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CHAPTER 13

INFLUENCING THE FORGOTTEN HALF OF THE POPULATION IN COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

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> Muslim women's voices can help us win the war against terror by tempering their societies long-term . . . Many quasi-democracies of mostly male participants are overly influenced by extremism and do not benefit from half the population's input. In other words, the hand that rocks the cradle could also moderate the nation.
>
> —Rachel Bryars[1]

INTRODUCTION

Stories of Iraqi Women.[2]

Following the initial euphoria after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, many Iraqi people gradually withdrew behind their sectarian and tribal divides. However, some worked across the divides to try to improve the lives of everyday Iraqis who had long suffered under the neglect of Saddam Hussein's regime. Nesreen, a woman and a doctor, was insistent upon getting the local hospital operational again. She worked with the U.S. Army to obtain critical hospital requirements, like emergency power generation and emergency medical equipment, through the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP) funding. Undeterred by dangerous conditions, she traveled repeatedly to Baghdad in search of basic medical supplies and actively lobbied for needed medical equipment. Upon bringing the hospital to an operational status, Nesreen worked with neighboring U.S. Army units to facilitate medical civic action programs at the local hospital. Her status in the community was further reinforced when male city council members asked her to join the city council as a member based on her contributions to the community.

Like Nesreen, Raja was not content to sit by and simply watch developments. As U.S. forces undertook a program to construct schools, Raja sought to ensure that school projects incorporated all Iraqi children, regardless of sect, tribe, or gender. She strived to fairly distribute school supplies and to get local teachers back into classrooms. In addition, she worked through her husband to gain acceptance for the local U.S. Army unit to facilitate formation of a local women's organization.

Iraq, and indeed the rest of the world the Army operates in, is filled with women like Nesreen and Raja who have the capabilities and motivation to make significant contributions to peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts. While local Iraqi men were concerned with divisive issues such as exploiting the Sunni-Shia conflict and assailing former Ba'ath party members, these women looked for ways to bring the population together and to support all members of society. The senior coordinator of the U.S. State Department's Office of International Women's Issues also observed "a great spirit of

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unity among Iraqi women."[3] Nesreen's and Raja's roles suggest greater participation by women in Iraq based on a shared stake in economic and social development and may help to moderate the regional, ethnic, and religious divisions. Their activities suggest women may be a key strategic factor to consider for stability operations anywhere in the world.

It is critical for the U.S. military, and particularly the Army as a land force, to understand and appreciate the motivations and capabilities of women like Nesreen and Raja, the cultural and social constructs in which they exist, and the effects they can have on the success of military operations and U.S. policy objectives. Such understanding and appreciation leads to better and more effective strategy, planning, and tactical actions. In pursuit of these ends, this chapter first highlights the internationally recognized importance of women as peacemakers and peacekeepers, then presents an overview of actions that the U.S. Army has already undertaken which recognize the importance of women in the cultural landscape. An examination of patriarchal culture follows, which reveals factors that Army leaders need to understand about women in patriarchal societies. Next, some of the challenges that the international development community and the military face when engaging women are discussed. This chapter concludes with insights and recommendations to improve the U.S. Army's ability to relate to the moderate voices of indigenous women and to influence them in a positive manner regarding the intentions and actions the U.S. military.

WOMEN AS PEACEMAKERS AND PEACEKEEPERS

It is only fairly recently that the international community, including the United States, has recognized the importance of women as peacemakers and peacekeepers. Women's importance in these roles is directly related to the disproportionate amount of harm that both women and children experience in war. In conflicts today, civilians are increasingly targeted, resulting in civilians representing 80 to 90 percent of all casualties. Among civilian casualties, 80 to 90 percent are women and girls. Women and children are the big losers in war, but women persevere in conflict and post-conflict situations to protect families and restore normalcy.[4]

Stephanie Hampton, a human geographer, describes the actions of women facing the horrors of conflict and its immediate aftermath.

> Under extreme conditions of deprivation of the basic necessities of life and the constant threat of violence, it is often left to women to gather any remaining family and seek safety, sustenance, and shelter. When the family is secured, women's attention turns outward to the community where they organize themselves to provide schooling, medical care, and support groups for traumatized persons.[5]

Ms. Hampton asserts that women are major stakeholders in war. Women are victims, but much more significantly, they actively seek to restore normalcy and redress grievances in war's aftermath.[6]

In 2000, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a message for the United Nations (UN) Day for Women's Rights and International Peace revealed a similar conclusion:

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> But women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it. When society collapses, women play a critical role in ensuring that life goes on. When ethnic tensions cause or exacerbate conflict, women tend to build bridges rather than walls. When considering the impact and implications of war and peace, women think first of their children and their future, before themselves.[7]

In October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security, recognizing that regardless to which culture they belong, there are gender distinctive characteristics of women that can be key to making and keeping peace. These include collaboration skills; ability to work across ethnic, political, and religious lines for the common good; and willingness to use available resources for social investment.[8] Rather than categorizing women as helpless victims of conflict, this resolution acknowledges their potential and active roles in peacekeeping and peacemaking.

In 2006, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) prepared a special report addressing the role of women in stabilization and reconstruction. This report concludes that women are the primary victims of conflict and bear a major portion of the burden of reconstruction. Women not only pursue practical reconstruction initiatives such as infrastructure repair and clean water supply, they also pursue intangibles such as repairing relationships and fostering traditions, laws, and customs. When women are placed in decisionmaking positions post-conflict, they operate in a manner that promotes good governance, insisting upon transparency and accountability to fight corruption. Recent research reveals that engaging women as peace builders both advances women's rights, a democratic ideal the U.S. Government (USG) pursues through the Department of State (DoS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and leads to more effective reconstruction programs, which promote a more sustainable peace.[9]

USIP acknowledges that the USG has made important progress in recognizing the importance of including women in stabilization and reconstruction operations, but asserts that there is much more to be done across the whole of government, to include the Department of Defense (DoD). The USIP report specifically recommends that the DoD develop internal capacity within the U.S. military to "recognize and address gender issues during war and in postwar reconstruction."[10] Not surprisingly, such a tasking falls most heavily on land forces, and in particular the Army.

RELEVANT ARMY DOCTRINE AND TRAINING

The U.S. military will continue its involvement with the indigenous populations of countries in crisis. As recent experience shows, this is an extremely complex and somewhat daunting challenge. Force-on-force conflict using purely kinetic effects against a known enemy seems simple and straightforward in comparison. The U.S. military has learned that post-conflict operations—stability operations—are essential to translating military success into a political victory—and culture matters in these types of operations. Despite toppling the regime, U.S. military forces on the ground were, in reality, behind from the start in Iraq. Post-conflict operations were the greater challenge. As a learning organization, the U.S. military identified a shortcoming in its capabilities to conduct

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Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) and Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, and is both implementing lessons learned during ongoing operations and seeking appropriate doctrine for the future.

Arguably, the most significant step the Army has undertaken to address these shortcomings is the publication of *Field Manual (FM) 3-24*, *Counterinsurgency*. Indeed, in the foreword, Lieutenant Generals David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army; and James F. Amos, U.S. Marine Corps, acknowledge it has been over 20 years since either service addressed principles and guidelines for counterinsurgency operations in a manual devoted exclusively to the subject.[11] FM 3-24 addresses the engagement of women in the following terms:

> However, in traditional societies, women are hugely influential in forming the social networks that insurgents use for support. When women support COIN efforts, families support COIN efforts. Getting the support of families is a big step toward mobilizing the local populace against the insurgency. Co-opting neutral or friendly women through targeted social and economic programs builds networks of enlightened self-interest that eventually undermine insurgents.[12]

The manual further discusses women in several chapters. In Chapter 1, which provides an overview of COIN, the essential nature of cultural knowledge is articulated, to include an observation that American ideas of normal are not universal, and different societies have different norms concerning gender. Chapter 3 addresses the critical nature of understanding the operational environment in COIN, with a specific focus on understanding the people and an emphasis on socio-cultural factors, to include society, social structure, culture, power, and authority. The manual briefly addresses considering the role of women in developing logical lines of operation for essential services in Chapter 5. However, despite this general recognition in the body of the manual and the strong paragraph in Appendix A, "A Plan for Action," outlining how hugely influential women are in COIN operations, FM 3-24 does not address women, nor how to influence them, in any great depth.[13]

As a result of its experience, the Army introduced Human Terrain Teams (HTT) in September 2007. These five-person teams are designed to work at the Brigade Combat Team level. They are unique in that they rely heavily on civilian expertise, to include anthropologists and social scientists. The intent of the teams is to provide an interpretation of the cultural landscape that will aid commanders and Soldiers in making the right decisions on the ground in COIN operations.[14] A *U.S. News and World Report* article articulates the need for these teams:

> The military has come late to appreciate the role that social connections play in Iraqi society, where divisions are not just geographic or religious but also familial and tribal. Understanding those kinds of connections, a key aim of anthropology, can be critical to forging alliances, assessing intelligence—and, military officials add, avoiding unintended consequences.[15]

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An HTT operating in Afghanistan clearly grasped the implications of gender when they noticed that a large numbers of widows created by the conflict had to rely on their sons for financial support. Recognizing that these young men could easily turn to paid insurgency to fulfill this social obligation, the HTT developed a job program so that these widows could support themselves.[16] In this case, HTT actions had a positive influence by directly improving the women's dire circumstances and indirectly by discouraging potential recruits for the insurgency and creating a more favorable constituency for U.S. policy success.

WHAT THE ARMY NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT WOMEN IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETIES

Accounting for gender is neither obvious nor is it a traditional area of expertise within the military. Every culture is markedly different so there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. At the same time, this is not an issue that the military can afford to ignore, given the relative size of the female population in most nations and women's ability to influence their society publicly and privately. Iraq is a good illustrative example. Population demographics indicate that in 2006 there were 26.8 million Iraqis, with men outnumbering women by only 230,000. The ratio of males to females aged 15 to 64 was 1.02; basically the population was evenly split. Afghanistan is much the same. Of a total population of 31 million, there are 740,000 more men than women and a 1.05 ratio of males to females aged 15 to 64.[17]

Cultures and societal norms define how women wield public and private influence, but the phenomenon is nearly universal and crisis and conflict affect this power significantly. Even in very patriarchal societies, key cultural aspects highlight the power that women potentially wield, but most Westerners fail to see, or appreciate it. Such power, which manifests itself in influence on men in society, can be neutral, supportive, or actively work against U.S. military efforts. Imagine the untapped power of 13 million Iraqi women positively influencing husbands, children, and extended family regarding U.S. military actions and intentions.

Today, there is a wide range of social attitudes regarding women among patriarchal societies. Different cultures have different views on proper roles for women, what modernity implies for women, and religious interpretations of the roles and rights of women. It is these differences that make the understanding of each cultural environment that the Army operates in so critical. Engagement with women in one society may need to be very different than in another, in spite of the fact that the two societies may both be patriarchal and practice a common religion. Take, for example, the cases of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudi Arabia is one of the most patriarchal societies in the world. Women are rarely seen in public, and when they are, they are in extremely conservative dress, to include a shapeless black *abaiya* (gown), *hijab* (head scarf), and *burqa* (face covering). All restaurants, public buildings, and even private homes are strictly segregated. Women are forbidden to interact with men to whom they are not related. In 2007, a Saudi gang-rape victim received a sentence of 200 lashes and 6 months in jail for being in a car with an unrelated

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male when they were attacked. Only 7 percent of Saudi women work, and they are strictly segregated when they do. Given the nature of modernity in the 21st century, this is unenlightened and a tremendous waste of human capital on the part of the Saudis.[18]

Contrast this with Iran; a country many assume is extremely oppressive. Iran has actually become more liberal towards women following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. This is based on a number of factors. The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) brought women into the workforce, and they remained there. Former Iranian presidents' Rafsanjani and Khatami spearheaded a program for economic liberalization and integration into the global economy. This resulted in the development of a sizeable modern middle and working class. Although women are discouraged from public roles, they are not banned from the public sphere as they are in Saudi Arabia. The Government of Iran also recognized the importance of controlling spiraling population growth and enacted family planning at the national level, which effectively empowered women. Agitation in the 1990s by Islamic and state feminists has resulted in the removal of restrictions on education and employment, resulting in 33% of public sector employees being women in 2004. Women may serve in the parliament, and there are women's affairs offices in each government ministry. Despite all this, women are still required to wear *hijab*, and there are many onerous restrictions on their movements and public dress. However, women in Iran frame their grievances openly in Islamic terms and continue to actively work to secure greater women's rights.[19]

These two societies are both alike and unlike in regard to women. Yet, for most Americans, a veiled woman is repressed and essentially powerless. U.S. military members see such women in patriarchal societies that abound in North Africa, the Middle East, and South and East Asia—or in other terms, the AFRICOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM geographical operating areas, but never understand the true relationships. Western culture biases the military layman to evaluate women in these societies very simplistically. The layman either assumes women have no influence so they are not worth any time and effort, or there is a desire to emancipate the woman behind the veil from repression. The reality is much more complex. In most of these cultures, patriarchy places men in all the public power roles in society, to include government, religion, the military, education, and industry. Conversely, women are for the most part denied access to these public roles.[20] However, women in patriarchal societies actually exert significant influence in the home and within their networks, which include extended family and other women.

Religion is another red herring. It is easy to point to religion, specifically Islam, as the sole culprit dictating an inferior status for women in these societies. Religion does state the inferiority of women, and Middle Eastern clerics of all religious persuasion are universally conservative in regard to women's rights and roles. However, in reality patriarchal culture has perpetuated the inferior role of women to a much greater degree than religion. Many of the most egregious acts of sexism have no real basis in religion, but are the patriarchal cultures' interpretation of religion.[21] The uniform control and subordination of women perpetuated in a patriarchal society cuts across cultural and religious boundaries.[22] Yet, women do wield power within their spheres.

In very basic terms, patriarchal societies have two spheres, the public and the private. Men operate in both, while women operate predominantly only in the private sphere. The fact that women in these cultures are rarely seen in the public sphere does not mean that

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they are not influential in the private sphere—or that the private sphere does not affect the public one.[23] Consider the example of Bedouin women of the Negev in Israel. Men guard the land and receive visitors in the public sphere. In the private sphere, women farm and are responsible for domestic livelihood, relations with neighbors, and the marriage of daughters. These are complementary roles, each critically important, each contributing to the well-being of the family.[24]

A study of agricultural families in Afghanistan reinforces the concept of public and private spheres. Both sexes play critical roles in the functioning of the family. Women are not simply in the background: they are responsible for finances, household management, and the welfare of the family. Men make the decisions in respect to the public sphere and are responsible for community dealings and interaction outside the family. In the home, women often exert significant influence over the family, including men.[25]

In the Middle East and North Africa, private sphere networking is very powerful for women as they seek a common solidarity and consciousness. Such networking is an alternative form of power that is not observed in the public sphere. The network is not limited to the bounds of the nuclear family, but crosses family lines and extends to the greater community. Networking actually increases women's power and reduces their dependency on men. It allows them to exercise their own power and independence within their society. Through these networks, women use information as power, controlling information and using it to further their own personal and collective interests.[26] The relevance is obvious: imagine the power of these networks if women perceive U.S. military action as either positive or negative?

Another difficult concept for Americans to grasp is that Arab women do not necessarily want to threaten the existing social order. The most visible symbol of female oppression, from a Western perspective, is the required facial covering in the form of the veil. Yet many Arab women see the veil as providing both the freedom to move about in a patriarchal society as well as freedom from sexual harassment.[27] Not visible in the public sphere is an extremely strong traditional family system that Arab women highly value. This is a system with complementary sex roles; a system that provides women protection and honor. Women trade submissiveness, propriety, and honor for protection. Most Arab women want certain things, like education, health care, clean water, and basic services, but they do not want to part with the traditional family system.[28]

In the Middle East and North Africa, the Western concept of empowerment can be very dangerous for women. Empowerment, as defined by the United Nations (UN) Development Program, aims to eliminate gender inequities through targeted actions in the social and economic spheres, the civil and political rights spheres, and development.[29] In seeking Western empowerment, women can easily lose existing power and social advantages they value. Because of this, they work within the patriarchal culture and look for acceptable ways to break into the male public sphere. One of the most effective ways for women to do this is through male sanction of their activities.[30]

It is also important to understand that during conflict, women may play significant roles that are completely outside gender norms. However, in the post-conflict period patriarchal culture usually seeks to limit women again; the social roles they filled in conflict do not necessarily expand their options or influence in the public sphere with the return of normalcy.[31] On the other hand, war and conflict often introduce great social change.[32]

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An additional dynamic to be considered in the post-conflict gender equation in today's world is that of extremist Islam overlaid on susceptible patriarchal societies. The politicization of Islam has resulted in a populist rejection of Western secular culture and a desire to return to a very nonsecular, pure Islamic society based on religious norms. The basic concept is that emancipated women are a reflection of an insidious Western secular culture creeping in, and women must be put back in their place.[33] Probably the best-known example of this is the brutal repression of women in Afghanistan when the Taliban took power from the Mujahedeen.

WHAT THE ARMY NEEDS TO DO

Despite the complexities of culture and gender, there are soft power possibilities that the Army can pursue to positively influence indigenous women and potentially bring more moderate voices to bear. The main objective of such activities would be to support stability operations through second order effects created by women's influence over others within the private sphere. Soft power as used here refers to nonkinetic actions focused on the women of an indigenous population.

` The U.S. Army has little or no expertise in the application of soft power in matters of gender except those learned on the ground during current operations. For many, this might beg the question of why the Army should even concern itself with this issue. The answer is quite simple. It makes strategic, operational, and tactical sense. Ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan both find military personnel on the ground interacting directly with the indigenous population, long after conventional combat operations are over. As the Army has rediscovered, stability operations are among the most complex. In post-conflict operations, and in many others, the Army will find itself committed to operating environments that are nonpermissive or semipermissive during which the military will operate with few external resources, and long-term success and costs hang in the balance. It is incumbent upon the Army to tackle these environments playing its "A" game, including gender savvy.

There are overarching imperatives that the U.S. Army needs to understand when engaging women. First, there are distinct differences between humanitarian assistance, development, and military operations that affect the potential to influence women's roles. Second, a critical distinction the military should appreciate is the difference between strategic gender interests and practical gender interests. And finally, the military should not attempt to engage in the empowerment of indigenous women, but should take a supporting role as required in a broader whole of government effort.

Even though the U.S. military likes to view its missions along a spectrum of conflict, nonkinetic military actions do not fit neatly into either humanitarian aid or development operations. However, such actions do differ in purpose in different operational environments across the spectrum. Humanitarian aid or assistance is short-term immediate action to save lives and alleviate suffering, and is normally altruistic. Development activities are longer-term and are intended to address underlying socio-economic conditions.[34] Development activities are more than altruistic; there are usually political, economic, or security agendas motivating them. President George W. Bush's National Security Strategy states, "USAID's work in development joins diplomacy and

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defense as one of three key pieces of the nation's foreign policy apparatus."[35] Both of these activities differ from conventional combat operations. However, as Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated, the U.S. Army is on the ground; it must learn how to effectively work with the humanitarian and the development communities as well as with the indigenous population.

Tensions between the humanitarian, development, and military professions are inherent. All three professions work in each other's jurisdictions, sharing the same "contested aid space."[36] The military, when responding to humanitarian crises, is usually on the ground quickly with significant assets. The humanitarian community arrives simultaneously or shortly after the military, often with less immediate capacity. Humanitarians have no choice but to accept the military presence and often seek its support, but the military must also accept humanitarian organizations as independent agents that are not under military control and may have differing agendas, even while pursuing similar goals.[37] The development community—governmental, nongovernmental, and private—arrives later. At the execution level, the military should look to assist the humanitarian community and set the stage for the development community in pursuit of long-term development goals.

The term empowerment is often associated with solutions to women's issues in patriarchal societies. However, empowerment is a complex undertaking, with second and third order effects best left to other professions with a better developed appreciation of their complexity. The military does not have the indepth expertise to engage in the empowerment of women in other cultures. A useful construct for use during the development of military operations is to separate gender interests into practical and strategic. Practical gender interests are those that allow one to better one's situation within the overall system. These are such things as access to clean drinking water, medical care, and education. Strategic gender interests are those that involve a structural change to the system itself and are akin to empowerment. In terms of a patriarchal society, they may include issues of legal status, political representation in governance activities, and women's suffrage. Prior to the rise of the insurgency in 2004, Iraqi women identified practical gender interests, things essential to physical survival, as their priority. Women were interested in water, electricity, security, and income if widowed, before education or political rights, which are strategic gender interests.[38] The military may act in support of many empowerment-related activities and provide appropriate advice, but the guiding strategy and planning for empowerment should come from experts within the development community, whose focuses is on strategic gender interests at the national level.[39]

Understanding complementary efforts in contested aid space and practical versus strategic gender interests will allow the Army to operate more effectively in engaging women in stability operations. As illustrated in the following statement by Marine Master Sergeant James Allen, military units operating at the tactical level clearly understand there is the potential to positively influence men in a patriarchal society through women: "We want to empower the women to the point where they can have a positive influence on the men, when they're alone, in the home. . . ."[40] Notwithstanding the use of the word empowerment, at the tactical level leaders grasp the importance of women. Equally important, there is an evolving infrastructure above the tactical level that can

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and should support and guide these efforts. This infrastructure could also benefit from some refinement and further development. A critical consideration is the fact that there is minimal culture and gender expertise within the military and the closer one gets to actual execution on the ground, the further one gets away from this expertise. Hence, there is a critical requirement to share this expertise in a useable manner down to the lowest tactical level.

At the theater strategic and operational levels, combatant commands must take the military lead in efforts to facilitating positive influence among indigenous women. The concept for Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs) at the geographic combatant command level evolved from the failure of interagency planning for post-conflict operations in Iraq. JIACGs should be a key enabler in dealing with gender issues and influence. These groups bring a wide variety of subject matter expertise to planning and execution efforts.[41] This is not to suggest that facilitating positive influence will be easy. The UN development community experienced problems in addressing gender issues in post-conflict environments and has advocated the involvement of gender advisors.[42] Arguably such expertise should be organic to the JIACGs at the combatant command level. This expertise does not have to be a specific organizational position; it can be an additional qualification or a reach-back capability. Regardless, the combatant command should provide guidance and information to subordinate units to assist efforts on the ground.

Human Terrain Teams (HTT) are another way of sharing expertise. HTTs bring culture and gender expertise right into the Brigade Combat Team with their anthropologists. HTTs should include a detailed analysis of women in their cultural intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). This analysis should follow the IPB framework within FM 3-24, but with women and their issues interwoven throughout. Units with the support of their HTTs should then determine how to engage women and promote favorable influence. Additionally, as in Information Operations, women should be considered throughout every Logical Line of Operation (LLO). For example, consider the impacts of women in regard to the security LLO. If U.S. Army units can provide security for women and girls in schools, women may advocate positively for the Army and U.S. policies in the home.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), like HTTs, is another valid attempt to operate more effectively in SSTR and COIN operations. PRTs are a civilian-military interagency effort spearheaded by the Department of State. These teams provide an interface among the U.S. Government departments and agencies, U.S. and coalition partner militaries, and provincial and local governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their efforts are focused on reconstruction, to include delivery of essential services and building local and regional governance capacity. PRT staffs represent a wide variety of capabilities. Different team members may prove invaluable in addressing both the practical and strategic gender interests of women. Potentially, the USAID representative, the governance team, and the bilingual culture advisor will bring new perspectives, different ideas, and more appropriate skill sets.[43] Units working in conjunction with PRTs have a much greater potential to significantly influence women in their area of operations—and should develop the potential and share the experience.

Civil affairs units and teams are another potentially critical resource for tactical level units. Civil Affairs is one military occupational specialty where education and training

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is better aligned for the cultural complexities the military is currently experiencing and will face in the future. Further training of civil affairs personnel in gender issues would provide an invaluable tactical and operational level resource to commanders on the ground. Such training should be incorporated into the institutional training base for each Army branch and made part of refined deployment preparation for specific regions of the world. Civil affairs planners at the operational level should be able to reach back to JIACGs within the combatant command and work directly with PRTs in theater. The hierarchical rank structure of civil affairs units lends itself to development of more specific gender knowledge at the brigade level than can be supported in the civil affairs teams operating with tactical units, making good planning and communications even more critical.

Similar to the military, the development community is awakening to the gender gap as well. Women and their needs are historically easy to overlook as the values of civil society in countries around the world generally reflect a male perspective and men's gender-expressed aspirations. Based on this, development agencies can overlook women's perspectives and under value the important human resource represented by women. As one author in the field put it, women comprise half the human race but take a secondary place in the world's cultures.[44] The ability to comprehend gender differences is generating new energy, ideas, and resources within this community. For example, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) pamphlet, "The Role of Women in Stabilization and Reconstruction," consolidates lessons learned involving gender and development.[45] Although these lessons learned are development focused, there is also great application for the military in the pursuit of practical gender interests and for laying a proper foundation for later development.

One of the most effective ways USIP has found to engage women in a given culture is to establish connections with women's rights and issues organizations when they exist. Resources that are available to find such organizations include the DoS, USAID, the UN, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Each country and region will differ in the extent to which these organizations are developed and at what level they are found. Organizations found at the national level will most likely be focused on strategic gender interests of interest to the development community.[46] Other women's organizations may exist at local levels focused on more local concerns and traditional models. Recognizing the nature and value of such organizations is important to military operations at all levels.

At the strategic level, USIP actively advocates collecting and sharing lessons learned related to gender and development across the whole of government. USIP also advocates gender training across government.[47] The DoD should be an active participant in this process, sharing the military's lessons learned and disseminating those from other government agencies within the department. What is critical at the strategic level for the U.S. military is the culling and translation of government-wide lessons learned into knowledge that the military can specifically use. In the case of the Army, this knowledge should be incorporated into the missions of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). For example, within TRADOC, such lessons learned could be militarized and immediately shared through the Center for Army Lessons Learned. In the longer term, TRADOC should integrate key gender knowledge into doctrine, institutional training and education, and combat training center scenarios.

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Combatant commands must also address gender lessons learned, albeit from a somewhat different perspective. Combatant commands are largely engaged in the here and now. JIACGs should play a key role in filtering lessons learned to glean key insights and practices that are applicable to ongoing operations and archive and share others that may apply to their geographic region for possible future use.

As the military, and specifically the ground forces of the Army and Marines, have engaged indigenous local populations much more indepth manner than previously imagined, the military has recognized that U.S. forces must become much more proficient in cultural understanding and awareness. Gender education and training should be an integral part of such proficiency. However, the depth and detail of gender education and training should be tailored to the appropriate level. Indeed, the military's mission does not call for every service member to become an anthropologist or gender specialist, but it does require a degree of awareness and sensitivity, some doctrinal thought, and supportive backup. Consider this statement from U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Jennifer McNamara, "Right now, we're relationship-building, listening to these women . . . building trust."[48] The cultural subject matter expertise found in a JIACG is a long way away from Corporal McNamara on the ground, but it can guide her intuitive gender appreciation to more appropriate tactical actions. Culture and gender issues touch military units at the lowest level. To accomplish the missions of today and the future, the military must develop more knowledge on the subject and tap into more expert resources.

At the tactical level, practical gender interests hold sway. One of the most effective ways to address practical gender interests is through direct interaction and consultation with indigenous women in the area. When this is possible, it is important to understand the composition of the women in a given group. Based on the nature of a particular patriarchal society, it may be difficult to meet with a cross-section of women of different ages, social status, education levels, and urban and rural backgrounds, but generally the more diversity, the better. Once units engage directly with women, they will be able to identify practical gender interests and gain insights into strategic ones. When units initiate projects without regard for women and their interests—practical or strategic—the desired effects may not be achieved. Development literature is rife with examples of Western expectations regarding projects being completely out of touch with the realities of indigenous women. The key to overcoming this is to encourage the participation of women in the decisionmaking process.

There are four key questions which women should be asked to get a proper practical gender appreciation of a proposed project: (1) Do women desire the proposed project and will they benefit from it? (2) How can the project be improved before it is started to more adequately support the knowledge and skill level of the ultimate users? (3) Are there any potential unintended negative effects for women or others? and (4) If negative effects will occur, how can they be mitigated?[49]

While it is obvious to outsiders that local women should be part of the process when working practical gender interests, tactical units must understand it can be very difficult to secure access to women in patriarchal societies. It is a radical departure for women to break their silence in public, so even women's groups cannot always easily serve as a conduit for women to communicate their practical needs. In addition, women's organizations often do not exist at the local level. In either case, tactical leaders should

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continue to seek acceptable access. One of the most effective ways to bring women into the process is through male patrons. If male community leaders sanction this type of engagement, women will venture out of the private sphere to participate in the public sphere with other women.

A significant pitfall in practical gender interests is in presuming to understand the needs of the community and their related issues. Projects that appear that they will benefit women often fail to do so, or if they do result in benefits, there are likely to be negative second and third order effects that should have been earlier considered.[50] Take, for example, a situation in Iraq where a battalion focused on reopening the local hospital, including securing emergency power generation and acquiring needed basic medical equipment. About a month later after starting a local women's group, one of the women's basic complaints was the lack of female doctors to see women patients at this hospital, a shortage that could have been identified earlier by input from the women prior to reconstruction. At first blush, this seemed like an obvious strategic gender interest problem: women are not allowed to go to medical school or at least not in sufficient numbers to treat female patients. However, in this particular case, the problem was much more practical. Available women doctors had no access to childcare, so they could not leave home to treat patients at the hospital. This was a practical gender interest that could be solved once the right questions were asked and answered.[51] Army unit leaders must learn to ask the right question early on in their decisionmaking processes.

Other potential changes in military forces may help identify and address practical gender interests of women. The adoption of part of UNSCR 1325, which advocates increased roles for women in all aspects of peacekeeping, may support tactical units in efforts to engage indigenous women.[52] Just as units use military lawyers to engage judges, or military police to support police force reforms, military women serve as a practical and powerful tool with which to engage indigenous women. They can interrelate with these women in ways that are not acceptable for male military members. One could also argue that in a strategic sense, they are also new role models. In this regard, female military members may be considered as scarce and essential resources. Consequently, units without women may coordinate with those that have them for support. Of course, military women should coordinate with HTTs and civil affairs teams to determine how best to work with indigenous women and to understand long-term interagency development goals. Such activities should always complement the commander's plan for the area.

CONCLUSION

A Marine battalion commander involved in the invasion of Iraq and post-conflict operations recalls:

> We didn't give special consideration to engaging the women . . . My concern was not stepping where I shouldn't step, or dragging a woman in there that would anger the local men.[53]

The U.S. military, and indeed the whole of government, have a better understanding of patriarchal societies and the role of women today, but much remains to be learned and applied. The keys to getting it right are to understand and more fully appreciate that

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there is no monolithic view of women in these societies, indigenous women find value in their traditional roles and practices, these women largely exert power through the private sphere and networking, and such women can influence for better or worst U.S. success in their areas of operation.

Getting gender interests right is a military imperative. The U.S. military will continue to find itself in nonpermissive or semipermissive environments where ground forces are initially engaging the local populace with little to no hands-on support from other agencies. In these kinds of environments, it is critical to address the needs of the entire population and to not overlook the interests of women. The strategic, operational, and tactical effects the military should seek are to positively influence women who will in turn advocate in the positive within the private sphere and through their networking in regard to U.S. efforts and activities—or as a minimum, not actively oppose them. Tactical units should address practical gender interests while military commanders and planners at the operational and strategic levels should provide guidance and information in support of tactical actions, setting the conditions for tactical success. These commanders and their staffs should also provide advice to, and plan for supporting roles for the military in order to assist key interagency players address strategic gender interests. In this regard, the national vision should be the establishment of a coherent whole of government effort in a given operation that includes gender as an integrated aspect of strategy and planning.

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