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## Professors in the Trenches: Deployed Soldiers and Social Science Academics (Part 1 of 5)

**Editor: Rob W. Kurz**

*“How do I come to know what I didn’t know I needed to know?”*

This is the *first installment* of a *five-part series*. Each article was co-authored by one Army soldier/civilian and one university professor/academic as part of a joint research project. This project and product responds to the Army’s objectives regarding the integration of cultural social sciences into its training and operations.

### **Introduction to the Series**

The overarching goal of a “Military-Social Science Roundtable”, coupled with a related Delphi research process, is to boost, broaden, and render more viable the relationship between the military and academic fields of cultural studies in a way that benefits both communities. Specifically, the Roundtable and Delphi research process should foster a level of cooperation between these communities which assists tactical military units as well as military/political decision makers to ask the right questions in order to conduct full spectrum operations in unfamiliar cultural settings. The process and the venue of such cooperative roundtable conferences is intended to improve not only military long-term capabilities but also bring academic social science thinking into real world challenges.

The concept for the Military-Social Science roundtable and its associated Delphi process arose out of three common areas of interest. In the spring of 2007, the Command and General Staff College’s Center for Army Tactics (CGSC-CTAC) was seeking further perspectives and input from culturally-focused social science experts in order to enhance its training and research. CTAC was also engaged with many CGSC faculty members and students who had returned from Iraq, Afghanistan, or other combat zones, and who wanted a venue through which they could share unique observations regarding their deployment and interaction with foreign populations. Concurrently, the Training and Doctrine Command’s (TRADOC) Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) was interested in further opportunities to leverage resources from its network of academics and foreign security specialists against the warfighter’s need for intercultural capabilities. A third impetus to hold such cooperative roundtables stemmed from academe -- specifically within the social science community -- where there are a number of very knowledgeable and experienced individuals who believe in applying their disciplines to prevent unnecessary casualties. This is especially important in an era where conflicts are raging in a number of different geographical as well as cultural environments, revealing a need to explore

areas where cultural, social science studies may benefit today's decision makers from the tactical to strategic level.

The confluence of these three areas of interest prompted CTAC and FMSO to jointly develop and host a roundtable and Delphi process at Fort Leavenworth. CTAC found the military participants and FMSO found the academic participants. The nearby University of Kansas – particularly its military supporters with longstanding ties to FMSO and the Combined Arms Center (CAC) – became a local partner in the event.

The primary objective of the roundtable was to publish one or more papers – written together by the participants – that address two related topics:

Unique and/or common experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, or other areas of operations that may help define the military's need for culturally-related social science training, information, and/or methodologies.

The possible way ahead for “military anthropology”, military and cultural geography, and related culturally focused social science disciplines in terms of research, development, and cooperation that could benefit the military at multiple levels; i.e., from the Soldier level to senior planning staffs.

To meet this objective, four military personnel were each asked to write a paper on their – or their unit's – experience interfacing with a local population while deployed. The paper was to focus on: mission challenges stemming from cultural differences between the Soldiers and the indigenous population, how the Soldier or the unit adapted to those challenges, and whether these adaptations were successful.

This marked the beginning of the Delphi portion of the event. The Delphi method is an iterative process used to collect and distill the judgments of experts using a series of questions interspersed with feedback. The questions are designed to focus on problems, opportunities, solutions, or forecasts. Each subsequent set of questions is developed based on the results of the previous ones. In this case, each Soldier shared his paper with one academic with whom he was paired. Over a series of weeks or months, the academic asked the Soldier questions regarding the experience about which the Soldier had written, with the intention of investigating the story from a Social Science perspective. As these exchanges occurred, the academic gradually integrated his or her observations into the paper, eventually co-authoring the final text with the Soldier and forming the basis of this book.

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 – literally in the middle of the Delphi process -- all four teams (each consisting of one Soldier and one academic) participated in a one-day “Military-Social Science Roundtable during which they openly presented and discussed the Soldiers' experiences and the academics' observations. This roundtable was open to the public and facilitated questions and comments from additional attendees. The concept of social scientists and more specifically anthropologists working closely with military veterans -- rather unlikely partners in today's environment -- drew a fair amount of attention from the academic and military communities, as well as the national and local press.

While there have been numerous conferences and much discourse about “military anthropology” and related concepts, this was one of the first, focused symposiums on this issue with the direct objective to publish one or more substance-filled papers intended to move this field forward. Most conferences or similar events on this topic have focused on sharing ideas, sharing information, and networking; not on publication. Moreover, the papers stemming from this roundtable have the unique credibility of having been written by social scientists -- several of whom are directly affiliated with universities or other DoD services -- in conjunction with experienced military personnel at the Army’s Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth.

These writings – which now comprise the chapters of this book – represent only the beginning of what is hopefully an ever growing appreciation for the extent to which social science and specifically Anthropology can substantially improve a soldier’s ability to stabilize a situation in a hostile environment as well as assist a unit’s capability to deal more viably with a culturally unknown, possibly uncooperative population. Furthermore, such culture-based knowledge will certainly contribute a great deal to a senior decision-maker’s ability to better understand second or third order effects of any course of action/non-action. Cultural fields of study will not provide tactical, operational, strategic, or political planners all the answers they need to know about the environment in question. On the contrary, cultural fields of study will provide these planners the foundation-level context necessary to ask the right questions from the outset rather than erring in their assumptions.

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## **Part 1 of 5**

### **To Change an Army: The Establishment of the Iraqi Center for Military Values, Principles and Leadership**

**Jack D. Kem and Aaron G. Kirby**

#### **Introduction**

Field Manual 3-24, the new U.S. Army’s Counterinsurgency Manual, defines culture as a “web of meaning” shared by members of a particular society or group within a society. Culture (ideas, norms, rituals, codes of behavior) provides meaning to individuals within the society (Department of the Army 2006, 3-6). The Counterinsurgency Manual also states:

*Culture might also be described as an “operational code” that is valid for an entire group of people. Culture conditions the individual’s range of action and ideas, including what to do and not do, how to do or not do it, and whom to do it with or not to do it with. Culture also includes under what circumstances the “rules” shift and change. Culture influences how people make judgments about what is right and wrong, assess what is important and unimportant, categorize things, and deal with things that do not fit into existing categories... (Department of the Army 2006, 3-7).*

The purpose for this article is to examine aspects of culture within Iraq. This examination is based on observations of Iraqi civilian translators and American contractors who worked together to develop classes for the Iraqi military in leadership and ethics studies. These classes were designed to change the Iraqi military into a professional organization that is “ethically based, competently led, loyal to the principles of the constitution and accountable to the civilian leadership and people of Iraq” (MNSTC-I 2006, 6). The preparation for this critically important mission provided the vehicle for observing the cultural differences between these two groups (Iraqi translators and American contractors) based on a “snapshot in time” during the summer of 2006.

These observations suggest that there are some cultural differences between Americans and Iraqis that could potentially present barriers to effective change in the Iraqi military. These include learning style preferences, teaching methodologies, the concept of time, the importance of names and titles, the relative importance of values, and historical role models.

## **Background**

One of the initiatives for change within the Iraqi Military in 2006 was to develop a center to reinforce ethical behavior within the Iraqi Military. The Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) was concerned that there had been an emphasis prior to 2006 on developing a “Quantitative Iraqi Security Force (ISF) but not a Qualitative one” (MNSTC-I 2006, 2). In response to this concern, a preliminary assessment of the Iraqi military ethos was conducted from October to December 2005. This assessment consisted of a survey, focus groups of 5-7 personnel, and interviews with key commanders and civilian leaders. Over 470 Iraqi military personnel and 25 senior level Iraq leaders participated in this assessment. Those surveyed and interviewed included personnel from all NCO and Officer ranks from junior sergeant to the Commander of the Iraqi Joint Forces and the Minister of Defense. The assessment also represents all levels from platoon thru division as well as operational and training units, the Joint Headquarters and Ministry of Defense.

This assessment provided a number of key findings and included:

- Iraqi military leaders understand professional military values
- Iraqi military personnel profess a belief in a values-based Army, but adherence is uneven
- The Iraqi military professional military ethos is neither documented formally nor spoken consistently across breadth and depth of the ISF
- The Iraqi military, both organizationally and individually, is neither reflective nor self-critical

- The Iraqi military frequently employ rigid discipline rather than actively fostering mutual trust
- Iraqi leaders have great faith and confidence in examples they see in Coalition
- Senior Iraq civilian and military leaders recognize need to establish a professional military values & principles and embrace an effort to transform ethical environment of the Iraqi military
- The Iraqi military Officer Corps is skeptical of the western model of Officer-NCO relationship
- The Iraqi military does not understand the Western concept of civil-military relations nor the role of the military in a democracy; distrusts MOD and civilian leadership

The assessment indicated a number of strengths in the new Iraqi Security Forces; survey responses and subsequent discussions with Iraqi leaders at all levels revealed a clear understanding of professional military values. Even though there were some differences that were considered to be attributable to culture and language, ISF personnel indicated a similar understanding of the meaning of such values as military honor, integrity, honesty, courage, etc. The interviews and focus groups revealed a strong positive association with the conduct modeled by the coalition. However, there was some indication that Iraq conduct was different in the presence of the coalition, indicating a double standard on the part of the Iraqis; there was one manner of behavior around coalition members, and a different ethical behavior in the absence of coalition members. As a result, the senior Iraqi leadership recognized that unethical behavior was one of the fundamental weaknesses of Iraqi leadership and that serious efforts must be made to change the ethical culture and climate of the Iraqi military.

Another major issue that emerged was the relationship between commissioned officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). Commissioned officers did not believe that NCOs should or will ever assume the role played by NCOs serving the armies of western democracies. This was considered to be mostly an issue of class structure, which was reinforced by the differences in educational levels between the two groups. During the focus groups, many of the NCOs frequently complained about the unwillingness of officers (or even more senior NCO) to listen to them; offering advice was simply not considered an option. Conversely, officers – especially junior officers – frequently micromanaged, often doing even the most routine tasks themselves to ensure success.

Finally, all soldiers expressed distrust of civilian leadership in the Ministry of Defense on the survey and during focus group interviews. In the previous regime, the Minister of Defense was a senior military officer (as in the Soviet model); during the time of the assessment, there were also a large number of retired officers in civilian positions within the MOD. The real issue appeared to be that the Iraqi officer corps did not want to take orders from civilians as a matter of “saving face” (CVMPL 2006, 17-21).

In response to the need to develop ethical behavior within the new ISF, the Iraqi Center for Military Values, Principles, and Leadership was created in March 2006. The new Center was given a comprehensive charter:

*The Center for Military Values, Principles and Leadership will develop, implement, monitor and assess training and education systems and programs within the armed forces in order to assist in developing a professional Iraqi Joint Force that is ethically based, competently led, loyal to the principles of the constitution and accountable to the civilian leadership and people of Iraq. (MNSTC-I 2006, 6)*

In order to accomplish this charter, there were a number of objectives that were to be met; these included making changes in organizational structure in the Iraqi military, appreciating the role of Iraqi culture and heritage, defining barriers and resistance to stronger roles for non-commissioned officers, and understanding the impact of corruption on effectiveness within the Iraqi military (MNSTC-I 2006, 12).

To accomplish these objectives, a number of contractors from the United States were hired to assist in developing the initial doctrine and curriculum that would be presented to Iraqi trainers, who would in turn teach the classes throughout the Iraqi military. The teams of Iraqi trainers would teach classes about professional military values, the law of armed conflict, human rights, and the role of a military in a democracy (Garamone 2006). These classes were to be presented to members of the Iraqi military at all levels. "The key is the values of the Iraqi military will be inculcated at every level... It is important to the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people. The army must behave in an ethical and consistent manner to build the Iraqi people's confidence" (Garamone 2006).

The Iraqi military was deeply involved in the planning for the new Center from the beginning. The commander of the Center, Major General (MG) Nabil Abdul Kadir, was designated by the Iraqi Military in March 2006. The Iraqi military cadre at the Center, led by MG Nabil, was responsible for developing the core values of the Iraqi military, which would be the basis for the classes. MG Nabil felt this effort was urgent; "I was gravely concerned to see the behavior of some of the (Iraqi) soldiers in the streets," he said. "It doesn't go along with our beliefs; it doesn't go with our culture. (The soldiers) are so rude, so ruthless, and it is not acceptable. It is widening the gap between military and civilians. I want to see that gap closed, completely" (Garamone 2006a).

MG Nadir was also aware of the sensitivity of having coalition representatives assist in the development of "Iraqi values." In response, he was directly involved in procuring "a modest library of books from Iraqi philosophers, thinkers, and leaders to add to the leadership center's collection" because "many books have been destroyed in the war." Using these writings would assist him in responding to criticism that Iraq has nothing to learn from the Americans. By using Iraqi texts, he stated "I can say that I am not teaching you American values. They are our values, too" (Mulrine 2006).

In addition to Iraqi military officers serving as the Center Commander and team instructors, Iraqi translators were hired to assist in the coordination between coalition representatives and Iraqi military trainers. These translators were not only essential in translating curriculum and doctrine, but also in understanding and bridging the cultural differences that existed between the two groups. Many of the translators had served in the old Iraqi army; almost all of them had graduate level educations; and most had become translators to make money:

*When I came here, frankly, I was only looking for money," says Danny, one of the Iraqi translators who uses an American name for fear of being killed should his identity become known. "When I found out what they were trying to do here, I thought it was very good for the country. We need to build an Army with not only weapons but with values. To protect the people, the Army must know how to treat the people. (Mulrine 2006)*

The role of the translators was an evolving role; initially they were hired as pure translators – to provide an accurate translation of the prepared doctrine and curriculum into Arabic. The role shifted to that of an interpreter – to provide a “contextually true” interpretation of the doctrine and curriculum from English to Arabic. This role provides greater discretion for the interpreter, since the interpretation may be more of a paraphrase, focusing on the meaning and intent of the interpreted materials – which also requires a greater understanding of the context of the interpreted materials. Because the permanent Iraqi military personnel had not arrived at the Center during the training, the Iraqi translators took on an additional role – that of “associates” who would potentially serve as instructors rather than just translators. This role, of course, granted even greater discretion to the Iraqi translators, as well as an equal status on the teaching team with the U.S. contractors.

The Iraqi Center for Military Values, Principles, and Leadership received a great deal of attention as one of the important coalition initiatives in developing the quality of the new Iraqi military. This part of the coalition plan was intended to be a “more comprehensive engagement with the Iraqis to help them change behaviors while building Iraqi institutions to address the root problems” (Felicetti 2006, 80). This engagement included a variety of initiatives that were directly related to the Center, including the Center establishment, initial classes in a “traveling road show,” doctrine development, curriculum development, curriculum delivery throughout the Iraqi military, conducting further research, conducting assessment and program evaluation, and strategic communications (MNSTC-I 2006, 9-12). There was, however, an expectation that this effort would take considerable time. “Shaping and shifting attitudes can and must be done, but it will take time, resources and, most important, commitment from Iraqis and coalition members” (Garamone 2006). The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), in a 2006 report, stated:

*...the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) has developed and supports an Iraqi Center for Military Values, Principles, and Leadership. Its goal is to inform and influence key leaders, the military, the public, and other ethics compliance organizations. MNSTC-I has established 34 values they intend to convey through the Center. However, there is an expectation that it may take nearly two generations to fully realize these outcomes. According to MNSTC-I officials, they only expect to achieve 5 or 6 of these values during the first 2 to 3 years of the program. (SIGIR 2006, 5)*

## Support from the Command and General Staff College

To support the development of the Iraqi Center for Military Values, Principles, and Leadership, a team from the United States Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) deployed to Iraq from Fort Leavenworth, KS. This team consisted of four faculty members; three leadership professors and an ethics subject matter expert. The intent of the team was to provide training in a number of areas: faculty development, leadership studies, and ethics studies.

Each of these three areas posed a particular challenge for the team. Faculty development encompassed teaching the instructional model in use at the Command and General Staff College – the CGSC Experiential Learning Model, or ELM. The ELM serves as the methodology for both lesson plan design at the Command and General Staff College and as the dominant teaching methodology for delivering curriculum. The CGSC Experiential Learning Model is a framework that serves as an “umbrella concept” for different delivery techniques for teaching: seminar instruction, instructor-centric traditional lecture, Socratic questioning, or case studies, to name a few. The CGSC Experiential Learning Model also embodies the underlying premise of the educational philosophy at CGSC: teaching students how to think, rather than what to think. The CGSC Experiential Learning Model is designed to treat subject matter content from a process framework that enables students to identify a problem, develop courses of action or solutions to a problem, test the courses of action or solutions to the problem, and then implement or apply that solution (Kem 2006). Teaching this new methodology was considered a drastic departure from previous educational methodologies in Iraq during the Saddam era, which predominately relied on lecture and rote memorization.

An interesting parallel to the Iraqi experience of democratization is that of Brazil, as noted by Paulo Freire. Freire writes that Brazil had previously been a “closed, colonial, slavocratic, anti-democratic society” (Freire 2002, 21). In order to transition to a democracy, Freire felt that their needed to be reform in the educational process that encouraged critical attitudes (Freire 2002, 33). Freire noted the following about pre-democratic Brazil:

*Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness. Indeed, its own naïve dependence on high-sounding phrases, reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness actually intensified our naïvete.*  
(Freire 2002, 37)

The CGSC Experiential Learning Model draws from the educational theories of Freire, among others (such as Kolb). Freire felt that experiential education was essential for developing a critical consciousness; that you best “learn democracy through the exercise of democracy; for that knowledge, above all others, can only be assimilated experientially” (Freire 2002, 36).

Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men, on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, and the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality, or under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion (Freire 2002, 38).



Teaching leadership – from the Fort Leavenworth perspective – was also considered to be a major challenge for the Iraqis. The Fort Leavenworth leadership studies were taught from the perspective of a values-based organization, with a focus on organizational leadership. The major topic areas that were to be delivered consisted of critical reasoning and creative thinking, leadership development and assessment, cultural awareness, and general leadership studies. Many of these classes were selected based on the survey results and focus groups, although the classes were admittedly adapted from the Fort Leavenworth curriculum and were initially developed for American students. The general leadership studies encompassed a wide variety of subjects, such as the profession of arms, officership, professional military ethics and values, the role of the military in a democracy, and the law of armed conflict and human rights. This wide array of courses was designed in accordance with the Center’s mission to “*developing a professional Iraqi Joint Force that is ethically based, competently led, loyal to the principles of the constitution and accountable to the civilian leadership and people of Iraq*” (MNSTC-I, 2006). These courses were developed to change the organizational culture of the Iraqi military – an enormous change from the Saddam era. Based on the initial surveys and focus groups, two of these areas were considered to be potentially problematic – the role of the NCO in a professional military and accountability to civilian leadership.

Teaching ethics was another area uncovered in the research that needed attention and would prove to be challenging. Our primary focus would be teaching an ethical decision making model that provides moral clarity for the Iraqi military – in sufficient detail to provide guidance for ethical dilemmas, but also simple enough for application at all ranks. This posed a particular challenge since the moral decision making model in use by the Command and General Staff College uses the “ethical triangle,” which incorporates three different ethical systems for analysis: principles-based ethics (based on the writings of Immanuel Kant); consequences-based ethics (based on the writings of John Stuart Mill); and finally virtues-based ethics (based on the writings of Aristotle) (Kem 2006a, 28-34). All three of these ethical systems were based on Western writings, and there was concern whether or not these ethical systems would have the same relevance for the Iraqi audience. The “ethical triangle,” however, is based on the concept of a “unified ethical approach” (Garofalo and Geuras 1999, 95-130) and by Svara’s “ethical triangle” (Svara 2007, 64-72). The key virtue that was emphasized – using the ethical triangle – was based on the concept of justice, consistent with Lawrence Kohlberg’s theories of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981). Kohlberg held that all three of the ethical theories were consistent with his model of moral development, that justice was the universal ethic, and that his model of stage development was “true in all cultures” (Kohlberg 1975, 48).

The team from the Command and General Staff College taught these classes to both the U.S. contractors and the Iraqi translators over a two week period. During these classes, Iraqi military officers (other than the commander, MG Nadir) were not assigned to the Center. The training audience, therefore, was a combination of two disparate groups – U.S. contractors, who were all retired U.S. military officers and noncommissioned officers, and Iraqi translators, most of whom had served in the Iraqi military. Both groups were roughly the same age (40-55), and both groups had roughly the same educational level (graduate level).

## Observations

There were high expectations from all three groups (the team from CGSC, the U.S. contractors, and the Iraqi translators). The expectations were that this core of trainers could help to train up and work with the Iraqi military officers, when assigned, to change the culture of the Iraqi military. The group's optimistic expectations were apparent in this CGSC team member's statement:

*...The country seems hungry for freedom. There are critics who say Arabs cannot handle freedom. If that is true, then why are so many Iraqis dying for freedom? Why are so many risking themselves and their families to serve in the new Iraqi Army?*  
(Garamone 2006b).

During the training, there were a number of issues that were worth noting and revealed both similarities and differences between the U.S. contractors and the Iraqi translators. Here are several of those observations from the viewpoint of one of the CGSC team members, provided in no particular order:

**Money and motivation.** Both of the groups – the contractors and the translators – were initially motivated by the money that could be made by working in the Center – not the opportunity to change the culture of the Iraqi military. Unfortunately, this reflected the values that were driving the motivation of both cultures (American and Iraqi) in the implementation of ethics and values. The contractors from the United States made a great deal of money for their troubles – most made at least \$180K a year for their work at the Center. The Iraqi translators made less, but it was still a job (where there were few jobs) with a significant paycheck. Fortunately, there were a few in both groups who were “true believers” in the cause, and they helped to keep things on track. One or two of the U.S. contractors left after a short period of time to return to the States or to go to another (higher paying) position. Within a year, only two of the U.S. contractors remained with the Center. The Iraqis didn't have such an easy way out; in fact, once the Iraqis had signed on as contract linguists, they really couldn't leave because of the potential danger to themselves and their families.

As the classes progressed, the two groups had a positive impact on each other – like Yin and Yang or Occam's razor, cultures change because they interact with one another (Patriquin 2007, 24). The culture and attitudes of the contractors was just as significant in determining the motivations of the Iraqis as the Iraqis are to the Americans. The dynamic between the two groups, especially with the influence of the “true believers,” positively influenced the entire group to focus their efforts toward initiating positive changes in the Iraqi military.

**Learning Styles Inventory (LSI).** Part of the faculty development included taking an instrument known as the Learning Styles Inventory. This inventory instrument, used widely in the United States, indicates the learning style preference in one of four different styles:

- Divergers, learners who acquire knowledge by concrete experience and process knowledge by reflective observation (learn by discovery).

- Assimilators, learners who acquire knowledge by abstract conceptualization and process knowledge by reflective observation (learn by planning and creating theoretical models).
- Convergers, learners who acquire knowledge by abstract conceptualization and process knowledge by active experimentation (learn by practical application and reasoning deductively).
- Accommodators, learners who acquire knowledge by concrete experience and process knowledge by active experimentation (learn by focusing on doing things).

At CGSC, the majority of the students are “assimilators” (planners) and “convergers” (deciders). The U.S. contractors generally fit this mold, which was not surprising since all of them were retired U.S. military. The Iraqi translators, however, represented all four learning styles, which was surprising. The expectation was that the Iraqi translators – who were roughly equivalent to the American contractors in age, education, and military background – would be roughly equivalent in learning styles. Based on the results from the LSI, the differences in learning styles were primarily in terms of the knowledge acquisition, with a greater reliance on concrete experiences rather than abstract conceptualization.

***Experiential Learning Model.*** As a result of the disparate learning styles, the Iraqi translators were generally more receptive to the experiential learning model (ELM) than the U.S. contractors – the ELM methodology, by design, addresses all four learning style preferences. The educational experiences of the two groups were also diverse; the U.S. contractors had all been through the U.S. military education system, and felt that their experiences were successful; therefore, they were generally not receptive to new methods of teaching and generally preferred using lecture. Two of the U.S. contractors were, however, “completely sold” on the experiential learning model; one of the contractors had served as an educator after his retirement, and another of the contractors had been deeply involved in the manning and fielding of the “Stryker Brigade,” an organization that had used the experiential learning model extensively during their fielding and development. The two “receptive” contractors were also least motivated by money and were lifelong learners – and natural teachers.

The Iraqis had experienced a different system. On more than one occasion the Iraqi translators expressed excitement with a system of learning that wasn’t based on lecture and encouraged active participation in classes. One of the Iraqi translators confided that he didn’t trust Iraqi physicians who had been educated after the Ba’athists came to power because of social promotion and the lack of active education; he felt that the new doctors had just attended classes but had learned nothing. “The system was corrupt; no teacher could fail a student and no student could be considered a failure.”

Since the CGSC team used the experiential learning model as the way to teach, they modeled the ELM as they taught all their classes. After the first day, it was apparent that the Iraqi translators “got it” – they were active participants in every class, asked a wide variety of questions, and provided their own assessment of each of the classes. Many of the U.S. contractors were impatient and wanted the classes to move along; they were looking for a lecture and were frustrated when it wasn’t given.

***Concept of Time.*** The concept of time was generally determined to be an area of cultural differences between the two groups. Generally, the U.S. contractors had a great desire to get started on time, “get ‘er done,” and then call it a day. The Iraqis had a different concept; they were rarely on time to start, but then in no hurry to finish. Even during breaks the Iraqis wanted to continue discussions and to follow up... but then would not be ready when it was time to start back. This was no surprise because of the cultural differences regarding the concept of time. These differences were pronounced, which required considerable time spent “herding” both groups in an attempt to begin class again at roughly the same time. The instructional format and schedule was altered and relaxed to accommodate this difference and to capitalize on the genuine desire of the Iraqis to learn as much as possible. The Iraqi translator’s emphasis on conversation, coupled with an apparent disregard for schedules, was accepted as a reflection of a different set of priorities – a priority to learn and reflect on the material rather than on a priority of getting through the classes.

***Names and titles...and their importance.*** One of the big differences between the two groups was the importance given to names and titles. The U.S. contractors were retired military, whose retired ranks ranged from Master Sergeant to full Colonel. Without exception, all of the contractors called each other by first name and avoided any reference to retired rank; two of the CGSC faculty members had doctorates, but they were rarely called by their title of “Dr” (with the exception of the pet name “Dr. Doom”). The Iraqis were completely different; one of the Iraqi translators had served in the Iraqi military as a Major and had the reputation of a war hero. Even though he was no longer a Major (the military he had served was dissolved), he received deference from all of the other Iraqi translators. When MG Nadir came around, he was given great deference as well.

The Iraqis also shared a particular honor – to be known and called as the father of your son was a particular honor (“father of Ahmet”). When one of the Iraqi translators wanted to show particular honor to one of the other translators, this term of reference was used – and noted by all the others. One of the translators provided clarification; he said that this term indicated that the father was honored by having such a noteworthy son, and that this indicated the greatness of the father. The family term of reference took precedence over military ranks, which indicated the greater value given to families than to the military.

***Troubling Examples and the Rule of Law.*** During the discussion of the rule of law, the Iraqi translators were quite open in their questions of how the United States would deal with troubling examples that violated the rule of law, especially the Haditha situation and Abu Ghraib. Interestingly, the Iraqi translators were not as disturbed by these events as the American contractors were, but they were greatly interested in our reaction. The Iraqi translators wanted to know how we would deal with these situations – and how we could teach about the rule of law when we had so many apparent violations of law within the U.S. military. The Iraqi translators didn’t seem to be accusatory, but rather troubled that the U.S. could say one thing (rule of law) and then act in another way. For the most part, the reaction of the U.S. contractors was to dismiss these situations as anomalies and exceptions, which didn’t satisfy the Iraqi translators, who were disappointed at the attitudes of the American contractors.

The Iraqi translators understood only after the situations were described as violations of the rule of law – which requires a deliberate investigation, due process, and representation by counsel. This acceptance was particularly influenced by the trial of Saddam Hussein, which was ongoing during the classes and watched carefully by all of the Iraqi translators. All felt that Saddam Hussein was guilty, but there was an understanding that the trial was necessary – he had to be allowed to present a defense and evidence had to be presented before a verdict could be given. When the explanation stated that the same process needed to be followed for those at Haditha and Abu Ghraib, the Iraqi translators understood. The concept of “justice” resonated; all of the Iraqi translators also knew Iraqi history and were familiar with the Code of Hammurabi. The concept of “justice” for the Iraqis, however, appeared to have a different basis than the American concept of justice. The Iraqi concept of justice didn’t include the moderating influence of the concept of mercy; justice seemed to be based on “getting what you deserve.” For punishment to be fair and just, it had to be equally administered. The concept of giving mercy – of considering mitigating factors or of showing compassion – seemed to indicate weakness or some level of corruption.

The Iraqi Constitution had also been recently approved by the vast majority of the Iraqis. Relating the concepts of the Rule of Law to the Iraqi Constitution was extremely important. The CGSC team analyzed the Iraqi Constitution and found that it provided great insight into what the Iraqis felt was important. One of the key passages from the Iraqi Constitution integrated into the classes being developed was Article 9(1a):

*The Iraqi armed forces and security services will be composed of the components of the Iraqi people with due consideration given to their balance and representation without discrimination or exclusion. They shall be subject to the control of the civilian authority, shall defend Iraq, shall not be used as an instrument to oppress the Iraqi people, shall not interfere in the political affairs, and shall have no role in the transfer of authority (IECIRAQ 2005, 4).*

A further analysis of the Iraqi Constitution revealed the relative importance of some of the key values that were ascribed by the Iraqis. The terms “democracy” and “duty” appeared only two times for each term in the 43 page document; “loyalty” appeared only once and “mercy” was absent from the document. The term “rights” appeared 18 times and “freedom” appeared 12 times (IECIRAQ 2005). “Just” and “justice” appears in the Iraqi Constitution 13 times. One of the CGSC team members stated:

*You also must teach respect for other people and other viewpoints and why that is important, he said. Iraqis also have to understand what their constitution says and what it guarantees. The military needs to understand not only what (the Iraqi constitution) says, but why it says that. It's really a remarkable document (Garamone 2006b).*

**Democracy vs. Justice (Values).** The concept of “democracy” was somewhat troublesome for the Iraqis. They couldn’t seem to fully grasp this notion in terms of a western liberal regime, with all of the checks and balances in a fully developed democracy, but rather they were focused on the concept of majority rule. The value (or virtue) that resonated most in Iraq was justice;

justice that had a personal impact. During the time of the training, there was a great deal of sectarian violence taking place in Baghdad, which included capturing members of other sects. Torture by some of the most gruesome methods was rampant; explaining how this was just not right didn't have much of an impact on the Iraqi translators – they seemed to accept it as a fact of life. Explaining how torture was unjust in personal terms made a difference in their perception of torture. Relating the inhumanity of this type of treatment against another human being – such as to your son or your mother – brought this home. Creating a vision where your family could walk down the road without fear from being harmed by others was a motivator for making changes – but those changes had to be understood in terms of the direct impact to the Iraqi's family or group. Unfortunately, we couldn't determine whether or not this understanding was based on a short-term, immediate sympathetic response or whether this was fully understood and retained.

All of the Iraqi translators had seen the image of the Iraqi woman with her purple finger in the air after voting – a sign of taking a stand for a better future. The Iraqi translators seemed to understand the importance of how an Iraqi woman could take a stand to make Iraq better for her children; they also understood fully when this type of courage was compared to the courage they would need to make changes in the Iraqi military, one unit at a time. The use of this type of strong imagery helped to reinforce the concepts of democracy and justice for the Iraqi translators. The U.S. contractors seemed to have an abstract perspective that their actions could change the Middle East and the world; the Iraqi translators were more concrete and wanted to see how their actions could change the lives of their children and family. Interestingly, the preference for abstract conceptualization by the U.S. contractors was consistent with their learning styles.

***Role Models.*** As part of the preparation for preparing curriculum for the Iraqi military, the CGSC team conducted research with the Iraqi translators in a number of areas. Many of the case studies in the Fort Leavenworth CGSC curriculum are based on the actions of key leaders, such as George Washington, George C. Marshall, and Matthew Ridgway. When the CGSC team asked the Iraqi translators for great Iraqi leaders to use as examples, the translators couldn't come up with a single noteworthy example without going back thousands of years (such as Nebuchadnezzar and Hammurabi). Besides the long time frames, most of these examples left a lot to be desired.

The lack of role models for the Iraqis extended beyond military and political role models; this inability to describe role models extended into areas such as writers, sports figures, and entertainment personalities. It is unknown whether this was due to a translation issue (an inability to grasp the symbolic magnitude of Western icons) or a reflection of how important history is on Iraqi modern life – or just an unwillingness of the Iraqis to share that particular part of their culture.

***Pride in work and a job well done.*** As part of the deployment to Iraq, the CGSC team stayed on the base and lived in what had previously been officer's quarters for the Iraqi military. Besides having Iraqi linguists, the Center also had a number of Iraqis who were responsible for the upkeep of the facility. This included cutting the grass, cleaning vehicles, and keeping the place clean. At the end of ground combat, the facility was in sad shape, but was markedly improving

because of the hard work of these Iraqi laborers. During the evenings, one of the CGSC faculty members started to clean up around the buildings; this was a huge embarrassment to these laborers, who asked the CGSC team member to let them do it. By the morning, all of the area had been fully mowed and cleaned up, and the laborers were outside to show off their hard work. There was a great deal of pride in doing their job and doing it well – and an appreciation when the job was properly inspected and praised. This did not appear to be motivated by shame, but rather by pride.

## **Analysis and Conclusions**

The experience at the Iraqi Center for Military Values, Principles, and Leadership was an interesting experience in cultural differences and similarities. The impact of history, culture, societal institutions, and individual differences was apparent, especially when considering the issues of ethics and leadership. The use of the Experiential Learning Model, which incorporates all learning style preferences, appeared to be an appropriate methodology for influencing change within the Iraqi military.

The impact of history can have a counterintuitive effect – because of the history of the Saddam era, the Iraqi translators were more receptive to change and new approaches; rather than being fixated on the old ways, they embraced new and promising methods. The repercussions of the old Ba’athist regime on learning, stigmas, standards and methods could also “re-appear” once the situation in Iraq stabilizes, which could be a potential barrier to future learning (regressing toward the mean). MG Nabil’s comments about Iraqi soldiers (“so rude, so ruthless ... not acceptable”) indicated that the reaction to the changes in Iraq can also be negative, and that old behaviors from the previous regime can quickly re-appear.

The Iraqi military appears to have a number of structural issues that are worth further research. The initial surveys and focus groups indicated a lack of trust in the noncommissioned officer corps, as well as a tendency towards micromanagement by officers. These particular findings pose significant problems in the development of a professional military. The dynamic of officers – particularly junior officers, micromanaging may be due to a number of factors: the inexperience of the officers in a new Iraqi military; class orientation; or as a security issue. Junior officer micromanagement and the distrust between the civilian government and the military may well be a cultural extension of security and manifestation of the tendency towards compartmentalization of society in order to retain power within an exceptionally variable environment. The lack of trust between the military and civilian authorities could also be a reflection of the lack of confidence in the American model of unification.

In teaching ethics, there was an initial assumption that Iraqi culture would assess “moral” dilemmas in the same manner that Americans do, based on Kohlberg’s theories of moral development. In the past twenty years there has been some criticism of Kohlberg’s assertions of moral universalism and the invariant progression of moral development (Jasinska-Kania 1988; Stewart, Sprinthall, and Kem 2002; Shweder, Mahapatra and Miller 1990, 194). Although there was no evidence that these issues affected the understanding of the Iraqi translators during the ethics classes, these areas merit further research.

The orientation for the Iraqis was clearly on concrete issues, and on the impact their actions could have on their families and those closest to them. The Iraqi translators focused on the immediate short-term mission of preparing to teach classes and doctrine development; a shared long-term vision of the future of Iraq just didn't seem apparent. This was consistent with the results from the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI), which suggested that the Iraqi translators had a greater reliance on concrete acquisition of knowledge than the American contractors. Money as a motivator also suggested a short-term orientation for both groups.

According to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), there were 34 values that had been developed, but MNSTC-I officials only expected "to achieve 5 or 6 of these values during the first 2 to 3 years of the program" (SIGIR 2006, 5). It is unknown which of those values were expected to be emphasized, however, the issue of justice and the rule of law resonated with the Iraqi translators; having a body of law and a constitution that was developed by Iraqis has great meaning and is a source of pride. Many of the other values that were discussed (such as respect) had a different conceptual framework for the Iraqis; the issue of torture and sectarian violence had to be personalized to have relevance, as opposed to being an issue of respect for other human beings. The concept of a "unified ethical theory" and its applicability to the Iraqi culture is an area that may still need further investigation. Most importantly, the changes in the Iraqi military must come from the Iraqis themselves. One of the disheartening issues of the training in Iraq was the fact that none of the Iraqi military (other than the commander) had been assigned to this important task. The Iraqi translators were willing to "step up" to the challenge and support teaching the classes to the Iraqi military, but the question remained as to whether they would be accepted in this role, especially by those who considered themselves "senior" in rank to the translators. The use of the Experiential Learning Model helped to reinforce this commitment, based on the underlying premise that students are responsible for their own education. It follows that changing the Iraqi military, therefore, is the responsibility of the Iraqis themselves. This commitment must be shared by all the Iraqi military and leadership, backed up with appropriate assignment of personnel to support this effort. As MG Nabil stated:

*This is my country. This is my army. My father served in the army, as did two brothers - one of whom was killed. We simply are an army family and I am completely committed to the reform of the institution (Garamone 2006a).*

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