



Communication, Culture and Effective Teams

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The Optimization Project at Joint Warfare Centre (*The Three Swords Magazine, December 2015, Issue: 29, p. 34*) has been an unqualified success, demonstrating improvement in nearly all of the organizational shortfalls that it was designed three years ago to address. According to data gathered through surveys, interviews, and observation, however, the optimized structure did not outperform JWC's 2012 Peacetime Establishment (PE) in one important aspect—*communication*. Data shows that we are no better (though no worse) communicating within or in a team than we were before we reorganized. A visiting dignitary, upon receiving an optimization update and learning of this result asked, "don't your leaders understand

how important communication is to effective leadership?" I submit that we *do* indeed understand, and that each of us has tried to communicate at JWC as effectively as we have communicated throughout our careers. The difference here, as with all NATO HQs, is that we are using communication norms that have been effective for us within our home nation services. However, differences in national cultures and communication norms may affect us when trying to reach other cultures within NATO. And, this is true for all of us. NATO is an Alliance of different nations and cultures. This diverse and collaborative environment has been one of the key factors of NATO's success for the past 67 years. However, despite our shared democratic values, significant separations exist between our individual nations' ways of think-

ing, behaving, and communicating. JWC has a staff from 16 different countries—it is imperative that we understand those various cultures' communication patterns so that we can improve our overall organizational communication as part of our Optimization Project.

This article will show you these significant differences, and more, which exist not only between East and West, but also between North and South; Scandinavia and the rest of Europe, as well as North America and Europe. I will draw on the work of two prominent researchers in this field—author and Senior Affiliate Professor Erin Meyer and Professor Geert Hofstede—and, I will apply their research to identify the differences in communication norms across the 16 Nations that contribute Officers to the JWC, and how these



differences can lead directly to communication gaps and miscues.

Erin Meyer is the author of *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*. I first learned of her work from Admiral Mark E. Ferguson, III (USA-N), the former Commander of JFC Naples, during his presentation to a course at the NATO School Oberammergau. Admiral Ferguson told us that studying this book was the most important thing he had done to prepare himself for his NATO assignment. In this book, Professor Meyer uses eight "scales" to capture worldwide cultural differences, and applies them to international business environments. These eight scales are *Communicating, Evaluating, Leading, Deciding, Disagreeing, Trusting, Scheduling, and Persuading*. I will discuss each of these scales in general, based on her book, then plot JWC's diverse teams across them to identify where we should be aware of potential communication gaps and misunderstanding.

Professor Geert Hofstede is a social psychologist who, through surveys of people from all over the world, developed a theory of cultural dimensions. His six dimensions are *Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation, and Indulgence*.¹ Some of these dimensions reinforce Meyer's work (in fact, the *Power Distance* dimension is the basis of her *Leadership* scale),

while other dimensions add additional perspectives worth considering within our international teams. Through Meyer's eight scales, and Hofstede's six dimensions, we will become aware of 14 different "cultural minefields" or possible roots for miscommunication.

A few caveats before we begin. First of all, these examples and insights by Meyer and Hofstede are not old NATO stereotypes. They are cultural norms and communication patterns, all of which have served each of our countries well for hundreds of years or more. There is no judgement implied in any of these; on the contrary, each communication pattern has its own peculiar advantage. The research scales only depict differences, not values. I acknowledge that individuals within a nation can be as different as the two ends of any of these spectrums. We have free will and, again, should not be stereotyped. However, anyone who behaves, thinks, and communicates in a way so differently from his country's norm as depicted in this article probably not had a twenty-plus year career in his nation's military (or within any nation-wide organization). And speaking of being in the military, our self-selection into this profession and the military cultural norms that we work within do separate us a bit from our overall national norms. It is true that we probably differ from our national cultures. But, we differ in the same relative way, so the points of the

scales and dimensions described by Meyer and Hofstede remain valid. Let's get started.

1. Communicating: This scale considers the context of communication, scaling it from low to high. Low context communicators use clear, direct language to get their messages across. Background or history, body language, tone of voice, etc. is relatively unimportant. "Say what you mean and mean what you say with clear, explicit vocabulary"; whereas in high context communication what is *said* is not always as important as what is *meant*, and the meaning is derived from the context. It requires a common baseline understanding between the two communicators to "*read between the lines*." A good analogy might be a long-married couple who finish each other's sentences as opposed to a couple on a blind date, who can only understand one another by the language that they use.

The world's most low context communicating culture is a significant contributor of personnel to the JWC—the United States. When we think of what it takes for a culture to communicate using high context, this makes sense. In high context communication, a culture needs common reference points, a long shared history and a homogenous population. Japan, for example, an island nation with an ancient and separated population, has the most high context communication style in the world. The U.S., though, has a very short history, characterized by large waves of immigration. There is no way for Americans from different parts of the country growing up in different heritages to come together in a business environment and communicate in any way other than by the clear use of language.

For a quantitative example, there are seven times more words in the English language than in French (500,000 to 70,000). (*Meyer p. 37*). And, with so relatively few words, the French have at least two phrases—*sous-entendu* (under the heard) and *deuxième degré* (the second degree)—that refer to the underlying message intended beyond what is said. But, on the other hand, Americans can also use high context communication. The tendency of Americans to speak in idioms (like, ironically, "*read between the lines*") or use American sports (baseball or American football) analogies is very high context when spoken to a European.

Our highest context communicating culture at JWC is Turkey. Turkey finds itself on

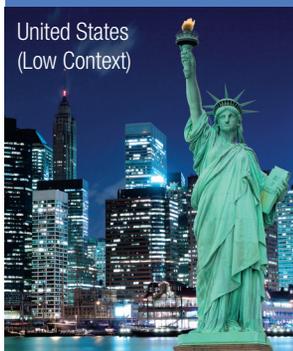
Low Context Communication vs. High Context Communication

Author Erin Meyer offers strategies for negotiating cultural differences, but the most basic solution, as with all scales discussed in the book, is simply to be aware.

Low Context Communication: Good communication is precise, simple and clear.

High Context Communication: Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered.

(Gus Lubin, *Business Insider*, 20 January 2015)



the NATO edge of several of these scales for a good reason. The scales represent the full spectrum of cultural diversity worldwide. So, Western nations, especially those of continental Europe, are spread across a spectrum in relation to one another. But, in relation to the rest of the world, they appear more homogenous. Western nations, as a group, will usually be separated from the Asian nations as a group, with Turkey serving as the bridge between the two, literally as well as figuratively—Turkey is the only country in the world where Europe, Asia and the Mediterranean all meet.

Looking at the relatively high context countries of the JWC (Turkey, France, Italy and Spain), they represent a significant portion of our Officers. Consider the impacts to organizational communication when such a large portion of the population is used to communicating in a high context manner, requiring a shared history and common reference points, but find themselves in a transient organization, like ours, with at most a few years of history together with any of their teammates.

2. Evaluating: This scale is about how direct we are when communicating feedback, specifically negative feedback (the implication is that positive feedback is universally easy to give and receive), and how comfortable we are receiving it. Those on the direct end of this spectrum (e.g. the Netherlands, Germany and Hungary) expect to be told directly, in low context terms, if they are doing something wrong. And, they will say the same to you when the roles are reversed. This communication style is candid, frank, honest, and even blunt. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptors are often used when criticizing. Moreover, criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.

Those on the indirect end (e.g. Turkey, Czech Republic, United Kingdom and the United States) are not comfortable giving that kind of feedback; they expect that if they offer a polite hint, it will be taken to heart and acted on with no embarrassment or hurt feelings. Positive messages are used to soften negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private. This style is diplomatic, polite, tactful, respectful of status and appearances.

You may notice an interesting paradox here. The United States was depicted earlier as

Egalitarian vs. Hierarchical

Egalitarian: The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low.
Hierarchical: The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high.

(Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map*)



the most direct and concise low context communicator in the world. But, apparently not when it comes to giving negative feedback. Americans and the British both change tendencies from low to relatively high context communicators when doing so. And, the high context French are much more direct when it comes to negative feedback. Room for miscommunication or worse abounds. Subtle hints are in fact not taken because they are not noticed, leaving leaders to believe that a corrected subordinate is ignoring direction and guidance or just does not care. Feelings are hurt in the opposite direction when a direct feedback leader or teammate offers constructive criticism that appears to those not used to it as overly harsh or rude.

3. Leading: This scale was heavily influenced by Geert Hofstede's "Power Distance" dimension that we will discuss later. It is based on the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. For cultures on the egalitarian end of the spectrum, the ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat, with initiative at lower levels encouraged. Communication often skips hierarchical lines. The opposite end of the spectrum is hierarchical. For those cultures, the ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong

director who leads from the front. Status and protocol are important. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

Our Scandinavian teammates are the most egalitarian in the world. Poland's position to the hierarchical end of JWC's spectrum, on the other hand, was perfectly illustrated by our Commander, Major General Andrzej Reudowicz (POL-A), in one of his introductory discussions with the JWC personnel. While offering an open door policy to all for personal issues, he showed JWC's organizational chart and asked, for JWC issues, that we work our way through the chain of command to solve them. This approach was different for those staff Officers raised in more egalitarian cultures (Norway being a big contributor of Officers to JWC) who are comfortable with skipping levels of the chain of command to communicate. In their militaries, they may even be expected to do so to solve problems. Whereas in the more hierarchical organization in which they find themselves at JWC, this behavior could be interpreted as subversive to their immediate supervisors. Now that we all know the expectation of the Commander, we can adjust ourselves accordingly.

One historical explanation for this scale, at least for Europe, are the effects of the Roman Empire and the Vikings. The countries most influenced by the Roman Empire tend to be more hierarchical, and those influenced by



Consensual organizations make decisions in an egalitarian fashion, that is by group consensus. NATO HQ would be a good example.

egalitarian Viking governmental organizations have retained a preference for that style. This generally south-north dichotomy is reflected in a survey showing levels of agreement with the statement, "It is important for a manager to have at hand precise answers to most of the questions that subordinates may raise about their work." The results are a virtual straight line from Sweden (less than 10% agreement) to Spain (almost 60% agreement).² Another influence is religion. Protestant cultures, where parishioners develop a personal relationship with God, tend to be more egalitarian. Catholic cultures, with several levels of command between Priest and Pope, tend to be more hierarchical. Finally, consider population density. As one of our Norwegian Officers at JWC noted, "You cannot have a hierarchical organization when your nearest neighbor is fifty kilometers away!"

4. Deciding: Related to the preferred leadership style of a culture is how decisions are made in organizations. The spectrum of this scale goes from consensual to top-down. Consensual or-

ganizations make decisions in an egalitarian fashion that is by group consensus. NATO HQ would be a good example. In top-down organizations, decisions are made by individuals, usually the boss. Everyone stays at about the same relative spot on this spectrum as they held on the leadership spectrum, except Germany and the U.S. flip flop. Perhaps it reflects the German comfort with direct criticism as discussed in the evaluating scale. It also coincides with the "Disagreeing" scale that follows. Perhaps, Americans are more egalitarian in the leadership scale in terms of opportunity, but more comfortable accepting top-down decisions from leaders once they are in place. Also of interest on this scale is the proximity of France and the U.S.—this is the only scale in which those two countries share the same style. Related to an organization's decision-making style is the timeline and malleability of that decision. Gaining consensus takes time. But once a decision is made, since all inputs have already been considered, it is relatively final. A decision with a capital "D". Top-down decisions are usually quicker. But, they are followed by more discussion and possible

revision. The decision is more of a lower case "d". As one visiting commander to JWC complained, "In my HQ, the decision is the start point of discussion."

5. Trusting: This scale measures how we establish and build trust with one another at work. Do we trust with our heads (task-based) or our hearts (relationship-based)? Task-based cultures build trust through business-related activities. Leaders are trusted due to their position, unless they prove unworthy. Trust and confidence grows through accomplishments, demonstrated skill, and credentials. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. "You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I trust you."

In relationship-based cultures, trust is built on a deeper, more personal level. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. Trust comes from investing in daily, personal interaction, shared time at the coffee machine, long meals together, evening drinks, and family gatherings. It takes emotional closeness and personal friendship. "I have seen who you are at a deep level, I have shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you."

Here, again, the U.S. is a world extreme, trusting peers based on position and professional competence more than any other culture. In fact, in America, we generally go out of our way to ensure that personal relationships do not cloud business relationships. This is despite the fact that we are also a culture prone to casual conversation of a personal nature. We will smile at strangers and ask new acquaintances about their family. But then we don't follow up that superficiality with real and consistent interest, at least with co-workers. And that entails a big risk if the co-worker has mistaken a superficial interaction for genuine interest, only to be disappointed and insulted by the lack of follow through. The analogy is peaches and coconuts. Americans are friendly and soft on the outside, but go any deeper

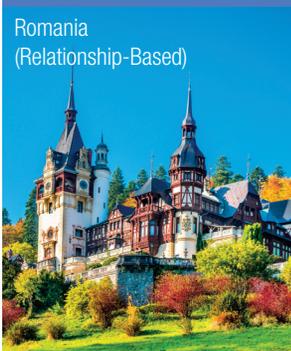
Task-Based vs. Relationship-Based

Task-Based: Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation.

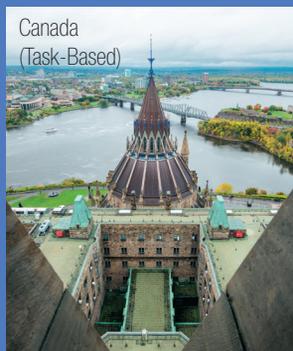
Relationship-Based: Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks and visits at coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term.

(Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map*)

Romania
(Relationship-Based)



Canada
(Task-Based)



The Netherlands
(Task-Based)



and it's a hard pit. While relationship-based cultures have a shell initially, but if broken through with an investment in time, effort and emotion, there is milk inside.

There is another important aspect to this spectrum—how people spend their discretionary time. Relationship-based cultures invest time in their relationships. They must in order to gain and maintain the trust and confidence of their team. And to maintain their accessibility to others. An American can easily email a long out-of-touch counterpart to ask a favor. If the note is to another American, no problem. The task is more important than the relationship. But the more towards relationship-based the receiver of that email is, the less likely is the favor to be granted. A British or Polish Officer would probably appreciate a phone call with some personal catching up before being asked. And, with a Turkish or Italian Officer, for whom the relationship is more important than the task, might be insulted. *"If you haven't been investing in the relationship, you don't get the reward of the relationship."*

6. Scheduling: Whether we prioritize relationships or tasks also affects how we interpret schedules and time. Task-based cultures tend to work in linear time. Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time without interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility. In flexible time cultures, project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arrive. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization. Relationships are valued over tasks and timelines. Being late for something is preferable to cutting off a conversation.

It is easy for our linear time cultures to fall into stereotype mode here, and make character judgements about the flexible time cultures. But that fails to consider all of the benefits of flexible time and, when looked at from the opposite perspective, the inefficiencies and wasted opportunities that adherence to linear time can cause. Sidebar conversations within meetings are another point of friction between cultures on this scale. While perceived as rude by a linear time thinker, flexible thinkers see

Linear Time vs. Flexible

Linear Time: Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule.

Flexible: Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. The focus is on adaptability and flexibility.

(Erin Meyer, The Culture Map)



them as taking advantage of an opportunity to get more things done at once.

The best visualization of a flexible time organization in action, and indicative of Italy's place on this spectrum, is the coffee bar at JFC Naples. After placing his order at the door, the customer turns to see fifteen to twenty people arrayed horizontally at the counter. It is unnerving for a linear person, who expects to be served in the order in which he arrived, to wade into this relative chaos. But the baristas are not doing one task at a time. They are in constant motion performing multiple tasks in service of multiple customers as the opportunity to do so arises. The linear time customer may not like the fact that a later customer is served first. But in the end, all customers are served faster than they would have been if served sequentially.

7. Disagreeing: This scale refers to the openness of an organization to public disagreement and debate, measuring it in terms of confrontation. "Confrontation" in this sense is not meant to imply aggression or negativity. Confrontational cultures expect spirited debate. It reflects dialectic thinking in which disagreement is the antithesis of the original thesis and, through discussion and debate, the resulting synthesis is the best course of action. Debate or criticism, to include from subordinates, is expected and will not negatively impact the status or feelings of the one being challenged. The key here is a German word—*sachlichkeit*.

Sachlichkeit literally translates as "objectivity," but it really means the ability to separate one's opinions from the person. If they challenge you, it means they're interested.

Cultures that avoid confrontation, on the other hand, are uncomfortable with such challenge. Respect and status necessary to lead are risked through public disagreement. This spectrum is interesting in that it is the only scale in which Norway veers away from its northern neighbors Denmark and the Netherlands, both of whom are more confrontational in their disagreements. Norway is in fact the least confrontational of all NATO nations. There is a bit of Confucianism that would be reflected if I showed the Asian nations (e.g. Indonesia, Japan, Thailand), which would all be to the right of Norway on this spectrum, where everyone is expected to play their role and not question the performance of others in their roles. A nation's education norms may also have role in this. Growing up in a system that stresses testing, and advancement or failure dependent on being right or wrong, instills an instinct of defending one's position and taking it personally when that position is questioned.

8. Persuading: This scale refers to the presentation of a point. In principles-first cultures, Officers have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up



a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued. In an applications-first culture, Officers begin with a fact, statement or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. This is best characterized as "Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)." The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment. Particularly interesting for a discussion within any NATO HQ is the fact that France and the U.S. are at the opposite ends of this spectrum for the world, not just for NATO. So, the U.S. and French Officers are set up for frustration when trying to convince one another of anything.

A "Culture Map", described in Erin Meyer's book, which plots the nations represented within your team across all eight scales, can be a valuable tool for an international organization with which to identify potential communication gaps and to analyze how

▼ JWC Training Team in Naples during exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 16. "Teamwork" is the strongest asset we share as members of the NATO Alliance. Exceptional teamwork results in a tremendous learning experience and high-intensity exercise training. JWC Training Team provided JFC Naples the best opportunity for success during TRJE16; this multinational team was the backbone horsepower that allowed JWC-EXCON to run the exercise smoothly. Photo by JFC Naples.

national cultural differences may impact your daily work. We will now take a quick look at another way to approach this idea. Professor Geert Hofstede analyzes national cultures across six dimensions.³ Some of them reinforce Professor Erin Meyer's points, and there are a couple of new angles that will give insight into team building challenges.

1. Power Distance: Hofstede stresses here the disdain for hierarchy in countries such as Austria (NATO Partnership for Peace [PfP] Nation), Denmark and Norway. For them, an organization should be as flat as possible with decentralized power and the few superiors that are needed are both accessible and collaborative. Whereas in France, Poland and Romania there is a preference for a formal chain of command with centralized power directive of subordinates. Building an organization in which Officers from each end of this spectrum can both feel comfortable, efficient, and respected can be a challenge. In JWC's case, we have Officers at both extremes: Austria and Romania are separated by 80 points on a 100 point scale, with Austria being the least and Romania the most comfortable with an unequal distribution of power in an organization.

2. Individualism: Individualism is "the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members," according to Hofstede. This di-

mension shows whether individuals think of themselves as "I" or "We". Romania, Turkey and Spain exhibit a long term commitment to the group. Loyalty is highly valued, and individuals feel a responsibility for fellow members. Leaders manage groups. Norway and France are in the middle; whereas the Netherlands, UK and the U.S. prefer a loosely knit social framework in which individuals take care of themselves. Leaders manage individuals.

"Individualism" has significant implications for JWC's Optimization project, in which we transformed into a matrix organization. Individuals support any number of project teams simultaneously and, when that project concludes, the team dissolves. This is routine business for individualistic countries. But, for more collective cultures, teams are like family. The challenge is that they may have difficulty building loyalty and commitment with every new team, only to see it disintegrated after ENDEX.

3. Masculinity: This is basically about, as in the words of Hofstede, "what motivates people; wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine)." I prefer to call this dimension "competitiveness"; it measures whether the culture works to live or lives to work. This is another dimension with major differences between the JWC Nations. Norwegians prioritize well-being over job success, emphasize equality within the group, and resolve conflicts



by compromise and negotiation. Hungarians, on the other hand, are driven and may sacrifice personal quality of life for advancement and recognition at work. They are comfortable with competition and having performance evaluated and recognized. They try to "win" conflicts. This is an important scale when you think of how to motivate team members. Medals and "Officer of the Month" type recognition will not resonate with the cultures that focus on "well-being" and may even result in discomfort.

This dimension revealed itself in a recent JWC exercise in which our OPFOR, which is supposed to be strictly a training aid in the service of achieving Training Audience (TA) Training Objectives, was led by an Austrian Officer and a Hungarian Officer. Their competitiveness was challenging from a TA training point of view, and challenging to them as they were forced to allow their forces to lose! (*The Three Swords magazine, December 2015, Issue: 29, p. 67*). In retrospect, we may have set our team, and our OPFOR Officers, up for frustration by assigning the most competitive nationalities to serve in a position in which they were not allowed to compete.

4. Uncertainty Avoidance: According to Hofstede, this means "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these." Some cultures are indeed comfortable with change and unexpected situations, while others are not and protect themselves with rigid codes of behavior, structures, and contingency plans that minimize risk and surprise. Some of this dimension is reflected in the Leadership discussion, with clear hierarchical chain of command structures being an example of avoiding uncertainty, as opposed to egalitarian flat structures that allow subordinates freer initiative.

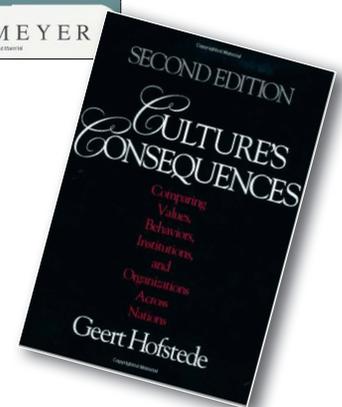
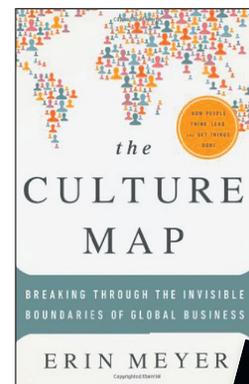
5. Long Term Orientation: This dimension is best understood as a measure of outlook. When there is a short term outlook, there is respect for traditions, with an eye on the present and immediate future. There is a low propensity to invest for long term future gains. However some cultures, have their eye on the future. Germany, for example, would be comfortable adapting traditions to new conditions and will patiently persevere towards long term objectives. The United States, on the other hand, has

a short term outlook, which is best reflected by our business focus—quarterly returns. Our business community is held accountable every three months. Plans for long term growth are less interesting. The position of Germany is reflective of JWC's Optimization Project. It was two Commanders ago—Lieutenant General Erhard Buehler (DEU-A) who assessed the need for it and started the organization on a multi-year deliberate transformation project that is only now realizing the intended results. An American or a Danish Commander might not have embarked on such a long term project, or worse, may have rushed the process to complete the reorganization during his tenure.

6. Indulgence: This is "the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses." Restrained cultures, such as Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic, suppress their gratification. They have less emphasis on leisure time. UK and Denmark, on the other hand, feel free to enjoy life and have fun. This dimension may seem to have little relevance in the work environment (except perhaps knowing who to keep an eye on during the Oktoberfest.) However, it is revealing in terms of a culture's tendency to indulge in emotions. A high indulgence communicator might be frustrated by his low indulgence teammate's taciturn or nonemotional feedback, while the Romanian Officer might be uncomfortable with his Danish teammate's jokes or free expression of humor or anger.

IN CONCLUSION, ANY NATO headquarters will have challenges to organizational effectiveness built into its international composition and may seek new ways to collaborate across functions and geographies. Awareness of these cultural differences will help us grow and innovate; but we need to put some effort into this. Simply recognizing where you might have significant cultural gaps with your teammates will alleviate much of the stress and confusion inherent in miscommunications. No one can be expected to moderate their behaviors across these spectrums depending on with whom they are communicating. But, if each of us has a better understanding of why everyone else on the team behaves and communicates the way they do, we can at least be comfortable with the differences and not be so quick to take offense or assume negative intent. And, always remember: Despite NATO's diverse international environ-

ment, we have strong mechanisms where we are able to tackle unprecedented challenges—whatever the challenge; we are united in our commitment to overcome it. It's our diversity that make us stronger and, also, smarter, especially, when the aim is building robust organizational cultures and achieving successful outcomes. Awareness of cultural differences is strength; it is a great step on the way for us to communicate and understand each other better. ✦



END NOTES:

¹ Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind. Revised and Expanded 3rd Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill USA, 2010
Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations. Second Edition*, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2001
These books are available in any good academic bookstore and library and from <http://geert-hofstede.com/books.html>

² Erin Meyer, "The Culture Map", bar graph p: 127
³ Ibid.

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- (1) Meyer, Erin, "The Culture Map: Decoding How People Think, Lead, and Get Things Done Across Cultures." Public Affairs, New York, 2014
- (2) Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations. Second Edition*, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2001