

FRANCE IN ALGERIA- LESSONS FOR THE US IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

The role of cultural competence, character and right relationships

John W Kiser

1. INTRODUCTION

Focusing initially on France's "Long War" in Algeria that began in 1830 and ended officially 132 years later with Algerian independence, students will identify lessons in cultural competency (and lack thereof) and enduring leadership qualities, demonstrated by Emir Abdelkader and Gen. Leon Joucault Lamoricière. Abdelkader's career as a warrior- scholar- saint was one of defeat on the battlefield but ultimate moral victory in the eyes of much of the world. The cultural intelligence component will be presented through the frame of Boyd's OODA loop and its enduring relevance, often limited to the micro but not the macro context of warfare. The course will explore the potential value of Algeria as an ally in the fight against Islamist militants today, and more generally the importance of: 1) studying the European colonial legacy in the Muslim world, 2) effective use of native cadres 3) requirements for engaging effectively with the local cultures—using the French experience in Algeria as a case history.

Drawing on the experience of the participants, together with past *Gazette* articles (see sessions 8-9), and insights from the course readings and discussion, students will make concrete recommendations to USMC leadership. These should relate to acquiring, using and preserving cultural intelligence for building enduring relationships with indigenous populations.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

- 2.1 Know more about Algeria seen from both a French and Arab/Berber perspective; identify lessons that could have been flagged before entering Islamic cultures, and should be for the future.
- 2.2 Appreciate the potential value of a strategic relationship with Algeria, and lessons from Algeria's Arab Spring of the 1990s.
- 2.3 Become more aware of individual, institutional and ethnocentric (cultural) mind sets that interfere with learning lessons from others and distort accurate observation and orientation per Boyd (including the limitations imposed by the U.S. political and budgetary environment)
- 2.4 Through study of the history of the French-Algerian struggle, acquire additional knowledge and insights relating to Islamic culture, esp its complexity and diversity; learn basic Islamic concepts: *tawid, umma, takfir, jihad, shirk, sufism, etc.*

3. Supporting Educational Objectives

- 3.1 Enlarge the framework of students' thinking; esp know thyself.
- 3.2 Appreciate the value of empathy for improving strategic and tactical planning; building human relationships.
- 3.3 Get reacquainted with Boyd, with focus on observation and orientation.
- 3.4 Reflect on role of character and moral leadership as reflected in Emir Abdelkader (Commander), Bishop Etienne Duval (Monks), Col Alan King (Twice Armed), Gen Douglas Stone (reform of detainee camps, Iraq)

4. Student Requirements

- 4.1 Active student classroom participation, showing evidence of knowledge of the assigned readings and their relevance to cultural conflicts. The experience of the individual participants is an important component to determining the relevance of the concepts presented in the readings and class discussions.
- 4.2 Two papers will be expected.
 - a. All students will write a short (1-2 pgs) summary identifying enduring principles of IW that have universal application, and discuss whether there is a subset that applies to Muslim dominant culture.

- b. All students will write a 3-5 page outline of a human terrain plan for a specific country of their choosing that could be a likely area of operations in the future.
 - i. US students will also address progress or lack thereof, with respect to the main issues (understanding the human terrain) raised in Gen. Smith's 2006 article "Avoiding A Napoleonic Ulcer."
 - ii. Foreign students will develop a human terrain plan for a sustained jihad attack on the USA.

5. Schedule (King, Johnston, Kiser [Monks of Tibhirine]) books provided gratis

Students shall complete all reading assignments (by session) BEFORE class.

Session 1: Armed with Insight, Orientation, Course Objectives

"Convictions are more dangerous than lies." Friedrich Nietzsche

READINGS

BGen George W Smith, MCG, *Avoiding A Napoleonic Ulcer* (blackboard - 17pgs)

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (blackboard - 2pgs)

Adam Michnik, *The Trouble with History*, pp 55-59; 80-88 (blackboard) (balance of excerpt optional reading)

Col Charles H. Churchill, *Life of Abdolkader, Ex-Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria*, pp v-xi (blackboard)

John Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful*, pp .Intro thru 33

Session 2: France occupies Algiers, 1830

"...this war will seem to end, but these people will not hate you any less; it will be a half extinguished fire that will smolder under the ash, and which, at the first opportunity, will explode into a vast conflagration." Baron Lacuée, 1831

READINGS

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Writings on Empire*, translation by Jennifer Pitts; intro, (xxxii-xxxviii,) pp 14-26 (blackboard)

John Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful*, pp34-87; 96-105

John Kiser, *From Algeria to Iraq*, MCG, June 2006 (blackboard)

Session 3: The Sword, the Plow, and the Cross

"The marabouts should be considered the most influential members of Arab society...It is generally the marabouts who reestablish peace and who secretly direct the mainsprings of their politics." Alexis de Tocqueville

READINGS

John Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful*, pp 141-195; 199-213; 261-273

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Writings on Empire*, pp 59-80 (blackboard)

Session 4: France's Long War

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God...owe no one anything except to love one another." Romans 13

READINGS

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Writings on Empire*, pp131-146 (blackboard)

John Kiser, *An Algerian Microcosm: Monks Muslims & the Zeal of Bitterness* (blackboard)

John Kiser, *The Monks of Tibhirine*, pp 6-21; 85-100;113-130,188-192 (to be supplied)

Session 5: OODA LOOP revisited. Self awareness as an essential tool

“Experience has shown that religion does not prevent the Arabs from being our most zealous auxiliaries, so long as they are treated respectfully, and patriotism and ambition does not turn them against us.” Alexis de Tocqueville

“If I had to do it all over again I would start with reading the Old Testament... We are all sons of Abraham.” LtCol. David Reist

READINGS

Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, pp 60-62 (blackboard)

Douglas Johnston, *Religion, Terror and Error*, pp 5-10, 152-156, 195-205, 185-194 (*to be supplied*)

Feisal Rauf, *What is Right with Islam*, Chap 6, pp 113-117 (blackboard)

Visit by Dr. Douglas Johnston, “Operating within a Religious Framework, in AFPAK”

Session 6: Cultural Smarts and Character on Display.

“He killed us with the words of our religion,” Iraqi sheik praising Col. King

“Use your opponents’ data.” John Boyd

READINGS

George Patton, *War as I Knew It*, chapter 1, pp 5-30: skim - optional (blackboard)

Alan King, *Twice Armed*, chaps 4; pp77-92, 6; pp 115-137, and 9; pp 177-196 (*to be supplied*)

John Kiser, *Abdelkader’s Legacy of Empathy and Obedience* (blackboard)

BGen Douglas Stone, remarks at US Institute for Peace 2009 (blackboard)

*Lecture by BGen (Ret) Douglas Stone, commandant of detention camps Bucca/Cropper in Iraq

Session 7: The Faces of Islam

“The capabilities required to wage irregular warfare are largely intellectual, rather than material and technical.” Concepts and Plans Division MCWL, MCG 2007

READINGS

CDR Youssef H Aboul-Enein, *Militant Islamist Ideology*, pp1-90 (blackboard)

Lt Col Glen Butler, *Know the Enemy?* MCG Aug 2008 (blackboard)

Lt Col Staunton Coerr, *Fifth Generation Warfare* MCG Jan 2009 (blackboard)

Session 8: Nuance, Patience, Learning, Linguistic Skills and Continuity

“If you don’t know how things are connected, then solutions become problems.” Amory Lovins, from *Thinking like a Plant*

Students blend their experience with the most compelling ideas for USMC improvement presented in the list of Gazette articles referenced below. Students will present their reflections regarding whether universal and timeless lessons exist, applicable to IW. Students should be prepared to deliver an oral presentation (no more than 5 minutes) based on their reflections. It is recommended that students consult the USMC Lessons Learned Database.

READINGS

Marine Corps Gazette articles to be reviewed for continued relevance today (blackboard).

Aug 2007

John Kiser, *Iraq, Amundson and the Zouaves (Marines need to be smarter and more culturally in tune with in their environment)*

Oct 2007

Lt Col Julian Alford/ Maj Edwin Rueda, *Winning In Iraq: It's time to Change our Operational Paradigm*

Maj Jonathon Dunne, *Twenty Seven Articles of Lawrence of Arabia*

Col Thomas Hammes, *Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks*

Cpt David Cooper, *An Organizational Model for Marines Fighting Insurgency*

Lt Col F.G. Hoffman, *Best Practices in Counterinsurgency*

Maj James Martin/Cpt Michale Regner, *Marines in the Eye of the Tiger*

BGen David Reist, *Twelve Things I Wish I Had Known*

Jan 2008

Cpt Michael Vasquez, *Tribalism Under Fire*

Maj Sean Griffin, *A Long View of the Long War*

Session 9: Marines talk to Marines

“My paradigm was in a shambles.” Henry Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*

“In counter insurgency, Boyd’s OODA loop remains valid, but stressing speed above all else does not make sense in war that may last decades. The focus must be on the accuracy of the observation and orientation part of the loop.” Col Thomas Hammes

READINGS:

Continued reflection on list of additional *MCG* articles (below) and more current ones (TBD) . Students select out those articles, most relevant to addressing today’s shortcomings in the areas of relationship building, cultural intelligence and improved capacity to deploy knowledge and skills across USMC personnel. Each student presents his/her concept of what a human terrain plan for a given AO would embrace. This will be preparatory to students writing their own human terrain plan for a specific country/region to be submitted in the final session.

Jan 2011

Col. Christopher R. McCarthy, *Challenges in Regionalizing the Marine Corps*

Maj. Gregory A. Thiele, *The Marine Corps of the Future*

LtCol. Edwin O. Rueda, *Rethinking the Future of the Marine Corps*

Col. J. Alex Vohr, *Decisionmaking in War*

1stLt. Jess Downs, *Advisor Training Group as a B Billet*

Cpt Eric Leckie, *Mctag (Enhancing the Marine Corps security force assistance capability)*

Jul 2013

SSgt James Conner, *Irregular Warfare -Preparing Marines for Future Engagements*

Maj Gregory Thiele, *A True Light Infantry*

Maj Andrew Del Gaudio, *Our History, Education and Future*

Feb 2014

Maj. Mathew K. Lesnowicz, *Gendarmerie de Marjah*

LCDR Risa B. Simon, *Prepare for Irregular Warfare*

LtCol. Seth M. Milstein, *Back to Our Future*

Aug 2014

Melissa McAdam, *Military Advising After Afghanistan*

Oct 2014,

Maj. David Dixon, *Leadership Cross Training*

Session 10: Students Present Papers, Summarize Main Arguments.

“It is their war and you are to help them, not win it for them,” TE Lawrence

“Our Muslim allies are the most important allies we have... We must reach out and build alliances across the true Muslim faith.” Hank Crumpton, CIA

Essays due.

6. Evaluations

Participation in class: 30%

Oral presentation: 30%

Course essay: 40%

7. References

CDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Militant Islamist Ideology* (Understanding the global threat); Naval Institute, 2010

Robert Coram, *Boyd*, Back Bay Books, 2004

Alastair Crooke, *Resistance*, The Essence of the Islamist Revolution, Pluto Books , 2009 (strongly recommended for understanding Islamic thought, author is former MI-6 officer)

Henry Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, (Lessons from a Career in the CIA’s Clandestine Service) Penguin Press, 2012

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Essays on Empire and Slavery*, Johns Hopkins University Press 2001, Translation by Jennifer Pitts

Charles H Churchill, *The Life of Abd el-Kader, ex sultan of the Arabs of Algeria*, Chapman Hall, 1867

Alistaire Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, Penguin Press 2004

Craig Holdrege, *Thinking Like a Plant*, Lindisfarne Books 2013 (indirectly very relevant, re thought processes, objective vs holistic thinking)

Douglas Johnston, *Religion Terror and Error : US Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement*, Praeger 2011,

John Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abdelkader*, Monkfish Books 2008,

John Kiser, *Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love and Terror in Algeria*, St Martins Press, 2002,

John Kiser, *The Algerian Microcosm*, Cistercian Studies Quarterly, 2003

Feisal Rauf, *What is Right With Islam*, Harper Collins, 2002

Trevor Royal, *Orde Wingate, Man of Genius*, Frontline Books, 2010 (pioneered irregular warfare tactics)

Eric Shibuya, *Demobilizing Irregular Forces*, Polity Press, 2012

Anne Scott Tyson, *American Spartan*, (Col James Gant's tribal strategy and implementation in Afghanistan), Harper Collins 2014

David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958*, Rand Corporation, 2006

8. Relationship to Other Courses of Instruction

The course material covered will bear directly on subjects such as DDR, COIN, and, if such courses exist, sustainability of respectful engagement with local populations and overcoming a puerile obsession with metrics in evaluating and defining progress.