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# **FAO JOURNAL**

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**Addicted to Aide: A Cautionary Tale**

**Legitimacy and Government: A Few Thoughts**

**Political-Military Affairs Officers:  
- The Art of Strategic Planning -**

**NATO: Growing in Size, Growing More Relevant**

**Socio-Cultural Aspects of Thai-US Military Relationship**

**Book Review**

**Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the Presidency**

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## ***Letter from the President . . .***

Dear FAO Colleagues,

It was a great honor to be asked by the Board of Governors to serve as the next President of the Foreign Area Officer Association (FAOA). I am humbled by the selection and I look forward to working on behalf of our community. To introduce myself, I am a U.S. Army Eurasian FAO. I entered the FAO program in 1994 when I began Russian language training at the Defense Language Institute. Following graduate study at Harvard University and additional study at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, I served as a deputy inspection team chief with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency in Frankfurt, Germany; political-military officer at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia; executive officer on the Headquarters, Department of the Army Staff; and senior political-military adviser in the U.S. Department of State. I am presently assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where I work in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia Policy.

Since becoming a FAO, I have been pleased to see a growing recognition of the unique set of skills and the important role that we play toward the achievement of national security objectives. We represent the Department of Defense to foreign governments and, in particular, with their defense and military establishments. As a matter of Department of Defense policy, foreign language proficiency and detailed knowledge of the regions of the world are critical war fighting capabilities that will help to achieve success on the non-linear battlefields of the future. FAOs develop and maintain constructive, mutually supportive, bilateral and multilateral military activities and relationships across the range of operations, so it is clear that FAOs are relevant to current and future operations.

To help tell our story, we are fortunate to have an organization like FAOA to serve as a voice for our community. FAOA exists to strengthen bonds among FAOs in all Services – active reserve and retired; to promote FAO professional development; and to advocate for more support and resources for the FAO program. However, FAOA can only succeed with the active participation of its members. I ask you to consider ways to get involved. We seek your input to help ensure that FAOA remains relevant, value-added, and visible, so let us know how the organization can serve you better. If you haven't done so recently, check out our website at [www.faoa.org](http://www.faoa.org). There are several new features, including a blog, which I encourage you to use. You will also find an on-line version of The FAO Journal. Consider submitting an article – this is a good way to contribute to the community, and you will be published!

Again, I look forward to serving as your President. I am here to help. You can reach me by phone at 703-571-0238 or by e-mail at [gary.espinas@us.army.mil](mailto:gary.espinas@us.army.mil).

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
COL Gary Espinas, USA

# Addicted to Aide: A Cautionary Tale

By: MAJ Asslan Sayyar, 48D, Bangladesh ICT

***“Aid is not an end in itself. The purpose of foreign assistance must be creating the conditions where it's no longer needed.”***

***President Obama, Accra Ghana, July 2009***

Even after only ten years of active service I can say that the military I joined in 1999 does not resemble the one that I am in today. Like its predecessors it has, facing an era of persistent conflict, adapted to new realities. Among them is the undeniable fact that our military units are employed in tasks that support “nation-building.” This has taken a variety of forms but as regional experts with an eye on the long-term future of a lot of the countries that we are in I think we need to be vigilant of the fact that these nations are potential aide addicts. This is even more so since we have the ears of policy-makers.

A nation that is addicted to aide has no incentive to develop its own legitimate institutions or effectively provide services to its people. It has no incentive to assume responsibility for its actions. Why should it? The developed nations of the world and their associated international organizations will always feel compelled, either via media-driven guilt or ulterior interest, to assist. Like parents who never allow their children to fail and then learn from their mistakes, this scenario produces the absence of moral hazard and locks developing nations into a vicious cycle of crisis, aide, crisis, aide etc. In South Asia one need look no further for a cautionary tale than Bangladesh.

**Giving the Word “Host” in “Host Nation” a Whole New Meaning . . .**

Independent since 1971, Bangladesh's government has had an unhealthy symbiotic re-

lationship with outside assistance in all its forms from day one. That relationship has been viral in its evolution and is now completing its fourth decade of existence. According to Shaheen Anam, a representative from the Manusher Jonno Foundation (one of over **24,000** aide or charity organizations registered with the Bangladesh government), aide organizations in Bangladesh originally entered the country “to fill a vacuum” left by its split from Pakistan, but never left.

Their missions have changed over the years, but their desire to keep operating has not. It began with “relief and rehabilitation,” then it was “economic development” followed by “service delivery” and “social development.” Now the organizations, some of whom like the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) have staggering operating budgets and staffs, are focusing on “good governance” and the peoples’ “right to participate in development.” Since they exist outside the framework of any legitimate, elected government and are accountable to no one, it is ironic that **non-governmental organizations** now feel the need to oversee programs that emphasize good governance. This is much like getting a parenting class from someone without children. To add insult to injury some of these organizations have become politicized and in areas of the country they act as parallel governments. They even run their own businesses (to the detriment of local economies) in order to finance their operations and there is a great deal of duplication of effort organizations.

## Enablers & Eternal Victims

Regrettably, Bangladesh's cultural mindset makes it vulnerable to aide addiction; one can even say they enable it themselves. There is a saying in the country, which loosely translated

says “the man who is not in the front does not get eaten by the tiger.” I have observed, from rickshaw pullers to educators to military officers to government ministers a overall unwillingness to take responsibility for actions that occur within the supposed realms of their control. It is always some other person’s or some other country’s fault. The British left them with a poor education and health system, Pakistan culturally brutalized them, India is responsible for the sad state of their rivers, the West’s pollution is responsible for their decaying ecosystems, and everything else is usually the fault of either the United States or multinational corporations trying to invest there.

Even before the advent of the British Raj when decadent, intrigue-ridden nabobs ruled Bengal with the consent of the Mughal court this mindset existed. It was one of the reasons the British East India Company had a relatively easy time subduing the area of Bengal in its incremental takeover of the Indian subcontinent. The tradition of the just ruler with absolute power, or the wise vizier ever-present in most Asian literature from *The Shahnameh* to *The Adventures of Amir Hamza* does not exist in Bengali culture. In Bangladesh you are either an oppressor or the oppressed, and since it is socially unacceptable to be an oppressor everyone (including the elites) publicly identifies themselves as the oppressed. As in other countries FAOs in Bangladesh are dealing with a nation of people, a military and a government who tend to identify themselves as victims and generally do not feel accountable for doing or failing to do the jobs they are paid to do.

Sadly, this lowers everyone’s expectations to the point where no one, including the citizenry, expects action out of the Bangladesh government. They lurch from one disaster to another while attending donor conference after donor conference, eliciting more and more assistance. The cyclone shelters being built by DoD reps in Barisal lie a few hundred meters from the ones built a decade ago but that have since fallen into

disrepair. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) spends millions of dollars on an internet based cyclone early-warning system for villages that hardly have electricity let alone computers. No one takes ownership and a constant flow of guaranteed aide sets the conditions for rampant corruption in all sectors of the society.

### Change *They* Can Believe In

As FAOs doing military-to-military engagement, how do we approach nations such as Bangladesh, knowing what we know about their societal propensities? How do you make them **own** their shortcomings and take the requisite pride in addressing them? Giving them the boats they need or providing the aircraft that they want may not be the long-term solution when you see donated C-130s rotting in maintenance bays with parts strewn everywhere. Individual training and exchange programs may not produce the sweeping changes their military requires when those people are plugged back into a system that does not reward merit, and values ascetics and political connections over content and results. We can’t keep throwing money, equipment, and small-scale training at the problem. The assistance we provide should not be an end within itself. The challenge remains, how do you provide military assistance to a generally irresponsible (and very psychologically insecure) nation?

It might be politically unfeasible for both the United States and the developing nations of the world but, broadly speaking, they need to taste failure. Before they receive any more assistance in the form of arms and equipment, their military must be put in a situation where they have no one to blame for their deficiencies but themselves. We can easily assess that their unit staffs needs to be better organized, their decision making processes need to be streamlined, their NCO Corps needs to be developed, their littoral security needs to be improved, and their commu-

communications architecture needs to be redrawn but on a **collective-level**, they must see and realize their own shortcomings themselves, and then take the step of owning the solution, not expecting someone else to provide it to them carte blanche.

Developing nations like Bangladesh are drowning in their own mediocrity. Aide addiction, coupled with various preexisting cultural conditions, has crippled them. We are a nation heavily engaged in many countries and as FAOs dealing with nations like Bangladesh we, like our civilian counterparts, must be wary of the long-term consequences of the assistance we are providing. A change in the mindset of the militaries in nations that are excessively dependent on our (and other nations') assistance may be the lever that, in the long term, also moves their respective social and political planets.

## Voice Your Views

**The Journal strives to publish a variety of opinions, views, observations and analysis from tactical to strategic. We encourage you to express your voice by submitting articles, book reviews and Op-Ed pieces. Letters to the editor with both opposing and supporting the views of those expressed in published articles are encouraged. Submit your writings by either going to your association's website at [www.FAOA.org](http://www.FAOA.org) website, or via email.**

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# Legitimacy and Government - A Few Thoughts

By: Dr. Albert Mitchum Phd.

The study and analysis of human political endeavor is a difficult task under the most favorable of conditions and best characterized as both complicated and complex – unlike say, the study of rocks. I mean no slight or disrespect to my colleagues who do in fact study rocks; but, while the study of rocks may be complicated it does not rise to the same level of complexity as the study of human political behavior. Even the study of very large rocks, like say The Matterhorn, may be very complicated, but the mountain does not change its behavior because you are observing it – and perhaps more importantly, the mountain does not study you back.

The best we can hope for when studying people, and the politics that define them, is being able to identify trends and indicators. Even then we may need to create the impression that we are studying one process in order to observe how a separate political process, in its natural environment, deals with an issue of governance.

In general, we pride ourselves on being rational members of the community of nations and in being responsible members of that community. Within that context, generally we want to be left alone to pursue our own legitimate interests. The same seems to apply elsewhere and that is, perhaps, a good place to begin – issues of legitimacy.

A dictionary definition of legitimacy would tell us it refers to a state of things that have been made legal or that are considered proper. It means things that have been stated or pronounced as legitimate. Historically, the usage referred to edicts pronounced from the throne or by the proper heirs to that throne. Legitimacy, as a condition, referred to things, people, and ideas that had been justified, sanctioned, or authorized; or to something or someone who had “legitimate” status conferred upon them.

The concept of legitimacy predates our modern political thinking. In fact most people these days acknowledge neither the divine right of kings nor the laws of heredity. We no longer assume that just because the parent was a great lawmaker the offspring will have the inherent right to serve in the same office. In our thirst for equality of individual rights we have chipped away at the barriers of racism, sexism, and other political forms of population control.

Please bear with me a moment as I digress briefly on the point about population control because there is a lesson here we can take from economic theory. An economist would tell us there are three - and only three - ways in which one can answer the basic distribution question of “who gets what” in the world. The first of these three ways is to institute a political decision whereby one’s share of the “good stuff” is dependent upon political affiliation. Those of the right political party get the best of what’s available and those from the wrong political party get what’s left over. Secondly, we could institute a social system whereby one must be born into the right family in the right social class to have access to the good stuff. Those from another social class get what’s left over. (Some would argue that is what was happening in the former Soviet Union with the creation of the book of nomenclature. One could have access to certain stores only if one’s name appeared in the book.) Thirdly, we could use a free market system with few or no barriers to entry where, what one gets depends upon what one walks into the market with to trade and one’s abilities at negotiation. One could also argue that what exists in the US and indeed in most of the west is a hybrid of these three basic types where the free market tends to dominate most of the time.

Why is this important? Because, if I can control how much of the “good stuff” you can ac-

cess, then I have one more way of controlling or influencing you and thereby maintaining myself in power. Furthermore, if I can convince you this is the way it ought to be then, I have a legitimate government! The subtlety is that since we no longer accept the divine right of kings and we do accept the supremacy of individual rights, then if the individual populations being governed think it is legitimate -- it is legitimate. It really doesn't matter what someone else from outside the system thinks about the legitimacy of the actions of the state in question. What matters is the opinion of the people being governed and even then it only becomes an issue if it creates a significant degree of social dissatisfaction.

The willingness of the citizenry to live under a monarch is a tacit acceptance of the legitimacy of the monarch's government. One does not have to be a serious political scientist to note the obvious -- the majority of ruling monarchs today are in the region Westerners euphemistically identify as the Middle East. Specifically, these are the monarchs of the Arab world. Collectively they rule more than a third of the countries of the Arab League (Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Sultan of Oman, and the Emirs of the smaller Gulf States -- Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) and account for over 40 million subjects. They control access to strategic waterways and natural resources and substantial financial resources.

These Arab monarchies demonstrate the power of cultural determinism as a political force. Certain parallels can be drawn (and differences noted) here to the European model or the Asian model of state building. Many of the world's industrial democracies retain vestiges of once powerful monarchies of their own. For Europe and Asia, Britain and Japan are but two examples that come to mind in this context. "The ideal of the absolute ruler, standing apart from society as he rules, responsible only to God or to his own highest self; regulating the different orders of that society in light of the principles of justice, so as to enable each to act in accor-

dance with its own nature, to live in harmony with others, and to contribute its share to the general good."

There are some differences in the Arab model that bear consideration here since the question at hand is one of legitimacy of a ruler in the eyes of the subjects; however, it may be useful to first "operationalize" a vocabulary to facilitate our discussion and understanding. To that end: recognition *de facto*; recognition *de jure* and recognition of states are all worthy of a further comment.

**Recognition *De Facto*:** This is an "indefinite and provisional recognition by the government of one state that a particular regime in fact exercises authoritative control over the territory or a second state . . . *De Facto* recognition is extended pending evidence of the stability of the new regime, or of a practical consideration such as the maintenance of trade. The legality of the assumption of authority by the regime so recognized is immaterial. Such recognition is not necessarily a precondition for the establishment of *de jure* or formal diplomatic relations."

**Recognition *De Jure*:** This is a "complete, unqualified recognition of one government by another. Once *de jure* recognition is granted and trouble arises with the government so recognized, its representative character is not denied and recognition withdrawn. Indeed diplomatic relations with the offending government are broken . . . *De jure* recognition always involves the establishment of normal diplomatic relations. Such recognition is termed *express* when it is accomplished by a formal act such as an exchange of notes expressing both desire and readiness to engage in regular diplomatic relations. *De jure* recognition is termed *tacit* when accomplished by an act that implies intention to recognize, such as a consular convention."

To further elaborate this point; "Although historically the United States granted recognition to new governments that demonstrated effective



control, during the Wilson administration the United States made 'constitutionality' or 'legitimacy' of a new regime the prerequisite for American recognition. In a statement of doctrine associated with his name, Mexican Foreign Minister Don Genaro Estrada in 1930 held that the granting or withholding of recognition for political purposes constituted an improper and insulting intervention in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state since it constituted an external judgment as to the legal qualifications of a foreign regime. Opponents of the Estrada Doctrine point out that the purpose of recognition is not passing judgment but merely the unavoidable necessity of establishing the essential representative character of a new regime."

Recognition of States: "The process by which a political entity becomes an international person in international law and is accepted by existing states as a new member of the community. Once recognition of statehood has occurred, this status continues regardless of internal changes in government so long as the sovereign character of the state continues."

To return to our brief discussion of the Arab model and to the question of the legitimacy of the ruler in the eyes of the subjects; first of all, the selection of someone to fill the office of monarch is not an automatic succession from father to son. The ruler is often selected not merely because he is the next in line or the most senior in the ruling family but because he is deemed to be the best qualified to lead. Additionally, in many of these complex relationships, the assumption by the monarch of the throne must be ratified by the religious community. Depending on the relative strength of the religious establishment and the relative strength of the ruling family, there are a wide spectrum of possibilities that could present themselves. "Because Islamic law, unlike Roman Catholic canon law, is supposed to regulate the ordinary life of the believer, one of the primary responsibilities of the ruler is to ensure application of the shari'ah, as

the legal system is known, in both the public and private lives of the believers.

Consequently, the political power and social prestige of the religious officials, as the staff of the judiciary, often allowed religious authorities to exercise control and demand accountability from the secular rulers." On one end of the spectrum then would be the question of legitimacy in the case of the monarchs of Morocco and Jordan. Both of these rulers claim literal descent from the prophet Muhammad. Both have very effectively melded their political and their religious power bases and routinely remind their subjects that they each take their obligations as religious leaders very seriously. The other end of the spectrum, it can be argued, was personified by the Shah of Iran. His father gained power in the aftermath of the chaos following the First World War.

The Qajar dynasty of Iran survived the war in a crippled state and was overthrown by the military officer Reza Kahn. Reza Kahn who, in 1926, declared himself the first Pahlavi Shah - and was also known as Reza Maxim because of his familiarity with the maxim machine gun. This is a key bit of data because as he ascended in power there were only five of these guns in the country and he was known for his skill and ability with the weapon. He passed power to his son, Reza Pahlavi, who continued the process of modernization aimed at making Iran a modern nation after the western model. By most accounts he was proud of the advances in nation building and even in the development of a nuclear power capability. Unfortunately he lacked the religious credibility that was to play such a key role in his fall from power.

The average Iranian citizen who was a devout Muslim did not like the changes being made in the society and the world around him. This then presents us with a superb example of the issues that arise when the legitimacy of a ruler is in question; especially, when there was already a high degree of social dissatisfaction.

As we saw, in the presence of a catalyst this was a formula for revolution.

Issues of governmental legitimacy and social dissatisfaction are not new. In point of fact there was a particularly useful bit of research done by Grabbendorf, Krumwiede, and Todt that posed some interesting hypotheses. The political significance of the acceptance, by the populace, of the regime is a key component of the stability of the nation state. One of the concepts that emerged from their research into the political situation in Latin America was a functional concept of legitimacy of the governments. They point out the apparent link between the viability of a government and the perceptions of the governed regarding the legitimacy of the government.

I would offer a couple of examples for your consideration. First, consider the fall of Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran. From a western perspective we looked on in non-comprehending disbelief and consternation. The country of Iran had, after all, made significant progress just prior to the ouster of the Shah. Iran had undertaken major modernization projects on the highways and numerous building projects. They had instituted a secular court system that was administering the laws. The nation had even made some progress in the area of human rights for women. The veil had begun to disappear and there was talk of more responsible roles for women in society and government. How could all this be happening? In our 20-20 hindsight it is a little more clear. We were suffering from a bad case of mirror imaging – you look like me so you must think like me. As the Iranian people began to look more and more western we began to assume they were adopting western philosophies and thought patterns. In fact, there was a Rand study done at about this time that was 12 volumes in length and that made only one mention of the Ayatollah Khomeini, as a footnote on one page.

A rudimentary analysis might lead one to posit that the Shah was never a legitimate ruler in the eyes of the people. The people did not share his vision of a newly emerging Persian Empire.

They were for the most part a simple people with a fundamentalist religion who wanted a religious leader and the Shah was not him. The highways did not impress the general population and local decision makers were neither comfortable with the changes nor the rate of change. The secular court system had in effect taken power from the hands of the local religious leaders who had previously exercised authority. To add insult to injury, the Shah's government had also begun to tax the church lands which had always been used for the benefit of the poor. A large and influential segment of the population was in fact being disenfranchised and alienated by the actions of the government that we in the west saw as very progressive. Against this political backdrop there was the added societal irritant of watching as Iranian Islamic women began to adopt the improper, immodest, and pagan ways of the west. What the Ayatollah offered these people was a return to a more legitimate form of government.

Before we shift gears, this seems a good place to revisit another idea – the concept of social dissatisfaction. The literature indicates that when social dissatisfaction is high there exists a greater probability of a coup attempt. In the previously cited case of Iran, one can see the basis for a good deal of social dissatisfaction beginning to brew. In the situation we have just described of a disenfranchised mass with a governmental form of questionable legitimacy, and high social dissatisfaction the only thing missing is the presence of a catalyst. The Ayatollah offered that catalyst and some have theorized that more than offer it, he may have engineered it.

If this theory holds true we should be able to see similarities in other places and a reasonable fit as a framework to discuss them. By contrast, consider conditions in the United States in the mid-1960s where, I can safely say, there was a high degree of social dissatisfaction. This manifested itself notably among a disenfranchised, economically depressed, subculture who was not buying in to the American dream. The

riots and the burning of Watts, the eloquent speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, the marches in Selma, could easily have provided the catalysts to ignite the situation but one thing was missing. The basic governmental legitimacy, as an institution, was never seriously questioned by the population. More specifically, even in the worst of the race riots no majority of the citizenry stood up and said "Excuse me! I'd like a dictator now!!" No one asked for a potentate; no one asked for a theocracy. In fact, those of us who lived through the period just wanted to change some of the people in charge in the various stations of the government. The basic institutions of the government were not under fire by the mainstream just the people in them.

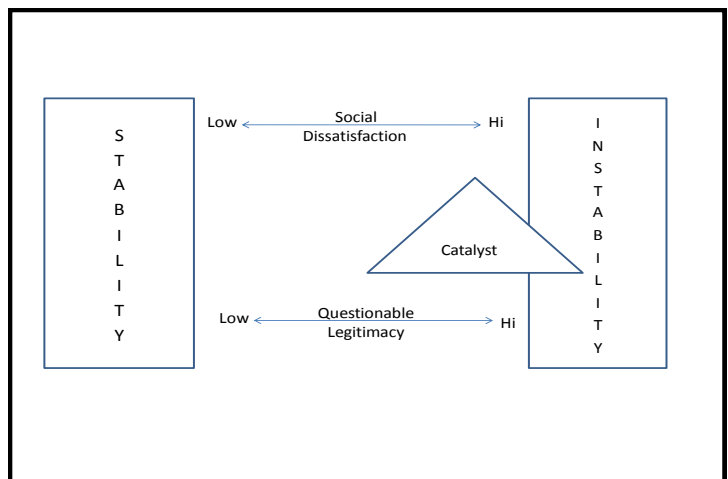
One could argue that this is driving the demonstrations in Tehran in the 2009 elections farce as well as the ouster of Mr. Zelaya in Tegucigalpa. With very little in common (dissimilar people, ethnicity, culture, religion, and political system) both nations have seen significant demonstrations on the street in recent weeks expressing opinions not about the system itself but the people within the system. Tehran looks like a stolen election or at least a heavy case of election fraud and the people appear dissatisfied with a result they perceive as lacking legitimacy.

In Honduras we watched an elected President Zelaya attempt to fire a Chief of Defense (CHOD) only to have the Constitutional Court reinstate him and then tens of thousands of people march on the street to support the CHOD. A few days later we saw that same CHOD, under orders from the Constitutional Court remove Zelaya from office and not seize power but report back to the Court which then instructed the Congress to select a new President. They did so and subsequent demonstrations have been anywhere from a 5:1 to a 10:1 ration of support en masse for the Congressionally elected Mr Micheletti versus the extremely unpopular Mr. Zelaya. In both of these most recent cases the people have not openly challenged the political structure but have aggressively expressed their displeasure with the

people in power and demonstrated an opinion of the legitimacy of their rulers that none can miss.

The argument then is that a high level of social dissatisfaction in an environment of questionable governmental legitimacy and in the presence of a catalyst is a formula for a government to fall.

Graphically it might look like this:



In his book *Coup d'Etat* Ed Luttwak makes the point that a coup in the UK for example would be highly unlikely because, among other factors, the bureaucracy and the public have a "basic understanding of the nature and legal basis of government and they would react in order to restore a legitimate leadership." The point here is that most governments of developed countries are too resilient to fall prey to a coup, unless contemporary conditions have weakened them. For example, a severe and prolonged economic crisis could nurture the growth of social dissatisfaction if the crisis included large scale unemployment and high inflation. Similarly, a long protracted war or a bitter military defeat could lead the people to question the legitimacy of the rulers. Chronic instability under a multi-party system could also shake the public trust in governmental effectiveness and thereby play into the rhetoric of insurgents. The intent of most insurgents is to cast doubt onto the effectiveness of the existing

government and to bring into question whether the government cannot protect the citizens.

This brings us then back to questions of legitimacy and distribution of the product of society. Whether dealing in a world controlled by the divine right of kings, laws of heredity, civil precedent or any of a number of other arrangements, the issue today is generally defined as one of governance. In cases where there is a weakness or a perceived weakness in the existing regime conventional wisdom says there is a heightened potential for insurgent activity. This defines the “structural vulnerability” that an insurgent strategy can exploit. Anecdotal, in studies among Latin American insurgencies, the structural vulnerability was exacerbated by certain crisis accelerating factors (e.g. the behavior of the elites during times of increasing tension or crisis).

Logically, if the strength of the regime is a factor then the strength of the social revolutionary movement is also a factor. This might include the movement’s structural (and procedural) methods for acquisition and growth as well as its strategy for gaining and exploiting power. The example that comes to mind is Hezbollah’s ascendancy in power within and contrasted against a weak central government in Lebanon. Naturally, all of this must be considered against the backdrop of the international context and the behavior of the most relevant international actors as well as the regime, or the insurgent, dependence on external power structures.

In practice the observed phenomenon indicates that: ***“It goes without saying that a regime – given the existence of a strong revolutionary movement – becomes particularly vulnerable to overthrow attempts when the loyalty of the military and security forces becomes doubtful, or at least when some of them are no longer willing to defend the existing regime and possibly even join the revolutionary opposition. Since the Russian Revolution, at least partial ‘desertion’ of the military has been considered a prerequisite for the success of any revolution (in part it is seen as a necessary condition for success).”***

In fact, it can be argued and indeed there are numerous examples of regimes relatively weak in terms of political legitimacy and in terms of real international power, who have nonetheless remained stable for long periods of time. They become threatened only when realistic alternatives become visible.

Since there always seem to be realistic alternatives available, a prudent course of action might be one in which the ruling government seeks to enhance its legitimacy in the eyes of the populace while concurrently lowering social dissatisfaction and neutralizing any catalytic situations as they emerge. To that end one can find ideas inside a relatively large body of information on the art and science of public administration. Take for example electrical power distribution in an environment of crumbling (or war torn) infrastructure – someone is going to be without power or at least will have to deal with brown outs.

A minimum standard of professional competence would dictate awareness of exactly which sectors of the population would be without electrical power and for how long. A slightly higher standard of competence would be demonstrated by knowing what the demographic component looks like (race, ethnicity, religion) as compared to that sector having good stable power. It goes without saying a competent administrator would have mapped out where the hospitals, religious buildings, community centers, etc. are and how they are affected. These things are complex and sometimes complicated but this is not rocket science and a simple overlay of these factors, graphically represented, would be a good thing on which to keep an eye. It would also be a good thing to communicate to the populace before the fact and as progress is made on repairing the electrical production capacity.

An even higher levels of competence would apply similar processes to other goods and services, and aggressively engage community leaders of affected areas. After all, if one were

sitting in the dark in a hundred degree heat without lights, air-conditioning or fresh food and without a clue as to if anyone were working on the problem, then one might begin to question exactly why the current rulers are in power.

For the military planner then, this offers a potential course of action to create a condition of heightened social dissatisfaction with a ruler we want to coerce or depose. Conversely, this offers a potential course of action to create a condition of heightened acceptance/ legitimacy in a regime that we want to support. The key in both extremes is the perception that defines reality in the minds of the populace. If they think it is legitimate then it is legitimate. If they think it is good governance then it is good governance. If they are dissatisfied then the government is much less likely to be stable.

Let me say that again, if they (the governed) are dissatisfied then the government is much less likely to be stable. The true test of legitimacy is not how a situation looks to us nor is it how the situation complies with 'established international norms.' The true test of legitimacy in the contemporary world is how it looks through the eyes of the people being governed. This may admittedly sound a bit simplistic and perhaps it is -- but it also works. Think of it as observed phenomenon.

What I mean is analogous to the fact that I do not understand how a computer works and yet

I am writing this humble opinion using one. I press a letter on the keyboard and a letter appears on the screen -- observed phenomenon. I am sure there are some 'purists' out there who would insist on academic course work in software design and hardware configuration as well as some courses on 'keyboarding.' But for my purposes it is enough to push a key and see a letter appear on the screen. In like fashion I argue that for many of my colleagues it is enough to note that if the governed are dissatisfied the government is much less stable. Add the presence of a catalyst in an environment of growing social dissatisfaction and questionable legitimacy, and the situation is ripe for a change of government.

To draw once again from the computer analogy, if I do not want a letter to appear on the screen I do not push the key. If I want a letter to appear I push a key. If I want a different letter to appear I push a different key. Alas here the analogy begins to breakdown because there does not appear to be an 'undo/redo' button in the real world. To the casual observer caution and prudence dictate care as to which buttons are pushed since I do not know anyone who has found an 'erase' button in the international political environment.

So there you have it -- this is the combined wisdom gleaned from 30 years of studying political forces at work at the field-level of analysis. Perhaps I should have focused on the study of rocks after all.

#### About the Author



Dr. Albert "Bull" Mitchum is the Political Advisor to the USAF Air Combat Command at Langley AFB, VA. He is a retired USAF Officer with extensive "boots on the ground" time throughout Latin America, Europe, Africa and South West Asia. Besides his background in small unit operations, he has served in positions as political advisor to the commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe, to the commander of NATO's Allied Air Forces Southern Europe, and to the commandant of the Air Command and Staff College. He is a member of the National Political Science Honor Society, the Association of Third World Studies, the Southern Center for International Studies, and the National Association of Hispanic Federal Employees. He has published on international political security issues in both English and Spanish.

# Political Military Affairs Officer The Art of Strategic Planning

By: MAJ R. Reed Anderson, 48C

This article draws upon my recent experience as a political-military affairs officer at a geographic combatant command. Its intent is to share lessons learned and other thoughts and opinions about two key focus points: the challenging art of strategic planning, and more effectively developing and preparing foreign area officers to serve as political-military affairs officers. I welcome and encourage feedback on these two topics. You can post comments on an AKO discussion forum under the topic title, "The Art of Strategic Planning."

For the past three years, I served as a political-military (pol-mil) officer in one of the geographic combatant commands (GCC), the United States European Command (EUCOM). This was my first tour as a Foreign Area Officer, so I fully expected to learn a tremendous amount about the FAO profession and the art of pol-mil affairs. I was not disappointed. Some of the lessons I learned came from observing seasoned FAOs who efficiently practiced the FAO art – a strategic art. Other lessons came from observing the inefficient practice of the same among fellow pol-mil officers, as well as senior leadership.

Although my recent experience frames my perspective, I am of the opinion that an assignment as a pol-mil officer, preferably in a GCC, is the ideal first assignment for a FAO. It is in this assignment that a FAO: is exposed to and is an integral part of the strategic planning process, frequently coordinates with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) policy offices and other interagency elements who have key roles in achieving national security objectives across the globe, works closely with security assistance officers and defense attaché offices in the embassies, works with and is exposed to a significant pool of seasoned FAOs in a single location, and has the opportunity to influence strategy, and even policy, with senior leaders both within the GCC and without.

Some would argue that FAOs with security assistance officer and/or attaché experience are more suited for pol-mil officer assignments. My perspective is that it is critical to have seasoned

FAOs as our "forward strategic scouts" in embassies across the world. A pol-mil assignment is a key developmental assignment to achieve such experience. This is particularly true if the assignment includes a mix of well-seasoned FAOs who can mentor the young FAOs. Yet mentoring, while indeed part of professional development, should not substitute for proper preparation, particularly for pol-mil officers who play a key role in strategic planning. It is my experience that strategic planning is quite challenging. In general, pol-mil officers lack a proper understanding of strategic planning, particularly as it pertains to the crucial pol-mil affairs role in security cooperation planning. This point, which I discuss further as the first topic in this paper, is a symptom of what I consider a broader issue and the second point in this paper – pol-mil officer training. The Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Army should better prepare FAOs, particularly young FAOs, with the appropriate skills to more effectively serve as pol-mil officers.

## **The Art of Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is not easy. It requires understanding the development and flow of national security policies and strategies down through DOD and ultimately to the GCC. Further, applying policy and strategic guidance into security cooperation plans requires pol-mil officers to understand how security cooperation works and is applied to achieve GCC objectives. Prior to my assignment to EUCOM, my exposure to strategic planning was limited to what I learned at the Portuguese Army and Joint Staff Courses. The ex-



posure to strategic planning principles and concepts at those courses is very similar to the level of exposure of the same during Intermediate Level Education (ILE). However, such exposure could not properly prepare me for the complexities of strategic planning. In this section, I discuss key elements of the art of strategic planning, particularly as it pertains to security cooperation, as I learned it on the job at EUCOM. While I believe the method EUCOM uses for strategic planning for security cooperation is effective, it is not necessarily the most effective nor inclusive method. Indeed, I know other FAOs who believe that EUCOM's method is ineffective. I hope to see their perspectives in subsequent FAO Journal articles or via discussion forums. I present the following as one logical option, which is nested with National and DOD strategies, policies and other guidance documents.

Clark Murdock's book *Improving the Practice of National Security Strategy*, defines strategy as "a plan for using the means of national power . . . to achieve political ends." U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22 defines strategic art as the "skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends, ways, and means to promote and defend the national interest." In the context of a typical pol-mil officer at a GCC, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 defines the military's role in support of national strategic planning as: "The military's contribution to national strategic planning consists of joint strategic planning with its three subsets: security cooperation planning, joint operation planning, and force planning."

Pol-mil officers primarily focus their efforts on security cooperation planning. As all FAOs out of training know, security cooperation is DOD's tool to encourage and enable partner and ally nations and organizations to work with the U.S. to achieve strategic objectives. The nexus for developing and managing security cooperation plans is the GCC – hence security cooperation planning is one of the key roles of a pol-mil officer. This is why a FAO must be well versed in strategic plan-

ning principles that are not readily taught in any of the currently programmed FAO training programs – an issue I address in the next section.

Before a pol-mil officer can develop a security cooperation plan, there is process that provides the policy and strategic direction required to apply ends, ways, and means and assess risks in a logical manner that supports national security objectives. Understanding this process is key if we are to develop effective strategic plans that target our resources to progress toward the GCC's and DOD's strategic objectives in support of our national security objectives.

The process (refer to figure 1) begins at the National level with publication of a *National Security Strategy* (NSS). The second level of strategic documents includes the *National Defense Strategy* developed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the *National Military Strategy* developed by the Chairman of



the Joint Chiefs of Staff. OSD further defines strategic guidance for the GCCs in its *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* (GEF). Other documents, such as the *Unified Command Plan* (UCP), *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan* (JSCP) and *Guidance for the Development of the Force* (GDF), also provide direction and guidance when

applicable. OSD-policy may also provide updated policy guidance when required as circumstances change that lead to policy and strategy modifications.

The GCC develops or updates its theater strategic plans to support the national strategic guidance and objectives as defined in the above referenced documents. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, describes a process for theater strategy development. However, the doctrine is not overly prescriptive, and this is even more true as it pertains to security cooperation planning. GCC Commanders therefore have a large degree of flexibility in how they conduct strategic planning. Each GCC may therefore develop its theater strategic plan a bit differently. I will rely on recent experience in EUCOM to illustrate one way strategic plans are developed down to the country-level plan (figure 2).

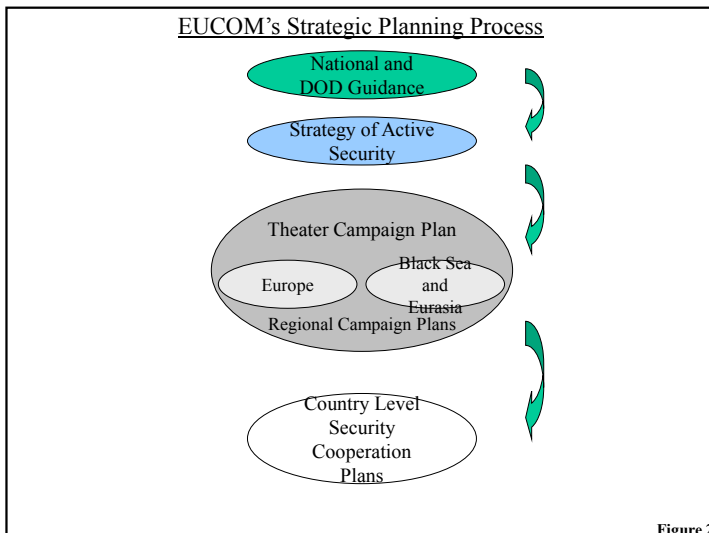


Figure 2

The overarching theater strategic document for EUCOM is *A Strategy of Active Security*, which includes an unclassified base document and a classified theater campaign plan that further defines the operating environment and the theater objectives and priorities. It additionally clearly defines: the mission, commander's vision and intent, theater objectives and priorities, and method. The method calls for the development of regional and functional plans and activities.

The regional plans are the next key documents that provide the EUCOM pol-mil officers with direction and guidance for developing a country plan. The regional plan, using the theater priorities and objectives, defines the regional priorities and objectives and ties them to sub-regions or countries, which in turn provide the direction that the pol-mil officers need to develop a country-specific plan. This is where the pol-mil officer plays a critical role. The process from here on out belongs to the pol-mil officer, and it is essential that pol-mil officers get this right since this is where the rubber meets the road for achieving national security objectives that we can affect through security cooperation. Therefore, a pol-mil officer should have a keen grasp and understanding of the above process in order to effectively develop a country plan.

The country plan is no less a strategic plan than any of the other hierarchical documents. It has two elements: a strategic element and an operational element. The strategic element should define the operating environment, or what I like to call the strategic context. The strategic context is essential to frame the environment in which we execute security cooperation programs so that we can more effectively design activities that meet the needs of and are adapted to the country, while at the same time supporting our defined strategic objectives. The strategic context defines, among other things: a greater contextual understanding of the country - the current state of affairs (PMESII-PT could be used as a guide), constraints, facts, assumptions, risks, mission, commander's intent, priorities and objectives.

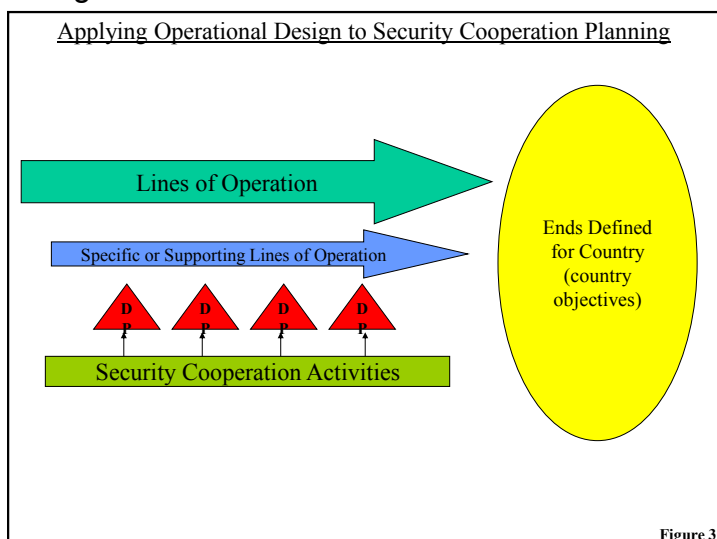
With the strategic context developed, EUCOM applies doctrinal standards of operational design and adapts them to meet its needs for security cooperation planning at the country level to develop an operational plan in support of the country plan's strategic element (see figure 3). The first step in the operational design lays out the ends, or in this case the priorities and objectives as framed and defined in the strategic con-



text. The second step defines the ways. EUCOM develops lines of operation to define the ways. Further defining the purpose and intent of specific lines of operation more effectively targets security cooperation resources. I should note here that developing and clearly defining the ends and ways are among the most challenging tasks for the pol-mil officer in strategic planning and operational design. A pol-mil officer must work hard with established guidance, the security assistance officers and attachés, GCC leadership, service component commands, Department of Defense agencies, and others as applicable to pull together the specifics on effective and logical ends and ways. There are several methods for coordination to include annual security cooperation working groups. In the end, however, a pol-mil officer should be proactive in coordinating with applicable agencies and subject matter experts using available collaboration tools.

outcomes also serve to assist in the challenging process of assessing progress toward achieving strategic objectives. Progress is often slow (many times effects may not become evident for several years) and very difficult to measure. When an outcome is clearly achieved, then you can quantify its achievement as progress along the line of operation it supports, and ultimately toward a strategic objective. This facilitates the assessment process. That is why working hard to develop clear and tangible outcomes is so essential.

The final step involves planning and linking security cooperation activities in such a manner to support strategic objectives. This too is challenging. This is where the pol-mil officers work with components, defense agencies, other subject matter experts, and the security assistance officers in the embassies to define activities. They must also work with applicable GCC staff and other offices to procure resources.



The decisive point is the next element of operational design applied to security cooperation. For the purpose of security cooperation EUCOM uses the term outcome – it defines a key desired outcome along the path toward achieving the desired effect of the defined objectives. Since security cooperation is often a long-term activity, defining outcomes is essential in order to define the path along which we should incrementally apply resources. With outcomes defined, we then develop activities to assist in achieving the outcome, and apply resources to the activities. The

I would like to highlight three points of caution. First, it is vital that the pol-mil officers effectively monitor the planning and execution of activities in the country and application of resources to ensure that all activities support defined elements of the operational design and ultimately the strategic objectives. I saw too many proposals for activities that minimally or in no way supported strategic objectives. It is a pol-mil affairs officer's responsibility to ensure that those wishing to conduct activities understand the strategic objectives for the country. If activities do not logically support the objectives then pol-mil officers should recommend activity termination, or in some cases a modification to the strategy.

Secondly, too often we execute activities for the sake of engaging partners and allies that do not provide any return for the investment. This is a legacy from when we engaged partners and allies, particularly in Europe, simply to develop military-to-military relationships and defense contacts. While that is still an effect of our engagements, it is no longer the intent. Each and every engagement should have a purpose. We should

be expending our resources toward the achievement of national security objectives as embodied in the country plan objectives, wisely applying the resources with which America's taxpayers have entrusted us. That is why the above outlined planning process is effective – it ultimately ties everything we do to national security objectives. The risk of not planning in the above outlined manner, or in one that achieves the same effect, is that we conduct security cooperation without a clear vision of the intent and desired outcome. In such a case, we risk reverting back to old purposes of security cooperation – to build contacts. Keep in mind that the primary intent for security cooperation is to encourage and enable partner and ally nations and organizations to work with the U.S. to achieve our national strategic objectives. It is here where pol-mil affairs officers are unique enablers.

Finally, developing effective strategic plans is difficult in and of itself. The reality of being a pol-mil officer is that we must manage multiple competing requirements, sometimes in a time-constrained environment. A pol-mil officer must be capable of managing time so that he can maintain proper strategic focus while at the same time meeting the more immediate demands and requirements. As Murdock so succinctly states in his book, we “must not only be capable of handling the short-term demands of an event-driven environment, but [we] must also be capable of taking actions that fit into a strategy pursuing longer-term goals.”

### **Pol-Mil Officer Professional Development**

Strategic planning is challenging and requires a large degree of study and application to become proficient. In the introduction, I stated that DOD and the US Army should better prepare FAOs, particularly young FAOs, with the appropriate skills to more effectively serve as pol-mil officers. FAOs do indeed go through a lengthy and often rigorous training program. All Army FAOs receive a baseline training program of language training, graduate school, and in-country training. This training, plus interme-

diately level education (ILE), completes the military education level four (MEL4) qualification for a FAO. With training completed, FAOs typically fill assignments as pol-mil officers, attachés, or security assistance officers.

To further prepare FAOs for future assignments, the Army often provides additional training focused on the responsibilities associated with the assignment. A FAO assigned as an attaché will attend the Joint Military Attaché School (JMAS) and other applicable training as appropriate prior to the assignment. Security assistance officers normally attend the Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management (DISAM). However, pol-mil officers, in contrast to incoming attaché FAOs and SAO FAOs, typically receive no additional training.

One could argue that the baseline training, in conjunction with ILE, provides a FAO all the required training to effectively prosecute an assignment as a pol-mil affairs officer. I disagree. One key responsibility of a pol-mil officer is to develop strategic plans for U.S. engagement in foreign countries. Further, pol-mil officers are required to provide strategic-level staff input and recommendations to GCC senior staff and Commanders. Both these responsibilities require a keen grasp of how issues affect U.S. interests at the strategic level, as well as a keen grasp of strategic planning principles and concepts. ILE indeed discusses issues from the strategic level and gives all Army officers some exposure to the art of strategic planning, but the focus for developing such competencies resides primarily at the senior service school level. Further, ILE coursework on strategic planning is broad and not focused on the specific aspects of strategic planning as they pertain to security cooperation. Lastly, ILE attendance is not a prerequisite for assignment as a pol-mil officer. I am a case in point – I am writing this paper while attending ILE after my three-year tour at EUCOM.

I would highlight that there is often a void of specific knowledge in FAOs as they enter pol

-mil assignments. On-the-job training is often the default training method. While "OJT" does work, I believe it is an inefficient method for learning this crucial art. I saw FAOs and non-FAOs assigned as pol-mil officers struggle with developing strategic plans since they were not familiar with the strategic planning process. Since the strategic plans developed by pol-mil officers at the GCCs set the guidance and direction for security cooperation and other applicable activities of service component commands, defense agencies, and security assistance officers (and to some extent attachés) in our partner and ally nations, then should we not provide FAOs the tools to effectively develop, maintain, and implement these plans? Definitely! As FM 6-22 highlights, masters of the strategic art effectively integrate three roles of a complete strategist, two of which epitomize a FAO, and more specifically a pol-mil planner: strategic practitioner and strategic theorist.'

There are several options to fill the training void or, when necessary, mitigate it. One option would be a short course that covers the key elements of strategic planning as they apply to security cooperation in achieving GCC objectives. This course would expand on strategic-level planning covered in ILE (or other service equivalents) and focus the instruction on applying security cooperation planning into the strategic planning process. This implies covering the elements of security cooperation and how we can best leverage security cooperation activities to achieve the GCC's objectives. It also implies that FAO assignments officers must do a better job of timing ILE for FAOs so that FAOs attend ILE and the strategic planners course prior to an assignment as a pol-mil officer. Since officers outside of the FAO career track often fill pol-mil jobs at the GCC, it may be wise for this course to be resident within the GCCs and make it a requirement for all pol-mil officers during the first quarter of their assignment.

A second option that would mitigate a lack of training, and augment training received, is to adjust FAO manning so that the GCC pol-mil officer assignments include a mix of seasoned and

new FAOs. This would facilitate the mentoring briefly referenced in the introduction. On-the-job mentoring, coupled with my experience at the Portuguese Army and Joint Staff Courses, was the source of my training. I was lucky to have several seasoned FAOs to mentor me as I began my assignment. It required a large degree of study and hard work to fully grasp the complex concepts, but I could not have done it as quickly without the great mentorship of some outstanding FAOs. Not every pol-mil officer is so fortunate.

A third recommendation is to incorporate strategic planning classes into language training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI). This is an opportunity where you have budding FAOs undistracted for a period of time. A series of classes focused on key strategic planning concepts in parallel with the language training could establish a solid baseline for the new FAO. It could consist of not only classes but of speakers from the interagency, GCCs, and seasoned FAOs to share experiences and lessons learned. These classes would be in addition to the FAO Course taught at DLI, which barely skims the surface of what a pol-mil officer does. While it would not reach every FAO (some train at DLI Washington and some already have language training), it would reach a large majority.

Other options include, but are not limited to: discussion forums where FAOs, and strategic planners writ large, could share common practices and procedures for strategic planning as it pertains to security cooperation; an online knowledge base of key reference and other documents; discussion via opinion pieces or articles in this journal; and discussions or seminars at FAO conferences. Lastly, as FAOs, we should never forget the key element of self-study and self-reflection essential in understanding and adapting to the challenges we face in a career field framed by a dynamic and complex operating environment, both internal and external. To that end, I encourage a recommended reading list from the FAO proponent, built based on input from the field and academia, which is updated regularly and focused by region, to orient professional

study relevant to today's challenges.

Finally, a note of caution concerning the assignments process that assigns FAOs to operational assignments in combat zones, specifically to assignments where FAO skills are not required or used. While operational experience is good and becoming more of a discriminator for promotion, we should not deploy FAOs for the sake of deploying. The Army invests a large amount of time and resources to train FAOs, and their skills are increasingly in demand. Assigning FAOs to operational tours that do not require the application of FAO skills is a waste of government resources. For one thing, hard-won language skills and regional political expertise are perishable, with the former being very hard to recover in a post-training environment. If there is a dearth of FAOs – and there is – why would we put a FAO into a position where such specialized and expensive skills are not required or used? There are plenty of operational assignments requiring FAO skills. That is where we should be sending FAOs. We must, of course, balance these assignments with the requirement for FAOs in embassies across the world — assignments that are essential to implementing security cooperation that serves to achieve our national security objectives abroad.

## **Conclusion**

The lesson I learned from the above process and my experience at EUCOM is two-fold. First, the art of strategic planning is not easy. As FAOs, we must study it, practice it, hone it, and always question the process to assess its validity and applicability. The Department of Defense has no directed process for strategic planning for security cooperation. Some would argue that we do not need one, but I believe we do, and one that logically ties security cooperation to achieving GCC, DOD, and ultimately National security objectives. Second, FAOs are not properly prepared as strategic planners. There are several ways to develop and hone the strategic planning skills so essential for an effective pol-mil officer, some of which I have highlighted. I recommend that the FAO proponent assess how it prepares FAOs for pol-mil officer assignments and determine a

## **About the Author:**

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proper path to more effectively prepare FAOs for these critically important assignments.

Finally, I offer this paper as a jump start to continued discussion on the points presented in this paper. Are there better ways to conduct strategic planning for security cooperation? How have other GCCs done it? What are the perspectives from the field – what do security assistance officers think? What do our senior FAOs and senior Army leaders think? What is the training and development experience from other FAOs and pol-mil officers from the other services? I have established a discussion forum on AKO, accessible to all those with AKO or Defense Knowledge Online accounts, as a venue to continue this discussion. The forum is titled “The Art of Strategic Planning.” I hope to see you there.

### Endnotes:

- 1 - Acknowledgements
- 2 - Clark A. Murdock, *Improving the Practice of National Security Strategy: A New Approach for the Post-Cold War World* (The CSIS Press, Washington, D.C., 2004), 12.
- 3 - FM 6-22, paragraph 12-10.
- 4 - CJCS, Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, Chap I, 26 December 2006.
- 5 - Pol-mil officers also play a key role in joint operational planning as they work with others to develop operational designs in support of the security cooperation plans, and as pol-mil experts on operational planning teams to develop contingency plans. While operational planning is clearly an important role for a pol-mil officer, this paper focuses on the aspect of strategic planning as it relates to security cooperation planning, which in many ways is undertaken to develop the conditions which would preclude the need for operational crisis action planning.
- 6 - From my experience, policy guidance does not always follow the neat progression outlined in the paper. Policy guidance and strategic direction can be fragmented, ill defined, and out of sequence in time from when one would most benefit having it. A pol-mil officer at a GCC is, therefore, in the very fortunate position to have an opportunity to influence the guidance eventually received, and to propose actions and direction that substitute for a higher authority having already prescribed a course of action. With that in mind, it is often the case that OSD gets too involved in strategic

## **NATO: Growing in Size and Growing More Relevant**

**By: LTC Martin A. Perryman, 48G, Turkish FAO**

***Following another recent NATO expansion, reflection on the continued relevance of the Alliance to our collective security may be helpful.***

Nostalgia is a wonderful thing. Reminiscing on times gone by is satisfying and lends a sense of durability and continuity to the events of our lives and the world around us. It can, however, also be dangerous, because generally, people are heavily affected by proximity. Events that occur near to a person tend to take on a greater sense of relative importance and urgency than events that are more distant in space and time. As a result, things nostalgically remembered are often viewed in soft focus, without the rough edges, uncertainty, and in some cases real danger that were in fact present at the time. With the outcome known, the past can frequently seem safer, more stable, and superior to the present.

Since the end of the Cold War, the NATO Alliance has been the victim of the twin forces of proximity and nostalgia. Some question the relevance of NATO since its original adversary and reason for being, the Soviet Union, no longer exists. However, beginning in 1991, the allies developed a new and dramatically different strategic concept that specifically obligated the alliance to work toward improved and expanded security for Europe as a whole through partnership and cooperation with former adversaries. This trend continued and in 1999 was expanded to include peace and stability within the wider Euro-Atlantic area. The member nations continue to enhance their security cooperation while integrating their individual international and domestic political requirements. As a result, the Alliance remains relevant to U.S. and European national interests.

This point is made clear by considering Europe's and the United States' reliance and dependency on NATO today compared to twenty

years ago, to a time before the Cold War ended. NATO was created through the Washington Treaty signed in 1949. It served as a vehicle for coordinating a common defense against the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. In this environment, coordination was limited to the higher levels and the bulk of defense coordination was accomplished by dividing the inter-German border into sectors of responsibility. The Allies developed many effective coordination mechanisms, mostly in the areas of combat support and combat service support. For example ammunition sizes and reporting procedures became standardized, but the bulk of military activity remained at the national level. Within each sector, militaries planned and prepared to conduct their own, relatively independent, military campaigns.

It is this image of the Alliance that generates nostalgia in many today who were young Cold Warriors during the 1980s. Serving then in the line, they saw the world with a clarity that was unencumbered by the larger geopolitical questions of the day. The Soviet threat provided the necessary motivation to ensure cooperation. The Alliance was a function of that threat. Yet the Suez Crisis of 1956, the withdrawal of France from the integrated military command in 1966, and the U.S. bombing of Libya in 1986 all arguably represented a greater threat to the survival of the Alliance than the current situation in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Some seem to looking nostalgically back even further, to a time before the current alliance system. They focus on the limitations to freedom of action rather than on the advantages the Alliance has bestowed upon its members. Yet one should recall the disjointed and self-serving individual national policies of the European nations prior to the creation of functioning international institutions in general and NATO in particular.

More to the point, it is difficult to find any case in which the U.S. or any member has ever acted counter to its interests as a result of membership in NATO. On the other hand, there are quite a few cases where NATO had provided a backdrop against which member nations have been able to provide mutual support to one another. The invocation of Article 5 following the September 11 attacks and the NATO mission in Afghanistan are both dramatic and recent examples, but less well publicized are ongoing missions such as Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR in the Mediterranean and the air policing missions over Slovenia and the Baltic States. Such missions not only efficiently utilize member nation assets, but they unencumbered other national assets for use on specific national objectives.

In this regard, Europe's and the United States' reliance and dependency on NATO today is more important, than during the Cold War. Originally, the Alliance was a function of and revolved around the Soviet threat, which provided the necessary motivation to ensure cooperation. Today, the "threat" is less concrete, and not exclusively military. Terrorism, rogue states, WMD, organized crime, human trafficking, pandemics, and the like all represent a threat that is unique to each nation and lack sufficient immediacy to generate needed cooperation. The Alliance itself has become the hub around which member nations can focus, coordinate, and respond to the various manifestations of the threat.

Therefore, the utility of the Alliance has increased rather than decreased. It is in the best interest of the United States and Europe, to remain focused on the fact that the glass is half full. Admittedly, NATO has had difficulty meeting its own goals for modernization and contributions to ongoing missions, but progress is being made and missions are being undertaken. It is disingenuous to link the ongoing frustrations with national caveats and resourcing exclusively to NATO. These are functions of international interaction and would exist regardless of NATO or

NATO involvement in any mission, in this case Afghanistan. It is inaccurate to extrapolate that NATO, as an organization, has somehow lost its relevance. To the contrary, NATO members' interests and capabilities are more common today than two decades ago.

One area where this is true is the member's economic contribution to defense. It remains in the interest of each member nation to maintain a credible defense capability. NATO provides the motivation. Only six of the Allies (the U.S., Britain, France, Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria) maintain or exceed the minimum defense-spending target of 2% of GDP. However, the fact that the target exists, and is agreed to by all, has a positive effect. Even those nations that are not currently meeting their obligation understand the commitment. At a minimum, it provides a degree of leverage for political leaders whose domestic populations who do not perceive the advantages of the current collective security arrangement.

Additionally, NATO has made an economic contribution to the development of a more integrated European industrial defense base. To be sure, there is still a long way to go, but much has been accomplished. Consider that the twenty-six member nations do not maintain twenty-six separate national industrial bases, nor do they operate twenty-six unique nationally developed sets of military equipment. Today they operate a consolidated fleet that consists of only four different models of tank, sixteen types of armored vehicle, and eleven different variants of frigate. Within that fleet there is a high degree of compatibility in terms of transportability, communications equipment, and ammunition used.

An area of even greater importance than the economic contribution is the overall impact NATO has on national policies toward cooperative security. This is due in no small part to the consistency with which the members of the Alliance agree on the nature of the threat. They agree within the context of NATO and that agree-

ment is reflected in their individual national strategy documents. Some make much over the disagreement about the correct way to meet the threat, but that completely discounts the fact that they are discussing the same threat.

A critical point to keep in mind here is that the debate over the proper relationship between Europe and the US is not only being carried out on the western side of the Atlantic. European nations are also considering the value (pro and con) of their relationship with the US. In that context, NATO is an invaluable tool. As a long-standing organization with procedures and traditions of generating compromise and consensus it is and should be the forum of choice for further deepening our collective security relationship.

NATO translates much of the desire for collective security cooperation into reality by facilitating standardization and interoperability. Many are familiar with equipment standardization efforts that have been ongoing since the formation of the Alliance, but there are other important areas that create an essential foundation for greater cooperation. If NATO did not exist, these elements would have to be created from scratch before meaningful cooperation could take place.

Command and control tops the list. The NATO headquarters provides the members with an additional, direct line of communication back into each national command authority. Additionally, the NATO planning staffs also provide a capability for coordination and organization that simply does not exist for any other group of nations in the world. Beyond the HQ, command and control concepts and equipment have trickled down into almost every level of command within NATO and the member nations' militaries. An officer can easily transition back and forth from a national HQ into any level of NATO HQ with relative comfort and ease.

Training and doctrine have also reached a high degree of standardization. Through deliberate processes the Allies seek best practices and distribute them through NATO training courses.

Recently, for example, NATO adopted current U.S. doctrine for counter insurgency. By extension, that doctrine will not only impact all of NATO, but will translate over time into national doctrine for the member nations. The U.S., on the other hand, stands to benefit from NATO efforts to develop a "Comprehensive Approach" doctrine which integrates civil and military as well as national and international institutions into an effective whole. This is similar to ongoing discussions in the U.S. about a greater interagency cooperation and effectiveness.

Finally, there is one more, little appreciated, area where standardization has paid huge dividends. The proliferation of the English language through the institutions of NATO has arguably done more to facilitate cooperation on security issues than any other single activity. Admittedly, the United Kingdom and the United States have gained the most, but all of the Alliance members enjoy smoother and more effective cooperation as a result.

The benefits of the NATO standardization processes for security cooperation extend beyond the Alliance. Nations are able to make meaningful contributions within the NATO framework but also independently, as part of other bilateral or coalition efforts. This is critical. There is a great need to be able to draw on more, not fewer partners as operations become recurring commitments. The broadening and deepening of a common sense of security cooperation expands the pool of potential participants and increases the likelihood of success. This is true regardless of whether or not the contributing nations are participating as part of NATO. Through association, they increase their willingness and more importantly their ability to play a meaningful role. For example, Georgia's ability to participate in Iraq springs directly from its association with the NATO Partnership for Peace Program.

NATO's influence on policies and attitudes about security cooperation has directly contributed to a third, and related, area of importance which is the harmonization of attitudes and action



in the European Union (EU). By design, the EU seeks to draw important elements of national sovereignty upward and consolidate them under a pan-EU governing body. From a historic perspective, this peaceful transition of authority has been unprecedented and remarkably successful in many ways. Yet few issues draw as visceral a human response as those concerning defense, security, and national preservation. As a result, since the end of the Cold War, NATO and the EU have matured in tandem. From the EU perspective, this effort moved forward episodically, reaching a major milestone with the signing of the Treaty of Nice in Feb '01. This treaty established the changes necessary for the creation of a European Security and Defense Policy that was capable of conducting operations independent of NATO. Clearly, resource constraints, precedent, and common sense indicated that both institutions would draw upon the same pool of national assets maintained by their respective member nations. This led to the formalization of a shared construct under the Berlin Plus Agreement in 2003. This agreement gave the EU "assured access" to NATO operational planning capabilities and "presumed access" to NATO common assets for EU-led operations "in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged."

NATO has been and will continue to be an essential element for EU development. Beyond security, EU progress on the judiciary and community pillars has been, in no small part, made possible by NATO. Without the benign security environment it provides, the EU might have proven incapable of collective action at all. As Europe's resources continue to decline and its population ages and contracts, Europe must continue to integrate, cooperate, and strengthen its alliances, if it is to maintain relevancy. A strong Europe is in the best interest of all the Allies. For the foreseeable future, NATO provides the stability Europe needs to continue maturing and will remain the venue where this process can most productively occur from a security perspective.

In summary, NATO remains relevant. In the current environment, where none of the mem-

ber nations face a legitimate threat to national survival, NATO is more relevant than ever. NATO provides the forum, the process, and the motivation to maintain, broaden, and deepen Atlantic security ties absent a dramatic threat. As a result, member nations will not only be better prepared to meet any threat that emerges but, more importantly, potential adversaries recognize conditions that inhibit and discourage them from developing capabilities that threaten the national survival of NATO members in the future.

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# Socio-Cultural Aspects of Thai-US Military Relations

## By: Major Johnny Baseel, USMC

This article represents a section of a thesis on Thai-U.S. military relations in the post 9/11 era completed as part of a Master's in Arts in Regional Studies at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. The research techniques used were personal interviews of Thai and U.S. military, diplomatic, and academic experts, participant-observer field research at several combined exercises, and document research. The article focuses on the thesis findings related to the socio-cultural aspects of Thai-U.S. military relations.

### Similarities ... Thai and U.S. Military Sub-Cultures

My overall observation of relations between Thai and American servicemen was that interpersonal relations and professional interoperability were good. Despite the fact that the U.S and Thailand are located halfway around the world from each other, the two countries' cultures share several key aspects which help Americans and Thais connect on an easier level when compared to other countries.

First and foremost, both countries place a high value on freedom and independence, and both countries are known as the "land of the free". Thailand takes justified pride in being the only Southeast Asian country never to have been colonized. The U.S. is of course a former British colony, but has for the bulk of modern history been regarded as the model for liberty, democracy and personal freedom for its citizens.

Both countries are also very accepting of foreigners and of other cultures. As the world's most ethnically diverse country, most Americans are comfortable around people of different backgrounds and can adjust to new customs and manners. Thailand is also very open to other cultures and customs, perhaps due in part to not having the collective psychological resentment towards foreigners that some other countries have who have been conquered by foreign powers. Also, a high percentage of Thai military leaders have studied in the U.S. or other western countries, and are familiar with western culture.

Thai and American cultures also share the characteristic of emphasizing friendliness. In contrast to some other cultures which are highly reserved or where individuals take a long amount of time to get to know each other before opening up, Thais and Americans are usually more outgoing and can warm up to each other quickly. I have had several experiences of

working with other countries' military forces in which dealings with my counterparts were stilted and highly awkward. But in the bulk of the observations I have made on Thai and U.S. military exercises, the two sides seem to connect easily and most dealings between them seem much more natural.

### Differences ... Thai and U.S. Military Sub-Cultures

Despite the similarities noted above, there are some key differences between Thai and U.S. cultures than can cause misunderstanding and friction. I will touch on three areas, social protocol, rank and respect of seniority, and political correctness.

#### Social Protocol

American culture does not place the same value on socialization as Thai culture does. U.S. military culture emphasizes a hard-driving work ethic. This attitude can be taken to an extreme, where anything other than mission accomplishment is regarded as extraneous. The social aspects of our military dealings with the Thais are seen as frivolous at best, and most often as a complete waste of time. "Why can't we just get down to business?" was the opinion of one U.S. officer I spoke with.

On a macro-level, this attitude can be seen in America's poor record on high-level visits and social protocol. This record is quite frankly dismal, especially when compared to other nations engaging the Thai military. All too often, it appears to the Thais that American leaders are more interested in other countries in the region, stopping in Thailand only infrequently. This blatant disregard of the social aspect of doing business is a major slight, since personal relationships are the key to operating in Asia.

As an example, in Dec '06, attendance at the parade marking King Bhumibol's 60<sup>th</sup> year on the throne. The U.S. sent one General officer to the event while China sent its Minister of Defense and over 20 Flag officers. The U.S. sending just one Flag officer, coming on the heels of the Section 508 sanctions that had been imposed after the 2006 coup, was seen by many Thais as a deliberate lack of respect for their beloved monarch.

Visits by diplomatic personnel are also important to acknowledging key alliances. In Feb '09, when Secretary of State Clinton made her first trip through

Asia, many Thais were incensed that she stopped in Indonesia but bypassed Thailand. A 16 Feb '09 editorial in the Bangkok Post had this to say:

***“The decision to visit Indonesia but ignore close U.S. friends and allies is confusing...Many in Thailand, which has 175 years of rock-solid support and harmony with the U.S. feel the new leadership in Washington is turning its back on an old friend. Singaporeans and Filipinos have said much the same...It is important to include wary countries like Indonesia in the dialogue. But it is vital not to ignore old and trusted friends.”***

The editorial also noted that in his only mention of Thailand in 2008's campaign, President Obama confused the country with Taiwan.

Flag officer visits are another area where we fail to appreciate the importance of showing respect in Thai culture. An American officer I interviewed confided that it was often “like pulling teeth” to persuade some senior U.S. officers to take the time for such a call. In the American mind, a thirty minute social call on someone they do not really know, who may not speak English, seems an awkward waste of time, particularly when the benefits a visit cannot usually be seen in the short term. But, within the Thai mind, such a visit speaks volumes about respect. Even if there is little substance discussed at such a meeting, a visit like this will be remembered in the future, and can shape opinions favorably toward future U.S. interests. During the MTWS 09-02 exercise at Sattahip Naval Base, I witnessed the goodwill generated by the social call when BrigGen Brilakis, Commander of III Marine Expeditionary Brigade, paid on the Commandant of the RTMC, Vice Admiral Suwit

It is also worth noting that in Thailand's quest to buy a new fighter jet, the King and Queen of Sweden as well as the Russian President personally made a case for their respective countries' aircraft. The lack of any comparable high level involvement on the U.S. side was perceived by the Thais as disinterest, and may have played a role in their eventual decision to buy Sweden's Fighter. Under our system such negotiations are a job for military rep, or perhaps the ambassador, who are empowered to make high-level decisions. However, we as Americans need to take into account Thailand's more hierarchical culture and adjust our practices accordingly.

I saw American disregard for socialization culminate in an awkward and embarrassing situation during the Cobra Gold post-exercise ceremony at Korat Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) Base. The USMC

squadrons, operating out of a different base, decided at the last minute not to send representatives to the ceremony in order to focus on internal training the next day. This made for a very awkward situation as the RTAF and USAF squadron commanders exchanged plaques and mementos with each other. The other USMC liaison officer and I accepted numerous plaques and gifts on behalf of our Marine brethren, but had nothing to give in return. Several Thai officers were visibly offended and asked why no USMC commanders had seen fit to attend.

The decision not to attend the end of exercise party was a classic case of short sightedness. The long term cost of insulting seven Thai squadrons certainly outweighs the small benefit achieved by completing a few extra flights. In this case, we were so eager to achieve a short term training objective that we lost sight of the main, long term objective of training such as Cobra Gold, which is to build the Thai-U.S. relationship.

### **Rank and Respect of Seniority**

The Thai military is much more hierarchical than the U.S. Armed Forces. The main reason is that Thai society is itself very hierarchical, in contrast to America's more egalitarian society. Another reason is Thailand's policy of retaining personnel on active duty until age 60, which makes for a very top-heavy, high-ranking military. In such an environment such it becomes natural to keep authority at the highest levels.

In contrast, the American military tends to push decision-making and responsibility down to a lower level and as such it is not uncommon to see American Sergeants making decisions that a Thai Lieutenant would make, or American Captains making decisions that in the Thai military would be made at the Lieutenant Colonel level. In my previous experiences as a Lieutenant and Captain at combined training with the Thai military, I can recall typically being paired up with Thai counterparts who were Majors and Lieutenant Colonels. Now as a Major, I normally deal with Lieutenant Colonels and sometimes even Colonels. Despite the informality of many Thai officers when dealing with foreigners, Americans working in such situations must remember they are dealing with a senior officer and treat them as such.

At the junior officer level, the high level of respect that Thais show to their seniors can be interpreted by Americans as excessive or obsequious. Junior U.S. officers are used to being encouraged to voice their opinions and make decisions on their own. When they look at the Thai model, which generally

keeps decision-making authority at the top, they may tend to see their young Thai counterparts as “Yes Men”. These U.S. officers need to understand that many junior Thai officers do have initiative and work to give their inputs to their chain of command, within the more hierarchical framework of Thai military sub-culture. This needs to be done much more subtly and often in a behind-the-scenes fashion rather than the more open and direct U.S. style.

### **Political Correctness**

In the past few decades U.S. military culture has undergone huge changes. A killjoy mindset has arisen due to the rampant political correctness in American culture, combined with a well-intentioned but often misguided effort to protect servicemen from injury and maintain force protection at all costs.

Speaking of Thailand specifically, I observed an exponential increase in rules and regulations since my first deployment there a decade ago. For example, at the 2009 Cobra Gold exercise, U.S. servicemen were completely prohibited from drinking alcohol. When Thai servicemen invited their U.S. counterparts out for drinks after work, they were baffled when we responded that we could not go. It was simply inconceivable to the Thais that Americans entrusted with the lives of men and millions of dollars worth of equipment would be banned from having a cold beer after work during a peacetime exercise in a friendly, long-time allied country. When we explained that this was a force protection policy, one Thai was offended at the implication that Thailand was a dangerous country. The policy was later amended to allow social drinking at Thai-U.S. functions, but in practice this did not change things because most Americans were unsure if a invitation for dinner and a few drinks from their counterparts constituted an “official” function.

Regulations also prohibited water sports. A Royal Thai Marine Corps (RTMC) associate of mine invited me and a few other Americans to go scuba diving during Cobra Gold 2009. When we declined, my friend was flabbergasted to learn that Marines, soldiers of the sea charged with carrying out amphibious operations, had been banned from the ocean.

I feel that the increasing political correctness within the U.S. military is severely hampering our ability to build rapport and camaraderie with the Thais. Excessive regulations diminish opportunities for social interaction between the two sides. This hurts the long term, overall relationship. For example, consider the case of a high-ranking Thai officer 10 to 15 years from now, meeting a U.S. military associate he worked with

years ago. Rather than reminiscing about how, as young officers, they went scuba-diving or had a few beers together, he may be more likely to remember us as a strange, awkward bunch of characters who were unable to do much of anything off duty.

### **Communication Issues**

#### **Briefs and Training Lectures**

Our briefing styles also vary drastically. Different basic patterns of communication between the two cultures as well as varying degrees of deference for ranks and positions contribute to misunderstandings.

The American military’s communication style favors informality with ample give and take between instructor and audience in the form of frequent questions. When giving a brief, Americans will tell their listeners to feel free to ask questions at any point. They will also stop at key points and check understanding by asking questions of their audience. No brief or class is considered complete without a question and answer session afterward. Indeed, in the U.S. military, a lack of questions at the end is seen as evidence that the audience did not pay attention to the brief or that it was boring or inapplicable.

The Thai style is much more formal. The instructor may make a comment encouraging questions, but in the vast majority of cases he will end up speaking straight through from start to finish. In the Thai military, asking questions during the brief is considered insulting, implying that the material is being poorly presented and is hard to understand. Couple this with the Thai military’s greater deference to rank and one can understand the reasons behind this lack of questions.

Misunderstandings occur with mixed audiences. An American giving a brief to Thais is usually struck by the lack of questions or feedback. On one occasion, I was briefing a Close Air Support mission. I wanted to ensure that everyone understood the attack timing so that there was no danger of a midair collision or of one aircraft entering the fragmentation pattern of another jet’s bombs. I interpreted the lack of questions and feedback as a failure on my part to get my message across. I spent a lot of time trying to explain the tactics and concepts in another way. Afterward, a Thai pilot told me, “You didn’t have to cover the timing so much. We understood it the first time”.

I have also seen other American instructors construe from the lack of questions that the audience is following the material. This can also cause problems as the instructor then speaks more quickly or

Begins to gloss over points he feels have already been made, leaving his audience confused.

### **After Action and Debrief**

U.S. culture is direct. After a mission, every mistake will be covered in detail in an effort to find out why things went wrong and how to fix them. Those who made mistakes are publicly held to account for their actions, and no punches are pulled. Everyone is expected to endure a little public humiliation for the sake of bringing out lessons learned. A typical debrief comment after a Cobra Gold flight went as follows: "On this bombing run, Voodoo 21 was out of position and used non-standard communication calls. Given a cleared-hot call, you pulled off without dropping your ordnance. What was your reason for the no drop?"

Thai culture, on the other hand, puts more emphasis on preserving face and status of others. The Thais will usually not go into as great a detail on mistakes or mention specifically who was involved. A Thai debriefing a similar bombing might say only that "On this run there was a problem with Voodoo 21's attack, and no bombs were dropped." Americans are likely to see this as glossing over mistakes. In reality, the Thais will cover those things that went wrong once they are in a more private setting. It is not seen as necessary to publicly rectify all errors that occurred.

If the problem involved another unit, that unit will be expected to handle it on their own as well. Unfortunately, when a problem or error involves multiple units, the Thai style of trying to handle it individually usually does not resolve the cause of the problem.

### **Liaisons and Exchanges**

This section will look at liaisons and exchanges, both in an official capacity, and in the role of unofficial socio-cultural "point men".

#### **Official Liaisons and Exchanges**

The Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) is the largest U.S. military activity in Thailand and the primary instrument for mil-to-mil engagement at tactical and operational levels. The Defense Attaché Office (DAO) comes in at the strategic, big picture level. The staffs at JUSMAG and the DAO are on permanent assignments to Thailand, generally for two-three years. As such, they provide good U.S. continuity to the Thai-U.S. military partnership. Manning levels at both offices have been fairly constant in recent years, however the staffs of both lack trained Southeast Asian FAOs and Thai linguists. Another shortcoming is the fact that only one U.S. Marine officer is on the staff at JUSMAG, and no Marines within

DAO, which is ironic considering the USMC is often the lead agency for training within Thailand and that the USMC and RTMC have by far the closest working relationship among the U.S. service counterparts.

Another venue for exchanges and liaison is the Personnel Exchange Program (PEP), in which Thai and American officers serve in one another's units. In the Vietnam War era, the PEP program was quite large, and American personnel served in a wide variety of billets within Thai units. Now, the USAF is the only service with an active PEP in Thailand, consisting of four billets: C-130 pilot, F-16 Maintenance Officer, C-130 Maintenance Officer, and Supply Officer. Thailand also sends RTAF officers to fill similar pilot and logistics billets with U.S. units.

Thailand is a large participant in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, which sends Thai officers to the U.S. for professional military education and technical courses. Between IMET and Thai attendance at other U.S. courses under the Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, an average of over 200 Thai military personnel a year have attended training courses in the U.S. since 2001 (JUSMAG IMET figures, 2009). In sharp contrast to these numbers, American attendance of Thai Professional Military Education courses is limited to just one Army officer a year, who attends the Thai Command and General Staff course.

#### **Socio-Cultural Point Men**

In all the exercises I participated in, I observed some initial hesitancy between the Thais and the Americans. On each occasion, there were a few servicemen from each side who served to "break the ice". I think of them as "point men" who act as representatives from their respective sides. On the Thai side, the point man is usually the designated liaison or action officer for the exercise, specifically tasked with the responsibility of working with the Americans to make sure the exercise goes smoothly.

The U.S. "point man" is most often an officer who has attended a previous planning conference or arrived with his unit's advance party. He has had a chance to get to know his Thai counterparts, in a setting where there have been few other Americans around and he has needed to interact with the Thais for training and logistics issues.

The best sort of "point man" is an American who is fluent in Thai and is trained as a Southeast Asian FAO. Speaking personally, I saw numerous

occasions where my ability to speak Thai helped to explain tactics and procedures and reduce confusion. The Thais are extremely impressed with any Americans who make the effort to learn the Thai language and can speak at a professional, knowledgeable level on military subjects.

### Recommendations

#### **Make Thailand a priority in Southeast Asia -**

The U.S. needs to work to continue to foster a good military partnership with Thailand. We pay lip service to the fact that Thailand is our partner of first choice in Southeast Asia, but we often do not back up our words. We cannot continue to take close military relations with Thailand for granted, or the relationship could become a victim of its success due to benign neglect from the U.S. side. U.S. leaders must conduct more high level visits with their Thai counterparts. This includes Flag Officers and senior diplomats from the government traveling through Asia. It is imperative that we demonstrate a strong commitment to our Thai allies, since Thailand offers a pro-American society, modern logistics network, and training opportunities that cannot be matched within the region.

**Better use of cultural point men** -- With the increased competition from other countries, the role of socio-cultural point-men has become more important than ever. The U.S. is no longer the "only game in town" for the Thai military to deal with, and must continue to demonstrate its commitment to a strong partnership. In order to do so, we need to ensure that we equip our people with the regional knowledge, cultural expertise, and language skills to help the U.S. military understand Southeast Asia and Thai culture (in general and their military sub-culture) in order to maximize the benefits from the partnership. The U.S. military has Southeast Asian FAOs, Regional Area Officers, and Thai linguists within its ranks, yet all too often does not use these assets during mil-to-mil engagement. I can confirm that the Thai military is impressed when an American officer can brief and discuss military subjects in Thai. Not only does it demonstrate a high-level of commitment to the relationship, but having a military professional brief subjects rather than relying on contracted civilian translators greatly helps overall understanding. In many cases the civilian translators may speak excellent English but are unfamiliar with military terms and concepts. The role of these officers should be as liaisons rather than as mere translators or interpreters. Their knowledge of the country's culture and values, as well as their knowledge of military concepts, terminology, and pro-

cedure is just as important as their language skills. They bring the total package of skills to the table (language, cultural and military knowledge) and serve as effective force-multipliers between the two countries' forces.

Aside from training cultural point-men regular personnel should receive short cultural in-briefs prior to deploying into country. These briefs should cover basic Thai culture and etiquette, Thai military rank structure, and basic Thai phrases. Additionally, the U.S. should improve continuity of the individuals assigned to exercise planning and participation each year so that valuable rapport built one year does not have to be rebuilt the next.

**More USMC representation in liaison and exchange roles** -- Additional Marine Corps representation is vital since the Marine Corps is often the lead service for Cobra Gold and other training events such as Marine Air-Ground Task Force War-fighting Simulations and Marine Special Operations Command combined training with Thai Special Forces units. Also, the USMC and the RTMC have closer bonds in service culture, traditions, training, and doctrine than do any of the other U.S. and Thai sister services. Yet incredibly, there is only one USMC officer on the JUSMAG staff, and none at the Defense Attaché Office. In addition to increased USMC representation at these two organizations, the Marine Corps should receive an annual slot to join their U.S. Army brethren at the Thai Command and Staff College.

**Overhaul of PEP billets** -- The current amount of four PEP billets, all of which are USAF-filled slots, needs to be expanded. This expansion should be conducted to place American PEP officers in a variety of Thai units: infantry, civil affairs, intelligence, the surface Navy, SEALs, and the RTMC. If budgetary or manning considerations preclude adding to the existing four billets, then these billets should be reassessed to more equitably distribute them among the U.S. military's branches of service and specialties. Expanding and/or broadening the PEP in Thailand will help not only to give more Thai military personnel exposure to American military ideas and expertise, but it will ensure that the U.S. military has a broader base of officers who are conversant with the Thai military's capabilities, operating areas, and challenges.

### Concluding Remarks

Improving socio-cultural awareness will greatly improve the overall military partnership, which in turn has an impact on all facets of Thai-U.S. relations -- economic, political and social. Although American influence in Thailand is less now than in the past, mili-

influence with Thais has decreased, military relations remain relevant. Thailand can count on US support in security matters, disaster response, international relations, and economic support. The US can count on a pro-American, competent security partner offering unique training and strategic Southeast Asian access.

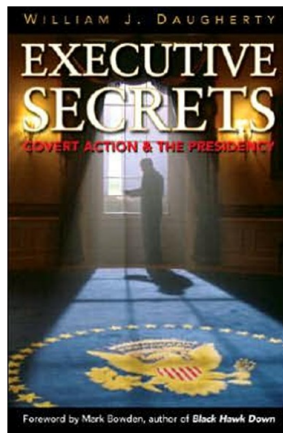
**About the Author:** Major John Baseel started his career within the US Marine Corps as a Weapons Systems Officer and is now completing his training as a Southeast Asian FAO as he completes a two-year MA in Regional Studies program with Chaing Mai University in Thailand conducted in Thai.

## Book Reviews

By CDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, US Navy

***Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the Presidency*** by William J. Daugherty, published by University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, KY. 275 pgs, 2006.

The Central Intelligence Agency, since its founding in 1947, has provided the President with valuable services and options in advancing America's national security. Yet this arm of the executive branch and in particular covert operations has been understood not only by the general public, but by those in leadership positions. Retired CIA Senior Officer William Daugherty has written a book attempting to demystify CIA covert operations; he has done a great service for those wanting to seriously understand the realistic capabilities of the organization. This is not an easy task, for the CIA has been the subject of many books, movies, and certain mindsets in the popular imagination; so it will be important to approach this book with an open mind and set aside these preconceived notions as you read this book. Daugherty was also one of 52 American hostages held by Iran for 444 days during the Carter Administration.



tions, for instance diplomacy, military special operations, and foreign military training does not fall under the definition of covert action.

Daugherty then tackles the myths of covert operations, and does writes that from President's Truman to Ford, the CIA was given authority to run low-level operations, however an operation such as ZAPATA (Bay of Pigs) was conducted with close oversight from President Kennedy. Since 1974, the President has to approve every covert operation, and a report submitted to Congress within 48 hours through a document called the Presidential Finding. At its core such activities as the Iran-Contra affair, in which weapons sales were conducted to Iran to finance the Contras in Nicaragua, was not a CIA program, and was illegal by statute. The book continues to discuss the panoply of covert operations options available to the President such as propaganda, deception operations, political action, paramilitary and information warfare. As you read the President's options in dealing with the Cold War standoff with the Soviet

Union, covert operations precluded more overt action that could have resulted in a nuclear stand-off. This was seen clearly in undermining aggressive communist encroachment in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Before making a judgment on the CIA or discussing covert operations, spend time with Daugherty's book.

The book begins by explaining the three basic functions of an intelligence agency: analysis, counter-intelligence, and covert operations. Daugherty writes that in the realm of collections, 12 percent come through clandestine technical means, 8 percent through human sources, and the remaining 80 percent are open sources in the media, journals, books, and open websites. He uses the definition in Executive Order 12333 to define what covert operations is, this includes within the definition that covert operations is not an intelligence activity, but a foreign policy option focused overseas to influence a target to do or refrain from an action. It is done without acknowledgement that the United States has undertaken the action. A whole chapter is devoted to defining covert opera-

Union, covert operations precluded more overt action that could have resulted in a nuclear stand-off. This was seen clearly in undermining aggressive communist encroachment in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Before making a judgment on the CIA or discussing covert operations, spend time with Daugherty's book.

**Editor's Note:** Commander Aboul-Enein is a regular contributor of book reviews and essays to the FAO Journal. He wishes to thank YN1(AW) Gavin Irby, USN a part-time undergraduate student at the University of Maryland University College for his edits and discussion of this review.



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