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CROSS CULTURAL AWARENESS IN INTERNATIONAL MILITARY OPERATION: INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN

Introduction

Afghanistan is a place on the edge of civilisational collapse, where people are more divided than related (Gryz, 2011, p. 16). Divisions between the habitants in every single life aspect create an impression of never-ending aggression. Afghan conflict has ideological, political and economical dimension, but most of all demonstrate an intricacy of contemporary international relations. Futile military attempts to stabilise area have not been converted into political success, which would provide a promising peace perspective. Situation in Afghanistan generates a need for having a long-term strategy of engagement, which means that civil-military presence must be recalibrated.

Multiculturalism defined as a multitude of cultures can be typified as a major trend in international relations, what is a challenge for every participant of global affairs. The phenomenon of multiculturalism is absolutely nothing new, but under conditions of progressive globalisation mechanism its importance has been appreciated. Barriers of time and space have been broken, that is why we experience cultures living next to each other. People can unite around mutual aims, having created an organisation open and diversified. This tendency applies to military operations as well.

Every coalition composed of national military components deals with distinctive patriotic values and national standards. In practice multinational forces have to operate in culturally heterogeneous environment in an array of tasks to combat threats of mostly a non-military transnational nature. All the time there are highly complex relations within coalition personnel, in culturally diverse society living in the theatre of operation and between all them mutually.

Cultural diversity in ISAF and Afghanistan

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was a NATO-led mission, mandated by the United Nations Security Council in December 2001 by Resolution 1386, which was a continuation of Bonn Agreement. On 31 December 2014 the ISAF mission was completed and responsibility for security was gradually transitioned to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and local institutions. At the operation's peak, more than 130,000 troops from approximately 50 nations were stationed across the country (Cooper et al., 2013, p. 787). ISAF was a multi-functional operation focused on crisis management, so operation goal was not conquest the land, but making changes in socio-political plight. There was a exigence to perform a quality change in government and administration. Crisis management is a broad concept that goes beyond military operations to include issues such as the protection of habitants The North Atlantic Council specified that the main goal for ISAF participants would have been suport for the local government to enable extension of rule of law and create conditions for land reconstruction and development. Undoubtedly time of industrial warefare is passed and now we identified population-centric approach – “war amongst the people” – a situation in which an outcome cannot be resolved directly by military force (Czupryński, 2012, p. 143).

Culture consists of material and non-material legacy that determines way of life group of people in particular area. Thereby habitants have an oportunnity to create a unique identity. Cultures differ from each other because they have reised in distinctive physical and sociological circles. Military culture consists of internal factors (standard operating procedures-SOP, history and kind of organisation), and external factors (organisation environment, extrinsic messages). There are specific functions of culture in military organisation:

- deeper understanding of the core values and personel integration around the mission,
- setting the borders of organisation,
- determining the hierarchy and competences in at least two kinds: horizontal among the services and vertical among the different categories of personel,
- indication of common language and assigned conceptual ideas,
- facilitation of making changes in organisation,
- definition of awards and punishment system,
- ensuring the security needs (Cieślarczyk, Pomykała, 2013, p. 175).

Despite the evidence that military staff represents stable national values we can perceive a phenomena of supernational military culture. Regardless origin of staff different nations in armies can find a large array of commonalities.

Distinguished elements of universal military cultures are:

- culture of specialised unities, for instance Logistic Unit,
- national army culture,
- culture of collective national armies in multilateral coalition or military Alliance (Schreiber, 2012, p. 25).

Basic condition for participation in international operation with multinational military contingents is preserving the national interest. Multilateralism is not a guarantor of operation legality, but contributes to social favour. Decision making process on the participation of operation “out of area” should be justified by public opinion. Favour of public opinion is in turn largely created by mass media that is basic communication tool on line government-society. There are three main principles for participation of the armed forces in international operations: purposefulness (in line of national interest), freedom of action (ensurance of possibly wide latitude over military actions), economy of force (allocation of minimum of essential combat power to achieve most effective results) (Drzewicki, 2011, p. 179).

Multiculturalism in military organisation have two main dimensions. It could be considered in strategic and functional levels. With reference to strategic dimension, Polish forces since 20 years are subjected to unceasing transformation. The breakdown of Warsaw Pact, Germany reunification, Soviet Union collapse and democratic transformation in East-Central Europe required to create new forms and operating principles of national forces. Accession to the Partnership for Peace boosted Polish integration with NATO. It forced adaptation of NATO's procedures into internal military system. In the first years of existence in the North Atlantic Pact Poland realised multidimensional aspect of membership and in 1995 took part in IFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Liberacki, 2009, p.91).

Members are not only consumers of global security but are obligated to be producer of transnational safety. Organisational dimension includes changes having been made after accession to NATO regarding to Standard Operation Procedures (SOP), military equipment and experience of joint combat with international units. It refers to increase verbal communication and share information within the North Atlantic Pact by organizing joint military maneuvers and exercises. In functional level multiculturalism is intended to develop a universal means of communication in order to achieve the

success of international cooperation while respecting distinct military tradition. In practical terms this refers to the increase knowledge of foreign languages, establish common interpretation of certain provisions, predicting the response to certain actions, to achieve mutual understanding, respect for the culture of another army and the development of common scenarios for action on a wide range of challenges.

National Armed Forces differ from each other with the time of joining NATO, thus are at different levels of adjusting common procedures. Additionally they vary in their degree of assimilation and practical use. In 2001, sociologist Joseph Soeters has made research on a group of troops of NATO member countries (USA, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Canada, Norway) and those who were in the Partnership for Peace (Slovakia, Slovenia, Georgia, Romania). Studies have shown that cultural diversity affects both the NATO system and the PFP countries, and the intensity of this impact is extreme - a lower degree in NATO countries and higher in the countries candidates. Studies have also shown that in the formation of multicultural teams should be considered predisposition of each of the national groups (English, 2004, p. 40-47).

Cooperation with the other one nationality will proceed more smoothly if you identify their common features. They consist of historical experience (desirable is a lack of previous disputes between the parties) and geographical location (territorial distance increases the risk of negative stereotypes). As long as the soldier does not cease to be treated as a representative of a particular nationality or type of forces, the attitude and feelings towards him will relate to a whole group of people, and not to him individually (Redziak, 2007, p.122). The perception of people in isolation from the preconceived notions can combat prejudice in the team. Mostly prejudices play the biggest role in the initial stage of the formation of the team and in the course of its existence disappear or lose momentum. Proper selection of cultur in multinational organizations is important, especially in conducting stabilization operations, where the stress level is high because of constant combat readiness and threat to life. In action staff cannot afford for the extra generation of coalitional problems (Britt, Adler, Castro, 2006, p. 31).

There are some conditions under which could appear the potential intercultural conflicts in multinational military operations. Small military contingents are generally not able to take self-responsibility in a specific theatre of operations and they are forced to subordinate its activities to leaders. It could be said that they enjoy a status of “subcontractors” – are an integral part of a group led by another country. Do not always have unlimited autonomy in the area of their responsibility and therefore must be prepared to perform assigned tasks. On the other hand, the existence state-leader the military

operation is not inherently a bad thing, because clearly define what are the universal principles of participation in the operation. With the cooperation between multicultural units, it is necessary to take into account the opinion competence of each team separately, because the most important thing is to accept the objectives and activities of command.

Another factor may be divisive are national guidelines for national quotas and caveats. With the the issue of national restrictions should be noted that there is no “international soldiers” – participants of operations are subject to their national directives. Many countries, despite willingness to participate in international operations want to reduce to a minimum rate of potential loss of life. This attitude is not in itself anything wrong until too patronizing policy of the country will not limit in practice the capacity of the troops. Although at the summit in Riga in 2006, the 37 countries participating in the ISAF operation agreed to reduce national restrictions that national protectionism still remains a problem of ISAF units (Arnold, 2008, p. 99).

National armies are responsible to society and the parliament of their countries. During the operation sovereignty over them is delegated to command of the country-leader. In practice, the execution of orders command may not necessarily remain the same as the policies of their home country. The exercise of democratic control over the military is different and depending on the country. Often national authorities are not aware of the scale of the risk which is taken by the army, the more it is difficult to administer justice in a situation of misinformation (Beeres, et al., 2012, p. 154).

Using a foreign language every day and the conditions under pressure is not always a comfortable situation for multinational contingents. Officers and soldiers to some extent are committed to know language proficiency in the headquarters. You cannot solve communication problems by means of the employment of interpreters, because the degree of understanding of the problem will depend on their interpretation. Communication can be understood as transmission and reception, or some kind of a link between at least two people. This is the mechanism that drives the social relations. Participants send messages themselves via the so-called communication channels, i.e. roads linking the sender to the recipient. The result of effective communication is a feedback loop that is included in the spontaneous exchange of views (Burakowski, 2010, p. 6). Communicating in so strongly hierarchical organization like the army is not an easy task, because the forms of broadcasting messages are limited by rigid procedures.

In a multicultural military organization also you can distinguish a special kind of communication that is cultural communication. Lack of ability to know the diversity

introduces a state of misinformation, which is the basis of culture shock and cultural conflict. Soldiers and officers of the various national armies are aware that they are guided by a common goal. It is important to focus on similarities rather than differences, strive to fulfill the needs of stakeholders, to share information and apply objective criteria proceedings.

The best way to overcome potential conflicts and clichés are multicultural military trainings. Polish Military Contingent training began immediately following the designation of units and sub-units, of which it was decided to form contingent elements. The training also included the emergency supplement group, who represented about 15% of Polish Military Contingent (PMC). Joint Force Trainig Centre in Bydgoszcz provided training for coalition forces, which in July 2013 attended by nearly 150 soldiers from 20 NATO countries. Since 2011, the seminars were also involved officers from the Afghan National Army. For ISAF coalition partners it was often the only chance to get to know their counterparts in the armies of the Allied.

Stages of training included individual and specialized form. It involved the exploration of knowledge of the international law of armed conflict, English and basic phrases in Arabic. Special attention was paid to psycho-physical abilities of commanders at all levels. They perfected the skills, ie. driving a car at high speed, database protection and convoying, the organization of fixed and mobile checkpoints, quick orientation in the field, medical evacuation procedures (procedure MEDVAC) including emergency medical services, rules of behavior in case of booby-traps. Trainings were conducted in the country, at the training ground Nowa Deba, Trzcianiec, Kielce, Bydgoszcz, Szczecin, Drawsko Pomorskie. Abroad, it was a US Army training center in Hohenfels. Virtual training sessions were held in Germany and in 2013 in Wildflecken in training under the name CRYSTAL EAGLE approx. 1,400 soldiers from 21 NATO countries had the opportunity to participate in computer simulations, along with the future partners of military operations.

Afghanistan is a country with an area of 647.5 km² with a population of about 29 million people. The border stretches for approx. 5.5 thousand km with six neighbors – Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, China, Iran and Turkmenistan. The population density is approx. 46 inhabitants on 1 km², wherein the population is distributed very unevenly, because of the very nature of mountain and upland country – only 10% of the surface is below 600m above sea level. Inflation is over 10%. 36% of the population lives below the poverty. Afghanistan is on 169 place with the lowest HDI according to Human Development Report 2014. The most developed is agriculture, while the

main cultivation is poppy used to produce opium. The high birth rate in 2013 stands at 2.22%, which indicates that the statistical woman gives birth to approx. 6 children. UN estimates contend with while maintaining the current rate of natural increase the population of Afghanistan in 2050 may exceed 97 million. Power structure and social infrastructure have collapsed, making Afghanistan the dysfunctional state. After 9/11 international powers decided that Afghanistan would be a field for war with transnational terrorism.

Military action initially focused on destroying and deterrence evolved at best in strategic containment operation. In the fight against radical grouping traditional methods of deterrence and containment proved ineffective and deeply rooted in the traditions of the so-called industrial wars. Using forces to suppress the worst form of violence like terrorism demonstrated that implementation of military objectives does not necessarily transformed into political success. It is a new paradigm of warfare among societies, that lead the fight for the will of the society and habitants (Smith, 2010, p. 183). The case of Afghanistan shows that the genesis of state collapse can be traced to the cultural conflicts that bloody gone down in the history of the country. ISAF was tasked to help Afghans in creation Afghan national security forces. But of course Afghanistan wasn't a "tabula rasa" before ISAF and Enduring Freedom and until today there exists a great diversity in military traditions.

With the meaning of anthropology military culture is formed around the phenomenon of the use of organized violence. It is a kind of socio-cultural phenomenon that is evolving with the developing needs of the community. Ethnic and tribal divisions are reflected in the organization of private armies. But there is no strict simplification in typology of armed groups in Afghanistan (Bhatia, Sedra, 2008, p. 89).

Violence in Afghanistan is not a case of extremism, but keeping the status quo. Development of small combat group subordinated to clans strengthened in the 80s. Hostilities with the USSR destroyed and so sparse state infrastructure, which is why the tribes needed to become self-sufficient, independent from the central government. Just as society, there are enormous discrepancies between the military formations not only because of ethnicity. Militias are subordinate to clans professed different ideologies. It is assumed the division between fundamentalists and traditionalists, formations within the state and those outside the country. There is a clear difference between fundamentalists and traditionalists. Wrongly called fundamentalists, those who are attached to their own tradition of religious culture. Fundamentalists are not traditionalists. Although some declare commitment to the values, but articulate them with new,

characteristic of their group behavior. Rather, they are reactionaries, because their religion is a reaction to a world that finds, on its chaos, confusion. Traditionalists do not have to try new things, go out with the assumption that since their previous choices were correct, then there is no reason to change them. Fundamentalists are most cohesive group. Their arising dates back to the 50s. In the traditionalists reciprocal links based on obedience to tribes that were a symbol of the values Afghan. They had no coherent organizational structure, which was caused envy among families (Besta, Blažek, 2007, p. 348).

Decisions about establishment of the Afghan National Army were taken in 2002 at a conference in Bonn. In Afghanistan military traditions are rather rhodium-clan than national. Achieving ethnic harmony by ANA was order to overcome antagonisms. Kandak (battalion) were formulated with culturally mixed staff. For the most part, however, alternatively dominated by one ethnic group, mostly Pashtuns or Tajiks. Often the problem arises when the commander coming from one ethnic group does not treat subjects equally, particularly with regard to extensions of contract. In effect soldiers are looking to work in unit with commander with the same ethnicity. Thus are formed culturally closed military units.

Another problem is competing loyalties between soldiers in ANA and local militias and warlords. Corruption and nepotism are common in all Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Primordialist interpretation claims that such a social pathologies are evidence for existence a genetic phenomenon. Human nature tends to unity with counterparts genetically similar and reciprocal linking are intensified by a common history, traditions beliefs and practices. Strong ties of kinship seek to protect their security, thus making maximum use of political and economic mechanisms. The nature of family relations, clan and tribal is then transferred to the level of state structures (Rushtone, 2005, p. 490).

Many Afghan soldiers and policemen leave country and do not fulfill their commitments. ANSF soldiers are subjected to daily pressure and are accompanied by combat stress associated with the danger of the job. Also attacks on Coalition forces by Afghan forces (the so-called green-on-blue attacks) were emerging as a major threat in the war in Afghanistan. The cultural differences between Afghans and coalition forces can drive the waves of aggression. ISAF soldiers inappropriate behavior, incidents of smoking Koran desecration of corpses and anti-American propaganda were fundamental problems in cooperation with the ANSF.

Operationalization of culture is a process tending to access cross-cultural awareness to strategic, operational and tactical levels. In training mostly is used Bloom taxonomy. Bloom's taxonomy is the basis for intercultural awareness, which is the basic knowledge about what to do and what not to do. It is necessary to adopt a specified scheme of behaviour in area of operation. It facilitates predict inhabitants' reaction. A person, who wants to acquire intercultural competence, is not only interested in how phenomena occur in a particular social group, but why this happens. Personalities such as Lawrence McArthur and George Kennan, having had a set of specific competencies, were able to change knowledge in strategic scenarios. In the strategic level the most important is to understand the relationship between political and military objectives.

In the context of the proper operationalization of culture necessary at this level it is to answer the following set of questions:

- Who is the enemy? What motivates him?
- Do you care about the order or justice? Where between these two poles is our desired state? If we want justice, then for whom?
- With whom do we want to cooperate? With the current authorities, whether we want to set someone else?
- Do we want to use their or our rights?
- Who will administer a state – we or them? What model of the process of building the state and nation to be adopted?

In tactical and operational level exists the greatest contact with the inhabitants. At this stage, planners apply another set of questions:

- How should we show that the state which we are heading is in the interest of the local population?
- How should be demonstrated that threats are ineffective?
- How should we demonstrate that our threats will be effective?
- How can we be sure that we can trust local people? (Smith, 2010, p. 225)

The operationalisation of culture contributes significantly to components responsible for information operations, psychological and civil-military cooperation. At the meetings with the Afghans the main task was disseminating knowledge about rebel and destructive activity. Performance of tasks allowed to form a catalogue of essential features which should possess ISAF staff. Empathy, broad-mindedness, decisiveness and consistency succor to undisturbed cooperation with the locals. A disgraceful fact was that up to 2010 were prepared so-called village assessments which provided basic information about the province inhabitants, but this questionnaire almost entirely ignored cultural

affiliation. During the VII rotation of Polish Military Contingent it was developed a working system, which draws a lot from the experience of the US Human Terrain. Environmental report thereafter was oriented to get information about formal and informal leaders, but examined also groups of Pashtuns, Hazars and Tajiks who had an almost complete disappearance of genealogical affiliation.

The most problematic aspects during contacts with the local population can be identified:

- confusing Pashtuns from Hazarami,
- ignoring religious conflicts,
- excessive gesticulation,
- demonstration of disrespect,
- inability to identify correctly the situation,
- giving the wrong gift,
- meetings in inappropriate places,
- promising anything,
- not knowing the essence of greetings and farewells,
- using the left hand.

Conclusion

It is obvious that while national interests bring actors to the table, these actors bring with them variegated and at times clashing cultural perceptions. In situation with such a high degree of complexity like a multinational operation all parties are exposed to the risk and may interpret reality differently. According to Christopher Coker there are two main products of shared culture for the Euro-Atlantic area. Firstly there is a liberal internationalism with a strong desire to export western democratic values and secondly cosmopolitanism (Coker, 2011, p. 3).

Customs and religion values are the core for Middle East consciousness. In Afghanistan ethnic and cultural relations were mostly all the time competitive and tense. Turbulent history of state so frequently plagued with conflicts violated the fragile equilibrium of ethnic coexistence. In effect national identity is very weak. Paradoxically at first Taliban as radicals did not have a great recognition in Afghan society, but in regions seized by force warlords lawlessness was restrained. Of course it was a tyranny and the order was cruel and strict but at least it was a form of rule. Initially local people greeted Western troops hoping to rebuild faint infrastructure, but in 2003 USA took the “new

democratisation challenge” in Iraq. Attention has been distracted and money allocated elsewhere. In 2006 guerilla returned but people did not remember why exactly foreign troops are stationeted on their territory. Presently dealing with infrastructure Afghani-satn is facing a great leap. The rate of wealth increased but the social tissue is broken. Regarding to awareness and mentality Afghanistan has become a much more dangerous and divided internally. For a huge amount of money that flowed into Afghanistan. Now we are dealing with new political elites, foreign-based measures and modern weapons. Transition country to a different political regime is one of the ways to spread American influence and form a unipolar system. Well what works in one part of the globe does not need to be appropriate in another. Democracy which does not count with the local traditions is another sophisticated tyranny and fanaticism. Afghans in their own understand a word democracy. Neither in Pashto nor in Dari there is no term for such a political regime and English „democracy” is untranslatable. The word is interpreted as a unlimited freedom in which human behavior is not regulated neither by the state nor by religious institutions. Through democratization placed by the troops the West had long since discredited. Everyone sees the hipocrisy. With high possibility forged elections for instance in Afghani-satn are tolerated, but when similar ones are legitimized in hostile to USA country then authorities are imposed by sanctions. Military operations which cause civilian casualties while at the same time promoting human rights will always be perceived as duplicitous by other global actors.

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**Cross Cultural Awareness in International Military Operation:
International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan**

Abstract

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Keywords: *multiculturalism, Afghanistan, ISAF*

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