


Political scientist, Samuel Huntington (1993) postulated that future global politics and conflicts would center on clashes between civilizations. Indeed, his prophetic words were realized in 2001 when individuals from a radical Islamic movement were willing to kill themselves and thousands of other innocent people in just such a clash of cultures and ideologies (Van Osten, 2003). The U.S. military commander, General Stanley McChrystal (2009) in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, stated that despite many deployments to the region, there is "much in Afghanistan I do not know." Though well-versed in military arts, the general's comment appeared, at least in part, to refer to the other baffling norms of the multicultural environment in Afghanistan. The recent 30,000 military personnel surge in Afghanistan announced by President Obama on December 1, 2009, and the $10.6 billion in budget supplements for 2010 stop the $14 billion spent since 2001, calls for renewed analyses on why conflict and chaos in the region has not subsided with both Soviet and American traditional use of overwhelming military force—hard power.

It is essential that the U.S. military adapt and accommodate interactions with other cultures and societies (Conway, 1996). Cultural understanding does not necessarily occur even after living in a given culture. We suggest that understanding comes in waves in successive stages, as illustrated in Figure 1. When organizational leaders appreciate and seek to progress through the stages, cultural understanding can be accelerated with positive effects. After nine years of military engagement, the U.S. collective understanding of the Afghan culture appears to have progressed beyond naivety to Stage 2, Superficial Understanding. The lack of sustained results and ongoing challenges in the region require U.S. civilian and military leaders to develop a Profound Understanding of the Afghan people and their society. Doing so may generate acceptance and commitment of the varied stakeholders and ultimately support the U.S. strategic vision for Afghanistan to become a secure and stable democratic nation. Profound understanding involves not just understanding the verbal, but also the non-verbal communications. The latter requires greater sophistication in reading communications and actions by key players, which will be addressed later in this paper.

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**Cognitive Underpinnings of Culture**

When the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and other high ranking general officers search for SMART forms of power to use, it is important to place culture within a cognitive framework; for it is in the human mind that cultural synergies and conflicts arise. While the idea that culture matters in international relations has been emphasized to our military personnel, many may lack the cognitive underpinnings of why and how there are differences in ways that cultures express meaning. Increasingly, the security of our nation in no small measure depends on how military leaders rapidly analyze and adapt to other cultures, which require a sophisticated depth of cultural understanding.

Culture does not exist as a factor distinct and apart from the human mind, rather humans in their interactions actively construct meaning about their environments based on cognitive interpretations. As noted by Clifford Geertz (1973: 5), “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance.” These webs of significance created by human minds about their environment influence what
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Fourth, they will have to be cognizant of professional cultures—engineers, for example, do not think like military sociologists and combat officers do not think like chaplains. Fifth, military personnel must understand themselves through the application of critical and reflective thinking. Within the United States, social and environmental changes have resulted in substantial cultural diversity and a broad mix of ethnic groups is now a part of America’s armed forces (Birelin, 2009). It helps to recognize that military personnel inhabit interacting worlds. This requires thinking styles of flexibility and adaptability. In today’s military environment, recognition of the need to think outside the box is captured in the article title, “Adapt or Die” (Fastabend & Simpson, 2004). U.S. Army Colonel Deborah Cusimano recalled a time when she was assigned to working with a Turkish Colonel in NATO, as well as supervising female non-commissioned officers (NCOs) from Turkey. Colonel Cusimano remembered that “serving as a female officer in a predominantly Muslim country further challenged my personal adaptability and professional sophistication” (Cusimano, 2009). To adapt gracefully, she “studied Turkish customs, such as clicking her heels, and engaging in various cultural courtesies. She noted that she intuitively began to master "the art of non-verbal communication to compensate for language barriers between me and the NCOs" (2009). From Figure 1., Col. Cusimano was at Stage 3, Profound Understanding. It was no wonder that she reported that her reading of words, gestures, and facial expressions helped build trust and good relationships with her Turkish colleagues and superiors.

Building on the concepts associated with the stages of
cultural awareness and soft power just described, this article now explores the concept that there is a symbiotic relationship between cultural manifestations and cognitive patterns. The article will then examine the role of culture in shaping attitudes and attributions. Finally, the influence of culture on a leader’s thinking is illustrated by its impact on different aspects of communication and decision-making.

**Influence of culture on cognition.** Culture is a complex construct that has its roots in the discipline of anthropology, from where it has influenced the field of management, along with other domains of learning and inquiry in the social and behavioral sciences. While no consensus has evolved for a single definition of culture, Ferraro’s definition that, “Culture is everything that people have, think [italics added], and do, as members of their society,” emphasizes thought patterns and associated manifestations (1990, p. 18). Another way to think of culture is to view it “as a pretested design, a store of knowledge and an entire system of coping skills that has been crafted by humans who have gone before...” (Fisher, 1988, p. 44). International management scholar David Holt (1998, p. 362) explained that collectively, “...shared thinking patterns help explain religious preferences, political mandates, customs, and a wide variety of social relationships.” Others, such as David Holt, explain that collectively, “...shared thinking patterns help explain religious preferences, political mandates, customs, and a wide variety of social relationships (Holt, 1998, p. 362). In these four different definitions, a unifying theme is that shared relationships associated with interwoven systems of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that determines one’s culture have a cognitive, or knowing, aspect.

“Thinking” and “Knowing” are complex, veiled, clandestine, and often unconscious processes that occur each human mind. How does one “see” hidden and abstract cognitive workings of the mind, such as one’s own consciousness and that of other people? Following Kant, the data of human consciousness, though unseen, can indeed be comprehended through individual behavior. When viewed collectively, cultural manifestations are simply actions and behaviors of groups stemming from systems of thought. With the growth of psychological theory in the 19th century from the works of Freud,
Figure 3
Cognitive Underpinnings of Cultural Awareness in the Military Megorganizational Environment

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General officers and their followers, deployed around the world, cannot fail to notice the importance of the simple statement: “all people are not necessarily alike in the way that they interpret their environment.” (Fisher, 1988, p. 1). Social constructions of reality differ, and thus we see how human thinking and subsequent reactions to universal concerns such as life threats, human rights, or bribery, are often culture-specific. Furthermore, these universal concerns may have different cultural manifestations are simply actions and behaviors of groups stemming from systems of thought. With the growth of psychological theory in the 19th century from the works of Freud,

positive interaction with others from different nations and cultures. This is especially important when conducting multinational operations and negotiating with, or fighting against, an adversary. To understand others, it is essential for leaders to think critically about, and be aware of, their own socially constructed, culture-based thinking. These cognitions are manifested in leaders’ biases, attributions, prejudices, and assumptions employed in sensemaking of the environment. The military leader will also be challenged by different approaches to reasoning encountered from home country nationals, as their cognitive responses are often shaped by military branch, service or inter-governmental organizational affiliation.

Cognition, attitudes and attribution. Mental models or maps created by cultural thinking are a form of shorthand by which the brain interprets its environment and discerns a behavioral reaction. These mental models are created over time through social learning and experience. The equation S = P[E], derived from the work of noted organizational behavior theorist, Kurt Lewin (1946), expresses the idea that Behavior is a function of the Person and the Environment. As such, the person is active in this relationship, influencing and in turn being influenced by it. The field of management psychology sheds light on this relationship and presents the basis for understanding how shared cultural meanings of the environment create attitudes. Attitudes are hidden phenomena but are effectively revealed to others through enacted behaviors over time. Attitudes are not immutable; rather they are socially-learned constructs that can be changed. Such changes, however, can be difficult due to social pressures for conformance and punishments for deviation. Put simply, attitudes are the interpretation of the environment based on how one views a particular situation with favor or disfavor (Nelson & Quick, 2006).

Cultures are embedded with artifacts and actions to symbolize attitudes. For example, the range of actions to include bowing and use of deferential words toward the aged, for example, shows that society’s reverence for elderly people. Not all cultures, especially Western ones, celebrate age and the day-to-day focus is more on youthful qualities manifested in dress and comportment. Similarly, in the U.S. there is an appreciative attitude toward rugged individualism, while in Japan an attitude of collectivism prevails. This is captured in the popular Japanese slogan “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down.” It is critical for military leaders to recognize that the relationships, influencing and in turn being influenced by it. The field of management psychology sheds light on this relationship and presents the basis for understanding how shared cultural meanings of the environment create attitudes. Attitudes are hidden phenomena but are effectively revealed to others through enacted behaviors over time. Attitudes are not immutable; rather they are socially-learned constructs that can be changed. Such changes, however, can be difficult due to social pressures for conformance and punishments for deviation. Put simply, attitudes are the interpretation of the environment based on how one views a particular situation with favor or disfavor (Nelson & Quick, 2006).

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tolerance for ambiguity, high need for structure, and a willingness to sacrifice for the good of society (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). These attributes follow the Islamist values of belongingness, social good, and humility (Ali & Amirshahi, 2002). Leaders must take these attributes into account when interacting with other nationalities and cultural groups.

One aspect of cultural sensitivity is to recognize that, in a sincere attempt to accommodate another culture's traditions, one might not understand the subtleties of the other culture. A colonel from an Eastern European (EE) military gave the following humorous story of being hosted by Western European (WE) officers. Both the WE and the EE officers were intent upon expressing goodwill but were caught in an unintentional cultural blunder. At each meal—breakfast, lunch and dinner—the WE served vodka. The EE officers were surprised, but happy at first, and enthusiastically toasted health of the Head of the WE country, and the President of their own EE country, alongside their WE colleagues. While the same group of EE officers attended each meal, a different set of WE officers served as hosts each time. Thus, the EE officers had more occasions to drink the toasts. Feeling a bit taxed after a few days of this, the EE senior officer suggested to his WE contact in charge that the vodka be decreased. His EE officers, he explained wanted to respect the WE custom of drinking vodka with each meal, but for his officers to drink vodka for each meal was not a good idea. He informed the WE officer that EE officers did not usually take vodka with their meals. "To his surprise, the WE officer said that the EE officers also do not drink vodka with their meals! They were only trying to respect what they thought was an EE tradition." (Mitrega, 2009). This example illustrates Stage 2, or Superficial Understanding of the Western European hosts of their Eastern European guests, as depicted in Figure 1.

When confronted with difference in expectations within a foreign culture while having to conform to one's socially-prescribed work rules and behaviors, a leader could experience the discomfort of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). This dissonance occurs when a state of tension is created due to an inconsistency between attitude and expected behavior. For example, a leader might be required to pay "grease money" to a person acting as an intermediary to gain audience with a higher authority figure as an accepted social or cultural business practice in a particular country. This action, however, may go against the leader's value system, which considers such payment unethical. The leader has to decide whether to not have the meeting or reconcile the attitude to match the needed behavior. This often may require cognitive rationalization, such as: the intermediary is expending time and energy to mediate the substantive issue between the two cultures. Thus, the person is performing the service of a consultant. This sort of thinking lessens the dissonance. Military personnel often experience such cognitive dissonance. A U.S. Navy Commander gave this example of a common cause of cognitive dissonance. "In the military, T.E. Lawrence’s maxim is often advised: 'Better to let them do it imperfectly than do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their way and your time is short" (Bowers, 2009). Commander Bowers, like Colonel Cusimano, could be assessed to have reached Stage 3, or Profound Understanding of cultural differences.

**Attributions and mental models.** Attribution about human motivation underlie attitudes. Humans have a tendency to attribute their own successes to internal factors such as intelligence or ability, while at the same time they may excuse their own poor outcomes by attributing the cause to external agents. This could lead to a cognitive bias. The statement, "I got an A, the teacher gave me a C" is a good example of the concept of The Fundamental Attributions Error—a bias held by many people (Ross, 1977). This error is closely linked to egocentrism or
tolerance for ambiguity, high need for structure, and a willingness to sacrifice for the good of society (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). These attributes follow the Islamists values of belongingness, social good, and humility (Afs & Amiriashahi, 2002). Leaders must take these attributes into account when interacting with other nationalities and cultural groups.

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Cultural Influence on Communication

Humans being convey their cultural identities through multiple channels of verbal and non-verbal communication. These channels contribute to how we perceive and interact within our environments. Singer (1998) observed, "it is not possible to communicate." Humans function as message encoders whenever we communicate. Cognitive coding is based upon cultural perspectives. Furthermore, how the message is decoded is dependent on the perceptual screen of the listener, and this screen is likewise influenced by culture. The virtual space between the encoder and decoder is believed to contain cultural "noise," which is often the source of misunderstandings between communicators. Since the message is not always a clear set of verbal mechanisms such as kinesics, proxemics, and eye movement are also interpreted. Examples of how thinking affects communication means emphasize the importance of strategic communication and building relationships with leaders from other cultures.

Word choice matters a great deal for military leaders in international settings. Consider the terms of the current campaign. Stockpiling nuclear weapons by one nation may be seen by that state as "deterrence" against a future attack, while another state could view such a stockpile as a "threat." The words associated with describing the War on Terrorism in certain strategies has, on occasion, created controversy within Islamic cultures. Military leaders sometimes make unintentional mistakes with language when trying to build inter-cultural relationships. Some words that may seem innocent enough to one culture could
be incomprehensible or offensive to others. Something as ubiquitous and innocuous as the word Coca Cola to an American translates literally into “bite the wax tadpole” in Chinese. The soft drink Fresca in Mexico is a term for lesbianism (Holt, 1998). Electrolux, a European appliance maker used the slogan “nothing sucks like an Electrolux!” in advertising its vacuum machines in the United States (Peng, 2009: 106). An American expatriate in Malaysia was introduced to a “Rajah” which is the name for a king, or nobleman, in that country. The American mistakenly thought the name was Roger, and proceeded to call the man, “Rog” in an attempt to be affable. The Malaysian nobleman was offended and walked away from the negotiation (Peng, 2009: 14). From Figure 1, this person would demonstrate Stage 1, Naïve Understanding.

Non-verbal communication and implied meaning. For military leaders in Afghanistan, Iraq and Asian nations, implied meaning is important to consider in international exchanges. This does not apply to verbal conversation alone. Sometimes even silence gets interpreted incorrectly, as noted by one expert: “In some cultures silence is golden; in others, it makes people uncomfortable” (VanOtten, 2005, p. 34). Interpretations of implied meaning can cause diplomatic misunderstandings. A Department of Defense official related the following incident during a class on culture and cognition at the U.S. Army War College.

In 2008 South Koreans became fearful of U.S. beef and this was exacerbated by propaganda from North Korea to damage U.S. and S. Korean relations as well as hyperactive internet rumors. Text messages began to be exchanged: ‘Why must I die like a mad cow,’ and suggestions were made to ‘swallow cyanide, but don’t eat U.S. beef.’ A Korean T.V. station captured a statement and televised it in which a high-ranking officer in the U.S. Embassy made a remark, “So we hope that the Koreans will begin to learn more about the science and about the facts of American beef and that this issue can be addressed constructively,” (Chung, 2009).

The remark, however, was misinterpreted as ‘Korean people need to study science.’ The political opposition party in Korea used his facial expression accompanying these words as looking down on Koreans in an arrogant way (Chung, 2009). This incident shows that facial expression and non-verbal language are powerful communications tools and must be used with care in host countries. There are also other forms of implied mis-communication such as such as sarcasm, which can be easily misunderstood across cultures and are best avoided in international dialogue.

Non-verbal language constitutes about 90 percent of all meaning in communication. One of the most important of these is eye-movements, which provide, in most cases, a rich expression of the person’s inner being. How one looks at another while speaking is also meaningful. Looking squarely at the listener is natural in Western cultures. However, a hard stare and direct gaze may be inappropriate elsewhere. In some cultures one might look at the speaker directly and then look away occasionally, as a stare could be perceived as disrespectful—especially between individuals who do not have the same social status—and could be interpreted as rude or even threatening. In some cultures, such as the Chinese, the “inscrutable face,” and the military “poker” face, are either deliberate or unconscious methods to avoid transmission of meaning, perhaps as a protective device against misunderstanding.

Proxemics, which describes how close or far one stands or sits from another person, should be understood when interacting with others in formal or social settings. People from western societies
be incomprehensible or offensive to others. 

As the saying goes, "you can't judge a book by its cover." In this case, it's not about a book, but rather the way we communicate with others. This is particularly true when it comes to non-verbal communication, which can be just as important as the words we choose to use.

In the context of cross-cultural communication, it's crucial to be aware of the non-verbal signals that can either enhance or detract from our message. For example, eye contact can vary greatly across cultures, with some cultures valuing direct eye contact as a sign of honesty and trustworthiness, while others may view it as a sign of aggression or disrespect.

One such example is the case of a businessperson from a Latin culture who is meeting with a North American businessperson. The Latin businessperson may expect more direct eye contact, while the North American may feel uncomfortable with too much eye contact. This can lead to misunderstandings if not properly understood.

In such situations, it's important to be aware of the cultural norms and to adapt our non-verbal communication accordingly. This might include adjusting our posture, gestures, and even our facial expressions to ensure that our message is being received as intended.

Cultural Differences in Decision-Making

The GLOBE Project, a 10-year cross-cultural research project, examined decision-making processes across 62 countries. The project found that decision-making styles varied significantly across cultures, with some cultures emphasizing individualism and others emphasizing collectivism.

For example, in individualistic cultures, decisions are often made based on personal attributes and individual qualities. In contrast, in collectivistic cultures, decisions are often made based on group norms and the needs of the group as a whole.

This difference in decision-making styles can have significant implications for business practices. For example, in individualistic cultures, employees may be more likely to be judged on their individual performance, while in collectivistic cultures, the focus may be on the group's success.

It's important for businesses to be aware of these cultural differences and to adapt their decision-making processes accordingly. This might include training employees on cross-cultural communication and decision-making skills, or seeking out cultural consultants to help navigate these differences.

In summary, understanding and respecting cultural differences in communication and decision-making is essential for businesses operating in a global marketplace. By being aware of these differences and adapting our approaches accordingly, we can foster more effective and productive relationships with colleagues and customers worldwide.
Collectivism and In-Group Collectivism. The former (institutional collectivism) represents the extent to which the organization encourages participation through rewards and resource distribution. The latter denotes individual loyalties, pride, and cohesiveness in their organizations. The Greek term *philotimo* is used for the extent to which an individual conforms to the values and standards of his in-group (Triandis, 1972). In a collectivist culture, it may take longer to make decisions, but the decisions will likely be thoroughly developed. In contrast, American decision-making is often quickly derived, but the decisions may need several incremental tweaks *ex post facto* to make it workable. Collectivist cultures, like that in Japan, prefer group consensus decision-making. Thus in Japan, the *ringi-sho* method of bottom-up decision style is quite common (Deresky, 2006). Decision-making processes also translate into how people are rewarded. For example, in the modern Japanese workplace, organizational rewards and recognition are group-based in nature. By contrast, American like to think of themselves as individuals and so seek to be recognized as such for their contributions. Professional cultures, such as the military, view collectivism as a useful device for unit cohesion. While this is important in many venues in which military personnel are engaged, at other times it might serve as a device to thwart dissent, and in its extreme form can result in groupthink (Janis, 1972).

Gerras, Wong, and Allen (2008, p. 12) reported the ‘Army of One’ slogan, in the words of one interviewed soldier, ‘just goes against everything they taught us.’

**Power distance.** In their studies on “power distance,” Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have shown that some folks are more equal than others in any given society—including an organizational society. At the decision-making level, we speak of power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 28). The GLOBE study indicates the levels at which organizational societies accept and legitimize authority, power and status differences. Thus, in countries where there are strong hierarchies of class and caste, such as in India and Britain, we find that there is separation or “distance” between organizational elites or leaders and ordinary citizens. In other countries such as Thailand, leaders are revered and given extraordinary respect.

In organizations such as the military, there are hierarchies that determine status and information flow. Hierarchies can create challenges for leadership. For example, if subordinates believe they are existentially unequal, they may fail to give timely and necessary advice to a leader out of fear, deference, or feelings of insignificance. A military leader needs to appreciate this dynamic and take measures to encourage an unfettered information flow to prevent mission failure because of misplaced deference. The GLOBE research shows that while some level of power distance is necessary for command, and that greater benefits accrue to organizations that lessen this distance.

Brigadier General Fastabend and Robert Simpson (2004, p. 22) observed the tension in the Army culture “between essential centralized control and necessary, decentralized innovation.” The findings of the GLOBE study suggest that the insights of junior officers be given legitimacy without “overbearance by superiors” (Gerras, Wong & Allen, 2008, p. 15).

During the tenure of Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense, there was a higher level of power distance shown by senior civilian leaders at the Department of Defense (DOD) toward their “junior” subordinate military officers—the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other general officers. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Yingling (2007) in his article on a failure in “generalship” noted the high power distance of the military establishment in relationship to its civilian superiors. The indication of a high power distance culture and cognition at DOD is illustrated in Lt. Col. Yingling’s (2007, p. 23) comment: “While the physical courage of America’s generals is not in
Collectivism and In-Group Collectivism. The former (institutional collectivism) represents the extent to which the organization encourages participation through rewards and resource distribution. The latter term denotes individual loyalties, pride, and cohesiveness in their organizations. The Greek term philosoton is used for the extent to which an individual conforms to the values and standards of his in-group (Triandis, 1972). In a collectivist culture, it may take longer to make decisions and the decisions will likely be thoroughly developed. In contrast, American decision-making is often quickly derived, but the decisions may need several incremental tweaks ex post facto to make it workable. Collectivist cultures, like that in Japan, prefer group consensus and decision-making. Thus in Japan, the ringi-sho method of making a decision is quite common (Deresky, 2006). Decision-making processes also translate into how people are rewarded. For example, in the modern Japanese work environment, organizational rewards and recognition are group-based in nature. By contrast, Americans like to think of themselves as individuals and seek to be recognized as such for their contributions. Professional cultures, such as those of the Air Force, view collectivism as a useful device for unit cohesion. While this is important, there are many venues in which military personnel are engaged, at other times it might serve as a device to thwart dissent, and in its extreme form can result in groupthink (Janis, 1972). Gerras, Wong, and Allen (2008, p. 12) reported "the Army of One" solution, in the words of one interviewed soldier, "just goes against everything they taught us."

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Perhaps the most well-known commentary might have prompted Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to give a speech to cadets at West Point: "I happen to be very careful—if as a officer you don’t tell blunt truths or create an environment where candor is encouraged, then you’ve done yourself and the institution a disservice" (Fausch & Simpson, 2004).

Uncertainty avoidance. While the original phrase "uncertainty avoidance" was developed by Curt and Hofstede (1966) to describe the organizational risk-taking phenomena, Hofstede (1991) extended the concept to culturally-based phenomena. In his view, uncertainty avoidance is "the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations" (Hofstede, 1991: 118). In his study of 74 cultures, Hofstede ranked the U.S. as low on uncertainty avoidance at a score of 62. The GLOBE study has commented that while it is common to the human condition to live through uncertainty, ambiguity, and change, the authors have questioned whether people are emotionally comfortable in those situations. The question is how emotionally comfortable people are in those circumstances (House et al., 2004). This is an issue for our military leadership—should the military leadership be expected to stand before negative upswellings of public opinion and avoid difficult strategic decisions? (DOD) toward their "junior" subordinate military officers—the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other general officers. Lieutenant Paul Yingling (2007) in his article on a failure of "leadership" noted the high power distance of the military establishment in relationship to its civilian superiors. The indication of a higher power distance culture and cognition at DOD is illustrated in Lt. Col. Yingling’s (2007, p. 23) comment: "While the physical courage of America’s generals is not in doubt, there is less certainty regarding their moral courage. In almost surreal language, professional military men blame their recent lack of candor on the intimidating management style of their superiors." Yingling goes on to say that, "Moral courage is often inversely proportional to popularity and this observation in nowhere more true than in the profession of arms. The history of military innovation is littered with the truncated careers of reformers who gathered threats clearly and advocated change boldly. A military professional must possess both the physical courage to face the hazards of battle and the moral courage to withstand the herds of public scorn. On and off the battlefield, courage is the first characteristic of generalship" (p. 18).

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In the modern era of irregular warfare, a military leader must have a good understanding of the enemy’s level of risk in uncertain environments. The GLOBE study also noted that in low uncertainty avoidance cultures like America the leader is recognized as a "heroic warrior—adored, for their taking off for uncharted territory and willingly facing great risks without guarantee of a successful ending" (Chibber, Brockeed, & House, 2007: 509). Arguably, after a decade of being at war, the U.S. citizenry can be said to become more risk-averse, and less tolerant of risk, as it relates to loss of life on the battlefield. Sgt. Michael Hanson (2008), U.S. Marine Corps, commented that risk aversion that has had a negative impact on his Marines: "Our Marines are overprotected. We're going to have to weight limits their speed, mobility, range, stamina, agility and all around fighting capability. They can't go out far and they can't stay out long with all of this gear. It is simply too much. Combat patrols are typically four hours, and even that short amount of time is exhausting. Our Marines are being consistently outrun and outmaneuvered by an enemy with an AK [rifle], an extra magazine and a pair of running shoes, (Hanson, 2008)."
today can be done tomorrow or in a week. The GLOBE study noted that cultures with low future orientation are more willing to “enjoy the moment.” In the American culture, time is experienced in linear fashion, as a commodity that is limited and must be utilized efficiently. Such cultures, according to the GLOBE study have “high future orientation with a strong capability and willingness to imagine future contingencies, formulate future goal states, and seek to achieve goals and develop strategies for meeting their future orientations” (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007: 282).

In the arena of international bargaining, or the military-diplomatic world, an American Colonel of Department of State diplomat may want to come to a negotiated settlement in a rapid manner, whereas his counterpart in Brazil may wish to pursue relationship-building prior to negotiation. The Brazilian’s decision-making strategy is likely to be to focus on building trust in the relationship first, and then to attend to the legal and formal agreements. To the Brazilian, if there is a poor relationship between the parties then the formal agreements will not likely stand up to the test of time (Deresky, 2006).

Relationship-building, however, is a time-consuming task, and it displays a willingness to commit time and effort to achieving it. Hence, a military leader needs to understand how coalition partner’s thinking associated with time affects planning military operations. Colonel Michael Lewis (2009) spoke at a War College class on the value of patience and relationship-building that he observed while in stationed in Iraq.

During our meetings with the Iraqi officers nothing of substance occurred until the Iraqis felt a relationship had been formed, coffee and tea served, stories of families and friends were shared, and small talk comprised the entire first three meetings. Once the Iraqis felt comfortable, the business of understanding each other and working to solve common problems began. The Iraqis sent the same six officers each time. Our mistake was changing our coalition officers after the fourth meeting to allow more coalition officers to participate. Immediately the dynamic changed, and the meetings reverted back to the initial stages of small talk and relationship building. At the start of the fourth meeting the coalition officers could sense something was different about the Iraqi’s willingness to discuss business and to begin where we previously left discussions. After the meeting our coalition translator was approached by the senior Iraqi officer and asked to be informed of the names of the participating coalition officer prior to the next meeting. We immediately realized why the dynamics had changed; we would have to start from the beginning and build that bond or relationship again before any further information sharing could occur in any meaningful way. (Lewis, 2009: XX).

**Conclusion**

This article began by identifying the need for military leaders to understand ways how cognition influence thinking about issues that may have strategic importance and the need for this cultural understanding of ourselves, as well as our allies and enemies in order to effectively use SMART Power to achieve favorable outcomes in Afghanistan and in other regions. Within the U.S. and coalition military organizations, leaders must seriously reflect on how their thinking is influenced by their cultural perceptions. Such reflection in necessary to reveal cognitive and cultural blind spots that could prove detrimental to achieving U.S. national security interests and thereby
today can be done tomorrow or in a week. The GLOBE study found that cultural orientation with low future orientation are more willing to "enjoy the moment." In the American culture, time is experienced in linear fashion, as a commodity that is limited and must be utilized efficiently. Such cultures, according to the GLOBE study have "high future orientation with a strong capability and willingness to imagine future contingencies, formulate future goal states, and plan to achieve goals and develop strategies for meeting their future orientations" (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007: 282).

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