Topic:

Attending to the "Human Domain"

This record has implications in the following areas:

------------------------ ---STABOPS Sectors ------------------------

GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION
SECURITY SECTOR REFORM
ECONOMIC STABILIZATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

------------------------ --P/SO - SPECIAL FACTORS ------------------------

VILLAGE STABILITY OPERATIONS
GOVERNANCE - SUB-NATIONAL
DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

------------------------ -PMESII-PT ------------------------

POLITICAL
MILITARY
ECONOMIC
SOCIAL/SOCIETAL
INFORMATION

------------------------ DOTMLPF-P ------------------------

ORGANIZATION
LEADERSHIP/EDUCATION
This record has the following UJTLs associated with it:

OP 2.2 COLLECT AND SHARE OPERATIONAL INFORMATION.
OP 4.7 PROVIDE POLITICO-MILITARY SUPPORT TO OTHER NATIONS, GROUPS, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.
ST 8 DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN ALLIANCE AND REGIONAL RELATIONS.

This record has no Essential Tasks associated with it.

This record has no files associated with it.

Topic:

Attending to the "Human Domain"

Observations:

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

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

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

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

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

Discussion:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Recommendation:**

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

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

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

**Implications:**

N/A

**Comments:**

THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OF INTEREST TO:

- Department of State – Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- Department of Defense – Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- Department of the Army – Deputy Chief of Staff, G3
- United Nations – Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO)

**Event Description:**

This lesson is based on the following REFERENCES:


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


(9) “Rebuilding Schools and Communities in Post-conflict Kenya,” SOLLIMS Lesson 772.


(14) “Youth Shura Innovation in Afghanistan,” SOLLIMS Lesson 771.


(21) “DDR Initiative in Northern Iraq,” SOLLIMS Lesson 774.

(22) “Bottom-up Approach to Reintegration in Northern Afghanistan,” SOLLIMS Lesson 778.

(23) “Strategic Lesson Number 6: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR),” PKSOI, 30 April 2012.
MEMBER PERSPECTIVES ON THIS OBSERVATION:

26 Dec 2012 20:30:08

(U) Excellent and insightful perspective!

This post addresses a long-overdue topic that well deserves reading and heeding.

Regards
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