

UNCLASSIFIED

History Essay

1SG David Livingston

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class # 35

UNCLASSIFIED

Abstract

History is a stern teacher. Military leaders rely on history to ensure that the course of battle is in favor of the Army that heeds history's lesson. This paper will focus on two examples of a military force succeeding in its effort to achieve cultural understanding as it conducted military operations. These two examples, the Battle for Fallujah and the control of Dyala Provenca will show how history teaches Soldiers what is needed to win on the battlefield.

History is a valuable teacher. Iraq has had a turbulent history. As far back as the 18th century, Iraq has been, and still is, a country embroiled in ethnic turmoil. Military leaders, both Iraqi and Coalition, re-learned this harsh lesson during the Second Battle for Fallujah November 7, 2004 – December 23, 2004. Additionally, 5th Iraqi Division leaders did not heed the lessons of history when deploying Kurdish soldiers to aid Iraqi and Coalition forces in this southern area of Iraq, although used lessons learned in the volatile Province of Dyala.

Iraq, considered the birth place of civilization, has had cultural diversity for centuries. The Kurds and Arabs located in northern Iraq were under the control of the Ottoman Empire (Tripp 1)¹, throughout the 18th century. Shias were occupying the area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southern Iraq. Though Kurds are considered to be Arabs, Shia and Sunni religious leaders do not consider Kurds as true Muslims. The British, who held what is called modern day Iraq as a territory, recognized this. The British, in November 1920, took special steps, to install a central Council of Ministers. This Council was dominated by Sunni Arabs.

In February 1934, a National Defense Bill was passed by the Iraqi Parliament. This bill was welcomed by Sunni Arabs but was viewed with suspicion by the Kurds and as a result caused unrest in the region. A revolt occurred in the Kurdish region, as well as some Shia areas, in the lower Euphrates region. During this 5 year period there was a pattern of instability in Iraq's political life. Iraq had 47 cabinets

and 6 attempted military coups between 1937 and 1941. (Bartleby 1)². This unrest was attributed to the distrust of Kurds by Shia. Shia were afraid that the non-Muslim Kurds were attempting to take complete control of Iraq (Sluglett 1)³.

History has shown that the Muslim belief is a time honored and strict culture. During the build-up of military forces for the upcoming second Battle of Fallujah, Kurdish forces were transferred to the Fallujah region by the fledgling Iraq government. Fallujah's populace was primarily Shia and or; Iraqi government leaders did not take history's lesson in consideration. Kurds are Muslims, but are not considered Arab by the rest of the Muslim world, especially the Shia populace.

This move caught Coalition forces by surprise. Coalition forces, using MiTTs (Military Training Teams), had been training Iraqi military and police forces. These forces would be able to take over the security of Iraq. The Iraqi soldiers trained in Fallujah and surrounding southern Provinces were of Shia and Sunni sects. Coalition leaders had taken history into account and knew to win the hearts and minds of the populace of Fallujah; a common ground was using soldiers of the same religious sects.

Iraqi leaders wanted a show of force. In the rush to regain control of this volatile region, history was not taken into account. This region was a stronghold for insurgents, and predominantly Shiite and

Sunni. The Coalition forces had painstakingly trained Iraqi soldiers for the battle but the Iraqi Government in their rush to regain the area did not take into account the Kurdish soldiers would be a liability. Though the Kurdish soldiers were Sunni, they were not considered Arabs by fellow Iraqi soldiers, and civilians, of the Fallujah region. The cultural difference between the Kurdish and Sunni/Shiite soldiers became apparent. Reports of up to 1,000 Iraqi soldiers deserting the Iraqi military during this period was noted by General George Casey, Commander, Multinational Force Iraq. General Casey reported, "It's constantly changing, but I do believe that some of the key leaders will stay there and will fight with their soldiers," (Commentary 1)⁴.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the most wanted terrorist in Iraq during this period, called on "true Muslims" to fight the Infidels, which included both Coalition and non-Muslim fighters. This would rid the country of these Infidels. True Muslims would not fight against the insurgent "freedom fighters", but would join them in their "Jihad" (Holy War) against the invaders. This type of propaganda is believed to have led to the desertion of the newly trained Iraqi soldiers.

Iraqi and Coalition military leaders found that the use of these Kurdish soldiers resulted in the desertion of Senior Iraqi officers as was witnessed by Coalition Officers. "This man has no known ties with Fallujah and they [the US military] don't believe in the first instance that he is headed for Fallujah. They believe that since the captain is a Kurd, he is more likely headed up north and going home." This Captain was in command of 160 Iraqi soldiers. It was

reported in April that the US military was detaining some 200 Iraqi civil defense soldiers who refused to take part in a massive US offensive against Fallujah. (CNN)⁵.

The 2nd Battle of Fallujah, which ended 23 December 2004, resulted in the death of 36 US Soldiers and the estimated death of over 1200 insurgents. This Battle again brought awareness to the Provincial Government of Iraq, that history had not been adhered to and the results were grave.

Though the 2nd Battle of Fallujah had been hard fought, Fallujah was finally brought under control of the Coalition and Iraqi forces. Most insurgents were driven from, or hiding in, the beleaguered city in which some semblance of order was restored.

In April 2005, the 5th Iraqi Division under the leadership of BG Madgid, was transferred to Dyala Province. BG Madgid, along with MiTT teams, was tasked with ensuring that the upcoming Iraqi election would be held and all Iraqis would be given an opportunity to vote in this election.

Coalition and Iraqi forces took the lessons learned from the second Battle of Fallujah, and from lessons learned from history. The 5th Iraqi Division did have Kurds within the Division. These Kurdish Soldiers were only used for base and FOB (Forward Operating Base)

security. BG Madgid deployed Shia/Sunni soldiers to the outlying towns that were of the same or similar religious sects. This proved to be the most prudent tactical move by the Iraqi Army. These soldiers were able to move through the cities with relative ease. The Soldiers were able to obtain strategic information on insurgent activities. The populace of Dyala, saw the Soldiers were of the same religious sects. These Soldiers patrolled the cities and gained information from the local populace of roadside bombs, weapons caches and Al Qaeda movement. This prudent movement of Soldiers throughout Dyala Province allowed the populace to vote in the Governmental Election. Voter turnout in the Governorate of Dyala was high (around 71%) ⁶. This voter turnout was due to the decrease in secular violence in the Province, and deemed as one of the highest violence free elections in Iraq. The decrease in secular violence was largely attributed to the use of Soldiers of the same ethnic background as the voting populace.

The battles for Fallujah allowed history to show that unless the lessons learned in the past, are adhered to, that the results are devastating to the side that does not heed to history's lessons. Additionally in contrast, the Province of Dyala showed what is gained when history's past is adhered to. Using the wisdom of the past is vital to the growth of the future.

References

- 1 Law Library of Congress retrieved 23 November 2008
- 2 IRAQ SINCE 1918, *supra* note74, at <http://www.bartleby.com/67/2404.html>, retrieved 23 November 2008
- 3 The Boston Globe. Sluglett 1, Iraqi Soldier Desertions. Retrieved 6 November 2008
- 4 <http://iraqi> soldiers deserting during Fallujah
- 5 CNN. Retrieved 16 April 2009
- 6 IECI, *Uncertified Partial Results*, 21 December 2005, <http://www.ieciraq.org/final%20cand/20051221%20Partial%20Results%20Turnout.pdf>.