Strategy Research Project

DETENTION OPERATIONS: THE STRATEGIC WILDCARD

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DETENTION OPERATIONS: THE STRATEGIC WILDCARD

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines the historic background of detention operations as well as current, modern day detainee missions, specifically, the detainee assessment process and its effect at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Further, it examines the value of educational programs for those detained and its effect on recidivism rates as well as the importance of establishing optics for viewing the success of the detention operations.

DETENTION OPERATIONS: THE STRATEGIC WILDCARD

> Brutal methods of interrogation are inconsistent with our values, undermine the rule of law, and are not effective means of obtaining information. They alienate the United States from the world. They serve as a recruitment and propaganda tool for terrorists. They increase the will of our enemies to fight against us and endanger our troops when they are captured. The United States will not use or support these methods.
>
> —President Obama[1]

Define the Operational Environment

Since the prisoner abuse scandal of Abu Ghraib in Iraq of October 2003, the United States military has made significant improvements in the conduct of detention operations (DO). It has invested resources and improved training to ensure events such as Abu Ghraib do not occur again. Whenever incidents of detainee abuse occur, regardless of whether at the tactical, operational or strategic level, these events can have a profound negative impact on our national image. Senator Carl Levin stated during the December 2008 Armed Services Committee report, “The abuse of detainees in U.S. custody compromised our moral authority and damaged both our ability to attract allies to our side in the fight against terrorism and to win the support of people around the world for that effort.” [2]

The evolution of detention operations demonstrates that lessons learned from previous failures significantly improves the conduct of detention operations. Using a constant series of assessments conducted at all three levels of detention operations--tactical, operational, and strategic--military personnel can assess the level of radicalization of a detainee. In addition, with the aid of educational programs, instructional cadre can influence detainees’ behavior to become better members of society. Finally, through the development of a series of checks and balances—optics—

civilian and military leaders will be better able to monitor and evaluate the conduct of DO.

When conducting detention operations, the Soldier on the ground who is either at the point of capture or detaining the enemy combatant for prolonged periods has as much an effect on the strategy of the war as the general commanding it. The assessment process occurring at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels as well as the various detainee rehabilitation programs are prevailing in the war on terrorism. Winning the "battle of the mind"[3] over the captured jihadists is critical to winning the war against Al Qaeda.

Historical Perspective

Over the past two centuries, the United States' policy toward the conduct of detention operations and the detainment of enemy prisoners of war (EPW) shows a continual evolution from one conflict to the next. Planning for EPW operations is problematic, at best, but it is critical for the success of the United States missions in the Middle East.

Throughout history nations have waged wars with each other and ultimately captured enemy forces. Often the treatment of those captured was not what a modern day society would consider humane. In ancient times, the Romans enslaved their enemies and used them in the coliseums as gladiators for entertainment. The famous Greek philosopher, Plato had a different view, "… and he who allows himself to be taken prisoner may as well be made a present to his enemies; he is their lawful prey, and let them do what they like with him."[4]

In contrast to the Romans' treatment of EPW, the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which ended the 30 Years Wars, established more modern rules of land warfare. The

victors released prisoners of war without ransom at the end of hostilities and allowed the prisoners to return to their homelands. Consequently, the notion promulgated a lawful way to conduct war: it was to a nation's interest for states to heed legal restriction.[5] Clearly this was a much more civilized approach to warfare and gave prisoners of future conflict hope that, if captured by enemy forces, the opposition would treat them treated humanely.

However, during World Wars I and II, many nations employed harsh and brutal treatment of prisoners. Even though The Hague and Geneva Conventions established principles for the humane treatment of prisoners, camps quickly became overcrowded, and prisoners suffered from abuse and malnutrition. Likewise, they received little or no medical care.

The treatment of prisoners throughout the world's wars has been idiosyncratic, at best. For example, during the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese Army detained and abused American prisoners in places like the notorious Hanoi Hilton. In fact, Senator John McCain served as a fighter pilot in the Navy and became a POW after his plane was shot down over enemy territory. The North Vietnamese forces held him captive and tortured him for over five years until he was repatriated. Conversely, during Operation Desert Storm in 1991, the US forces held the Iraqi EPW prisoners for the duration of the war, after which the Iraqi prisoners were repatriated upon cessation of hostilities.

Similarly, early in both the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States developed poorly planned and hastily established interment facilities. They were too few, too small, and too rudimentary. Quickly they became over-populated with

detainees. These facilities were not designed to hold large numbers of detainees and did not offer them much with regard to quality of life.

Major General Barbra Fast, the CJTF-7 J2, stated during the after-action review of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF1), “Those who made the predictions were betting on units surrendering in place so there wasn’t as much attention paid to really having a plan as there should have been… we were, as a force, much more prepared for prisoners of war and the idea that at the end of major hostilities, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.. prisoners are released.”[6] Generals normally resist committing large numbers of resources and Soldiers to the task of establishing and running detention facilities because most DO plans are based on estimates. Fast’s point about the “predictions being bet on surrendering,” is an acknowledgement that military planners historically have miscalculated the strategic importance of detainee operations--a common mistake of unpreparedness as well as an inability to project the future problems of DO.

Our National image took a hit for its inhumane treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and showed our lack of professionalism as detention specialists. However, as a Nation, the United States has learned from the events of its past and has corrected its indiscretions. To meet the broad range of challenges our Military Police Soldiers face when performing detention operations, the Army officially established the Army Corrections Command (ACC) in October 2008.

The creation of this command helped to legitimize the profession of corrections and its senior leadership within the Army. The command sought opportunities to work

with and adopt programs and practices implemented successfully by their civilian counterparts across the nation. By establishing professional relationships with organizations such as the American Correctional Association (ACA), the ACC was able to exchange thoughts and ideas through conferences and assistance visits.

DO Provides the Commander the Freedom of Maneuver

Military Police conduct detention operations to enable the combat arms commander the ability to preserve critical combat power, maintain the freedom of maneuver, and focus on the strategic fight. The detainee abuse conducted at Abu Ghraib in October 2003 caused the CJTF-7 Commander to lose his freedom of maneuver and shift his focus from the strategic fight to the tactical one. The result compromised the international status of the United States. The proper conduct of detention operations allows senior commanders to concentrate on grand strategy.

When a Soldier, who is conducting a tactical level task, makes a poor decision with devastating consequences, which impacts the strategic level he is referred to as "the strategic corporal." LTG Sanchez in his book *Wiser in Battle* describes a meeting with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld four days after the story about Corporal Charles Grainger and the Abu Ghraib abuse became international news. The meeting was previously scheduled to provide the Secretary of Defense with an operational update, the timeline for transition of sovereignty to the government of Iraq (GoI), and to discuss the recent capture of Saddam Hussein[7]. However, instead of focusing on strategic issues, the Secretary of Defense and CJTF-7 Commander diverted attention to the tactical level task of custody, care, and control of detainees responding to the international crisis. Such diversions are dangerous to military strategy and the well-being of the entire operation.

Levels of Detention Operations

The military conducts DO at all three levels of the operational spectrum: tactical, operational, and strategic. Although the physical task of detention operations occurs at the tactical level of operations, its impact affects all levels. Critical throughout all levels is the assessment process, which determines if the detainees meet the criteria for release.

DO at the Tactical Level of Operations

The focus of DO at the tactical level is on custody, care, and control. In order for the United States military to develop an exit strategy in DO, it must realize the strategic importance DO plays in the pursuit of our national interests. Therefore, as soon as time and training allow, the United States must integrate host-nation personnel into the operation and build toward host-nation responsibility.

Putting the Host Nation's Face on the Operation

The most effective way for the US to legitimize the conduct of a military operation is to encourage the participation of the host nation side-by-side, intending for them eventually to assume the lead in DO. In Iraq today, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are conducting day-to-day operations within the country with the US forces participating in a more advisory role. The same is true for the detention mission. Any exit strategy begins and ends with the training of host nation forces and should lead sooner, rather than later, toward an eventual transfer of authority. Encouraging the host nation ministries to assume responsibility and oversight is not easy and requires tremendous effort from all levels of the command. However, the strategic gains far out-weigh the costs and are one of the key elements to any plan of legitimacy and stability in the region, and include the eventual withdrawal of US forces from the theater of operation.

The development of Iraqi headquarters personnel capable of running the facility takes time as does the training of the detainee guard force. The United States military established Iraqi Correctional Officer (ICO) training and certification programs built around the military police school's training and doctrine command (TRADOC) approved lesson plans. To ensure the success of the host guard force, additionally, TRADOC assigned 31E military police correctional specialists to run the training programs. These academies have built a professional civilian force that assumed the oversight of DO at both TIFRCs at Taji and Camp Cropper.

Theater Internment Facility Reconciliation Centers (TIFRC)

Prior to the transfer of authority (TOA) to the GoI, the United States invested millions of dollars in the development of modern facilities and programs used to house detainees. These facilities focused on the custody and care aspects of detention operations while encouraging vo-tech and educational programs for the detainees. Recently, General David H. Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and commander of the U.S. Forces Afghanistan stated:

> When I took command of Multinational Force-Iraq in February 2007, we still had camp Bucca with 17,000 detainees at that time and it grew larger… we still had all the detainees in large enclosures… it was just fenced-in enclosures of about 800-900 detainees per enclosure… obviously we have come a long way since then.[8]

As General Petraeus stated, DO strategies in Iraq were not optimal and needed addressing by the senior leadership. Since 2007 DO has changed significantly in its processes and assessment of each detainee.

As well, the medical concept of support for each TIFRC improved drastically. Previously medical facilities were outside the detainee compound and had a different feel about them. The medical staff did not seem as committed to the operation as the

military police units. Senior leadership determined this to be counterproductive to the COIN concept and ordered the medical facilities to be moved inside the wire, creating an environment that centered on the health of a detainee both mentally and physically. The medical facility focused primarily on providing level II medical treatment—fairly comprehensive but falling short of surgery. However, to reduce the number of incidences the leadership takes a detainee outside the wire, the senior leaders increased the hospital staff with additional skill-sets to conduct routine procedures. Additionally, these facilities have optical and dental sections as well providing comprehensive care in these areas. In many cases this is the first time many of these detainees have received such care.

TIFRC's also have food service contracts that provide ethnic meals with a daily caloric count of more than 3000 calories per day as well as a bakery that provides fresh-baked traditional breads. The nutritional value of detainee food as well as the taste and quality of the meals is critical to preventing riots and protests. Such considerations may seem unwarranted and undeserved for detainees; however, quality food is an important part of the Muslim culture. Providing the best food possible creates long-term positive effects and contributes to the uninterrupted, more peaceful management of the detainees.

The TIFRC houses varying degrees of detainees. In Afghanistan and Iraq three different structures house detainees; the K-span, the modular detainee housing unit (MDHU), and the special housing unit (SHU). Most detainee populations display moderate behavior and are not radical jihadists. These detainees are housed in the open bay-styled K-span facility, which is a climate-controlled, domed structure with up to

20 cells, each capable of holding 25 detainees. Each cell possesses shower and toilet facilities designed to reduce the number of times a detainee must leave their cell. Military police and engineers designed the K-spans to address the environment that General Petraeus described previously, in which the detainees lived in large 800-900 detainee enclosures. These large enclosures enabled the establishment of Shari courts and encouraged the detainees to administer their own discipline for violators of their laws. Through the use of the K-span, the detainees are segregated into smaller numbers, thus eliminating these courts and improving control by US forces.

Another structure is the MDHU. Civilian contractors and engineers have constructed MDHUs from two 20 foot MILVANs welded together and placed inside a fenced compound. They come equipped with a sink and a toilet facility. MDHUs segregate the more dangerous detainees, who have a history of attacking guards or other detainees. Finally, the SHU is the most restrictive type of housing unit used in DO. The SHU has individual living cells each with its own shower and restroom facility, thus limiting the amount of time a detainee is out of his cell. These amenities, while primitive, also protect the detainee from self-harm. The military uses the SHU to house the most recalcitrant detainee, with very strict rules for usage.

A detainee may find himself segregated in the SHU for any of six reasons: administrative segregation; special quarters; protective custody; suicide risk; security reasons; law enforcement purposes, and disciplinary segregation. Standard operating procedures (SOP) dictate the current theater policy regarding the duration of a detainee's stay in the SHU. However, usually the TIFRC Commander can impose punishment up to 30 consecutive days, and any detainee required to stay longer

because of behavioral issues must be approved by the Detainee TF Commander, who retains approval authority for any stay exceeding 30 days.

The Assessment Process for a Detained Person (DP)

The military police conduct assessments at every level of operation, and these assessments determine the current status of a DP. Assessments aid in determining the following: crimes committed against the coalition, extreme or radical religious beliefs, education level, technical skills, and employment, and work history.

Assessment at the Point of Capture

The first assessment that occurs for a potential detainee is at the point of capture. Once US forces secure an individual, attaining proper identification is a key element in determining the intelligence value of the detainee. Using biometrics is the most precise method and ensures proper identification. Before detaintion within the system, the unit commanders must ensure that at least two eye witnesses can properly identify that individual.

Assessment In-Processing at the TIFRC

> Building toward long-term security requires that we engage our detainees and that we enable reconciliation that ultimately sets the conditions for reintegration of the predominance of the internees back into the Iraqi society. So we therefore employ counselors, psychiatrists, Iraqi clerics, teachers, and others to determine the education level, the occupational skills, the motivation, and morale of the detainees. This allows us to determine how best to relate to detainees, and it helps us identify and isolate the extremists from the remaining population. [9]

During past wars enemy prisoners were not released until the declaration of the end of hostilities. However, in modern-day counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare, US forces concentrate on aligning the support of the populous with the desired goals of the local government. As such, detainees are released as soon as they no longer pose a

threat to coalition forces. When detainees arrive at a TIFRC, they are in-processed and interviewed by Iraqi clerics and social workers as well as by military intelligence Soldiers to assess their level of radical behavior and ensure proper placement within the facility.

In accordance with this assessment, in 2007, military leadership devised a color-coded system to segregate the moderate detainees from the extremists within the facilities. A green classification indicated a detainee posed little threat and bore a moderate level of religious beliefs and behavior. An amber classification denoted an individual with slightly more extreme views and behavior. Finally, any prisoner categorized as red had very extreme or radical beliefs. The majority of detainees held in the TIFRCs were classified as green; whereas, only a small percentage were classified as red. This assessment and subsequent placement had a profound impact on the atmosphere within the facility. Most notable were the decline of incidents of detainee-on-detainee violence.

The intake assessment is pivotal in determining as quickly and accurately as possible into, which category a detainee fits. If the unit commanders do not properly assess a red detainee and place him within a group of moderate detainees, he may exert a negative influence over the moderates within the facility. Actions such as recruiting new members into their extremist organization, fear, and intimidation, and using lower-level members to probe the guard force for vulnerabilities are only a few of the problems that can occur by mixing the more passive with the radical detainees. As US forces became more aware of the impact the extremists had on the moderate population, they began to segregate them by their classification and tailored their living conditions and facilities accordingly. Essentially, commanders placed moderates in

facilities with less restrictive rules while placing red detainees in more restrictive facilities.

Currently, for example, unit commanders have allowed green detainees to spend hours freely walking around their compound and talking among themselves; whereas, they usually confined red detainees to their cells, from which they were allowed out for only one hour of recreation per day. Unit commanders segregated the amber and red populations usually belonging to either Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM) or Al-Qaeda from others to isolate their influence and behavior. Another problematic group was the Takfiri, who demanded a very austere lifestyle for all its members. When these groups roamed the larger, more moderately populations, they recruited new members, intimidated the population, and persuaded them to disregard the guard force and detention rules. Housed collectively reduced their influence on the greater population.

Daily Assessments by Guards and COIN Team

A Commander of a TIFRC has many assets at his disposal for maintaining a situational awareness of the current operating environment (COE) within his facility. Available to him are several formal and informal intelligence collection assets useful in defining that COE. The first is the bi-lingual, bi-cultural advisor (BBA) assigned to each of the facilities. The size of the detainee population will determine the number of BBAs assigned to each TIFRC. BBAs were usually former Iraqi citizens who immigrated to the United States and became citizens. Once the war in Iraq began, the BBA served as an integral part of the team to promote harmony and understanding and bridge the cultural divide between US forces and the detainees.

The effectiveness of the BBA program depends solely on the commander and his ability to trust and enable the BBA's. The BBAs' ability to establish a mutually

supporting relationship between themselves, and the detainees is dependent on the commander's trust in them and is essential to maintaining good order and discipline within the facility. The commander must establish forums for the BBA to communicate directly with him, the staff, and subordinate commanders to ensure they are receiving unfiltered reports and observation of the detainee population.

Another key component to COIN is the collection of human intelligence (HUMINT). The commander's intelligence officer oversees the various collection assets that monitor and track all events occurring within a facility. This is accomplished using a multi-layered approach. Within this varied-stepped approach is that of the guard force who serve as the first level. At this level the guard force observes and monitors the daily activities of the detainees. Through daily observation and interaction they are most familiar with the prisoners and can note any suspicious and unfamiliar behavior occurring among the detainees.

The second level is the compound S2, who is a Soldier of any military occupational specialty (MOS) who has been selected by the unit commander because of his analytical skills and ability to synthesize information. He tracks the detainee events taking place within the compound and looks for trends or associates of the detainee that enable his behavior. He updates the "Every Soldier a Sensor" (ES2) book, which has a breakdown in it of the significant activities of the population within that compound and what key areas the S2 wants the guard force to focus on during the next 24 hour-shift. These activities center on the commander's priority intelligence requirements (PIR)—such as identifying Shari court members and identifying leaders of various factions' within the facilities.

The third level of HUMINT is military intelligence Soldiers, who have a military occupation skill (MOS) of 35M and work in the battalion S2 section. These Soldiers conduct interviews with selected detainees to obtain information on events that could disrupt the facility: hunger strikes, riots, or the planned killing of detainees or guard force members. The final member of the COIN team is a contractor provided by the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) involved in the military intelligence civilian-excepted career program (MICECP).

These INSCOM contractors are former intelligence analysts highly trained in operational intelligence. They review and analyze trends and patterns gathered by intelligence teams collected within the facility.[10] The addition of these experienced analysts to a staff of generally young and inexperienced junior officers and enlisted Soldiers is essential to providing the commander critical intelligence analysis.

Intelligence sharing in DO is key to fighting COIN inside the wire. For this sharing to be successful, unit commanders and select elements of the staff meet to discuss detainee observations and behavior. The commanders and HUMINT team personnel discuss their observations of detainees, the trends and socializing of the detainees, and the latest tactics and techniques the detainees are using to thwart the guard force.

One of many challenges guard members face is detainees talking between compounds. Allowing them this privilege provides them with the communication network that enables them to coordinate such things as riots or escapes among the population. Another area particularly challenging to guard members is the facility's medical hospital. Because of limited security forces and medical personnel, regardless

of which compound the detainee comes from, he can communicate more freely and pose more of a threat to stability within the camp. While in the hospital, detainees have several opportunities to cross-talk from the various compounds.

One of the major strengths to the success of the DO is also one of the greatest weaknesses: standardization. A good unit develops a standardized way of performing tasks, and it will codify that task in an SOP, which must meet compliance. To the detainee such standardization provides predictability and an opportunity for him to thwart the system. Soldiers must remain diligent to prevent the detainee from exploiting this weakness. Our guard force commanders and senior leadership must administer the process at all levels, conducting thorough inspections, and unannounced walk-through of our facilities. By taking proactive measures such as these commanders can regain the upper hand.

Operational Level of Detention Operations

During in-processing of newly captured or transferred detainees into a TIFRC, the educational staff, along with a psychologist, conducts a comprehensive assessment to place the detainee in some or all of the programs. While no staff member mandates a detainee's participation in a program, the staff must explain the goals and objectives of the programs to the detainees along with an understanding that to be released, the detainee must show improvement in his behavior. Educational staff advises a detainee that being cooperative and participating in these programs will aid him in the movement toward release as well as potentially reduce his time in captivity.

Educational Programs

Primarily, the focus of detainee facilities today is on reconciliation—the act of reconciling differences of those who have committed crimes and disrupted the norms of

society. Strategically, the guard force can make the most significant impact at this level. When a detainee returns to the local populace, he should be able to look back on his detention favorably by remembering the quality of medical care, the meaningful education he received, and the humane treatment from the guard force. If he determines that his experience has been just and fair, his ability to reconcile himself back into his community will occur more quickly and easily.

Educating the detainee is extremely important because their illiteracy was probably what drove them to become involved with the insurgents in the first place. Studies of the United States prison systems show that individual characteristics that influence recidivism include demographic characteristics, prison experience, employment history, education level, criminal record, and substance abuse.[11] What has been demonstrated in US detention facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan shows a similar correlation with the detainee population. Most detainees who had poor experiences during detention could not find employment and eventually found their way back into detention.

Records show that illiterate detainees participated in crimes against the coalition because they allowed others to interpret the Quran for them. As well, unemployed local nationals aligned themselves with insurgents, not necessarily because of religious beliefs, but because of the financial windfall they receive from the terrorist organizations operating in the area. Therefore, education is key to rehabilitating the moderate-level detainee.

The programs offered at the U.S. facilities are basic education, art, religious discussion, civic classes, Vo-tech, and detainee-work programs. These programs

afford the detainees opportunities to improve themselves while being held captive. Once released, they will assimilate better into society because, not only is their time occupied by working but also they are supporting their families with the earnings they receive from the work incentive programs, which provide them with a sense of honor and dignity.

Similarly, the correctional system in the United States used these types of programs to prepare its inmates for release back into society. In a war zone, prisoners of war can benefit similarly. Additionally, the success of a prison education program depends on the values and attitudes of the administrative personnel, corrections officers, and educational staff,[12] which devote themselves toward the best interests of the detainees.

Along these educational lines, the basic education program runs in conjunction with the goals of the Iraqi Minister of Education (MoE). Establishing a memorandum of understanding with the MoE ensures that the detainees receive proper school credentials. Once the detainee completes his schooling requirements, he is awarded a diploma from the MoE indicating his educational accomplishment. The curriculum focuses on instruction in Arabic, particularly, and teaching the detainees to read and write at the fifth grade level. This provides them with the foundation necessary to continue their education upon reconciliation.

Additionally, detainees receive classes in history, science, geography, math, and computer technology classes. An offshoot of this program is the development of the inner-compound schools in which detainees, with the help of hired teachers, teaches

fellow detainees Arabic, English, and math skills. In such a way, a detainee teaching another detainee makes for a more acceptable, user-friendly curriculum.

The religious discussion program focuses on a moderate interpretation of the Quran, not a fundamentalist, extremist one. Detainees learn the foundations of Islam and the peaceful teachings of Mohammed as well as the more commonly accepted interpretations of the Quran. Educators teach the detainees to think for themselves and receive instruction conducive to moral and ethical behavior. This program employs, not only Muslim clerics, but psychologists who work with the detainees. Psychologists offer detainees individual treatment plans and prescribe medication that help him cope with the psychological impact of detainment.

The educational programs also tackle vo-tech training: basic electrical, plumbing, welding, carpentry, masonry, ceramics, and sewing. These skills allow the detained to become a vital force within their own community and in the rebuilding of Iraq. In addition, another vo-tech program hugely popular with the detainees is the agricultural curriculum. Educators teach detainees how to plant and grow various crops in such austere environmental conditions as Iraq.

Similarly, the detainees also participate in a detainee work program in which they perform tasks on the compound and, in return, earn money. During family visitations, the detainee can offer his pay to his wife and children. This work program raises the prisoner's morale because he can provide for his family while in detention.

The Minister of Human Rights (MoHR) while visiting the TIFRC at Taji said, "This is a really great facility, very nice and clean hospital with advanced equipment and good family visitation program in place. Everything looks nice inside the buildings. The only

thing that concerns me is that the Iraqi teachers and clerics, and social workers are contracted by an American company. Who will take care of these educational and vocational programs when Taji is turned over to the GoI."[13] The Minister's concerns are valid: in order for the United States' policy on detention operations to be successful, these programs must remain in place and under the control of the local nationals.

On an entirely different note, and in consideration of the trend toward Jihadist groups using women and children to conduct attacks against coalition forces, TIFRC Commanders must also be prepared to house and reconcile these categories of detainees. They present unique challenges to the command; however, they are no less significant an audience as their adult male counterparts when conducting a COIN war. To meet this challenge, U.S. forces have created juvenile education centers such as the House of Wisdom, a juvenile education and rehabilitation center designed to ensure that children receive an education beneficial upon their release. Such education for recalcitrant and insurgent youth allows them quick reintegration back into society.

Reduced Recidivism Rate

The goal of these programs is to reduce the number of former detainees previously lacking an education or a job skill from picking up arms against coalition forces again. In 2009 the TF-134 Commander from MNF-I briefed that the recidivism rate of those detainees recaptured for committing crimes against the coalition was less than 2%--an indication that these programs are, indeed, working. This percentage is significantly lower than recidivism rates in the United States prison system. A 2004 study of recidivism rates in the US penal system demonstrated that, for example, in Ohio in 1997, the recidivism rate was 40%; whereas, the recidivism rate for inmates

enrolled in college programs was 18%.[14] Recidivism rates were much higher in states in which the prison system offered no educational programs.

Strategic Level of Detention Operations

At the strategic level, external sources are conducting assessments ensuring proper detainee care in accordance with the Department of Defense policy as well as that of the Geneva Conventions. Below are a few of the optics used to ensure that U.S. forces are meeting or exceeding accepted national and international standards for their detainees.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Transparency in DO is paramount to the credibility of the operation and toward achieving the desired strategic end state. The ICRC's ability to observe and monitor U.S. facilities ensures fair and just implementation of DO policies and procedures. This transparency illustrates to the world that the DO facility is hiding nothing and is open for evaluation and proof of dignified and respectful treatment of detainees. The ICRC is an organization of dedicated international professionals who care about people and are non-political. The US government should encourage this organization's objective feedback as some of the most valuable information a DO facility can receive.

Host Nation News Agencies

U.S. military forces operating in the Middle East will most likely encounter press personnel from Pan Arab media organizations such as Al-Jazeera news. Regional and local news media organizations provide a look at DO operation from a cultural perspective, which ensures transparency to the citizens of the occupied country and to media markets throughout the world. Positive news to this effect can certainly aid in the counterinsurgency fight.

Department of Defense Internal Reviews

Third Army Headquarters (ARCENT) compiles a team of subject matter experts (SME) to conduct compliance assurance visits. This program includes a physical inspection of the compound from the perspective of security and medical policy review as well as a comprehensive review of all SOP's, and emergency action plans (EAP) ensuring organizational leadership is being proactive. These inspections are a direct result of the failures noted in the investigation of the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Grhaib.

The Pledge/Guarantor

After a detainee has been through all the programs and assessments, he is eligible for release. He must appear before an Iraqi judge to pledge that he will not engage in operations against coalition forces and that he promises to behave peacefully and with good will as he reintegrates into society. The act of reciting the pledge also reinforces the rule of law that has been established and provides credibility to the new government by making the detainee acknowledge the new Iraqi Police force and its law enforcement powers.

During this pledge the detainee identifies someone as his guarantor, a person guaranteeing the detainee will comply with his pledge. If the detainee fails to live up to the pledge, both he, and the guarantor may find themselves back in detention.

Reintegration Back into Society

Special ceremonies are held by coalition forces to celebrate the release of detainees. Iraqi VIP's as well as Iraqi/Pan Arab media attend these events. A program called Lion's Dawn releases, on average, some 300 detainees each month. Dr. Saleh Al-Mutlag, the head of the Dialogue Front Group of Iraqi Parliament, who spoke at one

of the ceremonies, told the former detainees, “I see in your faces and your eyes how happy you are, but your country is happier to see you back to help build it and build a new democratic Iraq.”[15] Having the ministers from various levels of government present and recognizing the efforts that the detainees put into their captivity and the improvement that they made contributes toward reconciliation.

Rule of Law

Legitimacy of any detainee operation is the establishment, acceptable governance, and the enforcement of a standard of law, which the people understand and respect. The conduct of security assistance missions by US forces has tremendous impact on detention operations. These missions assist in the establishment of proper rule of law procedures allowing those detained to have a better understanding of why they are being held. Due process is extremely important at all three levels of operations.

These levels, the establishment of courts, police, and corrections, are key to order and discipline within any culture. A respected constabulary force that physically enforces the rule of law, a court system that administratively enforces the laws, and a correctional system that properly provides for the custody, care, and control of those confined are essential to the success of any DO.

Information Operations (IO)

One of the key aspects of DO is the IO campaign. Having a proactive director of IO can go a long way in communicating the correct strategic message to the detainee population. The IO program develops posters, makes pamphlets, and develops the detainee inter-compound mail system, which allows detainees to communicate directly with each other. Because every detainee will return to society or transfer into the Iraqi

prison system, he needs to comprehend the world beyond the camp. As part of this program detainees listen to radio broadcasts and watch television shows approved by the command that reinforces the strategic message and prepares them to reintegrate back into society upon release.

Conclusion

Today's conflicts play out on a national stage in which every nation takes a front row seat to pass judgment on the United States military operations. Major General Stone stated in his Strategic Communication Plan that, "We must understand that in the larger strategic context, it is how we are perceived to conduct these operations that has the broadest impact—reaching far beyond those who are directly involved, and stretching to touch virtually every one of the more than one billion Muslims worldwide."[16]

Globalization has enabled our enemies to work against the ideals of the United States through digital networking. Because peoples from underdeveloped countries have only recently begun to use technology, they are vulnerable to more sophisticated methods of deceit and propaganda employed by Muslim radicals and other extremists. In such a world, detention operations must plan for the future and operate their centers, not at the technological, but at a real and palpable level that will speak to detainees: not only speak but also show the humanity behind the ideals, the promises, the hopes for democracy and the future.

The strategic importance of DO can no longer be overlooked or under-resourced as part of any campaign planning because it is the wildcard in present and future wars. What impacts DO have upon the detainee directly corresponds to success on the battlefield: if released detainees feel no resentment toward their captors and if they can prosper once free, they will encourage peaceful behavior among themselves and other

detainees. In order for future missions to succeed the leadership must consider DO programs. Without providing resources to DO, military missions are not necessarily plans toward success but, rather, plans for failure.

Endnotes

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