

Cultural Training & Intelligence for OIF

2004 Naval Industry R&D Partnership Conference

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5 August 2004



Agenda

- § Iraq Training Program
- § Challenges of OIF for U.S. Military
- § Challenges of Cultural Training in OIF
- § Challenges of Cultural Intelligence in OIF
- § Marine Feedback



Iraq Training Program – Mission & Access

§ Mission: To create a computer-based training program which prepares soldiers, leaders and commanders & staffs to operate in the complex political, economic, social and military environment of Iraq

<https://call2.army.mil>
OIF Iraq Training Program

<http://www.train.army.mil>
Iraq Training Program

Iraq Training Program – Contents

- § Understanding our Mission: military and civilian organizations, their goals, approaches and progress to date
- § Understanding Iraq: History, politics, culture, religion, ethno-religious groups, economy, security forces, insurgent organizations, among other topics.
- § Operational Challenges: Common operations – patrols, raids, detaining civilians, crowd control, working with local governments, interacting with the local population, Arabic for military operations

3 Audiences: Soldiers, Leaders, Commanders & Staffs

Methodology

- § Academics
- § Military and Civilian Post-Conflict Reconstruction Expertise
- § On-the-Ground Research
- § Instructional Systems Design



Challenges of OIF for U.S. Military

- § Security environment means the military is the only organizations which can interact with Iraqis on the local level
- § Task of Building Local Institutions is therefore being left to the military at the Battalion, Company and Platoon Level
- § Success in Building Local Institutions is central to defeating the insurgency
- § Military lacks skills, organizations and information for this task
- § Strategic Corporal

Challenges of Cultural Training for OIF

- § Short training lead times
- § In-person training by experts who are high cost and geographically dispersed is preferable
 - Hard to find experts with real on the ground experience after 1990 (Hussein regime, insurgent violence)
- § Geographic dispersion and large numbers of trainees
- § Training is decided on or dispersed at the company level
- § Making Marines and their leaders understand how important this training is to their mission success and force protection
- § Lack of existing skills in social sciences

Challenges of Cultural Intelligence for OIF

§ Collection:

- Skills in asking the right questions at the tactical level
- Leveraging knowledge and expertise on the culture writ large from academia, foreign service and national level agencies

§ Analysis

- Time and skills in analysis of detailed observations of patrols insufficient
- Access to information and skills from national level agencies, academia, etc.
- Access by analysts to information from the tactical – platoon, squad or individual soldier level

§ Dissemination:

- Open source information looked upon as questionable, but probably the most important source for cultural information
- Telecommunications technologies at the tactical level very poor – makes getting expertise and information to the field very challenging

Feedback from Marines

- § Training on culture was not very available, especially at the level where Marines interact with Iraqis most – platoon, squad and individual level
- § What was most available was:
 - Do's and Don'ts
 - Focused on Gulf States and not very relevant in Iraq
- § What was not available:
 - Understand the audience for IO
 - Understand how to do business with Iraqis – mindset
 - Effects of totalitarianism on individual Iraqi cooperation
 - Understand importance of building trust in establishing a safe & secure environment – deterring participation in insurgent activities and collecting information on insurgent and criminal activities
- § Cultural understanding seen by most as secondary – “peace through superior firepower”

Questions?

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