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Publisher	Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School
Issue Date	2009-12
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10945/4376

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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THESIS

BEYOND LAWRENCE:
ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE FOR USSOCOM

by

Varman S. Chhoeung
Chad T. Machiela

December 2009

Thesis Advisor:	Anna Simons
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	**2. REPORT DATE** December 2009	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Beyond Lawrence: Ethnographic Intelligence for USSOCOM			**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Chhoeung, Varman S. and Machiela, Chad T.			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

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14. SUBJECT TERMS Sociocultural log, Sociocultural Report, ethnographic intelligence, ethnographic sensor, sensor teams, cultural intelligence, sociocultural understanding, sociocultural conceptual framework, DoDD 3000.5 (SSTR)			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 83 **16. PRICE CODE**
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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BEYOND LAWRENCE: ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE FOR USSOCOM

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Ethnographic Intelligence (EI) is “information about indigenous forms of association, local means of organization, or traditional methods of mobilization” and the collection and processing of information regarding “ties built through kinship connections, tribal relationships, religious education, and other forms of normal, everyday association.” This thesis describes how the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) can employ an organization of ethnographic sensors to develop and maintain long-term, trust-based relationships among target populations throughout the world to improve sociocultural understanding in support of USSOCOM, Geographic Combatant Commander, and Country Team objectives. This thesis also demonstrates why USSOCOM has the most to gain from supporting this low-cost, sustainable solution to redressing a gap in our current collection and analysis.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
CA	Civil Affairs
CENTCOM	Central Command
CNT	Counter-NarcoTerrorism
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CT	Counterterrorism
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DoDI	Department of Defense Instructions
DoS	Department of State
EI	Ethnographic Intelligence
EUCOM	European Command
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commander
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, aka the Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
HTS	Human Terrain System
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
JUSMAG	Joint United States Military Advisory Group
MARSOC	Marine Special Operations Command
MI	Military Intelligence
MIST	Military Information Support Team
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIPR	Nonsecure Internet Protocol Router Network
ODA	Operational Detachment-Alpha

OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PACOM	Pacific Command
PIR	Priority Information Requirements
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SR	Special Reconnaissance
SSTR	Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction
TDY	Temporary Duty
TECHINT	Technical Intelligence
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USASFC	United States Army Special Forces Command
USG	United States Government
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture matters greatly. This is yet another claim that is not unique to irregular warfare, but is of greater significance in that mode of conflict. Since irregular warfare is above all else a contest for the acquiescence and allegiance of civilian locals, their beliefs, values, expectations and preferred behaviors are authoritative. If we do not know much about those beliefs and values, we are unlikely to register much progress in persuasion, except by accident. Indeed, by behaving like strangers in a strange land—true aliens—our regular soldiers and officials are as likely to do more harm than good to their mission.

Colin S. Gray, Irregular Warfare: One Nature, Many Characters

A. WHAT IS ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE?

Ethnographic Intelligence (EI) is "information about indigenous forms of association, local means of organization, or traditional methods of mobilization" and the collection and processing of information regarding "ties built through kinship connections, tribal relationships, religious education, and other forms of normal, everyday association" (Simons and Tucker, 2004, p. 2). EI provides the sociocultural framework to give decision makers, policy officials, and commanders the context necessary to better forecast how populations will react to both enemy and U.S. actions. With EI, military forces responding to regional emergencies or conducting security assistance operations will have a better understanding of operational environments, along with more detailed information about the key citizens and important non-state relationships, which always affect mission success. Country team officials will have greater access to communities that do not normally interact with embassy representatives, access that will help them design policy and focus U.S. participation within the host country. Through the products developed by an increased EI capacity, decision makers can better develop policies and inter-state relationships that promote U.S. interests, and that will be accepted by and in accordance with the needs of client communities and host nations.

In a 2004 report for OSD/Net Assessment, NPS Professors Anna Simons and David Tucker described the importance of EI:

> No organization within the U.S. Government's vast intelligence system currently gathers information about indigenous forms of association, local means of organization, or traditional methods of mobilization. Yet, ties built through kinship connections, tribal relationships, religious education, and other forms of normal, everyday association remain available to our adversaries throughout the non-western world as ready-made means of recruitment, communication, resourcing, and support. Worse, in addition to doubling as latent networks, these indigenous institutions offer ideal cover. They comprise the social fabric of most places; they are as familiar and comfortable as the neighborhoods in which people grow up (p. 2).

Until very recently, conventional intelligence methods focused almost exclusively on information regarding states, militaries, and target individuals. The information used to develop intelligence on these entities is typically gleaned from relatively easily identifiable sources such as maps, military tables of organization, bureaucratic structures, descriptions of local political leaders, and demographic data, or more advanced products such as the profiles compiled by the CIA's National Clandestine Services. What no agency collects is information that describes interactions among populations, societies, and communities—the relationships that describe how members are likely to act and react to one another. Additionally, without the appropriate conceptual framework for analysis any ethnographic information collected incidental to other intelligence operations is almost impossible to process into useful intelligence.

Arguably, recent U.S. successes in Iraq have hinged upon efforts made by tactical unit commanders and the relationships they have developed with tribes in their areas. This has occurred without—or even in spite of—U.S. Army intelligence doctrine. For example, *Field Manual 34-8-2, Intelligence Officer's Handbook*, recommends that intelligence officers develop strategic level products using the following: Global security forecasts, battlefield development plans, automated and hardcopy databases, arms proliferation and military power studies related to the weapons acquisition strategies and the overall military power and potential of selected foreign military forces, TECHINT and user bulletins, the CIA World Factbook and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)

country studies, and open source studies and articles (pp. 2–4). Only the last—open source studies—includes information relevant to predicting the behavior of non-state actors within the area of operation, and even professionally produced ethnographies are not written specifically to address factors crucial to military or government forces. As we have seen in both Iraq and Afghanistan, without knowledge of the strength of the enemy it is difficult to determine the tactical effect of operations against non-state actors, let alone plan an effective strategic campaign. In his report for the Center for the Study of Intelligence, Dr. Rob Johnston (2005) found that even when correctly estimating an enemy's capability, analysts' failure to determine the enemy's intentions "may be a result of missing hypotheses or mental models about an adversary's behavior" (p. 8).

The goal of the EI sensor, as conceived in this thesis, is to do much more than develop Dilthey's *verstehen* (Glass, 2005)[1]. The USSOCOM EI sensor must not only understand the community he studies so well that he can act in a manner the society members accept as appropriate for themselves, but he must also be able to communicate his understanding to others. In the same way a linguist studies, records, and translates a foreign language so that others can learn to understand and make themselves understood in that language as well, the EI sensor must record and convey the nature of social relationships to others so that they can begin to act appropriately within that culture (Sanday, 1979, p. 527). Even more important, while the sociocultural products developed by USSOCOM EI sensors will have great value for expanding the conceptual framework commanders and policy officials use to assess situations abroad, the real value to USSOCOM and its core missions lies in the long-term relationships developed and maintained over the course of the EI sensors' careers, and beyond.

This thesis proposes that through EI sensors, USSOCOM will be able to nurture relationships and establish trust in the same way relationships and trust are generated throughout the non-western world: "never by money, always by time" (Simons and Tucker, 2004, p. 11). Ideally, the social capital to be developed by EI sensors will be available to be leveraged in support of U.S. interests well into the future and can be

[1] To thoroughly immerse oneself in and empathetically re-live the experiences of the studied population so as to gain a visceral sociological and psychological understanding of them.

maintained on a personal level via various mechanisms, such as JCETs and other training deployments to the target country, short SME visits, follow-on EI rotations, and extensive personal communication. Because the objective of the EI sensor is to build relationships throughout all segments of society, the EI sensor will interact with a great range of communities outside the embassy's "cocktail circuit." More so than other DoS or DoD elements operating in a target country, the EI sensor team will have access to and daily contact with all strata of a population because of sensors' willingness to go without modern amenities and into less secure, more austere regions. To fully engage the target populace, a researcher must be willing and empowered to travel to locations throughout the target country, regardless of creature comforts or presence of dangerous elements—exactly the sort of duty for which USSOCOM operators eagerly volunteer. As Tucker and Lamb (2007) observe, "only two organizations in the U.S. Government presume that their personnel will operate in violent and austere circumstances, have expertise in preparing them to do so and supporting them once they are there: the Defense Department and the CIA" (p. 211).[2] As with all deployments, risk to deployed forces must be balanced against the expected benefits of remote community engagement. In the same way the TSOC manages the employment of JCET, CA, or MIST team deployments, the TSOC will coordinate with EI sensors to ensure that the sensors' time and risk are managed to best answer the TSOC and GCC commander's information requirements.

This thesis takes to heart Ben Connable's (2009) admonition that an "effective solution to the cultural intelligence gap is to retrain intelligence staffs to collect and analyze cultural data and to include this data in all-source intelligence products" (p. 63). In no way does what this thesis proposes satisfy the urgent requirement to increase cultural savvy throughout the Services. Rather, the program described in this thesis recommends selecting individuals with an affinity for empathizing and communicating

[2] Tucker and Lamb (2007) explain why the CIA should not be tasked to collect Ethnographic Intelligence. The CIA's organizational culture is based on the development of its case officers to conduct clandestine operations in support of its primary missions. The CIA lists its primary missions as: collecting information regarding the "plans, intentions and capabilities of our adversaries," "producing timely analysis that provides insight, warning and opportunity to the President," and "conducting covert action at the direction of the President" (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). The CIA's organizational focus on developing strategic-level intelligence for senior government officials precludes its officers from developing low-level sociocultural information in a country not currently considered strategically crucial.

with people of other cultures to serve as long-term primary collectors to target countries or communities. The argument is that the DoD needs to provide collectors with time, resources, and access to the population in order that they may develop the relationships that will lead to greater sociocultural understanding, and ultimately provide a venue for sharing sociocultural products with the rest of the force. The program to be described also supports DoDD 3000.5 *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations,* the November 28, 2005, tasking to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. According to paragraph 5.3.4.3, the military will "develop opportunities for DoD personnel to contribute or develop stability operations skills by learning languages and studying foreign cultures, including long-term immersion in foreign societies" (p. 6).

B. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS, PAST LITERATURE

This thesis builds upon a paper submitted to OSD/Net Assessment in 2004 by Dr. Anna Simons and Dr. David Tucker entitled *Improving Human Intelligence in the War on Terrorism: The Need for an Ethnographic Capability*, and offers a different approach than another thesis that also drew on Dr. Simons and Dr. Tucker's paper by LTC Alfred Renzi entitled *The Military Cooperation Group*.

Simons first defines Ethnographic Intelligence, explains why the United States must create a capability to collect EI, and argues that U.S. intelligence agencies do not collect sufficient EI—information regarding the social ties built through the everyday interactions our enemies use to recruit, organize, and mobilize. Access to this information is readily available in most countries, but requires the deployment of Ethnographic Sensors—specially selected individuals trained and employed to collect sociocultural information, through person-to-person interaction over time. Tucker proposes an organization to produce EI, and then evaluates the Army, the State Department, the CIA, and creation of a new organization as possible organizational hosts for their proposed sensor capability. He recommends two feasible options. The first, more conventional solution would be to create a new operational support career field within the Army, a proposal likely to take years to implement. The second, more unconventional option

would be to create a new joint agency similar to USSOCOM that would recruit from across the entire government. While we agree that a separate agency focused on developing this information might be the most effective solution, we do not believe that such an organization could be created expeditiously given current levels of political will, command emphasis, and financial constraints.

LTC Renzi further expounds upon the importance of collecting Ethnographic Intelligence, but argues for a different solution than that of Simons and Tucker. Renzi recommends the creation of a Military Cooperation Group at U.S. embassies that would consolidate the functions of the Defense Attaché, Security Assistance Officer, and Ethnographic Information Officer under one command. This new structure would assist with the collection of EI, provide limited command and control of collectors, and share information with the embassy, other Military Cooperation Groups, and Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC). While we agree with Renzi on the need to develop EI, we believe his recommended organization is bureaucratically infeasible due to the great expense and political will required to pass legislation to implement it.

Worth mentioning, too, is the Human Terrain System (HTS). Established in September 2007, the HTS has served as a 'band aid' solution applied to our lack of cultural understanding about Afghanistan and Iraq. The HTS attempts to utilize academic professionals and experienced military personnel to rapidly develop sociocultural information and provide recommendations to military unit commanders. While their academic backgrounds and experience in effective fieldwork techniques may allow some members of Human Terrain Teams to map superficial relationships quickly, their "drive-by" relationships with the populace do not build trust, the "essential component of all enduring social relationships" (Seligman, 1997, p. 13). The utility of the HTS has been hotly debated, and estimates of the classified cost range from $60 million to over $130 million dollars to work with deployed military forces in only two countries. More important than cost, however, in order to benefit from long-term relationships in countries throughout the world, USSOCOM needs sensors not only trained in fieldwork

methodology for the study of people and communities, but also well-versed in the intelligence and operational needs of military forces and committed to USSOCOM for the length of a career, and longer.

C. BRIDGING THE GAP—A LOW COST PROPOSAL

This thesis offers a blueprint for an organization of Ethnographic Sensors that USSOCOM can employ in support of U.S. interests throughout the world without major changes to current manning, budget, or force levels, and demonstrates why USSOCOM is ideally suited to develop—and has the most to gain from supporting—this low-cost, sustainable solution. Chapter II describes a few days in the life of a hypothetical EI sensor. Chapter III compares case studies of Mali and Thailand to suggest how EI would support USSOCOM core missions and DoD core competencies, and demonstrates how this single capability would be flexible enough to be employed in disparate countries. Chapter IV describes the essential tasks of an EI sensor, suggests how sensors might be selected, and demonstrates that because USSOCOM already employs operators with the requisite skills, only minor changes to current structure would be needed to manage its EI sensors within the existing personnel system. Chapter V will outline the organization of the EI teams and headquarters, and address how ethnographic intelligence will be disseminated to support USSOCOM core missions and information requirements for other organizations. Chapter VI concludes this thesis.

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II. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SENSOR

To better demonstrate how the EI sensor will collect and employ sociocultural information, the following paragraphs describe a few days in the life of Major Parks, an ethnographic sensor nearing the end of his first assignment to the U.S. Embassy in Bamako, Mali. In this example, Parks (formerly a 10th Special Forces Group detachment commander) has been working in Mali for almost three years. He has worked hard to develop relationships with members of several target communities throughout the country.

Parks begins his day with language training, as he does whenever he is in the capital. While fluent in French (the official language of Mali), he discovered upon his arrival that few Malians outside of the capital city of Bamako actually speak French. After reviewing the Priority Information Requirements (PIR) provided by the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) in order to develop an EI collection plan, Parks realized that most of the people he needed to study live well outside the capital and speak a variety of tribal languages. Northern Mali in particular is almost completely outside government control, leaving large ungoverned spaces open as safe havens and transport routes for the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) (also called the Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb) and Knights of Change. Recognizing the importance of relationships among the Tuareg tribes living in those northern areas, Parks asked members of the Country Team to recommend an instructor to teach him Tamasheq. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) office in Bamako recommended Abu, a Malian citizen they often employed as a guide during their infrequent trips into the northern regions. Because positions with USAID were much sought after by Malians, Parks knew that Abu was likely to be well connected within his community to have been able to secure his position. Sure enough, after many language lessons, not only had Abu proven to be a wealth of information about the Tuareg, but he was also able to introduce Parks to several influential members in different Tuareg communities.

After his language lesson, Parks tells Abu that they will no longer be studying Tamasheq together, though he would like Abu to begin instructing his replacement and newest team member. Major Thomas. Parks wants to focus on Hassaniya Arabic for the remainder of his time in Mali to help him prepare for his next job working in the operations section at the TSOC, where he will coordinate the operations of several sensor teams. Major Parks is aware that he will not achieve fluency in Hassaniya in just a few weeks, but he intends to learn enough to greet others respectfully in their own language and to make light conversation. More importantly, he hopes his new language trainer will provide the team with as much information about social capital in the areas where Hassaniya Arabic is spoken as Abu has provided for the Tuareg. Greater understanding of the people who speak Hassaniya Arabic will help Parks better analyze the relationships among the different Pan-Sahel tribes.

After his last language lesson with Abu, Parks joins Thomas and another member of the sensor team, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mills, at the embassy's cashier's office where they draw funds provided by the TSOC for travel expenses. The sensors proceed to the defense attaché's office to remind him of their planned departure on a week-long trip to Araouane, a town roughly 800 km northeast of the capital, and to see if he has any specific information requests. The defense attaché asks Parks to take photos of a school whose construction EUCOM has funded in a village just south of Timbuktu. As the only official assigned to the small attaché office in Bamako, the defense attaché has no time to take the completion photos himself. While only the TSOC can officially task the sensor team, the EI sensors have found that offering their assistance to others when this complements what they are already doing enhances their own efforts while supporting the embassy's overall mission. Thus, Parks agrees to make the minor detour to photograph the completed school.

The sensor team departs in their Toyota Land Cruiser immediately after final coordination with the embassy regional security officer. Their vehicle is loaded with food, drinking water, repair kit, four spare tires on the roof rack (once in the desert, they will likely use all four during their one-week trip), extra inner tubes, cots, mosquito nets, Thuraya satellite phone, 10 small boxes of Chinese green tea, 15 pounds of sugar in

Ziploc bags, and several boxes of school supplies provided by an NGO whose director wants to help inaugurate the new school, but whose budget cannot support travel to the remote location. The team drives east, on the only paved road that crosses Mali from west to east, and arrives in Segou just before nightfall. The sensors have arranged to spend the night with a family that Mills has come to know well during his three years in Mali. After dinner, they sip tea and share gossip about events in Segou in exchange for the latest news from Bamako. Several hours of friendly conversation later, the family and guests climb the stairs to the roof of the house where they will sleep for the night.

The next morning the team joins their hosts for a light breakfast of jam spread over flat loaves of bread (thankfully free of the sand ever-present in the bread of the northern areas) and instant coffee. Thomas asks his hosts in French if they have any peanut butter, and everyone at the table breaks into hearty laughter. Obviously straining to keep a straight face, their host's wife passes Thomas a jar of homemade peanut butter. Later, while Parks and Thomas inspect the vehicle to ensure that all equipment is tied down, Thomas asks about the unexpected reaction to his simple question. "When I asked for peanut butter, why did everybody laugh like that? Did I say it wrong?"

Parks laughs again. "No, you said it right. You have to know the context. The climate here is especially suitable for growing peanuts, and this community is known throughout the country for its production of peanut butter. This tribe in particular is associated with growing peanuts; there are even several jokes based on the stereotype."

"Oh. I hope I didn't offend them."

"No, you didn't. They know you are new here, and they really thought it was funny. But now you see how misunderstanding your own misunderstanding can lead to faulty conclusions. You assumed your French was wrong, when the issue actually had to do with the social context which you couldn't have known unless you knew a lot about the community."

Once back on the road, Parks drives while Mills updates the Sociocultural Log about the community they just visited, and together they discuss new insights into tribal relations near Segou. As the team continues northeast through heavily vegetated southern

Mali, Thomas thinks of a question and turns to Parks, “In the three days I have been here, it seems like you guys know everybody. What do I tell people if they ask what it is I do here in Mali?”

“You always tell them the truth. You are a military officer stationed in the embassy to work in the Cultural Studies Office supporting the defense attaché. Because of the actions of different intelligence agencies over the years there is always the suspicion that government officials working outside the embassy are spies. Now, the Malians cannot help but think we are up to something secret. You tell them that the reason the U.S. military is paying us to be here is because the U.S. Government has realized that all of its efforts throughout the world could be better planned and conducted if we understood the population.”

Thomas looks skeptical. “Won’t they still be suspicious?”

Parks laughs, and Mills grins without looking up from his laptop. “Yes, they will. And they will be for a while. The way you overcome that is with transparency. We don’t just walk up to people and start interviewing them. We become friends. We build relationships. What we do here is a mix of fieldwork and just being friendly with people who are genuinely interesting.”

Parks continues, “When I got here this program didn’t exist, so I didn’t know anybody. I started out by just watching people and studying the language with Abu. Abu was a huge help, because when he introduced me to people some of the trust those people had in him was extended to me. The more I talked to people, the more they began to trust me. Eventually people realized that I never ask about anything they don’t want to talk about. It occurred to them that I can’t be a spy because I never try to find out anything that isn’t plainly obvious to all. You will have to do the same.”

“What do you mean by obvious to all?”

“Think about if from your perspective. What if somebody walked up to you and asked you why a sergeant is required to salute a Major? What about if he asked you why more men than women in America ride motorcycles? Or, why many Americans think it necessary to ask a father’s permission to marry his daughter before asking her?”

“I wouldn’t care. None of that stuff is classified. Most of it isn’t even personal.”

“That is exactly the point, and the problem. Right now an intelligence officer sitting in his office in Virginia can determine, without getting up from his desk, how many people are living in this little village we are driving through. He can probably do it in real time while you are on the phone with him. But what he can’t tell you is how these people relate to one another. He can’t tell you who leaders of this village are or why the other villagers accept them as leaders. If Mali suffered a natural disaster tomorrow and became a host to multinational relief forces, who are the social entrepreneurs of this little village we can engage to jump start reconstruction efforts? Who are the opportunists who will use the crisis to profit from ignorant relief workers? To everybody living in this village the answers to those questions are so obvious that they don’t even talk about them to each other. Yet, those are the questions we are trying to get answers to.”

The team arrives in Mopti in the early afternoon and checks into a hotel. Parks and Mills leave Thomas at the hotel to conduct vehicle maintenance while they split up to visit friends living in different parts of the city. While the team members travel together for convenience and added safety, whenever possible they build relationships among communities individually. It is easier for a community to socialize an individual than to socialize a group—however small.

Mopti is a city large enough to offer cell phone coverage, and Parks sends a text message to Mills that he will be spending the night at his host’s house. Mills takes advantage of the Internet connection provided by the small hotel to check his email. He finds a request from an analyst working for one of Psychological Operations’ Strategic Studies Detachments for additional information about a Sociocultural Report the team has posted on the EI portal. Mills makes a note to follow up on this request during his next visit to the area being queried about.

Thomas joins Mills for dinner at a small restaurant. “Why didn’t Parks take me with him to meet his friends here? He is leaving pretty soon, shouldn’t I start getting to know them?”

“This isn’t like Iraq where he is going to leave you a list of HUMINT contacts and walk out. The people he became friends with here will be his friends for life. He will probably introduce you to them later, but nobody will pressure them to associate with us. Parks will most likely be back here for another tour, and he’ll stay in contact with them while he is at the TSOC.”

“How does that work?”

“I’m sure you had a roommate during your freshman year in college. When was the last time you talked to him?”

“He forwarded an article to me a few weeks ago.”

“When was the last time you saw him?”

Thomas thinks about that, “Umm . . . I guess eight or nine years ago.”

“If he called you right now and said he had a problem, would you help him?”

“Sure.”

Mills nods. “There you go. Obviously your strongest relationships are with the people you spend time with regularly, but there is still great strength in relationships maintained even casually over a long period of time. You shared a room with a guy for a year or two, and now, after five times that amount of time has passed, you still talk to him, and you still have enough warm feelings toward him to help him out. You did that just by staying in touch with someone you shared experiences with. Build those kinds of relationships here, and you will be successful.”

The next morning the team’s departure is delayed. Parks is introduced to several members of his host’s extended family who arrive for a visit and are flattered by his genuine interest in their family. Mills spends this unexpected free time updating the team’s products from his notes. He updates the composite sociocultural map to assist his geospatial analysis of their contacts’ areas of influence. Thomas has not had much experience with ArcGIS, and he is surprised to see how effectively it can be used to layer the sociocultural information detailed in the reports with geospatial data to connect

people with places. He also notices that is can't be coincidence that most of the new relationships the team has developed are located along primary smuggling routes into and out of Mauritania.

By the time Parks rejoins them and the team gets back on the road, the sun is well over the horizon and the day has grown warm. As they turn off the paved road and head north, the road fades from gravel to tracks worn deep into the sand. By early afternoon, they have to turn off the vehicle's air conditioner, as the engine is prone to overheat while driving through the deep sand with the compressor on. To take his mind off the pressing heat, Thomas asks a question he has been hesitant to bring up before. "I understand that ethnographic intelligence is about people instead of things, but what exactly is the difference? How is it different from regular intelligence? Or even just sociology?"

"That is actually a very good question." To explain, Parks pulls a notebook from his bag and opens to a blank page, then draws four circles with lines connecting them in a diamond shape.

Thomas has seen this before. "That's a link analysis diagram."

"That's right. A lot of analysts use link analysis in their product development. The difference between regular intelligence methods and ethnographic intelligence is really which parts of this diagram we focus on." Parks draws the circles in more heavily. "Conventional intelligence techniques focus on the nodes, the person. The analyst tries to learn everything about these nodes and develops detailed target packets or extensive personality profiles. Commanders and policy officials then use those products to decide how they should engage the actors to get the results they want. You were in Iraq—what happens if one of these guys gets killed?" Parks crosses out one of the circles.

"Somebody else takes his spot."

Parks draws in a new circle near the one he crossed out. "So what do you know about this guy?"

"Nothing. You just drew him in. He could be anybody."

“That’s exactly right. We have no way to predict what this guy will do because we know nothing about *him*. That’s the limitation of focusing on nodes.” Parks begins drawing in the lines between the circles more heavily. “Ethnographic intelligence describes the relationships *between* the nodes—how the nodes relate to one another. Every one of these actors forms part of this little society I’ve drawn, and this society puts rules on each actor’s behavior and each actor must act appropriately for his role.”

“What do you mean rules?”

“If you were to walk into the Pentagon tomorrow and start giving orders to invade Canada, would anybody listen to you? What if you told the first colonel you saw to get you some coffee? You can’t. Your role in our military society is that of a major. There are rules about who can send a colonel for coffee and who can order an invasion. It doesn’t matter what your personal characteristics are. *Major* Thomas can’t do those things.” Parks points to one of the circles. “Now, if this fellow is the leader of this group, and we understand the rules that define membership in this group, we don’t need a target packet to have a rough idea of how he will behave. If the group accepts him as a leader, we know that his behavior and ideology must be seen as appropriate to them *because* they accepted him as a leader. And that’s only on the smallest scale. Once we understand how different communities within a society relate to one another, we can begin to forecast what might happen if the state were to fail, or if a natural disaster occurred in one part of the country. If the economy and state apparatus collapse, the last relationships to fail will be trust-based relationships, like family or community ties. If we understand those, we can guess what the target society will look like when the artificial control imposed by security forces collapses.”

“You mean like in Iraq?”

“I mean anywhere. Remember Hurricane Katrina? In the United States, we have a federal agency with a budget of more than a billion dollars to do nothing but stand ready to respond to natural disasters. After the hurricane hit, whose response did you hear about first?”

“Corporations, churches, charities, private citizens . . .”

“Exactly—the quickest to respond were those who already had relationships with people and organizations in Louisiana. It was those relationships that enabled the aid to get to where it was needed quickly. Corporations and churches maintain trust-based relationships as part of doing business. When disaster struck, there was no need to coordinate authorization, confirm details, or allocate supplies—they just sent everything they could.”

Due to their late start, the team knows they are unable to get to the school they are to photograph for the defense attaché before evening, much less reach the ferry that travels between the banks of the Niger River southeast of Timbuktu. Rather than push on through the evening only to wait on the banks of the river with the crowd of local residents who will form to wait for ferry service to resume in the morning, the team opts to drive a short distance from the trail to the top of a large hill overlooking several miles of sandy plains. There they lay out their folding mats and light a fire in their small charcoal stove to brew tea. As the tea heats, a nomad appears seemingly from nowhere and joins them at their fire. Parks laughs, because he has noted that throughout northern Mali whenever anyone stops to brew the highly sweetened green tea, passing travelers will often join them even when there seem to be none about. Good manners dictate that the guests be offered tea and whatever food is served. Likewise, Parks knows that he and the team could stop and join any group of strangers preparing tea and they would be welcomed in turn. The three sensors attempt to converse with their guest in French, Tamasheq, and Bambara, but to no avail. Once the tea is heated, Mills makes a show of pouring the tea from greater and greater heights into one of the three small glasses they have set out before returning it to the pot. Malian nomads put as much emphasis into how tea is poured as how it is prepared, and their guest smiles his approval as Mills pours the tea a final time from a height of almost three feet, leaving a layer of sweet foam at the top of each glass. Their guest stays with them for two small glasses of tea, and shares dubiously in the team’s Meals Ready-to-Eat (MRE) before placing his hand held over his heart in a small bow and departing into the darkening desert.

Thomas enjoys being in the field, but has something on his mind. “So, we get to spend a lot of time travelling, and I can see why. But life back in the embassy . . . how do I make that work?”

“That’s a good question. The answer is that you work just as hard to build relationships there as you do out here. You study the culture of the embassy as closely as you do the culture of the communities we are trying to connect with. Sometimes I think I have more in common with the Tuareg than with our State Department counterparts. But really, every person on the Country Team and at USAID does their best to accomplish the mission, and they deal with problems we know nothing about. For a lot of different reasons they can use a little help from us sometimes—just as we can use their help. That’s where you can make yourself useful. The most important thing is to think of yourself as a guest in their house, which you are. It is always good behavior for a guest to offer help, but not to criticize or make negative comments. Always offer your work, experience, and products to the other agencies here, in-country, as a courtesy and let them make their own evaluation of it. Remember that we are looking for different things than they are, so our products may not always be helpful to their efforts. Like a good guest you offer them the report you wrote on the village they are traveling to and answer any questions they have; but, be careful with your commentary and suggestions. Think about how you would feel if two political officers from State showed up at your patrol base and started commenting on the way you ran your patrols. Don’t be that guy.”

The next morning, after tea and another MRE, the team inputs the coordinates for the new school they’re headed to into their GPS. They continue north on the road to Timbuktu, hoping that they will find a set of tracks leading in the correct direction. As they continue north, the terrain changes to larger and larger stretches of soft sand with less vegetation. Before long they cross a set of tracks leading in the direction of their destination. They follow the tracks for an hour and arrive at the small village before the day has a chance to grow too hot. Several villagers emerge from their blocky houses, excited to receive them. The villagers then conduct them on a grand tour of the school, which is finished and ready for use. Parks finds the schoolmaster, and together they unload the school supplies into the administrator’s small office. Parks is not surprised to

see the school finished on time. Parks recommended this contractor to the defense attaché based on the man's admirable performance in support of a Special Forces JCET with the Malian military last year. Parks and Mills take several photos of the school as well as several photos of the children holding new notebooks and pencil boxes for the NGO director.

The team then continues on and arrives at the ferry crossing on the bank of the Niger. Their arrival causes the waiting crowd to stir, as they know the ferry will depart now that a paying customer has arrived. While paying their fare, Thomas watches curiously as a small unattended herd of goats descends the dune and walks onto the ferry. The goats work their way through the crowd to the front of the ferry and wait on the ramps during the 20-minute crossing. Thomas looks around for their shepherd, but the goats appear to be both unattended and unremarked upon by the other passengers on the ferry. Upon arrival at the opposite bank, the goats leap from the ramp and move purposefully through the cluster of mud structures that tend to mark all ferry crossing points. Parks notes that the ferry landing has moved since his last visit, but this is normal since the loading and unloading sites shift up or down the river as the height of the river changes.

"What's with those goats?" Thomas inquires.

"What do you think?"

"Well, they seem to know the way. I guess that means they have done this trip so many times, they know how to do it themselves."

"And what does that tell you about this area?"

"Well, whoever owns them must trust his neighbors a lot not to steal them. Aren't they valuable?"

"That was a couple hundred dollars worth of goats, yes. But look around. This is a ferry crossing. Not all of these people are locals, and anybody travelling to Timbuktu from the south has to come through here. Yet, the goats are still out here by themselves."

“Oh. He probably has so much family on both sides of the river that he doesn’t have to keep an eye on them constantly.”

“Now you know something about the people here, and you didn’t have to talk to anybody. What you concluded is still just a hypothesis, but that’s how EI works. You watch how people behave, make a hypothesis about why they do things the way they do, then you test your hypothesis. The goal of the report you will write for each community is to make it as accurate an account of the culture as you can. The report is perfect if somebody who has never been to Mali can read it and then come here and act the way Malians would expect another Malian to act. Of course, it will never be that good, but it will still be very useful for forecasting how plans or policies will be received by those described in the report.”

The team continues on and arrives in Timbuktu half an hour later. They check into the Hendrina Khan, the better of the city’s two hotels, which offers both air-conditioned rooms and Internet access. Outside the hotel wait several merchants hawking various souvenirs and a group of teenage boys. Several of the boys excitedly greet Parks by name, as he often employs them to run errands during his visits to Timbuktu. Parks sends one boy to ensure that Colonel Ali, the local garrison commander, is still expecting them at four o’clock. The three sensors enjoy lunch at the hotel, and hear back from their messenger that the Colonel is prepared to receive them as scheduled. They spend the early afternoon conversing with the hotel owner—a man well-connected, highly educated, and always willing to share his knowledge of the area.

The team’s meeting with Colonel Ali goes well, and he agrees to provide the sensors with the usual escort of soldiers mandated by the Country Team for U.S. officials traveling north of the Niger River. The team and escort will depart together into the Sahara tomorrow morning bound for Araouane, where they hope to arrive before dark. Parks knows from experience that the soldiers will bring their own food and water but little else. Thus, Parks sends one of the boys to purchase additional inner tubes for the soldiers’ Toyota, as they will almost certainly have a few flat tires during the trip. He sends another boy to ensure that the owner of the small gas station will open his shop at dawn, because the soldiers’ truck will just as surely be out of fuel.

That evening the team sits on the tiled patio and drinks sweet green tea from little glasses under a darkening sky. Thomas has the reports about the community of Araouane spread out on the table. “We have two types of reports here. What is the difference between a Sociocultural Log and a Sociocultural Report?”

“The Sociocultural Log is a lot like history written by a historian. The big difference is that a historian uses multiple sources to try to determine what happened so as to be as objective as possible. Our goal is not necessarily to develop an objective history, but rather to record the history accurately as a community perceives it because it’s their perception of their history that shapes how they react to future events. The more developed the log is the more useful it will be for understanding how the community defines who is in, and—just as important—who is outside the community. The more developed the log is the more useful it will be for forecasting how the community will react to phenomena similar to what it has faced before. Finally, the more accurate it is, the more the reader can begin to understand what sort of behavior the community expects of its members and can act accordingly. Essentially, it’s your working document: what you observe, what you think it means, and what you predict will come of it.

“In contrast, the Sociocultural Report is essentially a summary. If the log is the accumulated data, the report is the analysis. It outlines your analysis of the culture you are studying without rehashing all the material from the log, so it serves as a tool that decision makers and policy officials can use to plan operations or develop policy that will fit the needs of the community studied without their having to study the log and make their own analysis second-hand. Both of these are living documents, and only as current as your last update of them. Does that clear things up?”

“I think so. I’m sure it will become clear as I read more of them.”

As the sun lightens the horizon the next morning, the sensor team greets their escort, briefs the planned route, and provides the escort with a small handheld radio. Together they fuel both vehicles and then drive north into the dunes. They all hope to get as far as possible before the sun pushes the desert temperatures over 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

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III. CASE STUDY COMPARISON—ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE IN MALI AND THAILAND

A. DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, DIFFERENT PROBLEMS, ONE CAPABILITY

The following case study comparison demonstrates that even though countries with drastically different characteristics will present different challenges to EI sensors, the inherent flexibility of the sensor team will allow sensors to develop effective methods specific to their host nation communities regardless of the country they are in. Mali and Thailand were selected for this comparison because of their dissimilarity in geography, climate, government, population size, population density, and number of religious and ethnic communities. The countries are in different operational theaters and therefore under different geographic combatant commanders of the Department of Defense. Additionally, the size and composition of the Department of State presence in both countries is drastically different.[3]

Located in western Africa, Mali is a country roughly twice the size of Texas with a population of over 12 million. While the official language of the country is French, large segments of the population speak a variety of tribal languages and have little representation in the government. The U.S. has a small embassy and large USAID office located in the capital city of Bamako, as well as 155 Peace Corps Volunteers spread throughout the country. Thailand, located in Southeast Asia, is half the size of Mali, but has more than five times the population—almost 66 million. The official language of the country is Thai, with a literacy rate over 92 percent. The U.S. has an extremely large embassy in Bangkok, with a Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) larger than the entire U.S. diplomatic mission in Mali. Also, the embassy includes representatives from the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences, Bureau of Diplomatic Security office, Centers for Disease Control office, Drug Enforcement

[3] Each of us has also spent time in these countries, and so we draw on our first-hand knowledge, as well as secondary sources.

Administration office, and six other U.S. agencies, as well as a consulate in Chiang Mai and almost 100 Peace Corps Volunteers throughout the country.

The features Mali and Thailand have in common include some of the same characteristics common to many countries in the lower half of the Failed States Index (2009). The Fund for Peace ranks Mali 83rd of the 177 countries it evaluates on its index, at the low end of its "Warning" category. Thailand ranks even worse, at 79. Mali has long sought to counter occasional low-level insurgent violence by its Tuareg population in the northern region of the country; Thailand has struggled to contain an insurgent movement in its southern provinces almost since the Thai Government annexed the Sultanate of Patani in 1902. Mali's ungoverned spaces are used extensively by insurgent groups, such as the GSPC and Knights of Change, as a haven in which to regroup as they seek to destabilize neighboring Algeria and Mauritania. Thailand, by comparison, is a center for document forgery, money laundering, and serves as a relaxation and recreation site for several transnational terrorist groups (Cheow, 2003). Residents in Mali are concerned about the destabilizing effect of Dawa and Wahhabi mosques in Kidal, Mopti, Timbuktu, and Sikasso; Thai citizens worry about the spread of Wahhabi mosques among the disenfranchised hill tribes north of Chiang Mai (Lintner, 2004).

B. MALI

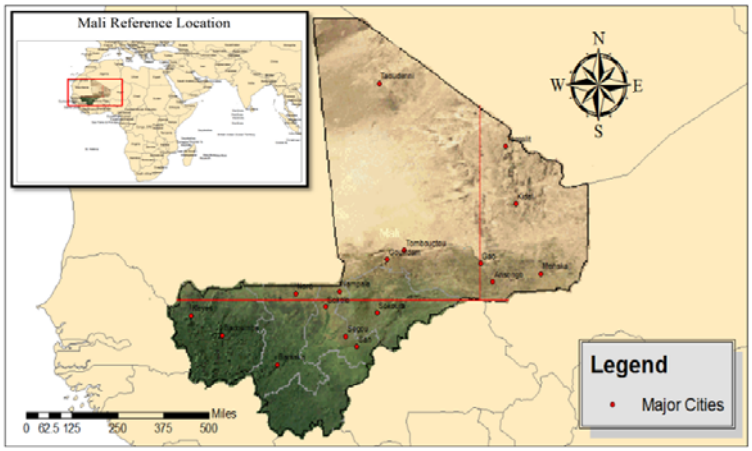

Figure 1. Mali

1. Ungoverned Spaces in Mali

Mali is a country with a broad range of geographic conditions, from the towering dunes and rocky wastes of the Sahara Desert in the north to the heavy jungles of the southern regions. Mali has one of the more stable governments in West Africa, with an elected president and parliament. Mali's Failed State Index Score is 78.7 (more than twice the United States' score of 32.8 but less than Somalia's 114.2) and is ranked 83rd out of 177 evaluated countries for instability (Failed States Index, 2009). While Mali's ratio of security forces to country area is not as low as that of some states with higher Failed State Index scores, Mali has large expanses completely beyond governmental control. As shown in Figure 2, the Malian military maintains no bases north of Timbuktu, Kidal, or Menaka, while the forces stationed there have few trucks and little fuel, and generally travel no farther than 20 or 30 miles from their bases—though they will patrol farther if directed to do so. As Figure 2 indicates, there is a 100-mile buffer around each of the major installations, representing an optimistic effective sphere of influence for each station. Note that the entire northern portion of the country, a region as large as Texas, is completely unpatrolled. Home to the Tuareg and several Bedouin tribes, this area is continuously used by criminal and terrorist organizations such as the GSPC, the Knights of Change, and smugglers of various products.

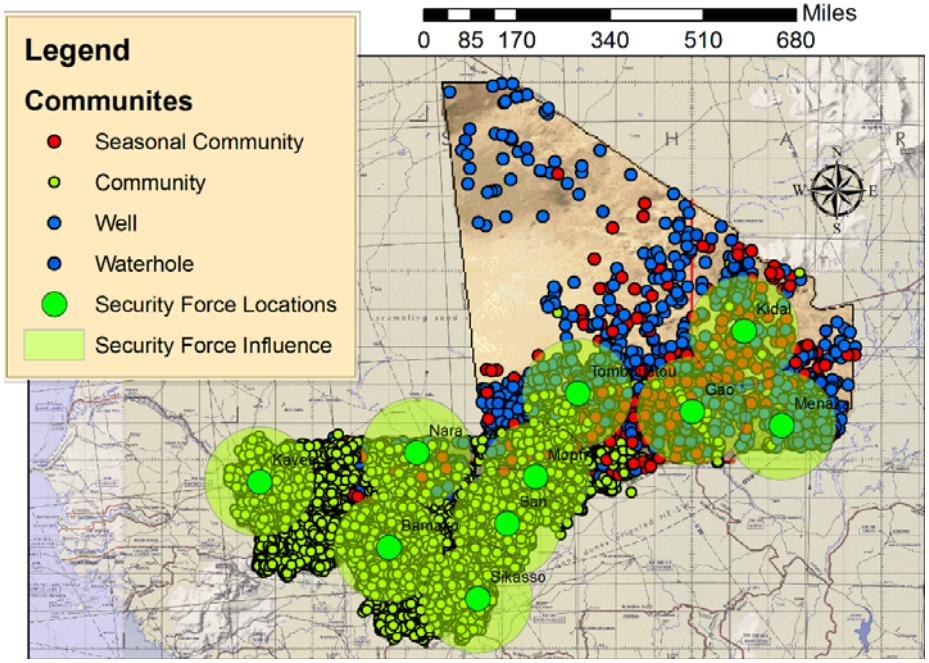

Figure 2. Mali Security Force Locations, Populated Places, and Water Sites.[4]

Compounding the difficulty in patrolling these areas given the sheer distances involved is the complete lack of roads. All travel north of the Niger River is by four-wheel drive vehicle, donkey, or camel—over rocks, shifting dunes, and desert. The blue points on the map indicate named water sites, areas where traveling Tuareg, Bedouins, and smugglers frequently stop to resupply their water or nourish their herds, and where tribal communities establish camps for seasonal use. These camps are outside the security sphere of influence, and as the seasons change the Bedouins move their camps and herds. This makes it difficult for the government to find the camps and to have any influence on the residents' behavior.

In addition to the terrain separating government agencies from the people of northern Mali, the number of languages spoken throughout the country creates barriers of another type, the rough boundaries of which are depicted in Figure 3. Though the official

[4] Toponymic information is based on the Geographic Names Database, containing official standard names approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names and maintained by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. More information is available at the Products and Services link at www.nga.mil. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency name, initials, and seal are protected by 10 United States Code Section §445.

language of Mali is French, the largest language in use is Bambara (60 percent), the language of the tribe in power. While Bambara is effective in numerous populated places in the southern half of the country, it forms a barrier to interaction with the Tuareg, Arabs, and other tribes in the north. Not only are state agencies unable to communicate with these communities, but the lack of northerners in the military and security forces ensures a lack of access for them as well.

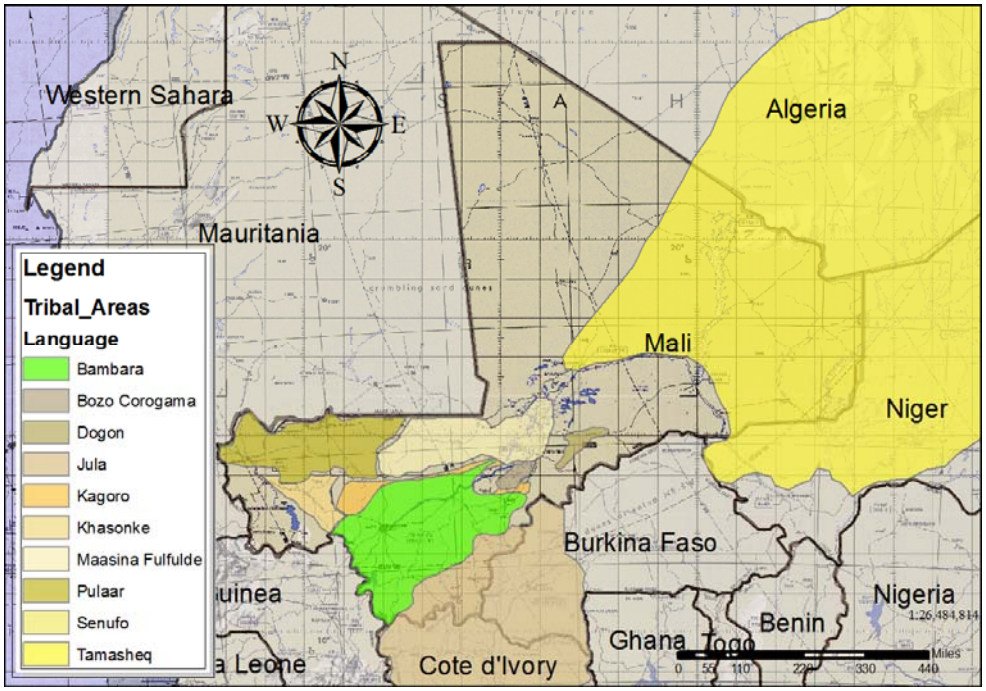

Figure 3. Mali Tribal Language Regions.[5]

Malian citizens have expressed concern over the spread of fundamentalist Dawa mosques in Kidal, Mopti, and Bamako that specifically draw recruits from among unemployed youth. Of additional concern are the spread of Wahhabi mosques and foreign religious teachers in Timbuktu and Sikasso. Because these areas are outside the areas normally visited by embassy staff, as well as outside the areas visited by Malian Government personnel, there is little information available to state agencies to use as a baseline to determine the spread or decline of these fundamentalist groups. Because the

[5] NGA (2009) General Navigation Chart Overall Classification: UNCLASSIFIED. Language location data from Ethnologue, (2009). Retrieved March 1, 2009 from http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Mali.

EI sensors would have both the time to engage the population directly and to develop the language capability to study communities throughout Mali, sensors would be able to more accurately assess what is happening in these otherwise underrepresented communities.

In the past, Special Reconnaissance (SR) often consisted of SF teams infiltrating denied territory, preparing hide sites, and reporting for days or weeks at a time on the movement and disposition of enemy forces. That mode of collection has been replaced by more advanced TECHINT, which can provide the same information without risk to personnel and at less risk of compromise. However, even the best forms of TECHINT cannot gather the level of sociocultural detail described by EI. Ethnographic Intelligence sensors would essentially conduct another type of "SR" for USSOCOM. For instance, these sensors would be able to study and describe in granular detail the nature and disposition of the communities surrounding mosques in Kidal and Sikasso to determine what influence the mosques have on the community and, from that baseline, identify changes in community relationships as they occur. Right now, though this information is unclassified and freely available to the entire community, it cannot be observed by satellite, signal intercept, or even regular patrols.

For EI sensors already paying attention to the contour and content of community relationships the abnormal would be obvious. Arguably, there is decreased need for expensive and often maligned human intelligence operations among a population more than willing to provide information to authorities in exchange for protection from outside actors the community views as detrimental to its own survival. Members of the GSPC often stop traders in northern Mali and demand a tax in the form of portions of cargo. These hapless traders do not hide their knowledge of GSPC terrorist activity out of sympathy for the terrorists' cause or even out of fear of reprisal, but simply because they have nobody to report the information to. Likewise, communities do not purposely keep visits by passing insurgents secret; their silence instead reflects a lack of attention from Bamako.

Because the EI sensors' objective truly will be to better understand host nation communities so that the USG can more effectively conduct Security Force Assistance

(SFA), Counterinsurgency (COIN), Humanitarian Assistance (HA), and Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations, ethnographic sensors will strive to operate with complete transparency. In order to maintain access to the population, EI sensors must always strive to ensure that their behavior fits their role as students of culture. “Cover” for the EI sensor will have a different focus than the cover used for clandestine intelligence operations. EI sensors will not want to hide their objectives. In fact, sensors will generally want to appear as open and approachable as possible. For some situations, however, the sensors will have to tailor their appearance to the environment. In an area of regular tourist traffic like Timbuktu or Kidal sensors will be able to interact with friendly residents regularly and openly to develop baselines. But to protect friends in some areas sensors may have to balance their desired transparency against the need to protect residents from retaliation for perceived cooperation with “spies” or security forces. Sensors may have to evaluate the situation to find ways to soften their appearance without lying about their affiliation, something that would confirm the worst suspicions in the minds of the community.

Because the sensor team will not engage in human source operations, EI sensors will be able to pass information reported openly by community members to other government agencies through intelligence spot reports. Those agencies can then use that information to track, target, and disrupt organizations. As this information can not be tied back to specific individuals or even small groups, terrorist organizations will be able to retaliate only by taking action against entire communities—an undertaking that even Malian security forces avoid during Tuareg uprisings, according to Colonel Ali, commander of Malian forces stationed in Timbuktu (personal communication, May 13, 2005). Even if the government of Mali is unwilling or unable to prosecute terrorists in northern Mali, target information on these groups can be shared through the TSOC and defense attaché offices in the region. That way the country team and TSOC can begin to devise other avenues of approach, potentially via Mauritania or Algeria.

2. Military Support for SSTR in Mali

In 2008, the U.S. DoD provided millions of dollars in Humanitarian Assistance funds to the USAID mission in Mali to develop a joint counterterrorism program. As one critic pointed out, "Skilled aid workers have the soft skills, historical and cultural knowledge, and technical expertise needed for effective development. The U.S. military, on the other hand, is good at fighting and building temporary infrastructure—not human development" (Moseley, 2009). Certainly Moseley is correct in his implication: that to conduct more effective SSTR and civil-military operations, DoD officials and commanders must improve their historical and cultural knowledge of the communities they strive to assist, as identified in DoDD 3000.5 *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations.*

Citizens in many countries have many times expressed frustration not in the amount of HA rendered by the U.S., but how the money is spent. Often communities see humanitarian assistance funds funneled into the hands of the wealthy and politically well connected (Transparency International, 2006). In Mali, citizens outside the ruling faction have long watched the benefits of international assistance dollars funneled to the elites of the Bambara-dominated government, forcing them to look outside the government to foreign NGOs and religious organizations for assistance (Gutelius, 2006, p. 38). That assistance has come with a price, however, and these same citizens now watch in concern as the Islamist teachings of Dawa and Wahhabism spread among unemployed youth.

Kaplan (2005) describes how U.S. assistance efforts have been most successful when conducted by elements small enough to administer military and government assistance without inflaming anti-U.S. sentiment. As he notes, smaller U.S. elements must of necessity work with community members. Because the small U.S. elements lack the resources and manpower to operate unilaterally, community members must be recruited to support operations and are well positioned to closely advise how best to improve local living conditions. Civil affairs units have proven to be a useful tool to win access to target populations to gather operational information. However, the army's specialists in civil-military operations are trained in general principles of community

development and do not have regional expertise. Nor are they trained in developing sociocultural understanding. CA operators are specialists in select fields, not in select communities. Unfortunately, change agents like CA operators often find that "techniques that have worked in one community may fail when applied in another not because they were inapplicable but because what was really involved was not understood" (Goodenough, 1963, p.24). Additionally, because the majority of the U.S. military's civil affairs personnel are reservists, they do not deploy to areas long enough to develop the necessary sociocultural expertise even if they were trained in ethnographic techniques. Civil affairs personnel could, however, plan and conduct their efforts in Mali *in conjunction with* EI sensors already stationed in-country, who, by close association, will be familiar with the USAID contingent's long-term plans for Mali. Perhaps engaging EI sensors and CA personnel early, and allowing them to work in conjunction with USAID efforts, can curtail the need for large-scale stabilization efforts by identifying and engaging areas of tension before they spread.

C. THAILAND

Largely an agrarian country of small villages and rice paddies, it is a testament to Thailand's beauty and the friendliness of most Thais that Thailand has remained a popular tourist location even while its government struggles to control both the flow of illicit drugs by armed drug traffickers and the fighting caused by separatists determined to create an autonomous state in southern Thailand.

1. Ungoverned Spaces within Thailand

Figure 4. Thailand

Former Prime Minister Thaksin's bloody "War on Drugs," which sanctioned extrajudicial killing and "shoot on sight" policies for those involved in the drug trade, was reviled by the international media as an abuse of civil rights. However, since the recent coup, the sheer volume of illegal drugs transported through the ungoverned space between Myanmar and Thailand has led 67 percent of Thai citizens to support a return to extrajudicial killings. Many Thais consider the 2,000 reported killings by police as a lesser evil compared to the thousands killed by the drug trade. Residents report that even when they provide details regarding the identities of drug traffickers to local police, arrests are not made (Montlake, 2008). This is not for lack of interest on the part of the police, but because the terrain along the border between northern Thailand and Myanmar is difficult to patrol. Steep mountains, gullies, and lack of roads prevent vehicle patrols, while jungle foliage prevents identification or tracking of drug traffickers from the air. There are no security forces stationed in the area to develop the "beat cop" familiarity

with local residents, who, in return, can identify those who don't belong. At the same time, without basing, the security forces cannot remain in the area long enough to act on tips provided by residents.

In addition to the problems caused by the drugs funneled in from the ungoverned spaces in the northwest of the country, the Kingdom of Thailand has had difficulties assimilating the native population of its southern provinces since it annexed the Sultanate of Patani, located between Thailand (then Siam) and Malaysia (then Malaya), in 1902. While the international press covers the southern insurgency extensively, less is reported on Islam in northern Thailand. Northern Thai Muslims are largely descendants of the "Chin Haw" traders who traveled the rugged mountain region between China and northern Thailand. The Chin Haw practice a form of Islam based on the Hanafi sect of Sunni Islam, which in turn is heavily influenced by Chinese traditions. They established mosques in the larger northern Thai cities along their trade routes in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Fang. Until the 1970s, northern Muslims of Chinese and Bengali descent had virtually no contact with Islam as practiced in the Arab Middle East.

While Thailand's Malay Muslims' separate ethnic identity has caused problems with assimilation and has motivated separatist groups in the south, Thailand's Muslims of Chinese and Bengali descent in northern Thailand have lived in peace for over a century. Only recently has the spread of Saudi financing of Wahhabi mosques in northern Thailand come to the attention of the Thai Government and international press. In 1972, the At Taqwa Mosque was built with financing from Saudi Arabia (Liulan, 2004), and graduates from the Mosque have studied in Middle Eastern nations. Since then many have returned to Chiang Mai to teach at the mosques there (Liulan, 2006, p. 356).

Throughout Thailand, mosques and schools are financed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Cheow, 2003). In addition to offering financial support, external actors provide a sense of extended community for Muslims in the south and increase the sense of disequilibrium between Malay Muslims' values and expectations on the one hand, and the administration's policies on the other. "Regional Islamic terrorists are looking at the area for a possible jihad (holy war). Disgruntled Muslim youth form a potential labor pool" (Wiseman, 2004).

Large mosques and Islamic schools have been constructed in Mae Sot, Chiang Rai, and Chiang Mai. Several smaller mosques have likewise been built for disenfranchised hill tribes in tiny villages such as Ban Pangsa, shown in Figure 5. These new mosques (depicted in red) are not located along the trade routes where the descendents of the Chin Haw and Bengali Muslims settled. Instead, they are located in the mountainous border areas outside the influence of Thai security forces. These areas are not only used by drug traffickers, but also inhabited by the Akha, a tribal people believed to have originated in Mongolia, as well as other "hill people" or tribal communities without Thai citizenship. Though living in Thailand, these groups are not afforded citizenship by the Thai Government and do not qualify for services like health care or education. As the Thai Government mostly leaves the hill tribes alone to run their own affairs, to date the hill tribes seem content to remain in the mountains and venture out only to sell works of craftsmanship at tourist markets like the Chiang Mai night bazaar.

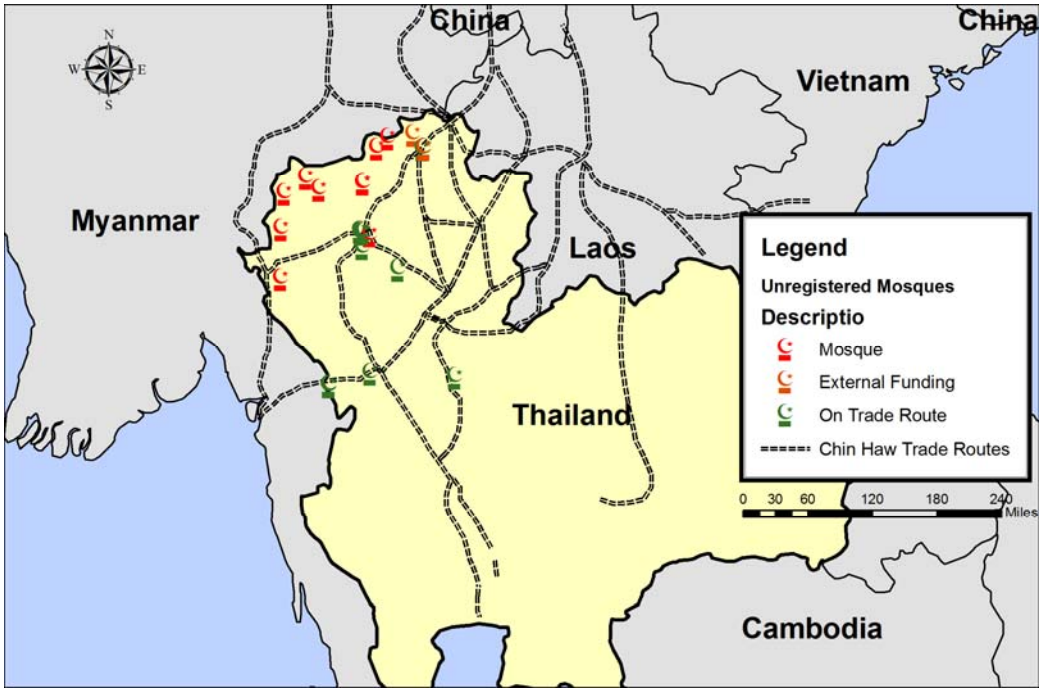

Figure 5. Chin Haw Trade Routes and Mosques in Thailand[6]

[6] Mosque locations from NGA Unclassified GeoNames server and MapMagic 2005, trade route data from Liulan (2006).

Obviously, the mere presence of a Wahhabi mosque catering to a disenfranchised segment of the population does not automatically mean that radical Islamic teachings are being preached to an otherwise peaceful people. Lintner (2004) cites Islamic scholars who estimate the number of converts in the hundreds, not thousands. But Linter also draws attention to the Thai Government's concern about the spread of Islamic mosques and organizations already linked to fundamentalist Islamic groups in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as well as the recent relocation of peaceful Akha children to Ban Pangsa's sister madrassa in southern Thailand at a time when other schools are sending children to the north for the children's safety. Many suspect that the motivation for these transfers is to expose the students to a more fundamentalist form of Islam while children are separated from the influence of their parents.

As in COIN, the center of gravity in Counterterrorism (CT) is the population through which terrorists and insurgents move and from (and against) that they often strike. Factors such as low job opportunities for military age males and porous borders in ungoverned spaces have long been identified as some of the factors that have a destabilizing effect upon governments, yet we still lack the ability to even develop a baseline for assessing current conditions in these areas. Without a baseline or access to ungoverned spaces, USSOCOM cannot track the rate at which terrorist or insurgent groups target these communities, nor can USSOCOM gauge the seriousness of recruitment. In areas like that along the northern border between Thailand and Laos, the mountain tribes are almost ideal target populations for recruitment due to their disenfranchisement by the Thai Government and lack of government security force presence or interest in the area. Just as members of the embassy staff depend upon relationships with their Thai Government counterparts for information (who, in turn, are primarily concerned with tracking the supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin), the United States Intelligence Community currently relies on news reporters for sociocultural information instead of building relationships among with members of these communities directly.

2. Military Support for SSTR in Thailand

The international community's efforts to provide effective humanitarian assistance to the areas devastated by the 2004 tsunami demonstrate the marked difference it can make when societies are well understood by aid agencies. Decades worth of regular Security Force Assistance (SFA) and international cooperation facilitated U.S. aid efforts in Thailand. In contrast, administering aid in Myanmar was much more difficult and, in some places, impossible. Even six months after the tsunami, wreckage of homes still littered the Myanmar shoreline and children were living on UNICEF relief supplies (Rush, 2005). The military junta's policies form barriers not only to active foreign assistance, but also to the development of community understanding through study of social topography. Aid workers do not know which community members have enough social capital to assist in reconstruction efforts, nor which entities will use relief resources to advance their own interests instead of passing them on to the public.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has since had to scale back its presence in Myanmar (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2007, p. 5), and protracted difficulties in conducting operations have caused Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) France to cease operations in Myanmar altogether. As fewer international agencies have a presence in Myanmar, it will become all the more important for EI sensors in Thailand to engage refugees from Myanmar in order to better map the social topography so as to prepare for future disasters and to prevent spillover destabilizing effects in Thailand and throughout the region.

The United Nations (2009) reports that there are 111,000 registered Myanmar refugees living in camps along the border between Thailand and Myanmar. Some refugees have fled the fighting between government and rebel forces, other have fled forced recruitment and forced labor by the government. The refugees are restricted to the camps and unable to pursue work or education in Thailand. An EI sensor team in Thailand would be well positioned to work with the Myanmar refugees to gain a better understanding about communities in Myanmar. Just as Ruth Benedict in her renowned ethnography, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword,* was able to describe Japanese society without ever having entered Japan herself, EI sensors should be able to engage refugees

from Myanmar living in Thailand in order to assist U.S. policy makers better tailor U.S. policy toward the Junta in Myanmar, identify underlying trust relationships among the Burmese, and better plan contingency and relief operations for when and if the state collapses. Additionally, as depicted in Figure 6, there is the location of the refugee camps to consider; they are in the same mountainous ungoverned space used by drug traffickers. Note also their proximity to the unregistered, Saudi-sponsored mosques described previously. An EI sensor team's efforts here will not only assist in developing greater understanding of Myanmar, but also increase understanding of the communities within this ungoverned space through which the drug traffickers smuggle drugs into Thailand and into which the Wahabbi mosques expand their influence.

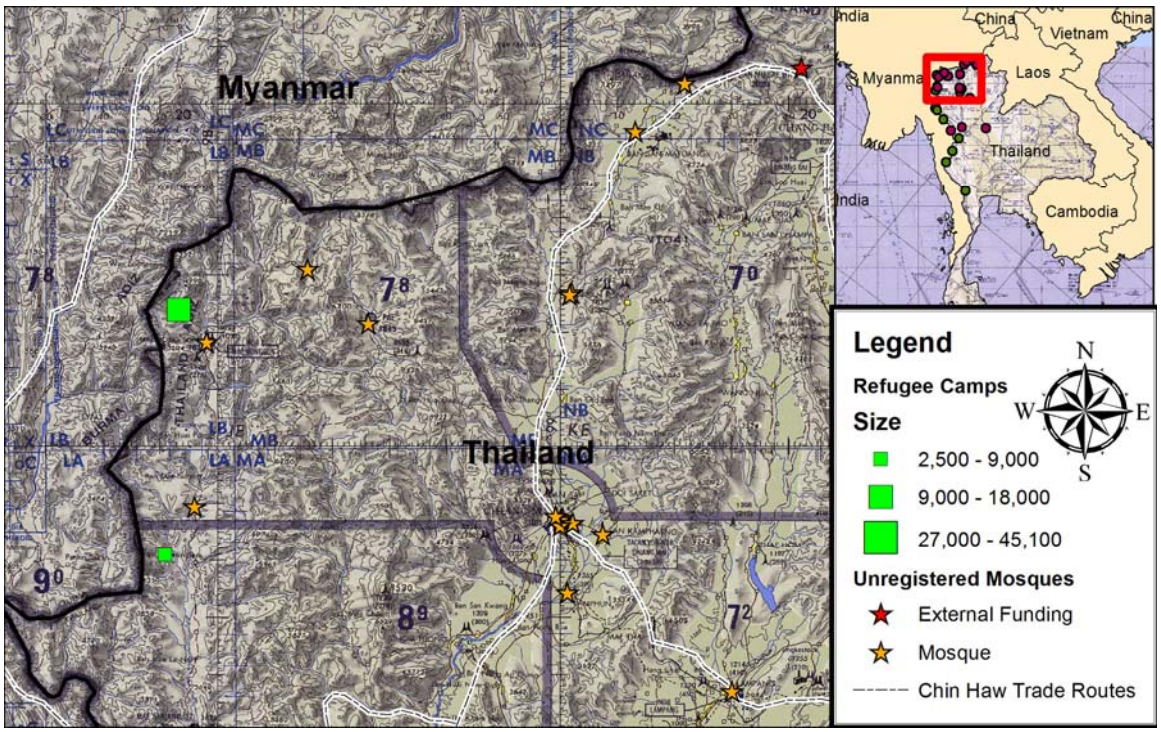

Figure 6. Myanmar Refugees and Unregistered Mosques in Thailand[7]

[7] Refugee locations and camp size data from map by Julien Zwang, Shoklo Malaria Research Unit, Mae Sot, Thailand. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from http://demoplanet.free.fr/karen_refugee_camps.htm.

D. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COUNTRY TEAM

In Mali, the small size of the embassy virtually assures that the sensor team will be invited to attend weekly country team meetings. These meetings will allow the EI sensors to develop relationships within the embassy to help them become accepted as full partners in the embassy mission. During discussions regarding EUCOM's humanitarian assistance planning officers operating in Mali in 2005, Ambassador McCulley stressed the extent to which he found the sociocultural input of military officers who engaged the population while working within the embassy to be extremely valuable, and he regularly petitioned their input during country team meetings. He also recognized that the officers themselves would not be fully integrated into the embassy team until they were assigned to the embassy on permanent change of station orders (personal communication, November 5, 2005). Sensors assigned to embassies for the same tour lengths served by DoS officials will be able to offer their products and the benefit of their conceptual framework, and the EI team's transparency should help dampen the suspicion that military officers are conducting secret operations outside the purview of the country team.

In contrast, the massive size of the U.S. mission in Thailand will likely preclude the sensor team from having the same access to the country team as it would in a smaller embassy like Mali. However, the products developed by the sensor team about communities outside the embassy's normal sphere of influence will still serve to assist members of the country team in Thailand. More importantly, the individual relationships, baselines reports, and detailed logs about communities at risk in the ungoverned spaces of Thailand that can be developed to enhance understanding about neighboring Myanmar, would make the sensor team in Thailand an invaluable resource for the PACOM GCC. Countries that score lowest on the Failed State Index are generally located next to each other, and share regional problems. By posting sensor teams to Mali and Thailand, these teams would be perfectly positioned to access precisely those communities that span borders. The teams would thus be able to develop products about countries that are otherwise inaccessible to the U.S. Even without an embassy in Myanmar, the sensor team posted to Thailand can develop products to be used by the GCC and other country teams

throughout the region to generate a more comprehensive policy, to plan for contingencies, and to conduct large-scale humanitarian assistance operations with greater overall effectiveness.

There are two additional considerations in EI force deployment based on the location of less stable countries:

1. A synergistic effect can be gained by employing teams in adjacent countries, as gains in one country can be built upon by a team in a neighboring country and regional entities can likewise be engaged.
2. When resources are limited and regional engagement *is* necessary, a team located in one country may have contacts through cross-border communities to potentially expand its scope through temporary duty via neighboring embassies, thereby expanding influence without the cost of an additional team deployment.

While Mali and Thailand offer drastically different operational environments, the same EI sensor team structure of two to four trained sensors assigned to the embassy team and supported by the TSOC should be effective in both countries. The flexibility of the EI sensor team will allow sensors to use the sociocultural conceptual framework they have gained through immersion and applied study of the communities of the host nation to tailor an ethnographic intelligence cycle that supports the conventional intelligence cycle by focusing on population-centric questions that the TSOC commander's staff didn't know enough about the target country to ask when they developed the TSOC commander's Priority Information Requirements (PIR). The EI sensor knows which communities to focus on to develop access and gain information to be processed into answers for the PIR.

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IV. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE SENSOR

The EI sensor must possess a diverse set of skills. He needs to understand the anthropological approach to developing sociocultural products. He must be able to map the social structure (key communities, subgroups, relational ties, and methods of interaction [kinship, occupation, schooling, etc.]). Most significantly, he must use his military operational experience in conjunction with the sociocultural intelligence cycle to develop ethnographic products that answer the strategic and operational needs of the GCC and his staff, the Country Team, and tactical commanders. The greatest advantage to employing USSOCOM operators to collect EI in support of USSOCOM's needs is encapsulated in E.E Evans-Pritchard's (1967) comment on fieldwork in general, "all I want to emphasize is that what one brings out of a field-study largely depends on what one brings to it" (p. 241).

Sensors deployed by USSOCOM would have a thorough understanding of the information requirements of tactical, operational, and strategic missions because they have performed those missions as operators for years. By carefully selecting from the general pool of USSOCOM operators for the specific requirements listed below, USSOCOM can ensure that it gets from its fieldwork teams what it needs—and more.

Soldiers other than Special Forces officers (CA, PSYOP, MI) or members of AFSOC, Navy SEALS, or MARSOC could very likely also serve as effective ethnographic sensors, and female sensors would provide access to additional segments of the population that would add a critical dimension. However, in this thesis we focus on the Special Forces officer for initial manning of this capability because the United States Special Forces Command (USASFC) provides the largest pool of candidates who already possess the desired training, maturity, and experience of having worked in small teams. Special Forces officers have already volunteered for careers working among indigenous populations with little support and may already have operational experience in target

regions. This combined skill set and career focus allows for the lowest possible initial investment and greatest return on investment when canvassing appropriate recruiting pools for EI.

A. KEY TASKS FOR THE ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE SENSOR

1. Understand the Ethnographic Intelligence Cycle and Methods

Operators and analysts must understand the conventional intelligence cycle in order to identify observable indicators that indicate an adversary's intent. Likewise, the EI sensor must understand the GCC and TSOC commander's Priority Information Requirements and engagement strategy in order to develop and maintain an ethnographic intelligence cycle. This cycle drives development of sociocultural logs to record how specific communities have responded to phenomena in the past, as well sociocultural reports to summarize cultural aspects that may have a bearing upon proposed operations or policy. The EI sensor must be able to develop his own EI PIR by studying the Country Team's mission and intent, as well as the GCC strategy in order to identify likely friction points with U.S. policy and interests before they become problems. The EI sensor must be able to examine and record cultural norms, standards, and artifacts subjectively (what does the subject say is the reason for this behavior?), as well as objectively (what behavior is observed, what reactions can be detected?). He has to be able to conduct assessments (what are the costs of compliance and non-compliance? Does this behavior still meet a perceived need? What is its cost?), advise, and plan (should U.S. forces behave similarly? Should officials engage an NGO to educate the populace away from a dysfunctional norm or behavior?). The EI sensor must understand intelligence analysis and methodology, to include the use of social network analysis and link analysis to identify lines of social influence and social power structures. Additionally, the EI sensor must know how to identify fault lines and areas of potential conflict, and then be able to graphically, textually, and geospatially depict that information in a manner that is accessible and easily understandable to an end user with no anthropological or intelligence expertise. The EI sensor must routinely update intelligence reports as the society described inevitably changes. Most importantly, the EI sensor should constantly

use the sociocultural products to forecast behavior, test hypotheses, and then objectively evaluate the accuracy of his forecasts to determine areas for additional study.

2. Understand Effective Social Entrepreneurship

The U.S. is well known for its robust humanitarian aid and economic development assistance packages. Unfortunately, local populations are frequently frustrated by their perception that those efforts are often channeled to the undeserving through corruption or lack of awareness of where true needs exist. Generally, citizens do not blame the U.S. mission; they blame their own government functionaries for funneling assistance according to personal relationships, in a more personalized and nepotistic form of American pork barrel politics. Such a perception weakens the respect for the central government that the aid is intended to bolster. Additionally, the client community often resists projects because the effort works against one or more of their perceived wants or needs (Goodenough, 1963, p. 7).[8] Often, in an effort to make their concerns evident, disenfranchised critics are not only willing to talk to U.S. officials in their areas, but will actively seek them out. With EI sensors present in the more remote regions, the grievances of the populace can be more easily (and continuously) assessed.

As a student of social structure, working both in target nation communities and within the embassy, the EI sensor must understand how to be an effective social entrepreneur. As noted by Goodenough (1963), change agents such as U.S. policy-makers, NGO volunteers, U.S. Peace Corp volunteers, have separate and distinct customary modes of operation that they will be bureaucratically unwilling to change (p. 26). Unlike an anthropologist, who strives primarily to record information about a society to enhance understanding and form theories about social behavior, the USSOCOM operator first and foremost represents the leading edge of a strategic effort to support U.S. national interests. During a presentation at the Naval Postgraduate School on May 12, 2009, Greg Mortenson, humanitarian and author of *Three Cups of Tea*, remarked on his personal exchanges with CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus and USSOCOM

[8] While Goodenough's assessment is decades old, the same observations he made in 1963 about the need for community involvement in assistance efforts were repeated in the Inspector General's review of operations in Iraq in *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*.

Commander Admiral Olson, and described how military commanders stressed the need for the U.S. military to focus on building relationships among the populations the U.S. is attempting to assist. In the same way that Mortenson identified and leveraged contacts in Pakistan and Afghanistan with social capital that enabled him to build more than 70 schools, the personal relationships formed as the EI sensors develop their sociocultural products will enable them to identify those members of the community with the social capital to assist in implementing future aid programs, as well as the community members most likely to capitalize on disaster. In cases where SSTR operations are implemented, the EI sensor will also be able to report the true measure of mission success by the degree to which the population accepts the changes that the operation was intended to influence, and not simply quantify the numbers of projects completed. "In the last analysis . . . success is measured by the degree to which the changed conditions are exploited and by the desirability of the direction that the exploitation takes" (Goodenough, 1963, p. 17). Because of his career-long affiliation with host nation communities, the EI sensor will be in a unique position to evaluate the effectiveness of aid programs or security assistance policies well beyond budget cycles and single-tour postings.

3. Enhance the Department of State's Mission and Efforts

Far from competing with the State Department's efforts, USSOCOM EI sensors will provide the Country Team with a cooperative eyes-and-ears in a package already bundled with strong planning skills, operational experience, and a can-do attitude centered on mission accomplishment. In return, the sensors' support for the country team mission will give the host nation a reason to accept EI sensors traveling throughout the country engaging disenfranchised communities. As Gutelius (2006) reports, the government of Mali already allows EUCOM forces to travel extensively in the northern regions of Mali as part of their assistance efforts. The Malian Government understands that the amount of assistance money they will receive is based on need, and that assessment is part and parcel of SFA and HA. However, as we have seen in Mali, Iraq, and Afghanistan, SFA and HA provide limited short-term access to communities, but little benefit in support of building long-term relationships. It is important to realize that

assistance funds will provide EI sensors with access to the population—access sensors will use to *begin* to build relationships over time, the way community members do. As part of the country team, EI sensors may assist the defense attaché in administering HA funds or helping USAID personnel to develop projects that may then be associated with the sensors. The projects may be built and funded by DoD or USAID, but the community will forever link the sensors to the projects because the sensors showed up first, helped in construction, and return frequently to ensure the projects are still functioning correctly.

Additionally, ethnographic sensors will provide their sociocultural analysis to the Country Team to supplement the embassy's understanding of remote and lesser-known communities. The TSOC, U.S. Embassy staff, and regional NGOs, may use the information EI sensors provide to better plan operations, employ HA and SFA, and/or develop policy that will address the disparity between local communities' values and expectations and the U.S. or host nation policies and operations early, thereby hopefully reducing the need to conduct large-scale or kinetic operations in the future.

B. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE USSOCOM EI SENSOR

Certain individuals have an affinity for operating overseas in different languages, cultures, and among different peoples. The EI sensor position would be unique in that it requires the selection of motivated people with an eclectic skill set. The majority of those in the armed services would not likely excel in this field, but USSOCOM does have a population that can effectively collect ethnographic intelligence.

T.E. Lawrence is known throughout USSOCOM as an outstanding example of the UW warrior, but little credit is given to the qualities and background that made Lawrence successful. It was not Lawrence's ability to ride a camel, wield a sword, or shoot a gun that enabled him to connect with and lead the Arabs in operations against the enemy, but rather his sociocultural understanding of the Arab people, gained through intense study, investment of time, and natural affinity.

More than four decades ago, Cleveland, Mangone, and Adams (1960) recommended a training program for Foreign Service officers that would match

Lawrence's example by combining education, language, and operational orientation. The core of their recommended training consisted of:

1. A liberal arts education program in which the dividing line between domestic and foreign affairs has been blurred, with the study of foreign cultures and languages the rule rather than the exception.

2. Professional training in a subject matter field. [The authors specifically mention military science as one type, but SOF operators also have experience in administration, training host nation personnel, and social engineering.]

3. Special linguistic skills, area knowledge, and experience relevant to overseas deployment.

4. Immediate orientation to the particular job to be done abroad.

Most officers within USASFC already meet these core requirements. In the following paragraphs, we examine these broad categories of desired attributes: education, experience, and language ability. With selection of the right candidates, only the fourth element of training—orientation—would be required prior to deployment.

C. THE SPECIAL FORCES OFFICER

While this program should be open to all within USSOCOM, we believe that Special Forces soldiers in USASFC can best support most of the initial manpower requirements. About one fourth of USSOCOM's 43,745 active duty members are assigned to USASFC (Olson, 2008, p. 16). Not only does USASFC have the personnel with the requisite skills and background needed to perform as ethnographic sensors, but also it has the personnel strength to support the program, the operational need for greater sociocultural data and, most importantly the most to gain from increased long-term relationships with members of target societies. Using Soldiers from within USASFC would take minimal additional investment in personnel while maximizing transfer of sociocultural understanding back and forth between the EI community and operational units to ensure that EI collection will address unit's collection needs.

1. Education

At a minimum, all Army officers are required to have a baccalaureate degree. Mid-grade officers are also given an opportunity to obtain higher degrees, which would further enhance their value to this program. Officers are provided with various options, such as advanced civil schooling at a civilian institution of their choice, advanced military schooling at institutions like the Naval Postgraduate School, or schooling abroad through the Olmstead Scholarship whereby military members study at an overseas institution. Military officers also receive specialized military education throughout their careers.

Having attended the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC), Special Forces officers have invaluable unconventional warfare skills. During the year-long (or longer) SFQC, Special Forces candidates must pass an Unconventional Warfare (UW) exercise during which they must infiltrate into the fictitious country of Pineland, link up with unorganized indigenous forces, then train, motivate, organize, and lead the guerrillas in simulated combat missions. The SFQC culminates in language training that prepares the Special Forces officer to work with members of other communities in their language.

Special Forces warrant officers are not required to have baccalaureate degrees, though the Special Forces warrant officer branch manager reports that 117 of the 550 Special Forces warrant officers have a BA, a BS, or a more advanced degree (personal communication, June 24, 2009). What warrant officers instead offer ethnographic intelligence collection is advanced technical expertise and experience, and in particular a thorough understanding of the intelligence community and intelligence cycle gained as a result of training and experience as a Special Forces intelligence sergeant prior to commissioning as a warrant officer. This training includes familiarity with ArcGIS, FalconView, and other geospatial analysis tools; Pathfinder and other data mining tools; ASOT Level I or Level III; and link analysis via tools such as Analyst's Notebook and Crimelink. For Special Forces warrant officer candidates to be considered as EI sensors, they should have two to ten years of Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) experience or have operated on a small self-reliant operational team, and be knowledgeable about all of the administrative requirements and procedures to deploy and operate effectively in host nations.

2. Operational Experience

The vast majority of Special Forces officers have deployed overseas. Most have deployed to combat zones in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Moreover, many have also deployed in support of Joint Combined Exercise and Training (JCET) or Counter Narco-Terrorism (CNT) missions in various countries around the globe. While operating in combat zones, officers gain experience working with conventional force commanders, local government leaders, local tribal leaders, and members of the population—analogous to the relationships an EI sensor would foster with members of local communities. In these operational deployments, officers are evaluated and rated on their ability to balance the needs of their chain of command with those of U.S. agency representatives outside their chain of command, as well as local government and tribal leaders. Additionally, mission operational success depends on the unit's ability to connect with the local military and population, collect information to support their own intelligence cycle, and process that information into actionable intelligence to support operations. During peacetime deployments in support of JCET or CNT missions, Special Forces detachments deploy for one to six months to target countries. The detachments, under the command of a Special Forces captain, coordinate the mission with the TSOC, U.S. Country Team, and host nation forces, and coordinate with and provide training to residents around the training area whenever possible using the local language.

3. Language Capability

As Goodenough (1964) wrote 45 years ago:

> It is in the course of learning his language and how to use it that every human being acquires the bulk of his culture. An ethnographer, himself a human being, can hope to acquire another society's culture only by learning and using its language. Thus, as a set of forms, language is not only a part of a culture; as a set of easily manipulated non-iconic signs, it is a major instrument for learning it. (p. 39)

Language reflects the society that speaks it. Even with the best translator, some meanings may not be passed from speaker to sensor. As the primary goal of the EI sensor program is to develop and maintain long-term relationships in target countries, continued

efforts by ethnographic sensors to improve their language abilities are crucial to success, and sensors' efforts to understand the language and culture will be noticed and appreciated by members of target communities. Given the number of languages used within some countries, it may not be realistic to expect every ethnographic sensor to achieve fluency in every language within a given area of operations. But even when an ethnographic sensor requires the occasional support of an interpreter to collect data accurately, population members he interacts with will sense his enthusiastic efforts to engage them in their own language. In countries that have only one predominant language, the EI sensor's constant attention to improving his language ability will pay huge dividends.

Special Forces relies on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) to estimate the ability of members to learn a language and to determine candidate language assignments. The Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) is used to measure language proficiency. Because of the sheer number of languages used throughout the world, the key language consideration in selecting as an EI sensor should be capability, not necessarily current proficiency. For instance, a fluent Chinese speaker may never deploy to China, but the fact that the operator did attain fluency in a second language in the past demonstrates an affinity for learning a new language and the motivation to do so. While not definitive, DLAB and DLPT scores represent significant selection criteria because they suggest a demonstrated capacity to learn a foreign language and the personal interest and ambition to maintain it.

D. FEASIBILITY

Special Forces Officers make up only 1,218 of the over 40,000 personnel within USSOCOM (November 11, 2008). However, the unique education, operational experience, and language ability of Special Forces Officers and warrant officers make them an ideal pool from which to select candidates to serve as ethnographic sensors. Personnel training and background requirements for this program favor Special Forces junior majors and warrant officers who have successfully completed their service on an Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA). Candidates must understand that the core

objective of the program is for officers to form and maintain long-term relationships in target countries and regions. As such, they will likely receive continuing assignments into the target country, broken only by rotations back to the Continental United States (CONUS) for continued education or to work at USSOCOM or TSOC headquarters (while still maintaining friendships and relationships in-country). Warrant officers should expect to return regularly to the Special Forces Groups to maintain their awareness of the tactical units' operational needs and to share their sociocultural understanding and country contacts with their affiliated units.

Entry into the program is a long-term commitment, and junior officers must understand that their selection will almost certainly preclude them from command of a tactical battalion, as once officers enter this operational field they will serve in it for the remainder of their careers. This choice is not atypical; some SF officers already choose to serve in one of the many functional areas such as Operations Research, Foreign Area Officer, or Space Operations, eschewing the possibility of receiving a tactical battalion command position. As there are only about 10 active duty SF tactical battalions available for a population of roughly 100 officers per year group, the chance of being selected to command an SF tactical battalion is relatively small.[9] Because SF officers can choose to remain in an operational career field and not be forced into a Functional Area, Special Forces officers must choose to leave the regiment of their own volition. The branch manager for Special Forces Major s reported that in 2009, nine of the 100 officers in Year Group 2001 chose to continue their career in a Functional Area, foregoing any opportunity to continue work within the Special Forces Regiment (personal communication, May 11, 2009). The Ethnographic Sensor program provides an opportunity for those Special Forces officers who have completed their ODA time to remain part of a small operational team on the extreme edge of forward deployment. As such, this program may allow USSOCOM to keep more of the captains and majors that it has already invested in while also allowing these officers a path for career progression to the rank of colonel.

[9] There will be 20 active duty tactical SF battalions over the course of the next few years with the growth of the 4th battalion in each SF group. Of those 20, only 10 are open for command to any given year group of officers.

For Special Forces warrant officers, career progression would be enhanced rather than adversely affected by participation in this program and is, therefore, not detailed in the career progression plan below. Warrant officers are already able to transition smoothly between overseas assignments, company, battalion, group, and higher headquarters. Regular rotations in and out of target countries would only increase the sharing of sociocultural knowledge between the EI program and the operational groups, and help ensure EI sensor teams are kept aware of current operational needs.

The Special Forces community is currently capable of filling ethnographic teams in critical countries using field grade officers and warrant officers (CW3 through CW5), all of whom have finished 2–10 years of service on an ODA. As of November 2008, the Special Forces officer community has 125% of its assigned strength ([1,218 officers assigned and 975 authorized], personal communication, November 18, 2008). The Special Forces community is very top-heavy with field grade officers. Currently the community is 220% strength for colonels, 160% strength for lieutenant colonels, and 174% strength for majors (SF Branch Brief, 2009). The growth of a fourth battalion in each group will result in an even greater excess of field grade officers over the next few years, as the jobs for captains and majors will not increase in the same proportions. While warrant officers are not as over-strength as commissioned officers, at the CW3 through CW5 ranks there are many that could work within the ethnographic sensor community. There are currently 124 CW3s (115 are authorized) and 85 CW4s (69 authorized). Many of those excess warrant officers are serving in other combat arms billets or in continuing education.

While many Special Forces NCOs have the desired skills and experience to serve as EI sensors, lack of time remaining in their service obligation after completion of detachment time makes them less than ideal for assignment to an organization focused on long-term program affiliation. And with the expansion of the groups with a fourth battalion there will continue to be a shortage of Special Forces NCOs. However, this does not mean select individuals should not be detailed for ethnographic sensor work, since

such service would provide NCOs with greater understanding of ethnographic intelligence collection methodology, as well as increased familiarity with target countries.[10]

E. PROPOSED CAREER PATH

To recap, establishment of an EI sensor program within USSOCOM would require only small changes to the current career path of Special Forces officers. Ideally, candidates for this program will be Special Forces officers with roughly 10 years in service. This would provide a service life for an ethnographic sensor of 10 years or more, and allow an officer to rotate two to three times into a target country to build and maintain the long-term relationships that are at the heart of this program. Officers who choose to stay beyond twenty years in service may continue to serve as ethnographic sensor team leaders, TSOC desk officers, or program coordinators at USSOCOM. This will require USSOCOM and USASOC to coordinate with Human Resources Command to code the positions of ethnographic sensors as Key and Developmental (KD). As officers in each grade need to serve a minimum of 12 months in a KD position in order to advance to the next grade, ethnographic sensors would still have the opportunity to advance in grade, compete for schools, and stay in the military. The timeline in Figure 7 highlights the standard career path of a Special Forces officer in comparison to a proposed timeline for the ethnographic sensor.

[10] NCOs could potentially be ideal for the EI Sensor program if, after 20 years, they could continue their service as EI Sensors in the National Guard, Army Reserves, or in a Government Service position.

Year	Standard SF Timeline	Boards	Ethnographic Sensor Officer
	OBC		Same
0	LT Time		
1		1.5 - Pin 1LT	
2		2.5 - ARSOF Board	
		3 - Pin CPT / SFAS	
3	MCCC		
	SFQC		
4			
	SFG CPT Time		SFG CPT Time
5			
6			
7			
			Language / School
8		8.5 - PZ MAJ	
9		9.5 - Pin MAJ	Ethnographic Sensor Apprentice
	ILE		
10			
11	SF MAJ Time		
12			TSOC / USASOC / SOCOM
13			
14			Ethnographic Sensor Journeyman
15	Joint Assignment	15.5 - PZ LTC	
		16.3 - PZ LTC Command	
16		16.5 - Pin LTC	TSOC / USASOC / SOCOM
17			
	BN Command		
18			Ethnographic Sensor Team Leader
19			
20			

Figure 7. Ethnographic Sensor Timeline for Special Forces Officers

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V. TEAM COMPOSITION

The most critical component of the ethnographic sensor program is the individual sensor. These individuals will form small teams permanently affiliated with various countries or regions. The TSOC desk officers will determine team size and configuration as they address the varying requirements of each location. A sensor whose personality supports effective fieldwork in China may not be as well received in Malaysia, and the U.S. Embassy in Mali may be more amenable to the program than the embassy in Thailand. Therefore, team composition and size can be adjusted as necessary by the TSOC and coordinated through the Country Team to fit its needs without major changes to the EI sensor team basic design.

The current configuration of the TSOCs and GCCs can fulfill the requirement for command and control of EI sensor teams. USSOCOM already employs TSOCs to provide command and control for several worldwide programs, and the manpower required to manage this additional program would be small, consisting more of coordination and ensuring that products meet the TSOC's and GCC's needs than requiring supervision of daily activity. USSOCOM does not need to allocate a large number of sensors at once, but could select from the force small numbers to establish sensor teams in priority locations, adding new locations as needed. This chapter will demonstrate that USSOCOM's current organizational structure can assist with establishing the teams, and that the headquarters to fulfill command and control functions already exist.

A. THE TEAMS

A small team provides the best balance between developing long-term relationships among important communities in target countries and employing minimal additional force structure in countries sensitive to an American military presence. As noted by sociologists and anthropologists, it is far easier for a community to socialize an individual than assimilate a group; a large team prevents the building of close inter-personal ties required to collect EI effectively. The ideal size for most EI sensor teams

will be two to four sensors. Keeping the team size small has several advantages in addition to those listed above: minimal manpower required to establish the program; no requirement for support personnel; and minimal workspace requirements (always at a premium in embassies). As Clausewitz's notion of friction suggests, the larger an element is the exponentially greater its resource requirements. The larger any military unit becomes, the more of its time, energy, and resources are spent supporting its own existence.

Ethnographic sensor teams can be configured by the TSOCs to meet short and long-term requirements. Regionally oriented SOF, such as CA, PSYOP, and SF units could benefit from sending personnel on TDY orders to support EI sensor teams. These TDY augmentees would assist both their units and the EI sensor team in areas where there will be upcoming unit missions by helping to prepare their detachments through developing a thorough intelligence preparation of the environment. These augmentees would not be expected to form the long-term relationships that this thesis asserts are necessary to effectively collect EI. Rather, the TDY member would ensure the ethnographic sensor team is operationally grounded in its work and sensitive to the needs of the deploying force. Additionally, close contact between the EI sensor team and the mission unit would ensure that the sociocultural products developed, and the understanding gained, would be processed and made available to other U.S. Government agencies and military units to use in the future.

B. THE HEADQUARTERS

The primary function would be to prepare new candidates (and families) for their PCS overseas, and to provide support for program participants. The Department of Defense maintains command and control of its forces through GCCs. Within each of the regions a TSOC coordinates SOF elements. The TSOCs within each combatant command would serve as the Command and Control element for the ethnographic sensor teams.

The ethnographic teams would report to and be managed by the TSOCs. The main purposes of coordination at this level would be ensure the EI sensor teams support the mission of the GCC and to convey information from the teams to the command.

Currently, the International Engagement Division of the Strategic Engagement Group of USSOCOM is fielding three programs to expand access in other countries: Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLO), Senior SOF Representatives (SSR), and Force Development Teams (FDT). Each of these elements works overseas with the U.S. Country Team under the operational control of the TSOC. The EI sensor program could follow the same model.

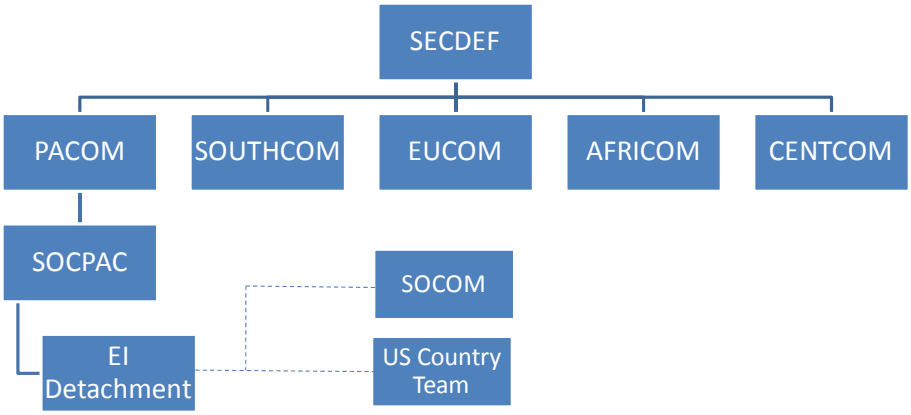

Figure 8. Proposed Task Organization

At USSOCOM, an EI office could easily fall under the Strategic Engagement Branch, already home to the three previously mentioned programs. The main function of this bureaucracy would be to support the training of all ethnographic sensors and to provide resources as required.

Figure 9. Ethnographic Intelligence Office Division

C. DISSEMINATION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE

The primary objective of the EI sensor is to develop and maintain long-term trust-based relationships among target populations throughout the world to improve sociocultural understanding in support of GCC and Country Team objectives. While those relationships are the most valuable end product of the program, sensors will gain access to communities and share sociocultural understanding through the development of written products, the Sociocultural Report and Sociocultural Log. Because SFA and HA funds will be spent more effectively with greater understanding of the communities to be assisted, ethnographic sensors will have a purpose acceptable to the host nation government, thus enabling them to travel throughout the country interacting with its citizens, and population members will have a vested reason to respond to EI sensor requests to share personal information with foreigners. These products would not merely serve as an excuse to interact with the population; they are the vehicles that would enable the ethnographic sensor to transfer his understanding about target communities to commanders and policy officials who plan operations and policies for that country.

As Stanford University anthropologist Charles Frake (1964b) asserts, "the model ... is not: 'if a person is confronted with stimulus X, he will do Y,' but: if a person is in situation X, performance Y will be judged appropriate by native actors" (p. 133). The Sociocultural Report may be used by DoS and DoD officials to enhance their understanding of the society that operations and policies will affect. The Sociocultural Log, meanwhile, can be used to forecast how communities will react to planned policies and operations by considering how those communities responded to similar events in the past. Both products can be used by analysts and experts throughout the U.S. intelligence community to further develop understanding of the target communities and provide their recommendations and analyses back to the sensors to enhance future study in support of peacetime operations or major theater war. Finally, relationships among target communities and the sociocultural products developed about them can be leveraged by the EI sensor to assist Country Team and USAID officials in tailoring humanitarian assistance and stabilization and reconstruction funds in support of U.S. interests, and in turn can further increase access to the population and incentivize locals to want to engage with the EI sensors.

1. The Sociocultural Report and Sociocultural Log

A number of disciplines use "ethnography" and the "ethnographic method" to describe the study of social or cultural communities, and define both terms to best fit their particular science. This has resulted in many different uses of the term ethnography, some almost contradictory. Because these definitions are used primarily for academic and theoretical purposes, and to avoid misunderstanding, we have coined the terms Sociocultural Report and Sociocultural Log to describe products that describe a culture collected on by USSOCOM ethnographic sensors for use by SOF and other government agencies. Frake's (1964) description perhaps best fits what EI sensors will endeavor to produce. Substituting in our terms—Sociocultural Report and Sociocultural Log—results in the following definition:

> [A Sociocultural Report] is produced from . . . [A Sociocultural Log] of the events of a society within a given period of time . . . To describe a culture . . . is not to recount the events of a society but to specify what one must know to make those events maximally probable. The problem is not to state what someone did but to specify the conditions under which it is culturally appropriate to anticipate that he, or persons occupying his role, will render an equivalent performance. This conception of a cultural description . . . should be a theory of cultural behavior in a particular society. (p. 111)

The base written products EI sensors will develop about significant communities are Sociocultural Reports and Sociocultural Logs. The Sociocultural Report collates, analyzes, summarizes, and offers a general forecast based on the accompanying Sociocultural Log. More than offering a mere timeline or history, the Sociocultural Log provides details of events within a community and the community's consensus and subjective reactions to those events, thereby permitting identification of patterns and cultural norms, which should allow the ethnographer to forecast how the community might react to similar events in the future. While very important in their own right, these products are also the vehicles by which the EI sensors will both analyze target communities and develop relationships throughout the population in an altruistic and non-confrontational manner. In unstable and impoverished areas, it is rare for members of

any disenfranchised community to be entirely unwilling to discuss their needs and grievances with those they hope might provide or secure assistance.

2. Availability of Ethnographic Intelligence Products

During his analysis of the U.S. intelligence community, Johnson (2005) found that as the classification of information increases from Unclassified to compartmented Top Secret, the efficacy of the information decreases in rough proportion simply because the end users of information no longer have access to it. This relationship is shown in Figure 10.

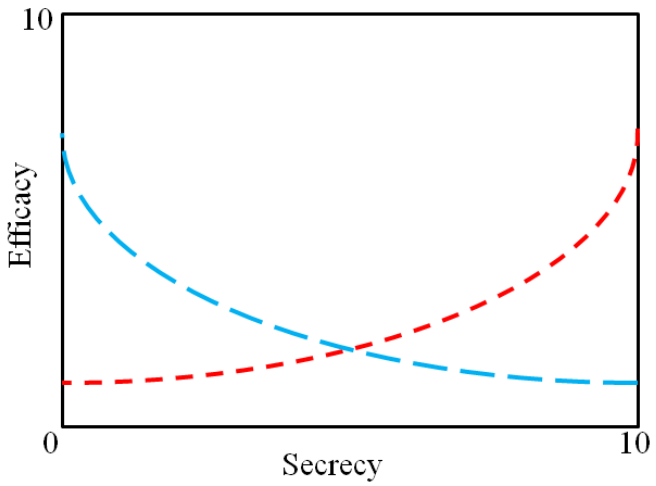

Figure 10. Secrecy vs. Efficacy of Information (From Johnson, 2005, p. 12)

Ideally, EI products, developed from interviews and regular social contact with willing participants, using unclassified methods, would be posted and maintained on a portal accessible on the NIPR net, and available to any official U.S. Government user. Official Web sites such as OpenSource.gov provide an unclassified venue to distribute information while ensuring that only U.S. Government officials with accounts can access the information. Because EI data will remain unclassified and accessible to any government agencies, analysts within the intelligence community will be able to use the source data to conduct more advanced levels of analysis than that conducted by the sensors themselves. Additionally, because of the embedded and long-term nature of EI sensor engagement, analysts in agencies that conduct cultural analysis but do not deploy

sensors (such as the DoS Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the Psychological Operations' strategic studies detachments) who seek to support their own cultural analysis through regular and easy access to the products developed by EI sensor teams may want to contact EI sensors directly with their suggestions and analysis. As the depth and breadth of sociocultural reports increase, analysts from intelligence entities that do not currently focus on sociocultural information may begin to see the value of supplementing conventional intelligence products through developing their own sociocultural conceptual framework.

The U.S. intelligence community does not lack trained analysts. Instead, it lacks 'eyes and ears' on the ground coupled to a sensor who possesses the right kind of sociocultural framework through which to interpret and report data. Once posted to the portal, ethnographies can be commented on in a thread format both by analysts and by other government users who have knowledge of the area. Users of ethnographic intelligence will then have access to the base product, threads of analysis, and commentary from other users, as well as contact information on which to base their policies or plans.

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VI. CONCLUSION - THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

With Ethnographic Intelligence decision makers, policy officials, and commanders will have the sociocultural context necessary to better understand how populations will react to both enemy and U.S. actions. Decision makers will have access to detailed reports about how communities have responded to events and policies in the past, as well as about cultural factors that may influence how planned efforts will be received by target populations so that they may develop policies and inter-state relationships that better promote U.S. interests. Country team officials will gain greater knowledge a fuller range of the population so as to more appropriately design policy and focus U.S. efforts. Military forces responding to regional emergencies or conducting security assistance operations will be able to access more accurate information about their operational environment and more detailed information on key citizens and the important non-state relationships that always affect mission success. Most importantly, via EI sensors USSOCOM will establish and grow long-term relationships that will provide ever-increasing access to—and understanding of—communities throughout the world.

In the same way a linguist studies, records, and translates a foreign language so that others can learn to understand and make themselves understood in that language, the EI sensor must record and make sense of the social relationships of a community so that others can learn to understand the actions of and act appropriately within the culture studied. Even more important than the Sociocultural Reports and Sociocultural Logs produced are the long-term relationships developed and maintained over the course of the EI sensors' careers. Through EI sensors, USSOCOM would be able to nurture relationships and establish trust in the same way relationships and trust are generated throughout the non-western world: "never by money, always by time." The social capital developed by EI sensors could then be leveraged in support of U.S. interests well into the future, maintained on a personal level through JCETs and other training deployments, short SME visits, follow-on EI rotations, and extensive personal communication.

USSOCOM is ideally suited to quickly and effectively establish an increased capacity to develop EI in order to more effectively support U.S. interests worldwide without this requiring major changes to current manning, budget, or force levels. Arguably, USSOCOM also has the most to gain from managing these assets, though all U.S. Government agencies with operations outside the U.S. will benefit from EI products.

While, as this thesis has argued, USASFC is the logical choice to provide the forces to establish the ethnographic sensor community, as the program grows and develops it would benefit by recruiting from across the Department of Defense. Once the program is established with experienced operators, new candidates need not meet all of the selection requirements of the initial manning because the existing team members would be able to provide more EI sensor-specific training on the ground. Accepting officers from other branches would then expand the skills resident on EI sensor teams, and bring new research and analysis techniques into the program. Further analysis of career paths for other possible candidates drawn from the Navy SEALS, the AFSOC, the MARSOC, CA, PSYOPs, and MI communities could lead to further expansion of the pool once the program is established. Simons and Tucker (2004) proposed that a new corps of officers with its own personnel system be created to support an ethnographic intelligence capability. As the value of sociocultural understanding becomes evident, Dr. Simons and Dr. Tucker's proposal may be the natural progression for this program.

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