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14 May 2015

SUBJ: Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) Update

Purpose: Describe current status.

Mission: Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) provides planning support to Commands with complex operational imperatives requiring multi-agency, multi-disciplinary solutions that are NOT within core Service/Agency competency. Solutions and participants are sought across USG and beyond. SMA is accepted and synchronized by Joint Staff/J-39 DDGO and executed by ASD(R&E)/EC&P/RRTO.

On-going Support Efforts:

SMA Support to EUCOM: Per request from USEUCOM, the Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) will identify emerging Russian threats and opportunities in Eurasia (with particular emphasis on EUCOM AOR countries). The study will examine future political, security, societal and economic trends to determine where U.S. interests are congruent or in conflict with Russian interests, and in particular, detect possible leverage points when dealing with Russia in a “global context.” Of particular interest are Russian perceptions of U.S. activities in Eastern Europe and what impact (positive or negative) those activities are having on deterring Russian aggression in the region. Additionally, the analysis will consider where North Atlantic Treaty Organization interests are congruent or in conflict with Russian interests. A more detailed outline of the effort was published as a separate 5X8. (POC: Mr. Jason Werchan, EUCOM J5)

Multi-Method Assessment of ISIL in Support to SOCCENT Phase II: During CY 2014, SOCCENT had requested a short term effort to understand the psychological, ideological, narrative,

emotional, cultural and inspirational (“intangible”) nature of ISIL. The effort was completed and the products from the effort were published. A listing of these products is being mailed separately. Based on these initial products the SOCCENT Commander has requested a follow-on research effort to address following:

Given that when the dust settles and some degree of durable stability has been established in the Middle East, it will no longer look as it did prior to the start of the Syrian civil war and the rise of ISIL; therefore, the question is what will the Middle East look like, and how is it likely to operate both within its own regional community and in interactions with external powers & actors, after the ISIL threat has been defeated and the Syrian Civil War has come to an end. This will involve a deep understanding of the environment that includes ISIL.

As in the previous effort, this follow-on effort solicits collaboration from large number of participants both within and outside USG including large number of SMEs. The project is developing an overall framework to synthesize the qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches for discerning what the Middle East look like when the ISIL crisis has been resolved. An overall project design and analytic framework is being developed to allow systematic comparison and integration of the analyses. This will help to ensure the concepts, analyses, and results are actionable for end-users such as military planners, strategists and/or decision-makers. A more detailed outline of the effort was published as a separate 5X8. (POC: Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois, NSI)

SOCCENT/MINERVA/DHS/S&T/START/SMA Speaker

Series: We have initiated a speaker series for this effort. Suggested topics/speakers should be forwarded to the POC for this series.

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Upcoming Speakers:

- 15 May 2015 1000 ET, Speaker: Dr. Mia Bloom, U Mass, Topic: "Bombshells The Faces of Women and Terrorism"
- 21 May 2015 1200 ET, Speaker: Dr. Ben Jensen, Marine Corps University, Topic: Findings of a design workshop to analyze how violent extremist groups like Da'esh/ISIL decline and transition to other organizational forms.

(POCs: Dr. Erin Fitzgerald, MINERVA, Ms. Gia Harrigan, DHS/S&T, Mr. Bill Braniff, START, and Mr. Sam Rhem)

USSOUTHCOM/NDU/MINERVA/SMA Speaker Series: This Speaker Series will bring an awareness of major regional challenges germane to USSOUTHCOM. It would offer an intellectual anchor for the work of US and regional Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from various Government and Non-Governmental Organizations, Think Tanks, and Academic Institutions. It will provide a unique platform to integrate non-traditional partners, connect and network regional thinkers, and serves to raise awareness on challenges to security and stability in the theater. The topics can range from strategic considerations to near term security issues. Expected duration of the series is 1 year. At the end of the period, USSOUTHCOM will consider sustaining this program to optimize the gains of this initial series. POCs: Mr. Juan Hurtado (USSOUTHCOM J72), Mr. Rick Arias (USSOUTHCOM J72), Dr. Cynthia Watson (NDU), Dr. Erin Fitzgerald (MINERVA), and Ms. Meg Egan (SMA).

White Papers in Preparation:

1. **White Paper on Social and Cognitive Neuroscience underpinnings of ISIL Behavior and Implications to Strategic Communication, Messaging, and Influence:** This white paper leverages recent advances made in social and cognitive neuroscience research that can enhance effective communications in fields such strategic communication, messaging, and influence with specific focus on ISIL behavior. Target audience is primarily those in planning, operations, and policy. Scientific Editors: Drs. Jim Giordano and Diane DiEuliis. Expected publication date: May 2015.
2. **White Paper on the Science of Decision Making Across the Span of Human Activity:** This White Paper is a primer on latest research on the decision making processes by individuals and social entities. It draws upon latest scientific findings from fields as diverse as neuroscience, psychology and social psychology, organizational psychology, political psychology and political science, and behavioral economics. Primary audience is the operational and planning community. The paper takes the premise that a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of decision making by social entities is essential for good decision making for one's own. In so-doing, the paper attempts to make comprehensible what at first glance may appear as "incomprehensible" decision making. It makes the point that such incomprehensible decision making actually arise from predictable aspect of human cognition and behavior (i.e. at the individual level [neuro]; individuals under stress; group processes; and the state level). It thus posits the need to

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think beyond the rational/irrational divide. Scientific Editors: Drs. Allison Astorino-Courtois and Nick Wright. Expected publication date: May 2015.

3. **A White Paper on the Geopolitical and Cognitive Assessment of the Israeli Palestinian Security Conundrum. Scientific Editor:** Dr. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (ICONS). Expected Publication date: June 2015
4. **Countering Violent Extremism: A Scientific Methods & Strategies.** This is a reissue of a previously published white paper. Scientific Editor: Ms. Laurie Fenstermacher. Expected publication date: June 2015
5. **White Paper on "Drivers of Conflict and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region in the Next 5-25 Years.** Scientific Editor: Dr. Belinda Bragg. Expected publication date: June 2015

POCs: Ms. Gia Harrigan, DHS/S&T, Mr. Bill Braniff, START, Dr. Erin Fitzgerald, MINERVA, and Ms. Meg Egan (SMA)

Upcoming events:

SMA Support to SOCCENT SRG.....TBD June
2015 SMA Conference.....28-29 Oct

SMA SharePoint Site:

To request access to the SMA Website go to this URL:

<https://nsiteam.net/newAcct>

If you already have an account and can't recall your password please visit this URL: <https://nsiteam.net/reset>

Unfortunately, users cannot automatically request their username if they have forgotten. Usernames are typically <first initial> <lastname> (e.g. nsuarez, achapman, scanna, etc.)

Weekly Technical Telecons:

DHS/START/MINERVA/SMA Technical Lecture Series

Purpose of the series is to raise the knowledge base and promote discussion among the federal inter-agency, universities, and other interested parties. The series focuses on topics that may be of interest and useful to members of our SMA network. This series is held via telecon on Tuesdays, 2:00-3:30PM EST. We will occasionally schedule speakers at other days and times based on availability and relevance to current efforts. Suggested topics/speakers should be forwarded to the POC for this series.

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