



EXERCISES FOR IMPROVING JUDGMENT:  
UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS IMPORTANT, TAKING  
OTHERS' PERSPECTIVE, AND CHALLENGING  
ASSUMPTIONS

*MAY 2016*

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Recommended Use.....	1
Module 1: Judgment in Action: An Account of Understanding What is Important, Understanding Others’ Perspectives, and Challenging Assumptions.....	3
Intelligence Gathering in Biggen’s Bazaar .....	4
Module 2: Identifying Important Points of Consideration and Making Judgments.....	13
Scenario 1: Unexploded Ordnance .....	13
Exercise: Unexploded Ordnance.....	15
Scenario 2: Gaining Support from a Local Town.....	16
Exercise: Gaining Support from a Local Town .....	17
Scenario 3: Vehicle Checks at the Border .....	18
Exercise: Vehicle Checks at the Border.....	19
Module 3: Reflect on Your Past and Envision Your Future.....	20
Planning for Future Judgment .....	21
Example Answers for Module 2 Exercises .....	22
Unexploded Ordnance .....	22
Gaining Support from a Local Town .....	24
Vehicle Checks at the Border .....	26
Example Answer for Module 3 Exercise Future Judgment.....	28

For more information, contact the Center for Army Leadership at  
[usarmy.leavenworth.CAC.mbx.center-for-army-leadership@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.leavenworth.CAC.mbx.center-for-army-leadership@mail.mil)

## Introduction

Applying sound judgment is of vital importance in the decision making process; perhaps nowhere is this more important than in the context of Army leadership. ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, describes the Army's leader requirements model of requisite leadership competencies and attributes. Among the desired leader attributes is the ability to make sound judgments. This attribute concerns a leader's ability to assess situations, form sound opinions, make reliable estimates, draw rational conclusions, and arrive at appropriate and suitable decisions.

The U.S. Army has been operating in theaters characterized by volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments for over a decade. Army doctrine highlights the importance of leaders possessing the ability to make sound judgments, especially in contemporary operating environments. Consequently, however complex the environment or situation may be, making quality judgments is a hallmark of good leadership. To make sound judgments and arrive at sound decisions, Army leaders must often interpret fragmented information and questionable data within their framework of assumptions and intuitions. For example, Army leaders may apply commander's intent, desired end-states, rule of law, personal experiences, personal values, and assessments of friendly and enemy strengths and weaknesses to interpret problems, develop understanding, and generate solutions.

Given that both real and fictional portrayals of complex and uncertain operating environments lend themselves to teaching about components of judgment, examples are modified from true events for instructional purposes. The modules constitute a crawl-walk-run framework for developing the three skills associated with quality judgment: understanding what is important, taking others' perspectives, and challenging assumptions. In the first module, readers will be introduced to these concepts in an iterative process similar to *The Defence of Duffer's Drift*. In the second module, the reader will practice using the three judgment skills to interpret information presented in several short scenarios. Lastly, in the third module, the learner is asked to envision a future scenario in which they will have to make a judgment call and consider how they could apply the skills learned to improve the quality of the judgment.

This resource is intended for junior leaders who encounter situations requiring careful judgment, to include company grade officers as well as junior and mid-level non-commissioned officers who must exercise good judgment.

## Recommended Use

This resource can be used by individuals or in a classroom or group setting. The individual option allows the most flexibility to use the resource at any time and location. The classroom or group setting offers less flexibility as it is administered by an instructor; however, it is likely to promote deeper learning through discussion of scenarios and the sharing of ideas.

### *For Individuals*

Individuals should work through the modules sequentially as each module builds on the content of the previous. Due to the length of the modules, users may begin to experience mental fatigue after completing a given module. In order to maximize the full benefits of the learning activity, it is advised for users to focus on the quality of experience and not quantity. It is okay to space the modules over time but all should be completed within a week of each other.

*For Classrooms/Groups*

Using this as a classroom learning tool requires an instructor to facilitate the learning process. The instructor guides learners through each module and uses the questions to elicit responses. However, the instructor should not feel limited to the discussion questions provided for each scenario. For instance, reviews of the scenarios could also involve discussion of how the context of the scenario—or how changes in that context—would influence responses. Discussions may also focus upon the appropriateness of responses, as well as key points in the scenario that seem to drive decisions regarding how to apply various judgment skills. Instructors may wish to facilitate discussion on how the desired end state or situation context may affect judgments. For example, instructors can play devil's advocate to help learners identify and challenge their assumptions.

## Module 1: Judgment in Action: An Account of Understanding What is Important, Understanding Others' Perspectives, and Challenging Assumptions

**Module 1** presents a fictional narrative of SGT Forethought, a squad leader deployed on a stability and support operation. The story is an adaptation of *The Defence of Duffer's Drift*, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century essay on British small unit operations that presents a fictional character, Backsight Forethought. The author, Ernest D. Swinton, was a captain of Royal Engineers. His experiences fighting in South Africa spurred his development of the Dreamdorp Paradigm, a way of presenting a story as a sequence of dreams in which the protagonist progressively learns a proper way of doing something through a series of trial and error.

Swinton's *The Defense Duffer's Drift* has been adapted over the years to impart lessons in its readers. Here, the Dreamdorp Paradigm conveys the importance of three skills associated with quality judgment and decisionmaking. This module presents SGT Sean Forethought, a descendent of Backsight Forethought, the protagonist of the original Duffer's Drift.

SGT Forethought has inherited the Dreamdorp gene from his ancestors, which enables him to learn from dreams through a sequence of trial and error, providing insight on problems he faces. Outside the family, none of the Forethoughts ever talked about what they called the Dreamdorp gene. Military personnel during the century past had assumed the Forethoughts were simply born with operational genius, as each Forethought demonstrated a superb ability to anticipate problems and circumstances unforeseen by others. However, the Forethought military acumen was not an innate ability; it was acquired through the dream sequences brought about by the Dreamdorp gene. Members of the Forethought family taught their children to anticipate serial nightmares on the eve of operations. These dreams were often disturbing and usually involved failure, but were always significantly instructive. The dream sequences provided the very substance of the military genius for which the Forethoughts were renowned.

## Intelligence Gathering in Biggen's Bazaar

SGT Sean Forethought was a squad leader deployed to Elbonia in the midst of an insurgency. His unit was tasked with vetting and acquiring intelligence assets among the local populace. Here, he tells the story of his dreams.

### SGT Forethought's Story

I was tasked to acquire intelligence assets from the local bazaar, known to our troops as Biggen's Bazaar. I knew this was going to be a challenging mission because recent upticks in IED activity and subsequent clashes between American forces and locals in the area had caused increased tension. The night before the mission, I attended an intelligence briefing to learn about potential assets. Intelligence was especially detailed regarding one man.

The man's name was Emilio. Emilio was 52 years old and operated a successful electronics store selling radios, wires and cables, batteries, cell phones, CDs, DVDs, fuses and all sorts of electronic components for electronics repair. Emilio's store was the only successful electronics store in the area. All other electronics stores seemed unable to stay in business, giving Emilio a monopoly on the local electronic goods market. However, other shopkeepers in the bazaar were known to buy his goods for resale in their own shops.

Emilio lived and worked in a small neighborhood and was well respected in the community. His family had lived in the area for many generations. While previous reports had mentioned that Emilio was friendly with coalition forces, there have been reports that he may have espoused anti-western ideology in the past.

As for his family, Emilio's father Vincente was a village elder known for a lack of cooperation with coalition forces. However, his father was a champion for local well construction projects that brought fresh water to the community for drinking and irrigation. Emilio's brother, Carlos, was a previous detainee of the coalition. He was detained under suspicion of supplying materiel aid to the insurgency, though was later released due to insufficient evidence. Emilio had two sons, Julius and Rommel. Rommel seems to be a normal child. However, Julius has a chronic disease requiring constant treatment but has been receiving the best medical care that could be offered in the area, despite the high cost of this treatment.

After the intelligence briefing, I returned to the barracks to catch some shut-eye.

#### **Dream 1**

*I woke up and rolled out of my bunk to meet my squad for chow and discuss the day's mission to go to the bazaar to identify potential intelligence assets. Due to time constraints we had to divide the potential assets discussed at the intelligence briefing between several squads. I chose Emilio, as he seemed like the one most likely to be aiding the insurgency. I was certain that he was the person responsible for supplying the IED components and most likely an active member of the insurgency.*

*Upon arrival at Emilio's shop, I decided to purchase various small electronic items for miscellaneous repairs to start a relationship with the shopkeeper and make him drop his guard. Although I said "hello" as I entered, Emilio seemed reserved. He did not reply, but continued to give me glances as I walked around the store. "Someone seems nervous," one of my sergeants whispered. I purchased a pack of batteries and thanked Emilio. Emilio never spoke throughout the entire transaction.*

*“Do you have a minute to talk?” I asked. “How can I help you?” he responded warily. “Are you looking for something in particular today?” “I need to talk to you about the IED attacks that have been occurring,” I told him.*

*“Why me?” he responded. “Your store has a large selection of electronic items,” I stated, “that are commonly used to make explosive devices like the one used in the attacks recently.” “Of course I have electronics,” he responded defensively, “I own an electronics store!” I pulled out a list of names and photos and asked, “Have you ever sold electronic items to these individuals?” Emilio stared at this list for a moment as his face turned white and responded abruptly, “Why do you ask me such questions?” “These photos are confirmed or suspected insurgents,” I told him, “and we believe you may have sold electronics to them that were used in making IEDs.” “I am insulted,” Emilio said. “Please, leave my store at once!” Locals shopping in the store had begun to gather around during our conversation, and it became apparent that further questioning would only cause Emilio to become more agitated and create a scene. Because he was an influential member of the community, I felt it would be better to come back later rather than detain and question him, which could cause further tension amongst the populace.*

*We left Emilio’s store and returned to our FOB. Having achieved very little during today’s mission, IED activity in the area continued unabated, and I feared that we may have tipped our hand to the insurgents.*

### **Dream 1: Lessons Learned**

I woke up in the middle of the night and immediately begin to ponder my strange dream. What had gone wrong? I decided to start from the beginning, when I made my decision that Emilio was likely an insurgent or at least aiding the insurgency. As I recalled, my assessment of Emilio was based on a few key pieces of information:

- His family had suspected ties to the insurgency.
- He sold equipment and material that can be used for building explosives.
- He seemed to be living outside the means of a shopkeeper.
- There have been reports that he may subscribe to anti-western ideologies.

When I considered these pieces of information together, I was confident that Emilio was part of the insurgency. Approaching Emilio in that fashion had led to confrontation, and I was unable to gain useful information in one form or another. However, I realized that the information I had focused on was not all of the information we had. I thought back to the intelligence briefing and I recalled a few additional pieces of information:

- Emilio’s father, Vincente, was a champion for well construction.
- Emilio’s brother, Carlos, though once detained under suspicion of collusion with insurgents, was released on the grounds of insufficient evidence.
- Emilio was known to be friendly to coalition forces.

“Hmmm...” I thought to myself. This additional information made it less clear in my own mind that Emilio was involved with insurgents. I was certainly less confident than I had been in my dream. This was a truly ambiguous situation. Based on the intel we received during the briefing, I could not be sure whether or not Emilio was a bad guy. But how could I have been so sure in my dream? Then it came to me. The pieces of information that I considered in the dream while formulating my decision whether or not to question Emilio shared one common feature. They all pointed towards a “guilty” verdict; I had only considered the information that confirmed my suspicions. I recalled learning about this type of confirmation bias in a course and was surprised to see myself fall prey to this bias so naturally. I had

ignored the other pieces of relevant information that supported the possibility that Emilio was not colluding with insurgents. Furthermore, I had considered information that could be irrelevant. I asked myself "If Carlos, Emilio's brother, had been released from detention because no evidence of his involvement in the insurgency could be found, should I really be considering that as evidence that Emilio may be involved with the insurgency?" I concluded that I should be careful when making judgments based on incomplete, ambiguous, and piecemeal information. I realized the importance of carefully considering which information is relevant and which is not. As I nodded back to sleep, I thought to myself "It is important to carefully consider the evidence available when deciding whether or not to question the locals as suspects. Drawing inaccurate and hasty conclusions from irrelevant information would only worsen an already tense relationship between the U.S. and the local populace. I need to be sure that I am **aware of what is relevant and what is irrelevant and am not just attending to the information that confirms my suspicions.**" I fell into a deep sleep and immediately began to dream.

## Dream 2

*I woke up and rolled out of my bunk to meet my squad for chow and discuss the day's mission to go to the bazaar to identify potential intelligence assets. Due to time constraints, we had to divide the potential assets discussed at the intelligence briefing between several squads. I was determined to remember the lessons from my previous dream and not repeat my mistakes. I again chose Emilio as my target for questioning. However, this time I decided that while the intel seemed to make him a likely person of interest, he was not necessarily an insurgent or knowingly aiding the insurgency.*

*Upon arrival at Emilio's shop, I decided to purchase various small electronic items for miscellaneous repairs in an effort to get him to drop his guard. Although I said "hello" as I entered, he seemed reserved. He did not reply, but continued to give me glances as I walked around the store. "Someone seems nervous," one of my sergeants whispered. I purchased a pack of batteries and thanked Emilio. He never spoke throughout the entire transaction.*

*"Do you have a minute to talk?" I asked him. "How can I help you?" he responded warily. "Are you looking for something in particular today?" "I need to talk to you about the IED attacks that have been occurring lately," I told him. "Why me?" he responded. In order to assure Emilio that we were not there to interrogate him, I said, "Emilio, I want you to understand that we do not think you are a bad guy. We do not think you are helping the bad guys. But we need your help." I pulled out a list of names and photos and asked, "Have you ever sold electronic items to these individuals?" Emilio did not even look at the list and responded, "Why do you ask me such questions? I do not know you. You come into my business asking questions. I do not know you. Do you need to buy something?" I replied, "No, Emilio. We are here to ask for your help in stopping the recent attacks." I pointed back to the list of names and photos and repeated. "Have you ever sold electronic items to these individuals?" Emilio seemed to dodge the question. He said, "I do not know, but if you need to purchase something I can help you. Do you need a new DVD?" I replied, this time more forcefully, "Emilio, we are here for business, and I need you to tell me if you have ever sold goods to these men!" Emilio seemed irritated but replied calmly, "I cannot help you. I do not know you, and I do not know these men. If you are not going to buy anything, please leave my store." His refusal to look at the photos and names was very suspicious.*

*Since we seemed to be getting nowhere, I tried a different approach. "Emilio we really need to have a look at your sales records." Emilio became angry at this and began walking towards us motioning aggressively toward the door, trying to get us to leave. "You Americans don't know how we do things here! I cannot show you my sales records!" Emilio yelled. "I am insulted," Emilio said. "Please, leave my store at once!" Locals shopping in the bazaar had begun to gather around the shop, and it became apparent that further questioning would only cause Emilio to become more agitated and create a scene.*

*So I decided to leave the store to have a look around the bazaar. After a short patrol, we headed back to the FOB with no new intelligence to speak of. IED attacks continued to escalate, and once again, I realized I had failed my mission.*

## **Dream 2: Lessons Learned**

I woke up in my bunk again, and immediately began to think about my dream. It was similar to my first dream in that we were unsuccessful in acquiring actionable intelligence from Emilio. However, I was at a loss for why this occurred. I knew that based on the ambiguous intelligence we received in the briefing that we could not be confident that Emilio was collaborating with the insurgents. Because of this, I made an explicit effort to tell Emilio that we did not think he was a bad guy. Yet still, he did not want to cooperate with us. If we assured him that we just wanted his help and that he was not a suspect, why was he still resistant to help us in this dream? I thought back to the cultural training that we had received prior to our deployment. We received training on how to approach and interact with local nationals in our area of operations. This training addressed issues such as the importance of accepting hospitality and not speaking directly to the local women. Well, these things obviously did not apply to the interaction in my dream. **What else** could explain Emilio's resistance? Ah ha! I remembered the part of the training that focused on the utility of taking the perspective of others when trying to understand the behavior of others. So I began to think about my interaction with Emilio in my dream. I asked myself, "if I were in Emilio's shoes, why would I resist questioning?" Attempting to see the situation through Emilio's eyes I envisioned seeing me, an armed American Soldier, walking into my electronics shop and with friends and neighbors looking at me, the Soldier begins to question to me. Thinking like I was Emilio in the situation, I began to wonder about what the onlookers were thinking. Questions starting racing through my head.

"Did they think that I (as Emilio) was in cahoots with insurgents? What rumors would they spread about me? Will my friends and neighbors distance themselves from me and my family? Will I be shunned? What if word gets out to the insurgents that I am assisting the Americans? They might come after me and my family! It doesn't look good that I am being questioned by American Soldiers, I need to get rid them now!"

I felt as if a light bulb illuminated. "Aha!" I exclaimed. It wasn't that Emilio was resisting us to hide information. He was simply trying to get rid of us because he was concerned about how the situation would be perceived by other members of the community. In the small community, word travels fast and because there were a number of onlookers when we questioned Emilio, he was concerned that the community would think he was helping insurgents or even that word may get to the insurgents that he was helping American forces. We had not taken adequate time to account for Emilio's interests. Questioning him in front of the other citizens was very bad for his reputation in the community and could even put the lives of his family at risk. Furthermore, even though I had not accused Emilio of being involved with the insurgents, I realized that interactions with our forces had not always been amicable with the local populace. Even if Emilio was not knowingly providing the insurgents with IED components, he might still think we would hold him culpable for unknowingly supplying the insurgency. I had totally *failed to see the situation through Emilio's eyes*. In light of this misstep, it was no wonder Emilio was resistant to helping us. It became clear to me that I would need to speak with Emilio out of view of the other locals. However, he would likely be reluctant until I established some level of rapport with him.

If I had made efforts to understand how our actions would be perceived by him, my judgment as to how to approach Emilio to acquire actionable information would have been different. I would

have decided to pull Emilio aside, out of view of the public, before I started asking for information. However, getting Emilio to agree to speak with me privately would likely have required me to establish some level of rapport with him so that he would feel at ease. I would have made an effort to let him know that as long as he was not intentionally helping the insurgents that he would not be held responsible for their actions. Thus, my failure to take the perspective of Emilio led to my suboptimal judgment on how to proceed with questioning. I knew the limits of the intelligence we had regarding Emilio but making sure to treat him as a non-combatant fell short of what was needed to encourage his cooperation. We would obviously need to protect his interests before we could expect him to provide us with information. To convince Emilio that we were trying to protect his interests, I was going to have to build the relationship. I thought hard about the importance of taking the perspective of others as I drifted back to sleep.

### **Dream 3**

*I woke up and rolled out of my bunk to meet my squad for chow and discuss the day's mission to go to the bazaar to identify potential intelligence assets. I was ready to apply the lessons from the first two dreams to get the information I needed. Although the intelligence brief provided a great deal of information regarding Emilio, I recognized that much of it was irrelevant for determining the probability that he was colluding with known insurgents. I was also now aware of how Emilio would perceive our approaching him in his shop and questioning him. We were going to need to be a bit more discreet in our questioning of Emilio if we were to gain his cooperation. Therefore, I discussed with my squad the importance of finding a way of pulling Emilio aside, out of view of others in the bazaar before we started questioning him. I also reiterated the need to let Emilio know we were not holding him responsible for the attacks. We were going to go talk to Emilio and treat him as if he was an innocent non-combatant and spend time establishing his trust in us.*

*Upon arrival at Emilio's shop, I decided to purchase various small electronic items for miscellaneous repairs to start a relationship with the shopkeeper and cause him drop his guard. Although I said "hello" as I entered, the shopkeeper seemed reserved. He did not reply, but continued to give me glances as I walked around the store. "Someone seems nervous," one of my sergeants whispered. I purchased a pack of batteries and thanked Emilio. In order to establish some level of rapport, and put Emilio at ease, I engaged him conversation.*

*Emilio was happy to speak with me about community news. During the conversation, Emilio told me that he has had this business for 30 years. He also told me that when he first started the business it was all about the money. However, now that he is older and more established, his goals have changed. He now wants to give back to his community. He wants to help others achieve the same amount of success that he has in business. He also explained to me that his people must take back the country from those individuals who would bring it down and start looking for ways to rebuild and grow their economy. I became even more certain that Emilio was not knowingly aiding the insurgents but still believed that the IED components were coming from his store.*

*I then asked him if he had a moment to speak privately. Emilio seemed concerned but agreed to speak with me. He led me to the back room of his shop and I left the squad out front to pull security but instructed them to assume a non-aggressive posture. Once we were alone I said, "I need to talk to you about IED attacks that have been occurring in the area."*

*"Why me?" he responded. In order to assure Emilio that we were not there to interrogate him, I said, "Emilio, I want you to understand that we do not think you are a bad guy. We do not think you are*

*helping the bad guys. But we need your help. We are not going to hold you responsible if you did not intentionally sell materials to the insurgents.” I pulled out a list of names and photos and asked, “Have you ever sold electronic items to these individuals?” Emilio stared at this list for a moment as his face turned white and responded abruptly, “Why do you ask me such questions?” “These are photos of confirmed or suspected insurgents,” I told him, “and they may have been involved in an attack that occurred today.” “What makes you think they would have come to my store?” Emilio asked. “Your store has a large selection of electronic items,” I stated, “items which are commonly used to make explosive devices like the ones used in the local attacks.” “Of course I have electronics,” he responded defensively, “I own an electronics store!” I responded by stating, “Look, if you don’t want to identify any names, can we at least see your sales records so we can see if the items were sold from your store?” Emilio gave me a blank stare and did not respond. “The records would be helpful,” I continued. “I am insulted,” Emilio said. “Please, leave my store at once!”*

*I had expected Emilio to cooperate given we were speaking in private. I was taken aback by his defensive posture. Given that our previous interactions had been respectful and pleasant, I assumed that his sudden change in disposition was indeed an attempt to obscure his involvement with insurgents in the area. Furthermore, his refusal to allow us to look at his sales record was very suspicious. If he had nothing to hide, then what was the big deal with letting us look at his sales records? I found this troubling so I pressed the issue.*

*I restated, “Emilio we really need to have a look at your sales records. Like I said we are not holding you responsible, but we believe you may be unknowingly selling items to the insurgents.” Emilio became angry at this and began walking towards us motioning aggressively toward the door, trying to get us to leave. “You Americans don’t know how we do things here! I cannot show you my sales records!” Emilio yelled. By this point, he was still approaching us and instinctively one of my men subdued him and zip tied his hands. Given his aggressive display, we needed to detain him and take him in for further questioning. His sudden defensiveness over his sales records, despite the fact that we spoke privately and explicitly stated that we did not believe he was intentionally aiding the insurgents, led me to confidently assume that he was supplying bomb-building materials to the insurgency.*

*When we arrived back at the FOB with Emilio in tow, we took him to the detention center so our intelligence unit could interrogate him further. During the interrogation, the interrogator pressed Emilio intensely, shouting, “If you are not an insurgent, and are not helping insurgents, then why wouldn’t you let us see your sales records?! Explain that, Emilio!” Emilio, with a look of disbelief on his face said, “Because if the insurgents find out I have helped Americans they will hurt my family! They kill us if we talk to American Soldiers!” We attained little information from Emilio. He let us know that while he was the biggest electronics store in the area, none of the men we had shown him had been to his store. My assumption that Emilio was being uncooperative due to involvement with the insurgents was completely wrong. Further, my assumption that the electronics must be coming from his store proved to be a dead end. He seemed to know more, but he was unwilling to cooperate extensively because he had been seen being taken into custody. Taking him into custody was a bad decision on our part as it essentially guarantees that Emilio will not be working with us anymore.*

*IED attacks continued, and I had once again failed my mission.*

### **Dream 3: Lessons Learned**

Again, I awoke in my bunk and began to consider the implications of my dream. My assumptions about the reasons for Emilio’s resistance had led the team astray and cost us a potential intelligence asset. If I had not acted so forward and heavy-handed in my dealings with Emilio, we may have been able to gain

useful intelligence from him. I realized that while getting using only relevant information to shape my understanding of Emilio and viewing the situation through the his eyes were important behaviors for arriving at an optimal judgment. However, I also needed to make sure that I kept my assumptions in check and considered alternative explanations for Emilio's behavior to avoid drawing hasty conclusions. For example, while Emilio's electronics store is the largest in the area and has components that could be used for making IEDs, it is also an obvious source and therefore may not be likely to be chosen by the insurgents. Also, lack of cooperation from a local does not necessarily indicate that they are an enemy. As Emilio stated, he was afraid to help us out of fear for his family's safety. In the interest of considering other possibilities as to where insurgents were getting the electronic components for their IEDs, I began reviewing everything I knew about the situation. I recalled that other vendors in the bazaar often bought Emilio's goods and resold them in their own shops. This is a logical and feasible alternative for where insurgents may be acquiring electronics for bomb building. Furthermore, if insurgents had bought the electronics from one of the other vendors, then that could explain why Emilio had not recognized the men I had asked him about and became defensive when I pressed the issue. However, I assumed his defensive posture was because he was hiding something. In the future, I needed to avoid making hasty judgments before I knew all the facts and considered alternative explanations for events.

## **Resolution**

Having awoken from my third dream around my normal waking time, I decided to get up for the day. I remembered the lessons that I had learned in my dreams the night before. Using them, I interacted as I had previously with Emilio. I made sure that I considered the relevant information and considered his perspective in our interactions. He continued to be resistant with giving information to me in his shop with others present. However, rather than assume this was a sign of guilt, I tried to see things how Emilio would see them, checked my assumptions, and made sure that faulty assumptions were not leading me to disregard alternative explanations for events and behavior. After building a rapport over several visits, I invited Emilio to a private meeting so that he would not be seen aiding our forces. When he came to the meeting, we discussed our interest in his shop and our beliefs that the electronics might be coming from his shop without his knowledge. He calmly explained that while he understood how we may have drawn that conclusion, he had never seen any of the men on our suspect lists. But he knew that one of the men was a cousin of another vendor in the bazaar who often came in to his store inquiring about the prices of the electronics he sold. While the man never bought from Emilio, he was aware that it was common practice for vendors to buy some electronics from larger stores and try to sell them on the street. The information that Emilio gave me led me to the street vendor, who it turned out was buying electronics from another store and reselling them to his insurgent cousin. Emilio's information helped to bring down the vendor, his cousin, and several insurgents he was working with. The IED attacks dropped significantly in my area, and the mission was considered a large success. Further, I kept Emilio as an intelligence asset in the local electronics market, and he was able to provide me with solid intelligence several times. IED attacks in that area remained low throughout the remainder of the entire operation.

## **Conclusion**

SGT Forethought, through the dream sequence, learned a great deal about what it takes to make quality judgments such as:

- Some pieces of information can be countered by other pieces. For example, "Emilio's brother was detained" is a piece of information countered by "Emilio's brother was released due to insufficient

evidence.” Try to see the bigger picture and parse relevant and irrelevant information before establishing what you think you know.

- Try to see situations from different perspectives. New potential explanations may emerge when viewing a problem through the eyes of another. For example, Emilio’s resistance was partly due to his concern that other community members would see him working with American Soldiers and word would get back to the insurgents.
- Check your assumptions. For example, the assumption that Emilio’s uncooperative behavior was an indicator that he was supporting the insurgents is a faulty assumption. Generate alternative explanations (e.g., Emilio does not want to discuss these issues in public) and try to uncover hidden assumptions that affect how situations are interpreted.
- Carefully consider all available evidence if time permits. Avoid considering only evidence that confirms an assumption, such as the fact that Emilio seemed to be able to afford expensive medical care for his son or that his brother was a prior detainee of the coalition.

### Module 1 Debrief

This module presented examples of three skills for making better judgments: attending to the relevance of information, engaging in perspective taking, and challenging your assumptions.

#### Attending to the Relevance of Information

Evaluating information to understand what is important is a necessary skill to avoid a common bias in judgment known as a **confirmation bias**. Confirmation bias leads one to only consider information that is consistent with (i.e., confirms) their suspicions or expectations. Accordingly, disconfirming information may be overlooked. An example above is that, at first, SGT Forethought attended to the information that Emilio’s brother had once been detained under suspicion of colluding with insurgents. His confirmation bias led him to ignore the fact Emilio’s brother was subsequently released due to insufficient evidence. Therefore, to avoid falling prey to your own confirmation bias, when considering facts, be sure to attend to how relevant the information is. If one piece of information (e.g., Emilio’s brother was detained) is negated by another piece of information (e.g., Emilio’s brother was released due to insufficient evidence) then that information may be considered irrelevant for shaping your judgment of a situation of best course of action.

#### Engaging in Perspective Taking

Engaging in perspective taking is a skill that can help you better understand the behavior and actions of others. As humans, we are naturally inclined to view situations from our own perspective. It is not easy to pause and deliberately try to consider how a situation, event, or behavior is perceived by others. However, making a conscious effort to understand how others view things can go a long way toward helping you understand their behavior. The Army Research Institute (ARI) has developed a four-step process for perspective taking. Their research outlines processes for taking the perspective of individuals similar to one’s self as well as taking the perspective of a culturally different other. To learn about the finer points of perspective taking in these contexts, access the ARI Technical Report here: [www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA509341](http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA509341).

#### Challenging Assumptions

Assumptions are items accepted as true or certain to happen, without proof. Challenging personal assumptions is a skill complimented by the ability to separate important from unimportant information. For example, the ability to ignore irrelevant information pertaining to the detention of Emilio’s brother would help avoid the incorrect assumption that Emilio’s family was colluding with insurgents. The

interesting and important thing about assumptions is that they underlie a great deal of things. They can carry through multiple contexts and situations, affecting everything along the way. Think of them in terms of a vector for an aircraft. If the trajectory (i.e., assumption) is even slightly off at the beginning of a flight (i.e., some effort), by the time the aircraft has flown 500 miles (i.e., progress in the effort) it will be significantly off course (i.e., wasted time and energy operating under faulty assumptions). Therefore, it is important to actively monitor assumptions to ensure they are accurate.

Challenging assumptions may be as simple as asking two questions: What if...and What else...? For example, "**What if** Emilio's resistance is not due to him hiding what he knows about the insurgents? **What else** could explain his resistance?" Asking these two simple questions can enable challenging assumptions and considering alternative explanations.

## Module 2: Identifying Important Points of Consideration and Making Judgments

**Module 2** presents a series of brief scenarios that portray fictional dilemmas in which you must make a judgment regarding how to resolve a problem. The overarching purpose of Module 2 is to practice identifying the things that need to be considered in terms of the three judgment skills addressed in Module 1. Questions accompany each scenario to think through critical components of judgment as they relate to the scenario. Questions to consider when working through the scenarios include:

- What information is relevant?
- What information is irrelevant?
- What might this situation look like through the eyes of another?
- How do differing perspectives affect the behaviors of the key characters in the situation?
- What key assumptions is the character making?
- How can the character check his or her assumptions?

Proceed through Module 2 one scenario at a time, using the provided space to answer the scenario questions. Indicate your course of action and explicitly document your reasoning in terms of the three judgment skills. There is no single right answer to these questions but examples of how to structure possible answers begin on page 22. Keep in mind that the example answers represent one way of answering the questions but as complex situations go, there is likely more than one right answer. Use the examples as a guide to provide insight rather than a hard and fast determination of right and wrong as it pertains to the questions in each scenario.

### Scenario 1: Unexploded Ordnance

#### Background Information:

- Your role is that of an advisor to the local police chief, who has a high level of autonomy with his responsibilities.
- The police chief has won numerous awards for his assistance with reducing terrorism in the area.

You are a platoon leader in a company that is currently operating in a heavily populated area. Your company has been tasked to work alongside local government agencies to improve the security and infrastructure in the area, and your platoon has been assigned to work with a local police chief who has been in the area for a long time. So far, things have gone quite well, and you feel like you are actually making a difference.

About six months into the deployment, your platoon sergeant approaches you and tells you that he can no longer deal with the police chief. “He is impossible to work with!” he says. You are surprised, as you have also been working with the police chief and have not encountered any issues. You also know the chief to be a hard worker and someone who takes his job seriously. You ask the platoon sergeant to calm down and explain what he is talking about. The platoon sergeant says, “Sir, I’ve told the police chief several times in the past month to make sure his officers know to call the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team whenever they encounter unexploded ordnance (UXO) while on patrol. Then this morning, I hear over the radio that a couple of his officers had uncovered a large UXO cache near a residential area. I called over to EOD to verify the information and found that it had never been called in. I immediately called the chief, who gave me multiple reasons why it hadn’t been done. He tells me not to worry because he has it all taken care of. He seems to think the only reason I wanted him to call EOD was so that we could take credit for discovering and destroying the UXO.” “Did he tell you that?” you ask. “He

doesn't have to tell me that," the platoon sergeant states, "he acts like it is a contest or something." "That is your assumption but we should talk to the chief to get his perspective on the situation," you tell him.

You tell the platoon sergeant that you will talk with the police chief. However, when you go over to meet with him, he has already left to go down to the site where the UXO was found. You decide that you better get down there right away. When you arrive, you find the chief sitting on a backhoe digging for UXO and several of his officers loading them into a truck. You yell for him to stop. The chief rolls his eyes and shuts down the backhoe. You tell him that digging up UXO with a backhoe is incredibly dangerous and in violation of your agreement to work together, and explain that he should contact the EOD team so they can safely deal with the UXO. He responds by pointing to the UXO stockpile he has already uncovered using the backhoe. "I appreciate your concern," he tells you, "but I've been the police chief for 15 years, and I don't need you telling me how to do my job. Besides, the backhoe is faster, and there is no way I am going to let your EOD team destroy the UXO in this residential area." You realize that your platoon sergeant has misread the situation and misjudged the intentions of the police chief.

**You must decide how to handle this situation. Please use the space provided to work through the exercise. Use extra paper if needed.**

## Exercise: Unexploded Ordnance

*Tip: Refer to the answer key for example answers that present one possible set of answers to help you understand how to respond properly.*

What is the problem that needs to be addressed?

What information is relevant to identifying the root cause of the problem?

What information is irrelevant to the problem? Why?

What are the key differences in perspectives on the situation in this scenario?

How can you reconcile differences in perspectives?

What assumptions is the team making in this scenario?

How can these assumptions be checked?

What is your course of action?

## Scenario 2: Gaining Support from a Local Town

### Background Information:

- In the local culture, it is customary to provide beverages to guests.
- The local people enjoy sharing personal history.
- The area has experienced continuous foreign occupation for an extended time.
- The mayor of the town has no known ties to insurgents.
- The U.S. Army has occupied the country for a period of 6 months.

You are a reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition platoon leader tasked with reclaiming a road that insurgents attack frequently. The route traverses through several small towns and has been the scene of multiple attacks in the last few months. You decide that in addition to your route clearing operations, you must gain the trust and support of the local populace if you are to succeed. You realize it is important for you to understand the locals' perspective if you are going to win their support.

After careful mission planning, you and your team decide to start with the first town along the route. Intelligence reports suggest the people in the town are not actively supportive of the insurgents. However, they do not seem to be against them either. You have heard rumors that the mayor of the town does not like Americans. You decide you need to meet with the mayor to and try not to let the rumor affect your interaction.

You arrange for a meeting with the mayor of the town to discuss security in the hopes of gaining his support. However, on the day of the meeting, the mayor asks to reschedule with no explanation given. You reschedule for the following day, disconcerted with the change of events but remaining open minded.

After formal introductions, you sit down with the mayor to start the meeting. He begins asking you questions about your family and home life. He then tells you about his own life, explaining that he is married and has three grown boys. He also tells you about the history of the town and some of the hardships they have faced over the years. While the mayor excuses himself to retrieve refreshments for you and your Soldiers, you overhear one of your Soldiers whisper to another, "We've been here for over an hour and all he wants to do is small talk. This is a waste of time." You attempt to remind your troops that small talk is an important part of polite discussions within the local culture.

When the mayor returns, he tells you that the people of his town are strong willed. But, they are tired of the fighting that continues to go on in their country. "All we know is fighting," he says. "Our dreams are held hostage by insurgents and by continual occupation by other countries."

You see this as an opportunity to tell the mayor that if he cooperates and supports the U.S., then you can reduce the number of attacks. The mayor does not respond. You begin to speak again and the mayor interrupts you and calmly says, "This town will not be a pawn to any foreign power. You are free to pass through the town as you like. There is nothing else I can do. I have no reason to help you any more than I have reason to help the insurgents. The insurgents have no quarrel with us. Our town is already in poor shape. Helping you will only make matters worse."

**You must decide how to handle this situation. Please use the space provided to work through the exercise. Use extra paper if needed.**

## Exercise: Gaining Support from a Local Town

*Tip: Refer to the answer key for example answers that present one possible set of answers to help you understand how to respond properly.*

What is the problem that needs to be solved?

What information is relevant to identifying the root cause of the problem?

What information is irrelevant to solving the problem?

What are the key differences in perspectives in this scenario?

How can you reconcile differences in perspectives?

What assumptions are being made in this scenario?

How can you check these assumptions to make sure you have an accurate understanding of the situation?

How do you plan to solve the problem?

### Scenario 3: Vehicle Checks at the Border

#### Background Information:

- The U.S. Army is responsible for training border patrol officers in the area.
- Direct supervision of trained officers falls under the responsibility of the host country, not the U.S.

You are a leader of a security force assistance team (SFAT) that has been tasked with training new police recruits. These recruits will eventually be part of a newly formed border patrol in the area operated by host national government officials and military officers. Your team has been working with them for the past four months, and you are confident that they are ready for the job. After training, they are assigned to a border patrol checkpoint where they are supervised by you and the SFAT before they are given complete autonomy. After a few weeks, you determine that the recruits are ready to be released to the full control of their senior border patrol officer. You have high hopes that these recruits will cut down on the amount of drugs leaving and entering the country. However, you discover that there are issues with a particular border checkpoint.

A team member informs you that during a routine patrol, he witnessed these new officers failing to stop a vehicle as it crossed the border. You know you spent a lot of time and effort reinforcing the importance of stopping every vehicle in that area. You cannot figure out why they are not doing it. A SFAT member tells you, "I've seen this before with senior border patrol leaders. I bet this guy is corrupt. I bet he is involved in some sort of smuggling operation." You stress to your subordinate that while he may have seen this type of behavior before that you should not assume that the officer is corrupt.

You make an appointment to meet with the senior border patrol leader to discuss future security protocols. The border patrol leader agrees to the meeting. You sit down and have refreshments while you discuss the situation. He indicates that there is no problem with the officers. He tells you that they do not need to stop every vehicle because it wastes the citizens' time. The border patrol leader explains, "I know a lot of these people, and there is no need to stop the same people day after day, week after week. They have done nothing wrong." He tells you that he has instructed them to stop only vehicles that look overly suspicious. You again emphasize to him the importance of stopping all vehicles. He says, "That is not how things are done, and my officers will do as I say. If I see a problem with the system, I will change it but that call will come from me." You end up speaking to him for over two hours, after which you do not feel that you have accomplished much or made any headway in the matter. You feel like your time has been wasted, but you do not want to offend him by saying so even though your body language may have given away your frustration. You hope that your insistence that the border patrol officers stop every single vehicle during patrols has sunk in.

The next week you notice the same thing happening. You do not understand how you have failed to communicate the importance of following security protocols to the border patrol leader. You wonder if there is some reason he has that you are not seeing. You meet with him again and attempt to explain the importance of vigilance with searches. However, you receive the same response; the border patrol leader reminds you it his system and he will make the changes if he believes they are necessary.

**You must decide how to handle this situation. Please use the space provided to work through the exercise. Use extra paper if needed.**

## Exercise: Vehicle Checks at the Border

*Tip: Refer to the answer key for example answers that present one possible set of answers to help you understand how to respond properly.*

What is the problem that needs to be solved?

What information is relevant to identifying the root cause of the problem?

What information is irrelevant to solving the problem? Why?

What are the key differences in perspectives in this scenario?

How can you reconcile differences in these perspectives?

What assumptions are made in this scenario?

How can you check these assumptions to make sure you have an accurate understanding of the situation?

How do you plan to solve the problem?

## Module 3: Reflect on Your Past and Envision Your Future

**Module 3** contains one exercise where you will apply the concepts learned in Modules 1 and 2 to a situation you will likely encounter in the near future. Consider the judgment you will have to make and how the three judgment skills will come into play.

The purpose of the Module 3 exercise is to encourage you to consider how you may use the three judgment skills (attending to information relevance, perspective taking and, challenging assumptions) in a context that is most personally relevant. By engaging in this activity you will begin to see how your own personal judgment, if improved, can positively affect your life and work.

*Tip: For examples of how to structure your response, see the example answers.*

## Planning for Future Judgment

Imagine a likely future scenario in which you will have to make a judgment call. Use the space provided to describe this scenario and how you would leverage the three judgment skills to formulate a quality judgment.

Briefly describe a likely situation you will encounter in the near future and the judgment that will have to be made.

How can each of the judgment skills be used in formulating a judgment?

What is the anticipated outcome?

If the actual outcome is different than the anticipated outcome, how might you use the three judgment skills to reach the anticipated outcome?

What can you do between now and this future situation to identify relevant factors or info sources, consider the perspective of others with respect to various outcomes, and check your assumptions?

## Example Answers for Module 2 Exercises

### Unexploded Ordnance

What is the problem that needs to be addressed?

There is a misunderstanding between US forces and the police chief. Because this has created tensions between the groups, and led the police chief to unsafely remove UXO, it needs to be addressed. In addition, the behavior of the police chief is not consistent with the agreement between US and local forces to work together. Therefore, it is important to determine what is causing the police chief to alter his behavior in a way that diverges from the original agreement to work together.

What information is relevant to identifying the root cause of the problem?

The PSG feels that police chief is impossible to work with (sentence #5). This is relevant because it is contrary to my previous experiences and indicates a behavior change in the police chief. The police chief has been told to call EOD if UXO discovered (sentence #9). They found UXO and did not call EOD (sentences #10 & 11). This is relevant as it is the primary indicator of the misunderstanding. The area is heavily populated (sentence #1). This is important because this seems to be a concern of the police chief that the chief does not feel is shared by US forces. The police chief thinks EOD will destroy UXO in residential area (sentence #27). This is important because it shows that there is a misunderstanding. EOD would never put civilians in danger if avoidable.

What information is irrelevant to the problem? Why?

The local police chief has been in the area a long time (sentence #2). This is irrelevant because the dangers of digging up UXO with a backhoe are unaffected by seniority or familiarity. This information also has no bearing on the agreement to work together.

What are the key differences in perspectives in this scenario?

US Forces see removing UXO with a backhoe as extremely dangerous and would use special EOD equipment and procedures for removal. The police chief is accustomed to making do with what he has available so the backhoe seems to be the most efficient way to get the job done. The police chief thinks US Forces would destroy UXO in a populated area which is why he took matters into his own hands. The PSG's perspective is that the police chief is just being difficult which led to frustrations and the PSG no longer wants to work with the chief. This misunderstanding is causing problems for cooperation between US and local forces.

How can you reconcile differences in perspectives?

I could explain that I understand why he would use the backhoe and that I appreciate his hard work. Then offer US assistance/equipment to finish the job, making sure the chief understands that they will get credit for finding the cache and that EOD will move the UXO to a safe area for destruction. Furthermore, I should explain our SOPs for disposing of UXO so the chief understands that we would never put civilians in harm's way. I also need to make sure the PSG understands the perspective of the police chief so that he does not continue to think the chief is just being difficult.

What assumptions are being made by your team in this scenario?

PSG assumes the police chief thinks we just want to take credit for finding the UXO (sentence #14).

How can you check these assumptions to make sure you have an accurate understanding of the situation?

If I were to consider that the police chief has always been cooperative and easy to work with in the past it would encourage me to generate alternative explanations for why the police chief did not contact EOD and chose to take on the removal of UXO without US assistance (other than blatant disregard for our agreement or seeking credit for finding the cache). For example, that there was a time constraint or that he was concerned for the immediate safety of the civilians in the area.

How do you plan to solve the problem?

To smooth out the situation I would commend the police chief for the work he has done finding the UXO. I would suggest to him that US Forces finish the job so that we can save face (important in their culture) and he can start working with US forces to put together a plan for the safe transport and destruction of the UXO. I would also recommend that he plan a press release that touts the great work he and his men have done. I would also explain to the PSG that the police chief was operating out of concern for civilians, not because he wants credit for finding the cache. This would help ease the PSG's concerns and reshape his perception of the police chief.

## Gaining Support from a Local Town

What is the problem that needs to be solved?

In order to reduce attacks along the route I need to gain the support of the locals. I need the mayor of a local town to be willing to provide me with information regarding insurgent activity. However, the mayor is resistant to helping us.

What information is relevant to identifying the root cause of the problem?

The mayor of the town has no known ties to insurgents and town not known to be supportive of insurgency. This is important as it discourages assumptions that non-cooperation indicates support for insurgents. Furthermore, the mayor seems to think that aiding U.S forces will create problems for the town. This is relevant as it provides an alternative explanation for his resistance. Specifically, that he is concerned helping us will result in insurgent retaliation.

What information is irrelevant to solving the problem? Why?

Rumors that the mayor of the town does not like Americans. This is irrelevant because it is mere rumor and speculation as opposed to solid intelligence based in fact. Must see for myself whether mayor is friendly to Americans. The mayor's last minute reschedule of the meeting is also irrelevant and I should avoid reading into this. Everyone has to reschedule meetings from time to time.

What are the key differences in perspectives in this scenario?

One of my Soldiers feels that small talk is a waste of time. However, such small talk is customary before discussing business matters. Therefore, the perspectives on the purpose and importance of small talk are different. US Forces see reducing attacks as an obvious good thing whereas mayor does not see the urgency as their town has not been directly affected. Furthermore, the mayor sees cooperation with the US as a threat to town security as insurgents would retaliate against the town. My perspective is that the mayor's cooperation will help increase security if we are able to eliminate the local insurgent threat.

How can you reconcile differences in perspectives?

In the scenario I took the mayor's lead and reminded my Soldier that small talk is customary and important to building relationships. As to the bigger issue of getting the mayor's cooperation, I should communicate to the mayor my understanding of the importance of maintaining the secrecy of any assistance from the mayor and show that you have the town's best interest and safety in mind. I could work with the mayor to determine how he could help us without word of his support for the US getting back to insurgents.

What assumptions are being made in this scenario?

I initially assumed the mayor would want to help the US in reducing the number of attacks in the area and that this would increase the overall security of the town.

How can you check these assumptions to make sure you have an accurate understanding of the situation?

I need to generate alternative explanations for why the mayor is resistant. Based on the mayor's comment that helping me would only make matters worse, I should consider reasons why the mayor could be leery of involving more military in his area and is reluctant to help the US in reducing attacks. This would lead to the realization that there could be deadly consequences for the town if insurgents were to learn of their support for US forces. In addition, if I were to consider that the locals have been under the thumb of occupying forces for a long time, and may attribute many of their problems to such occupation, it would present an alternative explanation for their reluctance to assist the US military. If what the locals desire is freedom to do as they choose, an increased foreign presence may be undesirable.

How do you plan to solve the problem?

To avoid making matters worse or offending the mayor (which may encourage him to support the insurgency), I would thank the mayor for his time and ask if there is anything his town needs (e.g., supplies, water, or medical care). This would build a relationship with the town and give the mayor more reason to help US Forces in the area. Because the mayor has said that we can pass through as we would like, I would heighten security until the threat is mitigated. After establishing a relationship and convincing the mayor that his help will eventually improve their security, we may be able to gain his cooperation. I would communicate how we plan to keep his assistance secret to address concerns he has about insurgent retaliation.

## Vehicle Checks at the Border

What is the problem that needs to be solved?

After handing control and oversight of the checkpoint to the newly formed local border patrol (BP), the recruits are not conducting the checkpoint operations as they were trained and are not stopping every vehicle as directed. The BP leader is insisting that they do things his way but I fear this will be ineffective and need the checkpoint to be operated in accordance with the training we provided.

What information is relevant to identifying the root cause of the problem?

The BP leader denies any problems and insists that they do not need to stop every vehicle. This is relevant as it is a primary indicator of the misalignment between the way the new BP team was trained and how they are currently operating the checkpoint. The BP leader insists on operating the checkpoint "his way." This information is relevant as it may represent evidence of the reason why the BP leader has decided to ignore the training.

What information is irrelevant to solving the problem? Why?

The fact that my sergeant believes that the commander is corrupt and thinks he is part of a smuggling operation is irrelevant. Without any proof, this is just an assumption by a soldier using potentially biased information that could lead to improper decision making. If this belief was based on some evidence then it would become relevant.

What are the key differences in perspectives in this scenario?

The key difference in perspectives exists between myself and the BP leader regarding the reasons for, and importance of, operating the checkpoint in accordance with the trained procedures. I am concerned about vigilance and stopping drug smuggling whereas the perspective of the BP leader is focused on being efficient and not wasting time of familiar civilians.

How can you reconcile differences in these perspectives?

One way of reconciling the differences in perspectives would be to explain to the BP leader the rationale behind stopping every vehicle even if the people are familiar. Particularly, I should explain how good people can be coerced into smuggling and that stopping them could help them escape the coercion. By doing this he would actually be saving the people he knows from harm which is a greater benefit than any cost to their time.

What assumptions are being made in this scenario?

A member of my team assumes that the BP leader is corrupt. One fundamental assumption I have made is that my way of operating the checkpoint is the best in this particular context.

How can you check these assumptions to make sure you have an accurate understanding of the situation?

To check the assumption about the BP leader being corrupt, I need to generate alternative explanations for why the BP unit is not stopping every vehicle. If these alternative explanations are feasible they would challenge the assumption that the BP leader is corrupt. Furthermore, I should consider if the methods of the BP leader could also be effective in stemming the flow of illicit drugs across the border. After all, this is his culture and he may be in tune with methods that could be effective for this mission. Before making the assumption that his way is wrong, I should try to determine the type of impact his methods are having on drug trafficking at the border crossing.

How do you plan to solve the problem?

Considering the cultural differences, I will make myself open to the possibility that the BP unit has a better sense of the activity in the area and may in fact be able to make decisions as to who should and should not be stopped at the crossing. I should let the BP leader exercise discretion for a trial period during which time my team can monitor the operation and try to gauge the impact the BP unit is having. I can let the BP leader continue to do things his way but I should embed a small team for a short period to observe how things are done "their way."

## Example Answer for Module 3 Exercise Future Judgment

Briefly describe a likely situation you will encounter in the near future and the judgment that will have to be made.

While deployed on a stability and support mission, I will likely have to allocate resources to community betterment projects (e.g., irrigation, sanitation, and construction). To determine how limited resources should be allocated I will have to judge which projects are of highest priority. I must stay objective and my goal will be to fund the projects that will have the greatest effects on community improvement.

How can each of the judgment skills be used in formulating a judgment?

When determining which projects to fund I will likely have to juggle information and requests from multiple stakeholders in the local community. Everyone will have their own opinions as to which projects should be highest priority. For example, farmers will want irrigation and educators may want a new school or supplies. I will need to be very objective in processing this information to determine which projects to fund. Keeping my goal in mind (one piece of relevant and important information), I should try to view the project alternatives from the perspectives of the stakeholders. By generating alternative courses of action and using perspective taking to consider factors that are most important to others, I should be able to make a good decision on which projects to fund. During this decision process, I will likely have my own thoughts and assumptions about what the community needs most. Trying to see the community needs through the eyes of the locals may help me check my assumptions. For example, a fundamental assumption I am making now is that my goal to fund the project with the largest effect is the correct goal. Maybe my goal should be to fund the project desired by the largest portion of the community. I probably should not assume that the project with the largest effect will be the most appropriate project for this particular community. Furthermore, am I assuming that my definition of effect or importance is correct? Perhaps I even need to check my assumptions regarding how mission success should be measured...

What is the anticipated outcome?

If I effectively apply the judgment skills when deciding which project to fund, the project that is ultimately selected should be agreeable to all of the stakeholders involved. Most importantly, I should select the project that is both desired and supported by the community.

If the actual outcome is different from the anticipated outcome, how might you reapply the three judgment skills to reach the anticipated outcome?

If it turns out that I did not make the best judgment, and chose to fund a project that was not agreeable to the community or otherwise encountered hurdles during implementation, I would want to reevaluate my assumptions. I could ask myself, "WHAT IF I were to fund a different project? WHAT ELSE might the community need? What could explain why the chosen project is not being supported by the community?" Asking these questions will help me take the perspective of the locals, generate alternative options and explanations, and reevaluate any other assumptions underlying my decision. Sometimes assumptions are hard to identify so I may have failed to consider a key assumption the first time.

What can you do between now and this future situation to identify relevant factors or info sources, consider the perspective of others with respect to various outcomes, and check your assumptions?

Between now and this future situation, I should speak with others leaders who have been involved in these types of missions. They may be able to use their hindsight to identify some of the unforeseen factors that need to be considered in these contexts. I should prepare to conduct a sensing session with locals to actually seek and determine their opinions on which project is most desirable. Preparing to do this in advance of my deployment will help ensure I am ready to collect important information that will shape my decisions. This preparation may prepare me to see the community needs through the eyes of the community members. While I can't be certain of the assumptions I will hold going into this situation, I know that I will need to remain flexible and be prepared to adjust my approach as the situation changes. I should be prepared to act as my own devil's advocate by asking myself "what if" and "what else" types of questions.