Semi-Annual Lesson Report:

Multinational Interoperability
Command and Control
and Transitions

in Peace and Stability Operations

Peacekeeping and Stability
Operations Institute

December 2021

Table of Contents

Introduction

This edition of the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute's Semiannual Lesson Report examines facets of Multinational Interoperability (MNI) Command and Control (C2) and Transitions in peace operations and stability activities. This report builds on a 2020 report, PKSOI Semiannual Lesson Report, Multinational Interoperability for Peace and Stability, which provides a framework for the interoperability discourse in three aspects: procedural, human, and technical. This report focuses on the *human* aspect as it reflects in the military command and control environment. It uses the *interoperability* definition found in Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, because it relates to multinational commands and refers to relationships among multinational partners within a command environment:

> 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.[1] [emphasis added]

Beyond recognition of cultural barriers to interactions, there is little extant study on the human aspect of multinational military environments. In contrast, there is much historic and contemporary research on corporate multinational organizations. Consequently, the corporate realm serves as the source for several of the lessons in this report.

Many observers of corporate multinational organizations indicate four common human-interaction differences: *culture*, which may include language; *communication* style, which is more than language; *hierarchy and authority* attitudes; and *decision-making* norms.[2] Obviously, as the lessons here confirm, these differences are integral to each other, rather than distinct. In addition, this report provide insights for multinational organizational *leaders*, from selection to leadership style.

Ironically, the structure and discipline inherent in military organizations—regardless of country of origin or station—often mask multicultural personnel interface challenges, but they are there. As many of these lessons conclude, a workplace environment—or command climate—that recognizes the challenges and addresses them, no matter how unseen they may be, will be an environment of trust and effectiveness.

This report also includes observations about *transitions*. JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, identifies four transition types: change of operations category, change of operation phase, change of function or service, and change of authority.[3] While the lessons herein do not cover all four of these transition types, they do offer an overview of organizational transitions doctrine and guidance from the US military and the United Nations (UN) viewpoints.

---

[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Multinational Operations*, JP 3-16 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2019), https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_16.pdf?ver=N5OFJfxmbzf2_K0CmEmwpg%3d%3d (accessed October 12, 2021).

[2] "Multicultural Teams: How to Cope with Culture-Based Challenges While Transitioning to a Global Company," *The H Factor*, February 8, 2019, https://thehfactor.com/multicultural-teams-cope-cultural-based-challenges/ (accessed October 31, 2021).

[3] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Multinational Operations*.

A hyperlink identifies each of the lessons location in the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) database. JLLIS access is at https://www.jllis.mil and requires a Department of Defense Common Access Card (CAC) for registration.

Multinational Interoperability:
The Human Aspect - Culture, Language, Authority, and Decision-Making

Language as Critical Competency

JLLIS ID#231041

Observation

In the contemporary global environment, US military members of multinational commands are most likely to operate in an unfamiliar geographic location with an unfamiliar culture. While there is some prospect that foreign partners—be they military, government, or non-government—will share some level of language competency (usually English), it is less likely the local government or population can communicate with the US military members in a shared language. Military members and veterans of ongoing and earlier conflicts can share any number of vignettes to illustrate this point: the absence of a shared language between military members and the local population may affect the value of the engagement, to the detriment of mission.[4] Some observers recently stated:

> When our personnel can speak that other language, their value in any shared endeavor goes up exponentially. Language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) capabilities are "an enduring critical competency" and a powerful force multiplier.[5]

The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes language competency (as part of greater cultural competency) as a crucial component to strategic victory in current and future conflicts, but it has an inconsistent record of institutionalizing and codifying both its requirements and its procurement. Further, as an essentially "soft" skill, both individual and institutional programs for language competency sustainment are often an early decrement in constrained budgets. Rather than ensure US military members have themselves the ability to communicate effectively with populations in conflict, the US military tends to rely on either interpreters or technology. Unfortunately, both means—human interpreters and interpreter technology[6]—are frequently unreliable to convey intent. Therefore, the DoD should continue to sustain—even increase—the LREC capabilities with the forces. As Scott Bruck noted in 2017:

> Priding itself on direct communication, the profession of arms often muddles the point. Professional military language is rife with the use of euphemisms, metaphors, and clichés. The aforementioned examples may seem insignificant, but when one understands that

---

[4] Two examples of such vignettes are found at: Bryan Sansom, *Lost in Translation: The Importance of Retaining Army Sociocultural Capabilities in an Era of Persistent Conflict* (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2014), https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA612192.pdf (accessed August 30, 2021), and M. Chris Mason, *Strategic Insights: Lost in Translation* (Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 2017), https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/articles/articles-2017/lost/ (accessed September 12, 2021).

[5] Douglas J. Robb, Brian H. Neese, and Cara Aghajanian, "Linking Foreign Language Capabilities with Expeditionary Requirements," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 102, (July 2021): 37-44. https://ndupress.ndu.edu/JFQ/Joint-Force-Quarterly-102.aspx (accessed August 3, 2021).

[6] For more on this topic, see PKSOI Lesson: "Lost in Translation—Technology Use to Enhance Multinational Communication," (September 28, 2021).

language has the ability to influence perception, the implications are substantial. Language is the way in which we experience the world.[7]

Discussion

Bruck's 2017 article suggests "military professionals need to be cognizant of language on both a macro level (translation issues) and a micro level (within one's native language) because it affects perception in international conflict."[8] One aspect of *macro level considerations* he describes is *linguistic relativism*, which indicates a person's or peoples' language creates their own reality. He shares research in the concept of *time* as expressed in language which suggests "certain ideas are not universal and are not comprehensible in every language," so consequently, "one not only has to be cognizant of the obvious cultural differences, but also the different thought patterns the language fosters."[9]

Another *macro level consideration* he shares is the difference in *color perception* as influenced by different languages. Because some languages do not recognize certain colors—or recognize more colors than other languages—he suggests there may be military implications. For example, "not understanding an adversary's linguistic idiosyncrasies could result in one's camouflage sticking out like the proverbial 'sore thumb.'"[10]

He further suggests yet another macro level consideration for language with military implication:

> Quite possibly the most significant anecdote of macro linguistic differences deals with the word *peace*. The English word *peace's* etymology comes from Ancient Roman foreign policy. The Romans used the word *peace* for describing the process of bringing non-romans into the Roman Empire through conquest. Through the centuries, the English language word *peace* has become synonymous with a mutually exclusive relationship with war. Contemporary Western thought holds dear the notion peace and war cannot exist at the same time. This notion is in stark contrast to the modern Arabic word for *peace*, *salam*. Instead of the absence of war, *salam* means harmony or inner peace, both of which can still exist during a state of war.[11]

Brock also provides observations of *micro level considerations*, or those issues within one's native language. As example, he points out:

> In the English language, metaphors function by telling us about something by telling us what that something is not. In political and strategic documents metaphors are encouraged and widely used. Too often though, these same metaphors make their way into tactical documents where they do not belong. For example, winning "hearts and minds" may fit well into a policy speech, but has no place in a platoon operations order…Soldiers need to be free of ambiguous ideas and language.[12]

He describes "the military's ubiquitous use of PowerPoint" as another example of a *micro level consideration*. He suggests a slide-deck briefing "encourages shallow…thinking" and the use of

---

[7] Scott E. Bruck, "Lost in Translation: How Language Affects Perception During Armed Conflict," *Small Wars Journal* (May 7, 2019). https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/lost-translation-how-language-affects-perception-during-armed-conflict (accessed September 20, 2021).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

color-coding may be problematic due to military partners' or the population's color perception described earlier.[13]

A deeper understanding of the *macro* and *micro level considerations* in language better explains interpreter ineffectiveness. Also in 2017, Chris Mason highlights:

> Studies have shown that an interpreted dialogue with a highly skilled interpreter fluent in both languages is, at best, a 50 percent communication. At least 25 percent of the speaker's meaning and intent is lost going in each direction through the interpreter. Much of conversational meaning is embedded in nuance, tone, inflection, and colloquial expressions—elements that are lost through interpretation.[14]

Mason also points out "the low quality of, and lack of qualification for, interpreters in [Afghanistan] were a frequent source of scandal":

> They were hired because, like many Afghans, they spoke a second language to some extent—in this case Pashto. That linguistic ability, however, was almost always suboptimal to put it politely. In many cases, it was what we called "Tarzan Pashto." Their skill in English also was almost always marginal at best. They were listening to us speaking English, and understanding perhaps half of what we said (and none of the context, colloquialisms, or subtlety), translating it into Dari in their minds, then re-translating it again into pidgin Pashto. Conversations with critically important Afghan leaders, military officers, and village elders were, on a good day, a dialogue conducted on the level of four-year olds.[15] This alone was enough to completely undermine the entire "hearts and minds" effort, whether it was critical *Jirga* (tribal council) meetings with tribal leaders in Kandahar Province or training young military officers in Kabul.[16]

Further, he asserts, the Afghan community leaders in which the US Army military was to engage did not respect the interpreters for several reasons not evident without an understanding of their culture. The interpreters were not of the same ethnicity; they were young; they conveyed a contempt for the rural community leaders, often consciously; and they did not understand the "subtleties of Pashtun language, culture, and etiquette."[17]

> In every conversation, the perceived culprit for this thinly veiled contempt and lack of respect was not the interpreter—it was the American holding the conversation. The same dynamic played out again and again in Iraq, where American forces would take Shi'a interpreters into meetings with Sunnis and vice versa, oblivious to the animosity this created before the conversation even started.[18]

Despite the US military's obvious need for shared language capability in its operations, Mason notes "hardly a minute was spent [by US military] in pre-deployment language training."[19] Bruck

---

[13] Bruck, "How Language Affects Perception."

[14] M. Chris Mason, *Strategic Insights: Lost in Translation* (Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 2017, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/articles/articles-2017/lost/ (accessed September 12, 2021).

[15] In another section of the paper, Mason points out: "It is a fact of human communication that people evaluate the intelligence of others through the eloquence and persuasiveness of their spoken words, especially people who are illiterate, because they have no access to the written word. A person who has a good command of their language is considered intelligent and wise. Conversely, a person who does not is considered ignorant and not worth listening to."

[16] Mason, *Lost in Translation*.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

acknowledges the 2007 to 2014 deployment of US Army Human Terrain Teams (HTTs)[20]— "experts in social sciences"—as an instrument towards understanding language and culture nuances, but also notes "their exorbitant cost" of $725 million in less than eight years and suggests a less-expensive language capacity building in the future.[21]

Robb, et al., has another perspective. He and his author team note:

> It may come as a surprise to discover that personnel with existing language skills are often purposefully not employed in the joint expeditionary environment. Two gaps in the joint planning process sideline foreign language capability on missions that this capability is meant to serve: combatant command planning documents do not request language-enabled forces; and planners at multiple levels do not identify or task language-enabled personnel.[22]

They further acknowledge:

> Because mission planners compete for limited resources, they prefer to keep manpower requirements as broad and generic as possible. They come to view foreign language capability as extraneous since, technically, missions could be executed without this skill set; however, this wedge separating requirement and capability means that we do not capitalize on the initial skills investment, tabling potential downstream effects on our training, force development, and even the security cooperation mission. We pay the upfront cost; we do not reap the full potential benefit.[23]

Recommendations

The reviewed articles and studies yield a variety of recommendations from the practical to the esoteric. Mason reminds readers "the ability to speak the local language does not ensure victory in a foreign internal conflict, but the lack of it is the handmaiden of defeat."[24] Bruck emphasizes that military professionals must be aware of their own, and others', language use at both *macro* and *micro* levels. He points out the US military already has a cost-effective structure to develop and sustain language skills—the Defense Language Institute (DLI). He suggests increasing participants and adding *linguistic anthropology* to the education.[25]

Increasing the attendance of military members at DLI will not happen without demand from Combatant Commands. Robb, et al., outlines three specific actions, summarized here:

- Combatant Commands must demand a more robust utilization of foreign language capabilities in their areas of responsibility, and related planning guidance should compel the use of language-enabled personnel wherever possible, moving foreign language capability from a "highly desired" line remark to an actual requirement.
- LREC needs to be a built-in step in the joint planning process. Language skills, regional understanding, and cultural awareness and its implications on joint operational planning should be reinforced at various education and training levels. When planners move into

---

[20] A succinct overview of the Human Terrain Teams is found at: Christopher Sims, "Academics in Foxholes: The Life and Death of the Human Terrain System," *Foreign Affairs* (February 4, 2016), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2016-02-04/academics-foxholes (accessed September 30, 2021).
[21] Bruck, "How Language Affects Perception."
[22] Robb, et al., "Linking Foreign Language."
[23] Ibid.
[24] Mason, *Lost in Translation*.
[25] Bruck, "How Language Affects Perception."

joint operational planning roles, they should master how to link foreign language capabilities with mission requirements.

- Language sustainment programs, such as LEAP, as well as foreign area officer and security cooperation officer training should leverage recurring combatant command deployment-for-training events…It is a lost opportunity not to link these efforts.[26]

Bryan Sansom's 2014 monograph, prepared for the School of Advanced Military Studies, may be prophetic:

> One thing is certain; understanding the human dimension of conflict is critical to Army mission success. Whether the Army has truly learned the lessons of its past, some of which have been discussed in this paper, remains to be seen. Will it commit to retaining and adapting its sociocultural knowledge capacity in the midst of fiscal uncertainty and the transition out of America's longest war? Or will the Army succumb to its own traditional inclinations to marginalize the capability in pursuit of other priorities. Perhaps, only time will tell.[27]

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 29 September 2021.

Lost in Translation—Technology Use to Enhance Multinational Communication

JLLIS ID#231040

Observation

Communication challenges across a multinational organization—be it government, military, or corporate—is not unique to today's global environment. What may be unique is the plethora of technology-driven or technology-enhanced means to communicate. From language translation interfaces (handheld or online) to the (re)emergence of "image as language" (pictures and/or emoticons and emoji), technology can enhance one's ability to communicate across language and cultures. However, like any cross-culture communication, technology can also be "lost in translation." Therefore, it is imperative for leaders of multinational organizations to understand the disadvantages as well as the advantages of technology-delivered communication.

Discussion

Any discussion about communication technology must begin with an understanding of the *inherent bias in technology development* in general. Examples of technology's inherent biases are many, such as the racial bias of most facial recognition systems,[28] or machine learning algorithms, such as those found in Facebook advertisements, healthcare distribution, and even the criminal justice system.[29] In plain terms, the humans that develop the technology embed personal

---

[26] Robb, et al., "Linking Foreign Language."

[27] Bryan Sansom*, Lost in Translation: The Importance of Retaining Army Sociocultural Capabilities in an Era of Persistent Conflict* (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2014). https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA612192.pdf (accessed August 30, 2021).

[28] Drew Harwell, "Federal study confirms racial bias of many facial-recognition systems, casts doubt on their expanding use," *The Washington Post*, December 19, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/12/19/federal-study-confirms-racial-bias-many-facial-recognition-systems-casts-doubt-their-expanding-use/ (accessed September 15, 2021).

[29] Terence Shin, "Real-life Examples of Discriminating Artificial Intelligence," *Towards Data Science*, June 4, 2020, https://towardsdatascience.com/real-life-examples-of-discriminating-artificial-intelligence-cae395a90070 (accessed September 18, 2021).

bias—consciously and unconsciously—into the created system. Often times, the data sets used to create the initial algorithms insert bias because they are based on historical information which may or may not reflect a contemporary reality. The 2018 Amazon, Inc., hiring practice controversy is a classic example of that phenomenon.[30]

One of the dangers of technological inherent bias is that it self-perpetuates through machine learning, such as found in Artificial Intelligence (AI). One author explains the situation in a discussion of *natural language processing* (NLP) and the concept of *word embedding*. Because NLP and word embedding depends on context, similar phrases perpetuate and unusual phrases are subordinated in the process, if not eliminated.[31] He provides an example where word embedding recognizes "man is to woman as king is to queen," but it also defaults to the word "nurse" when presented with the analogy "man is to woman as doctor is to _____." He indicates this result occurred because, traditionally, more doctors were men and more nurses were women.[32] (He does not address the contemporary challenges of non-binary persons and titles.)

Technology biases are not limited to persons' identifying characteristics (such as ethnicity or gender) but also of language and how technology users interpret the language. English is considered by many to be the "language of science"[33] and it was the native language of the developers of many of the first commercially available technologies used for communication. Yet, while English may be a conglomeration of many other languages, there are still terms and phrases unique to itself that are not easily translated. This is especially the case in national or regional use of English, such as the differences found between British and American English, or in American regional slang.[34]

Spoken or written language, however, remains the most common way to communicate between persons. The challenges of such communication in a multinational—therefore, multi-language—organization is obvious. Hence, the interest in *translation technology* which can be found in "a mix of machine translation algorithms, voice recognition and optical character recognition technologies…Some provide text translation, while others enable real-time verbal translation."[35]

According to at least one source, the US military initiated use of machine (technology) translation in 2001 with the Phraselator.[36] The Phraselator was a handheld device with phrases in foreign languages pre-recorded by native speakers. The users searched the device's menu for a phrase or sentence in English that met their needs and the device played the translation in the selected language. While helpful in situations requiring some translation capability, it was strictly one-

---

[30] Terence Shin, "Real-life Examples."

[31] A Brookings study calls this *word co-occurrence*. Aylin Caliskan, Brookings, *Detecting and mitigating bias in natural language processing*, May 10, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/research/detecting-and-mitigating-bias-in-natural-language-processing/ (accessed September 20, 2021).

[32] Sathvik Nair, "How Biases in Language get Perpetuated by Technology," *Towards Data Science*, January 8, 2019, https://towardsdatascience.com/how-biases-in-language-get-perpetuated-by-technology-b4edc5532f3f (accessed September 20, 2021).

[33] Nina Porzucki, podcast, "How did English become the language of science," *The World*, October 6, 2014, https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-10-06/how-did-english-become-language-science (accessed September 20, 2021).

[34] A Brookings study provided this example: Google's machine translation algorithms convert the gender-neutral Turkish sentences "O bir profesör. O bir öğretmen." to the English sentences "He's a professor. She is a teacher." This translation implies professors—educators of greater credentials—are men, while teachers—educators of lesser credentials—are women. Caliskan, *Detecting*.

[35] Mark Purdy and Xioa Chang, "Instant language translation can help us talk. But will it help us understand?" *Tech-monitor*, Updated August 12, 2021, https://techmonitor.ai/technology/instant-language-translation-can-talk-but-will-it-understand (accessed September 24, 2021).

[36] Tess Linnell, website, "Translation in the army: a new interest in machine translation," *TMTranslationBlog*, November 24, 2019, http://tsmtranslationblog.blogspot.com/2019/11/translation-in-army-new-interest-in.html (accessed September 24, 2021).

way—English to the other language—and did not assist in military members' comprehension of the same foreign languages.[37] More recently fielded (2017) is the US Army's Machine Foreign Language Translation System (MFLTS) with both real-time translation and text-to-text translation.[38] In the spring 2021, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Computational Cultural Understanding (CCU) program. According to the announcement:

> The goal of CCU is to create a cross-cultural language understanding service to improve a DoD operator's situational awareness and ability to effectively interact with diverse international audiences. The program seeks to develop natural language processing (NLP) technologies that recognize, adapt to, and recommend how to operate within the emotional, social, and cultural norms that differ across societies, languages, and communities.[39]

Yet the research into translation technologies deny central tenets of human interaction which are *context* and *non-verbal communication*, sometimes called *body language*. Or, as stated by authors Mark Purdy and Xioa Chang, "communication is about much more than translation of text or speech."[40] One source shares the findings of machine translator tests conducted in Nepal, where using a machine was determined to be communication barrier because "it essentially dehumanised exchanges between people."[41] Further, much of communication is now shared digitally, which has its own translation challenges.

In 2021, author Erica Dhawan published *Digital Body Language: How to Build Trust and Connection, No Matter the Distance*. In her work, she addresses "how a [digital] message that was meant to be friendly and to the point could be read by the recipient as angry or resentful, causing less engagement and innovation and even the loss of top performers."[42] In her findings, she describes how once-clear communications are now clouded by misunderstanding of intent. She shares a few examples, such as the manager who writes short and direct emails to her team, which the team interprets as unfriendly and brusque. Or the leader who conveys a note of appreciation in his digital correspondence which is read as inauthentic by his employees.[43] In one article, she summarizes:

> No traditional expert in body language could have predicted that, today, the majority of our communications would be virtual. Contemporary communication relies more than ever on how we say something rather than on what we say. That is, our digital body language…Most workplaces today minimize the conditions necessary to foster clear communication, leading to widespread distrust, resentment, and frustration…There is virtually no body language to read.[44]

---

[37] Robert Mackey, "The Year in Ideas, The Phraselator," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/12/magazine/phraselator-the.html (accessed September 28, 2021).

[38] Michael Doney, Christina Bates and Tracy Blocker, "Technically Speaking: Making language less foreign," *US Army*, October 17, 2017, https://www.army.mil/article/195459/technically_speaking_making_language_less_foreign (accessed September 28, 2021), originally published in December 2017 *Army AL&T Magazine*.

[39] DARPA Public Affairs, "Creating AI-Enabled Cultural Interpreters to Aid Defense Operations," *DARPA*, May 3, 2021, https://www.darpa.mil/news-events/2021-05-03a (accessed September 28, 2021).

[40] Purdy, "Instant Language Translation."

[41] Linnell, "Translation in the army."

[42] Erica Dhawan, "The Problems of Digital Body Language," *TLNT Talent Management and HR*, July 1, 2021, https://www.tlnt.com/the-problems-of-digital-body-language/ (accessed September 26, 2021).

[43] Ibid.

[44] Erica Dhawan, "Master Your Digital Body Language," *Wharton Magazine*, May 10, 2021, https://magazine.wharton.upenn.edu/digital/master-your-digital-body-language/ (accessed September 26, 2021).

If language itself is a barrier to communication, whether delivered in person or in digital format, then perhaps images serve best for universal communication. As example, emojis (and its predecessor, emoticons[45]) "were supposed to be the great equalizer: a language all its own capable of transcending borders and cultural differences."[46] Even Oxford Dictionary recognized the emoji as its "Word of the Year," noting its prominence or cultural impact over a 12-month period in 2015.[47] A 2021 survey confirmed the emoji importance in communications, finding "that 77% of employees used emojis in workplace communication, citing impact on company culture and increased urgency."[48] As the survey report states:

> For employees that use emojis at work, there are certain advantages — emojis help to convey a tone without words (17%), allow users to express emotions virtually (14%), cultivate a less formal work culture (11%), and help users respond to messages quicker (7%).[49]

Yet, while emoji use may be common across the globe, there remains "the question of whether it's really a universal language."[50] A 2018 study titled *Emoji and Communicative Action* decided that while "emoji is a universal component of written language" its "meaning and usage are not universal."[51] Further, the manner in which each technology platform (i.e., Apple, instead of Samsung) depicts the emoji also contributes to potential miscommunication.[52]

Even within same or similar cultures, however, there is a divide on emoji use in work-related communications, generally due to worker age. The recent 2021 study points out "nearly a quarter of employees (22%) over the age of 45 have received an emoji that didn't understand at work." [53]

Recommendations

The most important recommendation regarding multinational communication through technology is to recognize the bias (usually English language, often male and Western-culture centric) built into much of the technology that is in use today. As Steve Nouri writes in an online Forbes article:

> Human bias is an issue that has been well researched in psychology for years. It arises from the implicit association that reflects bias we are not conscious of and how it can affect

---

[45] A simple description of the difference between emoji and emoticon is this: "if you come across a smiley face that contains a character you can find on your computer keyboard, it's an emoticon. If it's a little cartoon figure that is free from the binds of punctuation, numbers, and letters, it's an emoji." Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/story/whats-the-difference-between-emoji-and-emoticons (accessed September 29, 2021).

[46] Eyder Peralta, "Lost In Translation: Study Finds Interpretation of Emojis Can Vary Widely," *NPR The Two-Way*, April 12, 2016, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/04/12/473965971/lost-in-translation-study-finds-interpretation-of-emojis-can-vary-widely (accessed September 22, 2021).

[47] Summa Linguae Technologies, "The Emergence of Emoji as a Universal Language," *Summa Linguae*, updated March 30, 2021, https://summalinguae.com/language-culture/emergence-of-emoji-as-a-universal-language/ (accessed September 27, 2021).

[48] Clutch, "More Than 75% of Employees in the U.S. Used Emojis at Work in 2020, Increasing the Possibility of Translation Mistakes in the Workplace," *Cision PR Newswire*, March 18, 2021, https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-than-75-of-employees-in-the-us-used-emojis-at-work-in-2020-increasing-the-possibility-of-translation-mistakes-in-the-workplace-301249993.html (accessed September 26, 2021).

[49] Ibid.

[50] Summa Linguae Technologies, "The Emergence of Emoji."

[51] Will Gibson, Pingping Huang, and Qianyun Yu, "Emoji and communicative action: The semiotics, sequence and gestural actions of 'face covering hand'," *Discourse, Context & Media,* vol. 26, December 2018, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2211695818300801 (accessed September 29, 2021).

[52] Peralta, "Lost in Translation."

[53] Clutch, "More Than 75% of Employees."

an event's outcomes. Over the last few years, society has begun to grapple with exactly how much these human prejudices, with devastating consequences, can find their way through AI systems. Being profoundly aware of these threats and seeking to minimize them is an urgent priority when many firms are looking to deploy AI solutions. Algorithmic bias in AI systems can take varied forms such as gender bias, racial prejudice and age discrimination.[54]

Purdy and Chang ask, "Given these limitations of culture and context, what kind of innovations could turn ILT technologies from tools of translation into tools of meaning and communication?" They offer three proposed improvements: greater calibration of context to translate entire sentences and paragraphs instead of word-by-word; greater capacity to recognize and respond to emotional cues; and visual image translation.[55]

Dhawan asks, "How can we stay connected when a screen divides us?" She suggests "what was implicit in traditional body language now has to be explicit with digital body language" and suggests three areas to employ: medium, punctuation and symbols, and timing.[56] Paraphrased:

- The Medium Is the Message. Know how and when to use different communication mediums. "Every channel brings with it a set of underlying meanings and subtexts, and knowing how to navigate this array of hidden meanings is a telltale mark of digital savviness and —ultimately—professionalism."
- Punctuation and Symbols—the New Measure of Emotion. Digital communications filter out the non-verbal signals and cues. To compensate, written communication relies on punctuation for impact. However, note that efforts to use punctuation to indicate tone or clarification can generate more confusion.
- Timing—the New Measure of Respect. In-person interactions require a commensurate measure of time by all parties. In contrast, digital communication requires the time of one party only, and then the time of the other parties to respond. However, offices can determine timing expectations, such as email response within an hour if subject is given as "urgent," or non-use of email after certain hours.[57]

In the end, leaders of multinational organizations must recognize:

All languages—all communications—are built on ever-shifting sands of meaning. That meaning can't ever be fully, totally captured by technology. But as translation tech accelerates it might fool us into believing otherwise. And so for the military the dream of a universal translating machine will be ever-more tantalizing. The trick will be knowing when to use the gadgets. And when to put them aside.[58]

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 28 September 2021.

---

[54] Steve Nouri, "The Role of Bias in Artificial Intelligence," *Forbes*, February 4, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/02/04/the-role-of-bias-in-artificial-intelligence/?sh=8a0d495579d8 (accessed September 21, 2021).
[55] Purdy, "Instant Language Translation."
[56] Dhawan, "Master Your Digital Body Language."
[57] Ibid.
[58] Alex Gallafent, "Machine translation for the military," *The World*, April 26, 2011, https://www.pri.org/stories/2011-04-26/machine-translation-military (accessed September 23, 2021).

Tips for Cultural Competence Reconciliation with Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Approaches

Observation

Much of the recent multinational organizational research focuses on the leaders' and/or the employees' *global mindset*, *cultural awareness/sensitivity*, and/or *intercultural competency* development.[59] to promote understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural philosophies and practices. Yet, at the same time, the contemporary diversity/equity/inclusion.[60] workplace approaches may challenge the acceptance of cultural differences in the same multinational organization setting. As a corporate leadership consultant succinctly expressed: "One of the most confounding challenges I have personally encountered is how to promote the values of equity and inclusion, while also recognizing and respecting differences in cultural perspectives."[61]

The multinational organization leader must navigate the workplace environment to reconcile cultural competence with both organizational expectations and diversity/equity/inclusion awareness. A successful navigator in these situations must dialogue with organizational subordinates and challenge the personal and organizational assumptions from which workplace policies and programs derive. This observation is relevant regardless of workplace type (private or public, such as government) or employee category (civilian or military, or combination thereof).

Discussion

Most multinational organizations rely on their codified organizational policies and programs to reconcile contrasts between diversity/equity/inclusion approaches and cultural difference acceptance (cultural competence). In other words, if the organization has a policy in place regarding a particular topic, then leaders enforce compliance to it. Certainly, adherence to established organization standards is important to effective workplace performance. However, while many leaders consider organizational policies and practices as sacrosanct, they should also understand the *base assumptions* about said norms and reflect on their applicability to the multinational work environment.

An example of a base assumption in the multinational workplace may be the concept of *professionalism*, in that most modern-day professional expectations are grounded in European and/or American views. In 2019, the Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR), published an article that outlines the inherent bias of workplace performance evaluation in favor of *Western* (and often

---

[59] With nuanced definition differences.

[60] The United States (US) government and many US-based corporations refer to "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility" (DEIA) in workplace awareness as well as programs and policies. (See: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/25/executive-order-on-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-accessibility-in-the-federal-workforce/.) The United Nations (UN), however, titles their similar programs and policies as "Diversity and Inclusion," and appears to group topics of *equity* and/or *accessibility* within either the *diversity* or *inclusion* categories. (See: https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/what-to-expect-working-for-unhcr.html among other UN websites) The African Union (AU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) apparently follow the UN's approach (e.g., https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/2/pdf/2019-annual-diversity_inclusion_report.pdf.

[61] Kate Stitham, "When Rights and Values Clash: Balancing Cultural Relativism and Equity," *Integrative Inquiry Consulting*, August 26, 2020 (updated April 15, 2021), https://www.integrativeinquiryllc.com/post/when-rights-and-values-clash-balancing-cultural-relativism-and-equity (accessed July 15, 2021).

white) norms, particularly in the areas of dress, speech (and written communication), workstyle, and timeliness.[62]

A June 2021 Forbes on line article emphasizes these points:[63]

> I've also observed a sense of authority among many white colleagues, or an assumption that there is only one way to be "correct."…There is also an expectation of a very formal way of speaking and interacting. My native language expresses a lot of emotions, and I am often perceived as loud, which doesn't fit into the white idea of "professionalism."

Both the SSIR and the Forbes authors' findings are similar to a 2020 US Army War College (USAWC) study which surveyed US military and foreign military officers regarding cross-cultural preparation for multinational military staff assignments.[64] One of the 2020 study's meta-themes was *cultural barriers*, which included the issue of American-English language fluency and the related perceptions of individual competence or respect. According to the study authors, both the US and the foreign officers expressed frustration with language constraints, but with significantly different perspectives:

> Possibly from a privileged position of numerical majority, resource dominance, and language fluency, U.S. officers suggested that language challenges (with English) slowed processes and became a significant barrier to effectiveness. International officers were less concerned with language challenges and instead suggested that poor appreciation of competence, divorced from nationality, language proficiency, or rank, negatively impacted the multinational staff's ability to maximize the contribution potential of its members.[65]

Meanwhile, attempts to address diversity/equity/inclusion within organizations can often be awkward. One example is the term *Latinx* (sometimes *LatinX*) in use by US-based corporations and academia. In a short overview, a corporate consultant describes the debate:[66]

> Latinx was coined in the early 2000s as a gender-neutral term for someone of Hispanic descent, specifically referring to those who identify as gender fluid or non-binary. There has recently, however, been an outcry against the use of this term, because the term anglicizes the Spanish language. Telling another culture that their language isn't inclusive enough is problematic, particularly when the group in questions is already marginalized in many ways.

The use—or non-use—of gendered pronouns may create another problematic application of organizational policies or programs. Intended to facilitate workplace acceptance for transgendered and/or non-binary individuals, some corporations and academics have policies to mandate pre-

---

[62] Aysa Gray**, "**The Bias of 'Professionalism' Standards," *Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR),* Stanford University, June 4, 2019, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_bias_of_professionalism_standards# (accessed July 29, 2021).
[63] Nadia Hernandez, "White 'Professionalism' Limits Diverse Employees' Belonging," *Forbes*, June 29, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/gradsoflife/2021/06/29/white-professionalism-limits-diverse-employees-belonging/?sh=4085aebd3e5c (accessed July 16, 2021).
[64] Michael P. Hosie, et al. "Multinational Staff Assignments: Cross-Cultural Preparation," *The Journal of Character and Leadership Development*, Winter 2020, vol. 7, iss. 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).
[65] Ibid.
[66] Stitham, "When Rights and Values Clash."

ferred pronoun identification (e.g., on one's public signature block). While the purpose—inclusion—is laudable, the effect may make some persons uncomfortable with widely sharing personal information.[67]

The main point in these examples is this: multinational leaders should not assume one way (usually their way) is the only way to operate in the organization. Review of and reflection on existing organizational policies and programs may lead the leader to make changes—or advocate for changes—that are more inclusive to the multinational workplace while reinforcing the norms and practices necessary for their mission and purpose.

Recommendations

The 2021 Forbes article regarding *Western*-biased professional standards offers these actions to develop an inclusive workplace (summarized here):[68]

> *Intentionally and regularly engage in active listening. Identify the beliefs and norms that influence the organization.*
>
> *Examine and reimagine the definition of "professionalism."* Explore how norms might hinder an individuals' sense of belonging. As examples: Is the organization's "sense of urgency" limiting creativity? Is its desire for perfection preventing some members from appropriate risk-taking? Are assumptions made about people's abilities based on the way they speak or write?
>
> *Make space for cultural-sharing and storytelling.* Having a "diverse" workplace without recognizing the diversity of perspectives the members bring to the table can encourage a culture of confusion and distrust. Culture-sharing is a way to build meaningful connections.

The 2020 USAWC study shared similar ideas. The authors identified the *Leader Skills* as important in a multinational context, using NATO as an example (edited):[69]

> *Diversity Facilitation*. "Embracing the multinational" meant having facilitation skills that leverage functional diversity while minimizing the cultural, resource, and language differences that undermined cohesion.
>
> *Creating Alignment*. Leveraging superordinate identity…and shared purpose to overcome cultural barriers. As example, to be "more NATO than NATO."
>
> *Time Management*. Balancing conflicting temporal expectations. Astute leaders understood that cultures differed in how they thought about efficient use of time, expectations for how fixed deadlines were, and the impact of these differing expectations on collaborative efforts. As one participant noted, "NATO likes to talk"—reflecting how communication about time and deadlines can be culturally bound and how work pace, urgency, and expectation of deadlines differ widely between cultures.

---

[67] Philip Galanes, "Do I Really Need to State My Pronouns?" *The New York Times*, April 29, 2021, https://www.ny-times.com/2021/04/29/style/pronouns-gender-work-social-qs.html (accessed July 22, 2021).
[68] Hernandez, "White 'Professionalism.'"
[69] Hosie, et al., "Multinational Staff Assignments." The authors also identified *Individual Knowledge and Attributes* they suggest are important in a multinational organizational context that most multinational corporate leaders could recognize: Self-awareness, patience, empathy and humility, systems knowledge, and culture-specific knowledge.

Socializing (not Issuing) Orders. Setting conditions for aligned action through socializing orders for collective buy-in. Participants advised better awareness of the inter-workings of informal organizational networks ("spaghetti diagrams"): learning to communicate and align different efforts within the organization was important in supporting tasks and providing clarity to those within and across the enterprise. This often meant officers had to adapt to a more collaborative planning process, seeing continuous input and remaining open to change (an iterative rather than linear planning process).

Boundary Spanning. Understanding and managing external influencers. Participants advised setting up a system to maintain situational awareness of external stakeholders' influence on policy and process (e.g., national caveats/interests) helped enable planning and operations.

Cross-Cultural Accountability. Holding participants from all nations accountable for performance regardless of personnel systems.

Forbes also adds "communicate inclusively" to the discussion of necessary multinational leader skills. A June 2021 online article notes a few *best practices* for inclusive communication, such as:

Always use gender- and sexuality-inclusive language. Unless one's desired pronoun is known, use gender-neutral pronouns (they/them/their) in reference to unspecified individuals. Use preferred, modern terms like LGBT, LGBTQ, "gay" or "lesbian" instead of more antiquated terms like "homosexual."

Be specific about race. Remember that race and ethnicity are only one part of a person's identity, so avoid broad generalizations. And be careful not to write in a way that assumes white is the default. For example, if you note the race of one individual, you must do so for all others mentioned.

In our firm's messaging, we adopt the use of Black (capitalized) as an adjective in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense, only use African American to refer to American Black people of African descent, and use "people of color" when referring to a mixed group or multiple races other than white. Per AP [Associated Press] Style, white should remain uncapitalized, as white people generally do not share the same history and culture, or the experience of being discriminated against because of skin color. [70]

Yet another communication barrier in multinational organizations is the use of idioms and clichés that do not translate clearly in to other languages. A popular example is Americans' over-use of American football analogies in their communication ("go for the touchdown!"), while the rest of the globe has a different perspective of football (i.e., soccer). Multinational leaders should carefully consider the phrases they use to communicate to others in their organization to ensure their meaning can be understood.

In summary, multinational leaders should review their organizational policies and programs with understanding of inherent bias. They should decide what policies can be flexible or need to change entirely, and which ones are essential to their organizational mission and purpose. They

---

[70] Heather Kelly, "Why Inclusive Writing Is Essential for Business," *Forbes*, June 29, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2021/06/29/why-inclusive-writing-is-essential-for-business/?sh=1aebf96d7da1 (accessed July 27, 2021).

must be transparent in their decisions, and communicate clearly, regardless of personal feelings. As one corporate consultant states:

> it comes down to choosing with intentionality and being able to elicit feedback as you go. If we can call one another "in" to the conversation, instead of calling each other "out," we can discuss these opposing values with candor and compassion.[71]

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 26 July 2021.

United Nations (UN) Organizational Personal Conduct Standards Overview

JLLIS ID#229120

Observation

Despite cultural difference acceptance—sometimes referred to as *cultural* or *intercultural competency*—most multinational organizations still advocate and adhere to personal conduct standards that may be more generous, or more constrictive, than those found at workplaces within individual nations. Further, multinational organizational standards development and enforcement, whether for their operations/administration and/or members' personal conduct, also contributes to organizational culture.[72] The United Nations (UN) *Standards of Conduct* are an example of organizational (the UN) personnel behavior expectations for individuals on UN missions and operations, despite one's nationality and intrinsic cultural norms.[73]

Discussion

Some observers suggest that a universal belief set, such as those codified in the United Nation's (UN) 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, forms the base for contemporary multinational organization conduct standards.[74] Other observers submit that internationally-codified conduct standards are themselves a product of *ethnocentrism*—roughly defined as a belief in preeminence or universality of one's own culture[75]—since some nations' agreement to the standards did not account for the relatively powerless position of said nations in the larger international or UN context.[76] These observers may advocate for *cultural relativism*—to understand a culture on its own terms, not from one's own perspective—within multinational organizations.[77]

Yet, cultural relativism in a multinational organization may confound the very tenets of organizational culture development if there are few shared values or behaviors among organization members and teams. More, the inability to adhere to identified personal conduct standards may also

---

[71] Stitham, "When Rights and Values Clash."
[72] The concept of *organizational culture* evolved from the anthropological definition (i.e., a socially transmitted shared understanding of language, arts, beliefs, and so on). Researchers in the 1930s studied factory work environments to determine greater efficiencies and also uncovered the elements of *company culture*. In the United States, the 1970s and 80s saw a resurgence of academic interest in workplace environment, which led to several papers, studies, and books—many still seminal in the field—regarding *organizational culture*. In the 1990s, Edgar Schein of MIT's Sloan School of Management defined organizational culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions" within three categories: observable artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. For a general overview, see: https://www.thercfgroup.com/files/resources/Defining-Culture-and-Organizationa-Culture_5.pdf.
[73] See: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/standards-of-conduct.
[74] United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *General Assembly Resolution 217A*, December 10, 1948, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights (accessed July 4, 2021).
[75] See: https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095759585.
[76] Stitham, "When Rights and Values Clash."
[77] Ibid.

jeopardize the organization's mission or purpose. As example, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres indicated an aspirational purpose for personal conduct standards:

> As we serve the world's people and work for peace and the advancement of humanity, the United Nations must be a source of inspiration and a beacon of hope for all. Together, let us solemnly pledge that we will not tolerate anyone committing or condoning a crime, and in particular, crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse. [78]

On a more practical level, the UN's adherence to a set of personal conduct standards that are similar to the donor nations' own cultures may also reflect the UN's dependence on "donor dollars," in addition to the UN's aspirational purpose and integrity.[79] As example, in a 2019 study of donor-funded anti-corruption programming, researchers Hafner-Burton and Schneider published:

> The good news is that IDOs [*international development organizations*] composed of donor states with lower levels of corruption are visibly more willing to channel resources away from corrupt recipients toward recipient states with a better track record. This is in part because these donors value the good governance movement's objectives to dampen corruption among recipients and in part because they face real threats of voter backlash for sending scarce resources to countries where aid is siphoned off. [80]

Whether due to aspirational or practical rationales—or some combination—the UN developed Standards of Conduct for its personnel that serve in any capacity or in partnership with the UN. From its website:

> The UN is committed to ensuring the highest standards of conduct, professionalism and accountability of all its personnel deployed globally. The UN Standards of Conduct apply to all categories of personnel deployed in UN missions. The UN Standards of Conduct are based on three key principles:
>
> 1. Highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;
> 2. Zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse;
> 3. Accountability of those in command and/or leadership who fail to enforce the standards of conduct. [81]

Much of the UN's attention to its Standards of Conduct focuses on the UN's Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) prevention, accountability, and reparation.[82] However, the Standards of Conduct and the data collection covers many types of professional behavior and misconduct in two distinct categories.

---

[78] United Nations, "Standards of Conduct," *United Nations Peacekeeping*, https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/standards-of-conduct (accessed July 17, 2021).
[79] For additional information regarding UN peacekeeping funding, see: United Nations, "How We are Funded," United Nations Peacekeeping, https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded (accessed July 17, 2021). For recent information on the U.S. foreign aid policies and programs, see: Congressional Research Service, "Foreign Assistance: An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policy," *CRS Reports*, April 30, 2020, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R40213 (accessed July 27, 2021).
[80] Emilie M. Hafner-Burton and Christina J. Schneider, "Donor Rules or Donors Rule? International Institutions and Political Corruption," *AJIL Unbound*, vol. 113, 2019, pp. 346 – 35, Cambridge University Press, https://doi.org/10.1017/aju.2019.62 (accessed July 22, 2021).
[81] United Nations, "Standards of Conduct."
[82] United Nations, "Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse," *United Nations Peacekeeping*, https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/trust-fund (accessed July 17, 2021).

An allegation or finding of misconduct is ordered in a specific category based on type of allegation/finding and/or status of the alleged/found perpetrator. The UN's SEA findings are contained in Category 1, as well as allegations of torture, murder, illegal trade or trafficking, bribery, major theft, narcotic use, etc. Category 2 allegations, to name but a few, are those of discrimination, simple harassment, minor theft, traffic violations, failure to comply with mission rules. If any senior leader of a team or mission—designated a *P5* level in the UN personnel management system—stands accused of any of the Category 2 behaviors, the allegations are considered Category 1.[83]

Recommendations

Over the past decade or more, the UN continues to improve its Standards of Conduct program and policy implementation, particularly in the area of accountability. In December 2020, the International Peace Institute (IPI) published a Conduct and Discipline Fact Sheet which provides the history of the UN Standards of Conduct as well as an assessment of current gaps in accountability.[84] Six months later, a June 2021 meeting of representatives from 80 Member States illustrated this point. Conducted as part of the Action for Peacekeeping[85] initiative, the meeting provided the attending participants the opportunity to share their own *good practices* in the areas of *prevention*, *enforcement*, and *remedial action*. It was proceeded by a survey in which 35 Member States identified almost 120 *distinct good practices*. Among those shared (paraphrased here):

>*Prevention*. India integrates the UN e-learning course on prevention of misconduct including sexual exploitation and abuse in all uniformed personnel trainings before they are deployed; Rwanda's command and control includes "movement monitoring" at bases and a daily report of misconduct allegations.

>*Enforcement*. Ghana conducts joint investigations on alleged misconduct cases with the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services; Morocco implemented *After Action Reviews* for all misconduct cases; South Africa conducts courts-martial in mission areas on alleged misconduct cases when possible. "Such *in-situ* courts-martial ensure victims and affected communities can participate and directly see justice being served."

>*Remedial Action*. Victim assistance includes medical care, psychosocial support, and provision of material care such as personal care dignity kits. When a child results from sexual exploitation and abuse, the UN and Member States facilitate the pursuit of paternity and child support claims to include legal assistance. The Trust Fund projects address victim needs, to include training and vocational skills, as well as income-generating activities to mitigate stigmatization, restore dignity, and promote reintegration within communities.[86]

The UN continues to collect these Member State *good practices* and will publish on its "UN Conduct in Field Missions" website at a later date.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 26 July 2021.

[83] United Nations, "Conduct in UN Field Missions: Other Misconduct," https://conduct.unmissions.org/other-misconduct-introduction (accessed 1 Dec 2021).

[84] International Peace Institute (IPI), "Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians: Conduct and Discipline," December 2020, https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Conduct-and-Discipline-Factsheet.pdf (accessed July 25, 2021).

[85] United Nations, "Secretary-General's Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping," https://www.un.org/en/A4P/ (accessed 1 Dec 2021).

[86] Minji Ko, "Strengthening the conduct of peacekeeping personnel," *United Nations Peacekeeping*, July 2, 2021, https://medium.com/we-the-peoples/strengthening-the-conduct-of-peacekeeping-personnel-7916e282debb (accessed July 8, 2021).

Multinational Interoperability: The Human Aspect - Leadership

United Nations (UN) Missions' Leadership Selection Criteria and Process

Observation

A May 2020 study, published in *International Studies Quarterly*, analyzed the "probability of selection" of nations' personnel as leaders for United Nations (UN) missions. The authors assert that while the UN purports to appoint the most skilled, knowledgeable, or suitable leaders to missions, UN member states influence the process in various ways. They determined "three key characteristics that affect the probability that a country will receive peacekeeping leadership positions: its power, its personnel contributions to UN peacekeeping, and whether its nationality is a source of valuable skills," which they shortened to "power, recognition, and skills."[87]

In the study, the authors point out national *power* in the UN is of two types: *institutional privilege* (reinforced by UN structure and agreements) as well as from any nation's *general capacities* (such as economic and/or military power).[88] Further, *pivotal* countries—those countries whose contribution to a mission is considered crucial—also have power, albeit mission- or circumstance-specific.

Other observations include[89]:

- "A country's embeddedness in global processes, mission specific troop contributions, and geographic proximity consistently increase nationals' chances of a peacekeeping leadership appointment."[90]
- "Civilian leaders are more likely to come from…permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC)—France, the United Kingdom, and the United States (the P3)—as well as from countries that have served multiple terms as elected UNSC members."
- "Military leaders are more likely to come from less developed economies, long-standing troop contributors, and states that are culturally proximate to the conflict country."[91]

Surprisingly, the authors report: "A number of intuitively crucial factors, such as financial contributions to the peacekeeping budget or bilateral development assistance to the conflict country, *do not* (emphasis added) influence the probability of appointment."[92]

Discussion

To conduct the analysis, the authors considered available data of leader nationality for UN missions between 1990 and 2017. The authors define "leaders" as either Special Representatives of

---

[87] Kseniya Oksamytna, Vincenzo Bove, and Magnus Lundgren, "Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 65, iss. 1, (May 4, 2020), DOI: 10.1093/isq/sqaa023 (accessed April 16, 2021).
[88] In their analysis, the authors "differentiate between extra- and intra-institutional power."
[89] Oksamytna, et al., "Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping."
[90] The authors assert: "Geographic and cultural proximity between peacekeeping troops and the local population is associated with less violence against civilians…However, proximity can be a double-edged sword. Neighboring countries often have a history of enmity or rivalry, while peacekeeping missions need to maintain impartiality. Whether proximity is an obstacle or an asset requires empirical analysis."
[91] The authors also point out the UN's "unwritten rule" that FCs are often from the nations that "make large contributions to the operation in question."
[92] Oksamytna, et al., "Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping." In another section of the study, the authors note "Major donors have a disproportionate influence on *staff* (emphasis added) appointments…"

the Secretary General (SRSGs), generally a civilian position, or as Force Commanders (FCs), usually of a military or security profession. They indicate SRSGs and FCs have "unique characteristics" and "their leadership shapes mission performance and determines whether a UN operation enjoys local support."[93] Further:

> Both SRSGs and FCs wield considerable formal and informal influence over how a mission's mandate is implemented. In resolving dilemmas that the job entails, they rely not only on personal experience, but also on lessons from their country's history, cultural norms prevalent in their society, and informal networks developed during national service.[94]

UN member states seek mission leadership positions for several reasons, but often within one or more of these motives (paraphrased here): to exert influence and increase national visibility (local, regional, or global) and to obtain information. The UN authorities also have motivations for specific leader appointments, such as to "please powerful member states, reward governments for supporting the organization, or tap into skill sets tied to nationality, such as linguistic abilities or local knowledge."[95] The authors suggest yet another reason for UN authorities to select mission leaders from specific member states—"to tie (a) country closer to the organization or the mission."[96]

In summary, the authors' analysis confirmed the UN's selection of mission leaders of the past two or more decades as based on member state *power* and/or contribution *recognition* (either financial or troop-contributing):

> Countries that are highly integrated into global processes, supply a significant number of troops for a specific mission, and are geographically close to the conflict country have a higher likelihood of providing civilian or military leaders.[97]

.
In terms of *skills*, they found evidence of mission leader selection due to anticipated "nationality skills." This is particularly the case where a member state has *mission capture,* whereby the leaders routinely come from a specific nation.[98] In contrast, for leaders' personal skills as a key characteristic to selection for mission, they found "little support for the importance of a democratic background or personal experience"[99] and "no support for the importance of national capabilities, NATO membership, democracy, personal experience (except coming from a country that has already led the given mission in the past), or bilateral assistance to the conflict country."[100]

The authors conclude their findings discussion to suggest they "point to several ethical and practical problems in the functioning of UN peacekeeping and, within generalizability, IOs more broadly."[101] Specifically:

- Institutional power as a basis for leader selection can be dysfunctional if the most capable persons are not visible in the process; and

---

[93] Oksamytna, et al., "Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping."
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] While "mission capture" is anathema to the UN's objective of representation among its mission leader positions, the authors acknowledge: "If a country has already provided a leader for a particular operation, hiring another leader of the same nationality for the same mission provides the benefit of continuity…"
[99] Oksamytna, et al, "Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping."
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

- Recognition by leader selection of the largest troop contributors can allow for limited applicants, and weak loyalty to the UN and its mission.

Recommendations

While unwritten, the most apparent recommendation from this study to address UN mission leader selection challenges is to have awareness of the competing dynamics in the decisions. As the authors highlight:

> The existence of multiple (institutional) hierarchies cannot conceal the "North–South" divide and the fundamental inequality of UN peacekeeping where developing countries risk the lives of their soldiers to obtain influence, while institutionally and diplomatically powerful countries can achieve the same through lobbying.[102]

They suggest further study on (1) the informal influence and hierarchies in international institutions; and (2) development of "other ways in which member states support activities of IOs, such as seconding experts or hosting conferences."[103]

Prepared by: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 23 May 2021.

Cross Cultural Leadership Adjustment (CLA)

JLLIS ID#229812

Observation

For both military and corporate multinational organizations, little is known of the most appropriate leadership style that may assure or improve individual follower performance—and, consequently, organizational effectiveness. However, the past decade saw more research on leadership styles in the multinational environment for the global corporate community. Therefore, there may be some insights from multinational corporate leadership that can also apply to military leaders of multinational commands.

A September 2020 study of a British-based, but multinational, organization, addresses the question of best leadership style when overseeing a culturally diverse organization. As the authors highlight early in their study[104]:

> Within a multinational corporation (MNC), it is not always clear whether managers should adapt their leadership style to match the local expectations or whether it is better to continue with their previously established management styles and practices.

In their findings, they advocate for leadership style *adjustment*. In other words, the researchers note the most effective leadership style is not one or the other, but the leader's ability to adjust between styles to meet the needs of the followers and the organization—*cross cultural leadership*

---

[102] Oksamytna, et al, "Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping."
[103] Ibid.
[104] Rekha Rao-Nicholson, Chris Carr, and Stuart Smith, "Cross-cultural leadership adjustment: A strategic analysis of expatriate leadership at a British multinational enterprise," *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 2020, vol. 62, iss. 6,(September 9, 2020), 675–687,
https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.22176 (accessed August 16, 2021).

adjustment (CLA). However, they also note the *exploration* mode of leadership adjustment appears best suited for positive multinational organizational performance.

Discussion

Seminal research from the 1980s on Work Role Transition (WRT) theory[105] suggest four ways people adjust to new workplace roles along two dimensions. The first dimension is personal development or modification when transitioning to a new position or environment (e.g., behaviors, values, skills). The second dimension relates to the changes as result of the role, such as follower behaviors, work methods and interpersonal relations.

According to WRT theory, persons adjust to new roles in one of four ways—replication, absorption, determination, and exploration. *Replication* implies little change to a person's behavior; the new role is performed in the same manner as previous roles. *Absorption* indicates full adaptation of individual behaviors because the role (position, environment) will not or cannot adapt to the person. *Determination* is directly opposed to absorption, in that the person does not change whatsoever, but the role modifies. The last adjustment way is *exploration*, where both persons and roles adjust to each other and the new reality.[106]

While WRT was not derived specifically for study of multinational (or, cross cultural) entities, its framework is applicable. The September 2020 study leverages the WRT work and is built on another study of multinational organizations from 2019. In the 2019 study, researchers analyzed data and conducted interviews from several foreign managers/leaders/followers (*expatriates*) employed by several multinational corporations with operations in Thailand. The focus on one specific country assumed a common cross-cultural challenge (Thailand), which allowed the researchers to note the adjustments—if any—of the expatriate corporate leadership—regardless of type of multinational organization—to meet their workforce needs.[107] As they summarize in the abstract to the study:

> Results show that the majority of our expatriate executives make adjustments to their leadership approach and try to change Thai employees–thus demonstrating the adoption of an *exploration* mode of adjustment–and that role requirements, Thai employee characteristics, the local hierarchy system and the expatriate leaders' perceptions all influence the latter's modes of adjustment. [108]

In other words, the researchers found the majority of expatriate corporate leaders adapted (adjusted) their personal leadership style to acknowledge the mores of the local culture, yet simultaneously stimulated behavioral change in their followers to meet the leaders' preferred performance modes.

The 2020 study reversed the 2019 data collection technique with focus on one sole multinational corporation (British-based) and its operations across several regions of the globe. This allowed for corporate culture—a key variable—to remain constant, highlighting leadership style

---

[105] Nigel Nicholson, "A Theory of Work Role Transitions," *Administrative Science Quarterly* vol. 29, no. 2, (June 1984): 172, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Theory-of-Work-Role-Transitions.-Nicholson/2857c66167ac6efd1310bf214ba2fcdf1a1ca644 (accessed August 28, 2021).

[106] Nicholson, "A Theory of Work Role Transitions."

[107] Chin-Ju Tsai, Chris Carr, Kun Qiao & Sasiya Supprakit, "Modes of cross-cultural leadership adjustment: adapting leadership to meet local conditions and/or changing followers to match personal requirements?," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 30, 2019, iss. 9, (February 13, 2017), 1477-1504, DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2017.1289549 (accessed August 16, 2021).

[108] Rao-Nicholson, et al., "Cross Cultural Leadership Adjustment."

changes—or not—in any given region. As a result, the study identified three specific *moderators* that influence CLA: *hierarchy*, *decision-making*, and *language.* Perhaps as a "given," it also noted that national culture remains vital as a moderator since both leaders and followers frame their perceptions around it. Most importantly, despite the different approach to data collection, the 2020 study confirmed the major finding of the 2019 study: the *exploration* mode—where both leader and followers/the roles change—was "the most widely adopted mode of adjustment" (CLA) among corporate leaders.[109]

Recommendations

As the 2020 study authors highlight, "one of the biggest challenges facing the global leader is how to turn cultural differences from a threat into a resource."[110] They note "People who used the exploration mode [in which both leader and followers/the roles adjust] reported the most positive influence of culture on overall performance, indicating that they were able to use cultural differences to elevate the overall performance." Perhaps ironically, the authors indicate the "second highest value for perceived positive impact" was found with the *replication* mode (no change to leader behaviors or follower/the role). They believe this suggests that cultural differences can, by themselves, have a positive performance effect.[111]

In contrast, the *determination* mode (when the leader behaviors or style does not change, but the role or the followers do) may have either positive or negative effects on performance or perception, indicative of the negligible impact of individuals' culture (but may be related to personal characteristics of all the actors, instead). At the same time, the *absorption* mode (when the leader fully adapts to new culture environment with no change to follower behaviors or the role) resulted in poor organizational performance perception by both leaders and followers. The study authors do not speculate to reasons cultural differences contribute to the negative performance perception in the absorption mode of leadership adjustment, but it may be related to followers' perceptions of leader inauthenticity or even concerns regarding cultural appropriation.

In summary, "careful management of cultural differences can potentially lead to competitive advantage and contribute to organizational health of the company," whether a corporation or a military organization.[112] The most effective leadership style in such environment is one that adjusts, especially when both leader and followers enact change.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 28 August 2021.

Transformational Leadership—A Pan-Cultural Leadership Style?

JLLIS ID#229811

Observation

Most recommendations offered to military members in leadership of a multinational command refer to the leaders' cultural awareness/competency/literacy and *global mindset*. Few recommendations include an awareness, and potential adjustment, of personal leadership style. Yet, there

---

[109] Rao-Nicholson, "Cross Cultural Leadership Adjustment."
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

is significant research available to assist leaders of multinational corporations improve their effectiveness and efficiency that military leaders can review for applicability of the concepts in their multinational commands.

In March 2021, academic researchers from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Santa Clara University published one such study with focus on *transformational leadership*. Explicitly, the "study investigates the extent to which transformational leadership behaviors are universal: by examining if leaders and followers perceive transformational leadership behaviors the same way across cultures; and by determining if the magnitude of satisfaction that followers derive from transformational leadership behavior is the same across cultures," assuming follower-satisfaction with their leaders results in better group performance.[113]

The study authors determined that transformational leadership behaviors are culturally universal; "that the effects are identical across the globe."[114] This appeared to be valid for two reasons. One, the surveyed followers, regardless of cultural background, recognized—and, therefore, appreciated—the transformational leadership behaviors. Two, they experienced similar amounts of satisfaction from those behaviors, which may result in improved performance of the multicultural group.

Discussion

The authors acknowledge the *cultural contingency* of leadership behaviors in general remains subject of debate. On the side of cultural contingency, they note "since leadership is inherently interpersonal, it is likely that the result of any leadership behavior will reflect the idiosyncrasies of both the leader and the follower, so culture should moderate the outcome."[115] Opposite to *cultural contingency* is *cultural universality*, a phrase that suggests humans tend to be similar—universal—in their appreciation of leadership behaviors (among other human interactions), despite cultural differences.

The study's data analysis included "71,537 leaders and their direct reports (*n* = 203,027) from 77 countries" and respondents represented different organizations, functional areas, industries, and all management levels.[116] This extremely large and diverse survey group reinforced the study's finding that "transformational leadership appears to be a universally satisfying style of leadership."[117]

---

[113] Arran Caza, Brianna B. Caza, and Barry Z. Posner, "Transformational Leadership across Cultures: Follower Perception and Satisfaction," *Administrative Sciences*, vol. 11, iss. 1, (Special Issue: Servant Leadership and Followers' Well-Being) (March 19, 2021), https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci11010032 (accessed August 20, 2021).
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid. Specifically, the study indicates: The data in this investigation were generated by a private company that routinely helps individuals assess their leadership behaviors through an online survey platform. Participating leaders provide an assessment of their own behavior and invite their direct reports to provide a confidential assessment of their leadership behavior. The sample included respondents from hundreds of different organizations, representing all levels of hierarchy, 12 functional areas, and 26 industries. The participants were from 77 different countries, and while the sample was predominantly (91.6%) from the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic zone, all zones were robustly represented: Latin America (*n* = 2037), European (*n* = 2894), and African-Asian (*n* = 12,005). We conducted our analyses on data from all leaders (*n* = 71,537) and their direct reports (*n* = 203,027) who met three criteria: they were at least 18 years old, had worked together for at least one year, and both self-identified as members of the same culture zone. Slightly less than half (43%) of the leaders were women; most had a college or graduate degree (81%). Nearly half (49%) had more than 10 years of tenure with their current organization, 23% had 5–10 years, 12% had 3–5 years, and 16% had between one and three years of tenure. By age, the sample of leaders was 18–32 years (10%), 33–40 years (29%), 41–49 years (34%), 50–59 years (23%), and 60+ years (4%). Direct reports were generally younger than their leaders, with less tenure; half were women, and over two-thirds had a college or graduate degree.
[117] Caza, et al, *Transformational Leadership*.

Followers around the world reported similar levels of increased satisfaction in response to transformational leadership behavior and showed similar tendencies in their recognition of such behavior from their leaders. At least in terms of follower satisfaction, it appears that transformational leadership is a "safe bet" for how leaders should behave. The results suggest that leaders' efforts at transformational behavior will be recognized and appreciated in similar ways by most followers.

As the authors conclude, "the existence of *pan-cultural leadership behaviors* [emphasis added] challenges many existing assumptions and can expand current leadership theory in important ways."[118]

Recommendations

For those unfamiliar with the term transformational leadership, the authors summarize the existing literature and produce a definition from the 1980s. In this definition, *transformational leadership* is "how leaders can change followers' perceptions of tasks, motivating them to transcend self-interest and work on behalf of the group," in contrast to *transactional leadership*, defined as "influencing behavior through rewards and punishments."[119]

They highlight the specific leader behaviors shared by most transformational leadership models, summarized here[120]:

- Clarify values, set a clear example, and act on the values alignment between leader, followers, and organization;
- Inspire a shared vision co-created with followers;
- Seek opportunities for improvement, question the status quo, and support a climate of experimentation;
- Build relationships, promote cooperation, provide autonomy, and enhance competencies; and
- Encourage through positive reinforcement.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 23 August 2021.

Multinational Interoperability: Transitions

The 2011 Transition in Iraq and Subsequent US Military Transition Doctrine

JLLIS ID#231177

Observation

In 2013, RAND published a study of the US and coalition efforts to transfer authority to host nation entities and drawdown military forces, titled *Smooth Transitions: Lessons Learned from Transferring U.S. Military Responsibilities to Civilian Authorities in Iraq*. The lessons shared in the study

---

[118] Caza, et al, *Transformational Leadership*.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.

reflect the US military's "succession of transitions" from 2003—shortly after US and coalition forces invaded Iraq—to 2011, the final year of significant US military presence in Iraq.[121]

While *Operation Inherent Resolve* saw the US military returned to Iraq in 2014, it was at much smaller levels. Naturally, the 2013 RAND study does not account for US military actions beyond its publication date. However, the 2014 reintroduction of US military combat forces and their proposed withdrawal—or reclassification—at the end of 2021 may represent yet another transition.[122]

The RAND study notes "no textbooks guided planners through the complexities" of the transitions experienced in Iraq prior to 2011.[123] Yet, the word *transition* and its related topics appeared in several US military doctrinal documents well before 2011. Even so—and perhaps due to the US military's Iraq experiences with transitions—recently published US military doctrine emphasizes and details transitions as a strategic and operational planning imperative.

Discussion

Both the RAND study and contemporary US military doctrine emphasize the importance of *stakeholder inclusion* in transition plan development. As examples, FM 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations*, describes a transition planning as an "area of interest (with) a multi-stakeholder environment" and suggests "developing working knowledge and understanding key stakeholders…is vital to the overall success of the transition line of effort".[124]

JP 3-08, *Interorganizational Cooperation*, also proposes identification of stakeholders in the transition process as an imperative to a plan's success. It states, "when interagency partners, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector do not participate in transition planning, military operations may be withdrawn prematurely or protracted to compensate for activities normally conducted by those entities" and further instructs planners to "anticipate the impact of transition on the local populace and other organizations."[125]

One of the key findings of the RAND study also addressed stakeholder inclusion. RAND's recommendation, *Cooperative, well-organized, and timely planning is essential to successful transitions*, counsels the use of *a multiagency planning process*, from the US Administration level to the local level.

Transition timing is also part of both the RAND study and US military doctrine. JP 3-08 reminds planners:

---

[121] Rick Brennan, Jr., Charles P. Ries, Larry Hanauer, Ben Connable, Terrence Kelly, Michael J. McNerney, Stephanie Young, Jason H. Campbell, and K. Scott McMahon, *Smooth Transitions? Lessons Learned from Transferring U.S. Military Responsibilities to Civilian Authorities in Iraq*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9749.html (accessed October 3, 2021).

[122] Colm Quinn, "Kadhimi Visits the White House," *Foreign Policy*, July 26, 2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/26/iraq-troop-withdrawal-kadhimi/ (accessed October 29, 2021).

[123] Brennan, et al., *Smooth Transitions*.

[124] Department of the Army, *The Army in Multinational Operations*, FM 3-16 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2014), https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/fm3_16.pdf (accessed October 12, 2021).

[125] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interorganizational Cooperation*, JP 3-08 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016), https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_08.pdf?ver=CqudGqyJFga9GaACVxgaDQ%3d%3d (accessed October 29, 2021).

A transition is not a single event where all activity happens at once. It is a rolling process of little handoffs between different actors along several streams of activities. There are usually multiple transitions for any one stream of activity over time.[126]

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-07, *Stability*, concurs with this perspective, indicating "operations can involve multiple types of transitions," but further suggests transitions "often occur concurrently."[127] The RAND study addressed transition planning timing in other key findings. The study asserts "pretransition planning should be launched several years ahead of the transition deadline," and to "initiate work early with the host nation to identify posttransition [sic] requirements."[128]

The RAND study identifies two specific types of transition:

> During the eight-year U.S. effort in Iraq, the term *transition* came to mean many different things to different stakeholders at different times. Most basically, the term referred to institutional transitions, such as transferring responsibilities from military authorities to the U.S. embassy or the Iraqi government. At the same time, however, transition also referred to changes in the functions that the U.S. military oversaw — from orchestrating combat operations to conducting counterinsurgency efforts, advising and assisting Iraqis, and administering broad-based reconstruction and economic development efforts.[129] [emphasis in original]

US military doctrine reflects these two transition types and introduces others. The US Army's Field Manual (FM) 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations*, distinguishes four types of institutional transitions: military relief-in-place, military to civilian or UN authorities, UN chapter escalation or de-escalation or the ROE [Rule of Engagement] situation, and military handover to a national government.[130] Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, Multinational Operations, identifies four types of transitions that relate to both institutional and functional transitions:

> In general, transition could be the *transition from one type of operation to another*, the *transition between the various phases* of an operation, the *transition of a specific function or service* from one organization to another (i.e., logistics), or the *transition of authority* for the effort from one organization to another (i.e., JTF to MNF or MNF to international organization/HN.)[131] [emphasis added]

Regardless of stakeholder inclusion, timing, or transition type, JP 3-16 reminds policymakers and planners:

> Each transition involves inherent risk. The risk is amplified when multiple transitions must be managed simultaneously or when the force must quickly conduct a series of transitions. Planning anticipates these transitions, and careful preparation and diligent execution ensure they occur without incident. Transitions are identified as decisive points on lines of effort; they typically mark a significant shift in effort and signify the gradual return to civilian

[126] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interorganizational Cooperation*.
[127] Department of the Army, *Stability,* ADP 3-07 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2019), https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1007358 (accessed October 12, 2021).
[128] Brennan, et al., *Smooth Transitions*.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Department of the Army, *The Army in Multinational Operations.*
[131] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Multinational Operations*.

oversight and control of the HN. Because of these risks and complexities, lower-priority development projects may not be resourced.[132]

While ADP 3-07 concurs with the risks associated with transitions, it also instructs "Transitions create unexpected opportunities."[133]

Recommendations

The RAND study offered several recommendations for policymakers and planners alike to consider. Among them included (extracts emphasized):

- *Cooperative, Well-Organized, and Timely Planning is Essential to Successful Transitions*. It should be a *multiagency planning process*, started well *ahead of the transition deadline*. The effort should be *staffed with capable planners who are not involved in current operations, granted all necessary authorities,* and have *support from relevant congressional committees*. The transition plans must include the *cost of an enduring civilian-led mission* and host nation *posttransition* [sic] *requirements*.

- *Goals for the Campaign and the Host Nation Following the Transition Should be Realistic for the Long Term*. The transition planning must include a re-assessment of *campaign goals well before the departure of forces* and prepare the Host Nation's institutional capacity, which may also include bolstering institution interest, to sustain the tasks and programs instituted by the military forces. The transition must *assess whether partner nations can independently sustain equipment and systems after U.S. forces and contractors depart and Department of Defense (DoD) funding ends.*

- *All the Ramifications of Use of Contractors Need to be Taken into Account*. A central US government office should *manage all contracts and contractors in theater*. Further, *planners should discuss with host-nation officials plans to use contractors after U.S. forces depart.*

- *Information maintained by the military has ongoing value that should be transferred to other organizations before the end of the mission. Future transitions should undertake systematic knowledge management* because *knowledge management efforts are essential during and after the drawdown period.*

FM 3-16, The Army in Multinational Operations, provides more detail for the planner in its Principles of Transition. After noting "principles apply to all levels of transition… (and) planning considerations vary based on the conditions predicting transition," the FM highlights:

- Transition is condition and not time based.
- Start at the bottom.
- Thin out and do not hand-off.
- Maintain situational awareness and points of influence.
- Transition institutions, functions, and geographic areas.
- Ensure enduring resources are not diverted simply to pursue transition.
- Always retain a headquarters.

---

[132] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Multinational Operations.*
[133] Department of the Army, *Stability.*

- Reinvest the dividends.
- Own and protect the influence campaign. [134]

Whether challenge or opportunity, transitions are a critical component of strategic and operational plans. As the RAND study concludes, "Perhaps the most important part of a war is how it ends, for that will set the stage for what is to follow." [135]

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 29 October 2021.

Planning the Transition from Stabilization to Development

JLLIS ID#214713

Observation

Transitions from stabilization, especially counter-insurgency, to development must be planned and coordinated. Stabilization projects are the short-term seeds from which long-term development will grow. Care should be taken to ensure that stabilization projects will contribute to longer-term development activities, and that there is a clear handover or transition from stabilization to development not only in terms of projects, but especially United States Government (USG) agencies, partner nations, and other actors.

Discussion

During 2011 in Afghanistan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) executed a full spectrum, comprehensive counter-insurgency campaign. This campaign had a significant stabilization component, including many strategic infrastructure projects which had execution time lines measured in years, not months. These projects spanned seven lines of infrastructure including: power, water, roads, rail, civil aviation, information and communication technology, and customs & borders. When the USG made a decision to hastily transition the lead for security operations to the Afghans, there was little thought to transitioning the lead for stability operations.

From a military perspective, the lead for counter-insurgency security operations to the Afghans was quickly achieved, although in hindsight this transition was flawed. However, there was no transition of military stabilization as part of the continuing counter-insurgency campaign, and this would prove fateful for the Afghans and by extension the coalition and specifically the USG. From a purely stabilization perspective there were also major issues. There was little appetite on the part of USG inter-agency partners to continue many of these projects. The resources expended to initiate these projects, not only in terms of money but human lives and other national treasure, suddenly became wasted.

At the same time that the Department of Defense (DoD) scaled back in terms of numbers and locations, as were the Department of State (DOS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and others. The ability of USG personnel to travel Afghanistan in order to oversee projects was greatly curtailed, and the reduced numbers of remaining USG personnel in country forced the abandonment of many projects. This led to the Afghans fighting a limited counter-insurgency campaign with only half, a kinetic portion, and no supporting stabilization

---

[134] Department of the Army, *The Army in Multinational Operations.*
[135] Brennan, et al., *Smooth Transitions.*

component. As a result the Afghans lost control of much of the territory that had transitioned to them, as well as the loss of the population that resided in it, and the Taliban insurgency grew stronger and continues to challenge the central Afghan government five years later [this lesson was written in Nov 2018, prior to the fall of the Government of Afghanistan in August 2021]. Just as bad, various audits fault the USG for wasting vast sums of money on projects that were either not completed, or that failed to achieve their intended purpose.

Recommendation

Future military operations requires improved participation between the DoD, DOS, and USAID. This participation and coordination must happen early in the planning process and be continuous throughout execution in order to ensure that all three organizations are fully aware of the future course of the operations, the conduct of stabilization activities during the operations, and to allow for a smooth transition to development following the operation. Failure to improve the participation and coordination between DoD, DOS, and USAID in the planning and execution of operations, especially those operations that have large stabilization components such as Counter-Insurgency, then the USG will continue to experience failures in US policy objectives, and find itself the focus of various audits and reports highlighting significant waste of taxpayer money.

Lesson Author: Charles Barham, then of USCENTCOM J3-IAD. Lesson added to JLLIS by PKSOI on 8 November 2018 and edited by Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, PKSOI, on 12 October 2021.

United Nations (UN) Lessons Learned for Mission Transitions

JLLIS ID#231167

Observation

In 2021, the UN published a paper titled "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Transition Planning Processes: Lessons Learned from Recent Transition Processes" which compared the drawdown, or withdrawal, of two distinct UN missions: Haiti and Sudan.[136] As one of the authors shared:

> UN Transitions planning require strengthened partnership amongst various partners at the political and programmatic levels, (and) while some of the recommendations provided in the attached publication might be more relevant to DDR practitioners others would be important for any actors to bear in mind when supporting UN transitions planning processes.[137]

The comparison of the two UN missions transition process indicates there are many similar consideration areas during transition as well as similar approaches. However, it also illustrates "there is no single blueprint for successful transitions."[138]

---

[136] The paper is out of the "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Section," in the *Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions,* of the *Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of the United Nations.*
[137] Akossiwa Lea Koudjou, email message to lesson author, September 30, 2021.
[138] United Nations, Department of Peace Operations, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Transition Planning Processes: Lessons Learned from Recent Transition Processes*, (May 2021) https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/ddr-and-transition-planning-processes-lessons-learned (accessed October 2, 2021).

Discussion

Several United Nations (UN) entities and partners published a series of thematic papers to support the UN Transitions Project.[139] These papers provide insights to past and current UN mission transitions with lessons to apply to future mission transitions. In addition, they often share recommendations for specific entities or policies to improve program integration towards mission transitions.

The recognition of the importance of transition management to peace sustainment is not new. As example, a decade-old study, published in The World Bank Economic Review (2008), noted post-conflict countries experienced economic growth after two to five years of some level of UN intervention, but those post-conflict short-term gains often reversed themselves for a variety of reasons. Therefore, the study author concluded:

> Successful peace-building…require that these political and economic imperatives of post-conflict [sic] transitions be accounted for in the design of UN peacekeeping operations as well as the aid regime.[140]

The *UN Policy on Transitions*, properly known as *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, and the *Integrated Assessment and Planning Policy*[141] appeared in 2013. The *Policy on Transitions* acknowledges the UN's "goal is for post-conflict countries to reach a point where no further UN presence is required and for UN transitions to lead to a handover of responsibilities to national actors" and defines transitions in two distinct but related contexts: change of mission size and/or purpose.[142] As the title indicates, it identifies key principles for UN assets drawdown or withdrawal: early planning; UN integration; national ownership; national capacity development; and communication.[143] It also clarifies UN actors' roles and responsibilities to those processes.

In 2014, several UN entities and partners initiated UN Transitions Project "to improve the way in which UN transition processes are being planned and managed across the organization."[144] By February 2019, the UN Secretary-General approved and disseminated a *Planning Directive for the development of consistent and coherent UN Transition processes*, designed to complement the previous policies on transition planning and provide operational guidance to UN missions. It highlights the UN expectations for transition planning in three specific areas. *Early joint planning* reinforces two key principles found in the 2013 *Policy on Transitions*, *early planning* and *UN integration*, with the additional emphasis on *financing*[145] the transition efforts. The other two transition

---

[139] United Nations, Peacebuilding, "Thematic Papers," https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/thematic-papers.1 (accessed October 16, 2021).

[140] Ibrahim A. Elbadawi, "Post Conflict Transitions: An Overview," *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 22, iss. 1, (February 20, 2008), 1, https://doi.org/10.1093/wber/lhn002 (accessed October 27, 2021).

[141] United Nations, *Integrated Assessment and Planning Policy*, approved by the Secretary-General, April 9, 2013, https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-policy-integrated-assessment-and-planning (accessed October 15, 2021).

[142] United Nations, *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, endorsed by the Secretary-General, February 4, 2013, http://dag.un.org/handle/11176/89550 (accessed October 15, 2021).

[143] Ibid.

[144] Adam Day, "UN Transitions: Improving Security Council Practice in Mission Settings**,"** (United Nations University: New York, 2020) https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/un-transitions-improving-security-council-practice-in-mission-settings.html (accessed October 27, 2021). The entities included: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO) – supported by the Swedish International Development Agency and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

[145] The UN Secretary-General's Report, "Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace," shares this data: In 2019, 30 percent of the [Peacebuilding] Fund's investments supported transition settings…Investments in transition settings are ex-

32

planning expectations, *operational support* and *staffing,* recognize the infrastructure requirement needed to support mission transitions.[146]

Authors Thomas Kontogeorgos and Akossiwa Lea Koudjou, of the UN's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Section, reviewed the UN's DDR activities for both Haiti and Sudan. They point out "the transition processes in Haiti and Sudan followed highly distinct approaches due to their conflict dynamics, and international pressure driven by donor fatigue and resource considerations".[147] yet there were commonalities that may be helpful to future transition efforts.

Recommendations

The authors share their transition planning recommendations for both mission headquarters and field level operations across four aspects: *sustained political engagement*, *meaningful and enabling partnership*, *alternative funding opportunities*, and *post-transition*.[148] These aspects correlate in some level with the *Policy for Transitions* and the UN's planning directives and guidance. Specifically, *sustained political engagement* reflects the key principle of *national ownership*; *meaningful and enabling partnership* reinforces the *national capacity development* and *communication* principles; alternative funding opportunities and post-transition both fall within *early planning* and *UN integration* principles as well as the three transition planning expectations found in the February 2019 directive.

However, the authors offer other insights for mission transitions beyond these four aspects. For example, one insight suggests UN or other functional experts "may set a positive tone" with personal "transition of mindset on their roles," particularly the shift from a *mentorship* to an *advisory* role with local and national persons.[149] Another insight directs that initial planning should include both the eventual transition and ultimate exit, or end of mission. They suggest a "good exit strategy" should establish benchmarks (partnerships, funding, and political outreach), be periodically reviewed, and have a contingency. They further suggest the contingency plan should consider the situation if the transition or exit is forced before meeting the benchmarks. As they summarize:

> A contingency plan needs to identify partners who could take over such tasks, funding and non-financial resources. The exit strategy and its contingency plan need to be coordinated and agreed on with both national (including local) and international partners.[150]

As the UN Secretary-General emphasized to the Security Council in September 2021, "no peacekeeping operation has ever been designed to be permanent."[151] Yet, the drawdown or withdrawal of UN entities from a mission can be perilous to the fragile peace. As several UN officials reminded

pected to account for the largest share of the Fund's investments in its strategy for the period 2020–2024. United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, "Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace," July 30, 2020, https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/sg_report_on_peacebuilding_and_sustaining_peace.a.74.976-s.2020.773.200904.e_4.pdf (accessed October 27, 2021).

[146] United Nations, *Lessons Learned from Recent Transition Processes*.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid. UN-led discussions with DDR experts through 2019 and a December 2020 meeting contributed to the development of the four aspects.

[149] United Nations, *Lessons Learned from Recent Transition Processes*.

[150] Ibid.

[151] UN Security Council, "In Post-conflict States, Engagement with Local Actors Must Continue through Transition Period and Beyond, Secretary-General Tells Security Council," United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, September 8, 2021, https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14624.doc.htm (accessed October 17, 2021).

their peers, "the shift to post-conflict peacebuilding is both a sign of progress and a time of profound risks."[152] Aggravating the situation, the UN missions often face a "financial cliff" as they transition due to donor-fatigue. Therefore, transitions are underfunded and have inconsistent resources despite the important need. Transition planning—and revisions of plans—can mitigate these challenges.

Lesson Author: Lorelei Coplen, Lessons Learned Analyst, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 27 October 2021.

PKSOI Lesson Reports and SOLLIMS Samplers (2010-2021)

2021

- PKSOI Semiannual Lesson Report Setting the Stage (May 2021)

2020

- PKSOI Semiannual Lesson Report Multinational Interoperability for Peace and Stability (November 2020)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Consolidating Gains (March 2020)

2019

- PKSOI Lesson Report Partnering (December 2019)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Strategic Planning (September 2019)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Conflict Prevention (June 2019)
- PKSOI Lesson Report SSR and DDR (January 2019)

2018

- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 10 Issue 1 Transitional Public Security (December 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 4 Foreign Humanitarian Assistance (September 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 3 PKSO Complexities and Challenges (July 2018)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Right-Sizing and Stage-Setting (July 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 2 Inclusive Peacebuilding (May 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 1 Monitoring and Evaluation (January 2018)

2010-17

- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 8 Issue 2 Operationalizing WPS (November 2017)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Sp Ed Leadership in Crisis and Complex Operations (May 2017)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 8 Issue 1 Civil Affairs in Stability Operations (March 2017)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Sp Ed Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) (January 2017)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 7 Issue 4 Strategic Communication in PSO (November 2016)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 7 Issue 3 Stabilization and Transition (August 2016)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 1 Issue 2 Investing in Training (June 2016)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 7 Issue 1 Building Stable Governance (March 2016)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 6 Issue 4 Shifts in UN Peacekeeping (February 2016)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 6 Issue 3 FHA Concepts, Principles and Applications (December 2015)

---

[152] UN Security Council, "In Post-conflict States, Engagement with Local Actors Must Continue through Transition Period and Beyond, Secretary-General Tells Security Council."

- [SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 6 Issue 2 FHA Complexities (September 2015)](#)
- [SOLLIMS Sampler Sp Ed Cross Cutting Guidelines for Stability Operations (July 2015)](#)
- [SOLLIMS Sampler Sp Ed Lessons from US Army War College Students (May 2015)](#)
- [PKSOI Lesson Report MONUSCO Lessons Learned (December 2014)](#)
- [SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 5 Issue 4 Reconstruction and Development (November 2014)](#)
- [SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 5 Issue 2 Overcoming Spoilers (April 2014)](#)
- [SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 5 Issue 1 Host Nation Security (January 2014)](#)
- [SOLLIMS Sampler Sp Ed Lessons from US Army War College Students (August 2013)](#)
- [PKSOI Lesson Summary Understanding Security Sector Reform and Security Force Assistance (July 2010)](#)