

Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Multinational Interoperability in Peace and Stability Operations



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Introduction

This edition of the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute's Semi-Annual Lesson Report explores the challenges and complexities of Multinational Interoperability in the conduct of peace operations and stability activities. An April 2020 RAND Corporation report asserted "interoperability" can be "a buzzword" in military vernacular to denote a problem needing a solution.¹ While that may be true in many respects, the US Army Regulation (AR) 34-1² "interoperability" definition is used here:

...interoperability is the ability to act together coherently, effectively, and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational, and strategic objectives...[and]...Interoperability activities are any initiative, forum, agreement, or operation that improves the Army's ability to operate effectively and efficiently as a component of the Joint Force, within an inter-organizational environment, and as a member or leader of an alliance or coalition across the range of military operations (ROMO).³

Joint Publication 3-16's "interoperability" discussion furthers the US Army's definition as it relates to multinational operations. It states, in part:

Although frequently identified with technology, important areas of interoperability may include doctrine, procedures, communications, and training...Additional factors include planning for interoperability and sharing information, the personalities of the commander and staff, visits to assess multinational capabilities, a command atmosphere permitting positive criticism and rewarding the sharing of information, liaison teams, multinational training exercises, and a constant effort to eliminate sources of confusion and misunderstanding.⁴

However, it is the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Publication 20-12, *Commander and Staff Guide to Multinational Interoperability*, that provides the structure for this report. The guide suggests a "framework" for multinational interoperability that includes "...procedural (e.g., doctrine and procedures), human (e.g., language and training, Mission Partner Coordination Center [MPCC]), and technical (e.g., hardware and systems)."⁵ Therefore, this report shares these selected lessons in the same three aspects: procedural, human, and technical. However, the focus of this effort is on the human and procedural aspects of multinational interoperability in peace operations and stability activities, as the technical aspect—for example, the ability, or inability, for equipment to work together—is often observed and remarked.

Of course, none of these three aspects is independent of the other. Certainly, human interoperability "gaps" are often managed through technical means, and the proper use of

¹ Christopher G. Perrin, et al. *Chasing Multinational Interoperability: Benefits, Objectives, and Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 8, 2020), x-xi, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3068.html (accessed July 10, 2020).

²In the AR 34-1, the US Army tasks PKSOI to enhance multinational interoperability by: (1) Serving as the U.S. Army HOD for NATO Training and Education for Peace Support Operations Task Group to promote interoperability through the standardization of manuals, standard operating procedures and partner nation training center courses; and (2) Serving as the NATO Partnership Training and Education Center in accordance with NATO Action Sheet PO (2016) 0179-AS1 to support partner nations in developing their own defense education and training capacities that enhance interoperability.

³ US Department of the Army, *Interoperability*, Army Regulation 34-1 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, May 9, 2020), 1.

⁴ US Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Multinational Operations*, Joint Publication 3-16 (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 1, 2019), I-10-11.

⁵ Combined Arms Center. *Commander and Staff Guide to Multinational Interoperability*, Publication 20-12 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, March 25, 2020), 17.

technical means is usually conveyed in a procedural manner. This report's final lesson, [Digital Divide Impact on Peace and Stability Operations Interoperability](#), illustrates this point.

Each of the lessons shared here are also found in the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) database, identified by the hyperlink under each lesson title. JLLIS access is at <https://www.jllis.mil> and requires a Department of Defense Common Access Card (CAC) for registration.

Multinational Interoperability: The Procedural

Peace and Stability Operations as Multinational Interoperability-Enhancing

JLLIS ID# 223245

Observation: A recent RAND report suggests there are three broad interoperability objectives that may justify US Army expenditures of monies, time, and effort towards multinational interoperability: shape the strategic environment, increase multinational capabilities, and reduce resource demands.⁶ Given these objectives, peace and stability operations' planning conferences, exercises, and actual missions are "interoperability-enhancing"⁷ and are worthy of the US Army investment in monies, time, and effort.

Discussion: The April 2020 RAND report titled "Chasing Multinational Interoperability: Benefits, Objectives, and Strategies" outlines challenges to achieving multinational interoperability, which includes these observations:

- it is often not clear, or at least not easily described, how much interoperability is needed, with which partners, and for what reasons⁸....
- it is unclear what steps are necessary for two countries to be interoperable⁹....
- interoperability is an investment that competes for the interest of leadership and financial resources with other priorities and capabilities.¹⁰....[and]
- the benefits of interoperability relative to its costs and risks are often not well understood.¹¹

The report attempts an "interoperability" definition. The authors point out that in their literature review, occasionally the definition focuses on technical and equipment interoperability, yet at other times it takes "a broader, more operational, and strategic flavor" of units or nations working together for a mission.¹² Due to its comprehensiveness, the authors favor a definition found in early versions of Joint Publication 1-02, DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 2000:

The ability of systems, units, or forces to provide services to and accept services from other systems, units, or forces and to use the services so exchanged to enable them to operate effectively together.¹³

⁶ Christopher G. Perrin, et al. *Chasing Multinational Interoperability: Benefits, Objectives, and Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 8, 2020), x-xi, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3068.html (accessed July 10, 2020).

⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 5-6.

¹³ Ibid., 6. According to the authors, this definition is found in JP 1-02 previous versions, including the one available from 1994 through January 2000.

Among the benefits of multinational interoperability, the authors highlight “Interoperability Can Reduce Resource Demands”—assuming the US Army’s resource demands but the idea is applicable across the Department of Defense. They describe “burden-sharing” with partners and allies as one means to reduce resource demands and provide examples, such as “In South America and Africa, much of the training the U.S. Army provides builds partners’ capacity to participate in multinational peacekeeping operations—tasks that the U.S. Army might undertake if capable partners did not exist.”¹⁴ In further discussion, they share:

U.S. Army forces have repeatedly worked with ground forces in El Salvador and Brazil to improve training, professionalism, and effectiveness. Such activities have paid dividends, given that forces from both countries deployed to Africa as part of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions, thus potentially undertaking the burden of maintaining international peace instead of U.S. forces needing to perform that duty.... Similarly, US Army forces operating with key partners in the Lake Chad Basin in north-central Africa developed a low-cost training program to develop partner countries’ counter-improvised explosive device capabilities, centered around developing shared processes and training to U.S. and international standards of effectiveness. Capacity-building activities not only improve the capabilities of those partners for their own missions but also can provide future U.S. and UN coalitions with more potential participants who can bring specialized capabilities. Again, those partner forces serve to reduce demands on U.S. military forces operating abroad by enhancing US-based capabilities in specific missions with partner-specific capabilities..¹⁵

In the 2019 RAND Corporation report, “Targeted Interoperability: A New Imperative for Multinational Operations,” the authors also point out: “building interoperability” includes activities that “...aid in increasing knowledge of cultural affinities, building individual and group relationship, and overcoming or at least identifying procedural or technical differences.”¹⁶ Therefore, they highlight peace operations such as those conducted as part of the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) as one type of US Army security cooperation activities contributing to multinational interoperability..¹⁷ The April 2020 RAND Corporation report, “Chasing Multinational Interoperability: Benefits, Objectives, and Strategies,” also describes “multinational operations”—such as peace or stability operations—as “Interoperability-Enhancing.”¹⁸

Recommendation(s): There are several recommendations to consider, shared and unique, from both the 2019 and 2020 RAND reports regarding multinational interoperability. Specific to this lesson, the 2019 report suggests: “practical activities that promote cohesion and understanding between military staff (staff exchanges) and military units of different nations (unit-to-unit type) are of the highest relevance for building interoperability.”¹⁹ It also recommends “...maximizing opportunities for soldiers to experience working with foreign partners, and overcoming the challenges inherent in multinational operations.”²⁰ Existing and future peace and stability operations’ planning and execution provide exactly these opportunities described in these reports.

¹⁴ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁵ Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁶ Christopher G. Perrin, et al. *Targeted Interoperability: A New Imperative for Multinational Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), xv, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2075.html (accessed July 11, 2020).

¹⁷ Ibid., Table E.1, 164.

¹⁸ Christopher G. Perrin, et al. *Chasing Multinational Interoperability: Benefits, Objectives, and Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 8, 2020), 43, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3068.html (accessed July 10, 2020).

¹⁹ Christopher G. Perrin, et al. *Targeted Interoperability: A New Imperative for Multinational Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), 101, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2075.html (accessed July 11, 2020).

²⁰ Ibid., 105.

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Rule of Law as a Framework for United Nations (UN) Interoperability

JLLIS ID# 224938

Observation: In a 2018 paper titled "Rule of Law and United Nations Interoperability," the authors, Geoff Gilbert, Professor of International Human Rights & Humanitarian Law, University of Essex, and Anna Magdalena Rüsçh of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), argue the Rule of Law framework facilitates UN operational interoperability by defining Rule of Law for member-states and its operations. They conclude:

As such, rule of law provides a framework for interoperability within the UN that is essential if all those rights and needs are to be fulfilled and satisfied by the State and by the UN. However, with that usefulness of the approach must come the obligation for the UN to accept accountability to individuals of concern.²¹

Discussion: As part of the discussion, the authors review the differing Rule of Law philosophies and describe "how the rule of law might facilitate UN interoperability, that is, how the UN's various agencies can utilize the principle, as it is understood within the organization, so as to promote an integrated response."²² They emphasize the "rule of law for international organizations is not solely self-determined" and "both the common law rule of law tradition and modern *Rechtsstaat* are core to rule of law in the UN."²³ Therefore, the authors contend "All references to 'rule of law' (in the UN)...should be understood to comprise both these meanings unless otherwise stated..."²⁴

The authors also describe the meaning of 'interoperability' in the UN:

At one level, it is about sharing resources on the ground. Under 'Delivering as One', the UN as a whole aimed to provide a coherent and co-ordinated [sic] response to crises, so interoperability was central to this plan. Under rule of law, the broader idea of co-operating [sic] with States and enhancing their capacity is core, as well as UN actors working together....²⁵

The authors also charge the "...lack of a viable mechanism for establishing the accountability of the UN undermines rule of law,"²⁶ but then acknowledge:

...the criticism may not always be wholly deserved (as) The UN operates through its Member States and the resources put at its disposal - sometimes those resources, such as troops for a peacekeeping operation, also answer to their (respective) capital..²⁷

²¹ Geoff Gilbert and Anna Magdalena Rüsçh. *Rule of Law and United Nations Interoperability* (Essex, Great Britain: University of Essex, July 11, 2018) <https://academic.oup.com/ijrl/article-abstract/30/1/31/5051999?redirectedFrom=fulltext> (accessed 5 September 2020).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. The authors use the Haiti cholera outbreak as an example of the "shadow still hanging over the internal operationalization of rule of law in the UN" as the "UN acknowledged its responsibility in 2016 but still asserted its immunity, without establishing an Internal mechanism to provide a remedy to victims."

²⁷ Ibid.

Recommendation(s): In conclusion, the authors note:

It bears reiteration that the UN is not one monolithic entity that marches to the beat of a single drum. Hence, (Rule of Law) interoperability within the UN could form the basis for successful operationalization.²⁸

In other words, given the reality of various cultural and political paradigms among member-states, a clear understanding of UN's definition of "rule of law"-which is a foundation for much of the UN's activities-enhances those same operations.

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Department of Defense's (DoD) Women, Peace, and Security Framework Implementation Enhances Interoperability²⁹

[JLLIS ID# 223613](#)

Observation: The Department of Defense's June 2020 "Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan" (SFIP)³⁰ will enhance multinational interoperability as it reflects and supports the policies and programs of other federal departments and agencies—Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—as well as policies and programs of partner nations. As of August 2020, there are 84 UN Member nations and 11 regional organizations with National Action Plans (NAPs) supporting WPS.³¹

Discussion: As the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, reminds us: "The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is relatively new on the global policy landscape, but women have always engaged in war and peace."³² Throughout the first few decades of the United Nations (UN), several commissions, conferences, and declarations focused on women as part of both conflict and conflict-resolution, but it was not until 2000 that the landmark Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) passed as the first Women, Peace and Security resolution.³³ UNSCR1325 consists of four main tenets:

- 1) The role of women in conflict prevention,
- 2) Their participation in peacebuilding,
- 3) The protection of their rights during and after conflict, and
- 4) Their specific needs during repatriation, resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.³⁴

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Related JLLIS lessons: 195528, 195611, 195666, 214682, 214702, 214745, 215459 (among others).

³⁰ Department of Defense, "Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan," June 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2217438/dod-unveils-women-peace-security-strategy/> (accessed 5 July 2020).

³¹ Website, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, <https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states> (accessed 10 July 2020).

³² Women's International League of Peace and Freedom. United Nations Office, Website, <https://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/background> (accessed July 10, 2020).

³³ Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), United Nations, Website, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/> (accessed July 28, 2020).

³⁴ United Nations, Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, website, <https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security> (accessed July 28, 2020).

In two decades since UNSCR1325, the UN passed another 8 Resolutions as well as released other related documents.³⁵ In addition to nation-specific policies and plans (National Action Plans, or NAPs), many other international/regional organizations published documentation and/or established programs in support of the WPS agenda. As an example, the African Union's founding document, the African Union Constitutive Act of 2002, preserved the principle of gender equality in decision-making processes, followed by "The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)" in July 2004.³⁶ ³⁷ The African Union has since developed frameworks to monitor its implementation plan, with the most recent published in 2019 and covering the decade from 2018 to 2028.³⁸ In another example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) published its first WPS policy statement in December 2007 and its first Action Plan in 2010.³⁹

The United States did not publish its first NAP on Women, Peace, and Security, until 2011 with Executive Order 13595.⁴⁰ Since then:

On October 6, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-68), making this the first legislation of its kind globally. In June 2019, the US Government released the *United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS Strategy)*, making the United States the first country in the world with both a comprehensive law and whole-of-government strategy on WPS.⁴¹

The US' *WPS Strategy*, highlights four Lines of Effort (LOEs), which reflect the UNSCR1325 tenets: (1) seek and support the preparation and meaningful participation⁴² of women around the world in decision-making processes related to conflict and crises; (2) promote the protection of women and girls' human rights; access to humanitarian assistance; and safety from violence, abuse, and exploitation around the world; (3) adjust US international programs to improve outcomes in equality for, and the empowerment of, women; and (4) encourage partner

³⁵ Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, website, <http://www.peace-women.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions> (accessed July 10, 2020) and Security Council Report, website, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/women-peace-and-security/> (accessed July 28, 2020).

³⁶ African Union, Documents, *Continental Results Framework: Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda In Africa (2018 – 2028)*, website, 1, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_result_framework_on_wps_agenda_in_africa.pdf (accessed July 15, 2020).

³⁷ African Union, *Abridged Eleventh Report of the African Union Member States and Twelfth Report of the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson on the Implementation of the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)*, website, https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33442-wd-abridged_11th_report_of_the_au_member_states_and_the_12th_report_of_the_auc_chairperson_on_the_implementation_of_the_sdgea.pdf (accessed July 15, 2020).

³⁸ African Union, Documents, *Continental Results Framework: Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda In Africa (2018 – 2028)*, website, 1, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_result_framework_on_wps_agenda_in_africa.pdf (accessed July 15, 2020).

³⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Topics, Women Peace and Security*, website, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm (accessed July 20, 2020). Since 2014, NATO/EAPC reviews the Action Plan biannually. The current version is from 2018. (See https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_09/180920-WPS-Action-Plan-2018.pdf.)

⁴⁰ The 2011 US National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security was revised in 2016, and was superseded by the June 2019 US Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security. Executive Order 13595 requires the executive branch of the United States to have a National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. The June 2019 US Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security satisfies the Executive Order 13595 requirement. (See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WPS-Strategy-FINAL-PDF-6.11.19.pdf>.)

⁴¹ US Department of Defense, *Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, June 2020), 7-8, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2217438/dod-unveils-women-peace-security-strategy/> (accessed July 5, 2020).

⁴² Defined as both critical mass and decision-making power throughout an organization's structure.

governments to adopt policies, plans, and capacity to improve the meaningful participation of women in processes connected to peace and security and decision-making institutions.⁴³

In accordance with the WPS Act, DoD serves “as a relevant Federal department responsible for implementing WPS.”⁴⁴ The June 2020 SFIP provides the details for the law’s implementation and defines the DoD’s objectives towards the four WPS LOEs. These are:

Defense Objective 1. The Department of Defense exemplifies a diverse organization that allows for women’s meaningful participation across the development, management, and employment of the Joint Force.

Defense Objective 2. Women in partner nations meaningfully participate and serve at all ranks and in all occupations in defense and security sectors.

Defense Objective 3. Partner nation defense and security sectors ensure women and girls are safe and secure and that their human rights are protected, especially during conflict and crisis.⁴⁵

Recommendation(s): The SFIP intends to align DoD’s implementation of the *WPS Strategy* within the *National Security Strategy (NSS)* and the *National Defense Strategy (NDS)*. It is augmented by the plans from three other U.S. departments and agencies—State⁴⁶, Homeland Security⁴⁷, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)⁴⁸ and reflects the tenets of the UNSCR1325 and similar policies, plans, and programs from partner organizations and other nations, “thereby increasing interoperability and better preparing forces to face the complex challenges of the modern battlefield.”⁴⁹

Following the release of the 2020 Inter-Agency implementation plans, the U.S. Congress formed a bipartisan WPS caucus, led by Representative Lois Frankel (D-FLA) and Representative Michael Waltz (R-FLA). “The bipartisan caucus is open to all members of Congress dedicated to fully implementing the Women, Peace, and Security Act (P.L. 115-68) and the White House’s National Strategy on Women, Peace and Security. The caucus is widely supported by peace-promoting groups around the world.”⁵⁰

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⁴³ United States, *Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security* (Washington, DC: The White House, June 2019), 5-12, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WPS-Strategy-FINAL-PDF-6.11.19.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2020).

⁴⁴ US Department of Defense, *Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, June 2020), 7, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2217438/dod-unveils-women-peace-security-strategy/> (accessed July 5, 2020).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Department of State, “Plan to Implement the U.S. Strategy on WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY 2020 — 2023,” June 2020, <https://www.state.gov/the-department-of-states-plan-to-implement-the-u-s-strategy-on-women-peace-and-security/> (accessed 26 July 2020).

⁴⁷ Department of Homeland Security, “Department and Agency Implementation Plans for The U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security,” June 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/wps-dhs-implementation-plan.pdf> (accessed 26 July 2020).

⁴⁸ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Women, Peace, and Security Implementation Plan,” June 2020, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/2020-USAID-Women-Peace-and-Security-Implementation-Plan.pdf> (accessed 26 July 2020).

⁴⁹ Department of Defense, “Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan,” June 2020, https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jun/11/2002314428/-1/-1/1/WOMEN_PEACE_SECURITY_STRATEGIC_FRAMEWORK_IMPLEMENTATION_PLAN.PDF (accessed 5 July 2020), 11.

⁵⁰ United States Army War College, website, Resources: Congressional Resources, Women, Peace, and Security <https://www.armywarcollege.edu/wps> (accessed 1 August 2020).

Multinational Interoperability Recommendations for Mitigating Civilian Harm

[JLLIS ID# 224363](#)

Observation: In January 2019, The Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) published a report titled “The Sum of All Parts: Reducing Civilian Harm in Multinational Coalition Operations.”⁵¹ In the report, the authors note:

Multinational operations offer a number of benefits, including enhanced capabilities, burden sharing, and international legitimacy. However, the characteristics of coalition warfare can also create unique challenges for preventing and addressing civilian harm, including differing political incentives, complicated and sometimes parallel command structures, variable levels of interoperability, disparate rules of engagement (ROE) and national caveats, and diverging civilian harm-related policies, such as incident assessment, public acknowledgement, and amends.

The report offers several findings and recommendations the US Department of Defense (DoD) should consider as it develops its pending DoD Instruction (DoDI).⁵² regarding minimizing and responding to civilian harm in military operations.

Discussion: The CIVIC report authors interviewed several military members and civilian leaders of US-involved and/or US-led coalitions to determine their findings and recommendations. They considered the “trade-offs” regarding multinational participation, especially in the topics of laws, transparency, and willingness to mitigate civilian harm. They also examined the commanders’ roles and the effect of organizational structure, to include targeting/investigation/amends processes.

Their summary of findings include⁵³:

1. The desire of coalitions to maximize participation for political reasons often leads to tradeoffs in other areas, including interoperability, unity of effort, and the capacity and willingness of states to effectively mitigate harm.
2. Sustained commitments by high-level civilian and military leadership, including a command climate that emphasizes the importance of preventing civilian harm, are essential for effective civilian harm mitigation and civilian protection.
3. National caveats and additional restrictions on ROE⁵⁴ are important tools for nations to ensure that their forces’ operations minimize civilian harm. At the same time, when national caveats, differing ROEs, or other sensitivities are poorly communicated or misunderstood between members of a coalition, unanticipated force protection issues may arise, exacerbating risks for civilian harm.

⁵¹ Annie Shiel, Daniel Mahanty, et al. *The Sum of All Parts: Reducing Civilian Harm in Multinational Coalition Operations* (Washington, DC: The Center for Civilians in Conflict, January 23, 2019), https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SumofAllParts_CIVICReport-2.pdf (accessed August 20, 2020).

⁵² On January 31, 2020, the Department of Defense Office of the Under Secretary of Defense published a Memorandum, Subject: Development of a DoD Instruction on Minimizing and Responding to Civilian Harm in Military Operations. See <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Feb/20/2002252367/-1/-1/1/DEVELOPMENT-OF-A-DOD-INSTRUCTION-ON-MINIMIZING-AND-RESPONDING-TO-CIVILIAN-HARM-IN-MILITARY-OPERATIONS.PDF>.

⁵³ Annie Shiel, Daniel Mahanty, et al. *The Sum of All Parts: Reducing Civilian Harm in Multinational Coalition Operations* (Washington, DC: The Center for Civilians in Conflict, January 23, 2019), 2, https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SumofAllParts_CIVICReport-2.pdf (accessed August 20, 2020).

⁵⁴ Rules of Engagement.

4. The presence of a robustly staffed and resourced civilian harm mitigation cell to track, assess, and learn from allegations of civilian harm – such as ISAF's⁵⁵ Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team in Afghanistan – should be considered a best practice.
5. Coalition structures may disincentivize [*sic*] transparency by enabling states to attribute civilian harm to the coalition as a whole, obscuring state responsibility through the premise of collective action.
6. The lack of transparency facilitated by coalition structures also has significant bearing on the provision of amends for harm. When nations refuse to step forward and take responsibility for civilian harm, making amends is by definition impossible.
7. Because each coalition participant often has its own standards, policies, and domestic legislation regarding in-kind or monetary forms of ex gratia compensation, the process of soliciting amends from coalition members places an undue burden on civilians already suffering the loss of loved ones, their homes, and their livelihoods.
8. Coalition lessons learned processes – including the extent to which formal processes are utilized, whether documented lessons contribute to institutional change, and the ways in which civilian casualty assessments are included in lessons learned efforts – warrant significant improvement.

Recommendation(s): The report provides 14 general recommendations⁵⁶:

1. Include civilian harm mitigation practices and procedures in combined exercises, peacetime training, and pre-deployment training.
2. Civilian harm mitigation should be repeatedly emphasized at the highest levels of command and throughout coalition policies and practices.
3. Standardize ROE as much as possible from the outset of operations and ensure regular training on ROE concepts.
4. Account for gaps in civilian harm mitigation capabilities when allocating roles and responsibilities.
5. Ensure that caveats and other national sensitivities are communicated early and effectively, and consider reducing caveats where appropriate.
6. Centralize civilian harm investigating and reporting in a multinational Civilian Casualty Mitigation Cell responsible for assessing all reports of civilian harm, identifying lessons learned, and using that analysis to adapt tactics, techniques and procedures.
7. Ensure that any multinational operation includes effective civil-military coordination on issues pertaining to civilian harm.
8. Standard operating procedures for assessing third party reports of civilian casualty incidents should ensure that the assessment team takes steps to identify and interview witnesses who can substantiate claims with first-hand knowledge.
9. Coalitions should publicly clarify the steps they take to evaluate and determine the credibility of external reports.
10. Establish a coalition-wide civilian harm disclosure policy that includes guidelines for both public and private acknowledgement of civilian harm incidents.

⁵⁵ *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)* was a NATO-led military mission in Afghanistan.

⁵⁶ Annie Shiel, Daniel Mahanty, et al. *The Sum of All Parts: Reducing Civilian Harm in Multinational Coalition Operations* (Washington, DC: The Center for Civilians in Conflict, January 23, 2019), 2, https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SumofAllParts_CIVICReport-2.pdf (accessed August 20, 2020).

11. Establish a coalition-wide amends program to facilitate and streamline the payment of ex gratia.
12. Transfer civilian harm mitigation capabilities and processes to the host nation and/or transitional mission as appropriate for the conflict.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA. Created in JLLIS on 27 August 2020.

Give a Little to Get a Little: The Paramount Importance of Liaison and Intelligence Sharing

[JLLIS ID# 225655](#)

Observation: Department of Defense (DoD) must actively ensure proper information classification to better share information with partner nations, or they will not reciprocate with sensitive sharing themselves. The subsequent lack of information sharing impinges on critical liaison activities. Therefore, DoD personnel must better integrate partner nation members in information and intelligence collection and dissemination. In addition, they should classify information at the lowest possible level (“write to release”) through “tearline reporting”, a method that protects sources and methods yet affords maximum dissemination of pertinent information to partners.

Discussion: In any coalition or partnered operation, a multinational intelligence center is necessary to merge and prioritize the intelligence requirements from each participating nation and to acquire and fuse all the nations’ intelligence contributions. There already exists a number of robust, multinational networks used as a backbone for intelligence exchange, such as the Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System (CENTRIXS); NATO’s Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation System (BICES); Griffin; and the Supreme HQ Allied Powers, Europe’s local area network, Cronos. However, US DoD personnel tend to use these systems for “pull” purposes only. They rarely “push” critical intelligence to partners on these networks.

Additionally, US DoD personnel may conduct an military operations meeting for all coalition members, then promptly evict the partner nations in order to hold the actual operations meetings. Such instances create distrust between coalition members and may cause the partner nation members to withhold information from the US as well.

Furthermore, US DoD members have a propensity to over-classify collected information, often using “Secret/NoForn” (Secret/No Foreign) as the standard for an entire document rather than appropriately classifying each individual paragraph or item. While this propensity is based on valid concerns of protecting sources and methods, the simple tearline reporting can be an appropriate means for classification. In many instances, partner nations provide information to DoD personnel only to have reclassified at a level which prevents it being shared back to the providing nation or other partners.

In another common practice, DoD personnel may share information with partners that is collected from “open sources”, assuming the partners are not savvy enough to recognize information they could have collected themselves. Too often, US military members convey to their partners a general attitude that the partner nation should provide all sensitive collected information to DoD, and expect nothing in return; they should be honored to help the US. Requests by DoD liaison officials to downgrade pertinent classified information to share with partner militaries are ignored or considered suspect in some manner.

Yet, as many DoD liaison officers can attest, if one merely shares “open source” information, then one only gets “open source” information—or nothing at all. Lack of sharing creates distrust between the DoD official and the partner nation members, or causes the partner nation to view the US liaison officer as too “low-level” to have access to any information of value. Consequently, the liaison officer is ignored and considered irrelevant.

Conversely, when collected information is appropriately classified at the lowest “shareable” level from the outset, or portions are declassified solely for the intent of sharing with the partner nation during liaison activities, then the value of information received in return increases immeasurably. The partner nation members view the liaison official as a “true and trusted” partner—thereby viewing the US government itself as a valued partner. This, in turn, enhances the partner nation members’ desire to share with the DoD liaison official.

The following vignette provides an example of this new approach in practice. At one point in the past decade, partner nation members rarely provided any pertinent information to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Afghanistan. When US DoD liaison officials visited the base, the partner nation members could not provide the officials any information regarding specific actors in the area. Yet, when the same liaison officials shared their analysis of illicit activities and personalities—information declassified prior to the meeting—the partner nation members pulled out voluminous dossiers on each of the mentioned actors, and corrected some of the DoD analytic misperceptions. At that point, the DoD liaison officials became temporary intermediaries between the partner nation force and ISAF headquarters until a more permanent and trusting relationship was developed.

Recommendation(s): There are several specific recommendations for consideration—

- DoD officials need to ensure all collected information is written to the lowest releasable level, and incorporates tearline reporting to protect sources and methods.
- DoD needs to develop a more robust and iterative strategy and process of reviewing information pertinent to partner nations, and determine specifically what information can be shared, not if it should be shared.
- DoD must think of partner nations as valued assets, incorporate them into as many aspect of operational planning as possible, and not hold separate Secret/NoFORN operations meeting immediately after a coalition meeting, as this gives the impression of distrust.
- In order to maintain unity of effort, each nation’s intelligence personnel need to view the threat from multinational as well as national perspectives. A threat to one multinational partner must be considered a threat to all multinational partners.
- Intelligence efforts of the partner nations must be complementary. Each nation’s intelligence system will have strengths and limitations as well as unique and valuable capabilities. Establishing a multinational collection management element is essential for planning and coordinating multinational collection operations.

Implication(s): If US DoD personnel continue expect partner nation members to provide all information without reciprocation, then DoD will often miss unique information and perspectives from partners, which may ultimately compromise an operation and cost US DoD lives.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA. Based on interview email on or about 30 September 2020 with former DoD intelligence analyst. Created in JLLIS on 17 November 2020.

Multinational Interoperability: The Human

Cross Cultural Preparation for Multinational Assignments

JLLIS ID# 225657

Observation:

The context of multinational military staffs is uniquely challenging for leaders. Diverse cultures and structural challenges driven by competing national interests interact to present complex problems for officers..⁵⁷

The statement above derives from a study published in early 2020, conducted at the US Army War College. The research included interviews of several US and foreign military senior officers as well as a literature review and assessment of practices designed to prepare military officers for a multinational staff assignment.

Discussion: According to the authors, five themes emerged in their analysis to “offer insight into the shortcomings of preparation, highlights the unique structural complexity of what individuals experience in the multinational staff environment, and why this unique context makes it difficult to prepare officers in advance of their assignments.”⁵⁸ They are as follows:

- Getting Ready (But Not Feeling Ready)(Preparation). The authors describe this aspect as a combination of home-country preparation (to include training or education), host-country preparation (such as found in orientations), and self-initiated study (or, in some cases, “on-the-job” learning).⁵⁹
- Structural Challenges. According to the authors:

The challenges in this category arose from outside the staff, but significantly impacted the way the staff was able to operate, plan, and interact with one another *internally*. The context of geo-politics or historical relationships between countries, for example, influenced the way the staffs were designed and subsequently operated, and often how members oriented toward one another..⁶⁰

Examples shared were Operational Restrictions (“caveats” in how different nations expect their military members to operate), Intelligence Sharing (information access is not equal access, given prior agreements or history between national militaries), and Nonequivalence (the perception—and reality—of resources and rank between military members of different nationalities).

- Cultural Barriers. The authors describe:

⁵⁷Michael P. Hosie, et al. “Multinational Staff Assignments: Cross-Cultural Preparation,” *The Journal of Character and Leadership Development*, Winter 2020, Vol 7, Issue 1 (Colorado Springs, CO: US Air Force Academy, Center for Character and Leadership Development, 2020) https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/JCLD-Winter2020_final_web.pdf (accessed November 1, 2020).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 81.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 81-81.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 82-83.

The natural, subconscious affinities for similar cultures within the headquarters tended to create exclusive sub-grouping rather than an inclusive environment due to language and cultural affinities around common language... history of ethnic or regional conflict, or cultural proximity. Some participants reported this dynamic as disruptive (requiring intervention) because they perpetuated or confirmed previously held stereotypes and drove a natural gravitation toward others of similar ilk. Others reported that these in-groups could be comforting to those who felt displaced from their element and tended to describe them as positive ways to socialize and bond with each other....⁶¹

Of further interest, however, is the finding regarding perceptions of competence (or incompetence) as related to this theme of “Cultural Barriers”:

While all of the officers agreed about the challenges of stereotypes, they disagreed in how they perceived challenges around language and respect. The US officers tended to view these challenges as process problems, related to logistics and translation. The international officers, however, viewed the issue more personally—viewing them more as a signal of status and identity and as an issue of normative respect..⁶²

Specifically reported as sources of competency perceptions were: language fluency, translation and vocabulary limitations, different levels of military “preparedness”, and, again, rank..⁶³

- Skills And Attributes For Leading In A Multinational Staff Context. Another theme addressed the interviewed officers’ expressed needs towards multinational staff preparation: “to develop skills consistent with creating *unity of effort*.”⁶⁴ The authors provide such a list in two categories:

Individual Knowledge and Attributes, such as Self-Awareness, Patience, Empathy and Humility, System Knowledge, and Culture-Specific Knowledge; and

Leader Skills, such as Diversity Facilitation, Creating Alignment, Onboarding, Time Management, Socializing (not Issuing) Orders, Boundary Spanning and Cross-Cultural Accountability..⁶⁵

- Perceptions Of US Officers. The last theme shared by the authors regarded how international officer perceive the US military officers:

In conversations with international officers, some clear perceptions of US officers (both positive and negative) emerged. Some of these fit the stereotypical image of U.S. military officers: Being mission-focused, hardworking, adept planners, and possessing a capacity for self-improvement. However, negative aspects of U.S. behavior included unwavering adherence to U.S.-based structure, templates, or practices; a general lack of interpersonal skills (a lack of patience, empathy, and relationship building); a perception of discomfort in multinational settings; a

⁶¹ Ibid., 83-84.

⁶² Ibid., 84.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 85-86.

perceived behavioral posturing as overly competitive and assertive; and being perceived as unwilling to exude trust in partners..⁶⁶

Recommendation(s): According to the authors, the results of the first theme (“Getting Ready”) did not lend itself to an easy determination of “how to fix” the gaps described with training or education. However, it “did strongly suggest the value of this context specific onboarding (as) Effective socialization programs accelerate new team member understanding of role tasks and expands social knowledge...”⁶⁷ In addition, the authors suggest “Maximizing self-preparation will likely accelerate the onboarding process and integration upon arrival,” as well as “...understanding the limits of how this knowledge (and any previous experience) might not immediately translate to the operating context of the multinational staff...”⁶⁸

Similarly, the second theme (“Structural Challenges”) is not readily addressed due to the national policies and programs. Yet, “culture-specific (staff-specific) training and preparation” may reduce the friction described..⁶⁹

The authors gave no suggestion or recommendation to address the third theme (“Cultural Barriers”), except to note that US officers are “Possibly from a privileged position of numerical majority, resource dominance, and language fluency...” and

International officer concerns have some similarities with those expressed in social identity threat...that suggests that different social groups experience the same context differently. Additionally, this theory suggests that lower-power group members are more sensitive to perceptions of respect...⁷⁰

For the fourth theme (Skills and Attributes), the authors suggest “Certain attributes such as patience and empathy are likely dispositional and less responsive to development...Efforts to improve self-awareness, though, may help officers to be aware of tendencies and develop behaviors conducive to the particular environment.” They further indicate the remaining list of skills “are more amenable to training and education.”⁷¹

While the authors do not specifically address any recommendations regarding the fifth theme (Perceptions of US Officers), it could be recognized that improvements in any of the other themes will likely improve perceptions among international officers working with their US military counterparts.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA. Created in JLLIS on 17 November 2020.

Essential Leadership Competencies in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations

[JLLIS ID# 194270](#)

Observation: The emergence of Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) has created an increasingly broad array of challenges for military and civil leaders. New peace building tasks and additional state and non-state actors have complicated the PKO environment,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁷¹ Ibid.

altering the competencies needed to be a successful leader. It is important then to identify the leadership characteristics that can prove most useful in the contemporary, multidimensional PKO environment. *Identity*, *cross-cultural savvy* and *interpersonal competence* are three leadership metacompetencies that play an integral part in forming an effective strategic leader.

Discussion: In the wake of peacekeeping failures in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda the United Nations (UN) conducted a review in 2000 to assess shortcomings in leadership competencies. In the Brahimi Report it was concluded that these operational shortcomings stemmed from leadership failures to adapt to the dynamics of complex peacekeeping environments. With this realization came an understanding of the need for the overhaul of existing peacekeeping guidelines and regulations and a better conceptualization of the nuances of multidimensional PKO.

Understanding multidimensional PKO implies the need for a focus on both 'peace building' as well as 'peacekeeping.' Political involvement, upholding human rights, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and working towards the transition to legitimate governments are all new supplementary tasks that go hand-in-hand with the more traditional PKO challenges. The emergence and roles of state and non-state actors also complicates an already complex operational environment. Likewise, the involvement of UN elements such as the UN High Commissioner of Refugees (UNCHR), non-state actors like NGOs [Non-Government Organizations], and Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) make it even more difficult for the strategic leader to formulate and lead a synergistic effort.

How then should leaders adapt to better prepare themselves for multidimensional PKO. Leonard Wong outlined six strategic leadership metacompetencies for successful leaders including: "(a) identity; (b) mental agility; (c) cross-cultural savvy; (d) interpersonal maturity; (e) world-class warrior; and (f) professional astuteness."⁷² Of these six, three are highlighted as particularly important given the conditions of the current multidimensional PKO environment. *Identity* entails the ability of a leader to create a common feeling of synergy amongst his group. In so doing, a leader will be able to guide his or her partners as one towards a common goal. A leader's *cross-cultural savvy* also serves a significant purpose in the new, multidimensional PKO environment. This metacompetency helps a leader to better understand and respect other cultures. The third key metacompetency is *interpersonal maturity*. A main tenet of interpersonal maturity, empowerment, is the capacity to support and work alongside diverse partners, maximizing the group's total output towards a shared goal. This effort in turn creates an essential common bond that leaders must seek to foster.

Recommendation(s): Leaders need to focus on three essential metacompetencies to be successful in multidimensional PKO: *identity*, *cross-cultural savvy* and *interpersonal maturity*.

Leaders must seek to strengthen the *identity* aspect of their leadership style in order to preclude subordinates and partners from acting unilaterally; pursuing disparate goals and objectives. These individual priorities and diverse perspectives may work to undermine the overall leader's main goal of directing all efforts towards a common goal. "Synergy is the consequence of identity."⁷³

Leaders should constantly work to enhance their *cross-cultural savvy* to ensure that respect and understanding is maintained and shared amongst the various strategic leaders involved in a

⁷² Leonard Wong, et al. *Strategic Leadership Competencies*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2003.

⁷³ Wilson Mendes Lauria. *Strategic Leadership Competencies for Peacekeeping Operations*. PKSOI Bulletin, Volume 1, Issue 3 (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, April 2009), 15 <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a499567.pdf> (accessed November 3, 2020).

multidimensional PKO. Individuals coming together from diverse national backgrounds bring with them their associated national and personal perspectives. Cross-cultural savvy helps to prevent inherent frictions that may exist and likewise any failures in communication that can prove disastrous for PKO. Respect and understanding are the consequences of cross-cultural savvy.

Leaders need to facilitate better cooperation among the myriad players and agencies now present in any multidimensional PKO via their ability to demonstrate *interpersonal maturity*. Interpersonal and unilateral organizational problems will cause negative impacts on mission performance. The mature leader can share power without the loss of authority; gains confidence and respect by demonstrating competency rather than by being just "in charge." Due to the sheer increase in the number of players it is more important than ever for the senior leader to guide these many factions down one main path towards a synergistic end. Consensus and cooperation are the consequences of interpersonal maturity.

Implication(s): According to the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, "effective, dynamic leadership can make the difference between a cohesive mission with high morale and effectiveness despite adverse circumstance, and one that struggles to maintain any of those attributes". [United Nations. General Assembly and Security Council. (A/55/305-S/2000/809), 2000.] The specific needs of multidimensional PKO call for a new focus and emphasis on leadership competencies. In order to avoid the mistakes of the past, these lessons must be taken to heart; strategic leaders must focus on inculcating these three key metacompetencies to better posture themselves for success during multidimensional PKO. Selection of strategic leaders for multidimensional PKO should be largely dependent on how well they possess and demonstrate the three metacompetencies listed above. Failures in leadership capacity can directly jeopardize mission success. In particular, the author contends that failures in leadership may result in the loss of popular (host-nation / indigenous) support for the PKO mission and objectives, and often leads to low troop morale - meaning that of the PKO partners and participants. In Somalia, for example, shortcomings in leader interpersonal maturity and cross-cultural savvy did, in fact, lead to a loss of popular support, low troop morale and the eventual withdrawal of the UN mandate. Similarly, fragmentation of group unity can prove disastrous for PKO. Efforts in Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Somalia all fell victim to uncoordinated, unsynchronized activities by the various actors, that hindered the overall mission's goals.

Lesson Author: Nathaniel Teichman, Intern, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA. Based on a summary of main points found in *Strategic Leadership Competencies for Peacekeeping Operations*. [Lieutenant Colonel, Army (Brazil). International Fellow, United States Army War College, 2009.] Created 23 June 2009; uploaded to JLLIS at later date.

The American Advisor and the Language Problem: Terms of Reference⁷⁴ ⁷⁵

[JLLIS ID# 194137](#)

Observation: When communicating cross-culturally, there is no guarantee that even a correct translation will accurately convey the concepts the speaker intended to communicate.

⁷⁴This lesson, along with several others, are available in JLLIS as extracts from a monograph titled *PKSOI Papers, The American Military Advisor: Dealing with Senior Foreign Officials in the Islamic World*; by Michael J. Metrinko, August, 2008. While the recommendations are directed to "an American military advisor," they are relevant to any participant in a multinational organization.

⁷⁵ Related JLLIS lessons: 194120, 194121, 194129, 194130, 194131 (among others).

Whether American advisors communicate with foreign officials in English, in the language of the host country, in a shared third language or through an interpreter, the cultural assumptions underlying the words of each participant in the conversation will differ, probably substantially.

Discussion: The same word or phrase, even correctly translated, may convey different meanings in different cultures. The word "crime," for example, can be translated from one language to another, but the assumptions underlying the word can be vastly different. In the United States, crimes tend to be divorced from religious belief. In Afghanistan, conversion from Islam to another religion is considered a serious crime. Apostasy is viewed as a betrayal tantamount to treason.

In some countries, taking the law into one's own hands is considered proper and even necessary. For instance, it may be considered proper for a man to kill his daughter if she has had an extra-marital relationship. In some countries, failure to kill her would be regarded as weak and dishonorable. Conversely, taking the law into one's own hands in the United States is a crime.

To take another example, the phrase, "extending the reach of the central government," may be intended by an American to mean, "bringing necessary services and stability to rural areas." However, it may be interpreted by a foreign official as, "sending soldiers from the capital to plunder the provinces." A foreign official, hearing the term "Hamas," may picture a charitable organization which brings help into needy communities. An American hearing the same term is more likely to associate it with terrorism.

On a more mundane level, the word "tomorrow," which an American will interpret as the 24 hours following midnight, may also mean "an indeterminate time in the future" to a foreign official.

Perceptions of world historical events will likely be different in non-western cultures. To most Americans, the word "crusade" carries no serious negative connotations and has no bearing on the present. To those in the Muslim world, the term is more likely to call to mind western attempts to destroy Islamic civilization, and it has echoes which have reverberated through the centuries to the present day. Similarly, the word "jihad" may cause an American to think of suicide bombers, while to a devout Muslim the term has positive religious connotations.

To add another historical example, the names "Genghis" and "Attila" often bring images to the western mind of blood-thirsty barbarians spreading meaningless destruction. In Turkey and some Asian countries, these historical figures are seen as great national heroes after whom people name their children.

Recommendation(s): Advisors must pay special attention to nuances in language in order to convey the intended meaning and message. Learning the local language helps in this endeavor.

In addition, it is important to remember that one's own language contains many nuances that are culture-specific. Therefore, advisors should limit their use of American colloquialisms, slang and acronyms to avoid miscommunication.

Lesson Author: Lisa Leicht, Intern, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA. Based on a summary of main points found in *PKSOI Papers, The American Military Advisor: Dealing with Senior Foreign Officials in the Islamic World*; by Michael J. Metrisko, August, 2008. Created 5 April 2009; uploaded to JLLIS at later date.

“Multinational Interoperability” (in regards to Mission Command)

[JLLIS ID# 212574](#)

Observation: Eastern European multinational partners were surprised by US custom of subordinates questioning the Commander's order.

Discussion: A US Battalion Commander reported that one of the major outcomes from the multinational exercise was an increase in human and procedural interoperability based on greater mutual understanding. The partner nation leadership was at first surprised and put off by the US Army dynamic in which subordinates questioned an order after the commander had given it. The partner nation culture was that 'once the order has been given the subordinate executes.' Working together with the US they came to see that the questioning by subordinates was aimed at ensuring understanding of endstate and intent, not questioning the commander's competence. In the US Army style the subordinates questioned until they understood and then could take the initiative. In the host nation style the commander issued either very specific orders or very broad orders, depending on the competence of the subordinate and the specifics of the situation, but in either case after the order was issued the subordinate executed without question. US observers noted a high level of crew drill proficiency in the host nation forces, enabling a system of leader-centric planning and management.

Recommendation(s): US unit leadership engaging with eastern European partners and allies should be aware of the culture and customs of their partner. US leaders can accelerate understanding by discussing mission command and intent-based orders with their partners and clarifying that questioning is aimed at clarity, not resistance, and that the US style is based on, when appropriate, enabling decisions at the level that the information resides at, instead of reserving decisions to a higher level. US leaders should be aware that if they receive multinational attachments the attachment will most likely be very proficient in drills but will not question orders and thus might not understand the endstate and intent. LNOs deployed to multinational partner headquarters should also be aware of the custom of not questioning orders and develop a relationship that allows for seeking clarity, which is a key reason for exchanging LNOs.

Lesson Author: David Klingman, Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, KS. Created in JLLIS on 20 August 2019.

Multinational Interoperability: The Technical

Digital Divide Impact on Peace and Stability Operations Interoperability

[JLLIS ID# 223056](#)

Observation: The ongoing Covid-19 novel coronavirus pandemic highlights “how digital technologies help to confront the threat and keep people connected.”⁷⁶ ⁷⁷ Yet, the global “digital divide” remains a barrier to effective interoperability among governments, their populations, and their militaries. Indeed, in November 2019, the United Nations (UN) reported “Today, there are

⁷⁶ United Nations. *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*. Report of the Secretary-General, June 2020, 2 https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap_for_Digital_Cooperation_EN.pdf, (accessed June 30, 2020).

⁷⁷ Shannon Schumacher and Nicholas Kent, Pew Research Center, *8 charts on internet use around the world as countries grapple with COVID-19*. April 2, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/02/8-charts-on-internet-use-around-the-world-as-countries-grapple-with-covid-19/> (accessed July 5, 2020).

still 3.6 billion people without affordable access to the Internet...among the world's 47 least developed countries, where the Internet could have a truly transformative impact, more than 80 per cent of the population is still offline.”⁷⁸ The United Nations' June 2020 Report of the Secretary-General "[Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#)," identifies “global issues such as digital connectivity, human rights, trust and security that are necessary for making digital services available worldwide.”⁷⁹ In addition, the Report notes: “...accurate data and information related to the disease (Covid-19) are fundamental for an effective response, (yet) social media have been misused by some to spread dangerous misinformation and fuel discrimination, xenophobia and racism.”⁸⁰ The lack of effective and broadly-accessed communication and information distribution challenges the operational effectiveness in peace and stability operations. Participants in such operations must recognize the interoperability limitations due to the global digital divide, especially in matters of communication.

Discussion: The phrase “digital divide” has many related and interrelated meanings and understood causes. In broad terms, the global digital divide describes the access disparity between those populations throughout the world with modern technologies of information and communication distribution.⁸¹—which may include telephone and television—and those populations without the same.⁸² In other words, “the haves, and have-nots.”⁸³

The following are among the causes for the global digital divide⁸⁴:

Geographical Restrictions and Infrastructure. Across the globe, urban areas are more likely to have modern technology access than rural. However, even urban locales may not have appropriate technology infrastructure if situated in—or adjacent to—geographically inaccessible areas.

Financial Access and Income Distribution. Financial concerns impact the ability for both countries and their populations to invest in infrastructure (and related maintenance and education). In some cases, infrastructure exists, but only in institutional settings (i.e., schools and libraries) or for limited periods of time each day/week/month/year. In many cases, only high-income earners have access to modern information and communication technologies.

⁷⁸ United Nations, Secretary-General Remarks at Internet Governance Forum (Berlin, Germany: November 26, 2019) <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sqsm19882.doc.htm> (accessed June 30, 2020).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 10.

⁸¹ Carmen Steele. “What is the Digital Divide?” (Digital Divide Council, February 22, 2019), <http://www.digitaldividecouncil.com/what-is-the-digital-divide/> (accessed June 29, 2020).

⁸² In November 2019, Pew Research Center reported out a survey of “smart phone” ownership and usage in 11 emerging economies. Findings indicated a median of 6% of adults do not use phones at all and another median of 7% do not own phones but instead borrow them from others. In the survey, non-users reported the barriers to phone ownership and/or usage include: device and/or data cost; fear of theft (including identity theft); lack of Internet service; inability to read or read in an accessible language; and/or not “allowed to have a phone.” Laura Silver, et al, Pew Research Center, “Mobile Divides in Emerging Economies,” November 20, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2019/11/20/mobile-divides-in-emerging-economies/> (accessed July 6, 2020).

⁸³ In addition to country-wide barriers to Internet and/or modern communication and information distribution platforms usage, there are often individual issues. In April 2019, Pew Research Center surveyed US citizens regarding Internet usage. They found “Internet non-adoption is linked to a number of demographic variables, including age, educational attainment, household income and community type.” This assessment can be extrapolated globally as well. Monica Anderson, et al, Pew Research Center, “10% of Americans don’t use the internet. Who are they?” 22 April 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/22/some-americans-dont-use-the-internet-who-are-they/> (accessed July 6, 2020).

⁸⁴ Ibid, and Lumen, “Chapter 14: Globalization, The Global Digital Divide,” Cultural Anthropology, undated, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/culturalanthropology/chapter/the-global-digital-divide/> (accessed July 3, 2020).

Education and “Digital Literacy.” In order to use computer technology, populations need a certain level of information literacy. Low literacy levels widen the digital inequality gap. Education forums, such as schools, can provide access to the technologies.

Physical and Cultural Access. Computer and other communication equipment design must be accessible to individuals with different learning and physical abilities, as described in Article 21 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations. In addition, information must be available across different cultural lines.

Political Access. In general, routine information and communication access has been and can be easily denied to a population when the government controls the infrastructure.⁸⁵ At the same time, controlled access can be used to promote government or opposition themes and messages.⁸⁶ ⁸⁷In 2005, researchers Guillen and Suarez argued that “democratic political regimes enable a faster growth of the Internet than authoritarian or totalitarian regimes.”⁸⁸

Regardless of root causes, one analyst recently noted “the digital divide is more like a chasm, both within and between countries.”⁸⁹ The digital divide directly impacts the effectiveness of any information campaign as well as the collection of pertinent data. It certainly limits the ongoing peace-building work necessary for prevention and/or reconciliation of hostile actions within or between nations. When Covid-19 concerns limited or eliminated travel and face-to-face meetings, a seasoned mediator asked “...can we negotiate peace (online)?” He suggests three critical elements to effective online negotiations: trust and relationship building, dialogue, and safe space. While the mediator does not label his concern as “digital divide,” he introduces the related challenge in his tenet of “dialogue” when he postulates:

For some participants in a peace process the COVID-enforced shift to digital communications may raise internal complications. Imagine, for example, an armed group, perhaps in a rural territory where only a few members have solid digital access to the outside world. Those points of contact may be overwhelmed by an exponential increase in digital communication, while the group they represent may still rely heavily on in-person meetings for their decision-making.⁹⁰

More simply stated, operational and strategic planners cannot anticipate equal access—or understanding—across the digital divide. At a minimum, such inequality in access may result in

⁸⁵ Paul Bischoff, “Internet Censorship 2020: A Global Map of Internet Restrictions,” comparitech, January 15, 2020, <https://www.comparitech.com/blog/vpn-privacy/internet-censorship-map/> (accessed July 7, 2020).

⁸⁶ United Nations, “Battling COVID-19 misinformation hands-on,” United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC), 17 June 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/battling-covid-19-misinformation-hands> (accessed 29 June 2020).

⁸⁷ S. Harris Ali and Fuyuki Kurasawa, “#COVID19: Social media both a blessing and a curse during coronavirus pandemic,” *The Conversation*, March 22, 2020, <https://theconversation.com/covid19-social-media-both-a-blessing-and-a-curse-during-coronavirus-pandemic-133596> (accessed July 6, 2020).

⁸⁸ Mauro F. Guillén and Sandra L. Suárez, “Explaining the global digital divide: Economic, political and sociological drivers of cross-national internet use,” *Social Forces* 84 (2), 1 December 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0015> (accessed 7 July 2020).

⁸⁹ Mercedes García-Escribano, “Low Internet Access Driving Inequality,” International Monetary Fund, June 29, 2020, <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/06/29/low-internet-access-driving-inequality/> (accessed 3 July 2020).

⁹⁰ Juan Diaz-Prinz, “Yes, We Can Meet Online But Can We Negotiate Peace There?” United States Institute for Peace, May 15, 2020, <https://www.usip.org/blog/2020/05/yes-we-can-meet-online-can-we-negotiate-peace-there> (accessed 30 June 2020).

misunderstandings, or create narrative “holes” for deliberate misinformation. At the most dangerous, it can be “a matter of life or death.”⁹¹

Recommendation(s): As shown here, mitigating the effects of the digital divide is not a simple process. Ensuring access to devices alone will not “close the gap.” On June 11, 2020, in New York City, the UN Secretary-General introduced the “Roadmap for Digital Cooperation” at the High-Level (virtual) meeting titled “Impact of Rapid Technological Change on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.” In his remarks, he sets 2030 as the UN’s goal for every person’s access to “safe and affordable” Internet. He identified eight aims: universal connectivity, common standards on open data, targeted efforts towards “the most vulnerable,” build digital capacity in every country, ensure protection of human rights, provide vision and leadership on artificial intelligence, promote digital trust and security (as part of the Sustainable Development Goals), and build effective architecture for digital cooperation.⁹²

This is an ambitious agenda with at least a decade or more of implementation ahead of it. In the interim, participants in peace and stability operations must recognize and plan for the digital divide’s impact on interoperability, even among agencies representative of developed nations.

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⁹¹ António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, remarks at “Impact of Rapid Technological Change on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,” New York City, June 11, 2020, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sqsm20118.doc.htm> (accessed 30 June 2020).

⁹² Ibid.

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