard to collect.

507. **Areas for Development.** To enhance interoperability with the US, and to inform the development of cultural capability within the British Armed Forces, a summary of some of the major US cultural initiatives is at Annex 5B. Areas for further consideration and development include:

- a. **Cultural Advisers.** Consideration is being given to the development of a permanent cadre of cultural advisers, to deploy as staff advisors in all operational formation headquarters.⁸
- b. **Red Teaming.**⁹ Red Teaming provides ‘adversary, neutral, cultural and contextual perspectives in order to challenge the perceived norms and outputs of analysis, planning, execution and assessment’. Cultural experts should be included to contribute to the red viewpoint, aiding the identification of cultural risks and opportunities.
- c. **Information Management.** There are initiatives to enhance the management of cultural information, including a collaborative project between the UK and US. However, even with improved information collation and sharing mechanisms, there remains limited provision for expert interpretation to exploit it.
- d. **Pool of Regional Expertise.** Through assigning senior NCOs and officers an approved specialist country/region, during initial training and by continuing this focus throughout their professional development, a pool of knowledge could be developed and maintained for almost any country with which engagement or future operations can be envisaged. This has the potential benefit of growing a valuable resource from relatively low investment, sustained and enhanced through motivating individuals to further their own study and experience for themselves. A database¹⁰ of cultural exposure, including overseas postings and out of service experiences, could identify individuals with relevant cultural insight. This could be of particular value for rapid and unforeseen deployments, for example non-combatant evacuation operations or disaster relief operations.

⁸ Recommendation within ‘*Army Culture and Language Capability*’ paper, endorsed by the Executive Committee for the Army Board, December 2008.

⁹ See JDP 5-00 ‘*Campaign Planning*’ (2nd Edition), (paragraph 123 and Annex 2I).

¹⁰ Perhaps modelled on the existing Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) language database.

e. **Technological Support Tools.** There are a number of existing commercial technological tools to aid cultural training and support to operations. Some are computer based scenario trainers utilising commercial gaming techniques to facilitate individual learning. Others use hand-held technology to provide soldiers, who do not have interpreter support, with language assistance, but these have limitations and are being kept under review.

SECTION III – NEXT STEPS

508. **Incorporation in Doctrine.** This Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) should provide the basis for cultural education and training initiatives. Where relevant the principles of cultural capability will be incorporated in the development of future doctrine, notably Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 3-40 '*Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*'.¹¹ Readers are invited to comment on this JDN, and particularly on the cultural analysis template (Annex 4A) to aid its development, by 31 March 2009.¹² Single-Service Warfare Centres should now use this guidance, in parallel with ongoing work at the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) to develop and publish environmental tactical doctrine and operating procedures.

¹¹ Working title, January 2009.

¹² Desk officer point of contact: SO1 Joint Air Combat Support – see page ii for DCDC contact details.

ANNEX 5A - LEVELS OF CULTURAL CAPABILITY¹

Level	Definition	Target Audience
Cultural Awareness	Basic knowledge of cultural issues, the comprehension of their importance and impact, and the ability to apply this knowledge, skill and attitude to predictable scenarios to create desired effect.	All personnel.
Cultural Understanding	Intermediate knowledge of cultural issues, the comprehension of their importance and impact, the ability to apply this knowledge, skill and attitude to unpredictable scenarios and contribute to analysis of the effect.	<p>Personnel with duties specifically dealing with the local population, authorities or media, for example Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) personnel, Military Security and Stabilisation Teams (MSSTs) and those conducting Key Leadership Engagement.</p> <p>Personnel in Military Capacity Building embedded training teams.²</p> <p>Personnel planning and directing influence activity and selected intelligence personnel.</p> <p>Personnel operating at the higher level of command engaged at political interface, liaison to other government departments and national authorities.</p>

¹ Levels as described in 'Army Culture and Language Capability' paper, endorsed by the Committee of the Army Board, December 2008. Target audience column developed for this Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) for illustration. For further staffing and development by single Services in consultation with the Defence Cultural Capability Working Group.

² Sometimes referred to as Military Transition Teams (MiTT) and Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT).

Cultural Competence	Advanced knowledge of cultural issues, the comprehension of their importance and impact, the ability to apply this knowledge, skill and attitude to unpredictable scenarios, and analyse and evaluate the effect in order to synthesise this evaluation to create new improved effect.	Personnel acting as cultural advisors to commanders and staff.
Bespoke	As required.	Senior commanders and Defence Attachés.

ANNEX 5B – US INITIATIVES¹

The Human Terrain System

5B1. The Human Terrain System² is specifically designed to address cultural awareness shortcomings at the operational and tactical levels by providing commanders with an organic capability to help understand and deal with *human terrain* (the social, ethnographic, cultural, economic and political elements of the people among whom a force is operating).

5B2. **Human Terrain Teams.** Human Terrain Teams are 5-9 man teams, with both military personnel and civilian specialists, embedded in forward deployed brigade or regimental staff to provide an organic capability to gather, analyse and interpret relevant cultural data. Each Human Terrain Team include a leader, cultural analyst, regional studies analyst, human terrain research manager and a human terrain analyst.

5B3. **Human Terrain Analysis Teams.** Human Terrain Analysis Teams are similar in composition and function to Human Terrain Teams, but provide support at the divisional level.

5B4. **Reachback.** The Human Terrain System has connectivity to a reachback centre in the US, and via this centre access to a Subject Matter Expert Network (SMENet) and a database to capture the institutional memory. Personnel from the reachback centre periodically rotate into theatre to serve as Human Terrain Team members. Other US Government agencies also have access to the central database.

5B5. **Map-HT Toolkit.** The *Map-HT Toolkit* is used to assist with research and analysis and maintaining the human terrain database. The database includes a repository of information concerning local populations, social groups, interests, beliefs, motivating factors, leaders etc.

5B6. **Programme Development Team.** The Programme Development Team is a permanently established team to allow for an iterative review and improvement of the Human Terrain System, reacting to lessons identified about the system itself.

Foreign and Regional Area Officers

5B7. The Foreign Area Officer functional area, within the US Army and US Marine Corp (USMC), is designed to provide officers with opportunities to develop skills required for conducting and analysing military activities that have economic, social, cultural, psychological, or political impact. Foreign Area Officers combine regional expertise, cultural awareness, language competency, political-military awareness and

¹ This is a sample of the initiatives ongoing in the US, selected as there are elements of potential interest in the UK context.

² <http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil>

professional military skills to advance US interests. A key of the Foreign Area Officer function is to provide a cross-cultural linkage between and among foreign and US political and military organisations.

5B8. The Foreign Area Officer system divides the world into 9 regional areas of concentration. Foreign Area Officer training takes 3 years, including language training, graduate level study, and 12-18 months of in-country training in one of the 9 regional areas, which is designed to immerse the Foreign Area Officer in a foreign cultural and linguistic environment.

5B9. Additionally, the USMC has developed a Regional Area Officer programme. The Regional Area Officer training is more operationally focused and takes 18 months.

Lifelong Learning

5B10. US Army and USMC senior NCOs and officers are required, throughout their careers, to study the culture, religion and language of a selected country,³ to grow knowledge which they can then share with their colleagues.

5B11. A US Air Force language programme is under development currently targeting 4 strategic languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French and Spanish.

³ Currently there is a list of 17 regions of future interest and 10 targeted languages from which to choose.

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