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**The Influential Leader**

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*The Sheik brings more Sheiks, more sheiks bring more men. Joe realizes that if he'd done this three years ago, maybe his wife would be happier, and he'd have been home more. Mohammed gets to meet the Sheiks. They realize he's not such a bad guy, which is good for Iraq. Joe grows a moustache, because he realizes that Iraqis like people with moustaches and have a hard time trusting people without one.*

—Captain Travis Patriquin, “How to win in Al-Anbar”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Somewhere in the world, conducting stability operations**

The brigade commander was growing increasingly frustrated. He was a great leader; he knew it. As a battalion commander in the initial offensive he had done a good job. Now, here he was, back again, leading a good unit, with excellent subordinates. The troops loved him. He was an aggressive commander who took care of his soldiers. He was able to draw the best from his men and women. Sharp and direct, his orders were always clear, providing purpose and vision to his subordinate commanders. He knew his job, his weaponry, his tactics and his soldiers. But he was growing increasingly frustrated, because a lot of issues he was not responsible for were running out of control.

Deployed in a populous area, his unit was performing “three-block warfare.”<sup>2</sup> He had been assigned the protection of a shrine, at the same time he attempted to clear the area of insurgents, and was rebuilding infrastructure, schools, hospitals... a Clear – Hold – Build

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<sup>1</sup> Captain Travis Patriquin’s Power Point presentation, [http://www.blackfive.net/main/2006/12/great\\_in\\_the\\_wo.html](http://www.blackfive.net/main/2006/12/great_in_the_wo.html), visited 3 April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The term “Three Block Warfare” was coined by former Chief of the Marine Corps General Charles Krulak. Charles C. Krulak, “*The Three Block War: Fighting in Urban Areas*” presented at National Press Club, Washington, D.C., 10 October 1997, Vital Speeches of the Day, 15 December 1997, 139, cited by Major Phillip W. Boggs.. *Joint Task Force Commanders and the “Three Block War”*. SAMS Monograph. Fort Leavenworth, 15 May 2000.

operation.<sup>3</sup> In order to accomplish his mission he had studied—and learned—cultural awareness; he had asked for, and received more interpreters; his staff had been augmented with a civil affairs specialist; he even knew by heart the full list of what the myriad International Organizations (IO) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) acronyms present in his area meant. But he was growing increasingly frustrated, because his chosen measures of effectiveness indicated that things were getting worse.

He was forced to accept the support of a local host country brigade, whose commander was definitely not a good leader. Evidently this local commander achieved his position because of his social origins, not for his military proficiency. He was a bully, using a heavy hand against his own population. The brigade commander got along much better with the local operations officer, a westernized young and brilliant maverick that reminded him of himself. He often tried to work around the local brigade commander to deal with his operations officer. It was not the standard way of operating, but it was the only one that provided immediate results. The situation was made even worse by the European officer at the head of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT). He had gone native!<sup>4</sup> This European was supporting the local commander even when it was evident he was favoring his own tribe against the most elementary principles of democracy!<sup>5</sup>

His responsibility included some reconstruction tasks, to which he devoted extraordinary attention. Reconstruction was the key to the exit strategy. He had started a new school for girls and planned a new hospital, had already drilled a few wells, and many more projects were planned in this zone. But he was deceived by the local authorities, who were not able to staff the school when it was about to be inaugurated. He even had a strong disagreement with the PRT commander, who had wanted him to build a new office for the

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<sup>3</sup> FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Department of the Army, December 2006): 5-18.

<sup>4</sup> Ideas extracted from: Greg Jaffe, A Camp Divided. *Wall Street Journal*, June 18, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Captain Travis Patriquin tragic story and famous PowerPoint presentation shows a good example of honest approach to tribalism.

local authorities instead of the school, those same authorities that were unable to fulfill their roles.<sup>6</sup> They did not deserve a new building at all!

Fortunately, the enemy was so clumsy he could present a few successes. He had recently caught a local insurgent commander because he had provided his cell phone number trying to extort a local telecommunications company.<sup>7</sup> He had just solved the kidnapping of three international hostages because of the amateurish way the insurgents had conducted the negotiations.<sup>8</sup> However, the insurgency was still active, waiting for better weather to launch their typical spring offensive.

He wished to be in full command. Full command? Was he not in full command of his brigade? Actually he was, but he longed to command, at least to be able to coordinate, the NGOs, the local authorities, the local military and police units and even the European OMLT, or the American Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). All those entities were making him mad. Nobody was following a common intent, they all had a different understanding of the situation, but THEY were wrong and HE was right, he knew it. Only if he were in full command!

This is a fictitious story. It could have happened in Iraq or in Afghanistan, it could happen again elsewhere in the world. The screenplay, like many movies, forces into a single plot events drawn from different real situations. But it illustrates one of the new characteristics of the contemporary operational environment (COE). The presence of multiple agents in the same area with a similar purpose, be it peace, stability or prosperity, but each with different mandates and

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<sup>6</sup> ISAF Civil Military Cooperation in 2004 moved from humanitarian assistance to direct support of governance, during the deployment of the author to the International Security and Assistance Force Headquarters (ISAF HQ) in Kabul.

<sup>7</sup> Idea extracted from a blog post by Barnett Rubin. Barnett Rubin. 31 March 2008, "Taliban and telecom." *Informed Comment: Global Affairs*. <http://icga.blogspot.com/2008/03/rubin-taliban-and-telecoms-secret.html>, visited 3 April 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Idea extracted from the kidnapping of three international workers the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004 during the deployment of the author to ISAF HQ.

approaches to what they consider the best solution. In this kind of environment a commander cannot impose his vision, his solution of the problem. This paper will argue that the new COE places extraordinary demands on leaders to exert influence on events in their area of responsibility that go beyond the traditional limits of military command authority. To do so, it will explore the concept of influence, its benefits and how to achieve it.

### **What is influence?**

Influence is an essential component of Leadership. Following FM 6-22, leadership is defined as “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.”<sup>9</sup> However, this definition implies leading through influencing others who share a common purpose and direction within an organization. The word “influence” in this definition has a limited scope to those who are in our immediate proximity. However, FM 3-0 affirms that “leaders influence not only Soldiers, but other people as well.”<sup>10</sup>

FM 3-0 presents another concept of influence, as one of the stability mechanisms: compel, control, influence and support. These are an alternative to defeat mechanisms when there is no enemy opposition.<sup>11</sup> Influence, following FM 3-0, “means to alter the opinions and attitudes of a civilian population through information engagement, presence, and conduct.”<sup>12</sup> FM 6-22 also extends leadership influence beyond the chain of command, as the second leader

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<sup>9</sup> FM 6-22. *Army Leadership* (Department of the Army. October 2006): 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> FM 3-0. *Operations* (Department of the Army, February 2008): 4-2.

<sup>11</sup> A stability mechanism is the primary method through which friendly forces affect civilians in order to attain conditions that support establishing a lasting, stable peace. FM 3-0: 6-10.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

competency.<sup>13</sup> In contrast with FM 3-0, it considers not only the civilian population but every agent affecting or interested in the environment. FM 3-24 simply states that “commanders must influence directly and indirectly the behavior of others outside their chain of command.”<sup>14</sup> This is where influence receives its full significance. People affected by our leadership will share part of our purpose, but will have their own; will not follow our direction, but will take into account our decisions. In any case, our mission as leaders will include influencing the decisions of those very different agents in our environment.

The stability mechanisms may be used across full spectrum operations in every operational theme. They can be considered as a continuum from coercion to support. The issue that will be discussed in this text is to choose the best position in this continuum from the use of legitimate military actions, ranging from a measured use of violence to any kind of cooperation, with a special emphasis on influence. The working definition for influence may read as the ability to persuade or stimulate other individual or collective agents in our environment to act in accordance with our purposes. FM 6-22 provides a good guidance on how to understand and exert this influence. The principal context for this approach to influential leadership will be the operational themes other than major combat operations.<sup>15</sup> This context can be analyzed from our own perspective as a military unit performing an operation and from the point of view of the different agents present in or affecting our area of operations.

From a military unit’s perspective, the first consideration to be made is that our organization is only one of multiple stakeholders in a crisis environment, but it is our own. We want to influence our environment for our own purpose. As a military unit, this purpose will

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<sup>13</sup> FM 6-22: 7-11.

<sup>14</sup> FM 3-24: 7-9.

<sup>15</sup> FM 3-0: 2-3.

normally be to accomplish our mission; from a leadership point of view, we will add the purpose of improving our organization. This point of view is, and ought to be, selfish. Our purpose is not to improve the environment within our Area of Operations (AO), but to accomplish our mission. We will try to influence our environment only in order to better accomplish our mission. We assume our mission to be purposeful, legitimate, and effective. We will operate within the latitude in its interpretation that we are allowed. We have to be aware that our unit may be not the only one present in the area. Indeed, we may find other units from our forces with different tasks, outside our chain of command, as the PRTs. The issue at hand is to choose the best position in the continuum. This may vary from coercion to exerting influence through the use of legitimate military actions, ranging from a measured use of violence to any kind of cooperation.

The second consideration points to the full spectrum of operations. Major combat operations require a broad application of directed violence. Within this context, the use of force will be the main tool for the military commander, reducing the effectiveness of influence in favor of coercion. For the other types of operations in the spectrum of conflict, influence will have a very important place. The operational environment in Peacetime Military Engagement, Limited Intervention, Peace Operations and Irregular Warfare will have a richness of agents that may not respond to coercion in accordance with our purpose. This may be either because their non-combatant and neutral nature, such as most NGOs, or because of their possible reaction to threat or violence, as fencesitters. The use of force from coercion to influence will depend on the situation; in general terms, actions to influence the environment versus coercion will be often necessary in a variety of operations within those operational themes.

From a broad leadership perspective, the operational environment can be characterized by the variety of agents present, each with different features, within a continuum that ranges from

conflict to cooperation with our own organization. Those agents can be local or international: in the local side we find the population; its political representatives at various levels; local informal power structures; local security forces; irregular activists from criminals to insurgents; in the international side we can point out: the Non Governmental Organizations (NGO); the International Organizations (IO); international military forces in coalition with ours; other security forces, international police or private companies; private contractors; the media; and other national governmental agencies, economic, political or cultural. As soon as any group is designated as an enemy, actions over this group will rest upon violence much more than upon influence. For all those not considered enemy—which may even include criminals—a commander must convey ways to influence their behavior without necessarily resorting to coercion.

All those agents will have a great variety of features: different ends, purposes and interests; some will not share our culture and values; others will have distinct skills and habits, applied through different strategies. All those not considered enemy will potentially have at least some common ground in their purpose with that of our unit within the scope of our mission. The search for peace and prosperity through security, freedom and justice will define this common ground. However, the specifications and interpretations of peace or justice will likely be different among the various players. Some agents will have a mandate; some others will have broad autonomy. In any case, our military unit will not be in a position to force a mission on them, and neither will it have the power to “coordinate” their actions. Despite these limitations, a military commander will perceive the need to influence the actions of all those organizations in order to best accomplish his assigned mission.

**Why influence?**

The working definition of influence implies our military unit will not use coercion to force every action of the agents in our environment. As military leaders, we will have a defined mission, whose fulfillment, in most cases, will be affected by their behavior. What are the possible courses of action that we—as military leaders—have when interacting with these other agents? We can simply ignore them; just do our job without taking them into account, following our orders. We may perform within our standards, applying our TTPs, treating them with military courtesy. Will this attitude benefit our mission? By acting alone, we will not receive any help from the other actors and may even perhaps alienate them. On the other hand, our effectiveness would be enhanced with their cooperation; so why not seek this cooperation?

Another possibility is to substitute the tasks of the non cooperative agents that we deem necessary for the success of our mission. That attitude may lead to conflict with these agents, but who cares? If the locals are not able to provide essential services, if the NGOs reject contact with the military, we can do both local administration and humanitarian assistance on our own. Beyond the risk of drawing on ourselves the anger of the agents, we may cause their disengagement in the future, making them dependent on our extended presence.

Simply, we can force the agents to do our will through sheer force or capabilities. Local population and authorities can be forced to do our will, IOs and NGOs will not have our resources both in manpower and equipment and can be coerced when they need support. The opposite is possible too; we can try to make everyone happy by doing exactly what the agents expect from us. The interpretation of our mission may be “reengineered” to satisfy all agents. In the short term, in front of the media, our unit may receive a big applause. Is it that what we are

looking for? Is there another way? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative way? Is it feasible? At what price?

The answer is the use of non-coercive influence. The main advantage to this course of action is the legitimacy that this approach will confer to our mission within the realities of our capabilities.<sup>16</sup> First, because it will establish a common ground for cooperation with outside agents: if they do not feel threatened or ignored by our actions they will be more prone to look for common ground. Second, because it will enhance mutual trust. Exerting positive non-coercive influence requires contact and engagement; if this engagement remains sincere, without each party renouncing each own position, it will build confidence and the possibility of concerted action. Third, because the effects of cooperative agreements will probably last longer than coercive actions. This is significant because, even if other agents perform less efficiently than our force, they will learn, improve, and take full responsibility over time. Finally, as history proves repeatedly, military decision making has not always been correct.<sup>17</sup> A cooperative approach allows each one to take responsibility for his own mistakes, there is less likelihood of mistakes or incompetence when each agent is performing its own responsibilities.

However, there is a price, of course. Efficiency and effectiveness may suffer in the short term. Military capabilities and resources are often much more effective than other agents in short-term actions; but assuming other agents' tasks may reduce the legitimacy of theirs and our own mission.<sup>18</sup> Second, things may take more time to accomplish. Again, in the short term

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<sup>16</sup> FM 3-0 clearly asserts that influence requires legitimacy, acknowledging the risk of a misuse of force to this legitimacy. FM 3-0: 6-10.

<sup>17</sup> The entire intervention of the US in support of UNOSOM II in Somalia deserves a close look. As an example, the Abdi House raid in Mogadiscio 12 July 1993. Cf. Robert. F. Baumann, Lawrence A. Yates and Versalle F. Washington. *“My Clan Against the World”*. (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 116.

<sup>18</sup> The Afghan government has asked repeatedly to the International Community to let the Afghans be in the “driver’s seat” of their own reconstruction. Cf. <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/04.06embnewsscripp.html> visited the 3 April 2008.

military resources may get immediate results, but in isolation; this does not help to build confidence with other stakeholders. The worst case is that influence simply may not work. The different agents may pursue their own interests and objectives in a manner that may prove absolutely incompatible with our mission. In these circumstances, if the alternatives are considered, be it coercion or substitution, the result may be a different kind of the same evil. But if we consider not only our own unit, but the whole operation, with different units like ours, there is a great probability that some of those units would be actually attaining their objectives. In general terms, looking for influence may not work hundred percent of the time, but it promises to be better than simply relying on brute force. In the mid to long term, as well as when looking at the big picture, from a strategic point of view, influence may be superior to coercion in operational situations other than major combat operations.

Finally, there is another legitimate question. Will an orientation to exert influence on the commander's part affect combat capabilities of our unit? Will it affect our own will to fight? If so, would it be better to prepare ourselves for major combat operations, using this as preparation for the rest? General Casey, in a recent speech to CGSC in Fort Leavenworth,<sup>19</sup> made clear that he believed no more in the old statement that if we are good at combat we will be good at stability. It is like getting married. Can we consider that the day after our wedding we are not as good professionals as before because we devote time and concern for our families?<sup>20</sup> Our soldiers have the capability to train for full spectrum operations, devoting the necessary preparations for any contingency.

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<sup>19</sup> Speech of General Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, to CGSOC classes 2008-01 and 2008-02, Fort Leavenworth, 4 March 2008.

<sup>20</sup> I owe this sharp metaphor to Major Francis Moss, who improvised it just after General Casey's speech.

## How to influence?

Influence is a quality of leadership. FM 6-22 provides the best guidance on how a leader may extend his or her influence beyond a leader's own chain of command. Good leaders will be able to influence events in their environment by the simple rule of BE-KNOW-DO.<sup>21</sup> The COE is a very complex environment that in many ways is more demanding in leader qualities and competences other than those associated with traditional military leadership. These certainly deserve a closer look.

An influential leader needs restraint. Arrogance is one of the worst enemies of influence. An aggressive mind is not the obstacle, just the contrary, it leads to anticipation. But this aggressiveness needs to be controlled with restraint. Patience is another basic quality. An energetic command is either followed immediately or plainly disobeyed, there is little room for foot dragging. But influence leaves plenty of time to analyze options, check trustworthiness and assess alternatives. The influential leader assumes his measures will take time. Trust is built with time and perseverance. That is why coherence is an additional requirement. Maintaining coherence through time is not easy when a leader has competing demands. Coherence will require sacrifices in short term goals to benefit not yet defined long term purposes, but it will prove its value. The contrary of coherence is arbitrariness, which will undermine trust for the price of short term gains. An influential leader is adaptable and agile too.<sup>22</sup> His or her adaptability does not go against coherence, it is built upon it. Adaptability means to be able to change one's approach while remaining within principles and commitments in order to meet the requirements of every situation. In order to be adaptable, the leader needs to take decisions

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<sup>21</sup> FM 6-22: v.

<sup>22</sup> See Harold Wiffen. "Becoming an Adaptive Leader". *Military Review*, November December 2007, 108-114.

following the battle command decision-making process, based on a situational understanding, and his or her own analysis, not a checklist. The basis for these decisions is knowledge and professional judgment as developed by experience.

An influential leader requires a special orientation to knowledge. First, of course, his own professional responsibilities, the TTPs of his unit, which are common to any other situation. On top of this professional expertise, the first essential step is the knowledge of self. By simply being present in a theater, a military force has a tremendous influence in events. This influence will range from the local environment to the international public opinion. Self-knowledge then, springs from a thorough awareness of one's own capabilities, physical and moral, to a clear understanding of our own civilization and the legitimacy of our mission. Moral capabilities are measured in terms of trust, credibility and will; physical capabilities depend on our equipment and the graduated measure of violence we can exert. Any leader has to be aware of his place, never be behind the scenes, but always on the public spot.

The need to influence people of varied background places an extraordinary demand on the leader. The influential leader needs familiarity with a quite complex environment. He or she must be familiar with the different agents that populate it, their characteristics, names, purposes, mandates, interests, and structure. On the one hand, he needs to appear knowledgeable to the leaders of all the other organizations in order to be trusted; on the other hand, he needs to consider all aspects of the situation of his own decisions. This knowledge about the agents consists of much more than what an intelligence cell may provide. It is much more than knowing, it implies understanding. Those agents are formed and led by persons. The influential leader needs to understand people, their basic needs, ambitions and habits. This kind of knowledge relies heavily on basic education.

The demands of technology have oriented our education to be highly specialized. This increases the depth of our thinking in a narrow field, at the price of losing perspective and breath of understanding. When participating in operations other than major combat, success will not be defined by the precise application of technical knowledge, be it flying aircraft or conducting planning, but by interpersonal relations with a broad variety of people. A good leader has to know human nature, instincts, and motivation. He has to show more than respect for a religion, he or she needs to demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of religions and civilizations. Collective decision making is filled with ideological and religious considerations. A basic understanding of philosophy and political science should form part of the intellectual resources of any leader which aspires to exert influential leadership in a complex environment. Cultural awareness is not enough; it means a leader is aware that other people have other cultures. To be effective the leader needs cultural familiarity.

Moreover, the interaction of people with their physical environment will profoundly shape their behavior. The study of the physical environment is also a useful factor in interpersonal relations. In a rural environment one needs to know some basics of agriculture, in an industrial town the leader must be able to value production, in an urban dwelling social relations change. The influential leader must know how to react in any situation, from a rural meeting with traditional peasants to a political working lunch in a downtown hotel with international officials. But intellectual resources and awareness need to be properly communicated. This communication may rest on a personal skill and natural abilities, but every leader may greatly improve his or her communication capabilities through study and preparation.

Frequent communication will be one of the most important actions an influential leader must do. Influence is all about communication. He has to be able to reach to the other agents,

establish a climate of dialogue when possible, and engage them with honesty and sincerity, certainly without arrogance. Cooperation is made easier once a communication channel is established. But then the question arises—what to communicate? First, the leader has to clarify his position, his mandate, and his mission, to all agents.<sup>23</sup> An influential leader is not a negotiator, although sometimes he may need to negotiate. His point of departure is his mission. From this point, he needs to open a field for cooperation with imagination and generosity. He should employ his capabilities and resources, using them as leverage. His actions will affect other agents. They may improve or worsen the situation. The influential leader needs to balance each agent's demands and interests in order to remain coherent and trustworthy.

The first steps in influential communications should attempt to build trust between the leader and his counterparts. To do so he needs to be involved personally, preferring to communicate primarily with leaders who are at an equivalent level, in order to leverage his personal commitment with his prestige and authority. Morality is paramount: in any case, the influential leader acts and speaks beyond any reproach, serving as a “moral compass” to the environment.<sup>24</sup> The beginning of a relationship needs patience; the attainment of small steps helps to establish trust before addressing greater projects. Later on it will be time to take calculated risks. Sometimes those risks will materialize. If risks have been properly calculated and likely results anticipate, the one who would suffer from failure will be the unreliable counterpart, not the military unit. Future successes would compensate for some errors. The influential leader seeks good luck. Luck is not a question of chance. As Maj. David Cummings

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<sup>23</sup> A UN official complained once to the author that Afghan local authorities did not recognize civil supremacy over the military. When touring the recently established northern ISAF PRTs, in 2004, local authorities always saluted first the military commander. This gesture has a great significance for Afghans.

<sup>24</sup> FM 3-24, 7-2.

shows<sup>25</sup>, it is a combination of preparation, control and confidence with opportunity. A good influential leader jumps on the opportunity based in his knowledge and his preparation.

Engaging with other agents means that cherished and efficient military procedures may need to be revised. Military planning capabilities tend to be far better than Interagency or NGO capabilities. Their agility allow NGOs to respond quickly, but not always following established procedures. Flexibility in the procedures may allow short term successes, which in turn help to establish trust. Furthermore, many procedures are designed to improve efficiency. Outside of the system, the efficiency is often in doubt. But in order to provide some of the other agents a sense of ownership and responsibility, sometimes efficiency should be discarded in favor of allowing them to execute actions even if they do not do so in the most effective manner. Leading through influence is costly, but effective. There is a need to trade efficiency for effectiveness. Being flexible in the procedures will enable the reach of consensus among the stakeholders.

The military leader commands a force, not a group of Boy Scouts. He needs to be aware of the capability of his force and use it with moderation according to the circumstances. Military force is a powerful leverage tool; its coercive power characterizes the essence of the military action. When a military armed unit has been deployed, except in Peacetime Military Engagement, it is because force is needed in some way, not because of his logistical capabilities. Influence is reinforced and directed through dialogue, but it is based in force. Prudence and determination are the key attributes for the successful use of force; prudence to decide the moment and intensity required in the application of force; determination to carry on the decision to success. A proportionate use of force reinforces one's prestige, authority and trust. Not employing enough force may not get the desired results; but an excessive use of force will break

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<sup>25</sup> David Cummings. "On Luck and Leadership." *Military Review*, January-February 2008, 104-107.

trust with friends and foes; once excessive violence is unleashed there will be no way back; therefore the need for prudence and sound judgment in its use is imperative. But once the commander has decided to use force, it has to be successful; decisive action has to be carried out with determination and positive control.<sup>26</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Military leaders at all levels, except when engaged in major combat operations, will find themselves surrounded by a very complex human environment. The actors in this environment are intelligent and willing human beings, who take their own decisions. They are not enemies, nor are they strictly neutral, they have an interest in the solution of the crisis that brought us there. The chances to compel those agents to play by our rules are weak; even worse, it could be counterproductive. But there is an evident need to find common ground on which to operate for a common purpose. Military power and capabilities mean that any military unit deployed in any area will have a robust influence upon its environment. The role of a military leader is to make the best use of this influence to accomplish its mission.

The COE places an extraordinary demand on future leader development. Leaders will conduct their tasks heavily constrained by their operational environment. In order to be successful, leaders should be able to influence this environment in accordance with their mission. It is not an easy task. Influential leaders should be adaptable, able to restrain their energy, patient, and coherent. They need to be aware of their own capabilities and possibilities; they need

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<sup>26</sup> At the same time, when using force over irregular agents that are not defined as the main enemy, a good advice may be to leave an honorable escape route to save face. A group defeated with honesty and clarity without arrogance may become an ally in the future, be the fight over words or with weapons.

basic general knowledge in order to improvise adaptive and practical solutions to unforeseen problems, the book for success in this environment is not yet written; influential leaders must have much more than cultural awareness, they must have cultural familiarity. Knowing what they know, knowing what they are, influential leaders will engage and communicate personally with their environment. This communication should bring trust and credibility among all parties, making cooperation possible, and creating a common ground to find practical solutions. Influential leaders will assume risks, taking advantage of opportunities with flexibility in the procedures. They will use force with prudence, but with full determination when committed.

Finally, the brigade commander began to understand the foundations of his frustration. He realized he was trying to solve everything by himself, putting an extraordinary pressure on his unit and creating mistrust in the environment. It was not too late, he had learned from his past mistakes. It was going to take more time, but patience was now in his side.