

## **HUMAN ASPECTS OF C-IED**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When we look back in time at NATO, it seems that the major concern for 50 years was to get more material power than the Soviet Union; and that the qualitative focus was on weapon systems technology. However, it is now common to hear and read that the human aspects are increasingly important in today's operations. This does not mean that the human aspects were not important before. History shows that human aspects were always addressed during wars. Traditionally, they were tackled through four objectives:

- To ensure the friendly forces' will and ability to fight
- To undermine the enemy forces' will to fight
- To ensure the populations' support to the friendly military
- To undermine the populations' support to the enemy military

If the military concern for the human aspects is not new, nevertheless, many things have changed; which make the human aspects even more important in operations.

- NATO military are assigned the missions to contribute to stabilization, reconstruction and humanitarian relief. The resulting new objectives are to gain legitimacy among populations in theatre and among the global public opinion.
- The public oversight on the military operations is increasing; and military are more often requested to justify their decisions and actions, even those conducted at the lower levels of command.
- The communication age has built a new social reality; where military actions are presented to the whole world in a matter of minutes; and almost immediately impact the global public opinion. High tech telecommunication has also a significant direct impact on the soldiers' opinion and behavior.

The use of IED is not new either. Some consider that IED were used in every armed conflict since the invention of gunpowder. But IED use has also significantly evolved over the last decade.

- Due to new communication technology and social patterns, to the growing public oversight on military operations and to the growing public sensitivity to casualties, the non-kinetic effects of IED have drastically increased.
- The wide spread availability of inexpensive technology multiplied the IED networks' ways and opportunities to operate.

These trends justify today's emphasis on Counter IED. In addition, they are expected to increase in the future.

## **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

### Definition

The human environment of an operation consists of all the people impacting, directly or indirectly, the operation.

### The people

The people impacting C-IED activities could be gathered in four main categories.

- The friendly forces personnel, this category consists of the NATO force, Coalition forces and host nation security forces.
- The NATO domestic public opinion.
- The enemy or adversary fighters and their supporters, active or passive.
- The neutral populations in theatre.

Even if useful to some extent; this categorization is too simplistic for a proper understanding of the Human Environment.

First, because each category is composed of many sub groups, making it very complex and difficult to understand and influence. The NATO forces, for example, are composed of 28 nations, 24 languages and a significant amount of cultures and sub-cultures. One single nation public opinion, for example, is divided into various groups with often different opinions of how the military operation should be led. Opposition political parties may show limited support to their government's use of the national military capabilities. In the specific case of C-IED, the enemy forces could be composed of a large amount of different groups; each of them requiring a different approach. Finally, the populations in theatre can be a patchwork of countless cultures and sub-cultures, like in Afghanistan.

Second, people may move from one category to another.

This is typical of the local populations, which may shift their supportive to hostile. Active supporters of the enemy cause, and even fighters may also shift to a neutral position momentarily or definitively. Unclear position of some members of the host nation security forces is also possible. Finally, sub groups within the coalition domestic opinion could also deny support to NATO's cause; or even support the adversary.

Understanding and influencing of such a complex human environment cannot be improvised or acquired only by reading books; it requires extensive expertise in human aspects and persistent close contact with the people of the specific groups.

### Human Behavior

A decisive asset in the C-IED endeavor is to be able to understand people's behavior; and answer the question, why common/neutral people can get to support the enemy cause, passively or actively, or even join the enemy fighters.

This ability requires taking a close look at what drives human behavior.

The root driver of human behavior is the preservation of mankind : the *reproductive*

instinct; which concretizes in creating families and raising children. This first driver is seconded by the *survival* instinct; which drives to produce food, build shelter, and ensure safety, health and security. These two instinctive drivers are then directly supported by a third driver : *group affiliation*. Indeed, being part of a group facilitates all aspect of reproduction and survival. But being part of a group comes also at a price. It implies to abide with the group rules. These group rules, in their initial simplest form, aim at maintaining peace among the group members. Their objective is to deconflict interpersonal relationship. So they define what belongs to whom(food, land, shelter); and who can mate with whom (sexual behavior). As time passes and the group grows bigger and more organized, the set of rules becomes extensive and complex. It progressively tends to regulate all the activities of the group member. This includes rules like: don't steal; stop at the red light; speak this way, work hard ... All these rules constitute the culture of a group. (They were also categorized in *belonging, esteem* and *self-actualization* needs by A. Maslow). Well-organized social groups have reached the point where survival outside the group is perceived as almost impossible. In this case, the behaviors driven by the *group affiliation* need become more important than those driven by the instincts (*survival* and *reproduction*). Examples of this are the firefighter or the soldier who sacrifice their life to ensure the group's prevalence. A more common example is who dedicates his/her life to achieve higher social status through work, while neglecting health and family. It seems that group or cultural obligations have become central to almost everybody's lifestyle and behavior.

In summary, what is important about human behavior is that it depends on both instinctive and group affiliation drivers. These intermingle into complex relationships specific to each individual, place and time.

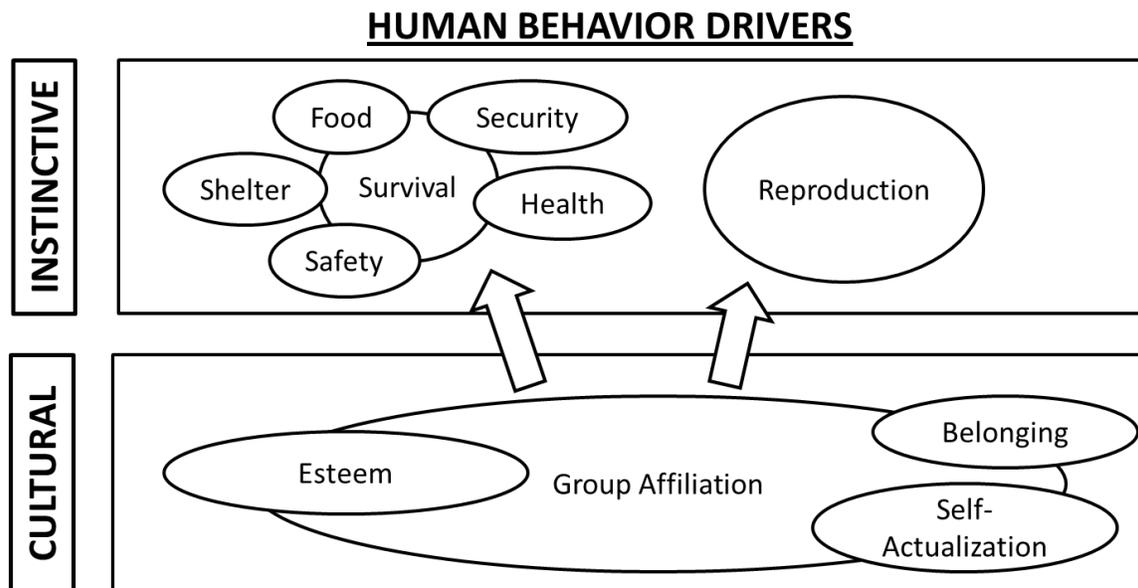


Figure 1

Applying the human behavior theories to the C-IED case helps understand why

neutral people can get to passively support the adversary. It happens when this behavior is the shortest path to security/survival, while conform to the group rules. Becoming an enemy fighter might be driven by the will to achieve higher social status within a specific group; together with ensuring survival by receiving a significant amount of money as a reward for this. Suicide bombers, finally, sacrifice their life to a cause, and so achieve the highest social status (in the afterlife though) but, most of all, provide their families with security and material advantages as the reward for their sacrifice. These examples show some mechanisms used by the adversary to influence people's behavior to its benefit. This is what the C-IED wants to break or better, exploit to its own advantage.

## THE FIGHT

### Adversary's objective and method

Even if causing casualties is the most visible and immediate effect of the IED *modus operandi*, it is the secondary, medium and long-term non-kinetic effects of it that are the real purpose of the adversary. These secondary non-kinetic effects impact the whole human environment (friendly and enemy forces, local and domestic public opinion).

Thanks to its IED attack, the adversary is perceived as powerful, able to provide security to its members, able to cast insecurity on its opponents. IED attacks soon create a growing insecurity feeling among friendly troops, directly challenging their survival instinct. The first reaction to this feeling is to fight back; but since the IED attacker is most of the time able to vanish before the reaction; the counter attack is often useless and might generate collateral damages alienating neutral population. Eventually these first and second level effects reinforce each other in a growing feeling of insecurity and weakness among the friendly forces, paralyzing its actions and damaging its relationship with the population. The third level effect is the amount of post-traumatic stress (PTS) emerging within the friendly forces.

Domestic public opinion, in the friendly countries, is highly sensitive to the IED casualties. Unlike the suicide bomber's family, which is granted higher social status, the IED victim's family develops an insecurity and weakness feeling, which is soon conveyed to other potential victims' families and eventually to a big part of the domestic public opinion. The only way to free a family from this drudging feeling is to redeploy the beloved soldiers; this is the perception IED is meant to spread. Since the IED attacks also makes innocent victims among the neutral population, this group becomes also affected by that same insecurity feeling. While fighting the enemy might be a way to remove insecurity; having the friendly forces withdraw seems to be a much easier and direct path to the termination of the IED attacks. And this unveils the root objective of the IED network, to get everyone unsupportive of the NATO forces presence. Their method is to propagate insecurity feeling all over the human environment. At the same time, making them almost un-targetable by the NATO forces; the fastest way to remove the insecurity is perceived to be the NATO forces withdrawal; resulting in no more IED innocent victims within the population, no more beloved soldier at risk for the friendly domestic public opinion, no more risk and PTS for the friendly troops. This is the backbone of the terrorist action.

### Friendly forces' objectives and methods

The friendly forces' objective is to break this logic and return its own methods against the enemy network. Stated like this it sounds pretty simple. Achieving it is however recognized as one of the major challenges NATO forces ever faced.

To do so, the human environment needs to be addressed through its four categories of people.

Limiting the insecurity of the forces obviously include the material protection against the IED attacks, and the limitation of their physical effects (injuries, fatalities). This trend covers completely the *defeat the device* activity; and covers

partly the *prepare the force* activity. It has already derived various tactics, techniques and procedures, together with a large amount of technology solutions. However, the fight against IED cannot be won by these protective measures only <sup>1</sup> and, as a consequence, having to mitigate the secondary non-kinetic effects among the friendly forces is critical to the success of the operation. How well the friendly soldiers can resist the pressure of insecurity and resist the weakness feeling, not only directly impact their effectiveness, but also significantly influence the domestic public opinion. In this information battle, the domestic public opinion needs to be convinced that the group is more important than individual security. While dealing with the domestic part of the human environment is assigned to military and civilian Strategic Communication assets, preparing the force to stand the pressure falls entirely within the C-IED *Prepare the Force* activity. This activity must ensure, not only that the force members are psychologically strong, but also that they have the right understanding of the situation and the right attitude toward the local populations and even the enemy fighters. This means that violent kinetic overreactions have to be unlearned; since they are counterproductive.

Since attacking the enemy forces in a reactive mode, after the explosion of the device, was found little effective, the C-IED experts sought to be proactive and focused on the *left of boom* actions; this is to say the actions preventing the device to go off. The *left of boom* activities are not limited to detect and disrupt the device (*Defeat the Device* activity) but extend very far into the chain of events that enable the IED attack; such as the recruitment and training of the attackers, and the acquisition of the financial means to support the enemy activities. The full array of these enemy activities constitutes the IED network. C-IED intends to disrupt or neutralize these activities through its *Attack the Network* activity. The first phase of it is to acquire a thorough understanding of the network, its mechanisms, its members and its linkages with the rest of the environment. This understanding is acquired by Intelligence Agents. In the final phase the network is attacked with kinetic and non-kinetic means. This attack is conducted mainly by traditional and special kinetic forces, Psychological and Information Operations targeting the network.

However, *Attacking the Network* cannot be successful without having the enemy networks deprived of the support of the population. This is pursued by two different types of influence activities. The first type makes use of psychological and information operations targeting the population. These operations are preceded by an understanding phase where experts in human terrain<sup>2</sup> gather open sources information, fuse and analyze it so it makes operational sense and supports decision

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to a quote from CIED document

<sup>2</sup> Human Environment Experts are personnel with specific background knowledge, skills and expertise in the Human Environment. Their mission is to conduct or support the tasks of Understanding, Operationalizing, Adapting to, and Influencing the Human Environment. Average personnel, even after specific training, cannot be considered as Human Environment Experts

making. The product of this is then exploited by the strategic communication assets in their influence activities.

The second type is relationship building. For this one, the local people are directly engaged, face to face, in order to build relationship and trust. In this process understanding and influence happen simultaneously from the outset.

Strategic communication and Relationship building are two types of influence activities which complete one another. Strategic communication operations usually address broader audiences through the media at operational level; while relationship building addresses individual and small groups through dialogue at the lower levels.

Strategic Communication and Relationship Building cannot however be conducted by the same personnel. The reason for this is that when local people are engaged with the purpose of information gathering; they generally don't build a trust relationship with the information gatherers. As a consequence, two types of personnel should be working in parallel, the human terrain information gatherers and the relationship builders.

At this point, we have identified the three different C-IED functions addressing the human environment: the Intelligence information gathering, the Strategic Communication operations, and the Relationship building. Eventually, the right blend of these three functions is key to a successful C-IED and should be materialized at every echelon of the chain of command; down to the platoon level.

### C-IED Human Environment Functions

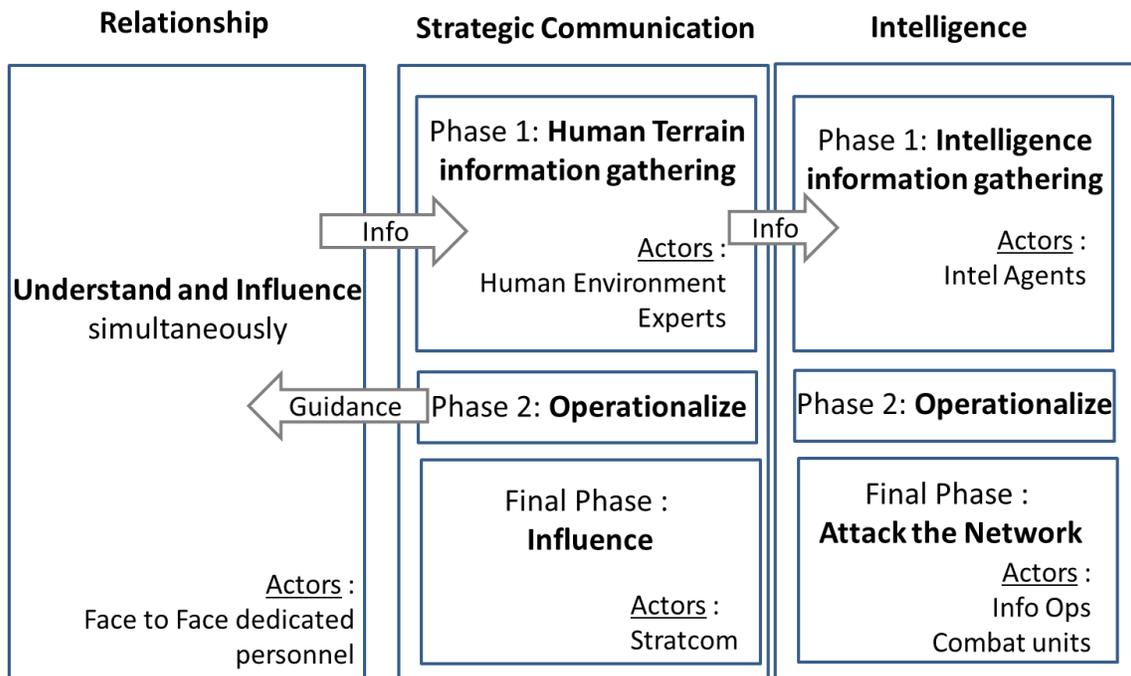


Figure 2



## CAPABILITIES

To conduct successful C-IED, NATO wants a coherent process ensuring that the human aspects are taken care of at every level and every stage of an operation. In the same way that the operational commander needs to Understand, Operationalize, Adapt to, and Influence the enemy; he/she wants to Understand, Operationalize, Adapt to, and Influence the human environment<sup>3</sup>. Let's detail these four steps.

### UNDERSTAND

A systematic process is required to continuously gather and analyze relevant information about the human environment. Conform to the COIN doctrine, this process should not only involve expert capabilities (such as Target Audience Analysis Teams) and the intelligence community, but should be based on the contribution of every member of the NATO forces<sup>4</sup>.

As Sun Tsu wrote. Military success depends on how well you know your enemies and yourself. As a consequence, understanding the perceptions, needs, beliefs, values of the NATO soldier is part of the equation too.

Existing capabilities and assets contributing to the Understand step include Intelligence, **Human Environment Experts (deployed and reach back)**, Strategic Communication and every unit in theatre.

### OPERATIONALIZE

Operationalize means making military sense of the understanding, translating it into objectives to meet, decisions to take and actions to conduct. This step is usually covered by operational planning processes. The human aspects then need to be properly inserted into these processes. The use of non-kinetic tools, such as conveying a specific message to a specific audience, also needs to be systematically addressed at this stage. Existing capabilities and functions contributing to this step include Strategic Communication, the **Human Environment Experts**, expert advisors such as CULAD, GENAD, and many of the HQ Staff members.

### ADAPT TO

Most of the military units are organized, equipped, trained and minded for combat, combat support or service support. In complex situations, typical to C-IED, however, the units need to be able to perform tasks outside of these categories. "It takes a network to defeat a network"<sup>5</sup>. To adapt the military capabilities to the specificity of the tasks and to the specific human environment is an important step in the process that needs to be systematically addressed by the whole chain of command.

### INFLUENCE

The ultimate C-IED goal related to the human environment is to influence it. This is

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<sup>3</sup> NATO's Minimum Capability Requirement, Para 556 to 561

<sup>4</sup> NATO COIN Doctrine, AJP 3.4.4

<sup>5</sup> General (Retired) Stanley McChrystal, Foreign Policy, March/April 2011

to say, to shape the perceptions and behaviors of the people so they support the NATO operation. Some expert capabilities, such as PSYOPS, are designed for this purpose; but, as explained in the COIN doctrine, every military has an important role to play in reaching this goal through building relationship and through Information Operations. This step also includes the influence activities supporting the *Attack the Network* activity.

This process, each of its steps, and the capabilities it requires, need to be implemented at all levels of the hierarchy (Strategic, Operational and Tactical) down to the platoon level. To do so, the contribution of every member of the NATO force is required, and the appropriate mindset, as explained in the COIN doctrine needs to be adopted. Besides this, the existence of expert personnel, military and civilian is critical to the C-IED success.

## CHALLENGES

As of today, even if some of its constituting capabilities exist, the afore explained process constitutes a requirement, not yet a reality. Much is still to be done to fully implement the needed capabilities. Existing capabilities are facing coordination issues; sometimes they are even in competition for the acquisition of the needed experts. C-IED not only depends on better implementation of these capabilities, but should contribute to their improvement while avoiding competing against them. COLLABORATION should be the motto.

Another important requirement that is not met yet, is the adoption of the right MINDSET by all military. This means the will to give a high priority to the human aspects.

## WAY AHEAD

C-IED success depends on the efficiency of the Understand, Operationalize Adapt to and Influence process supported by an active collaboration between various communities :intelligence, Human Environment Capabilities, Strategic Communication, and the whole chain of command. Success also depends on the C-IED community's active contribution to it and to infusing the appropriate mindset.

### The Human Environment Capabilities Study

All the capabilities, functions and assets contributing to Understand, Operationalize, Adapt to, and Influence the Human Environment are currently under review as requested by the NDPP. The Human Environment Capabilities Study's purpose is to identify shortcomings among these capabilities and recommend solution. C-IED should benefit from the outcome of this study scheduled in 2014.

## CONCLUSIONS

The western society's sensitivity to casualties made of the fight against IED a top priority. While a significant amount of focus was initially dedicated to the force protection and to defeat the IED device; these obvious and immediately visible measures proved not to be enough to meet the C-IED challenges. Success in C-IED implies addressing the root causes of this threat; attacking the C-IED networks; understanding and influencing their human environment. This is the human aspect C-IED, COIN and stabilization operations have in common; they share the need to truly understand and influence the people. In theatre, this concretizes into the need for similar capabilities; manned by military and civilian experts in the human aspects. Given the difficulty to train or hire these experts, resulting in the short supply of this kind of personnel; efficient collaboration and mutual support between the various capabilities and assets focusing on the human environment is critical. In other words, C-IED cannot be successful if COIN, **Knowledge Development**, Human Intelligence and Strategic Communication are not successful.

Today, in spite of one decade-long efforts, success in this field has not been clearly achieved yet. C-IED, perceived as more directly contributing to limit casualties, has been attracting more resources than other initiatives. This situation should enable C-IED, to significantly contribute to build the critical capabilities to Understand, Operationalize, Adapt to, and Influence the human environment; to acquire the needed amount of human environment experts at all level, strategic, operational and tactical; and to spread the appropriate mindset among NATO military and hierarchy.