

From: "[REDACTED] MAJ MIL USA FORSCOM" <[REDACTED]@us.army.mil>
Subject: **Re: Cross-Cultural Adjustment Training**
Date: August 9, 2008 5:29:34 PM MDT
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Gentlemen,

I recommend you all host a visit of the Chaplain to your FOB / COPs so he can present this training. It is very detailed and educational. Bruce (Chaplain) presented aspects of our roles as advisors that we did not recognize before. Additionally, it gave every member of my team an opportunity to speak to someone outside of normal circle of people. Furthermore, it was just great having him and his assistant with us, because they are fun to have around and the team related to them immediately. So if you ask me, I'll say "Yeah" you need to invite the Chaplain to you home!

Hope I did not bother you with this but I thought you all should know my opinion of my team's experience with the Chaplain.

Bruce you are welcome to COP Eagle anytime. Call me and we will go get you.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]
MAJ, US Army

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Brother Sidebotham from Brother [REDACTED]

Between [You](#) and [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] October 18 at 10:40pm

Sir or I would prefer to call you Brother in the spirit of the scriptures.

I really hope you teach the chaplains about what you taught us about your experiences in Indonesia. I still have the notes I took... The "dating phase" the "honeymoon phase" "disillusionment/crisis phase" How we resolve it "Going native/Adjusting/Rejection" Or roughly that... and how we can sometimes be too hard on each other. Your insight into this helped me make a mental shift which helped me to be more forgiving and understanding of the different reactions each of my team members made... and explains why people treated each other the way they did. If you ever publish a book about it detailing this stuff in more detail please let me know. I would definitely be interested in reading it. Enjoy.

Sincerely

Brother [REDACTED] (Captain [REDACTED])

Reply:

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MiTT Chaplain's Cross-Cultural Adjustment Training:

Cultural adjustment, like marriage, goes through stages. First you have the dating or orientation phase of learning and building expectations. Then comes the honeymoon or tourist stage of enthusiasm and adventure. Inevitably you wrestle with disillusionment as you face hidden agendas, buried flaws, and unrealistic expectations. You can respond in one of three ways. Only one way will make you a successful advisor.

Why do I feel used by the Iraqi Army?
How do I learn the truth amidst so much dishonesty?
What will it take to stop all this corruption?
From where do my biggest challenges come?
When will I ever feel successful?

Reserve Chaplain (MAJ) Bruce Sidebotham directs a non-profit corporation focused on teaching principles of cross-cultural communication. He has his master's in intercultural studies and doctorate in ministry. He spent nearly seven years working among Muslims in Indonesia and taught himself the Indonesian language.

CH Sidebotham offers a lecture and discussion that can help your Transition Team through disillusionment to constructive engagement. He will help you understand how Iraqis prioritize values differently and find roles for influencing behaviors without changing beliefs.

Lesson Plan

Embedded Advisor Immersion, Adjustment and Adaptation

Primary Instructor:

Bruce Sidebotham, CH (MAJ), USAR, D.Min., bruce.sidebotham@us.army.mil

Terminal Training Objectives:

1. Students will be able to recognize the stages of adjustment to immersion in a foreign culture so that they can quickly reach a point of healthy adaptation that supports constructive engagement for influencing and advising host-nation counterpart personnel and units.

2. Students will be able to recognize and evaluate the way that host-nation counterpart personnel are prioritizing their values, so that they will be able to influence and advise according to the host-culture system of beliefs and values, and so that they will experience minimal personal frustration while avoiding trying to change the beliefs and values of host-nation counterpart personnel.

3. Students will be able to recognize and assume roles and lifestyles to which their host-nation counterparts can relate and from which they can impact the behaviors of their counterparts.

Students: Transition Team members, chaplains supporting Transition Teams, battle space commanders and staff partnering with Iraqi units.

Duration: 120 minutes

Training Conditions: In a small group/workshop environment a trained and field experienced instructor teaches and facilitates discussion on adjustment stages, values systems, and immersion roles & lifestyles.

Materials:

Whiteboard or butcher paper with marking implements.

Table and chairs

Follow up handouts

Training Outline:

A. Introduction

1. Spectrum of Exposure
 - a. awareness/presence/sensitivity
 - b. communication/partnership/understanding
 - c. advising/embedded/adaptation
2. “What” Training versus “Why” Training & Avoiding Offense versus Creating Change

B. Stages of Adjustment

1. Orientation (research, survey, classes, expectations)
2. Tourist (adventure, excitement, anticipation, naïve, confusion)
3. Disillusionment (disoriented, frustrated, unappreciated, discouraged, depressed)
4. Resolution (3 directions)
 - a. Withdrawal
 - i. results in: isolation, finger-pointing, vindication, justification, busy-work
 - ii. from: rejecting counterpart’s identity and beliefs/values
 - b. Going Native
 - i. results in: resolution, surrender, advocacy, appeasement
 - ii. from: embracing counterpart’s identity and beliefs/values
 - c. Adaptation for Constructive Engagement
 - i. results in: changes counterpart behaviors without threatening beliefs/values
 - ii. from: embracing counterpart identity without changing personal beliefs/values

C. Different Values Prioritization (revealed in ultimate sacrifice and ethical dilemmas)

1. Dying for Freedom -vs- Dying for Reputation
2. Integrity -vs- Human Life (i.e. Hiding Dutch Jews)
3. Integrity -vs- Honor (i.e. Cherry Tree, Cheating on Exams)
implications:
 - a. words -vs- actions
 - b. perception -vs- reality
 - c. accountability triangles
4. Service -vs- Status (civil servants -vs- patron clients)
implications:
 - a. gov’t positions
 - b. extended family expectations
 - c. corruption or patron privilege
5. Submission -vs- Responsibility (serenity)
implications:
 - a. risk management
 - b. medical treatment
 - c. disaster preparedness
 - d. force protection
6. Repentance -vs- Retribution
implications:

- a. for reconciliation
- b. for apologizing
- 7. Individualism -vs- Dependency
 - implications:
 - a. for logistics distribution
 - b. for hiring practices
 - c. for treatment of women
- 8. Private Space -vs- Public Space
 - implications:
 - a. for public works & hygiene
 - b. for advisor sanity

D. Roles:

1. Learner-Teacher (be a learner first, show dignity, respect & vulnerability)
2. Parent-Child (when reciprocity neglected)
3. Inspector
4. Story Teller (propositional -vs- proverb & parable)
5. Trader (establishing value preserves presence, tolerate being exploited, avoid dependency)
 - (channel funds indigenously)
6. Mediator (protect appearances, translate message into context, find insider spokesperson)
 - (preserve own identity, train the trainer)
7. Mentors (advising the advisor)

E. Lifestyles:

1. Engagement Levels (extraction, commuter, compound, shared)
2. Considerations (security, comfort, sustainment, perceptions, vulnerability)

F. Emergent Team Conflict

1. Adjusted versus non-adjusted members
2. Complicated by:
 - a. Blurred Personal and Professional Relationships
 - b. Rift between Combat Experienced and Inexperienced Personnel
 - c. Potential Race and Gender Alliances
 - d. Unusual, Unclear, Incremental, and Intangible Objectives
 - e. Unfulfilled Expectations
 - f. Immersion Fatigue
 - g. “Designated Patients”
 - h. Punitive Atmosphere
3. Mitigated by:
 - a. Team Building Activities
 - b. Daily “Hot Washes”
 - c. Civil Affairs Projects
 - d. Atmosphere of Grace
 - e. Available and Engaged Leaders who Lead
 - f. Commitment to Integrity over Popularity

Training Synopsis:

The Army does a good job preparing soldiers on Transition Teams for what a specific foreign advisory environment is like, but it does not do a very good job of explaining why the advisory environment is that way, or of preparing those soldiers to negotiate the adjustment process and become people of influence.

Embedding within a foreign security organization is like growing up. Both are processes with inevitable and irreversible stages. In growing up, people proceed from infancy through adolescence to either well or poorly adjusted adulthood. In embedding within a foreign security apparatus, people proceed through orientation, tourist, and disillusionment stages to become either well adjusted and constructively engaged or poorly adjusted by either going native or becoming withdrawn.

Having influence within a foreign security organization is like raising children. Like children, every culture has a unique personality very different from the others. Wise parents steer their children into independence and maturity within the framework of the individual's temperament without either giving up or trying to alter their child's basic personality. Foreign societies have the same basic values that we do, but they prioritize these commonly held values differently. Influential advisors have enough security in their own identity and values that they can facilitate behavioral changes within a system of values different from their own without compromising their own set of values. Trying to influence a foreign organization from one's own hierarchy of values is like trying to motivate children to clean their rooms with broccoli. Advising through the values system already present in the target society is like motivating children with ice cream.

Assembling a familiar looking puzzle with completely different pieces can be both frustrating and fulfilling. In Iraq, changing behaviors in order to enhance security is the puzzle. Different values priorities and insecure roles for outsiders are the pieces. Americans highly regard freedom. Iraqis more highly regard honor. Americans highly regard service. Iraqis more highly regard status. Americans readily extend forgiveness based on a promise of change. Iraqis readily extend forgiveness after justice has been served. American spirituality highlights struggling against the forces of nature and fate. Iraqi spirituality highlights submitting to nature and fate. These are just some of the many ways values priorities differ between Americans and Iraqis. Because Americans are not out to change anyone's beliefs and values, American advising must accommodate rather than change the Iraqi values system.

Americans in Iraq are outsiders. They don't have access to roles of honor and influence that are open to native Iraqis, but they can assume roles and lifestyles to which Iraqis can relate and from which they can exert influence. They can easily become patrons, clients, inspectors, traders, teachers, learners, or mediators, and they must choose a level of embedding that balances influence and security.

Finally, for mastering the situation, Americans must develop relationships with Iraqis who will be their mentors – advisors to the advisors so to speak. And for leaving a lasting legacy, Americans must recruit insiders who will be mediators – disciples who will promote the desired behavioral changes within their own culture according to their own values system. With this approach, American advisors have a chance of putting together the puzzle.

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