

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AS A WEAPON SYSTEM

By: Lt Col Jeffrey "COG" Coggin

In Operation Iraqi Freedom, a resource manager's primary operating guidance is outlined in a document known as the "MAAWS" (Money as a Weapon System). The MAAWS is based upon Congressional, DoD, and Army funding guidance and it clearly defines how the various colors of money can be used to support mission requirements in theater. As the security situation in Iraq gradually improves, non-kinetic operations are slowly taking the place of prior intensive kinetic fights. Efficient application of funding has taken on great importance as a key enabler for humanitarian missions, infrastructure improvement, and preparing the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to take on more responsibility for safeguarding their country.

Though helping rebuild this worn-torn nation is essential for a brighter future, it is not the only way that the U.S. is helping the Iraqi's "help themselves." In fact, the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) focuses much of its energy on developing a more competent, capable, and professional Iraqi Security Force (ISF) through numerous personnel training initiatives. In particular, these objectives are being accomplished by nurturing partnerships with the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) Headquarters. The IGFC HQ complex, the Iraqi's equivalent of our Pentagon, is co-located on Camp Victory across from the Al Faw Palace, home of MNC-I. It is hoped that these partnership efforts will have a positive "trickle down" effect across the entire Iraqi Army. The long term goal of these collaborative relationships is to help the IGFC leadership develop the confidence and skills necessary to eventually take over full responsibility for planning and executing all military operations across Iraq in the future.

Building a Bridge between Fellow Financial Managers

Our Resource Management (C8) partnership efforts began shortly after 1st Corps took command of MNC-I from the 18th Airborne Corps in April 2009. At that point, we began reaching out to the IGFC Comptroller staff located on the Victory Base Complex at Camp Slayer in the IGFC's "Camp Iraqi Heroes." Because of the language barrier, one of the first steps in our partnership initiative was to seek interpreter support. Fortunately, there was a U.S. Military Training Team (MiTT) member assigned as the IGFC G1/G8 advisor, who was able to help set-up our initial meeting with the IGFC Comptroller (COL Ali Mazen) through one of their Arabic translators.

Our first few meetings with the IGFC G8 were primarily focused on relationship building and trying to understand how we may be able to assist them. Our IGFC hosts were very gracious, even inviting us for a traditional Iraqi dinner one evening, followed by a very lively after-dinner discussion over Iraqi chi (hot tea). These conversations touched on a variety of topics such as family, hobbies, and professional issues such as how the Ministry of Defense funds IGFC requirements in comparison to how funding flows through DoD channels. With each visit, we began getting a better feel for some of the IGFC G8's operating challenges. One very interesting observation was how the IGFC still does most of their accounting and finance transactions manually. Just as in the "days of old" in the U.S. military, the IGFC conducts monthly pay lines for soldiers and keeps their budget data in larger ledger books written by hand.

Because of funding restrictions, we could not directly assist with the IGFC's financial challenges; however, we could offer advice on how to automate some of their

financial processes. Additionally, we believed that by including the Defense Financial Management & Comptroller School (DFM&CS) in our partnership efforts, we could help the IGFC G8 by offering the staff world-class education opportunities. In particular, the “Defense Decision Support Course (DDSC)” taught at DFM&CS seemed to be a perfect class to offer to our fellow Iraqi financial managers. The DDSC focuses on equipping officers and civilians with skills to help them address complex issues by identifying potential solutions and selecting the optimal alternative.

Partnership through Education

At the same time we were developing relationships with the IGFC G8, the Corps’ senior leadership established a “Combined Partnering Operations Cell (CPOC)” to facilitate daily interaction between the Multi-National Corps and IGFC staff officers. The CPOC is a joint operations center located in the IGFC HQ building, manned by U.S. and Iraqi personnel from various functional areas such as personnel, intelligence, operations, planning, communications, engineers, resource management, and medical. Weekly joint assessment briefings are conducted to report on operational requirements, and give MNC-I and IGFC senior leadership an update on unit readiness. After we attended a few of these briefings, it became obvious that the proposed decision support workshop for the G8 staff could also be extremely valuable for the Iraqi CPOC staff officers as well. With the DFM&CS providing the decision support course content and the MNC-I and IGFC senior leadership’s support, the MNC-I C8 prepared to offer the course not only to the IGFC G8, but also to the other CPOC officers.

Using a slightly modified version of the Defense Decision Support Course, our teaching team worked closely with several MiTT interpreters to translate the course materials from English to “English + Arabic”. A critical component to the success of the course was the assignment of an outstanding interpreter, Mr. Mathus Remaden, to help conduct this workshop. Without an interpreter to translate the English speaking instructor’s words and “energy” into Arabic, this project would not have been possible. After several weeks of translating course materials, identifying classroom space, acquiring the necessary administrative/audio-visual support, and practicing the course presentation, we were ready to conduct the first ever DFM&CS sponsored “Decision Support Workshop” for 10 Iraqi and 2 American senior officers in Baghdad, Iraq.

Decision Support Workshop (18 – 21 July 2009)

The primary goal of our “Decision Support Workshop” was to help both Iraqi and American CPOC staff officers more effectively analyze information and make better recommendations to their senior leaders. Class discussions and practical exercises focused on identifying specific issues, using various decision support tools to sort and analyze available data, developing courses of action, and ultimately generating informed recommendations for decision makers. The enthusiasm was extremely high as U.S. and Iraqi students worked together on a mutually identifiable class scenario which involved making decisions for a fictitious “futbol” (soccer) team called “Team CPOC”. The class project was to utilize the decision support model to develop three courses of action (CoAs) for securing a playing field for the team. The decision support model consists of: (1) identifying the issues; (2) analyzing the issue; (3) developing

alternatives; (4) evaluating alternatives; and then (5) making a recommendation to the decision maker.

One of the first hurdles the class had to overcome was recognizing the cultural differences associated with the use of the word “football” or “futbol”. The U.S. students immediately thought of American tackle football; however, the Iraqi students honed in on the game they know as “futbol” (soccer), the national sport of Iraq. The sports metaphor appropriately highlighted just one of the many challenges U.S. and Iraqi personnel face when conducting day-to-day joint operations. Once the group was able to understand their differences, they were able to move past them and connect around mutual similarities. Though the learning concepts introduced during the workshop were not necessarily new to most of the attendees, classroom conversations allowed the students to share experiences and highlight the importance (and challenges) of incorporating different cultural viewpoints into the decision making process.

At conclusion of the 3 ½ day Decision Support Workshop, all participants were asked to provide detailed feedback regarding the value of the course materials presented as it relates to both their personal and professional lives. Many of the Iraqi students (most of which were senior officers) remarked that this training was extremely beneficial and that it helped re-energize them on tackling the many challenges that their country faces on a daily basis. The event was such a success that a request has already been made by the CPOC leadership to conduct another workshop for those CPOC staff officers who were unable to attend. Furthermore, the IGFC leadership would like for a Decision Support “hands-on laboratory” to be scheduled, specifically to work through real-world challenges currently facing the Iraqi Army.

Achieving Lasting Peace and Prosperity Starts by Growing People

Hopefully, the collaborative spirit ignited during this workshop will continue to flourish as these U.S. and Iraqi staff officers return to the CPOC and work together toward forging a more democratic and prosperous Iraq. However, in order for Iraq's military to evolve into a highly-skilled and self-reliant organization, dedicated effort must continue to be placed on developing personnel across all ranks. Therefore, as the Department of Defense contemplates future training programs for increasing the capability of the military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan (and beyond), we must not only focus on teaching traditional military skills, but also incorporate evidence-based development of the intellectual, social, and psychological components of "Human Capital." As an old Chinese proverb suggests...if you want a year of prosperity, you should grow grain; if you want ten years of prosperity, you should grow trees; but if you want 100 years of prosperity, *you should grow people*. It is hoped that the Decision Support Workshop described above, is one such example of how "Human Capital Development" can be employed "as a Weapon System" in the 21st Century.



Left to Right: Lt Col Jeff Coggin & Mr. Mathus Remaden (Linguist) teaching the “Decision Support Workshop, 18 – 21 July 2009 at Camp Victory, Iraq.” (Photo by U.S. Army Capt Robert Burnham)



Right to Left: COL Stanley Brown (MNC-I Comptroller), Staff Colonel Mohammed Rasheed Abbas (IGFC CPOC Director), Lt Col Jeff Coggin, and Mr. Mathus Remaden. (Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Michael Daigle)



Front Row (l. to r.): Mr. Mathus Remaden, Lt Col Jeff “COG” Coggin//2nd Row (l. to r.): CPT Robert Burnham, Lt Col Taleb Abed, Staff Lt Col Assef Mzahem Muhe, 2Lt Mohammad Abd-Airda, Colonel Nasir Tariq AL-Shihabi//3rd Row (l. to r.): Lt Col Abbas Awad Jabir, Lt Col Ahamd-Hamed Abbud, Lt Col Lua’ay Abbas; 4th Row (l. to r.): LTC James Murphy, COL Stanley Brown, Colonel (Engineer) Hamid Hameed Hasan, Staff Colonel Mohammad Rasheed Abbas. (Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Michael Daigle)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey “COG” Coggin is a faculty member at the Defense Financial Management and Comptroller School, Eaker College for Professional Development at Air University (Maxwell AFB, Alabama). “COG” served a 1 year tour at Camp Victory, Iraq as the Deputy Comptroller for the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As the Deputy Comptroller, he was responsible for directing the C8 staff and resource management operations of a deployed Multi-National Corps totaling 140,000 personnel throughout Iraq. The MNC-I C8 staff manages a \$14 billion dollar operating budget to include funding all operations and life support for U.S. forces, critical strategic and theater ISR requirements, operational and force protection assets, and humanitarian and reconstruction efforts.

