Cultural Training & Intelligence for OIF

2004 Naval Industry R&D Partnership Conference

Ms. Andrea V. Jackson
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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
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?

Andrea V. Jackson
Program Manager
Iraq Training Program
andaj@verizon.net
202 421 5857