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SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN MILITARY
OPERATIONS

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THE POLEMICAL INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN MILITARY OPERATIONS

Abstract:

This paper is aimed at exploring the US Project known as the "Human Terrain System", supported by the US Office of the Secretary of Defence, led by its Army and run by its Training and Doctrine Command. From the description and study of its background and historical development, I will then proceed to the evaluation of its impact on the ground, and, finally, to the assessment of the goodness of its existence and the suitability of its implementation in the US Army. A brief note on how the Spanish Armed Forces deal with the problems addressed under the HTS will also be included.

HTS was created to improve the military decision-making process and fill the ignorance gap between the military and the environment where they operate, as well as to provide them a socio-cultural interpretation of events and enable relations with the host population. In order to do so, teams of social scientists are assigned to commanders that, although they are also present at a strategic level, are mainly deployed at tactical and operational levels.

The HTS is categorized by the US Administration as an intelligence support activity and receives funding from the intelligence budget and is supervised by the Undersecretary of Defence for Intelligence and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence of the U.S. Army; in Afghanistan, the HTS falls within the responsibility of ISAF's Intelligence Section and serves as an intelligence enabling capability at all levels of the operation. It is here where the source of the debate on the issue and the criticism from some American anthropologists may be found, as they claim that, with their work, members of the deployed teams do not respect the rules and ethical principles governing the studies on populations to guarantee their rights and interests.

Keywords: Human Terrain System, Afghanistan.

***NOTE:** The authors are responsible for the ideas contained in the *Documents of Opinion* which do not necessarily reflect the views of the IEEE (Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies) or the Ministry of Defense.

1. INTRODUCTION

The US program known as the Human Terrain System (HTS), supported by the US Office of the Secretary of Defense, led by its Army and run by the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), was created as an initiative to improve the military decision-making process and to fill the gap generated by the US military ignorance about the human environment where they operate, providing them a socio-cultural interpretation of events in their Area of Responsibility (AOR) and making easier for them to establish relationships with the host population of that environment. In other words, this will allow them to map the human terrain where they will have to move during their deployment.

In order to achieve this goal, HTC (Human Terrain Teams) are created consisting of four or nine experts that the HTS deploys with the Forces to support the military and its staff. Thus, anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, philologists and regional experts provide the commandants a better comprehension of the local population and its potential reactions, in order to enhance operational efficiency of the forces, save lives and reduce, as far as possible, potential conflicts. Teams are deployed in operations—in military units—fundamentally at a tactical and operational level. This way, they help to locate the knowledge about the local population in a coherent framework of analysis and to establish relationships with the most influential members of the local community. They also provide advice and create opportunities in the terrain for the military and their units.

The US Administration describes the activity developed within the framework of the HTS Program as a support to intelligence, thus, the program receives funds from the allocation aimed at intelligence and it is supervised by the Undersecretary of Defence for Intelligence and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence of the U.S. Army (DA G2). With regard to the presence and activities of the project in Afghanistan, HTS provided support to the NATO survey which identified the necessity to gather and exchange information from the human field. HTS, based on a list of priorities made by the ISAF CJ2, provides support to the NATO headquarters in the Regional Commands, to the combat teams in the different Brigades and to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) from the Coalition. HTS is also part of the civilian-military information program from the Intelligence Section (CJ2) of the ISAF, and it acts as a capability facilitating intelligence at all the levels of the operation.

2. BACKGROUND: COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS (VIETNAM, IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN)

In 2005, after several analysis of the complexity factors in the counter-insurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and after the military checked that one of the most important factors was the ignorance of the socio-cultural reality or the human terrain where they move (in other words, the human population from the operational environment), the anthropologists Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson published a proposal which included the creation of an "Office for Operational Cultural Knowledge" in the Pentagon¹.

¹ McFate, Montgomery & Andrea Jackson, "An organizational solution for DoD's cultural knowledge needs" in *Military Review*, July-August 2005, pp. 18-21

In this warlike scenario, where cultural elements are decisive factors, the military did not have instruments to measure and determine where to concentrate their efforts, or to know what effects their actions will have in the short and long term. Their suppositions about local leaders' authority and influence were not enough realistic. Their actions to "win the hearts and minds" of the population did not have the expected impact, so they failed. The military concept of "human terrain" is then developed, in relation with the one of the physical and geographical terrain, which includes the present populations, defined through its socio-cultural, anthropologist and ethnographic features and other data and information of non geographical character.

The HTS project was born as a tool to fill the gap of ignorance identified in the human field and to make an academic analysis of the conflict reality in order to better understand the social structures and their cultural dynamics. The academic team, through on-the-ground research and interviews (and even surveys²), could evaluate the present dynamics and allow the military organizations to design their actions with a view to obtain stability in the long term.

This is not the first time that social and military scientists have collaborated in military operations in the framework of an institutionalized structure. Before the HTS Project, there was a counter-insurgency program developed by the US Army during the Vietnam War, the CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support). This program was based on the premise that a war must be won through the fight for people's loyalty and not in the battlefield. It was said that CORDS did not have the deserved success because capabilities of support in national terrain were not established, and it was activated too late and removed too soon. Despite its deficiencies, CORDS gave us important lessons that have clearly influenced the HTS development. CORDS transformed the HTS into an effective cultural program in the intelligence field in support of the operations through the advice to the military and the civil Administration representatives at the tactical and operational levels. In contrast to the praise generated by the new project among its intellectual fathers, its detractors draw attention to the fact that, in Vietnam, CORDS operated together with Phoenix, another program that used the information gathered by CORDS in order to "neutralize" partisans from the National Liberation Front of Vietnam, better known as Viet Cong.

Despite that, at the beginning, the attitude was reluctant to the implementation of the doctrine and the training of the Armed Forces by social science, and even more to the integration of social science experts in combat units, there has been a change in the Armed Forces characterized by an increasing rise of cultural based programs, both in the Armed Forces training and practice and in the US National Security Services. There has also been a change of direction in the fight against insurgent forces where the priority are now the actions aimed at "winning hearts and minds" against the ones focused on the use of military

² Although it is possible to make surveys, semi structured interviews, even if they require more attention and time, are more productive when getting information than the surveys.

force, known as "kinetic military actions".

At the beginning of 2006, the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC G2) Intelligence Section carried out the initial development of the concept, which status as "proof-of-concept"³ was approved to be executed by the end of that same year. In March 2009, the Army approved the HTS Concept Plan with the authorized staff. And in October 2010, HTS became a permanent program of the Army, with permanent capabilities from the period to 2011 until 2015 like items in its budget. The US Army ended up institutionalizing the HTS, turning it into a permanent capability assigned to its Training and Doctrine Command.

After several trials in Defense institutions, the Project selected and recruited its first team, deploying it in Afghanistan in February 2007 with the 4th Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division. During that same year, in summer, other teams followed the first one in Afghanistan and Iraq, as a response to the Central Command (CENTCOM). The CENTCOM asked for the deployment of teams in each Brigade and Marines Regiments in both countries. When the teams grew from 5 to 26, the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, authorized in September 2007 a 40 million dollars increase in the program budget.

In 2009, Iraq adjusted its requirements to the reality of the already planned troops' retirement, while Afghanistan was preparing to increase its requirements to respond to the troops reinforcement in 2010. The aggregate demand for 2011 was of 41 teams, among which 31 were for Afghanistan.

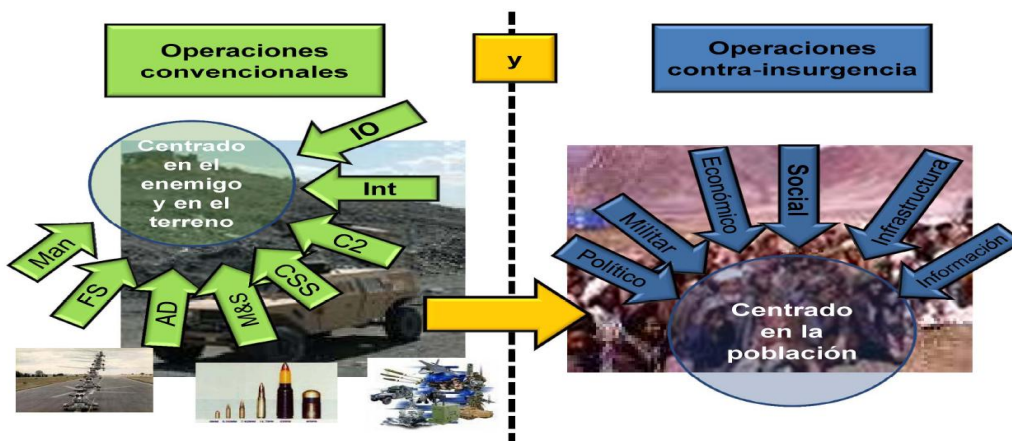
Among the first operations in Afghanistan, there was the one called "Khyber" which was executed in the province of Paktja, in the southeast of Afghanistan, by the end of summer in 2007. U.S and Afghan troops had prepared a series of actions to: clean the province of Taliban insurgents, guarantee the most important communication route of the area and stop the suicide attacks against US troops and local governors. During the operation, an analyst from the HTS, the anthropologist Tracy Benoit detected that the number of widows in extreme precariousness in the area was very high and this enormously influenced the pressure exerted on their children to join an insurgent force which members were very well paid. Following her advice, US army officers started a training program for these widows. She also interpreted that the beheading of an old man from a local tribe was not only going to intimidate the population but also to divide and weaken the Zadran, one of the strongest tribes of the south of Afghanistan. Consequently, U.S and Afghan officers made an effort to reinforce the union between the Zadran in order to hamper the Taliban operations in the area.

³ A "proof-of-concept" is the way in which the US Government refers to an idea which is being proven for a new project, in which case the funds for its financing need to be approved each year. If this idea passes the test phase then the project becomes a "program with register" and, this way, obtains permanent financing.

3. DEFINING THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: THE POPULATION AS A DETERMINANT FACTOR

The US Department of Defense sets forth a series of factors that the Army should take into account when making a decision during the operations planning process: mission, enemy, terrain and temperature, troops and available support, deadline and, usually added in urban operational environments, civilian considerations. The tactical planning included in this concept focuses on the analysis in depth of areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people and events.

However, it is the analysis of variables from the political, military, economic and social fields, as well as of infrastructure, information, orographic and temporal matters, which provides the foundation of the operational environment in the study, either at a tactical or an operational level. When the type of operations carried out changes (from conventional to counter-insurgency) the perspective of the operational terrain in the study also changes, which means that instead of focusing in the enemy and the terrain, it focuses on the host population.



Picture's translation:

Left (green text): (rectangle) operaciones convencionales: conventional operations; (circle) centrado en el enemigo y en el terreno: focused on the enemy and the terrain.

Right (blue text): (rectangle) operaciones contra-insurgencia: counter-insurgency operations; (circle) centrado en la población: focused on the population; arrows from left to right: political, military, economic, social, infrastructure and information.

In conventional operations, military planners and executants have learned to resolve tactical problems with elements from the operation system of the battle space (please, see the picture): information, command and control, tanks, artillery, intelligence, air defense, etc., i.e. tactical solutions. In fact, strictly speaking, the training and experience of the military has shown them that if they do not consider these aspects, there could be a tactical failure.

Nevertheless, if we accept that the population is the key, all the operations must be executed in the human environment. Thus, the military power alone is not enough. The insurgent forces have noticed that, if the population is in the center of gravity, there must be aspects, different from the military power, influencing their decisions, reactions and loyalties. It is a political fight, so there must be elements of political potential that must now be added to the traditional and conventional ways of resolving military problems.

But the analysis in depth that needs to be done now must be tridimensional. It has to take into account the perspective of the local population, as well as of the insurgent and counter-insurgent forces, without underestimating the host government.

4. CONSTRUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT: OPERATIONAL NEED

The HTS project responds to the so-called operational need of establishing teams of experts and socio-cultural support tools in combat units deployed in military operations. This was a consequence of a series of events and actions that documented and validated the operational need in the capabilities and functions of analysis and evaluation of the human field from the area of operations.

Socio-cultural capabilities in the operational need

Between 2005 and 2007, several combatant commands from the US Army and Marines deployed in Iraq, or getting ready to deploy in support of the troops surge, submitted requests related to the urgent operational needs among which tactical and operational capabilities in social science were included. The first request was made in 2005, from the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan.

Socio-cultural capabilities in the fight against IED⁴

The research about the matter seemed to show that the attacks with IED were a violent response to military actions that, somehow, transgressed local costumes or traditions. Then, a better socio-cultural understanding of the operational reality could help the process of designing military operations and could greatly prevent the cultural conflict and thus reduce the risk. In 2006, the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) approves the operational need of this type of capabilities and decides to finance the HTS proof-of-concept in the context of the fight against IED.

HTS is declared to be a joint and urgent operational need

The US Central Command (US CENTCOM) consolidated the requests from Iraq and Afghanistan, supporting the necessity of deploying a Human Terrain Team (HTT) with each combat team, together with another Human Terrain Analysis Team (HTAT) with each Marine Expeditionary Force. CENTCOM also expressed the need to develop support elements in the

⁴ Acronym for: Improvised Explosive Device.

theater and outside the theater. The US Administration processed the approval and financing of the CENTCOM statement (JUONS⁵) through an institutional mechanism for urgent acquisitions of the Department of Defense⁶.

Operational gaps

The socio-cultural operational gaps driving the urgent operational need were properly documented and identified. Commanders at all levels define them as:

- a. A Limited capability (organization, methods or tools) to research, file and transfer, during the relief in place, the information about the human field obtained during the operations.
- b. Very limited bases of socio-cultural knowledge
- c. Inability to exploit unclassified cultural information from open sources.
- d. An insufficient doctrine, tactic, technique and procedures to make an ethnography or a descriptive study of the costumes and traditions present in an area under enemy control or with hostile elements, where the friendly forces cannot operate with success with the current capabilities and the existing limitations (denied area).
- e. An absence of specific expert support to the commanders for the comprehension of the human field.
- f. A lack of access to the external sources of information and knowledge which allow an efficient use of these ones.

As the Joint Urgent Operation Need Statement, which we referred previously, said the US Armed Forces kept operating in Afghanistan without experts with the specific tools or comprehension needed to gather data, which means without the consolidation, visualization and analysis of socio-cultural factors of operational importance in the battle space.

If those capabilities were not provided to the Armed Forces, and in particular to the combat units, the dangers will be:

- Continued loss of US soldiers' and Marines lives.
- Permanent lack of optimization of the commanders' capability to evaluate and analyze the complex interaction between the different tribes and identify those Al Qaida Associated Militant (AQAM) leaders operating among the population.
- Constant risk of mission failure and of unintended effects of second order with strategic consequences.
- Continued cycle of local cultural knowledge loss during unit relief in place, which causes the needless loss of soldiers and marines' lives during the period of adaptation to the environment of the new unit.

⁵ Joint Urgent Operational Need Statement.

⁶ Joint Rapid Action Cell (JRAC)

The Iraq JUONS documented the operational gaps and pointed out that the deficiencies in the human field existed at all command echelons. It also pointed out the importance of the detailed knowledge about the host populations in the areas of Iraq where there was a troops reinforcement to conduct counter-insurgency and stabilization operations.

To operate without knowing in real time what motivates or drives the behavior of the host population largely limits the situational awareness of the commanders and increases the risk for the Armed Forces. Although these processes and organizations were established in support of the commanders, to visualize friendly and enemy forces, that was not the case regarding the comprehension of the host population socio-cultural aspects, because the commanders lacked in their units the experts who could advice them.

All this process leads us to the systematization and institutionalization of the analysis and evaluation program in the human field, which essential tasks are defined as: the selection, recruitment and deployment process integrated in military units of socio-cultural operational capabilities; the socio-cultural research and analysis of important operational realities; and the development and maintenance of a database about this matter.

These tasks are aimed at providing support to the important decisions-making process in the military operations, in order to improve its operational efficiency and preserve and share the acquired socio-cultural or institutional knowledge.

5. PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND COMPONENTS

The capabilities established for the HTS are structured in two basic types: the operational and the institutional capabilities. The operational capabilities represent the teams deployed in the terrain, and the institutional ones permanent structures established by the Army in its military bases in the Continental US territory (CONUS). The HTS uses its institutional capabilities (Army Enduring Base) to recruit, train, deploy and maintain its operational capabilities.

Operational capabilities: deployed teams

The operational needs and the combatant command's requirements determine the quantity and type of deployable teams. The number of these teams can increase or decrease, depending on the operational demands of the combatant command; they are formed and deployed responding to a demand, so they are not a permanent structure. The requests of combatant command must be validated and funded annually. There are different types of teams:

■ *Human Terrain Teams (HTT):*

The human terrain teams are composed of 5-6 members (civilian and military) and are deployed at the Brigade and Regimental level. These teams, integrated in the unit, make

field researches among the local population and represent the "human terrain" in the planning, preparation, execution and evaluation of the operations. A team includes a team leader, one or two experts in social science, a research manager, and one or two human terrain information analysts with specific local knowledge. When possible, teams need to have at least a woman, to facilitate the access to the female element, often inaccessible.

■ *Human Terrain Analysis Teams (HTAT):*

The human terrain analysis teams are deployed in support of the echelons above the Brigade/Regiment (Division, Marine Expeditionary Force and Regional commands); in Afghanistan there are currently seven HTAT. These teams are integrated within the commander's staff, they make field and unclassified open sources research, they also synthesize the information from the teams deployed with subordinate units and they finally analyze the information of the human terrain in support of the commander's military decision making process. Among the 5 or 6 civilian and military members, there is a team leader, one or two experts in social science, one or two research managers and one or two human terrain analysts.

■ *Theatre Coordination Elements (TCE):*

The coordination element is deployed in the operations theatre (now only in Afghanistan), and consists of between 6 or 8 members (civilian and military) with a team leader, three experts in social science, at least one research manager, and up to two human terrain analysts. The TCE provides socio-cultural support to the theatre staff and to the decision makers; it also coordinates and manages the Social Science Research and Analysis (SSRA) capability.

■ *Theatre Support Office (TSO)*

In Iraq and Afghanistan, it provides administrative and logistics support to the deployed HTS teams. It includes a theater support officer and a support team of variable size.

■ *Social Science Research and Analysis (SSRA) Teams*

Depending on the supported unit information needs, the TCE assign the SSRA the task to develop a research plan. The SSRA uses trained, indigenous polling organizations and SMEs to compile data through polls, surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussion. SSRA presents reports to the TCE for its dissemination in all the operations theatre.

Institutional Capabilities: Army enduring base

They include a Project Office, Reachback research, HTS Training, and Knowledge Management. Apart from the Continental Centre of research and reachback, they can be included in leadership, management, administrative, educational and training capabilities.

■ *Reachback Research Centre (RRC)*

It provides, from the US continental territory, direct support to deployed teams and elements. It consists of social scientists, uniformed and civilian analysts, organized in regional cells. Through the access to classified information and open sources, the RRC provides an immediate and in depth analysis in support of the HTS teams requests, deployed to cope with immediate needs of the military units in the operations theater. Moreover, it populates and maintains the HTS knowledge repository, while concurrently surfacing and mitigating key database gaps. Currently, the RRC provides support to Afghanistan and to the combatant commands requiring it.

6. REMARKS

The HTS, although it is not an applied social science program, means the execution of research and analysis from this field in a war zone, where the access to a target population is more difficult and slanted. The conclusions and recommendations made by the experts in these conditions are influenced by the limitations they find in their work.

The necessary tridimensional perspective, from which the study must be done, requires the participation of social scientists able to come up with an hypothesis, identifying the type of information needed to be gathered about the host population which is important for the achievement of the unit's mission and the security of its troops and the host population itself. They also need to identify where and how that information must be gathered, and to analyze and evaluate that information from different perspectives (population, insurgent forces and counter-insurgent forces/host government), systematizing it, and to draw valid conclusions which allow to make recommendations to the commander, at all the operation levels, and, finally, to make important decisions for the mission achievement avoiding as far as possible the raid in dangerous situations of the troops and population.

In all this process social psychology plays —together with anthropology—a fundamental role, because when they try to "win the hearts and minds" of the population, insurgent forces, as well as counter-insurgent ones, want the same thing: the population support. The insurgent forces have the advantage of their profound knowledge about the human field where they move and the force of their main weapon: terror. In contrast, counter-insurgent forces have the disadvantage of ignoring the human field where they operate and of having less strong methods.

In many cases, the insurgent forces operate with hybrid methods, in which, together with terror, they carry out tasks that, somehow, make up for the deficiencies of the population. That is the case of the Taliban "bicycle judge", who acts in the absence of a legal system that resolves the controversies between neighbors. Finding a way of providing a system of disputes' solution for the population, would distract part of their attention and gratitude from the insurgent forces to counter-insurgent ones and the government.

The use of anthropologists provides the knowledge of the host population needed by counter-insurgent forces. Meanwhile, the experts on social psychology could help in the selection of the most appropriate methods to reach and win the population. This is a task in

which the job of the psychological operations units is essential, but in which the systematization of the scientific method application could improve the results. The combination of both, HTS teams and psychological operations teams, could bring benefits at all the operation levels and in the short, medium and long term.

The recommendations from this type of study produce, generally, their results in the medium and long term, so its execution could end up being a little bit difficult to understand for the commanders, because their time frame of deployment goes from 6 to 12 months, in the most extended cases. In particular, this happens when these recommendations are produced at operation levels of tactical character. The problem is not that benefits are not produced in the short term, actually, the evaluations and recommendations of these teams can help to resolve immediate problems. They can also provide benefits in the medium term, because it is possible to evaluate the impact of a unit's work depending on the improvements in the conditions of the human field in which this unit operates. And, which is more important, why.

The restrictions in the time frame are the most difficult part to understand for the command units at a tactical and operational level.

In most cases, they tend to think about numbers of attacks or casualties, excluding other social, political and economic factors which directly affect their planning.

It is important to point out that a bad combination of personalities can ruin the integration of the team in the unit and that the integration of civilians, in the military patrols in a war zone, requires specific training and protection provision, so it is very demanding concerning human and material resources. Moreover, the staff that must protect itself is not necessarily trained in the protocols required by this protection. If the training before the deployment is not achieved, the command will be facing the necessity to increase its troops, or to limit the mobility of these teams.

The use in intelligence tasks of population studies, made by social experts working under the chain of command, has generated a heated debate in anthropologists associations. They criticize the use of this kind of studies in support of military operations and they state that, with this, the target populations of the study are threatened. However, among the anthropologists, some defend that the relation between anthropology and war is not unnatural, they even declare that anthropology emerged initially as a discipline in the service of the art of war, and that both have been merged several times. And they defend it without having to betray the basic ethical rules and principles that must govern anthropologist studies to protect the interest and welfare of the studied population. On the other hand, the detractors of the program declare that the HTS project violates those principles and rules.



Dr Kathlee Reedy, HTS anthropologist
Shembawat Bazaar, Khost, Afghanistan

The way in which the teams are coordinated and integrated in the chain of command is also a controversial question and difficult to balance. The US HTS Project showed a lot of kindness when it intentionally decided to be ambiguous about this subject, consequently, officers can decide how and when to use the teams in their units. This way, if all the appropriate personalities are gathered together, the work will be amazingly done, but a bad officer or companion can ruin everything. Likewise, there is not a good marketing work of the own work at the lowest levels. Those who have the power to decide in Washington love the idea. But to translate their benefits at lower decision levels can be difficult.

Beyond the current operations, in the US Army, the socio-cultural capabilities are conceived as a critical resource for the combatant commands when executing the planning and, in order to manage the research efforts and to analyze the collection of important data, when describing the human field of the AOR and informing about potential hotspots of conflicts. These activities will allow the deterrence of conflicts and stabilization operations and to habilitate the capability to respond to the crisis and the transition to the sustained combat operations.

7. SPAIN AND THE HOST POPULATION

In their operations, the Spanish Armed Forces face the necessity to know and treat the economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the host population and of how to use the information to plan and execute their actions and protect their material and human assets.

We have seen how, in the case of the US HTS, the deployed teams of experts fulfill two main functions:

- To provide the commander a socio-cultural interpreting of everything happening in the area under its responsibility, and
- To facilitate the commander its relations with leaders, representatives and other key personalities.

In the Spanish case, to consider that the host population is a variable when making the planning and executing the actions is not something new. Although this has not ended up in a systematization of the analysis, or in the creation of specific capabilities within the Spanish units. The careful process of preparation for the deployment of the different contingents and the organization of the relief in place allow the new units to come into contact with all the leaders and representatives with which the departing unit has established relations.

The Spanish Armed Forces previously prepare and distribute "area manuals" which, in a simple and direct way, gather basic and useful information of various kinds about the characteristics of the area where they are going to develop their operations. These documents highlight the importance of the human field in the area of responsibility. They include costumes, traditions, polite forms of address, basic expressions in the local language, etc.

Thanks to the preparation they receive, and to the tools like the area manual, our units have less difficulty to move in their operations' human terrain. Through the empathy they show to the populations, they fill, in most cases with skill, the gap that appeared due to the lack of maps of that human terrain. And having those maps facilitates the knowledge of the tools provided by social science.

There are several units which function is to gather that information. However, in most of the cases, I suppose that these units gather the information without a combined line of action previous to the deployment, a part from the important mentions about the civilian matters which appear in the operation plans in the appendix. Units of information, intelligence, counterintelligence, psychological operations or civilian-military cooperation, among which the ones making up the deployment, gather very useful information about the host population, analyzing it according to the different needs and final clients. The staff, with a few exceptions, of these teams has only a military training. This fact limits the analysis and the evaluation of gathered data and information; even the collection of information and data itself, limiting also its utility in the training and development of the commander decision-making process. This impact can be more or less important depending on the level at which the troops have been deployed and of the responsibility that the commander has in relation with the decisions-making process.

According to my experience, in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the Spanish Armed Forces show, during their deployment, a high level of empathy with the host populations. This characteristic make it easier for them to establish relations with the host populations, even if they are very different. The comment made by the Army General McChrystal in the headquarter of ISAF in Kabul, 12th Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (COM ISAF), in the situation point after he visited the then Combat Outpost (COP) Bernardo de Gálvez, in Sang Atesh, a town of the province of Badghis under Spanish responsibility, can be used as an example. He said that, during his visit, he found the Spanish people from the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) playing soccer with the Afghan people from the Afghan National Army (ANA), declaring that that behavior was what he meant by mentoring and urging everyone to establish relations of this kind with their mentors. There are measures ordered from Kabul for the operation's transition phase that the Spanish have been doing since their arrival to Afghanistan, something that I witnessed, as regards PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Teams), during my visit to Qalay-I-Naw, as a Political Advisor of the NATO Representative in Afghanistan, in January 2010.

And, however, I think that their task is not that effective, regarding the necessary transmission of knowledge, tools and capabilities, which are normally lost (at least some of them) with the successive relief in place. Maybe this happens because the systematization when applying the acquired knowledge about the human field is made in a more intuitive than scientific way.

We are talking about a partial loss because there are permanent structures, at a national level, which allow the preparation and the monitoring of the operations, like the Operations

Command Defense Staff, the Army Training and Doctrine, as well as structures of analysis and support to intelligence, like the Intelligence Center of the Armed Forces, which remain the same during the operation. These structures, together with procedures like the "learned lessons", make an effort trying to prevent a loss of the accumulated experience during the relief in place.

The support provided by the Armed Forces interpreters in this matter is also very important. Their stay in the area of operations goes far beyond the one of the military troops, covering in some cases, and I remember the operation in Kosovo, the totality of the mission. Their information and advice prove to be very valuable regarding the human field and they contribute to the permanence of the historical memory. However, a small civilian-military team, which would include experts in social science, integrated in the chain of command of the unit, under the authority of the team leader of this unit, could provide a perspective of analysis with a strong disciplinary base and with greater scientific rigor. It would allow to better systematize the acquired knowledge, as well as a continuity in the function. This way, the transfer of the historical memory of the operation would be guaranteed almost completely at each relief in place of the Armed Forces.

In this respect, the possibility of evaluating the role that the Voluntary Reserve (*Reserva Voluntaria*) could play in the process is added. In 2002, the Voluntary Reserve is created in Spain as a necessity of the Defense in order to reinforce the capabilities of the Armed Forces, in principle in areas where its troops do not have the necessary specialties. Reinforcing the military capabilities with experts in anthropology, sociology, social psychology, history or philology can complete the abilities needed to study the information gathered for the analysis and evaluation of the human field, but also when deciding what information is important to gather. With a small cost, the presence of these experts in social science will provide a great value added to the decision process of the commander.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The HTS provides the military units a high level global social analysis capability to be able to evaluate the needs and the impact that their actions have over the local population. This way, they help the commanders and other governmental representatives to make much more effective strategic and operational decisions. They treat the origin of the problem and not only the symptoms, like the operations against insurgent forces usually do.

The right knowledge of the surroundings facilitates the management of the operation by optimizing its resources and the achievement of the mission. In the case of Afghanistan and the OMLT, a profound knowledge of the Afghan religious practices and their incidence in everyday life would allow, for instance, to better plan the formation tasks and the educational and training cycles of the Army, as well as the quadrants.

The execution of the tasks carried out by the HTS teams is distinguished essentially by the application to the process of multiple disciplinary frames which enrich and facilitate it. The

use of HTS teams allows the systematization of the information's collection and analysis process about the human field, according to the rigor required by the scientific method of evaluation, and it also allows to include that factor in the process of planning and to recommend lines of actions which tend to modify behaviors.

The application of the social science takes time if it is done with scientific rigor and it is very difficult to quantify the impact that a team of these characteristics can have (the decision-making bodies generally expect that the extent in which any organization has reduced its violence is quantified by a percentage), an impact that essentially has a qualitative character because the war is also difficult to measure.

Although HTS appeared as a response to the current deficiencies in a situation of conflict, having socio-cultural capabilities can be more effective before the conflicts start. Moreover, these capabilities are more effective if the teams are deployed in areas of pre-conflict and post-conflict situation, because they can move with more liberty in order to go out and speak with the population, and, through this, they help to calm everyone down before people get angry and the combats start.

Despite the risks and drawbacks, the HTS provides a high added value to the US combat units deployed in war zones, and even higher if the consequences in the medium term for the troops with which it is deployed are evaluated. We should turn our attention to the key concept of stability when we evaluate the suitability of programs like the HTS. The final goal can only be to build a stable basis that will eliminate step-by-step the reasons for violence, and ultimately, to win the war.

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DOCUMENTS OF INTEREST

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