

## THE UIR FRAMEWORK: AN APPROACH TO DEVELOPING CULTURALLY SAVVY LOGISTICIANS

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE UIR FRAMEWORK:  
AN APPROACH TO DEVELOPING CULTURALLY SAVVY LOGISTICIANS**

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## ABSTRACT

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An important long-term realization that has resulted from the Global War on Terror and the current counterinsurgency operations occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan is the explosion of needed cultural awareness insights that in itself has arguably created a cultural awareness revolution within the military services. The Department of Defense and the military services have placed an incredible amount of emphasis and resources to fuel this cultural awareness explosion. This paper discusses the origins of this recognized requirement for culturally savvy leaders and briefly highlights the Army's concept of the Pentathlete leader. It then examines the recommendations of the Army's Review of Education, Training and Assignments for Leaders Task Force and identifies a potential gap in the development of culturally savvy leaders. This paper introduces the Understand, Immerse, and Reinforce (UIR) Framework developed by the author as a complimentary approach to potentially fill this gap. The paper also shows how it can be applied to an Army logistician's career to demonstrate a complimentary method of increasing cross-cultural savvy and thereby providing additional benefits to the military services.



## THE UIR FRAMEWORK: AN APPROACH TO DEVELOPING CULTURALLY SAVVY LOGISTICIANS

In case you haven't noticed, there is a cultural awareness revolution occurring inside the Department of Defense and its military services. If there's one thing that has resulted from the Global War on Terror and the current counterinsurgency operations occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is the explosion of needed cultural awareness insights that in itself has arguably created a cultural awareness revolution within the military services. The proponents of this rebirth in cultural awareness are numerous. Clearly, culture has become the topic du jour in many circles within the Department of Defense these days.<sup>1</sup> Some of our national leaders in Congress have also energized this revolution. For example, Representative Ike Skelton from Missouri stated in a letter to the Secretary of Defense in 2005, "If we had better understood the Iraqi culture and mind-set, our war plans would have been even better than they were, and the plan for the postwar period would have been much better. We must improve our cultural awareness...Our policies would benefit from this not only in Iraq, but elsewhere."<sup>2</sup>

The Department of Defense and the military services have placed an incredible amount of emphasis and resources to fuel this cultural awareness explosion. Several of the military services have created a cultural training center or cultural center of excellence to develop programs to address the critical importance of cultural awareness. The Air Force created its Air University Culture and Language Center in 2006 at Maxwell Air Base in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>3</sup> The Marine Corps unveiled the Advanced Operational Cultural Learning Center in May 2005 in Quantico, Virginia.<sup>4</sup> The Army developed its Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center and

opened its doors in February 2006 at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.<sup>5</sup> Each of these cultural centers promotes cross-cultural competencies and communication in its education programs.

In addition to its Culture Center, the Army has also invested time and resources with the academic community in the development and implementation of the Human Terrain System (HTS) project in which anthropologists and social scientists deploy and are embedded with brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan serving as cultural advisors to brigade commanders.<sup>6</sup> The Army has also greatly leveraged the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) community for cultural expertise in its counterinsurgency fight in Iraq. These officers have been invaluable in negotiating the cultural obstacles involved in the hunt for insurgents crossing the border in western Iraq.<sup>7</sup>

We may often ask ourselves as a military how we overlooked the seemingly obvious importance of cultural awareness in today's complex and globally interconnected 21<sup>st</sup> century security environment. In answering that question, we need to look no further than how military cultural bias is instilled within its members as they are first introduced to a service during initial recruiting. American society is inundated through various mediums to the differences and uniqueness of our military services. Each service takes pride in accentuating its differences and highlighting its unique features compared to the other military services as evidenced by their common slogans on the advertising circuit. The U.S. Army highlights its strength - There's strong, then there's Army strong! The U.S. Marine Corps capitalizes on its specialty - The few, the proud, the Marines! The U.S. Air Force challenges to reach further - Aim High, Air Force! The U.S. Navy promises more than just a job - The Navy, not just a job, but an

adventure! All are examples articulating the uniqueness of one military service compared to another. Once an individual decides to join a particular service, the promotion of those differences and unique attributes intensifies under the guise of competition as an enabler to promote inner service culture. It is no wonder that we are not a culturally savvy military or do not effectively develop culturally savvy military officers.

These recent developments and investments by the military services in cultural awareness are critical and appear successful, but a key issue is whether the Army's focus is too narrow and centered too much on the Global War on Terror. Furthermore, leaders need to determine whether these lessons and resources focused more on a geopolitical perspective can be applied within a joint service context. Currently, U.S. military forces are involved in the largest and most important operations since Vietnam while simultaneously attempting to transform itself. A thorough and clear self awareness is absolutely essential to the success of these efforts. A key aspect of self awareness, successful joint operations, and effective transformation requires a thorough understanding of the component service cultures and their potential to effect operations.<sup>8</sup> One could certainly argue that the attention and effort to understand and educate cross-cultural awareness across the military services has been overshadowed by the requirement for cross-cultural awareness in fighting the Global War on Terror – a foreign national focus.

This paper discusses the origins of this recognized requirement for culturally savvy leaders and briefly highlights the Army's concept of the Pentathlete leader. It then examines the recommendations of the Army's Review of Education, Training and

Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) Task Force and identifies a potential gap in the development of culturally savvy leaders. This paper introduces the Understand, Immerse, and Reinforce (UIR) Framework developed by the author based on several tenets of Edgar H. Schein's embedding and reinforcing mechanisms within organizational cultures as a complimentary approach to potentially fill this gap. To illustrate a practical use of this UIR framework, this paper shows how it can be applied to an Army logistician's career to demonstrate a complimentary method of increasing cross-cultural savvy and thereby providing additional benefits to the military services. The newly established Logistics Branch may be best poised to make an innovative leap in developing cross-culturally savvy logisticians similar to the manner in which the Pentathlete leader is designed to develop the trait within Army officers. Before any of these topics can be addressed however, it is important to review the genesis of the requirement for future cultural savvy leaders.

### The Recognized Requirement

In the past, our approach to culture awareness appeared to be more through discovery learning than through effective development. As the Global War on Terror has taught us, we cannot afford this approach any longer. The probability that the majority of Army officers will now experience either working with other cultures or certainly within other cultures is much greater now than ever before. The sheer number of Army units engaged in the long war battling terrorist extremism around the globe will continue for some time as we are in a global environment defined by persistent conflict. The acceptance of cultural awareness discovery learning is not acceptable today as the stakes are simply too great. For the Army to be most effective operating in the different

environments and cultures with unique nuances, it must excel at developing culturally savvy officers across the cultural environment spectrum.

Our national leaders, Department of Defense officials, military services and our American society have seen that cultural awareness is a key component to victories in security operations and nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many television newscasts, newspaper and magazine articles, and radio features have included stories of young officers and Soldiers serving as defacto mayors of small Iraqi and Afghan villages and providing critical interactions with the local populace in order to bring security and stability to these towns. Cultural awareness and understanding are critical components to their success and to the future since today's military environment requires a global presence in conducting the war on terrorism. Our young officers and Soldiers are on the front lines in three broad and unique cross-cultural environments each and everyday – multinational environments, intergovernmental environments and joint military environments – all promoting America's national security interests.

The near future will be no different as the requirement for leaders to possess cross-cultural awareness in order to successfully fight the long war on terrorism is a theme stressed in the Department of Defense's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review. This document notes that recent operations have reinforced the critical need for U.S. forces to have greater cultural awareness and understanding to prevail in the long war to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, much like the level of understanding and cultural intelligence we developed about the Soviet Union during the Cold War.<sup>9</sup> Representative Ike Skelton from Missouri also noted in his weekly column of March 13, 2005 that

“...cultural awareness training is an investment that will enhance our national security and pay dividends for generations to come.”<sup>10</sup>

The Army appears to be at the forefront of the cultural awareness revolution with its decision to develop a Pentathlete leader that, as one of its key skills, must be able to understand and operate across cross-cultural environments. Former Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey and former Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter Schoomaker called for Army leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be Pentathletes – strong, multi-skilled leaders who are above all strategic and creative thinkers.<sup>11</sup> Recognizing that the current and future security environments will require more of Army leaders at all levels, the emphasis is now upon growing adaptive leaders to master these environments. As noted in the Army’s 2007 Posture Statement, the actions of individual Soldiers and leaders are vital to success and can have strategic consequences as we have seen in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Europe and the Americas through peace enforcement and civil support operations around the world.<sup>12</sup> With this renewed emphasis on cultural awareness and the recognized requirement to grow and develop leaders with this critical trait, the Army has developed its strategy to move forward.

### Army’s Current Strategy

As a result of the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army’s emphasis on developing pentathlete leaders to operate successfully in 21<sup>st</sup> century security environments, the Department of the Army established the Review of Education, Training and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) Task Force in July 2005.<sup>13</sup> This Task Force was to review leader education, training and assignments in order to determine how the Army should best develop its military and civilian leaders required for

the future. As a result, the RETAL Task Force developed the following Army Pentathlete Leader Model:

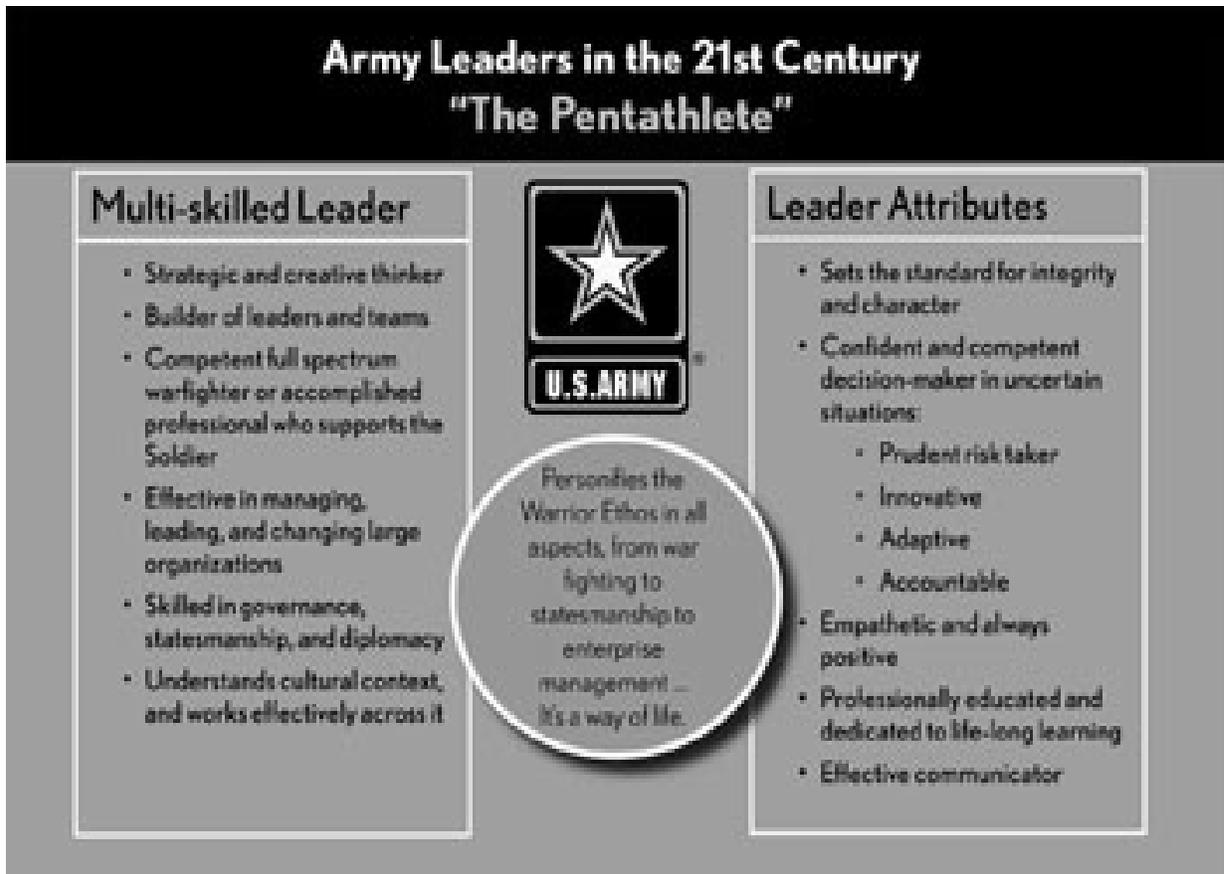


Figure 1 – The Army Pentathlete Leader (\*Accountable added subsequent to the RETAL TF review)<sup>14</sup>

The Pentathlete leader, as defined by the RETAL Task Force, is a metaphor for the kind of leader the Army requires, and that is one who will be well versed in a range of areas, not just one discipline. The Task Force identified cultural context as one of six components of a multi-skilled leader and defined it as being comfortable working across cross-cultural boundaries, possessing cross-cultural savvy, and effectively

communicating and operating within cultures where Army forces or capabilities are needed.<sup>15</sup>

The RETAL Task Force operated in three independent teams: civilian, noncommissioned officer and officer teams. One of the major findings and observations of this task force's officer team was that additional officer leader development emphasis was required in the areas of mental agility, cross-cultural awareness, governance and enterprise management to provide the officer with a broader foundation in order to meet the pentathlete attributes.<sup>16</sup> This team further noted that the current officer leader development system (the Army Training and Leader Development Program developed in November 2003) required adjustments in order to grow Pentathlete leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> As a result, they identified six initiatives for providing select officers with developmental opportunities to enhance the areas of mental agility, cross-cultural awareness, governance, and enterprise management. The focus of these RETAL Task Force initiatives is on developing multi-skilled leaders at all levels, but specifically multi-skilled senior leaders. Due to culture's importance and current deficiency, four of the six initiatives are aimed at improving cross-cultural awareness and developing cross-cultural savvy. These four initiatives are:<sup>18</sup>

- Adjust the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Order of Merit List (OML)
- Create an ROTC foreign immersion experience
- Create Leader Development Assignment Panels
- Create Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational (JIIM) Internships

According to the RETAL Task Force officer team report, adjusting the ROTC OML initiative provides incentives for those cadets demonstrating academic achievement in cross-cultural savvy and mental agility by awarding points to students through subjects and experiences that reflect pentathlete development. The current OML model for branch selection uses only grade point average in computing points for the overall OML. By incorporating specific points for academic subjects and experiences, the Task Force believes this would help create a culture indicating that the Army values cross-cultural awareness and mental agility in addition to warrior skills.<sup>19</sup>

The initiative of creating a foreign immersion experience is designed to increase the officer's foreign cultural awareness capability according to the RETAL Task Force officer team. This initiative will provide the best ROTC cadets an opportunity to broaden their horizons by immersing them in a foreign culture for a short period of time indicating to pre-commissioned officers that the Army values cross-cultural savvy.<sup>20</sup>

The creation of the Leader Development Assignment Panel is an initiative designed to identify and select the best operational career field officers for leadership development opportunities that emphasizes cross-cultural savvy, mental agility or enterprise management through assignments outside the traditional tactical track. This initiative involves convening a panel of Colonels from the field to identify and select officers finishing Company command or key Major operational positions to these "non-kinetic" developmental assignments. The RETAL Task Force officer team believes that assigning select officers to developmental assignments such as internships and civilian graduate schools better supports the assignment process and would provide needed pentathlete development opportunities in an officer's career.<sup>21</sup>

The last initiative aimed at improving cross-cultural awareness is the initiative recommending the creation of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational Internships (JIIM). The RETAL Task Force officer team indicates that the Leader Development Assignment Panel would identify and send successful operations career field officers, those finishing Company command or key Major-level assignments, for a one or two year joint, intergovernmental, multinational or similar internship to gain cross-cultural savvy, mental agility and enterprise management in these culturally different organizations.<sup>22</sup> Over time, the RETAL Task Force believes officers would associate these internships as a desirable assignment that would further enhance their professional development.

In examining the final report from the RETAL Task Force, two distinct points are of note. The final report continuously uses the terms cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural savvy, but it does not explicitly define either. As will be addressed later, the Army needs to explicitly define these terms when using them to better strategically communicate its message to preclude misunderstanding. Additionally, my analysis of the final report reveals a potential gap in cultural development that was created by the recommended initiatives focusing on only the best or select officers – a gap that this paper’s framework and recommendations will address.

#### Awareness, Savvy and the Select Few

The definitions of cultural awareness and cultural savvy are most helpful in understanding the development of each in Army officers. As previously noted, the RETAL Task Force’s final report discusses that officer Pentathletes require a broader identity to more fully develop cross-cultural awareness, but each of the four task force’s

recommended initiatives outlined in this paper are aimed more at developing cross-cultural savvy. There is a difference between cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural savvy as savvy is much deeper than awareness, and it is a key skill needed in a senior leader.

The Army Culture and Foreign Language strategy defines cultural awareness as having a foundational competence to describe key culture terms, factors, and concepts necessary to perform assigned tasks in a specific geographic area.<sup>23</sup> This strategy further indicates that cultural awareness then sets the conditions to learn about foreign cultures and people and describes those who have an appropriate mind-set and a basic culture capability.<sup>24</sup> A definition of cross-cultural savvy this paper advocates resulted from the December 2001 Chief of Staff of the Army tasking to the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute to identify the strategic leader skill sets for officers required in the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment. In their research published in September 2003, Dr. Leonard Wong and a group of War College students defined cross-cultural savvy as "the ability to understand cultures beyond one's organizational, economic, religious, societal, geographical, and political boundaries ... and implies that an officer can see perspectives outside his or her own boundaries."<sup>25</sup> One can argue that education provides the foundation for cultural awareness, but more has to be done to truly develop cross-cultural savvy in senior leaders.

As to the potential gap in the development of cross-cultural savvy within Army officers, the RETAL Task Force's final report does state that not all Soldiers will become pentathletes. But it also highlights that the goal is to ensure that every military leader acquires the characteristics and competencies to achieve pentathlete status, to include

cultural awareness skills.<sup>26</sup> The RETAL Task Force initiatives confirm this since the initiatives focus on the best and select officers in order to develop cross-cultural savvy within its multi-skilled senior leaders. The ROTC OML adjustment and the ROTC foreign immersion experience are only designed for the best ROTC cadets as defined by the report. Additionally, the Leader Development Assignment Panel and the JIIM Internships are designed to provide the best operational career field officers with a cultural immersion experience according to the task force's final report. Although the term best is never explicitly defined in the RETAL Task Force's report, this by itself limits the number of officers that the Army intends to develop cross-cultural savvy within. Conversely, a larger number of officers should receive exposure in developing cultural awareness since it is accepted that education is the foundation for developing awareness.

As a specialty within the Army, this also has a limiting affect as to the number of logisticians the Army will officially develop cross-cultural savvy in through its RETAL Task Force initiatives. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, the Ordnance, Quartermaster and Transportation Corps accessed a total of 898 officers into the active Army, or approximately 17.5 percent of the total 5,121 officers accessed into the active Army force.<sup>27</sup> Understandably, this development of cross-cultural savvy will only be for the Army's recognized best or select logisticians in order to achieve the focused goal of specifically developing multi-skilled senior leaders. Only these select officers will be provided with an immersion experience through assignments, internships, or advanced degree opportunities. With this small number of logisticians forecasted to develop cross-cultural savvy within the Army's pentathlete model, this paper advocates that

more be done to develop this cultural trait in logisticians. After all and as stated earlier, our young officers are already operating in cross-cultural environments in today's complex security environment and making critical decisions in support of our national security objectives. The Understand, Immerse and Reinforce (UIR) Framework presented in the next section should be a complimentary approach to the Army's RETAL Task Force initiatives that the newly formed Logistics Branch can apply to assist in developing more cross-culturally savvy logisticians for the future.

### The UIR Framework

Within the multinational, intergovernmental or the joint military environments one could argue that one of the most important keys to developing cross-cultural savvy is a person's mindset and the ability to continually develop it. The Understand, Immerse and Reinforce Framework is a comprehensive approach to developing this required cross-cultural savvy mindset where each element builds upon the other as an officer goes through career development from company to field grade and then to more senior levels. This framework also uses embedding and reinforcing mechanisms to anchor change that are advocated by cultural experts such as Edgar H. Schein.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, this framework should be applied to the majority of officers with a combination of multinational, intergovernmental and joint military experiences within their careers to bring about this desired change and development of cross-cultural savvy within each environment.

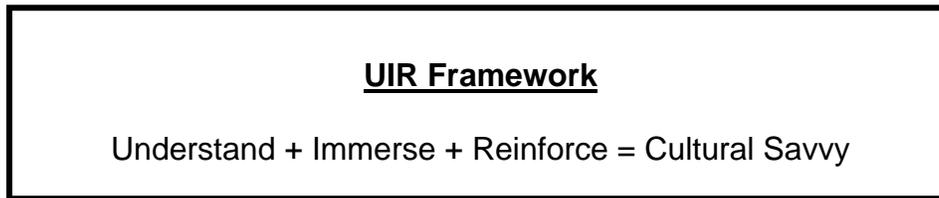


Figure 2 – The UIR Framework

The first part of this framework is focused on the *understand* element, and the military services understand that education is the foundation for understanding other cultures. The mission statements of the services' cultural centers confirm as much. The Air Force's Air University Culture and Language Center states its mission as "...supporting the Expeditionary Air Force by providing Airmen at all ranks with the best available understanding of foreign cultures and the competencies to communicate and collaborate effectively with members of foreign societies."<sup>29</sup> The Marine Corps' Advanced Operational Cultural Learning Center articulates its mission as "...ensuring Marines are equipped with operationally relevant regional, culture, and language knowledge to allow them to plan and operate successfully in the joint and expeditionary environment..."<sup>30</sup> The Army's TRADOC Culture Center's main purpose is to "support civil affairs development and training and to disseminate relevant cultural training, knowledge and products across the Army, and potentially across the Department of Defense."<sup>31</sup> Providing specific education, be it on foreign, governmental, or joint military cultures, early in the officer's career rather than later at the field grade officer level will enable a better understanding of other cultures.

The importance of the framework's second *immerse* part is best illustrated by the Karen Rodriguez article about cultural immersion when she stated: "The elusive

perspective shift that comes from a deeper, more critical cultural immersion experience includes empathy – the ability to see things from another point of view and evaluate situations differently...<sup>32</sup> Immersing an Army officer within another culture instead of just infrequent interactions with individuals from another culture provides an invaluable base of experience and a more complete understanding of other cultures, thereby providing greater influence for a permanent change in mindset.

It is well known that in order for change to truly take place and become permanent, reinforcement of the desired change must occur, and this is the framework's last and perhaps most important part to anchor needed cultural savvy. In his experience with teaching Japanese students English, Clive Lovelock noted that persuading Japanese students to give up their exclusive memorization and mechanical practice in order to adopt new learning strategies required constant and useful reinforcement.<sup>33</sup> The Department of Homeland Security has also incorporated several behavior maintenance and reinforcement messages in its Citizen Corps Personal Behavior Change Model for Disaster Preparedness in an attempt to provide cues and reminders for preparedness action.<sup>34</sup> Continuous reinforcement and interaction with individuals outside the Army culture will influence the mindset of the Army officer and work toward a permanent change in mindset.

In his extensive research on organizational culture and leadership, Edgar H. Schein concludes that culture embedding is essentially a socialization process, but one in which the socialization mechanisms are in the hands of its leaders.<sup>35</sup> His thoughts on how leaders and founders embed and transmit culture involve enabling mechanisms

and reinforcement mechanisms to develop that needed organizational culture. The three tenets of the UIR Framework are based on the following Schein mechanisms:<sup>36</sup>

- What Leaders Pay Attention To, Measure, and Control On a Regular Basis
- Deliberate Role Modeling, Teaching, and Coaching
- Observed Criteria for Allocation of Rewards and Status

Schein's mechanism of what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control is highlighted as one of the most powerful mechanisms that leaders and founders have for communicating what is important to the organization.<sup>37</sup> As we know, being systematic and paying attention to certain things becomes a powerful way of communicating a message to an intended audience. For example, if the Army's senior logisticians consistently transmit through various ways that the Logistics Branch values cross-cultural savvy through the development and application of the UIR Framework, then Army logisticians will understand the importance and value of being cross-culturally savvy, especially when the cultural education and cultural assignments are enacted for more than just the best or select few officers as outlined in the RETAL Task Force's initiatives.

The mechanism of deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching also has a foundation within the UIR Framework. Schein discusses how leaders of organizations generally know that their own visible behavior has great value for communicating values to other members of the organization.<sup>38</sup> This mechanism is supported when all logisticians understand they are operating under this UIR Framework, not just the newly accessed junior officers. The logistics senior leaders must be required to mentor and

coach Army logisticians within their purview to the importance and value of cross-cultural savvy within our logisticians.

Schein's additional mechanism of observed criteria for allocation of rewards and status refers to what the organization values for rewards and how leaders can quickly have their own priorities, values, and assumptions understood by consistently linking rewards to the behavior they are concerned with.<sup>39</sup> Under the UIR Framework, the reinforcement tenet supports this mechanism as the Logistics Branch could award a designator or Additional Skill Identifier (ASI) indicating a cultural savvy status. Examples could include Culturally Savvy – Multinational Environment (CS-M), Culturally Savvy – Intergovernmental Environment (CS-I) or even Culturally Savvy – Joint Military Environment (CS-J). This identifier is another way to distinguish that cross-cultural savvy is valued and desired.

The UIR Framework, while a simple concept that relies on key aspects of Schein's mechanisms to anchor change, is a versatile framework that can be applied across various environments providing a major influence on developing that valued cultural savvy leader across all levels. To further illustrate the potential effectiveness of the UIR Framework and how it can be applied to develop cross-cultural savvy within Army logisticians, the next section applies this framework to an Army logistician's career under the structure of the newly developed Logistics Branch within a joint military service context. The framework could also be applied to the multinational or intergovernmental environments.

## Developing the Joint Culturally Savvy Army Logistician

The Army's newest branch, the Logistics Branch, was established on 1 January 2008 by General Order of the Secretary of the Army. This branch combines Captains through Colonels from the Ordnance, Quartermaster and Transportation Corps into a single Logistics Branch. The creation of the new branch was in response to the need to ensure all logistics officers are multi-skilled logisticians, rather than having a singular functionality as an Ordnance, Quartermaster or Transportation officer.<sup>40</sup> The new branch also accounts for changes associated with the Army's transformation to modularity. These modularity changes now require logistics officers to be proficient and knowledgeable in multi-functional logistics at the rank of Captain, a relatively early stage in an officer's career.<sup>41</sup> The Army's senior leaders have recognized that our logisticians need to focus on becoming experts in multi-functional logistics, integrating the functions of supply, maintenance and transportation in order to provide the best possible support to the Army.<sup>42</sup>

Previously, the Functional Area 90 Multi-Functional Logistician designation was awarded at the logistician's 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> year of service while the officer held the rank of Major. However, the Army's senior logisticians have understood that waiting until a logistics officer is a Major is now too late to be thinking about training and preparation for multi-functional jobs.<sup>43</sup> The Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) has addressed this by devoting an entire phase of the Combined Logistics Captain's Career Course (CLC3) to multi-functional logistics training and as a result, all graduates of CLC3 are now being awarded the FA 90 designation at their 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year of service.<sup>44</sup> Upon graduation from CLC3, all logistics officers will be inducted into the Logistics Branch. By joining Ordnance, Quartermaster and Transportation officers into one

unified branch at the rank of Captain, the officers will expand and broaden their abilities in order to meet the demands of the modular Army in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>45</sup>

In her article in *Army Logician*, Major Vickie Stenfors, the Chief of the Functional Area 90 Branch at CASCOM, stated that “Logistics officers have been leading the way on the battlefield gaining as much experience as possible in all areas of logistics and the logistics community is now ‘kicking it up a notch’ [with the creation of the Logistics Branch] in order to stay in tune with what the Army needs from its logisticians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>46</sup> The new Logistics Branch and the emphasis on developing multi-functional logisticians at an earlier age will certainly benefit the Army. However, one could argue that a more important, although ancillary benefit, of combining these three specific branch officers at an earlier age into a unified branch will reduce these officer’s inner branch culture and improve their overall cross-cultural awareness with respect to the other branches.

If this UIR Framework were applied in conjunction with this new Logistics Branch initiative within the joint military service environment, it would create the opportunity to make an innovative leap and develop cross-culturally savvy logisticians. After all, the requirement to be knowledgeable of other service component logistics functions and operations may not be very far off in the future. As noted by Randy Kendrick in an *Army Logician* article, “the planned force drawdown in Europe will cause the European Command (EUCOM) service components to depend increasingly on one another for logistics support. The service components can no longer afford to retain redundant forces where joint efficiencies can be gained.”<sup>47</sup> The application of the UIR Framework upon an Army logistician’s career within the joint military service context can arguably

develop a more cross-culturally savvy logistician. As stated earlier, one of the most important keys to developing cross-cultural savvy is a person's mindset and the ability to develop it through embedding and reinforcement mechanisms. By focusing on the similarities of other service cultures instead of embellishing the differences, we can begin altering the mindset of the Army logistician. The Understand tenet of the UIR Framework provides the starting point by focusing on the education of the Army logistics professional.

The logistician's early educational years within the Army occur within several courses: the Basic Officer's Leaders Course (BOLC), the Combined Logistics Career Captain's Course (CLC3) and the staff level course. These courses are traditionally Army centric and are designed to educate the officer for successful participation in the Army's tactical logistics environment. At the mid-career level, the primary source of the logistician's professional education is the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course, which provides the first opportunity for the logistics officer to be formally educated to varying cultures within the joint, intergovernmental and multinational environments. A select few Army logistician's formal professional military education culminates at the senior level with the Senior Service College. Among the many educational objectives of this level, this course aims to prepare the career logistician for the joint and interagency environments at the strategic level.

Professional military education must be viewed as the opportunity to plant the seeds of cultural awareness enabling the change in mindset we so desire. For the Army logistics professional, this can be accomplished early and continually reinforced throughout the professional military education within the Logistics Branch. Exposing the

officer to basic logistics operations of the Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy throughout each of these professional courses increases the understanding of other service cultures. Assigning and incorporating other military service logistics course instructors within the BOLC and the CLC3 education system also serves as a catalyst for close interaction to further understand service culture nuances.

Education provides the foundation for awareness, but immersion provides the benefit of developing savvy. The Immerse tenet of the UIR Framework is by far the most difficult tenet to realize, but it also has the biggest reward as fully enabling the development of a culturally savvy Army logistician. This tenet, however, also catalyzes the biggest change in mindset of the Army logistician as it will immerse the individual in a completely different service culture. As with the RETAL Task Force's initiative to provide officers with immersion in one or two year assignments through internships or graduate civil schooling, the Army Logistics Branch leaders could coordinate with Army senior leaders and other military service leaders to articulate the benefits of assigning logisticians within the other services. Imagine if the best needs of the Army assignment process included formal recognition for the development of a culturally savvy Army logistician. The assignment process could now include assigning an Army logistician to either an Air Force, Marine Corps or Navy logistics position for a two or three year period once, possibly twice during the Army logistician's first 20 years of his career. This immersion in another service culture will fundamentally alter the mindset of the Army logistician as it applies to cultural savvy. Professional military education as described earlier planted the seeds of cultural awareness, but this immersion in another

service culture through this assignment opportunity enables the full development of cultural savvy.

As Edgar Schein discovered in his research of organizational cultures, reinforcement mechanisms are key for understanding the value placed upon the requested change in behavior. The Reinforcement tenet of the UIR Framework is designed to do just that – ensure Army logisticians understand the Logistics Branch and senior Army logisticians value culturally savvy logisticians. This tenet relies upon the mentorship concept and a certification program as the two reinforcement mechanisms.

The cultural lessons learned through the service logistics education and service immersion assignments can be formally reinforced through a mentorship program. Imagine if this mentorship program was now formalized and required an Army logistician to select a senior logistics mentor from another military service as well as a mentor from the Army. A facet of this cross-service mentorship program could include temporary duty (TDY) trips twice a year for two weeks whereby the Army logistician would work with his senior logistics mentor within that service culture. This mentorship program would reinforce the appreciation of other service cultures throughout the Army logistician's career, and it would certainly develop a more culturally savvy logistician.

Another mechanism for cultural savvy reinforcement could be the development of a certification program. Similar to the certification plan established by the Society of Logistics Engineers (SOLE) for its Certified Professional Logisticians (CPL) to remain current in their recognized certification, the Logistics Branch could also develop a certification that encompasses further education, attendance at professional meetings and writing articles in order to accumulate points. The SOLE requires CPLs to acquire

50 points in a variety of ways every five years in order to re-certify their CPL status.<sup>48</sup> A similar Logistics Branch program would ensure Army logisticians continue to develop the highly regarded culturally savvy leadership skill.

As just described, the UIR Framework can be used to develop a joint culturally savvy Army logistician much like the RETAL Task Force's initiatives are designed to develop a culturally savvy Pentathlete leader. In the logistics field, the requirement for joint logistics efficiencies is on the near horizon and being able to operate across other military service logistics environments will be critical. As noted in his research explaining the requirement for a Joint Theater Logistics Command, Michael Salvi states that "...our joint theater (operational) logistics will have significant consequences on traditional service logistics functions and organizations. Redundant service logistics functions and personnel must be eliminated to reduce our logistics footprint. Joint theater logisticians will have to support not only U.S. personnel, but those of its multinational coalition partners and civilian organizations."<sup>49</sup> A culturally savvy Army logistician is the key to this success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century logistics environment.

### Conclusion

The cultural awareness explosion is upon us. Our national leaders, the Department of Defense and the military services fully understand and recognize the impact of cultural awareness upon success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century security environment. The requirement to develop cross-culturally savvy Army officers for success in this security environment is clear, and we must meet that challenge. The Army's Pentathlete leader model with the RETAL Task Force's initiatives provides a mechanism. The requirement to develop cross-culturally savvy Army logisticians to

successfully operate across cultural contexts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century logistics environment is also a challenge that must be met. While the RETAL Task Force initiatives will develop a number of culturally savvy logisticians, more can be done.

The Army's newest branch, the Logistics Branch, is uniquely poised to "kick it up a notch" and develop even more culturally savvy logisticians in addition to the best or select few identified through the RETAL Task Force initiatives. The UIR Framework provides this complimentary mechanism for the majority of its officers. The Logistics Branch can apply the UIR Framework to an Army logistician's career within the joint military environment, the intergovernmental environment or the multinational environment as another approach to develop even more culturally savvy Army logisticians. This approach is nested with the Army's pentathlete model and can be innovative in developing more culturally savvy logisticians to meet this growing requirement in the future. The challenge is upon us.

## Endnotes

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<sup>3</sup> *Air University Culture and Language Center Homepage*, available from [www.au.af.mil/culture](http://www.au.af.mil/culture); Internet; accessed 5 January 2008.

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<sup>5</sup> Major Remi Hajjar, "The Army's New TRADOC Culture Center," *Military Review* 86, (November-December 2006): 89.

<sup>6</sup> Evan R. Goldstein, "WEEKEND JOURNAL; Taste: Professors on the Battlefield," *The Wall Street Journal*, (17 August 2007): 11.

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Final Report (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, November 2006), 3.

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<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. The other two initiatives are creating Advanced Civil Schooling opportunities and General Officer (GO) Leader Development.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy*, Coordinating Draft (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), 5 November 2007), 29. Draft supplied to author via email.

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<sup>25</sup> Dr. Leonard Wong et al, *Strategic Leadership Competencies* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, September 2003), 7.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Logistics Branch Senior Army Leaders Information Paper* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 11 December 2007), 1.

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<sup>46</sup> Major Vickie D. Stenfors, "The Logistics Officer Corps: Growing Logistics Pentahletes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Army Logistician* 38 (September-October 2006): 1.

<sup>47</sup> Randy S. Kendrick, "Joint Logistics for the EUCOM AOR," *Army Logistician* 37 (November-December 2005): 1.

<sup>48</sup> "CPL Recertification Report Forms," linked from *International Society of Logistics Engineers (SOLE) Homepage* at "Certified Professional Logistician Program," available from [www.sole.org/cpl.asp](http://www.sole.org/cpl.asp); Internet; accessed; 4 February 2008.

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