The Five Year Development, Current State, Future Direction of Human Terrain System and Social Science with the U.S. Government and Military

Christopher King
Human Terrain System
Anthropology Colloquium Series (Fall 2011)
*Thursday, September 29th, 3:00 pm, in Crawford Hall 105*

The Human Terrain System (HTS) is a U.S. Army project whose purpose is to provide socioculturally relevant information to support decision-making, enhance operational effectiveness, and preserve and share sociocultural institutional knowledge. This is accomplished primarily through face-to-face interviews, surveys, and focus groups conducted among a local population supported by secondary open-source research. Thirty HTS teams are currently employed in Afghanistan, serving alongside battalions, brigades, and divisions. HTS hires social scientists from a wide variety of disciplines. These individuals are trained in ethical standards consistent with generally accepted practice within the research community. For human subjects research, HTS complies with ethical principles and guidelines set forth in the Belmont Report, the “Common Rule” federal regulatory framework governing human subjects research, and (as well as) DoD-specific guidelines addressing research.

What commanders want to know is remarkably consistent between Iraq and Afghanistan and even world-wide. This presentation will discuss how HTS fulfills the military’s sociocultural knowledge requirements defined in terms of the concept of operational relevance. HTS participates in the community of military and academic scholars actively conducting sociocultural research. The future trajectory of the HTS project will also be discussed.

**Dr. Christopher King** is currently the Director Social Science Directorate, Human Terrain System. Dr. King received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa in 2006. Since graduation he has worked with the U.S. government. He has worked as a forensic anthropologist in Iraq for the Department of Justice (2005-2006). He completed a post-doctoral fellowship with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in 2007. Most recently, he served as a field social scientist for Human Terrain System in Iraq (2008-09) and Afghanistan (2009-10).

Presentation VIDEO: [http://vimeo.com/30210314](http://vimeo.com/30210314)