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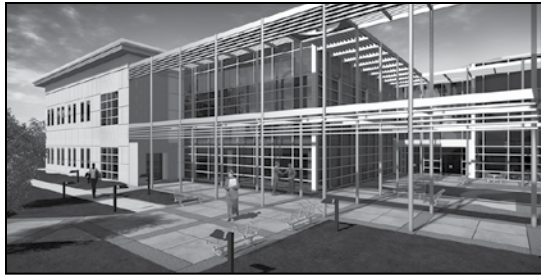
Cultural Intelligence for Special Forces Personnel

Russell D. Howard, Greta Hanson, and Carly Laywell

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Foreword

In a 2009 JSOU Press monograph reflecting on the education requirements for Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel, Brigadier General Russ Howard (U.S. Army, retired) identified "cultural competency" as critical to SOF professional development. He returns to this theme with researchers Greta Hanson and Carly Laywell by answering this question: Why can some people act effectively in new cultures or among people with unfamiliar backgrounds while others, even highly respected people within their own group, stumble in those same situations?

The research team asserts that cultural intelligence (CQ) makes the difference and describes a proficiency that goes beyond simply being intelligent, emotionally mature, or having good general social skills. The empirical evidence offered in the research should resonate because SOF personnel will recognize operator attributes. These include bridging divides and knowledge gaps in an organization: transferring knowledge between otherwise disparate groups; and helping to build interpersonal connections and smooth the interpersonal processes in a multicultural team.

The need for the SOF operator to effectively interact with interagency counterparts, indigenous peoples, and transnational, nongovernmental actors suggests that a predictive assessment of CQ potential and a toolkit of skills for professional development could be a key component of talent management and a source of competitive advantage. The authors argue that culturally intelligent personnel possess the potential to boost innovation and creativity due to their ability to help the team make best use of the multiple perspectives which are central to by, with, and through strategies.

Howard, Hanson, and Laywell underscore the fact that successful people are not necessarily the multilingual, the executives, or socialites. They can be serious-minded quiet professionals. Their message to SOF is that a person with high CQ, whether cultivated or innate, can understand and master situations, persevere, and do the right thing.

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About the Authors

Brigadier General (retired) Russ Howard is a senior fellow at the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) and a senior advisor to Singapore's Home Team Academy. General Howard was founding director of the Jebsen Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and head of the Department of Social Sciences at West Point, where he was also founding director of the Combating Terrorism Center.

General Howard's Army positions include chief of staff fellow at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, and commander of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Lewis, Washington. Other assignments include assistant to the Special Representative to the Secretary General during UN Operations in Somalia II, deputy chief of staff for I Corps, and chief of staff and deputy commander for the Combined Joint Task Force, Haiti/Haitian Advisory Group. He previously was commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and served as administrative assistant to Admiral Stansfield Turner and as a special assistant to the commander of U.S. Southern Command.

As a newly commissioned officer, Howard served as an "A" team commander in the 7th Special Forces Group from 1970 to 1972. He left the active component and served in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1972 to 1980. During this period he served as an overseas manager of American International Underwriters, Melbourne, Australia, and China tour manager for Canadian Pacific Airlines. He was recalled to active duty in 1980 and served initially in Korea as an infantry company commander. Subsequent assignments included classified project officer, U.S. Army 1st Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, and operations officer and company commander, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa, Japan.

General Howard has a B.S. in industrial management from San Jose State University and a B.A. in Asian studies from the University of Maryland. He also has an M.A. in international management from the Monterey Institute

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Carly Laywell is a researcher at the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program (MonTREP). She is a former Rotary Foundation Cultural Ambassadorial Scholar to France and a recent recipient of the State Department's Critical Language Scholar for Arabic. A native Texan, she holds a B.A. from Southern Methodist University and an M.A. from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

Introduction

*C*ultural Intelligence for Special Forces Personnel is the third culture-related monograph the lead author has written for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). Published in 2011, *Cultural and Linguistic Skills Acquisition for Special Forces Soldiers: Necessity, Acceleration, and Potential Alternatives* was the first.[1] It identified the need for Special Forces soldiers to gain competency in foreign languages in the post-Iraq and Afghanistan international security environment. It speculated that these soldiers will be deployed primarily in the so-called arc of instability, a swath of territory from the Caribbean to the Indonesian archipelago, which is home to hundreds, if not thousands, of different languages, dialects, and cultures. The monograph further speculated that these troops will need to be knowledgeable about the languages and cultures not only of their adversaries, but also, and as importantly, of the allies with whom they will work in this arc of instability. The monograph next explained that learning foreign languages and about foreign cultures are not mutually exclusive but mutually supporting, particularly when learned in tandem. Finally, and most important for this current work on cultural intelligence (CQ), the *Cultural and Linguistic Skills* monograph addressed the challenges of foreign language and cultural education and training, and determined that learning a foreign language is easier than learning about its related culture, for three main reasons.

First, many countries in the arc of instability conduct everyday business and discourse in non-native second languages, such as English, French, Arabic, Spanish, and Russian. Therefore, it often is not necessary for Special Forces soldiers to learn the native tongue, as they can rely on one of these other languages, which they learn while in training and maintain throughout their careers. For example, the ability to converse in English, French, or Arabic will suffice in most parts of Africa. Second, technology will eventually produce software and lightweight hardware that will translate English into most languages, and vice versa, which will enable a Special Forces soldier, or, for that matter, any military person, diplomat, businessperson, etc., with a laptop and the right software to communicate in near real time with non-English speakers in most parts of the world. In fact, such technology is available now via Google and other search engines. Third, and most relevant

to this monograph, is the likelihood that future military personnel will be assessed for their ability to learn a foreign language, whereas no assessment vehicle has been available to measure their ability to learn about a foreign culture. This quote from the earlier monograph is instructive:

> Unlike the case of foreign languages, where evidence exists that some have better aptitude for learning another language than others, there is no such reliable evidence regarding the learning of culture. Recent studies attempting to measure a person's cultural intelligence (CQ) are interesting and informative, but inconclusive.[2]

However, this is no longer the case. There is now an assessment tool for measuring individuals' cultural acumen, which is a central topic of this monograph. All Special Forces soldiers have taken the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB), which has been refined over the years to produce more definitive assessments of people's ability to learn a foreign language. It is now sophisticated enough to predict fairly accurately what level of language difficulty a person can master. Few, however, know of the CQ assessment tool, which is better than the DLAB in at least one significant way: if the DLAB assessment determines that a Special Forces candidate does not have acumen in learning a foreign language, the soldier is dropped from consideration for Special Forces. Like the DLAB, the CQ assessment can also determine if a candidate lacks cultural education and training acumen. However, unlike the DLAB, the CQ assessment has a mechanism that suggests how the candidate can improve their CQ and thus improve their assessment score. The CQ assessment can also determine a person's cultural orientation—that is, the culture(s) a person has a particular affinity for, which can accelerate their ability to work in that culture. At present there are 10 'cultural clusters' that closely match the U.S. Special Forces Groups' areas of operation. For example, a person with a cultural value orientation toward the 'Confucian Asia Cluster' and/or the 'Southern Asia Cluster' might be a better pick for 1st Special Forces Group than a person with a 'Latin America Cluster' value orientation, who would likely do well in the 7th Special Forces Group.

Published in December 2013, the lead author's second culture-related monograph for JSOU was titled simply, *Strategic Culture*.[3] The monograph compared the strategic cultures of three nations and a non-state actor: Iran, China, North Korea, and al-Qaeda. Generally speaking, an analysis of strategic culture examines the motivators and conditions necessary for a nation

to use force. While several similarities and differences were noted among the four subjects, one cultural phenomenon stood out in all of them: mirror imaging. Mirror imaging is the incorrect assumption that, given similar circumstances and stimuli, an adversary of another culture will act in the same manner as one's own. Unfortunately, the research found that U.S. leaders have all too frequently succumbed to mirror imaging when assessing the nation's adversaries, which reflects poor cultural intelligence. This topic is covered in some depth in this third and final culture-related monograph for JSOU.

Cultural Intelligence is the product of several months of interesting research and training for the lead author to qualify himself as a CQ practitioner and instructor, which included training sessions in Chicago and Kuala Lumpur. Although there is no magic formula for acquiring CQ, a person's CQ ability can be measured and improved. This monograph addresses personal, strategic, and cultural situations in which high CQ capability is important. It also dives deeply into the CQ assessment process and explains why developing CQ skills is so important for Special Forces soldiers, particularly given the threatening environments these soldiers will face over the next several decades in the areas of the world where they will have to operate successfully. After describing the CQ assessment process, the monograph offers examples of what a personal CQ assessment looks like and explains how a person can increase his or her CQ.

A key benefit of having CQ acumen is that it enables a person to do a quick study of a particular culture. Studying the 10 culture clusters detailed in this monograph can enhance this ability. The clusters consist of groups of countries with broadly similar characteristics. These clusters can provide a quick study for Special Forces commanders required to go into unfamiliar cultural territory.

Finally, there is the 'so what' question: why CQ? Unlike the other culture-related monographs for JSOU, which are primarily analytical and informative, this work advocates for the need to acquire CQ acumen, which is important for two main reasons. First, if a soldier who lacks CQ acumen is accepted into Special Forces, the authors believe it could have disastrous implications in the field. Second, and more importantly, the CQ assessment process gives prospective Special Forces soldiers the opportunity to increase their CQ if they come up short. Unlike IQ (intelligence quotient), which

according to most experts remains fairly constant throughout a person's life, CQ can be improved.

Cultural Intelligence has eight chapters. Chapter one describes the science behind the ability to assess the four components of CQ: drive, knowledge, strategy, and action. Chapter two continues the explanation of these four components, using vignettes and personal accounts to emphasize the importance of CQ. Chapter three puts CQ into a strategic context and notes how mirror imaging can have important international and strategic consequences—sometimes favorable and sometimes adverse. Chapter four provides an in-depth discussion of the CQ assessment process, using the lead author's personal CQ assessment results as an exemplar. Chapter five discusses the relationship between CQ and operational design, which is a relatively new analytical procedure designed to help military planners address irregular warfare threats. Chapter six explains the 10 cultural clusters and describes how important having knowledge of the clusters can be to the geographically oriented Special Forces Groups. Chapter seven reviews how Special Forces soldiers can improve their CQ.

The following CQ-related questions specific to Special Operations Forces (SOF) are answered in chapters two through eight:

1. Does the Special Forces community need a CQ assessment capability?

2. Is the CQ assessment process articulated in this monograph a functional cultural assessment tool for Special Forces soldiers?

3. Can good CQ acumen be beneficial to individual Special Forces soldiers as they carry out their duties?

4. Can senior Special Forces leaders benefit from CQ in the strategic planning process?

5. Can Special Forces Group commanders benefit from the cultural clusters CQ methodology?

6. Is the notion of improving CQ viable and important for the Special Forces community?

Chapter eight answers the 'so what' question by reviewing the importance of CQ to the Special Forces community.

1. The Technical Aspects of Cultural Intelligence

Why do some people thrive in culturally diverse situations while others fail? The answer lies in a person's cultural intelligence, or how successfully they function in diverse cultural settings.[4] Having good CQ does not imply that a person is well versed in all cultures, but that they are able to identify cultural patterns and have enough personal awareness to adjust their behavior as needed in an unfamiliar cultural situation.

The history of CQ is surprisingly brief. In the past, cross-cultural interactions throughout the world were mostly limited to expatriate communities and transnational corporations conducting global business. However, in the last 50 years, the world has seen more than a 1,000 percent increase in the number of multinational companies.[5] Most commonly referred to as globalization, this worldwide trend in interactive business operations has ushered in a tremendous increase in cross-cultural personal interactions, meetings, and business platforms; the strong influence of international business has made it nearly impossible for corporate entities to remain culturally isolated.

Today's U.S. military forces—specifically Special Forces—also interact, collaborate, and work with their military counterparts around the world. While such interactions can be tremendously successful, getting the most out of collaborations with the militaries of other countries requires our soldiers to have solid CQ. The concept has been applied in the military for two decades, but it did not gain full recognition within the U.S. Department of Defense until the most recent counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.[6]

Despite its short history, the CQ field has undergone a rapid transformation from a theoretical construct to a scientific measure of intelligence. P. Christopher Earley of Purdue University's Krannert School of Management and Dr. Soon Ang of Nanyang Technical University Business School in Singapore initially based the CQ model referenced in this monograph on the work of Robert Sternberg and Douglas Detterman, who claim that intelligence is a combination of mental capabilities and behaviors, and that every person has multiple loci of intelligence.[7] Sternberg, a contemporary psychologist at Cornell University, is best known for his research on intelligence, love,

creativity, and cognitive styles. Detterman, a professor of psychology at Case Western Reserve University, has studied why some people are smarter than others since his career began in 1972.

Earley and Ang expanded on the Sternberg-Detterman premise by applying the multiple loci of intelligence theory to their own work with CQ, which they divided into four categories: motivation (drive), cognitive (knowledge), metacognitive (strategy), and behavior (action).[8] The first three categories are brain-driven mental faculties, whereas the fourth—action—involves the entire body and relies on learned appropriate behaviors. While the sum of these four components represents an individual's overall CQ score, each can be assessed and improved individually.

The first component of CQ is drive, which refers to an individual's desire to learn, understand, and take part in culturally distinct practices.[9] Individuals with a high level of CQ drive not only accept culturally diverse practices and situations, they actively seek them out and focus on participating successfully in such interactions. CQ drive consists of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, which relate to personal interests in foreign cultures and professional expectations, respectively. CQ drive is foundational to the rest of the CQ skill set and can be considered the most crucial component; aptitude is of little value if coupled with apathy, whereas inexperience can be overcome by the will to learn.

The second CQ dimension is the cognitive, or knowledge, which signifies the cultural understanding learned through education and experience.[10] It thus refers to a person's knowledge of the cultural practices, norms, and institutions of a given culture. This conception is different from previous approaches to cultural awareness, which focused almost exclusively on factual knowledge of other cultures, and success was contingent on the ability to memorize information rather than the ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures.

Strategy comprises the metacognitive aspect of CQ—the ability to reflect on one's own thought processes or the "processes individuals use to acquire and understand knowledge."[11] Strategy can be thought of as the ability to compare expectations with reality; CQ strategy involves checking one's own cultural assumptions and contemplating those of others, and thus combats mirror imaging. Having a strong CQ strategy enables an individual to check stereotypes, anticipate differing points of view and social constructs, and

accurately interpret and appropriately respond to them in the moment of interaction.

While the other three pillars of CQ are crucial to successful cross-cultural experiences, they are limited to the mental faculties and are nothing without the ability to conduct oneself correctly. Aptly named, CQ action, or behavior, refers to one's physical actions and demeanor. A high level of CQ indicates that an individual can use the appropriate gestures, words, tones, body language, etc., in diverse cultural situations.[12] Advanced CQ action facilitates more positive interactions when traveling for business or pleasure, and helps individuals avoid offending the host culture. Behavioral CQ in turn leads to more productive interactions.

Increased research on cultural intelligence has coincided with increased attention to the subject and greater enthusiasm for its positive attributes. These developments have helped reinforce shifting attitudes when predicting a person's professional potential. When accepting new students or hiring new employees, higher education institutions and corporations are now looking beyond academic performance and are paying increasing attention to the candidates as a whole. While grade-point averages and standardized test scores are important, a prospective hire's demonstrated knack for establishing and maintaining human relationships, particularly in a multicultural environment, is at least equally important. The same is true of Special Forces soldiers, for whom standardized tests of their physical ability, psychological maturity, and the ability to learn a foreign language are important. So too is the ability to test for cultural intelligence acumen, which until recently had not been possible.

Business leaders are finding cultural intelligence an increasingly valuable asset, as employees with high CQ tend to have a stronger job performance than employees with low CQ. In business parlance, a person's patience, leadership potential, negotiation abilities, and customer service and sales skills are just a few attributes positively correlated with high CQ.[13] The same attributes benefit those in public service, particularly diplomatic and special operations careers.

Moreover, CQ can predict how well an individual will adjust mentally and psychologically in a cross-cultural setting—an important factor in their professional success. For example, when thrown into new cross-cultural situations, those with high CQ will adjust more easily than those without. High CQ is similarly correlated with less mental fatigue and emotional exhaustion,

which in turn reinforces professional success. This facet of CQ will help those doing military service to remain mentally present while deployed and help limit the initial psychological shock of conflict.

CQ is gaining recognition and importance in the private sector, and the same needs to happen in the public sector. CQ is especially relevant to military personnel serving in foreign cultures, as it can help soldiers and their commanding officers better understand their adversaries' goals, motivations, and decision-making process.[14]

David Livermore has built on Earley and Ang's research and continues to bridge the gap between the theoretical framework and practical application of CQ. Livermore, director of the Cultural Intelligence Center (CIC) in Holt, Michigan, divided the world into 10 cultural clusters: Anglo, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin Europe, Latin America, Confucian Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Arab.[15] He then created a basic framework for CQ scholars that identifies the key characteristics of each group and provides basic advice for cultural adaptation. By using this cultural knowledge as a baseline, professionals and travelers alike can make informed predictions about what to expect when visiting or working with people from a given culture.

It's important to note, however, that Livermore's 10 cultural clusters are just a starting point. Within the United States, for example, different cultures exist within the Northeast, the South, the Midwest, the West Coast, etc. The same is true, and highly relevant to military operations, of the Arab states, which do not all have the same culture. Rather, they share cultural characteristics that are unique to their region.

The ability to recognize cultural nuances indicates that a person has strong CQ acumen, something they can build on once they have been assessed and know what their CQ capabilities are. Applying CQ is both strategic and practical, and Livermore's work demonstrates that cultural intelligence is relevant not only to business professionals at transnational corporations, but also to public servants, military personnel, missionaries, tourists, educators, and others interested in expanding their cultural horizons. In an era with marked levels of cultural sensitivity, it is increasingly important for armed forces to display conscientious and respectful behavior in keeping with whatever culture they are embedded in.

The benefits of CQ include increased understanding of adversaries' goals, motivations, methods, and decision-making processes;[16] the potential CQ

provides Special Forces personnel is unlimited. From a tactical standpoint, CQ can help "facilitate victory and potentially limit the duration and level of violence of modern warfare."[17] From a public relations standpoint, CQ can help win the hearts of the native populations the U.S. is serving. By respecting and working within foreign cultures, the U.S. military can create a model of mutual collaboration and respect, rather than conquest and occupation. This in turn will facilitate greater acceptance of a U.S. presence and a desire for further collaboration. Moreover, the leadership potential indicated by CQ is relevant to all who wish to display their abilities and advance their careers.

Some aspects of cultural intelligence overlap with other forms of intelligence, such as general, social, and emotional intelligence. Despite the similarities, CQ is distinct from these intelligence models, and from personality. CQ does not consist of innate characteristics and as such is not set in stone. Unlike IQ, which remains fairly constant throughout a person's life, CQ is merely a snapshot of a person's level of cultural intelligence at the time of the assessment. It reflects a combination of abilities that can vary from day to day, depending on the situation, and it can be developed and improved throughout a lifetime by traveling to foreign countries, working in a cross-cultural setting, or actively studying other cultures.[18] Moreover, while emotional, social, and cultural intelligence all help a person understand their own culture, only cultural intelligence suggests that a person has insights into other cultures.

This monograph will serve as a guide to CQ for those who need to operate in a multicultural environment, such as Special Forces soldiers. Case studies depicting CQ triumphs and blunders—some from a Special Forces perspective—will inform readers about the immense potential CQ offers, as well as the unwanted consequences that result when CQ is not adequately applied. Finally, assessment methods will provide relevant information for military personnel who decide to further their CQ training.

2. The Four CQ Components: Drive, Knowledge, Strategy, and Action

As a construct, cultural intelligence incorporates multiple dimensions of mental and behavioral capabilities. Building on the multiple foci of intelligence theory, scholars Earley and Ang applied the psychological principles of motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior to the realm of cross-cultural interactions.[19] The resulting schema of drive, knowledge, strategy, and action addresses four crucial components of successful interactions in cross-cultural situations. While the sum of these four components represents an individual's overall CQ score, each can be assessed and improved individually. Individual component scores are not necessarily predictive of one another, meaning that a person who has a low score in one section will not necessarily have a low score in the other three, or vice versa. An individual's drive, knowledge, strategy, and action collectively compose their CQ score, and each component represents a distinct and crucial element of their ability to succeed in multicultural settings.

The Four Components of CQ

Drive. The first CQ component, drive, is foundational to the CQ skill set. In the words of CQ scholars Ang and Linn Van Dyne, drive is the ability to direct energy toward learning.[20] Drive stems from both intrinsic motivation (such as a personal interest in other cultures) and extrinsic motivation (such as professional expectations), and it indicates an individual's interest in and degree of confidence or self-efficacy in cross-cultural interactions. Aptitude is of little value if coupled with apathy, whereas inexperience can be overcome by the will to learn. In fact, all other aspects of CQ flow from an individual's desire to learn and develop their cultural skills.[21]

Knowledge. The second CQ component is knowledge. Previous approaches to cultural awareness have focused almost exclusively on having factual knowledge of other cultures, and an individual's success was contingent on their ability to memorize information rather than on their ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures. In contrast, the CQ model defines knowledge as a macro-level understanding of cultural systems.[22] Rather than

rote memorization, CQ knowledge reflects an individual's general awareness of cultural differences. In short, CQ knowledge is a mindset, not a list of facts.

Strategy. Strategy is the metacognitive aspect of CQ; in essence, it's the ability to reflect on one's own thought processes. In the context of intercultural environments, strategy involves questioning one's own cultural assumptions and contemplating those of others. It is a measure of an individual's ability to compare their expectations with reality. As such, strategy combats the mirror imaging phenomenon—perhaps the most important point from an SOF perspective. Having strong CQ strategic ability enables an individual to anticipate differing points of view and social constructs, and to accurately interpret and respond to them in the moment of interaction.

Action. While the previous three components of CQ are mental, action is behavioral. It refers to an individual's ability to act appropriately in cross-cultural environments.[23] This includes the nuances of verbal interactions, as well as the subtleties of facial expressions and gestures. A person with well-developed action skills is able to intuit when to adapt to the norms of a new environment and, equally important, when not to. Action is thus the physical implementation of the three mental CQ capabilities.

To place the four CQ components in context, consider the following vignettes.

Vignette No. 1: Baffled in Brazil

John Q, a defense attaché at the U.S. embassy in Brasilia, plans to conduct a series of meetings with his counterparts at the Brazilian Ministry of Defense. This is his first assignment in Brazil, but he assumes that his previous experience elsewhere in Latin America is sufficient preparation. On the day of the meeting, he arrives at the scheduled time and is visibly frustrated when his Brazilian counterparts arrive nearly a half-hour later. His frustration mounts as the meeting is further delayed by small talk and several rounds of espresso. Mindful of his tightly packed schedule, John is anxious to get to the point, and by the time the meeting finally begins, he conveys his information directly and succinctly. His Brazilian counterparts, who all speak English, then update him on the status of several projects, although John is unclear about the details, due to the roundabout way they describe

their progress. As the meeting ends, John makes a hurried exit and rushes to his next appointment.

Points to consider. Viewing this scenario through the lens of CQ reveals several areas for improvement. First, John appears to lack drive, as he shows little interest in learning about the Brazilian culture before his trip. In fact, John's knowledge of broader cultural systems is also deficient. He expects his Brazilian colleagues to conform to American norms of punctuality, which differ greatly from those of other regions of the world. During the meeting, having more CQ knowledge would have equipped John to anticipate and bridge different styles of communication. Instead, to the Brazilians, John's directness comes off as curt and his 'strictly business' approach cold and impersonal. With a better mastery of CQ strategy, John would have understood that cross-cultural communication is far more complicated than simply speaking a common language. Finally, John fails to adapt his behavior to the situation. His underdeveloped CQ action skills hamper his ability to communicate effectively with his Brazilian partners, and their relationship suffers as a result.

A more thoughtful, CQ-informed approach to the situation might unfold as follows: John recognizes the importance of the strategic partnership with Brazil and wants to make a good impression on his counterparts. He also knows that his ambassador has high expectations, and any missteps may damage both his career and bilateral relations. The stakes are high, and he is driven to meet the demands of the situation. While he is unfamiliar with Brazilian culture, he has a cursory knowledge of how Latin America's cultural values differ from his own, especially when it comes to time, and he adjusts his schedule accordingly. John also knows that Latin Americans often communicate in a more indirect, familiar manner, and he strategizes on how to convey his thoughts and engage his colleagues effectively. He joins in on the small talk before the meeting and thus finds his Brazilian counterparts receptive when they start to do business. John tailors his actions to the demands of this particular interaction and accomplishes his professional and personal goals for the meeting.

Vignette No. 2: Misguided in Mali

Jane Q, a psychological operations officer, was recently sent by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) headquarters on temporary duty assignment to

Mali. Jane was chosen because she speaks fluent French and previously completed a complicated military information support operation in Haiti. Jane receives orders for a weeklong visit to the region, with arrival Sunday evening and departure the following Friday afternoon. At her first meeting with her Malian counterparts, Jane extends her hand to introduce herself, but the Malians keep their hands folded on their laps. What's more, after what Jane considers an incredibly awkward introduction, her Malian counterparts pose several personal questions about her family. This occurs at every site visit. While she is able to communicate with her hosts in French, Jane feels they often do not fully understand one another, and she is frankly offended when several of them inquire as to when they will meet her boss. Jane is also frustrated to discover that the final site visit she has planned for Friday will be impossible because the site will be closed for the weekend. She is able to gather most of the information she needs to determine which sites will receive funding, but she returns to Stuttgart, Germany, feeling frustrated and confused by her interactions with her Malian colleagues.

Points to consider. Based on her language skills and previous work experience, Jane appears to have the drive to understand other cultures. Unfortunately, her knowledge of cultural systems seems to be focused primarily on the Western Hemisphere and Christian cultures. Speaking French was insufficient to ensure clear communication with her hosts, and Jane had no discernable strategy for dealing with the major cultural differences between Mali and Western Europe. Consequently, her actions—such as attempting to shake hands with her Muslim male counterparts or balking at personal questions—were inappropriate.

With the benefit of CQ assessment and training, Jane might have fared better on her trip. She could have used her CQ drive as an impetus to improve the other facets of CQ where she might be lacking. With just a bit of research, Jane would have learned that Mali is a predominantly Muslim country that operates on a Sunday through Thursday workweek. This also would have shed light on her interactions with the opposite sex and enabled Jane to strategize on how to assert herself while also putting her male colleagues at ease. While Jane may not feel comfortable divulging personal information to professional acquaintances, the fact that the questions arose at every site visit should have signaled to her that this is a Malian cultural norm. With a CQ strategy in place, she could have prepared stock answers that were vague

but polite, and reciprocated with similar questions as a show of respect to her Malian colleagues. A CQ-centered approach to these site visits would have honored both Jane's unique identity and the culture of her local hosts. Therefore, perhaps a little CQ on the part of the AFRICOM HQ could have prevented this *faux pas*.

Vignette No. 3: Blindsided in Beijing

A congressional delegation—composed of an influential senator, two ranking members of Congress, and high-ranking special operations advisors—is visiting China in an effort to promote bilateral counterterror operations. The American delegation invites a group of Chinese officials to a meeting at the U.S. embassy in Beijing, where they plan to discuss the finer points of the upcoming Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise. The Chinese suggest meeting at their defense ministry, but the U.S. team (thinking of convenience) insists that it will be their privilege to host. On the day of the meeting, the Chinese officials, several of whom are in uniform, arrive at the appointed time. They shake hands and offer business cards to their American counterparts, who quickly tuck the cards away in their coat pockets. Once everyone is seated, a senator's staffer formally welcomes the group and launches into a brief presentation that succinctly details America's key regional counterterror policy points that should—in the staffer's and the delegation's opinion—resonate with the Chinese. Afterward, she opens the floor for questions and is met with blank stares and silence. In the interest of encouraging dialogue, she singles out a young-looking Chinese official and elicits his opinion. When the time comes for the Chinese to make their presentation, a middle-aged man in uniform speaks at length in vague and sometimes confusing terms. On several occasions, he uses the phrase "drawing a snake with feet," which prompts an American delegate to raise his hand and ask for an explanation. When the meeting concludes, all shake hands once again, and the Americans report to their superiors that the meeting was a success. Not long after, however, a counterterrorism portion of the RIMPAC exercise planning stalls, and the Americans are completely blindsided by the decidedly negative turn of events.

Points to consider. At first glance, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what went wrong at this meeting. The Americans extended every courtesy to the Chinese officials, and their interactions were polite and professional. From

a CQ perspective, however, the Americans' lack of knowledge about Chinese culture revealed a number of blind spots. The Americans were no doubt driven to bring about an agreeable outcome to their meeting, but their verbal and nonverbal communications appeared inconsiderate. The Chinese do not extend invitations lightly, and casually dismissing their offer to host the meeting was likely insulting. Moreover, while Westerners rarely examine a new acquaintance's business card closely, the reverse is true in much of Asia, where name, rank, and title are matters of pride, and the chain of command is extremely important. Had the Americans examined the cards and taken note of their counterparts' positions, they might not have made the mistake of acknowledging a younger, less experienced official over a senior colleague when asking a question. The Americans also did not adequately strategize ways to ensure clear communication with the Chinese. They were unaware of the indirect method of communication employed in China, and thus unprepared for the metaphor the Chinese official used. They could easily have sidestepped this problem by hiring an interpreter or by researching relevant terminology in Mandarin. In the end, the Americans' actions reflected a great deal of room for CQ improvement.

Vignette No. 4: A Katy Perry *Faux Pas*

The previous vignettes are composites of actual situations. However, one recent real-life incident demonstrates that even those with the wherewithal to develop CQ or hire people with CQ acumen fail to do so—at their own risk. Singer Katy Perry's April 2015 concert tour is a case in point. Ms. Perry sparked controversy in China after a concert in Taipei, where she wore both a Taiwan flag and a sunflower-print dress during part of her performance. Many in the audience viewed her performance as a statement of solidarity with the 2014 pro-Taiwanese Sunflower Student Movement.[24]

Points to consider. Just over a year before, members of the Sunflower Student Movement occupied Taiwan's parliament for 23 days, protesting a cross-strait trade agreement with mainland China. The students believed the pact would give mainland China too much economic and political power over Taiwan, and the sunflowers were used throughout the protest as a symbol of hope. Perry thus not only irritated Taiwan's government, she also upset the leaders in Beijing who criticized her harshly, most likely believing that,

by draping herself in the Taiwan national flag, she supported the Taiwan independence movement.

Perhaps Ms. Perry knew that the sunflower has special symbolism in Chinese culture and can be forgiven her faux pas, for in "Chinese symbolism, the sunflower represents long life, good luck and is considered very auspicious. Its yellow color signifies vitality and intelligence. It's a symbol of happiness too."[25] She almost certainly did not know the student protest group had chosen the sunflower to symbolize the group's anti-China cause for cultural reasons. However, that does not excuse her wearing the Taiwan flag, which anyone with a basic understanding of Asian politics and culture would know to be a rebuke of Mainland China, which considers Taiwan a breakaway province, not an independent state.

As these case studies illustrate, taking the time to prepare for, observe, and engage mindfully in multicultural interactions can pay long-term dividends. In all four of these stories, minor misunderstandings became major issues. Had the offending parties applied the four CQ components—drive, knowledge, strategy, and action—they could have avoided or at least corrected their mistakes. These examples demonstrate the ease and efficacy with which a person who has well-developed cultural intelligence can participate in intercultural exchanges, and with good results.

3. Strategic Culture and Cultural Intelligence: Assets in a Dangerous World[26]

Strategic culture—a nation's set of beliefs, attitudes, and norms regarding the use of military force—is often molded by history and experience. While not a predictor of a state's behavior per se, strategic culture in the hands of culturally attuned operators can do much to determine the triggers that might prompt a state to use military force. Strategic culture, like cultural intelligence, is a fairly recent phenomenon. Initially the product of a RAND study in 1947, strategic culture was first applied to the Soviet Union in an attempt to determine if, when, and how Moscow might use nuclear weapons.

This chapter examines three historical examples where strong CQ could have been beneficial in a strategic culture context. These historical examples include the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the D-Day invasion, and Osama bin Laden's attack on the United States on 11 September 2001.[27]

Where Were You When … ?

Generally speaking, history is a slow process, but certain events—the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the D-Day landings on 6 June 1944, the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on 11 September 2001—changed the course of history in an instant. The World War II generation could say exactly where they were when Pearl Harbor was attacked and when the first news of the D-Day invasion came over the radio. Those in more recent generations can say the same about 9/11. Much has been written about the successes and failures of these history-changing events, but what's lacking or lost in most of the military and political research is the cultural component—the cultural factors that had a causal impact on all these events that altered, or in some cases set, the course of history.

Tora, Tora, Tora

Japan's sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 was the deadliest foreign attack on U.S. soil up to that day, and remained so for half a century. "The assault, which lasted less than two hours, claimed the lives of more than 2,500 people, wounded 1,000 more, and damaged or destroyed 18 American ships and

nearly 300 airplanes."[28] Less known is the fact that 63 Japanese lost their lives in the assault—54 aviators and 9 submariners; the remains of 29 were never recovered.[29] The Pearl Harbor attack was devastating for the U.S., but not the crushing blow Japanese leaders had predicted. "Remember Pearl Harbor!" became the rallying cry of an American public that until that day had been divided on whether or not to get involved in the war.

In the U.S., blame for the surprise of the attack centered on two military officers, Admiral Husband Kimmel, commander of the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet, and General Walter Short, who was responsible for the defense of Hawaii. 'Evidence' of their failure included their underestimating a U.S. intelligence warning on 27 November of a possible Japanese attack. Kimmel was particularly criticized for having so many battleships at anchor—sitting ducks for the Japanese gunners. Short was criticized for a lack of defensive preparation, but even more for having all the island's military aircraft lined up, wing to wing—hundreds more sitting ducks. Both Short and Kimmel were relieved of command for "dereliction of duty."[30]

Pearl Harbor was the catalyst for the U.S. to join the allied war effort—the costliest American war in terms of treasure and blood, but also arguably the greatest victory. While much has been written about the U.S. failure to prevent the Pearl Harbor attack, little has been said about the cultural dimension, which holds important lessons relevant to the purpose of this narrative. Mutual cultural ignorance between the Americans and Japanese was in fact a major factor in the Pearl Harbor attack. American foreign policymakers knew little or nothing about Japan, and racial stereotypes of Japanese living in the U.S. were unflattering at best and often downright cruel. America tended to view Japan as a small island nation incapable of waging war against a modern Western power.[31] When asked about his failure to heed intelligence warnings that the Japanese were preparing to attack, Admiral Kimmel is purported to have said, "I never thought those little yellow sons-of-bitches could pull off such an attack, so far from Japan."[32]

Japan, in turn, had little understanding of the United States and her people. Other than Admiral Yamamoto, who had studied in the U.S., Japanese leaders responsible for international affairs prior to Pearl Harbor had little or no firsthand experience with Americans. The Japanese in fact regarded themselves as racially superior to their enemies and believed that "the Americans were too materialistic and individualistic to muster the national discipline necessary for a long and bloody war."[33] They also believed

that they were spiritually superior to the Americans, whom they regarded as an effete people devoted to their creature comforts and divided by political factionalism and racial and class strife. The Japanese were oblivious to the galvanizing effect their attack on Pearl Harbor was certain to have on American public opinion.[34]

While counterfactual history is not a well-accepted research method, one does have cause to wonder what might have happened if the U.S. and/or Japanese government had had knowledgeable CQ analysts on staff prior to Pearl Harbor. Perhaps the "day that shall live in infamy" would have been just an ordinary day.

The Allies Are Coming, but from Where?

The Allied invasion of Europe on 6 June 1944 was not exactly a secret. The Germans knew it was coming, but they did not know the date or the location. Keeping that information from the Germans was critical to the success of the landings in Normandy, and although their losses and mistakes were many, it could have been far worse for the Allies. It also could have gone much better for the Nazis—if the Germans had had better CQ.

Even before the D-Day landings, the Germans were the victims of Operation Quicksilver, one of the most successful military deception operations of all time. The Allies were able to pull it off, to a large extent, because German leaders had essentially no cultural intelligence. Operation Quicksilver was part of a much larger operation, Fortitude North and Fortitude South, which was implemented to convince the Germans that the allied forces had nine divisions poised to attack through Norway (Fortitude North) and nine through Calais (Fortitude South). But of course the 18 divisions didn't really exist. Both operations had set up dummy headquarters that mimicked the communications patterns and procedures of the real thing, complete with dummy tanks, aircraft, and landing craft made out of plywood, and even some 'blow-up' tanks that looked real from the air. Double agents were used to plant stories about the fake divisions and the Germans were deceived, in part because the Nazis lacked air reconnaissance, and also due to their lack of CQ.

In fact, the Germans' lack of CQ was more than a contributing factor in the successful ruse. The Allies put General George S. Patton in charge of the fictitious organization. Patton was available because he had been relieved of

command of the 7th U.S. Army in Sicily for slapping two soldiers.[35] General Eisenhower recalled Patton and reprimanded him for his actions. However, instead of returning him to the U.S., Eisenhower put him in charge of the fictitious operation. While not relishing the assignment, Patton played the part well, reporting to duty at the fictitious headquarters and even examining fictitious equipment.

The Germans fell for the ruse and were convinced that Patton would lead the invasion of Europe across the channel at its shortest point, with a landing near Calais on the French coast. Patton was the Allies' most daring and brilliant combat leader, thus the Germans could not imagine that he would not lead the attack. Their lack of CQ knowledge caused them to overlook the possibility that the U.S. Army would create a phantom operation and put Patton in charge of several nonexistent divisions. Moreover, due to the common CQ-related personality trap known as mirror imaging, the Germans most likely could not conceive that the most capable Allied combat commander could be relieved of command for "slapping privates,"[36] and thus they were convinced that he was in charge of the expected invasion forces.[37] The results are etched in history. The Germans, although they had enough strength at Normandy to make the Allied landing difficult, had earmarked some of their best forces for Calais to cover the anticipated landing site. If the Germans had better developed CQ that understood American war planning, strategy, and tactics rather than mirror imaging the Prussian way of war, the outcome of the Allied landing might have been completely different.

9/11 in Retrospect: A Lack of CQ Results in Disaster

Much has been written about the failure of U.S. intelligence to 'connect the dots' prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Had the intelligence agencies done so, the attacks most likely would have been predicted and prevented, and thousands of lives saved. There was a good deal of evidence suggesting the attacks were coming, and the failure of U.S. communications and coordination among different federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies to pick up on the information and share it were the primary reason for the attackers' success, as has been documented in the official "9/11 Commission Report."[38]

However, the lack of CQ among policymakers was also a significant factor in the intelligence failure. To begin with, top military and policymaking

officials in the Bush administration did not take bin Laden's 1996 *fatwa* declaring a holy war against the U.S. seriously.[39] One reason for this was the administration's racial arrogance and cultural condescension that bears a striking resemblance to the cultural arrogance of the Roosevelt administration before Pearl Harbor. Disparaging terms such as 'little yellow sons-of-bitches' were used in the 1940s, whereas in the 1990s and early 2000s, al-Qaeda members were referred to as 'towel heads.' According to Michael Scheuer, who was fired from his job as head of the CIA's "bin Laden unit" in 1999, the Bush administration's top personnel and policymakers were "so full of themselves" that they could not imagine that the rest of the world did not want to be like us. According to Scheuer, they believed America was invulnerable, particularly to the "unwashed, unlettered, unwhite, unshaved, and anti-feminist [Muslim] masses." Scheuer noted the elites could not believe that "a polyglot bunch of Arabs wearing robes, sporting scraggly beards, and squatting around campfires in Afghan deserts and mountains could pose a mortal threat to the United States."[40] Americans are often blinded by what British strategist Ken Booth calls "strategic ethnocentrism, which is the inability to perceive other cultures or societies in an empathetic manner, or to understand them"—or, in the terminology of this monograph, a lack of cultural intelligence.[41]

However, bin Laden suffered from a similar lack of CQ vis-à-vis the United States. Indeed, cultural arrogance played a key role in al-Qaeda's decision to attack the U.S. on 9/11.[42] In fact, bin Laden made his decision to attack the Twin Towers based on two data points: the Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon in 1983, which was the deadliest terrorist attack on Americans at the time, and the Blackhawk Down disaster in Somalia in 1993. Both incidents convinced bin Laden that the U.S. was a "paper tiger" because of its rapid withdrawal of military forces from Lebanon and Somalia after suffering casualties.[43] Bin Laden apparently assumed that, if the Americans would leave these two military outposts after experiencing fewer than 300 casualties between them, Washington would do something similar if an attack caused more than 20,000 casualties. Like the Japanese before Pearl Harbor, bin Laden underestimated American resilience and ingenuity, and above all, the certainty that the U.S. would respond with force to any attack on the homeland.

Final Remarks

Many variables other than CQ certainly affected the war-related decisions presented in these three examples. While CQ should not be overemphasized in the decision to use force, warfare does have a CQ component. However, not all four CQ elements are always in play. Drive is assumed, in that a decision was made to go to war. One would expect knowledge of the enemy culture to be an important component of such a decision, but a lack of critical knowledge was a decisive factor in the three examples presented above. Had the Japanese, Americans, Germans, and bin Laden had a better appreciation and understanding of their adversaries' cultures, they most likely would have applied different strategies and perhaps not have taken any action. Think of the lives and treasure that could have been saved if those deciding whether or not to go to war had well-developed CQ capabilities. It would have indeed changed the course of history.

4. CQ and Operational Design: Complementary Acumen for Special Operations Campaign Planning

Operational design, which refers to a broad analytical approach to achieving objectives and accomplishing missions, shares many inherent characteristics with cultural intelligence. Both are journeys of discovery with unclear goals, and both help to organize dynamic, nonlinear situations. More important to this discussion, however, is the possibility that CQ acumen can help to improve operational design.

Operational design is defined as "a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them."[44] It was introduced into Army doctrine in 2008 as part of a program to help commanders and their staff understand the nature of complex military problems and improve their ability to use critical and creative thinking to resolve them.[45] Perhaps most importantly, operational design helps people determine when and how to change the approach when confronting changing circumstances.[46] Operational design is best used to address "ill-structured problems" characterized by unclear goals and an evolving strategy. A wealth of actors usually is involved, which means there will be a variety of opinions about the desired goals or whether a specific goal is attainable.[47]

Whereas operational design is a process intended to produce the most positive outcome for a challenging problem, cultural intelligence, as previously explained, is a person's ability to function successfully in diverse cultural settings.[48] Before discussing the relationship between CQ and operational design, however, it's important to note that any definition of culture involves a wide set of parameters. For example, each branch of the armed forces has a unique culture, as do the various units within each branch. Government agencies also have unique cultures specific to their experiences, histories, and responsibilities.

Operational design typically involves a wide range of actors, which may include military branches and units, government agencies, private-sector companies, international organizations, and even indigenous populations.[49]

The different opinions, working styles, and attitudes toward teamwork these various cultures bring to the table can have a profound and sometimes negative effect on the strategies, approaches, and perspectives taken to operational design.[50] Having well-developed CQ capabilities can help the actors involved navigate among the variety of cultures represented on an operational design team, and thereby increase the chances of success.

Similarities

Practitioners of both cultural intelligence and operational design will find that the two share many theoretical characteristics. Like operational design, gaining CQ acumen is a journey of discovery, not a destination. The CQ score reflects a person's current mindset, their personal experiences, and the level of cultural knowledge they have developed thus far. This score can be improved through academic study, cultural immersion, personal experience, and even by exercises designed to stretch a person's confidence and comfort zone. In short, developing CQ is an ongoing process of improvement.

Operational design is also a continuous and self-correcting process that must respond to an ever-changing environment: "Operational design adopts a skeptical posture regarding the finality of learning, or achievement of stasis in human situations. It assumes intervention in a situation by one party will elicit a variety of responses from other interested parties."[51]

CQ and operational design both function in situations that lack a clearly defined end-state. The operational design process is intended to guide planners facing an environment that is nonlinear, dynamic, and requires flexibility—characteristics also applicable to the need for CQ. Strategies and action plans must continually interact with each other and readjust to changing situations. The cultural values and norms encountered can also change daily, as do individual opinions, preferences, habits, and personal experiences, all of which further complicate operations. With so many factors to consider, it's impossible to achieve a 100 percent success rate—even in one's native culture. In short, the constant adjustments needed to compensate for ill-defined goals and changing strategies require tremendous flexibility. CQ and operational design, which both incorporate flexibility into their processes, can help SOF planners successfully navigate back and forth between changing strategies and actions.

Differences

The differences between CQ and operational design highlight CQ's ability to support and guide the operational design process. Developing a high level of CQ is an inherently personal journey, whereas operational design is largely a group effort. This difference complements the two and, to some degree, is what ties them together, as applying individual CQ is best when used to serve a group process and purpose, and to help achieve a successful end result.

CQ's Role in Operational Design

CQ can be of great benefit to operational design. When leaders execute plans without factoring in outside opinions and knowledge, greatly biased decisions can result, often with a negative impact. Adapting to outside opinions and knowledge is inherent in CQ, which makes it such a valid part of the thinking and planning involved in operational design. Not recognizing valuable cultural information in the context of operational design can be a fatal error, as cultural bias and assumptions may prevent critical information from being considered and understood.

Leaders with considerable experience and success may inadvertently project egocentric tendencies, such as self-righteousness or shortsightedness. Egocentric tendencies can cause a person to feel superior due to their previous success, or to believe only they have the correct understanding of how the world works. This may cause them to overlook information that does not support their beliefs, values, goals, etc.[52] In CQ parlance, egocentric characteristics are called mirror imaging, as noted earlier in this monograph. Well-developed CQ can help to combat mirror imaging in oneself and others, to identify gaps in understanding, and to develop an action plan to fix the problem.

Cultural intelligence can also aid operational design in terms of developing tactics and an action plan, particularly in balancing direct and indirect special operations actions. CQ could be seen as the yin to special operations' yang, as it has been suggested that special operations seek to "push the line more to the right, where [action] is more indirect."[53] The effectiveness of an operation is directly related to commanders' understanding of "the context of the complex issues facing the population," and the CQ skill set will give operational designers a solid understanding of the culture in which an operation will take place, thus enabling them to factor in information needed to

design a successful operation.[54] Familiarity with the cultural terrain will also allow operators to choose the best locations for various activities, drills, and missions. And, most importantly, in areas where accurate intelligence may be hard to come by, being able to converse with the local population may help operators obtain more accurate intelligence and thus to conduct a more successful campaign.

As noted in previous chapters, CQ strategy requires having enough personal awareness to evaluate one's own cultural biases and potential points of friction, much as operational design can be considered an introspective part of special operations that "encourages continual reflection and discourse to develop inter-subjective (shared) meaning."[55] Reflecting on past experiences will allow practitioners of both CQ and operational design to examine what was successful or not, and to develop strategies that will help increase the chances of future success. Furthermore, CQ and operational design can complement each other in the details of planning an action, including a consideration of "all aspects of the human population in the operational environment and those of stakeholders, their institutions, and organizations," which will enable them to come up with coherent strategies and plans.[56]

Reflecting on the operational design process, it is clear that multiple viewpoints can be beneficial in terms of innovation and collaboration, but they also can create divisions between groups in terms of the end goal and the steps needed to achieve those goals, which may cause disagreements and tension. A tactful CQ strategy can help the parties involved negotiate their various cultural biases and assumptions.

As noted, planning is the foundation of any operational design. When a situation changes and the execution must be readjusted, strategy and action intersect with each other. Such operations are often characterized by constant reframing and reevaluation in a short amount of time, and thus require a tremendous amount of flexibility and innovative thinking. CQ helps actors take stock of a situation and readjust their actions and behavior to the changing cultural landscape. It also can provide operational designers with tools to adapt to a changing theater quickly and effectively.

Final Thoughts

In sum, cultural intelligence and operational design have many similar and mutually supporting characteristics, and CQ can significantly benefit the operational design process. CQ can provide a foundation for more successful operational design by helping designers and operators overcome common pitfalls, such as mirror imaging. Armed with greater knowledge of other cultures and understanding of the cultural inputs, designers will be better prepared to develop successful operations. Moreover, the skill sets that accompany strong CQ acumen will prove invaluable when navigating the space between expectations and actual outcomes.

5. The Cultural Intelligence Assessment Process

The cultural intelligence assessment provides an accurate measure of an individual's cultural intelligence baseline within the four CQ pillars, revealing strengths and weaknesses and acting as a guide for improvement. As previously explained, the benefits of CQ are manifold and can help U.S. Special Forces achieve greater operational success. Assessing the CQ of Special Forces personnel is also an economical decision, as it facilitates the placement of personnel in the positions they are best suited for and eliminates those who lack CQ acumen.

CQ assessment is a quick and painless process. Both self-assessments and a multi-rater assessment are available online through the CIC. The multi-rater assessment derives CQ results from a combination of a self-assessment and peer feedback from up to five individuals of the user's choosing. Although this option is a bit more intensive and time-consuming, it provides the most comprehensive feedback and is applicable to a greater array of professions.[57] Both options are processed by the CIC.[58]

Assessment can begin once the user has created an online account. The assessment is conducted survey style, and all questions are answered on a Likert scale, in which users mark whether they strongly, moderately, or slightly agree or disagree with, or feel neutral about, a given statement.[59] The first section asks for the user's demographic information and cultural experience, including the number of countries lived in, the number of languages spoken, and the amount of full-time work experience. Throughout the assessment, it's important to think about culture in the broadest possible terms: interactions with people from different social classes and educational backgrounds, and with people of different ages and genders, are all considered cross-cultural interactions.

The remaining portion of the assessment asks the user about their behavior and preferences in cross-cultural situations, including the workplace. Questions ask whether behavior changes in multicultural settings, if volume or tone of voice changes, and how the user feels they compare to their peers and professional colleagues. The user is also asked to express a preference for working solo or in a group, and for operating within rigid guidelines or

with room for individualization. All of these questions contribute to the user's CQ score and help them understand which type of culture they likely will work best in and which cultures they have the most in common with.

Users of the multi-rater assessment ask a minimum of three (five or more is optimal) people to complete the survey on their behalf, which is combined with the user's self-assessment to produce the results. This combination provides the most accurate overview of a person's CQ, and as such is preferred in professional settings. When completed, the surveys are sent by e-mail to the CIC to be processed and interpreted by professionals.

The results include detailed feedback on the four CQ pillars—drive, knowledge, strategy, and action—and also provide insight into the subdivisions of each category. For example, CQ drive is broken down into intrinsic interest, extrinsic interest, and self-efficacy, which refer respectively to the level of enjoyment derived from culturally diverse experiences, the benefits gained from such experiences, and the level of confidence one feels during such experiences.[60]

Knowledge is broken down into business, values and norms, sociolinguistics, and leadership. These subcategories relate to knowledge of economic and legal systems; values, social interaction norms, and religious beliefs; knowledge of a foreign language and its norms of communication; and knowledge about working and cultivating relationships with people of foreign cultures.[61]

CQ strategy includes three subcategories: planning, awareness, and checking. Planning refers to the strategy a person develops before a culturally diverse encounter, whereas awareness refers to how well an individual can perceive his behavior while in culturally diverse situations. Checking involves evaluating the assumptions one had going into a culturally diverse situation and readjusting them as necessary.[62]

Finally, CQ action is subdivided into speech acts—verbal, and nonverbal. Speech acts pertain to the manner and content of one's communications, or how direct the communications are. For example, cultures within the Arab cluster tend to communicate directly and take things literally, whereas Anglo cultures tend to be indirect and are accustomed to looking for deeper meanings.

The assessment results will also enable users to see how they compare with worldwide norms in each of the four pillars and their subdivisions. The worldwide norms are derived from CQ assessments of over 35,000 individuals across the globe. Scores in the bottom 25 percent are considered

low range, moderate range scores are the middle 50 percent, and the top 25 percent represent the high range. Users are able to compare their self-ratings with the observer averages.[63]

Users also are rated on their potential global effectiveness in four categories—cross-cultural adaptability, judgment and decision-making, negotiation, and strategic leadership—all of which are important components of cross-cultural success. The results will also inform users of their potential in these areas and provide strategies for improvement where necessary.[64] This portion of the assessment is especially relevant to Army Special Forces selection. The assessment process acts as a screening tool so supervisors and officers can make the most practical decisions when making culturally sensitive assignments. CQ assessments provide the information needed to prevent soldiers from being assigned to units or positions where their intercultural acumen is not a good match.

Perhaps the most interesting results inform users how their cultural preferences compare to cultures throughout the world. Individuals tend to have personal preferences and a strong orientation toward certain cultural values that sometimes, but not always, reflect their own national culture.[65] The 10 distinct cultural clusters will be discussed more in the next chapter. These clusters help Special Forces assessment personnel determine which cultural region a newly minted Green Beret is likely to serve in most effectively. Special Forces soldiers have a military presence throughout the world, and the CQ assessments help to ensure that each is assigned to a posting where they have the best chance of success, due to an affinity for a given culture. Moreover, the assessment results provide data that show which soldiers will adapt to new cultures most readily.

Most importantly, the assessment includes reflection questions in each category and a personalized action plan that an individual can use to improve their CQ. When interpreting the assessment results, it is important to remember that CQ is a malleable combination of abilities and capabilities. Moreover, unlike IQ, CQ can be improved through a combination of training, personal experience, and education.[66] The CQ assessment is a fluid process that reflects the user's frame of mind at the time of assessment and can be affected by such factors as mood and level of fatigue.[67]

While cultural intelligence is a new field, the CQ assessment has been academically validated.[68] Three measurements have been conducted to ensure the experiments are sound and the results should be accepted. The first,

internal validity, is a measure of confidence that tells researchers the extent to which they can trust that no variables besides the one they are studying have caused or influenced the results.[69] The higher the score, the more internal validity a project has. In the case of CQ research, the internal validity exceeds the standard cutoff of .70.[70]

Convergent validity measures the degree to which two variables are theoretically related.[71] In the case of CQ, the self-assessment and observer scores are theoretically related, and the convergent validity supports this assumption.[72]

Discriminant validity is the opposite of convergent validity, as it measures how disconnected two theoretically unrelated factors actually are.[73] In terms of CQ, discriminant validity relates how disconnected a person's CQ is from their personality, general mental ability, or emotional intelligence. The statistical findings ensure that CQ is distinct from all three.[74]

One key thing to remember about assessment is its utility. The assessment takes little time and effort to complete, and the results offer valuable feedback to users from all backgrounds. Students, missionaries, international businesspeople, government officials, and travelers alike will find that this assessment provides an accurate reading of their cultural intelligence. Most importantly, the assessment will provide insight into how users can increase their CQ, and thereby improve their professional and personal performance in culturally diverse situations.

6. Making CQ Easy: 10 Cultural Clusters

As discussed in previous chapters, CQ knowledge refers to an individual's understanding of non-native cultures, and how their native culture informs their thoughts and actions. Such knowledge is crucial to CQ, but it can't be achieved by memorizing a list of pleasantries and faux pas for every culture. In order to prioritize and simplify regionally specific cultural characteristics, CQ knowledge has been broken down into 10 cultural clusters that divide the globe into more manageable categories. The clusters are Anglo, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin Europe, Latin America, Confucian Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Arab.

First developed by scholars Simcha Ronen of Tel Aviv University and Oded Shenkar of The Ohio State University, these 10 clusters represent groups of cultures that share certain intellectual and behavioral patterns, typically due to a combination of shared history, religion, language, and/or geography.[75] They are not meant to be exhaustive, and each cluster is widely diverse. The clusters also are not meant to prescribe how people of a given culture should behave, nor do they make any value judgment. However, cultural clusters do provide a foundation for cross-cultural interactions, which can be added to through personal observation and experience.

Before delving into detailed descriptions of the 10 clusters, there are a few guidelines for how to use them most effectively. Cultural clusters are primarily descriptive, thus they are most effective when used to compare multiple cultures rather than to define a single culture. They are meant to highlight the ways different cultures might approach the same situation, which often depends on overarching historical, religious, or social paradigms. One must beware of making generalizations based on these clusters, and on one's own cultural biases and predispositions. These clusters do not reflect the full diversity of global behavior, but when used knowledgeably they can provide guidance without dictating every action—more like a compass than a GPS.

To enable comparisons between the cultural clusters, they have been assessed using a standard set of value dimensions. Also by no means exhaustive, the seven dimensions (see Table 1) identify major cultural differences and indicate which end of the spectrum a given culture falls on:

Individualism-Collectivism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Cooperate-Competitive, Time Orientation, Context, and Being-Doing.

Table 1. The Seven Cultural Value Dimensions[76]

Individualism-Collectivism	**Individualism:** Individual goals and rights are more important than personal relationships **Collectivism:** Personal relationships and benefiting the group are more important than individual goals
Power Distance	**Low Power Distance:** Status differences are of little importance; empowered decision-making is expected across all levels **High Power Distance:** Status differences should shape social interactions; those with authority should make decisions
Uncertainty Avoidance	**Low Uncertainty Avoidance:** Focus on flexibility and adaptability; tolerant of unstructured and unpredictable situations **High Uncertainty Avoidance:** Focus on planning and reliability; uncomfortable with unstructured or unpredictable situations
Cooperative-Competitive	**Cooperative:** Emphasis on cooperation and nurturing behavior; high value placed on relationships and family **Competitive:** Emphasis on assertive behavior and competition; high value placed on work, task accomplishment, and achievement
Time Orientation	**Short Term:** Values immediate outcomes more than long-term benefits (success now) **Long Term:** Values long-term planning; willing to sacrifice short-term outcomes for long-term benefits (success later)
Context	**Low Context:** Values direct communication; emphasis on explicit words **High Context:** Values indirect communication; emphasis on implicit understanding
Being-Doing	**Being:** Social commitments and task completion are equally important; diffuse boundaries between personal and work activities **Doing:** Task completion takes precedence over social commitments; clear separation of personal and work activities

The 10 clusters are described below, organized by the five Special Forces groups' geographic areas of responsibility and summarized by their respective cultural value dimensions. The following reflects changes in group orientations, in that 3rd Group will be returning to Africa in the near future.

1st Group: Asia

Confucian Asia

China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, etc.

The cultural value dimensions of the Confucian Asia cluster center on one single concept: promoting harmony. This tenet, called *li* in the Confucian tradition, is meant to bring about order and demonstrate respect and goodwill toward humankind. First-time visitors to this cluster region are often intimidated by the countless unwritten rules that govern everything, from personal greetings to table manners to business meetings, but these rules are simply the manifestation of li. This pursuit of harmony informs every facet of Confucian life, from birth to death, from the mundane to the sacred. Communication is also intended to promote harmony and preserve dignity ('save face'). This cluster prefers indirect communication and draws from a wealth of nonverbal gestures and facial expressions. Many languages in Confucian Asia are rich with metaphors and proverbs that allow speakers to convey their thoughts without appearing impolite or overly harsh. Li also dictates a certain hierarchy of interpersonal relationships. Confucian Asia is the most collectivist culture in the world, and the commitment to family and other intimates is unparalleled in the other clusters. Divided into five archetypal relationships, li clearly identifies authority in every situation and defines specific roles for the leader and follower in each scenario. Memorizing the five relationships is less important than understanding the overall dynamic. When visiting a culture within this cluster, one must be aware of this paradigm and make every attempt to determine which role they are ascribed in each situation. Li is ultimately meant to bring about *ren*, or inner harmony and peace of mind.

Confucian Asia Cultural Value Dimensions: Collectivist, Moderate Power Distance, Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Cooperative, Long-Term Time, High Context, Moderate Being-Doing

South Asia

India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, etc.

The South Asia cluster is defined by its vibrant diversity, and the region provides a feast for the senses: the mouth-watering smells of a night market in Singapore, the soothing touch of a Thai massage, the awe-inspiring site of the Taj Mahal, the warming spice of Burmese curry, and the lively beat of Bollywood music. The most densely populated region in the world, South Asia embraces every major world religion, thousands of languages, and an abundance of cultural, artistic, and culinary traditions. Nevertheless, there are certain commonalities that unite the broader region and also distinguish it from Confucian Asia. While South Asia is highly collectivist, it is more accepting of individual self-expression and more forgiving of those who fall outside the social norm. However, South Asia still values social status. The Indian caste system is a prime example: each rung on the ladder is clearly defined, and people know which rung they occupy. Most of South Asia was subject to European colonization at one time, and certain vestiges of colonial influence remain. This can be observed in the enclaves of British, Portuguese, and Dutch expats, and in the value conferred on professional status over personal status. South Asians are consummate hosts and often go out of their way to make visitors feel welcome. When visiting cultures within this cluster, it is important to bear in mind the diversity of beliefs and expression throughout South Asia, and to follow the cues given by local colleagues and hosts to determine appropriate behavior.

South Asia Cultural Value Dimensions: Collectivist, High Power Distance, Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Cooperative, Moderate Time, High Context, Moderate Being-Doing

3rd Group: Afghanistan and Pakistan (Returning to Africa in the Near Future)

Afghanistan and Pakistan

These neighboring nations drive home the notion that the 10 cultural clusters need not be exhaustive to be effective. The cultures of Afghanistan and Pakistan do not fall neatly into one all-encompassing cluster, but examining them

through the lens of the cultural value dimensions and comparing them to nearby clusters sheds light on how to approach interactions with the Afghan and Pakistani cultures. Geographically speaking, Afghanistan and Pakistan belong to one of the clusters discussed above, South Asia. The British Indian Empire ruled Pakistan, along with India, Burma, and Bangladesh, until 1947. Despite the intense rivalry that persists between Pakistan and India, their cultural similarities are undeniable. Much like the South Asia cluster, most Pakistanis are highly aware of social status and adhere strictly to familial and societal expectations. Afghanistan was also subject to British invasion in the 19th century, and subsequently suffered at the hands of the Soviets in the 20th century and the Taliban in the 21st. Lacking the political and economic stability that underpins civic society, Afghan culture is primarily a product of family and tribal structures. Afghanistan and Pakistan also have a great deal in common with the Arab cluster, discussed below. It is imperative to note, however, that although they are majority Muslim nations, neither is ethnically Arab, nor do they speak Arabic.

Afghanistan Cultural Value Dimensions: Collectivist, High Power Distance, High Uncertainty Avoidance, High Cooperative, Short-Term Time, High Context, Being

Pakistan Cultural Value Dimensions: Collectivist, High Power Distance, Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Cooperative, Short-Term Time, Moderate High Context, Moderate Being-Doing

Sub-Saharan Africa

Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, etc.

Grouping the numerous countries of sub-Saharan Africa within a single cluster may appear to belie their diversity, but the same cultural undercurrents flow throughout the region. Chief among them is kinship, an idea best expressed by the Bantu term *ubuntu*, which is a philosophy of interconnectedness and codependence. This idea extends beyond the immediate family to include one's clan, tribe, or ethnic group. Ubuntu teaches that life should not be lived in isolation and that personal success should not be sought at the expense of a brother's failure. The importance of family within this cluster cannot be overstated, and it is common to inquire about family matters during introductions and greetings. Family and relationships, rather than time, are of the essence, and being personable is valued over being punctual.

Nevertheless, the evidence of European colonization in sub-Saharan Africa is plentiful, from the widespread use of French, English, and Portuguese to the prevalence of Christianity. Religion plays a critical role in daily life in this cluster, which perceives a great degree of unity and connection between the spiritual and physical worlds. Islam and Christianity are widely practiced, but they tend to have a distinctly local flavor and are frequently mixed with animism and tribal religions.

Sub-Saharan Africa Cultural Value Dimensions: Collectivist, Moderate Power Distance, Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance, Cooperative, Short-Term Time, High Context, Being

5th Group: Greater Arabia

Arab

Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, etc.

This cluster is one of the most important on the global stage today, yet it is widely misunderstood by outsiders. Within the region itself, 'Arab' implies a cultural and linguistic identity more than an ethnic identity. While Islam is the predominant religion of the Arab cluster, Christianity and Judaism are also scattered throughout. Moreover, there are widely varying interpretations of sacred texts and differing schools of thought even within Islam. This is evident in the various forms of dress for both men and women, as not all Arab women wear a headscarf, or *hijab*, nor do all men wear a tunic, or *djellaba*. Certain tendencies, however, are common throughout the region. The Arab cluster is extremely collectivist, and Arabs respect the patriarchal and hierarchical authority of the family. When faced with the unknown, Arabs frequently say *Inshallah*, meaning "God willing."[77] As a result, they tend to be more focused on the short term, leaving the future in the hands of God.

Arab Cultural Value Dimensions: Collectivist, High Power Distance, Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Cooperative, Short-Term Time, High Context, Being

7th Group: Latin America

Latin America

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela, etc.

Due to the long history of European colonization in Latin America, the Latin American cluster exhibits many of the same traits as Latin Europe, although often in a more exaggerated form. For example, Latin America is particularly paternalistic, both politically and socially. The Catholic Church also has undeniable and palpable influence in many aspects of daily life. That said, a number of important differences distinguish Latin America from other clusters. Family is the arbiter of social power in Latin America, more so than in almost any other region. Latin Americans are devoted first to their families, and they deeply respect the family hierarchy. Latin Americans work to live rather than live to work, and they put their personal, family, and social lives ahead of their professional ambitions. They do not value punctuality or a devotion to schedules in the way their North American counterparts do. When faced with uncertainty, they seek to alleviate it through their relationships with God, family, and friends.
Latin America Cultural Value Dimensions: Collective, High Power Distance, High Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Cooperative, Moderate Time, Moderate High Context, Being

10th Group: Europe

Anglo

Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, UK, U.S., etc.

Covering every corner of the globe, the geographically dispersed Anglo cluster is united by a common language and a historical connection to Mother England. Over the centuries, this cluster has fused the Old World sensibilities of its European origins with a pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit. These cultures are often seen as 'strictly business,' whether in their preference for direct communication or their tit-for-tat view of human interactions.[78] The common adage 'there's no such thing as a free lunch' concisely conveys their

firmly held belief that everything comes at a price. This applies to their perceptions of time as well. The Anglo cluster runs like clockwork, especially in professional environments, and punctuality is essential; as is often said, 'time is money.' Cultures in the Anglo cluster value individualism and personal space, both literally and figuratively. The U.S. in particular is defined by its need for elbow room, and Anglos on the whole prefer a lot of personal space. They closely guard their privacy and typically avoid discussion of personal finances, religious beliefs, and politics.

Anglo Cultural Value Dimensions: Individualist, Low Power Distance, Low Uncertainty Avoidance, Competitive, Short-Term Time, Low Context, Doing

Latin Europe

France, French- and Romansh-speaking Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, etc.[79]

The powerful influences of the Catholic Church and the Roman Empire continue to define modern-day Latin Europe. In contrast to the Germanic and Eastern European clusters, Latin Europe is distinctly paternalistic in terms of both politics and, to a degree, gender relations. Politically, governments in this cluster expect the devotion of their citizens in exchange for stability and protection. Socially, while men and women enjoy equal rights, there are vastly different expectations around their societal roles and social norms. Despite this cluster's general tendency toward secularism, the Roman Catholic Church wields significant power, which partially explains these cultures' awareness of and deference to authority. Latin Europeans embody the aphorism 'work hard, play hard' and are motivated as much by professional status as personal contentment. They believe that one should not interfere with the other, and thus put equal energy into ensuring the quality of their personal and their professional lives.

Latin Europe Cultural Value Dimensions: Moderate Collectivist, Moderate Power Distance, High Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Cooperative, Moderate Time, Moderate Context, Moderate Being-Doing

Eastern Europe

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, Serbia, etc.

Arguably the most diverse of the 10, the Eastern European cluster encompasses a vast array of religious, linguistic, and cultural groups. Nevertheless, they all have a history of frequent invasion and conquest. Eastern Europeans have been both colonizers and the colonized, and their recent history is marked by geopolitical upheaval. As a result, their loyalties lie more with ethnic groups and family clans than with the state.[80] These cultures have a strong sense of hierarchy, and when it comes to decision making they defer to and respect authority figures. They are collectivists within the confines of their tightknit groups and are understandably wary of outsiders. Although they are often demonstrative and affectionate with one another, this rarely extends to foreigners. Harsh climates and unforgiving terrain dominate this cluster, and its people shoulder the burden with those closest to them. The threshold for earning their trust is high, but once earned it is not easily lost. **Eastern Europe Cultural Value Dimensions:** Moderate Collectivist, Moderate Power Distance, Low Uncertainty Avoidance, Moderate Competitive, Short-Term Time, Moderate Context, Moderate Being-Doing

Nordic Europe

Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, etc.

Nordic countries consistently top the world rankings in quality of life and human development. Although decidedly secular and at times even anti-religion, they have an unwavering faith in work-life balance, and generous holiday and parental leave benefits are the regional standard. This egalitarian philosophy extends to nearly every facet of daily life in this cluster. Although the Nordics are individualists, they are equally committed to ensuring autonomy and personal freedom for all their citizens. Scandinavians go to great lengths to avoid standing out or calling attention to themselves, whether in their fashion choices or their professional lives. Scandinavian furniture and clothing designs echo this understated ethos, as they promote functionality, simplicity, and minimalism. These values extend to personal interactions

in the Nordic cluster, which favors direct communication, punctuality, and efficiency, traits that are often perceived as dry or impersonal.

Nordic Cultural Value Dimensions: Individualist, Low Power Distance, Low Uncertainty Avoidance, Cooperative, Short-Term Time, Low Context, Being

Germanic Europe

Austria, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, German Switzerland, etc.

This small but economically mighty cluster includes most of the countries of Western Europe. Although this group shares some traits with the Anglo, Nordic, and Latin European clusters, its significantly unique differences merit a separate category. Like its neighbors, Germanic Europe is highly individualistic and characteristically blunt in terms of communication style. Unlike its neighbors, however, this cluster values order above almost all else. These cultures adhere strictly to rules and regulations and believe that proper planning and legislation mitigate risk. They tend to shy away from an ostentatious show of wealth or power and are markedly task and goal oriented. As such, a person's status is generally less important than their ability.

Germanic Europe Cultural Value Dimension: Individualist, Low Power Distance, Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance, Competitive, Moderate Time, Low Context, Doing

7. Improving the CQ of Special Forces Personnel

Most anthropologists will say the most efficient way to learn about another culture is to immerse oneself in it: live there, learn the language(s), and experience daily life over an extended period of time. In short, the "best way to really get to know another society and its culture is to live in it as an active participant."[81] Joint exercises for training, military training teams, and joint exercises conducted by the five regionally aligned Special Forces groups ensure that members of the various groups have scheduled opportunities to be immersed in a foreign culture. Even so, most Special Forces soldiers do not have the opportunity to do so for any extended period of time.[82] The following narrative describes alternative methods for improving CQ that are available to U.S. Special Forces.

Before improving CQ, one must first determine his or her CQ baseline. Although a formal assessment is the most reliable method, it is also possible to gauge CQ ability through self-assessment. An honest, objective self-assessment should enable an individual to identify their strengths and weaknesses across the four CQ components: drive, knowledge, strategy, and action. There are exercises people can do to correct their CQ deficiencies, and whatever a person's level of CQ acumen, they will always benefit from improvement: those with superior CQ skills will gain an even greater advantage, and those with less than stellar CQ ability can take steps to improve. It's important to note that improving one aspect of CQ will likely have a beneficial effect on the other aspects as well.

Drive is perhaps the most important CQ pillar, as it's unlikely a person without drive will ever make an effort to improve their CQ. There are a few exercises that can help people increase their drive. One is to read case studies, as learning about the role CQ plays in successful operations can guide future efforts, and discovering how solid CQ helped lead to that success might spark a person's interest in the field. Moreover, learning how CQ could have made a difference in failed operations might give a person a sense of urgency to increase their CQ.

Learning a foreign language can also help increase CQ drive, as having measurable benchmarks, such as being able to order a meal or ask for the

restroom, can motivate individuals to improve their language and cultural skills. In short, success breeds success. Furthermore, language consists of so much more than vocabulary and grammar rules; idioms, phrases, and even fables say a lot about the values and historical lessons of a particular culture. In this sense, learning a foreign language can provide the motivation to increase both drive and knowledge.

For those with little time to invest in gaining foreign language proficiency, learning even a few simple phrases of greetings and thanks can have a similar effect. The ability to address someone in their own language, regardless of pronunciation or grammar, at the very least indicates one's interest in that culture. This often elicits an enthusiastic response from the host and may pique the speaker's personal interest and boost their confidence.

Military personnel—particularly Special Forces personnel—have several opportunities to learn foreign languages. Some Special Forces soldiers receive language training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI), which offers some of the best language instruction in the United States. DLI, which is part of the Army Training and Doctrine Command, offers instruction in 24 languages. Qualified military personnel can gain basic competency in a foreign language in as little as 26 weeks.[83]

Most Special Forces soldiers receive language training as part of the Special Forces Qualification Course taught at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, which currently teaches 16 primary languages.[84] Special Operations Forces Teletraining System Language Training, a new language instruction program facilitated by the Special Operations Forces Language Office, provides U.S. Special Operations Command students the opportunity to study languages remotely.[85] Having the flexibility to study at any time of day in any location that has reliable Internet access will enable more service members to gain valuable language skills. Besides offering flexibility, the program teaches languages that are outside the usual core offering.[86]

Knowledge is perhaps the simplest CQ component to increase, and the Armed Forces have developed numerous methods to prepare military personnel for cross-cultural deployments. The DLI and the Special Forces Qualification Course offer state-of-the-art language training and education, which includes instruction in foreign cultures. Language classes at DLI are paired with courses that help give students a holistic education about the culture in which their foreign language is the native tongue. Current training exposes

service members to a wide variety of culture-related knowledge, such as local history, values, traditions, beliefs, geography, climate, and language. The in-house educational structure of DLI gives students an extended amount of time to become familiar with a foreign culture.

To advance in their training during the Special Forces Qualification Course, students must become orally proficient in a target language. Students also study different military cultures throughout their training, with specific attention given to such topics as language and culture application, mediation and negotiation, and tactics.[87] This educational structure is ideal, as military personnel need the classes, lectures, and workshops that provide critical cultural knowledge—such information cannot be communicated adequately in last-minute briefings before deployment. When military personnel arrive in a foreign culture, they must be comfortable with the situation and feel they are capable of carrying out their mission successfully. As such, it is crucial that their cultural preparation go beyond basic knowledge.

Strategy is a more contemplative aspect of cultural intelligence, and improving CQ strategy requires a great degree of self-awareness and empathy. To be successful CQ practitioners, Special Forces personnel must be able to take stock of their own cultural assumptions and those of others. Improving CQ strategy requires evaluating assumptions by envisioning encounters with other cultures, anticipating other cultures' approaches to conflict, authority, uncertainty, etc., and being able to recall information learned about that culture's language, religion, or history that might influence the interpretation of personal interactions. Most importantly, however, is that CQ strategy requires recognizing one's personal expectations and comparing them with the assumptions of foreign cultures, which will help a person identify potential areas of friction or misunderstanding and suggest better strategies for addressing them.[88]

Information gained from lectures, workshops, and briefings, as well as through movies, books, and personal observation, can be beneficial when developing CQ strategy. Raw information about a new culture is crucial when developing a game plan for interacting in that setting. Before meeting with people in a new country and culture, a Special Forces soldier needs to know if it's customary to shake hands, bow, or kiss cheeks in greeting. While it may sound simple and obvious, first impressions are lasting, thus knowing the basics can help one make a positive first impression, which can result in a successful operation and an enduring relationship between the two cultures.

Developing a setting in which Special Forces personnel can be debriefed on cross-cultural interactions is also helpful in developing CQ strategy. The format of the meeting is unimportant, but it is crucial that the parties involved are able to talk about their trials, tribulations, and successes in a foreign culture. Having an open forum allows all parties to learn from one another's mistakes and collectively improve the institution.

The final CQ pillar is action. As important as the other three CQ components are, they will have little impact if they are never put into action. Nevertheless, a person must first have the drive to learn about a culture, knowledge of the customs, and a strategy to implement appropriate behavior before they can take action successfully in a foreign culture.

One of the most effective ways to improve CQ action is to pay close attention to how people in different cultures interact and then replicate those behaviors. Culturally intelligent action requires constant mental engagement, as operating on 'auto pilot' in cross-cultural settings will exacerbate communication difficulties and lead one to fall back on native habits, which will not produce the desired results. Individuals must be aware of how their words and mannerisms are perceived and adjust them accordingly. It is also important to know which cultural norms an outsider should not adopt. For instance, while it may be customary to bow on certain occasions in Japan or Korea, if an outsider unknowingly overdoes it, the hosts may perceive it as patronizing or mocking. Similarly, while individuals from the Anglo cluster are typically more casual, being too informal with professional acquaintances may appear disrespectful or crude. A careful balance must be struck, and individuals who engage with other cultures mindfully are better equipped to recognize and respect that fine line.

Learning by example is another method for U.S. forces to improve their CQ. When on assignment in a foreign culture, military personnel must approach their work with the native population not as teachers but as equals. Learning from their hosts will allow U.S. forces to assimilate into the native culture more readily and work with its population most effectively. Full cross-cultural cooperation often requires first breaking language barriers. Although the U.S. conducted military training exercises in Thailand for over 20 years, participants did not get the full benefit of the training until the 353rd Special Operations Group started using language and cultural specialists, which improved the experience on both sides.[89]

The U.S. military offers its personnel numerous programs that include participation in cross-cultural studies. While not specifically intended to do so, such programs help increase participants' CQ. However, engaging in on-the-ground learning in a foreign setting is far more effective than a classroom setting for improving all four areas of CQ. Although not always feasible from a military standpoint, some immersion opportunities are available to military personnel. The Olmsted Scholarship, for example, offers U.S. military officers the opportunity to live in a foreign country for two years. This is the ideal immersion experience, as it gives them time to acclimate and assimilate culturally and socially.[90] Although the officers living in a foreign country will undoubtedly make cultural blunders, by the end of the program they will feel comfortable in their surroundings, have intimate knowledge of the culture, and interact successfully with their foreign hosts. As such, immersion opportunities are one of the most effective ways to enhance CQ acumen.

Afghan Hands is a program that specifically helps military personnel increase their CQ capabilities. Participation lasts three to four years, during which participants spend several months learning either Pashto or Dari and studying the Afghan culture. This course of study is designed to prepare participants for a one-year deployment in Afghanistan, which gives them adequate time to adjust to living and working in that culture. An assignment stateside then follows, and the final year of the program involves a return to Afghanistan for one year.[91] The intense training, coupled with long and repeated deployments, enables soldiers to gain expertise in the language and culture and build rapport with the native population.

Those with high CQ tend to be more adept at adjusting to a different way of life, which supports the suggestion that testing soldiers' CQ is beneficial. This model gives soldiers with less than exemplary CQ the time to adjust and thus to reach their full potential in an overseas assignment. In sum, programs like Afghan Hands allow military personnel to increase their CQ acumen while developing strong relationships with the indigenous populations, both of which add legitimacy and the potential for success to U.S. military operations.

The CIC, among others, has developed a training program in the civilian sector to help participants increase their CQ. Two workshops, Developing Cultural Intelligence and Leading with Cultural Intelligence, are designed specifically for this purpose. Geared toward two different audiences, these

workshops offer targeted sessions to help participants work effectively in whatever cross-cultural situations their professions require.[92]

The CIC is scheduled to launch a virtual CQ program in 2016 that will "bring the assessment, coaching, and training right to team members' devices."[93] Participants first undergo a CQ assessment and then select two key intercultural skills they want to improve. They are then given personalized training based on their assessment results to improve the two chosen characteristics. The participants are assigned to training modules that guide them through the basics of CQ and provide useful instruction to help them improve their global effectiveness.

Every new cross-cultural experience, whether a success or a failure, can be integrated into an individual's existing CQ abilities. The desired results of a cross-cultural interaction are usually obvious: to reach a mutually beneficial agreement, increase profits, promote diplomatic cooperation, etc. Achieving these goals, however, is often obstructed by myriad cross-cultural differences. The four components of CQ shed light on these differences, and having solid ability in each area increases the likelihood of achieving the desired outcome without burning any bridges in the process.

8. Summing Up and Final Thoughts

This final chapter reviews several propositions about cultural intelligence that were articulated in this monograph by revisiting the six major questions asked in the introduction.

No. 1: Does the Special Forces community need a CQ assessment capability?

Not surprisingly, the answer may be yes. The Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) process was established to identify soldiers who have the mental, social, and physical skills to pass the Special Forces Qualification Course. SFAS candidates are assessed in a number of areas, including psychological, physical, and mental aptitude, land navigation skills, the ability to work individually and as part of a team, and endurance. The DLAB, mentioned earlier, "is designed to assess an individual's potential for learning a foreign language. The test helps to select students for foreign language courses and identify appropriate languages for study."[94] All these assessment requirements help determine a Special Forces soldier's potential to succeed as a member of a unit that will participate in global operations conducted primarily in unfamiliar and challenging cultural and physical environments.[95] These operations are further complicated by considerable cross-cultural differences between U.S. Department of Defense personnel and their counterparts from local cultural groups in the host nation communities, and with their coalition partners. Some of these differences are significant in determining their influence in mission success.[96]

The extensive SFAS assessment menu does not include any testing for cultural intelligence aptitude. This seems a considerable oversight, given the importance of cultural sensitivity when conducting overseas missions, and the level of competence expected of Special Forces soldiers. Imagine that a Special Forces soldier is highly skilled in his occupational specialty, speaks a foreign language, and is physically fit—the ultimate 'quiet professional'—but cannot operate effectively in a multicultural environment. What is his value to his team and the mission? An equally important question is: Was it worth the cost to train him if he can't work effectively in the environment where he is most needed?

As mentioned in the introduction, this monograph differs from the lead author's other JSOU publications because it advocates for a particular position—that Special Forces applicants have their CQ acumen assessed by the CIC. This recommendation is advocated for two reasons. First, the lead author is a certified Level 1 and Level 2 instructor in the CIC's CQ program. Level 1 certification assessed understanding of CQ and CQ acumen, and granted certification to administer the assessment to others. Level 2 certification involves design and delivery of cultural intelligence programs. Second, of 10 cultural assessment programs evaluated by the *Journal of Cross Cultural-Psychology* in July 2013, the CIC's program was listed among the top three in the nation.[97] Based on the journal's evaluation, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and the Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale would also be viable assessment mechanisms for Special Forces CQ testing; however, the lead author decided to advocate for a program the experts considered good and which he had personally experienced.[98] Earning the Level 1 and Level 2 certifications took approximately 40 hours, which included classroom instruction, outside reading, and practice teaching. None of the other cultural assessment programs offered such a convenient certification program.

No. 2: Is the CQ assessment process articulated in this monograph a functional cultural assessment tool for Special Forces soldiers?

The simple answer is yes. The CQ assessment process is quick and painless. A self-assessment and a multi-rater assessment are available through the CIC. The multi-rater assessment is considered the more accurate, as it determines CQ based on a combination of a self-assessment and peer feedback from individuals the soldier being assessed has chosen. Although the multi-rater option is a bit more intensive, time-consuming, and expensive, it provides the most comprehensive feedback and is applicable to a greater array of professions.[99] Both are available online from, and are processed by, the CIC.[100] CIC personnel provide the initial assessment scores and hard-copy feedback. A deeper interpretation of score results, particularly for those who show low CQ aptitude, can be done by CIC personnel for a fee or, more appropriately, by trained Special Forces personnel.

No. 3: Can good CQ acumen be beneficial to individual Special Forces soldiers as they carry out their duties?

While the number of conventional U.S. military forces deployed around the globe has decreased markedly in the past two years, the number of SOF has increased slightly.[101] In fact, President Obama and Pentagon leaders have increasingly made SOF—the primary U.S. force in terms of numbers and of missions requiring cultural competency—their military tool of choice.[102] By definition, Special Forces unconventional warfare (UW) missions, such as leading insurgents against a hostile government, and foreign internal defense (FID) missions, which involve working with friendly governments to counter insurgencies, terrorism, and other threats and contingencies, are conducted in areas where the ability to work with other cultures is paramount. There are three main reasons for the cultural requirement: First, U.S. allies in FID operations are from other cultures.[103] Second, U.S. enemies and allies in UW situations are from other cultures. Third, U.S. Army Special Forces' allies in both UW and FID operations are from other cultures.

Almost every operational deployment Special Forces soldiers undertake—UW, FID, joint combined exchange training,[104] military training team missions, Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises, counterterrorism, counter-drug, and counterinsurgency operations—requires some degree of cultural competency. Therefore, having CQ drive is a foregone conclusion, as all Special Forces soldiers are motivated to work in multicultural environments. However, it is impossible for each one to be competent in all cultures, which highlights three important reasons the CQ assessment is critical: First, CQ assessment indicates a person's ability to understand and interact well in different cultures, although it does not teach how to master the nuances of any one culture. Second, CQ assessment indicates which cultures a person is likely to have the greatest affinity with. Third, CQ assessment provides a roadmap for improvement, as each person's CQ assessment report identifies areas where improvement is needed and breaks these results down by region. The CQ report also provides a development plan, which often prompts the subject to request additional CQ training or to work individually to improve their CQ performance.

No. 4: Can Special Forces senior leaders benefit from CQ in the strategic planning and operations process?

Absolutely. When the lead author entered the Special Forces in 1970, there was one Special Forces flag officer, a brigadier general; today there are more than two dozen Special Forces generals on active duty. Five have achieved four-star rank, one served as Army Chief of Staff, and another served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Given the nature of the threats the U.S. will face in the next two decades and its reliance on SOF, its leaders' ability to understand other cultures' motivations and actions and avoid mirror imaging will be critical in preventing strategic miscues—and thus more such tragedies as the Pearl Harbor and 9/11 attacks. But this will require leaders who are both comfortable with their own culture and highly knowledgeable about other cultures. Of course, not all strategic decisions are as crucial as those made on D-Day, for example, but in the counterterrorism and asymmetric warfare engagements today's military faces, decisions that fail to consider the cultural context can have serious implications. One need only look at the situation in Libya to understand that the lack of CQ has created a strategic nightmare for much of Africa. Toppling a tyrant in an operation that squandered neither American lives nor domestic political capital might have made good sense from a U.S. perspective.[105] However, had decision-makers approached the decision to enter the conflict in Libya with solid CQ, they would have understood that Libya is a tribal nation and that removing Kaddafi would empower tribal leaders to assert power for profit and leave the door wide open for organized terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and ISIS.

No. 5: Can Special Forces group commanders benefit from the cultural clusters CQ methodology?

Yes. As a quick study, the cultural clusters have great value for Special Forces groups that operate outside their traditional areas of responsibility, and for groups whose areas of responsibility include multiple cultural clusters. Using the clusters concept will not make a Special Forces leader or soldier an expert in any particular culture, but the clusters do serve as a quick reference guide that can help reduce the chance of missteps in the planning stages of an operation, limit the tendency toward mirror imaging, prompt the right

culture-related questions to ask, and fast-forward the ability to dive deeply into a particular culture, which can help promote mission success.

No. 6: Is the notion of improving CQ viable and important for the Special Forces community?

The lead author admits to bias, but strongly believes the answer is yes. In the past, cultural intelligence was not included in the Special Forces assessment and selection process. Almost every other competency was evaluated, but not CQ. This was not an oversight; the fact is that a viable CQ assessment mechanism was not available. It is now. For reasons already stated, this monograph advocates using the CIC's multi-rater CQ assessment. The CIC program is preferred for several reasons: it is user friendly, it can be done online, it is relatively inexpensive, it shows an individual's strengths and weaknesses in several technical (drive, knowledge, strategy, and action) and regional (the 10 clusters) areas, and, perhaps most importantly, it provides a roadmap for improving one's score.

For the foreseeable future, U.S. Special Forces soldiers will need cultural intelligence to carry out most of their many missions, during which they will be working with, for, and against those from other cultures. A Special Forces soldier who lacks cultural intelligence is a liability to his team, to the mission, and to himself. We must begin now to identify those with and those without strong CQ and offer both groups the opportunity to hone their cultural skills, and thereby reduce the likelihood of mission—and personal—failure.♠

Reference Tables

(Note: The following tables are derived from David Livermore's *Expand Your Borders: Discover 10 Cultural Clusters*.)

Table 2. Cultural Clusters

Clusters	Countries
Anglo	Australia, Canada, New Zealand, U.K., U.S., etc.
Arab	Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, etc.
Confucian Asia	China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, etc.
Eastern Europe	Albania, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Russia, etc.
Germanic Europe	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, etc.
Latin America	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia.
Latin Europe	France, French-speaking Canada, Italy, Portugal, Spain, etc.
Nordic Europe	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, etc.
Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, etc.
Southern Asia	India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, etc.

Table 3. Cultural Values

Characteristics	Definitions
Individualism	Emphasis on individual goals and rights.
Collectivism	Emphasis on group goals and personal relationships.
Low Power Distance	Emphasis on equality; shared decision-making.
High Power Distance	Emphasis on differences in status; superiors make decisions.
Cooperative	Emphasis on collaboration, nurturing, and family.
Competitive	Emphasis on competition, assertiveness, and achievement.
Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Emphasis on flexibility and adaptability.
High Uncertainty Avoidance	Emphasis on planning and predictability.
Short Term	Emphasis on immediate outcomes (success now).
Long Term	Emphasis on long-term planning (success later).
Low Context	Emphasis on explicit communication (words).
High Context	Emphasis on indirect communication (tone, context).
Being	Emphasis on quality of life.
Doing	Emphasis on being busy and meeting goals.

Table 4. Cultural Value Continuum

Individualism		**Collectivism**
Anglo	Eastern Europe	Arab
Germanic Europe	Latin Europe	Confucian Asia
Nordic Europe		Latin America
		Southern Asia
		Sub-Saharan Africa
Low Power Distance		**High Power Distance**
Anglo	Confucian Asia	Arab
Germanic Europe	Eastern Europe	Latin America
Nordic Europe	Latin Europe	Southern Asia
	Sub-Saharan Africa	
Low Uncertainty Avoidance		**High Uncertainty Avoidance**
Anglo	Arab	Latin Europe
Eastern Europe	Confucian Asia	Latin America
Nordic Europe	Germanic Europe	
	Southern Asia	
	Sub-Saharan Africa	
Cooperative		**Competitive**
Nordic Europe	Arab	Anglo
Sub-Saharan Africa	Confucian Asia	Germanic Europe
	Eastern Europe	
	Latin America	
	Latin Europe	
	Southern Asia	
Short Term		**Long Term**
Anglo	Germanic Europe	Confucian Asia
Arab	Latin America	
Eastern Europe	Latin Europe	
Nordic Europe	Southern Asia	
Sub-Saharan Africa		
Low Context		**High Context**
Anglo	Eastern Europe	Arab
Germanic Europe	Latin America	Confucian Asia
Nordic Europe	Latin Europe	Southern Asia
		Sub-Saharan Africa
Being Orientation		**Doing Orientation**
Arab	Confucian Asia	Anglo
Latin America	Eastern Europe	Germanic Europe
Nordic Europe	Latin Europe	
Sub-Saharan Africa	Southern Asia	

Appendix A: Acronym List

AFRICOM U.S. Africa Command

CIC Cultural Intelligence Center

CQ cultural intelligence

DLAB Defense Language Aptitude Battery

DLI Defense Language Institute

FID foreign internal defense

IQ intelligence quotient

JSOU Joint Special Operations University

RIMPAC Rim of the Pacific

SFAS Special Forces Assessment and Selection

SOF Special Operations Forces

UW unconventional warfare

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