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## **Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy**

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# CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF STRATEGY AND POLICY

**Jiyul Kim**

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This paper is the product of many people over the last 3 years, when the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) decided that a new approach was required for the regional studies courses. Instead of an approach based solely on U.S. interests, it was determined that an approach that takes the perspective of the other side would be more useful; in essence, to use culture as a means to determine the what and the why of the others' interests that could help in the formulation of U.S. strategy and policy, its implementation and a favorable outcome.

In the spring of 2006 the six regional directors gathered to formulate our first effort. To them, this paper owes its initial debt: Dr. Craig Nation (Eurasia), Dr. Gabriel Marcella (Americas), Dr. Larry Goodson (Middle East), Colonel Bob Applegate (Europe), and Colonel Tom Dempsey (Africa). Dr. Nation in particular developed the initial framework now known as the Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP). It originally consisted of six dimensions instead of the three that are presented in the current version. The original version of the framework presented here was a bare bones affair, the product of a hurried effort that is too often true in military bureaucracy; but it provided the intellectual foundation for a new series of regional studies courses offered to the USAWC class of 2007. The framework was further refined for the class of 2008, but was still far from a complete conception.

For the Class of 2009, the USAWC decided to introduce these cultural concepts and framework to the students in the beginning of the year as part of the Strategic Thinking course. Thus, the framework is included in the first course of the core curriculum where students are introduced to fundamental thinking approaches (for example, creative, systematic, ethical, and historical) that will inform their study for the rest of the year as well in future assignments.

This paper is the foundation of that lesson in culture and serves as one of the theoretical pillars for the rest of the core curriculum and the regional studies courses. It represents thoughts and feedback provided by many members of the faculty and students from the Class of 2008. Particular gratitude is extended to the following for their extraordinary contributions: Ambassador Cynthia Efirm, Colonel Charles Van Bebber, Richard Smyth, Colonel Dwight Raymond, Colonel (Ret.) Don Boose, and Aloysius O'Neill.

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Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, PA 17013-5244.

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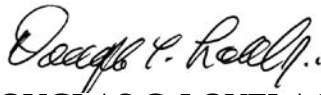
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## FOREWORD

This Letort Paper explores the intersection of culture with strategy and policy. Given the recent emphasis and attention on cultural aspects of national security, this is a timely and appropriate contribution. The concepts and framework provided herein have formed the foundation for how the U.S. Army War College has incorporated culture in the study of strategy and policy, including its new approach to regional studies. This framework is not presented in a dogmatic fashion, but as one way to incorporate culture into strategic and political thinking.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this foundational document on how we may approach the consideration of cultural factors in the formulation of strategy and policy.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JYUL KIM is the Director of Asian Studies and the Coordinator for Regional Studies at the U.S. Army War College. He was formerly an intelligence officer and then, for the past 20 years, a Japan and Korea Foreign Area Officer serving in a variety of field and policy assignments. He has published on Asian policy issues, history, and archaeology. Colonel Kim holds a BA from the University of Pennsylvania in Anthropology and Biology, an MA from Harvard University in East Asian Regional Studies, and is currently completing doctoral work in History and East Asian Languages at Harvard.

## SUMMARY

There has been a growing recognition in the post-Cold War era that culture has increasingly become a factor in determining the course of today's complex and interconnected world. The U.S. experience in Afghanistan and Iraq extended this trend to national security and military operations. One might call this the Department of Defense's "cultural turn." The focus thus far has been on the importance of culture at the tactical and operational levels.

There is also a growing recognition by the national security community that culture is an important factor at the policy and strategy levels. The ability to understand and appreciate the role and impact of culture on policy and strategy is increasingly seen as a critical strategic thinking skill. Cultural proficiency at the policy and strategic levels means the ability to consider history, values, ideology, politics, religion, and other cultural dimensions and assess their potential effect on policy and strategy.

A more useful way to consider the role of culture in security studies than through the levels of war (tactical, operational, and strategic) is a framework that includes the following three dimensions: *cultural considerations at the individual level*; *cultural considerations in tactical and operational level military operations*; and *cultural considerations at the political and strategic levels*.

Policymakers and strategists tend to view situations through their own cultural and strategic "lens" with insufficient consideration and calculation of the "other's" perspective and interests. The Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP) is one systematic and analytical approach to the vital task of *viewing the world through many lenses*. The



national security community is interested in cultural features or dimensions that drive political and strategic action and behavior. The ACFSP identifies basic cultural dimensions that seem to be of fundamental importance in determining such behavior and thus are of importance in policy and strategy formulation and outcomes. These dimensions are (1) **Identity**, or the basis for defining identity and its linkage to interests; (2) **Political Culture**, or the structure of power and decisionmaking; and (3) **Resilience**, or the capacity or ability to resist, adapt or succumb to external forces. *Identity* is the most important, because it ultimately determines purpose, values and interests that form the foundation for policy and strategy to attain or preserve those interests.

# CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF STRATEGY AND POLICY

## WHY CULTURE?

We face a world today without the relatively simple and comforting dichotomy of the Cold War. It is a world made increasingly more complex by the forces of nationalism and unprecedented globalization released by the end of the Cold War. Since the early 1990s, the post-Cold War era, there has been a growing recognition among scholars that culture has increasingly become a factor in determining the course of today's complex and interconnected world. A well-known scholar of strategic culture, Jeffrey Lantis, wrote,

Culture has become fashionable in mainstream international relations scholarship in the post-Cold War era. One of the most surprising aspects of the renaissance of scholarly interest in culture has been the emerging consensus in national security policy studies that culture can affect significantly grand strategy and state behavior. Scholars and practitioners have begun to interpret events like the U.S.-China standoff over a downed spy plane in 2001 or escalating tensions between Palestinians and Israelis through the lens of national identity and culture.<sup>1</sup>

Although scholars may have recognized this, practitioners at first did not. One criticism that can be leveled against U.S. national security and foreign policy of the 1990s is that it failed to recognize and address the immense potentially destabilizing and conflict generating cultural and political changes unleashed by the end of the Cold War. Much of this force had to do with the release of pent up demands for self-determination by a variety of cultural groups

determined by ethnicity, religion, and language. Suppressed groups found space to emerge and quickly turned into political forces and movements in the pursuit of formerly unattainable interests (separation, independence, domination) defined by previously unviable identities (ethno-religious nationalism).

The various small wars of the 1990s turned into the deadly wars of the 2000s. The U.S. experience thus far in Afghanistan and Iraq principally, but other places as well, and in particular due to the reemergence of counterinsurgency as a major task, has alerted the practitioners of policy and strategy, politicians and military leaders, to the importance of culture at the tactical and operational levels. One might call this the Department of Defense's (DoD) "cultural turn," therefore the emphasis placed on culture as an important if not a decisive factor in countering insurgencies.<sup>2</sup>

There is also a growing recognition by the national security community that culture is an important factor at the policy and strategic levels although most of the current effort and resources for the "cultural turn" are devoted to the tactical and operational fight. It is the education of strategic leaders, civilian and military, that is the first step toward increasing the expertise of policymakers and strategic planners. Considerations of how culture affects our political and strategic actions and behavior and the actions and behavior of others have become vital strategic tasks. Thus, the ability to understand and appreciate the role and impact of culture on policy and strategy is increasingly seen as a critical strategic thinking skill.

Cultural proficiency at the policy and strategic levels means the ability to consider history, values, ideology, politics, religion, and other cultural dimensions and assess their potential effect on policy and strategy. In

the current security environment it is an imperative skill for:

- Working cooperatively with rising powers such as China and India;
- Dealing successfully with new partners and allies as well as new challenges with old allies and partners;
- Responding effectively to ideological, religious, and ethnic extremism;
- Waging an effective counterinsurgency campaign;
- Coping constructively with anti-Americanism;
- Handling successfully or defeating transnational challenges and threats; and,
- Building strong coalitions encompassing different cultures.

The Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP) provides one approach, a systematic and analytical tool for exploring the cultural aspects of the political and strategic landscape to help develop the strategic skill for taking account of cultural factors in policymaking and strategy formulation. The ACFSP will be discussed in greater detail later.

## **CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP, OPERATIONS AND STRATEGY**

It is too easy to think of the role of culture in the world of national security strategy and military operations as a single dimensional phenomenon. That is to say, consideration of cultural specifics is too often conflated to one comprehensive set that is conceived and perceived as widely applicable across the length, breadth, and depth of the space we call national security strategy and military operations.

One approach to get a better resolution of the role of culture is to consider three distinct dimensions of culture as factors operating in the world of national security strategy and military operations: *cultural considerations at the individual level*; *cultural considerations in tactical and operational level military operations*; and *cultural considerations at the political and strategic levels*. This is not to imply that these dimensions are separate and distinct, because there are significant areas of overlap and mutually supporting as well as hierarchical relationships among them.

*Cultural considerations at the individual level* encompasses the cultural dimensions of leadership, management, and interpersonal communications and relations. Languages, cultural do's and don'ts, and negotiation skills are examples of what this dimension would consider. Current emphasis on "cultural understanding," "cultural awareness," and languages in the U.S. military, born of new challenges in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, is designed largely to address this dimension.

*Cultural considerations in tactical and operational level military operations* examines cultural factors that can influence the success or failure of tactical actions and campaigns. This may be the most familiar for most soldiers. At the tactical level, tactics, training, small unit leadership traits, weapons design, and such are some aspects of the tactical battlefield that have cultural components. Why is it that the Russian/Soviet and Chinese military did not hesitate to use human wave attacks? Why did western armies use human wave attacks in World War I? More recently, the emphasis on counterinsurgency has given birth to the concept of Human Terrain System and Human Terrain Teams at tactical levels that brings culture directly into the

tactical fight. At the operational level, we are dealing with campaigns. And in designing campaigns with the greatest chance for success, one must consider the interplay and harmonization of cultural factors such as service and agency organizational cultures and the cultures of allies in forming a capable joint, interagency, and multinational force operating in a foreign land. In addition, military leaders must consider the cultural dimension of the opponent such as civil-military relations (political control), military-societal ties (popular support), and military force (senior leadership style, operational level doctrine and training philosophy, and military culture) among other factors. The Army's Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM) 3-24 (December 2006), and Operations FM 3-0 (February 2008), represent examples of how cultural factors have now become prominent aspects of the tactical and operational level fights.

A recent British conference on the relationship between culture and conflict considered how the above two dimensions interrelate,

Any military operation involves people—lots of them. And more often than not the people come from different backgrounds. A commander has to interact with the different groups under his or her command, allies, neutrals, locals caught up in the operation and, of course the enemy, all of them distinctive in some way. In a counter-insurgency campaign the picture is further clouded by having to engage closely with local people for extended periods, and often there is superficially no means to tell the locals from the enemy. All this means that the commander needs understanding—understanding of the influences that impact on the behaviour of all these people. One of the significant influences is culture.

Culture is a fundamental ingredient of life. . . . We all see things through the lenses that our culture provides us with. But different groups have different cultures,

and that's where the trouble starts when groups find themselves in contact with each other. Cultural differences can lead to limitations on any ability to see things from the other person's or group's point of view, lack of communication, and misunderstandings (sometime lethal). Culture therefore has a profound effect on the successful conduct of military operations.<sup>3</sup>

*Cultural considerations at the political and strategic levels* deal with the impact of cultural factors in the formulation, implementation, and outcome of policy and strategy. It is concerned with cultural factors that can affect political and strategic decisions, actions, and behaviors. This is the dimension that we are most concerned with, and the ACFSP provides one approach for considering this dimension in a systematic manner.<sup>4</sup>

Before getting into the details of the ACFSP, we must consider one final fundamental preparatory subject, the definition of "culture."

## **WHAT IS CULTURE?**

Culture is the fundamental, although not the only factor, for defining and understanding the human condition.<sup>5</sup> Culture affects how people think and act. It can be considered as the way humans and societies assign meaning to the world around them and define their place in that world. It is manifested in many ways including languages and words; ideas and ideologies; customs and traditions; beliefs and religions; rituals and ceremonies; settlement patterns; art and music; architecture and furniture; dress and fashion; games; images; in short, anything that is symbolic or representative of the values, norms, perceptions, interests, and biases of a culture.<sup>6</sup>

The study of culture, to deeply explore and discover the symbols and symbolic systems and, more importantly, their meanings, requires consideration of a number of interrelated parameters. These include,

- Formation: How does culture form?
- Agency: Who and what are the sources of culture's formation and change?
- Process: Through what ways and means is culture formed and changed?
- Boundary: What limits and bounds culture in time and space?
- Variability: How do cultures differ? What are the reasons for the differences?
- Stability: How stable is culture? What enhances stability or causes instability?
- Coherence: What logic if any connects the different parts of a culture?
- Effect on thought: How does culture affect thinking and decision making?

The German political economist and sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) saw man as an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun. The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2007) extended this notion by equating culture with Weber's "webs of significance."<sup>7</sup> In Weber and Geertz's conception, man was like a spider in the middle of his web except that the strands were not made of silk, but of those values, perceptions, and norms that were significant and meaningful to him. Thus, the main task in analyzing culture is to understand the specifics of what are significant and meaningful, the meanings represented by the strands of the "webs of significance." Conducting this task requires interpretation of the symbolic forms and systems to



tease out the meanings they contain. This approach has had a great influence on how humanists and social scientists today understand, apply, and analyze culture.

It is important to recognize that human beings are not born with a particular culture (the “webs of significance”), but culture is constructed through a process of conscious and unconscious socialization and acculturation (human interactions) within the particular situation that an individual was born into. This “particular situation” can encompass a wide range of factors from the individualistic and biological, such as gender and race, to an ever-widening circle of social, political, economic, religious, organizational, and ethnic levels of human organization (family, community, ethnic community, religious order, economic class, village/town/city, state/province, nation, region, and the world). Therefore, in trying to come to grips with how culture operates, we must recognize that it varies enormously through space and time. Variability over space is reflected by the variety of cultures in the world at a given moment in time. Variability over time is best seen in history. History is thus, in part, a record of cultural change over time.

Culture operates at different levels ranging from the individual to various levels of collectivities (clan, organization, tribe, village, town, city, state, nation, and world). Culture at each level is rarely the sum of the cultures of the lower levels. At the individual level, culture affects interpersonal communications and relations, while at the collective level it affects intercollective (e.g., interclan, intertown, interstate) communications and relations. The strategic leader should consider these two dimensions of culture as distinctive. There is clearly an overlap between

culture at the individual level and at the collective level, especially if we consider decisionmakers. But a framework that distinguishes between the two could help with the study of the cultural dimension of policy and strategy.

When considering interactions at the individual and the collective levels of culture, it is important to recognize the significant variance that often exists *within* a particular organization or society. In other words, generalized rules or lists cannot possibly account for the nearly infinite variability one is likely to find among the individuals of a given collectivity. A perceptive strategic leader must always consider this variability from a given or supposed norm for the group.

## **THE ANALYTICAL CULTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGY AND POLICY (ACFSP).**

Policymakers and strategists tend to view situations through their own cultural and strategic “lens” with insufficient consideration and calculation of the “other’s” perspective and interests. How should we approach the task of appreciating and understanding the different lenses through which other people, groups, societies, nations, and regions view themselves and the world? The ACFSP is one approach to the vital task of *viewing the world through many lenses*. The national security community is most interested in cultural features or dimensions that drive political and strategic action and behavior. The ACFSP identifies basic cultural dimensions that seem to be of fundamental importance in determining political and strategic action and behavior and thus are of importance in policy and

strategy formulation and outcomes. These dimensions are,

- Identity: the basis for defining identity and its linkage to interests.
- Political Culture: the structure of power and decisionmaking.
- Resilience: the capacity or ability to resist, adapt, or succumb to external forces.

We will consider these dimensions in an American context to illustrate how they affect American values and interests and therefore American policy and strategy.

### **The ACFSP and the United States.**

Consider first the revolutionary circumstances of America's national origin and the founding documents, in particular, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the Federalist Papers. The United States has a unique revolutionary origin that redefined how society should be organized. Democracy and republicanism, freedom and liberty, equality, Manifest Destiny, and other fundamental conceptions of man and society, combined with a pioneering spirit, individualism, and entrepreneurialism that early established a unique and enduring American identity. Tocqueville's account of American society in the early 19th century is valuable precisely because it demonstrates how little American society and Americans have changed in the last 200 years.<sup>8</sup>

Protestantism combined with capitalism to fan a tremendous appetite for innovation, adaptation, and progress.<sup>9</sup> America became a synonym and a symbol for

a land of innovative and adaptive people. Along with growing prosperity came the dominance of middle class livelihood, values, and practices that formed the backbone of American society. These ideas and values interacted with history, resulting in a richer, and some would say a more “positive,” development of American society and identity. Without being comprehensive, consider the following historical developments in addition to the revolutionary origins and conceptions of social and political organization mentioned earlier and how they may have affected the way Americans saw themselves and their place and purpose in the world:

- Isolationism
- Slavery
- The Civil War
- The Spanish-American War and Imperialism
- Immigration and multicultural and multiethnic society
- World War I
- The Depression
- World War II and America’s permanent global role
- The Cold War and the development of the national security state
- The rise of the military-industrial complex
- The Civil Rights movement
- The End of the Cold War and September 11, 2001 (9/11).

What does all this mean in terms of American identity, political culture, and resilience? *First*, American citizenship and identity are based on place and, more importantly, on the idea of being an American rather by than blood.<sup>10</sup> This forms the

foundation of the American identity and differentiates American citizens from those of most of the world who predominantly privilege bloodline. *Second*, American political culture evolved from a revolutionary distrust of strong central authority (kings and tyrants) and thus emphasizes the protection of individual and local rights and privileges and the principle of checks and balances over the efficient functioning of the government. This has resulted in a political culture that is particularly complex. *Finally*, one test of American resilience is America's relationship with globalization. Perhaps more than any other society, the United States has been able to innovate and adapt to the forces of globalization. Indeed, America has been and remains one of the engines of globalization. Another test of resilience is how America approaches its integration with transnational institutions (e.g., the United Nations [UN] or the World Trade Organization [WTO]). It does so with the determination to protect individual and national prerogatives while remaining open to institutions that support its ideas of liberal democracy, economic openness, and universal human rights.

These cultural considerations affect American policy and strategy. To begin with, most Americans have a distinct worldview and beliefs about America's place in that world. That view is very much founded on the legacy of 18th century enlightenment that also animated America's founding revolution. A democratic world with a capitalist economic system based on free trade is America's idealized utopia, and Americans see America as destined to have a leading role in bringing about such a world.

Other societies may share many aspects of what constitutes American identity, political culture, and resilience, but not identically. In the same manner,

every other society reflects a unique combination of identity, political culture, and resilience.

## COMMON THEMES ACROSS THE ACFSP DIMENSIONS

*Modernity and Nationalism* form the first common theme. They are two aspects of the modern world that play key roles in all the dimensions. *Modernity* has both material (e.g., industrialization, scientific and technological developments, and the information revolution) and ideational aspects (e.g., different ideas about political and economic organization such as democracy, autocracy, and socialism). *Nationalism* has taken many variant forms rooted in the traditional past as well as in the new political and geographical arrangements of the modern era (ethnic, religious, and nation-state political).<sup>11</sup>

Another common theme is that *culture is a subjective and emotional entity and process and thus inherently unpredictable*. This contrasts with rationalism or rational choice theory that has been prized in social sciences, because it seems to provide a way to predict. The predictive shortcomings of rational choice theory as the basis for human thought and action can be seen everywhere in daily life from the unpredictability of the performance of the stock market to the uncertainties of international relations.<sup>12</sup> In the world of policy and strategy, it is prediction that is the prize of analysis. Human beings, individually or collectively, do not always think and behave in rational ways. The concept of rationality itself is relative and is subject to differing conceptions and definitions based on culture. The best that may be possible is to gain some insight into what might be most probable. It is precisely *because*

*we are creatures of emotions and passions that the only way to more fully comprehend our thoughts and actions is through cultural understanding that can provide predictive insights to the seemingly irrational patterns of thought and behavior.*

The criticality of *history* is another common theme. History makes man and his society, and its principal contemporary expression is culture. Without history, there is no culture. But history is an interpretive field, more subjective than objective. Thus, each dimension of the framework must be appreciated as the product of both the accumulation of actual historical experience as well as the revisionism brought by memory and interpretation of that history. In doing so, one must also consider that memory and interpretation of history are often incomplete, selective, or distorted.

History, therefore, serves two important functions: as agent and process that determines specific tangible and intangible cultural forms; and as an instrument of culture, usually purposefully distorted or adapted for contemporary and, most often, political purposes. For many modern nation-states, the distortion often takes the form of inventing or exaggerating a heroic past that serves to legitimize the regime while inspiring and helping to mobilize the populace for national projects. Examples abound throughout the world and in history. More often than not they are rooted in dictatorships: Hitler's Nazi Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union, Saddam's Iraq, and Kim Il Sung's North Korea. A long record of deliberately distorted and politicized history to support the state can be found too in most East Asian nations such as China, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan. Indeed, there is probably no place in the world where one cannot find evidence of manipulation of history for political purposes. Deliberate distortions,

exaggerations, omissions, and even inventions become readily apparent when one digs a little deeper into the historiography (how history is studied and written) of a particular society.

## **Identity.**

Identity can be comprised of race, gender, generation, family, clan, class, ethnicity, tribe, religion, locality, nation, and region. One aspect of culture that seems to matter greatly at the political and strategic levels is those cultural factors that determine “identity.” Identity is perhaps the most important of the ACFSP dimensions, because it ultimately determines purpose, values and interests that form the foundation for policy and strategy to attain or preserve those interests.

Identity is a fundamental trait that is essential to man and societies. “Identity” can very well stand as another way to say “culture.”<sup>13</sup> It defines existence, purpose, destiny, and, sometimes, fate. It provides a sense of self worth, dignity, and community. Man exists both as an individual and as a member of a group, a collective, and thus an examination of identity must also recognize the existence of differing individual and collective identities. At the individual level, identity begins with a base of biologically inherited features on which is built a superstructure of cultural or acquired elements. Race, gender, and family are clearly the most obvious and consequential biologically inherited identity traits. Superimposed on these are socially inherited features such as ethnicity, religion, clan, class, and tribe. The boundary between biological and social inheritances is often blurred. Ultimately, however, social inheritances are changeable, while biological inheritances are not.



While individual identity is important for the individual, it may not necessarily be of equal or similar importance at the collective level. Collective identity almost always consists of fewer traits than reflected by the sum of the individual identities of its members, because, by necessity, collective identity is based on features that are shared by all or most members of the collective. However, in terms of political and social power, collective identity is almost always far more than the sum of the individuals, because it has the potential to mobilize the collective and thus political power. For example, at the nation-state level, leaders who can fuse individual with national identity can inspire the people of the nation to sacrifice for national survival and glory. The ability to mobilize a nation is essential in strategy, in the conduct of foreign and domestic policy, and is absolutely paramount for the enterprise of war. In as much as policy and strategy are oriented toward a particular collectivity rather than an individual, be it a subnational, national, regional, or trans-national entity, it is collective identity that we are most concerned with in considerations of policy and strategy.

As with individual identity, collective identity is composed of both biologically and socially inherited traits, but often the biological or “blood” traits are more fictional and mythical than real. Ultimately, it is the collective social agreement on what commonality binds the collective that is most important. Even if every member shared exactly the same features of individual identities, biological and social, they could not form a collective identity unless they agreed on the basis for their coming together.

Collective identity also exists in widely ranging forms creating intricate layers of overlap and hierarchy.

Indeed, it would be the rare society that exhibited only one collective identity, and thus we must consider the existence of a multiplicity of collective identities. These identities also provide indications of social and political fault lines containing the potential for future divisions. While the collective identities exist simultaneously, they can usually be defined hierarchically. Some are more important than others. Each individual and collective sorts and prioritizes, often consciously, but sometimes not. The identity that occupies the top of the hierarchy provides the greatest potential for significant and powerful political force, often with implications for peace and conflict. For most of the modern age (i.e., since the late 18th century) nation-state political nationalism has been the most important and powerful collective identity and one that has had direct war and peace implications. Although suppressed by the confrontation between capitalism and communism during the Cold War, the post-Cold War period has witnessed a resurgence of nationalism. But the form of nationalism that became prominent in the post-Cold War era has been more of the ethnic and religious variety rather than nation-state political nationalism. The post-9/11 era has added to the increasingly complex situation by highlighting the potency of religious and ethnic extremism.

When considering more specifically the sources of collective identity, especially those that result in political power (and, therefore, the power to mobilize the collective toward a common purpose), we cannot escape considering history. As stated earlier, history makes man and his society (collectivity), while culture is history's principal contemporary expression. The thought that there is no culture without history, that culture is a historical product, can be extended to the

notion that there can be no identity without history. History is based on interpretation and subject to constant revision and reinterpretation. But what is the basis of the revisions and reinterpretations? Here we are considering not academic history, but the popular mass view of history. It is usually a simplified and reduced version of history. New evidence plays a part, but even more so is the collective “memory” of that history, memory that may be actual but is more likely selective, subjective, or manufactured. That history can never be definitive (we will always need historians) points to an important aspect of identity, that it is dynamic and changeable. It need not be permanent.

Politically, the most potent collective identity in the modern era has been the nation-state. Nation itself is an old concept and in the traditional sense, membership in a nation is determined by a common identity based on one or more of a number of physical and cultural factors such as origin, ancestry, location, religion, language, and shared history. In the modern era, a powerful new foundation for nationhood was introduced with the concept of the nation-state that combined national fervor with political organization. Modern forms of national identity can thus serve as the basis for powerful collective actions, especially in the political, social, economic, cultural, and strategic arenas. The sources of national identity of modern nation-states are often based on a shifting amalgamation of the old and traditional (ancestry, location, religion) with the new (recent history). Thus, nation-state identity is usually artificially or deliberately created rather than deriving as the natural and spontaneous consequences of a nation’s history. Every nation glorifies what it is and what it represents, and thus tends toward glossing over history that does not fit that

story (narrative). This becomes all the more evident in nations whose boundaries were arbitrarily created rather than historically evolved. Nations created by colonial powers, especially in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, are good examples of this phenomenon. Thus it is not uncommon for national leaders to evoke and use history deliberately as an instrument of unity and mobilization. In such usage, history is often distorted or even falsified.<sup>14</sup>

Nationalism is not the only basis for collective identity with consequential political power. Transnational identities have also proven to create potent political power. Some, such as extremism (religious, ethnic, political) and criminal activity, can be destructive and threatening to order. Others are potentially constructive, such as collective identities that, for example, advocate worldwide human rights, seek to preserve and promote labor rights in the context of a globalizing society, promote open and tolerant society for the free exchange of ideas and information, build global consensus over climate change as a common global problem, encourage religious expressions of universal brotherhood, and advance international efforts for peaceful conflict resolution. A more focused form of trans-national identity is regionalism. Regional identity may be seen simply as an extension of the national identities of the region, a summation of the common aspects of national identities, or there may be a basis for considering regional identity as something distinct in and of itself that is beyond national identities. Subnational collective identities such as tribe or sect have also proven to possess increasingly potent political force in those parts of the world where the nation-state is weak or where the state is seen as remote from individual or group concerns.

## **Political Culture.**

Political culture is comprised of a political system, political tradition, political institution, decisionmaking, faith and religion, and strategic culture. Aristotle famously once said that “Man is by nature a political animal.” What does this mean in terms of thoughts, decisions, and actions? What we are most interested in is how being political is translated into real world outcomes. Identity provides a foundation for collective unity and mobilization, but politics provide the instrument and the means to mobilize the collective leading to actions and results.

Political culture can be defined as the set of values, beliefs, traditions, perceptions, expectations, attitudes, practices, and institutions that a particular society harbors about how the political system and processes should operate and what sort of governmental and economic life should be pursued. Political culture is dynamic and changeable because it is a historical product. Some factors that contribute to the formation of a particular political culture include historical experience, religious tradition, collective values, founding principles, geographical location and configuration, strategic environment (for example, relative vulnerability or security), economic capacity, and demographics.

A most important factor of political culture is the philosophical attitude taken toward the meaning of progress and development. If one accepts the notion that modernity and modernization originated and have been defined by the West, one must also consider the problems of western bias in the modernization scenario. The essential question in this debate is whether there is

only one correct path to modernization (“civilization”) and its implied sense of progress or a multiplicity of paths (e.g., a “Confucian way” that could explain the successful developmental paths taken by East Asian nations). This is an important issue because of its profound effect on the kind of political culture that develops. It is also important within the context of the American quest to spread liberal democracy and market economy around the world. America’s notion of progress, combined with its sense of having a leading role to spread it, is intimately involved in the process that defines interests, policy, and strategy.

An increasingly important factor in the construction of political culture has been faith and religion. This has been especially true in the post-Cold War era and especially so in societies with significant nonsecular political traditions. The role of religion in political culture is not difficult to understand if we recognize the role of religion in identity formation. A key issue in political culture is the extent to which those whose identity is primarily religious or ethnically based will also show allegiance to the nation-state and/or transnational institutions.

Political culture also forms two key supporting instruments of its expression that are of interest for policy and strategy: *political system* and *strategic culture*. *Political system* refers to how political power is organized, with particular emphasis on identifying and understanding the basis for power, its distribution, and hierarchy. Consideration of political system includes examination of the role of history, class, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, geography (physical, social, and cultural), demography, and power fault lines that determine power centers, connections, and operations. The world has a spectrum of political systems varying

from failed states and diffuse power structures to centralized systems such as autocracy. In between these extremes are various gradations of systems such as democracy. Within each of these systems is a spectrum of players and institutions that have political power and influence. These players and institutions usually have differential access to tangible and intangible resources (e.g., material, financial, influential, moral). The state itself is a structure of power that performs essential functions: security, governance, conflict resolution, and services. To perform such functions, it needs to have persuasive and/or coercive capability that is legitimized by social contract in a democracy, the mandate of heaven in some societies, and in others is literally hijacked by despots. Within all political systems are rules of the game about how power is obtained, used, and transferred.

*Strategic culture* is a relatively new concept that arose in the post-Cold War era. It arose in reaction to two developments. First was the shock of the failure of the social scientific approach in predicting the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union and European communism. This led to a search for one or more missing factors that could have led to a more accurate predictive analysis.<sup>15</sup> The second development was the realization that each nation had a unique perspective that affected the way it perceived, interpreted, analyzed, and reacted to events and developments. It was a realization that no single universal “law” governed how all nations behaved. These two developments led to considerations of culture as an important factor in collective behavior (including that of the nation-state) and thus policy and strategy, and out of it emerged the idea of strategic culture.<sup>16</sup> *Strategic culture* can thus be defined as the concept that considers how cultural factors affect strategic behavior.

It is the unique collective perspective rooted in historical experience, memory of that experience, and collective values that leads to particular policy and strategy formulations and outcomes. Strategic culture thus both enables and constrains actions and reactions regarding strategic choices, priorities, security, diplomacy, and the use of force. Lantis, a leading scholar of strategic culture, provided a summary of the current state of strategic cultural studies:

Today, scholars have rediscovered the theory of strategic culture to explain national security policy. Alastair Johnston's exploration in 1995 of "cultural realism" in Chinese security policy during the Ming dynasty, for example, suggests that societal characteristics have influenced state behavior throughout much of the history of human civilization. Others have devoted attention to studying the surprising German and Japanese security policy reticence in the post-Cold War era and have suggested that their unique "antimilitarist" strategic cultures account for most of the continuity in their behavior from 1990 to the present.<sup>17</sup>

## **Resilience.**

Resilience is the *response to globalization, openness to transnational institutions, and coping with environmental pressures*, and refers to the capacity or ability of a culture to resist, adapt, or succumb to external forces. It is a test of the culture's stability and coherence and a measure of the endurance of its identity and political culture. Thus, it can help us understand either the permanence or changeability of the values and interests that determine a particular culture's strategy and policy.

Probably the greatest external force affecting cultures around the world and testing cultural resilience is globalization. Globalization is a term increasingly used to define the contemporary world



order and system. While the specific focus is often on the economic and the informational, from a historical perspective globalization should be considered as the current version or phase of modernity that encompasses both material and non-material dimensions. There have been other periods of globalization,<sup>18</sup> but the globalization that we are facing today may be of such enormity and penetration that we do not yet have the historical basis to inform us of its potential impact.

Although globalization is a term most often associated with economics and information, we consider it in its broadest terms to include economic, social, technological, political, informational, and ideational factors. A key notion to consider is interdependence and a dynamic that is more involuntary than voluntary. Thus there is a sense that globalization is a force that cannot be controlled, but can only be accommodated or mitigated. One aspect of the debate on globalization is whether or not it undermines nationalism. On the one hand, there is plenty of evidence that it does so. On the other hand, it seems, on occasion, to serve as an instrument to enhance nationalism.

In the mid-1990s, Samuel Huntington raised the notion of a "Clash of Civilizations" with inter-civilizational friction raised by the forces of globalization resulting in inevitable conflict.<sup>19</sup> The thesis has come under a great deal of criticism, in particular from those who believe that Huntington's civilizational groupings, based largely on religion but not exclusively so, over-simplifies and over-generalizes actual diversity of identity and potential fault lines of conflict. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has been one of the most vocal critics of the "Clash of Civilizations" theory. An economist who integrates economics with social action and cultural processes, Sen's most recent

criticism labeled Huntington's approach crude and misleading not only because it oversimplifies culture while marginalizing political-economic factors, but also because it incorrectly leads to the thought that conflict between different cultures is inevitable. Sen called for a more nuanced and sophisticated analysis that recognizes the immense diversity and plurality of identities while integrating political-economic factors in determining the causes of violence and conflict. He wrote, ". . . poverty and inequality are importantly linked with violence and lack of peace, but they have to be seen together with divisions in which other factors, such as nationality, culture, religion, community, language, and literature play their parts."<sup>20</sup>

Finally, an important component of globalization is understanding the linkage between globalization and growing anti-West-ism, and in particular anti-Americanism. Many people in the world consider globalization synonymous with Americanization or Westernization. Perhaps it is unfair, but much of the world also considers America as the primary source of globalization, especially those aspects of globalization that are seen to undermine traditional society and values.

Another important test of resilience is how a culture approaches its integration with transnational institutions such as the UN or the WTO. It may take a parochial position focused on the preservation of its own interest at the cost of the larger interest for which the institution was created. Alternatively, it may be willing to sacrifice parochial interest for the good of the larger community. An increasingly important arena for this interaction is emerging in environmental concerns and in particular with carbon emission, global warming, and climate change. The Kyoto protocol was

a key international effort to address this challenge collectively, but international responses have been mixed. Why that is and how viable are the positions taken provide insight into each culture's resilience.

## CONCLUSION

Two sets of factors determine human thoughts, decisions, behavior, actions, and reactions: biological and cultural. Biological factors are more prominent in determining individual thoughts and behavior than it would be with human collectivities. At the human collective level, the level that strategy and policy are concerned with (e.g., a nation-state), cultural factors are dominant. It is thus an imperative that strategy and policy formulation, the way they are implemented, and the outcome to be expected must consider the cultural dimensions. The Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy, its three dimensions of Identity, Political Culture, and Resilience, provides one approach. It may not be a definitive approach, and no such claim is made, but the framework provides a specific way to get at the complex issue of how culture figures into strategic and political behavior.

The key points to take away are these: first, that strategy and policy are driven by Ends or Objectives; second, that these Ends are determined by interests; third, that interests are derived from the sense of purpose and core values that a particular collectivity considers to be the foundation of who they are; fourth, that the sense of purpose and core values arise from the elements that constitute the collectivity's Identity; fifth, that Identity is the foundation for collective mobilization; sixth, that such a mobilized collectivity can be put into action for political purposes through its peculiar form of political culture that provides the

Ways and the Means; and finally, that the resilience of the group's culture, grounded on the strength of a common Identity with a shared sense of purpose and values, can determine how flexible the collectivity is to either resisting, succumbing or adapting to forces that challenge the shared purpose and values.

These points seem simple enough, but to actually apply them to a specific nation or a group, subnational or transnational, requires intense study and analysis of the history of that collectivity. There will be no one right answer, but if we hope to formulate more effective strategies and policies then we must make the effort to make them more answerable to cultural factors. The very lack of a definitive cultural analysis requires a multiplicity of efforts. Different approaches will emphasize different factors. A historically oriented analysis is likely to emphasize different factors than those taking a political scientific approach, and yet other factors will be emphasized by anthropological, sociological, economic, psychological, or military approaches. Their sum, however, can provide the sort of comprehensive analysis that can get us closer to the truth even if we can never get to the final truth. This is the difficult challenge for strategic leaders involved in strategy and policy. Identity, Political Culture, and Resilience provide a starting point for that cultural analytical journey.

## ENDNOTES

1. Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Reflection and Reappraisal: Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Fall 2002, p. 87.

2. "The **cultural turn** describes developments in the humanities and the social sciences brought about by various develop-

ments across the disciplines. Most noted amongst these was the emergence of cultural studies and the dominance of the sociology of culture within the discipline of Sociology. . . . It describes a shift in emphasis towards meaning and on culture rather than politics or economics. This shift of emphasis occurred over a prolonged time, but particularly since the 1960s." Available at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_turn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_turn).

3. From the background information on a symposium on "Culture in Conflict" held at the Defence College of Management and Technology, DCMT, Shrivenham, UK, on June 10-11, 2008, [www.cranfield.ac.uk/dcmt/symposia/cultureinconflict08.jsp](http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/dcmt/symposia/cultureinconflict08.jsp).

4. Sheila Miyoshi Jager, Visiting Professor of National Security Studies at the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, 2006-08, wrote of the need for appreciating how the three different levels of political-military operations, strategic, operational, and tactical, require different kinds of cultural knowledge. Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2007, [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB817.pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB817.pdf). Although Jager's levels (strategic, operational, tactical) are different from the U.S. Army War College's consideration of three dimensions—policy/strategy, operational, leadership/management—the more important point is that the two frameworks agree on the notion that a differentiation must be made on how cultural factors work in different areas; that culture cannot and should not be conflated into a "one size fits all."

5. Two other features that define the human condition are man's biology and the physical environment.

6. Culture is defined in the draft TRADOC *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* as

the set of distinctive features of a society or group, including but not limited to values, beliefs, and norms, that ties together members of that society or group and that drives action and behavior. Additional aspects or characteristics of culture are: (1) Culture is shared; there is no "culture of one"; (2) Culture is patterned, meaning that people in a group or society live and think in ways forming definitive, repeating patterns; (3) Culture is

changeable, through social interactions between people and groups; (4) Culture is internalized in the sense that it is habitual, taken for granted, and perceived as “natural” by people within the group or society; (5) Culture is learned; (6) The distinctive features that describe a particular culture include its myths and legends.

Culture is expressed in the real world through symbols and symbolic systems that represent, reflect or contain the meanings inherent in cultural features, therefore values, beliefs and norms. Learning to identify these symbols and symbolic systems and “read” the meanings they reflect, represent or contain is thus a crucial skill to understanding a particular society and the culture it contains.

7. Geertz is the founder of the field of Interpretive Anthropology, the dominant variant of cultural anthropology that approaches culture as a symbolic system. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 5.

8. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, first published in 2 volumes in 1835 and 1840, New York: Penguin Classics, 2003.

9. Protestantism and capitalism’s complementarity was examined in detail by Max Weber in his famous 1904 treatise, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

10. Ethnicity is a cultural construct usually based on race, religion, language, and way-of-life traditions. It may be possible to conceive of a distinctive American ethnicity that transcends the usual determinants by embracing an ethnic identity based on the American idea.

11. The beginning of the modern era is most commonly defined by the advent of the enlightenment and industrialization in the 18th century. The enlightenment created a rational secular world where man dominated the ideational domain, while industrialization created a material world where man dominated the physical domain. Divorced from the constraining and limiting pre-modern fixation on the divine, the modern era increasingly promised a future of unlimited possibilities. See Appendix I,

"A Commentary on Modernity and Nationalism," for a fuller discussion on the subject. For a closer examination of the role and place of liberty and freedom as overarching conceptions that define what America means, see Appendix II, "A Commentary on Liberty and Freedom as Dimensions of Modernity and Nationalism." See Appendix III, "A Commentary on Language as a Dimension of Modernity and Nationalism," for a discussion of how language is an important factor of modernity, but perhaps not a determinative factor in nationalism.

12. The most prominent example was the failure to predict the collapse of the Soviet Union. Two important criticisms of rational choice theory came from the Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis and political scientist Ian Shapiro. Gaddis' criticism of the social sciences and their focus on the quest for the independent variable appeared in Chapter 3, "The Interdependence of Variables," *Landscapes of History*, London, England: Oxford University Press, 2002. Shapiro indicted the social sciences and the humanities as being driven more by concern over methods, most importantly rational choice theory, than by actual real world problems in his *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

13. Thus the study of identity involves the exploration of the same parameters that were mentioned earlier for the study of culture: formation, agency, process, boundary, variability, stability, coherence, and effect on thinking and decisionmaking.

14. Two important and powerful studies have had an enormous impact on how we view the formation of coherent and stable modern nation-states. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983, provided startling studies of how nation-states deliberately invented traditions to provide legitimacy by tying the nation-state to its long traditional past and by consolidating its power through invented symbols and rituals. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, London, England: Verso, 1983, examined how printed words played a key role in virtually linking all parts of the modern nation-state. Widespread and cheap printing, "print capitalism" in Anderson's term, is a modern phenomenon. Its ubiquity was an essential mechanism and instrument for rapidly binding citizens of a nation-state by helping them imagine their membership in that national

community. For example, print capitalism helped spread the sort of invented traditions that Hobsbawm and Ranger considered. For some nations, such as Indonesia, that had never existed as a single coherent community prior to its formation in modern times, the concept of a national community in itself was an invention made possible to imagine through print capitalism.

15. John Lewis Gaddis, perhaps the world's foremost historian of the Cold War, wrote,

the efforts theorists have made to create a "science" of politics that would forecast the future course of world events have produced strikingly unimpressive results: none of the . . . approaches to theory . . . that have evolved since 1945 came anywhere close to anticipating how the Cold War would end. . . . If their forecasts failed so completely to anticipate so large an event as that conflict's termination, then one has to wonder about the theories upon which they were based.

John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Winter 1992-93, p. 3. Quoted by Kenneth B. Pyle in "Reading the New Era in Asia: The Use of History and Culture in the Making of Foreign Policy," *Asia Policy*, Vol. 3, January 2007, p. 3.

16. Important works on strategic culture include Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995, pp. 32-64; Stephen Peter Rosen, "Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995, pp. 5-31; Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995, pp. 65-93; Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993; Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993; Richard J. Ellis and Michael Thompson, eds., *Culture Matters: Essays in Honor of Aaron Wildavsky*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997;



Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in Forty-Three Societies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997; Yosef Lapid, "Culture's Shop: Returns and Departures in International Relations Theory," in Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil, eds., *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996.

17. Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Reflection and Reappraisal: Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Fall 2002, pp. 87-88.

18. For example, the globalization based on expansion of European trade between the 16th and 18th centuries or the opening of the Silk Road in the 13th century.

19. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

20. Amartya Sen, "Violence, Identity and Poverty," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 45, No. 1, 2008, p. 12.

## APPENDIX I

### A COMMENTARY ON MODERNITY AND NATIONALISM

In considering how culture operates in the realm of policy and strategy, we can begin with a broad and historical approach to understanding two defining features of the modern world: *modernity* and *nationalism* (by nationalism, we are specifically referring to modern politicized nation-state nationalism and identity). These are not simply cultural concepts. They also touch upon other broad fields of knowledge and discipline through which we study man and society (philosophy, history, literature, anthropology, political science, economics, sociology, and psychology). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that their contemporary relevance is essentially a cultural one. Therefore, the particular cultural direction taken by a given society or nation has determined the particular form of identity, political culture, political system, social organization, economic system, and important ideas that infuse a nation-state. And these features become important and relevant in the world of policy and strategy, because they are related to the formation and content of *national values* and *national interests*.

*Modernity* is a complex concept. One way to reduce it to a manageable level is to consider it in material and nonmaterial or ideational terms. The most obviously recognizable aspect of modernity is the material one. The Industrial Revolution of the West since the 18th century and more recently the Information Age have changed and modernized the material landscape of human society that made lives more comfortable and convenient. It also made possible the absolute expansion

of wealth and the creation of middle class dominant societies. For many societies, material modernity made possible for its members to be able to imagine a middle class future of security and comfort. It is often this conception that is the source of social and economic activity. Some postulate, and with a good number of supporting examples from around the world, that such material improvement and the resultant social foundations are necessary preconditions for the successful introduction of liberal democracy.

Perhaps more difficult to analyze than material modernity, although probably more important, is nonmaterial or ideational modernity. In other words, how modernity affects people's thoughts, conceptions, perceptions, and imaginations. Thus, ideational modernity deals with political, economic, social, and ideological transformations. Material modernity made possible the imagination of a very different future, but this is only a fragment of the impact that modernity had on the mind. The beginning of this process coincided with material modernity in the late 18th century in the Age of Enlightenment (or the Age of Reason). New meanings about the purpose of life and society were generated that challenged old and traditional meanings.

The role and place of the individual and the individual's relationship with collectivities from neighborhood and village up to the global underwent a significant change. For most people in pre-modern or traditional communities, the perceived and meaningful world was limited to the local. Except for a relative handful of merchants and soldiers, most people did not travel, communicate, or interact beyond the local in pre-modern societies, because it was often neither physically possible nor necessary. It was modernity

that made possible the conception of the modern nation and the world as something tangible. Modern infrastructure made it physically possible and modern political-economies made it necessary to connect with the world in an increasingly interdependent manner; the latest version of which we now call globalization.

Modernity also introduced new ways of conceiving how human societies could be organized and supported, such as democracy, colonialism, capitalism, and Marxist-Leninism. It might be useful to keep in mind that these competing ideas also created competing factions within nations, therefore, competing nationalists who held different visions for their nation. The existence of these factions often led to violence, civil conflict and division.

At the humanistic level, the most important impact of modernity was its effect on spirituality and, in particular, on the notions of the divine and the secular. The traditional pre-modern world was one imbued by an ever present divinity that served to explain the world and all the wonderful and terrible things that existed within it, as well as being itself a force to be respected and feared. Ultimately, however, the divine pre-modern world was a comforting one, because everything could be explained and justified. The increasing emphasis on empirical materialism and secularism created a rational world that made possible the expansion of modernity. But it also led to a profound sense of loss and unsettlement, because the divine could no longer explain everything and there remained so much beyond understanding. Furthermore, divinity was no longer seen as determining the natural or manmade world and thus became separated from questions regarding who we are, what we do, how we live, and how we look at the future. However, we should not forget that

religion and the divine continued to be relevant in answering the question why we exist.<sup>1</sup>

The political, economic, and social worlds were no longer limited to the local in the modern era, but increasingly encompassed more distant polities, economies, and people in greater and more complex and interdependent ways so that today we can easily think and imagine in global terms. The modes of government and the basis of legitimacy and power changed as well. At the individual level, it was now possible to conceptualize and imagine a limitless future of infinite possibilities unconstrained by those things that had defined the pre-modern world such as trade, class, gender, and god. Of course the modern world has its own constraints to include carry-overs from the pre-modern such as race, gender, class, and sometimes even faith. But it is the notion of equality, another distinctly modern conception, that has made it possible to imagine a world without such divisions and constraints. And, it is that mode of thinking, rather than reality, that is a feature of modernity.

This discussion of modernity is simplified but provides the beginnings of the basis for understanding how a particular society entered the modern age, interpreted and adapted modernity for its own needs, and created the kind of contemporary society that exists today.<sup>2</sup> Modernity, however, must also be seen in tandem with the development of *nationalism*, in particular activist modern political nationalism and national identity. Nationalism in a cultural or ethnic sense had long existed in human societies, but the visceral and emotional political nationalism that we are more familiar with is a distinct feature of the modern age. This is true whether that nationalism is based on

a nation-state or on a more ambiguous ethnic-religious “community.”<sup>3</sup>

Three important historical processes in the 20th century have had an overwhelming impact on the rise of modern nationalism: worldwide modernization (westernization), decolonization, and the end of the Cold War. These historical processes have created a world of over 200 nation-states, each with a distinct form of nationalism, and also opened the way for the development of a more politically outspoken and activist ethno-religious nationalism. The best way to study and understand how we arrived at where we are today in terms of modernity and nationalism is through history. Without an historical examination of the contingent turns and twists of a given society’s path toward its contemporary form of modernity and nationalism, we will not gain a deep or what Geertz called “thick” understanding of what has determined contemporary ideas and forms of identity, interests, values, and world view.<sup>4</sup>

All modern nation-states achieved, or are trying to achieve, some acceptable balance between modernization in its original western form and native culture, to create a new and unique combination of modernity and nationalism. More often than not, the combination reflects an amalgam of native spirituality with Western materialism. For example, during East Asia’s turbulent period on the cusp of modernity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, we find ideas and slogans such as “Chinese spirit, western technology” and “Japanesepirit,western technology” to motivate the nation. This process continues today as demonstrated by such recent thoughts as how Confucianism is the source of East Asian economic success or Chinese notions of “Chinese-style capitalism.” It is these processes that

strategic leaders should be most interested in, because they influence and determine values, interests, policy, and strategy.

## ENDNOTES - APPENDIX I

1. Each reader will undoubtedly find exceptions to this generalized and simplified discussion of the relationship between divinity and secularism as a fundamental point of division between the traditional and the modern. The intent here is to point out a fundamental change in the course of human history. No study of man and society will claim absolute universality. To understand the continued existence of traditional modes of thought and life is also to understand how much that particular society has embraced or rejected modernity.

2. This is not to claim that all societies have become modern or have become modern at equal rates or achieved the same level of modernity, if such comparison was even possible. Thus, when one encounters a society that is less modern or not modern, it naturally leads not only to questions of why, but what it means for the values and interests of that society and how it might affect behavior and action.

3. The nationalism typology of Ernest Gellner, one of the great students of nationalism, included the category "diaspora nation/nationalism" of which the most successful example is Israel. Other examples include Armenia, Palestine, and the radical Salafist Islamic movement to reestablish the Caliphate. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983, pp. 101-109.

4. Clifford Geertz, Chapter 1, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-30.

## APPENDIX II

### A COMMENTARY ON LIBERTY AND FREEDOM AS DIMENSIONS OF MODERNITY AND NATIONALISM IN AMERICA

If we accept the premise that culture can significantly influence policy and strategy, the most logical place to start our study is through self-examination. The key question is this: How do American forms of modernity and nationalism influence or determine the way America formulates policy and strategy? It is important here to keep in mind that, in so much as modernity and nationalism are culturally based and that culture can change through time and space, we must consider both the continuity and changes of these forces through our history. What specific aspects of American modernity and nationalism are relevant? Consider the circumstances of our revolutionary national origin and the role and influence of our conceptions and experiences of revolution, Christianity/Protestantism, freedom, liberty, Manifest Destiny, democracy and republicanism, capitalism, the Civil War, the valorization of innovation and adaptation, and middle class values, among other cultural factors. American identity, political culture, and both fueling and coping with globalization, are all affected by this foundation. More importantly, out of this foundation was formed a distinctive American world view, which provided a basis for understanding and sustaining its position in that world, and a mode of thinking about policy and strategy in attaining that position. These and other cultural forces have influenced policy and strategy in the past and the present, and will do so in the future.

An important dimension of American modernity and nationalism concerns the concepts of *liberty* and



*freedom*. Among the many studies on this subject, David Hackett Fischer's 2005 study *Liberty and Freedom* offers perhaps the most accessible.<sup>1</sup> An important insight is that the concepts of liberty and freedom have neither a common origin nor meaning, and that this distinction was meaningful in their effect on America society and history. And though both words originated from the West, they did so from two very different traditions. *Liberty* is a term that is derived from Latin and Greek, while *freedom* has a Northern Europe linguistic origin. *Liberty* is about earned individual *privilege*, while *freedom* is the notion that all have the *right* to be accepted as members of a free community while having the obligation to accept others who are different. Thus, *liberty* exerts a *fragmenting* force on society with individuals going their separate ways (i.e., centrifugal) while *freedom* is a *cementing* force (i.e., centripetal) that embraces all members of a community.

For Fischer, one way to analyze and understand American history was to look at it through the lens of how these concepts, liberty and freedom as cultural entities, changed in meaning over time. At differing times and places, the boundaries and the terms of what liberty and freedom meant converged and diverged, contracted and expanded. And yet, Fischer detected a larger historical pattern of absolute expansion of both liberty and freedom in America. Compared to the 18th century, Americans today have absolutely greater liberty as individuals, while American society has become much more open to accepting diversity as evidenced by the change in status and views about women, ethnic-racial-religious minorities, voting rights, civil rights, homosexuals, and social welfare among other groups.

## ENDNOTES - APPENDIX II

1. David Hackett Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas*, New York and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005.

## APPENDIX III

### A COMMENTARY ON LANGUAGE AS A DIMENSION OF MODERNITY AND NATIONALISM

The examination of the conceptions of liberty and freedom and their etymologically distinct origins and meaning leads to considering language as an important dimension in the cultural study of modernity and nationalism. It is easy to forget that contemporary forms of modernity and nationalism are based on Western conceptions, inventions and creations, and that most of the terms and concepts associated with modernity and modern nationalism did not exist in non-Western societies; they had to be purposefully invented. Terms to describe modern political and economic processes that originated in the West required either a redefinition of existing words (risking ambiguity in meaning) or the creation of entirely new words (requiring a mechanism to popularize them). Modern political and economic concepts, some seemingly universal, such as liberty, freedom, nation-state, constitution, democracy, political party, election, citizen, national assembly, civil rights, and all the technical terms associated with the new inventions of the Industrial Age, did not exist outside of the West. Thus, native terms for them may not hold the same meaning and intent as they do in the West. Contemporary meanings for these terms are often a product of the complex historical experience of the collective society. Therefore, what the term originally meant in the early period of modernization may have changed to something different today, just as the conceptions of liberty and freedom changed through American history.

A good example of the linguistic dimension of modernity and nationalism can be found in East Asia among nations that use Chinese characters. Many of the terms of modernity and nationalism were invented by Japan by either combining traditional Chinese characters in new ways or sometimes creating new characters. Japan did this because it was the first East Asian nation, indeed the first non-Western nation, to successfully embrace modernity and nationalism to become a powerful and rich modern industrialized nation by the end of the 19th century. Japan's linguistic products remain the foundation of modern terminology throughout East Asia today, thereby providing a conveniently common lexicon for the regional development of modernity and nationalism.

And yet, upon close examination, we can detect that the character-based words often did not necessarily convey precisely the same meaning as their English counterparts. A major part of the problem is that Chinese characters did not simply represent sounds, but individually contained a long cultural history of accumulated and modified meanings. A good example is the term used for "democracy." The term is formed by a new combination of two old characters (民主).<sup>1</sup> The first character means "people" as in the masses, but historically this equated to feudal subjects and in particular farmers or peasants. The second character means "lord" or "master" and historically refers to the landlord or feudal lord. Combined, it literally means, "people as master of the land." There is here the notion that suggests a "dictatorship of the people." This is rather different from the Greco-Western notion of considering democracy as "rule of the majority." The Chinese compound places greater cultural emphasis on the people as a monolithic and unified entity. This

emphasis on the unified collective is perfectly in accord with the traditional East Asian Confucian emphasis on the group over the individual and, one can argue, is related to a different notion of democracy in East Asia than in the West.

Aside from the linguistic dimension of modernity, can we say that a language, by itself, can provide a central basis for political nationalism? Clearly, language is a factor in nationalism. Language is important both as an actual source of common identity and also as an instrument for forming a shared identity. However, the relationship between language and nationalism seems to be complex, with many caveats, exceptions and even contradictions. There are two ways to consider this issue.

First, a purely linguistically based identity appears to be quite rare, if it exists at all. The Basques, Catalans, Bretons, Quebecois, Armenians, or the Welsh use language to solidify claims to a broader set of historical symbols, experiences, and values that identify them as separate. Language has also been used for nationalistic purposes by many nations in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Three examples of this are the role of the German language in the creation of Germany as a nation in the 19th century; the role of Italian to assert its unique national identity, also in the 19th century; and Japan's attempt to replace Korean with Japanese during Korea's colonization in the 20th century. Undeniably, language is important for national identity, but is it sufficient? The seemingly linguistically based nationalist movements, in fact, do not necessarily have a unique language or a direct correlation between linguistic distribution and the area of common national identity. Bretons share a wider linguistic heritage with other Gaelic speakers of northwestern Europe. Quebecois speak French but

do not identify as French nationals. Armenians have a nation-state, and yet, Turkish-Armenians clamor for a separate identity. The German linguistic spread seems to have been far wider than the area incorporated into the 19th century German nation. The common use of Chinese written language and classics for over a thousand years in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, a deep source of a shared cultural tradition, have created widely divergent, even confrontational, forms of nationalism in those countries today. The crucial factor seems to be history and politics of the group based on its ethnic identity and perceived injustices rather than a common unique language. In these cases, language seems to have served merely as a cultural symbol of a unified historical experience and current status rather than as a fundamental source of national identity.

Second, while ethnic or religion based nationalism has undeniable political force similar to nation-state nationalism, there appears to be no example of a linguistically based nationalism with similar political potency. Language does not seem to be on the same categorical plane as ethnicity and religion nor as nation-state. Rather, language should be seen as one of the supporting cultural forces behind nationalism. It is clearly one of the principal instruments for how culture actually operates and transmits. Benedict Anderson's emphasis of the role of print capitalism in the creation of an imagined Indonesian national community cannot be made without assuming a common language.<sup>2</sup> Ernest Gellner's notion of the critical role of a new industrial social organization in the creation of modern political nationalism cannot function efficiently without it.<sup>3</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's invented traditions of modern nation-states depend as much on the word as on images.<sup>4</sup> David Hackett Fischer's historical trace of liberty and freedom could not have happened without

a shared language (written and visual).<sup>5</sup> Language may best be considered as a critical cultural instrument and one of those crucial points of hybridization of the old and the new.

### ENDNOTES - APPENDIX III

1. Pronunciation: Japanese – *minshu*; Chinese – *minzhu*; Korean – *minju*.

2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed., London, England: Verso Books, 1991.

3. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.

4. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

5. David Hackett Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas*, New York and Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2005.