

Chapter 5

PKSOI:

Mr. Lynch, the Political Advisor for the Chief of Staff of the Army joined us yesterday and he was not fully introduced to everybody. He's been with us all of yesterday and all of today. He'll be departing; he has to go back to some meetings this afternoon. I would just ask him to give us some thoughts he might have from his perspective as Political Advisor on the proceedings here.

Mr. Lynch:

This is pre-lunch water torture so I'm going to count the seconds.

I'm here as a "foreigner" or outsider and one with the odd background of having spent a couple of years in stability operations in Bosnia and Afghanistan.

I liked the phrase used this morning: "teachable moment." I think we may well have arrived at such a point in the U.S. Government. There is in Washington a general sense of disappointment that we have not managed to achieve more in our efforts to get the U.S. Government organized for success in conducting stability ops. What you heard from Secretary Harvey last night suggests that the efforts continue in earnest, that S/CRS is still at work, and that we are trying in Washington to move this forward. What I've seen here is the stability ops community at work on a parallel track trying to do what it can to generate some capacity and stay in touch. Certainly this is welcome.

"Teachable moment." Some of your target audience is senior policy makers who are by extension educators: generals and political leaders. When you had an Army Chief of Staff affirming a few years ago that the Army's real purpose was to fight and win the nation's wars – well, that was education. Or a National Security Advisor-designate who said that soldiers shouldn't deliver school lunches – that was education.

One question that I haven't heard the answer to is how you would describe to our senior political leaders what is the present state of affairs in respect to the teaching of stability operations in the schoolhouses?

I began to form an impression in Afghanistan – and it continued to develop in Washington – that the generals believe our young officers' cutting-edge experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq are being recycled and leveraged in the schoolhouses. I don't think this assumption has been evaluated very critically or carefully.

A couple of personal prejudices and observations. On cultural sensitivity, keep focus on what you're aiming for. You can be sensitive and still be tone deaf. Please look at other nations' experiences. I've been really interested by India conducting a 50-year stability operation. Could we do that?

We need to think Joint and Combined. The broader communities. I don't understand how this is going to work if we continue to define the Interagency as the military on one hand and a loose set of sovereign civilian entities on the other hand. They've got to come closer together. The military has got to be part of the Interagency.

Understanding "civilian capacity." A biologist would be astonished, I think, to look at typology where you have Active Component, Reserve Component, National Guard, contractors, and civilians defined as co-equivalent species. At least 97 percent of homo sapiens are civilians, and we need much more definition of what is needed on the "civilian side."

Finally, on the discussion of force structure and constabulary forces. We need to be careful not to confuse force structure and capacity with desired effects. Aren't we saying to ourselves sometimes, "Well, such and such must be going on in Wardak Province or in Nangarhar because we've got such and such capacity deployed there?" That's a bit of a tricky transaction and we need to look out for it. Thank you.